

**Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission  
Minutes for the Thursday, December 17, 2015 Meeting**

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.  
Fourth Floor Conference Room  
Alexandria Health Department

**Present**

Rebecca Ash  
Ann Harbour  
Daniel Hawkins  
Keith Hearle  
Arlene Hewitt  
Jessica Hill  
Brian Hricik  
Allen Lomax

Richard Merritt  
Barbara Nowak  
Meredith Taylor  
Michael C. Trahos  
Katya Wanzer  
L. Tamara Wilson  
Stephen Haering, AHD  
Diana Sanchez, AHD

- I. Welcome introductions and attendance – Katya Wanzer
  - Brief introductions of new PHAC members Barbara Nowak, Brian Hricik and Tamara Wilson
- II. Meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. A quorum was established.
- III. Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria (PHA)Update – Allen Lomax
  - PHA continues efforts on the eight Alexandria Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) priority areas to build strong partnerships. Conversations are being held with several key members from the City in regards to Mental Health.
    - Is there a place in PHA to educate the community in regards to guns? – A. Hewitt
  - There is no place regarding guns in the 8 priority areas in the CHIP. The CHIP was approved a year ago. At the end of the calendar year 2016, PHA will look to reassess the CHIP to see if these 8 priority areas are still up consideration.
    - Have we looked at data in regards to gun violence? – T. Wilson
    - Alexandria Health Department (AHD) is in the process of doing a full report on all homicides. AHD will be sending that out to PHAC members once complete. – Dr. Haering
      - Can the Epidemiologist contact me regarding the data? Not all gun related injuries are taken to Inova Alexandria Hospital. – B. Hricik
    - Gun violence is a Public Health issue and the CHIP does not address this. – D. Hawkins
  - Yes it does not because the community did not see that as a Public Health priority.
    - I am in the process of conducting interviews for Inova and guns have not been brought up as an issue. – K. Hearle
    - I would suggest that we put this issue on the agenda for next month's meeting. – D. Hawkins
    - We need to focus on an issue and narrow it down. – K. Wanzer
    - If the data does not see this as an issue, we may need to look at something else. – B. Nowak
    - Can we look into bringing to Council signs about banning guns? – J. Hill
    - We need to define the problem as the first step. – M. Taylor
- IV. Introduction of Delegate Mark Levine
  - A brief biography was passed out to the members of PHAC.
- V. Special Guest - Delegate Mark Levine

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- Delegate-elect Mark Levine will be officially sworn-in on Saturday, January 16, 2016 in Richmond and has invited the members of PHAC to attend. He has written twenty bills with three of those on guns. One of the proposed bills is for paid family and medical leave which would allow paid paternity and maternity leave by taking .1 percent from employees' paycheck with employers matching the contribution. Another bill would be for Medicaid expansion by having hospitals in Virginia pay for those uninsured. The hospitals have agreed and the cost to the state of Virginia would be \$0.
- Discussion about guns and proposed bills. Three bills on guns are being proposed and it is an uphill battle. Statistics on gun violence provided to PHAC. The first bill would be to ban the purchase of guns from people who are on the Federal watch list/terrorist watch list. The second bill would be to ban the online purchases of guns because internet sites allow people to purchase guns without a background check and with no questions asked. This bill would state that you cannot sell to strangers on the internet. The third bill makes it illegal to have a loaded weapon available to a child under the age of five.
  - Governor of Connecticut made an executive order to ban sales of guns to those on the no fly list. Will our governor do the same? – R. Merritt
- That question should be directed to the governor in regards to that.
  - Is there any jurisdiction the City has over gun sales? – A. Hewitt
- I do not think that there is but there is some power that citizens have to show that gun shops are not wanted in Alexandria.
  - The focus on guns should be on mental health and domestic violence aspects. We need to find ways to chip away at the issue and to get to the root cause. – A. Lomax
- Gun ownership is down in America by 22%. The assault rifle ban lifted in 2011 is the same weapon that was used in the San Bernardino and Newtown, attacks. I support mental health awareness to prevent violence.
  - What can we do here in the City? Can you explain how we might be limited here in Alexandria? – T. Wilson
- Cities don't exist by virtue of the state. Localities only have power if the State gives it to them. Virginia is a Dillon rule state.
  - Businesses can act on their own to prohibit guns. One thing to consider for future discussion is having PHAC encourage businesses in banning guns. – D. Hawkins
- Publicize the statistics on guns and inform and encourage people about the real dangers on owning guns in their homes.
  - Can you explain more about the Medicaid Expansion bill? – A. Harbour
- The Federal Government pays 100% of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). \$250 million dollars is getting ready to come back to Virginia which could support Medicaid expansion. Over the next 10 years, Virginia will pay 10% of the ACA. Virginia hospitals agreed that they will pay the difference because they know that fewer people will get sick and it will reduce the amount of people having to go to the hospital.
  - PHAC reports to City Council and we would like to get updated information on this. – K. Wanzer
- On January 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. the City will have a town hall meeting in Old Town and one in the Farlington area to find out what is going on with Governor McAuliffe's ideas on Medicaid expansion. I support writing the Governor, as a Commission for Medicaid expansion.
  - When you see people starting to behave differently, whether or not they are radicalized or if there is a mental health issue. Is there anything that we can address at that level, to encourage reporting issues? – R. Ash

