

**KITSAP COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**May 5, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 11:27 a.m.

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Charlotte Garrido moved and Commissioner Josh Brown seconded to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2009, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

After a brief explanation by Dr. Scott Lindquist about the contract on the consent agenda, Mayor Darlene Kordonowy moved and Commissioner Brown seconded to approve the items on the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Lindquist entered a letter from Monte Levine into the record. In the letter, which was addressed to the Board, Mr. Levine tendered his resignation from the Kitsap Tobacco, Alcohol, and Substance Abuse Coalition (KTASC) board. There was no other public comment.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Lindquist brought the Board up-to-date on the most current information about the H1/N1 or Swine flu virus outbreak. There have been no deaths to date in the United States. Today Washington became the thirty-eighth state to have confirmed cases of the H1/N1 virus when nine cases were confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) lab. No cases have been confirmed in Kitsap County. Lindquist explained that the testing process begins when a patient comes to their primary care provider's office with a fever greater than 100 degrees, cough, and/or sore throat. The provider rules out other possible causes for the symptoms at which point the provider may use a rapid test for flu. Providers will then forward a test swab to the state public health lab for patients whose rapid test result was positive for type A influenza.

To date, this H1/N1 flu strain appears to be a mild flu virus similar to the flu virus seen in a regular flu season. In responding to this outbreak, the District's focus has been on general education to the public through meetings, on BKAT television, and using volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps to distribute information to businesses in the community.

In response to questions from the Board, Lindquist reminded the Board of the three interventions for the flu beginning with prevention focused on hand washing, covering your cough, and staying home if you are ill. The second intervention is a flu vaccine targeted to the circulating flu strain. Finally, medical providers can use anti-viral medications for patients who do become ill. The federal government has released supplies of anti-viral medications to local communities, which in Kitsap County will be released to local pharmacies for distribution for providers who are prescribing the medications to patients within the first 48 hours of the onset of illness.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDER REPORTS**

Dr. Lindquist explained to the Board that as part of the discussion that began in the Board Retreat in April regarding the provision of health care in our community, he has asked the

directors of the three primary providers of health care in Kitsap County – Harrison Medical Center, Peninsula Community Health Centers, and Kitsap Mental Health Services – to come to this Board meeting to explain their role in the community as well as outline the impacts of the current financial climate and budget cuts from the legislature on their respective organizations.

Lindquist introduced the first speaker, Ms. Patty Cockrell, Chief Operations Officer for Harrison Medical Center (HMC). Ms. Cockrell explained that HMC has moved to a “hub and spoke” operating model with the hub being the main campus in Bremerton with a campus in Silverdale focused on women’s and children’s care and emergency services; the Port Orchard campus that now offers primary care and twenty-four hour urgent care; the new primary and urgent care center in North Mason County; and the planned opening of a medical oncology center in Poulsbo in July. Cockrell noted that HMC is one of the largest employers in the county with 2,200 employees, licensed for 297 beds. As a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 provider, HMC serves all who come to it for services. She said they are seeing more patients coming to HMC as a provider of last resort because they lack access to other providers or lack insurance. In the last fiscal year, HMC had 17,000 admissions to their facilities; saw 76,336 patients in both ERs; and had 2,100 births. Ms. Cockrell then went on to explain the payor source for the services they provide, overall the largest being Medicare, followed by private insurance and Medicaid. However, in the Emergency Room (ER), the payor source shifts with an increase in patients covered by Medicaid or who are self-pay patients. The concern with the self-pay patients is that they tend to become charity care or bad debts. She noted that last year across Washington, ten percent fewer employers offer health insurance coverage for their employees which have resulted in an increase in uninsured and charity care patients seen. Over the past three years, charity care has increased from \$7 million dollars to \$14 million projected for the current year and that coupled with the increase in bad debt approaches \$30 million per year. In the legislative session which just ended, the percentage of hospital care in the Medicaid program was cut, which will translate into \$3 million per year in reduced reimbursements for services at HMC over the next biennium. In order to remain financially healthy and in response to this and the other impacts already described, HMC has had to reduce expenses and has had to lay off staff. As part of its work to contain costs, Cockrell noted that HMC continues to work with the other providers in the community including Peninsula Community Health Centers and Kitsap Mental Health to provide care in the community.

