

**Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
Board of Directors Meeting
June 16, 2020**

APPROVED MINUTES

March 24, 2020

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

**Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
2601 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53718**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Dr. Robert Corliss, Vice-Chair Charles Warzecha
Secretary Dr. James Schauer, Jeffery Kindrai, James Morrison,
Dr. Richard Moss, Greg Pils, Steve Geis, Gil Kelley

WSLH STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Dan Kurtycz, Dr. Pete Shult, Dave Webb, Jan Klawitter,
Kristine Hansbery, Allen Benson, David Webb, Cynda
DeMontigny, Kevin Karbowski, Steve Strebels, Camille
Danielson, and Nathaniel Javid

DNR STAFF PRESENT: Zana Sijan, Steve Geis, Greg Pils

GUESTS PRESENT:

Chair Dr. Robert Corliss called the meeting to order at 1:07 P.M.

Item 1. ROLL CALL

Chair Dr. Robert Corliss initiated the roll call of the Board. All Board Member seats or their designated representatives were present. There were no attendees on the public telephone line.

Item 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve the minutes of the December 17, 2019 Board Meeting as submitted. **Chair Dr. Robert Corliss** entertained a motion to approve the minutes, so moved by **Charles Warzecha**. **Jeffery Kindrai** seconded the motion. The voice vote approving the minutes was unanimous.

Item 3. REORGANIZATION OF AGENDA

Dr. James Schauer noted that item twelve will be moved to before item six to ensure quorum participation in the Election of Officers. **Chair Dr. Robert Corliss** entertained a motion to move the Election of Officers before item six. This motion was approved by **Charles Warzecha**, seconded by **Dr. Richard Moss**. The voice vote approving the reorganization of the agenda was unanimous.

Item 4. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

There were no public appearances.

Item 5. BOARD MEMBERS' MATTERS

Jeffery Kindrai deferred his Board Member matter to the COVID-19 update agenda item.

Dr. Robert Corliss noted that we will be moving into closed session at the end of the meeting, noting the language sent in the packet with a motion presented to move into closed session.

Item 12. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (moved after reorganization of agenda)

Chair Dr. Robert Corliss introduced the Election of Officers. Dr. James Schauer instructed the Board to refer to the Board Packet for the details. Dr. Robert Corliss entertained a motion for Charles Warzecha to assume the role of Chair. The motion was seconded by Jeffery Kindrai. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Robert Corliss solicited nominations for Vice-Chair. James Morrison self-nominated. Dr. Robert Corliss entertained a motion for James Morrison to assume the role of Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Jeffery Kindrai. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. James Schauer assumed the role of Board Secretary. The motion was moved by Jeffery Kindrai, seconded by Dr. Robert Corliss. The motion passed unanimously. The Board Elections for the 2020-2021 term were now complete.

Item 6. COVID-19 UPDATES

■ Dr. Pete Shult, WSLH Communicable Disease Division Director

Dr. James Schauer introduced Dr. Pete Shult and thanked the work of Dr. Shult, his staff, and the WSLH for their tremendous efforts in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Shult provided background on the COVID-19 response. Dr. Shult noted we were ready to test the last week of February, and began testing in early March. Our first positive result was recorded on March 9th, and at that time we were already in our modified incident command. By mid-March, our increase in capacity building took place. We went from tens of specimens to hundreds of specimens per day. At this point, the WSLH and City of Milwaukee were the only labs providing testing in the state. We had staff cross-trained and we increased our testing window. We moved to a seven day per week operation the week of March 16th. We are working with WI-DHS regarding messaging and focusing of testing efforts. We have reached our maximum capacity of 400-500 specimens per day. This level of testing is not sustainable indefinitely. We also were able to obtain seven-day complete courier coverage. Lately, testing has gone down to around 200-300 samples per day. The testing window can range from 1-2 to 3-4 days from receipt in the laboratory. We have made the 2-day window 97% of the time. Entering this situation, we were prepared with the equipment and platform. Early on, we identified other options for platforms. This is a complex, multi-step testing process. We predicted disruptions in supply lines. We have produced multiple platforms with their own reagents and

media. We are better prepared with the flexibility we have built in. Staff are highly cross trained in molecular areas. We began to draw outside of virology, adding other microbiology staff into our testing pool. We are in good shape with our analytic staff; however, we needed to increase our pre and post analytic staff capacities and have provided cross-training to staff for helping out in these areas. We are at maximum capacity as far as space, but we are investigating other options. As far as supplies and platforms, we do have a robust inventory system so we are well prepared. Over the last few weeks, we have sent messaging to our Wisconsin Clinical Laboratory Network, and we anticipate some participation from these sources to help out with COVID-19 testing. We are also determining if other high capacity clinical laboratories in Wisconsin are able to help out with testing. We are hoping to have several of these laboratories on-board later this week. We are also investigating the capabilities of smaller laboratories. Dr. Shult noted that we are in constant communication with the Wisconsin Clinical Laboratory Network. We are assisting with the validation of tests so other laboratories can get on board. We anticipate that we need to maintain a significant surge and to be testing in the 400-500 per day range. We know there will be an increase in testing on the deceased, with a presumption that much testing will be sent to the WSLH. High priority specimens will also be sent to the WSLH until local labs can build their testing capabilities.

