Thursday January 18, 2024 7:30 – 8:45 AM

Members present: Leslie Clapp, Louise Clough, Cindy Doyle, Betsy Edge, Beth Folcarelli, Marcy Holmes, Sarah Kuh, Lewis Laskaris, Bob Laskowski, Marina Lent, Karen MacPhail, Lisa Nagy, Chantale Patterson, Dan Pesch, Susan Pratt, Joyce Stiles Tucker, Sheryl Taylor, Martina Thornton, Christine Todd, Mary Jane Williams, Jim Wolff. Guests present: Cathy Wozniak, Aldino Maggiulli, Betsy Van Landingham, Lea Hamner

**Welcome, approval of December 21** – Mary Jane Williams called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM. The December minutes were approved.

**New Island Health Care Dental Center Director, Dr. Aldino Maggiulli** – Jim Wollf introduced Dr. Maggiulli, who then described the dental center and his work. The center is at 1 Mariner’s Way, Unit D, in Edgartown, and is just awaiting DPH approval the start construction of the space. He described the dental center as a private practice, not really a clinic. He practices general dentistry, and because of his continuing education, can provide a range of services. Questions about access and waiting times were asked – no one will be turned away initially, but at some future point they may have to pause taking in new patients, in order to service those already accepted.

**Discussion: Data from the Hospital that the Council could use -** facilitated by Bob Laskowski – Bob said that Amy Houghton from the hospital would like to organize the hospital’s relationship to the Council from an information standpoint. She suggested a schedule for the hospital to give a regular report to the Council, and also monitor some critical data of the status of health on the Vineyard. Some Council members responded to Bob’s email request for data they thought would be important to discuss. Suggestions for data from the hospital included:

Population Health-

* Amount of free care provided to people living on the Island
* Total uncompensated care
* Appointment accessibility for primary care for new patients and established patients
  + Same for mental health and specialty care
* Census for nursing home and bed availability
* Capacity for hospital clinics for primary care
* Number of surgeries per year
* Number of endoscopies per year

Also –

* Falls and the role of DCHC
* How many seniors come to the emergency room as a result of falls
* The Health Council as a “subcommittee” of the County could be a useful group to help the hospital spread important health bulletins to the community
* Mental health data – who comes in for those evaluations – ages, diagnosis, outcomes, etc. – including alcohol and drug related visits

Other member suggestions –

* Number of visits for dental emergencies
* How the language line and translators ensure continuity once patients leave the emergency department – Dan Pesch spoke up and said they’ve put a special emphasis on maternity care to be sure there is follow-up with non-English speaking patients, and also said that information needs to be 2-way with the Council – if we know patients who were unable to access specialists the hospital referred them to we need to inform the hospital. He also said that the hospital has all the data we have identified today, but it’s not quick and easy to get. Demographic data may not always be shared with us, as because of our small population some kinds of data may not be de-identified in practice.

Bob asked that Council members with other suggestions send them to him, and once the data and information committee meets and reviews all suggestions, they will report back to the Council.

Lisa Nagy recommended an assessment for adrenal insufficiency.

**Role of the County Health and Human Services Director** – Martina Thornton

Christine Todd asked Martina to talk about the new position the County is planning to create, and the impact that will have on healthcare and social services provided to the Island. Martina said there would be no impact on healthcare, that it was a health and human services and public health program - not direct healthcare services. This is nothing new – just restructuring what the County already does. We have several programs: healthcare access, public benefits access, veterans’ benefits access, and- since last year –collaborating with the board of health. The County is participating in their grant and has three shared services positions. The director of health and human services will administer all these programs. She sees the director as attending the Health Council meetings, SUD coalition meetings, and working with her on the bringing and pooling the opioid funds. The position hasn’t been posted yet, as Sarah is not retiring until June 30, but Martina would like to have the new director start on June 1, so there’ll be some overlap. In response to a question from Bob about how the Council could help, Martina said that a letter from the Council to every town’s finance committee would help, because it will increase the portion of the County budget that each town pays. Showing up at the finance committee to support the County’s budget request will also help.

**PFAS on the MVRHS playing fields – should we write another letter opposing artificial turf?** – Mary Jane Williams

Mary Jane wasn’t sure if another letter would help, but Cindy Doyle recommended another letter, and not just from the Health Council – she thought individual letters from Council members should be written, and perhaps the Council could send out bullet points to Council members to assist them. Lisa Nagy recommended that we get a letter from Senator Cyr, and perhaps interviews with experts in the field. Marcy Holmes said that it’s the high school, not the public that needs information – but they don’t seem to want to believe it. It’s not just the threat to the water, but threats to the children who play on artificial turf. Christine Todd said that we to stay on this and recommended that the Health Council write a letter for publication in the local papers about our concern and opposition to an artificial turf playing field. Lisa recommended that Victoria interview Senator Cyr and experts in the field of PFAS dangers then get that in the paper. The Council voted on both Lisa’s suggestion and Christine’s. Christine will work with Mary Jane on the letter. There was further discussion about the impact of the controversy about the artificial turf on the day-to-day operations at the school. It is acknowledged that the roof leaks, the HVAC system needs work, and the running track needs replacement, but school staff don’t feel that they are involved in the process – it’s largely the school committee that is making decisions.

**DCHC needs a new Secretary** – Mary Jane said that Louise is stepping down, so there needs to be a look at how to fill this position.

**Public Health Update** –

Marina Lent had to leave the meeting early, so couldn’t give a report. Betsy Van Landingham, who works with the public health agents, said that the COVID rate is down on the Island, but there’s plenty of flu and RSV around. She said that the hospital isn’t having any vaccine clinics, but patients can get vaccinated by their primary care physicians. All the pharmacies have vaccines: Stop & Shop, Vineyard Scripps, Conroy Apothecary. Patients without health insurance will only be able to get vaccines at Island Health or the hospital.

**More on PFAS**

Cindy Doyle said we should get the important bullet points organized then send out an all-points bulletin about the situation and our opposition to the use of artificial turf. Send it to town fathers, the school committee, the newspapers. And get other people to join, sort of a campaign to stop the use of artificial turf. Lisa Nagy said that she already texted Victoria about writing a column in the newspaper about the situation, perhaps interviewing Senator Cyr and expert Linda Birnbaum. She asked Mary Jane to tell Victoria that the Council approved this. Christine said we should get the boards of health / health agents in all six towns involved. Martina Thornton thought it would be worthwhile to find out how much it cost to mitigate the damage done to airport neighbors’ drinking water, after discovering PFAS in the firefighting process at the airport. It was very expensive, and knowing the cost might mean more Oak Bluffs residents and officials would be against the use of the artificial turf.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:45 am**

**The next regular Health Council meeting will be held via zoom on February 15 at 7:30 am**

Respectfully submitted, Louise Clough, secretary