Dr. Lindquist introduced Ms. Barbara Malich, CEO for Peninsula Community Health Services (PCHC). Ms. Malich began by addressing the impact of the structure of the current healthcare system in the United States and its impact on medical providers such as PCHS. She said at the heart of the debate over healthcare is the question, yet to be resolved, if health insurance is a right or a privilege. She noted that President Barack Obama commented in a recent press conference, of the importance of community health care providers, such as PCHS, as very important as a safety net for the delivery of medical services in this country. In Washington State, Malich said there are 25 community healthcare providers of which PCHS is the community healthcare provider in Kitsap County. These providers are all non-profit 501 (c) 3 organizations. Ms. Malich explained that PCHS is structured by its Board not as a free clinic but provides services on a sliding fee scale based on the federal government’s poverty guidelines. A large percentage of PCHS’ patients are insured through the Medicaid program, so the cuts previously described by Ms. Cockrell will result in a loss of \$1 million in reimbursements out of a budget of \$12 million. Ms. Malich noted that PCHS has three locations including its Poulsbo clinic which has just moved into a spacious new facility. In 2008, PCHS saw 17,465 patients for a total 53,032 medical and dental visits. Thirty percent of PCHS’ patient

population is uninsured, self-pay patients. In addition, PCHS serves many retired military patients because PCHS is one of the few providers in the community that accepts Tricare insurance reimbursements. Ms. Malich closed by encouraging the members of the Board to be active in the debate over healthcare reform.

Mr. Joe Rozak, Executive Director of Kitsap Mental Health Services (KMH), explained that KMH's mission is to provide evidence-based mental health services in Kitsap County. To provide those services, KMH works closely with its other community partners including HMC, PCHS, and the Health District. KMH began in 1978 with 27 employees with a budget of \$1 million. Today KMH employs just fewer than 400 people with a budget of \$21 million and provides care to 5,964 people primarily on Medicaid insurance. KMH works with PCHS to integrate their mental health care with primary care by out-stationing a therapist at PCHS. Rozak noted that over sixty percent of the adults KMH treats also have a co-existing addiction in addition to their mental health disorder, which adds an additional level of complexity to the care that must be provided in order to treat the mental health disorder. Rozak also told the Board about KMH's Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) which is KMH's "hospital without walls" that serves 46 clients that were previously housed at Western State Hospital. Through the PACT program, KMH is able to serve these clients in the community more efficiently and at less cost. Rozak noted that KMH works collaboratively with 40 agencies throughout the County providing a wide range of services including the provision of mental health services at the jail and at Spectrum Alternative School, staffs Teen Screen in the Bainbridge Island School District, and has a liaison therapist stationed at Kitsap Recovery Center. Rozak explained that eighty percent of KMH's funding comes from State Medicaid insurance; the balance comes from private insurance or self-pay. Rozak noted that the full impact of the funding changes in the legislature is yet to be determined but he estimates that it will result in a 9 - 10 percent reduction in funding and reimbursements for each year of the biennium for KMH.

Following Ms. Cockrell's observation that it is National Nurses' Week noting the nurses in attendance in the audience, Mayor Kordonowy moved and Mayor Kathryn Quade seconded to formally recognize the nurses that serve patients in our community night and day, year in and year out, and to thank them for all that they do. The motion passed unanimously.

## ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting was adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

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**Council Member Chris Snow, Vice Chair**  
**Kitsap County Board of Health**

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**Scott W. Lindquist, MD, MPH**  
**Director of Health**

**Board Members Present:** *Commissioner Josh Brown; Commissioner Charlotte Garrido; Mayor Darlene Kordonowy; Mayor Kathryn Quade; Council Member Chris Snow*

**Board Members Absent:** *Commissioner Steve Bauer; Mayor Cary Bozeman; Mayor Lary Coppola; Council Member Dianne Robinson; Council Member Roy Runyon;*

**Staff Present:** Cris Craig, *Program Manager, Health Information Resources*; Scott Daniels, *Deputy Director*; Keith Grellner, *Director, Environmental Health*; Karen Holt, *Personnel Assistant*; Leslie Hopkins, *Special Projects Program Coordinator, Administration*; Scott Lindquist, MD, MPH, *Health Officer*; Amber Mulherin, *Administration*; Maureen Murphy, *Human Resources Manager*; Suzanne Plemmons, *Director, Community Health*; Shelley Rose, *Health Promotion Program & KTASC board member*; Liz Wilhelm, *KTASC Coordinator*

**Public Present:** Patty Cockrell, *Harrison Medical Center*; Minnie Davis, *Olympic College*; Barbara Malich, *Peninsula Community Health Centers*; Joe Rozak, *Kitsap Mental Health*; Yelena Watson, *Olympic College*; Stacy Winters, *Olympic College*