Dr. Schauer noted that everyone at the WSLH is viewed as an essential employee and we are still operating. We are very concerned about the safety of our workforce, so we have implemented limits for visitors and allowing some staff to work from home. The testing we perform is essential to public health, and as such these activities have continued. Jeffery Kindrai thanked the WSLH for the work they have done. Mr. Kindrai asked about deferred samples and if they will be shipped out to other laboratories. Dr. Shult replied that we have cleared the backlog on our end. We do have an issue to lower priority specimens. These need to be sent to another reference laboratory. Mr. Kindrai also asked about sample acceptability, fee exempt status of the WSLH, and tier patient information sheets. Dr. Shult responded that our website has current information regarding accepted specimens. We are finding avenues to relieve some of the shortages of media. We will not take a dry swab, but there are different options for media and this will be available on our website. Dr. Shult deferred the fee exempt questioning to Chuck Warzecha. Mr. Warzecha noted that the work the WSLH has been doing for years up to this point has made the work with DHS and local laboratories much easier. Mr. Warzecha noted he needed to leave this call but will check in with Mr. Kindrai later. Dr. Shult noted that we need to be aware of fee exempt issues. Mr. Kindrai suggested looking into the possibility of fee exempt testing in the future to help with issues surrounding the form. Ms. Klawitter (WSLH) confirmed the options for samples are available on the WSLH website.

Dr. Moss noted discussions of potential additional testing sites at facilities on University of Wisconsin properties. Dr. Schauer replied that we have had these conversations, although there is enormous concerns with this regarding biosafety as we could not absorb oversight of this testing under our CAP and CLIA licensures. Compliance and liability issues arise with this, and instead there may be alternatives under other CAP or CLIA licenses. WSLH Medical Director, Dr. Dan Kurtycz, noted that having the clinical background to do this is of prime importance, and the effort needed to train would take away from our current testing resources. Progressing step-wise is the best effort. Dr. Schauer reiterated that we appreciate these suggestions, but we cannot jeopardize our compliance activities. Dr. Schauer noted the UW Vet School and CALS have made offers for us to use their equipment and we are working with these units to appropriately do this.

Item 7. PFAS UPDATE

■ David Webb, WSLH Environmental Health Division Director

David Webb provided the PFAS update to the Board. We have been having productive meetings discussing and analyzing our capabilities. We were awarded a medium sized grant to further develop PFAS methods. This will be important as biomonitoring efforts progress. We have also procured resources to measure PFAS in archived samples. We are in the process of increasing staffing for this. Staffing has been complicated due to COVID-19, but we are working on this. Certification is ongoing, and we have been audited by the WI-DNR and we are expecting to receive accreditation for public drinking water. Steve Geis (WI-DNR) noted that we hope to have results from the DNR in the following weeks.

Item 8. FINANCIAL REPORT

■ Kevin Karbowski, Chief Financial Officer, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Mr. Karbowski noted that we have variance of \$201,109 as a loss. Mr. Karbowski noted that this close to our break-even goal, as it is only a variance of 0.7% in our revenue. Mr. Karbowski noted some significant variances to the Board. Part of this is a budgeted fee increase for Newborn Screening cards. We expect to have losses until this goes through. We also budgeted for additional revenue for PFAS activities and we have not seen that revenue yet. We have a positive variance of \$77,820 and this is due to significant activity with the University Health Services. We also have a positive variance of \$180,677 due to an increase in environmental testing.

Mr. Karbowski noted that our working capital went down by \$704,796. This is due in part by our net loss and an increase in our operating contingency (a sixty day requirement to hold assets based on our revenue). A \$300,000 purchase of equipment has also contributed to this number but we have anticipated this.

Mr. Karbowski presented a graph of our contracting activities, which have increased, although they are mostly state contracts. Most contracts are with DHS, with the remaining with Kairos Power, the Department of Justice, and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL). The total dollars in contracts for this period is \$4,254,978.

Item 9. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

■ Kevin Karbowski, Chief Financial Officer, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Mr. Karbowski went over the Strategic Plan Update with the Board. Mr. Karbowski focused on the eleven priorities. For advancing the public health mission, we have completed the project and integrated this on-going approach to projects in day-to-day operations. Our assessment of Master's Degree for Cytotechnology is complete and we will analyze this over the summer. Bioinformatics, Clinical Biomonitoring, and the Cytogenetics Business Plan are complete but we will continue monitoring these. We are working on the eBusiness Web Portal and are reviewing a proposal to outsource web activities. For expansion of LIMS, we are upgrading all three LIMS

systems at the WSLH. For Outreach, we are continuing to implement new areas of focus and new outreach efforts. We have added Sensors capabilities and are currently working with the UW on an architectural engineering project regarding space. Mr. Karbowski noted that this is the second year of the three year planning cycle.