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- The “see something, say something” is something that the Alexandria Police Department and Council would support.
  - Social pressure works and we can make guns as undesirable as cigarettes.
- VI. Approval of the meeting minutes from the November 19, 2015 meeting. Correction made to the meeting minutes on page 1; change Michael Trahos to Michael C. Trahos. On page 3 changed “money” to “effort” under the Partnership Update section.
- Motion to approve the minutes as amended – R. Ash
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> to back motion – M. Taylor
  - Minutes were approved unanimously at 6:37 p.m.
- VII. Updates from the Chair – K. Wanzer
- A. Casey awards – K. Wanzer
- Nomination packets were sent out to Commissioners and a discussion about whether nominations should be opened up to the public was mentioned. Will be looking into what a community blast would entail and the timeline.
- B. Letters to City Manager and City Council – K. Wanzer
- We are holding off on letters at the moment.
    - 2016 priorities
      - K. Wanzer will be contacting those members whose lists have not yet been received.
- VIII. Vote – Health Fair Resolution
- I move for the reconsideration of the Health Fair resolution as amended. – R. Merritt, 6:45 p.m.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> to back the motion – D. Hawkins, 6:47 p.m.
  - I motion to table the reconsideration of the Health Fair resolution until the next PHAC meeting. – M. Trahos, 7:02 p.m.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> to back the motion. – A. Lomax, 7:03 p.m.
    - 6 votes for aye
    - 7 votes for nay
  - Motion approved for reconsideration of the amended Health Fair Resolution. - 7:05 p.m.
  - Recommend formatting of the document better for readability purposes. – R. Ash
  - I opposed the resolution for several reasons. I have not seen or been given the information that supports the benefits and I have not been given the information regarding the cost of the Health Fair. There are changes to the document such as the mayor’s statement which was not in the previous version. Overall, I am opposed because there is no evidence based data and I have a number of questions that have not yet been answered. – A. Lomax
  - We have declined to provide financial information because it pertains to employee’s salary. I also can’t support a resolution that measures success on 300 individuals. There were no defined targets for success. – A. Harbour
  - We shed light on the uninsured in Alexandria. The risk is that this resolution will be viewed as a sustainable solution to the problem of the uninsured. Unless we are really careful on the language in the resolution, I would recommend adding in another portion that there is an ongoing need to provide sustainable solutions for the uninsured and that we are not implying that these are the solutions. – K. Hearle
  - Previously PHAC sent a letter to City Council opposing the establishment of an Advisory Panel because the Commission was already working on these issues. The scheduling of joint meetings between PHAC and PHA was in progress and then the Mayor’s Advisory Panel was formed, so we stopped. The Commission opposed the Mayor’s Advisory Panel’s recommendation for the Health Fair; we have voted against

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- this twice and sent two letters to Council. Meredith's second letter specifically stated that PHAC would not be supporting the Health Fair. It would be disingenuous to now send this resolution congratulating the Health Fair. – K. Wanzer
- The Mayor's Panel invited a member PHAC to be on the Panel for voting. PHA was also invited and involved. – A. Lomax
  - It was not perfect and we learned a lot of lessons from the Health Fair. Does this Commission not agree that this is a serious problem? Can we not send a letter congratulating the volunteers and their efforts? – D. Hawkins
  - Several health fair participants were signed up for Medicaid, which they did not know they were eligible for, interpreters were present and referrals were made to Neighborhood Health. We did this to raise the issue in the community in which nothing was being done. There are 5500 uninsured and we helped out over 300. – A. Hewitt
  - Neighborhood Health is actively doing something to help those 5500. – A. Harbour
  - Amended Health Fair resolution withdrawn. – R. Merritt, 7:36 p.m.
  - With what Dan said about sending a letter congratulating volunteers and their efforts, I liked and I probably would have voted for it. – A. Lomax
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> for Amended Health Fair resolution withdrawn. - D. Hawkins, 7:39 p.m.
  - A letter with the language Dan stated would be really good to send to Council. – R. Ash
- IX. Health Department Update – Dr. Stephen Haering
- Care for the indigent is something that AHD provides. We transitioned many clinical services to Neighborhood Health; they are Alexandria's medical home. I drafted a document for the Panel that summarized a lot of the group thinking, much of that was not taken into consideration in the Panel's final document. The services that we are able to provide are dramatically decreased because of staffing levels. Across the board we are below the marks. The only way we are able to provide services and meet targets is to develop methods to successfully recruit and retain staff.
- X. Neighborhood Health Update – Keith Hearle
- We received a \$600k grant fund for dental care services, which was not budgeted. This is something that will greatly improve the services we offer. – K. Hearle
- XI. We can send a letter to the City Manager stating that we are concerned about the staffing levels at AHD and would like to bring that to his attention. – A. Lomax
- XII. Motion to adjourn meeting. – A. Harbour
- 2<sup>nd</sup> to back motion - A. Lomax
  - Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Next Meeting: January 21, 2015

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:

*Diana Sanchez*

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