Item 10. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

■ **Cynda DeMontigny, Human Resources Director, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene**

Dr. James Schauer provided the HR report on Ms. DeMontigny's behalf. For the period of December 10- March 10, 2020 we had ten recruitments including one in DPD, seven in EHD, none in LID, two in CDD, none in Administration, and none in the OHD. As far as staff turnaround for the same time period, we had one retirement in EHD and Administration, one resignation in EHD, OHD, and Administration, and two resignations in CDD. For hires, we had two in DPD and CDD, none in LID, three in EHD and Administration and none in OHD.

Item 11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

■ **Dr. James Schauer, Director, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene**

Dr. Schauer introduced Ms. Klawitter to the Board to provide the Public Relations Report. Ms. Klawitter noted the following events that were in the Board Packet: WSLH Laboratory Improvement Division/WSLH Proficiency Testing Director Kristine Hansbery attended the Laboratory Director's Summit in Lake Las Vegas, NV, sponsored by the Medical Laboratory Observer (MLO). WSLH Communicable Disease Division scientists recently published two journal articles on their respiratory virus research. The WSLH Laboratory Improvement Division/WSLH Proficiency Testing was inspected November 5-6, 2019, by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) and received recertification to provide proficiency testing materials to CAP-licensed laboratories. In other news, Forensic Toxicology Director Amy Miles is a member of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) Opioids Biosurveillance Task Force and attended the annual in-person meeting. WSLH Medical Director and UW Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Dr. Daniel Kurtycz presented at the Intersociety Pathology Council for the American Society of Cytopathology at the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology in Los Angeles. Forensic Toxicology Director Amy Miles moderated an evening session during the annual AAFS meeting. Lastly, The UW Cytotechnology Certificate Program (which is housed at the WSLH) held its inaugural Advisory Board Meeting, incorporating members from government, the private sector, students and Program and WSLH staff.

Dr. Schauer introduced Mr. David Webb to present the Water System Boil Notice Report. There were no boil notices for this period.

Dr. Schauer asked Dr. Pete Shult to provide the influenza update. Dr. Shult noted that we are still performing flu surveillance. We are coming off the third severe but different influenza season. While we are past peak of the season, influenza is still circulating at a high level. Many pathogens present as an influenza-like illness including COVID-19 which complicates matters. Dr. Shult noted the importance of looking at ILI as a monitor. Influenza is still a significant pathogen although it has taken a back seat to COVID-19. We are continuing to monitor

influenza particularly when we are doing diagnostics in our most vulnerable populations. If it is not COVID-19, it is still useful to know what the pathogen is.

Dr. Schauer introduced Camille Danielson from the WSLH Environmental Health Division to present on the WSLH Accreditation Streamlining Plan. Ms. Danielson is Co-Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee at the WSLH. We are looking at streamlining our NELAP Accreditation for the environmental side of our testing. Laboratory certifications are required by law for particular testing with the EPA, DNR, and DATCP. The EPA improved their certification program and now certifies and audits the WSLH directly. Previously, the EPA accepted NELAP certification in lieu of their own full audit. We are reviewing accreditation in EHD sections including organic, inorganic, radiochemistry, microbiology and environmental toxicology. Sections plan to withdraw NELAP certification for methods where they already have EPA, DATCP and/or DNR certification. These redundant NELAP certifications cost significant staff time. As such, we wanted to focus on more legally binding certifications and each EHD section has determined which NELAP parameters will be withdrawn and we have contacted our stakeholders and no concerns have been expressed about this.

Ms. Danielson reviewed the planned withdrawal from NELAP with the Board, noting that a detailed table of methods, parameters, and certifications are available. The WSLH Environmental Health Division will still maintain NELAP certification for a variety of parameters but with a reduced scope. This change will save significant staff time, save over \$5,000 per year on fees, and allow us to focus on the legally required accreditations. We plan to make these changes effective summer 2020.

Dr. Schauer noted the WSLH Board open seats and mentioned that we have been contacted by the Governor's Board Appointment Office. We plan to follow up on this in the future and typically we would provide recommendations to the Governor. There is interest in having these positions filled and we will move forward with this.

Chair Dr. Robert Corliss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 P.M. **Dr. Richard Moss** accepted the motion and **James Morrison** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

The WSLH Board Members then moved into **Closed Session**.

Respectfully submitted by:



James J. Schauer, PhD, P.E., M.B.A.
Secretary, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene Board of Directors