

**Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
Board of Directors Meeting
September 21, 2021**

**APPROVED MINUTES
June 22, 2021
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
2601 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53718**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair James Morrison, Vice-Chair Greg Pils, Secretary Dr. James Schauer, Dr. German Gonzalez, Dr. Richard Moss, Barry Irmen, Greg Pils, Gil Kelley, Jeffery Kindrai

WSLH STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Karbowski, Allen Benson, David Webb, Jan Klawitter, Dr. Errin Rider, James Sterk, Amy Miles, Dr. Kaitlin Sundling, Dr. Kelsey Florek, Noel Stanton, Kris Hansbery, and Nathaniel Javid

DNR STAFF PRESENT: Zana Sijan, Steve Geis

GUESTS PRESENT: Dr. Keith Poulsen

Chair James Morrison made a motion to call the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. Dr. Richard Moss seconded the motion. The meeting commenced at 1:00 P.M.

Item 1. ROLL CALL

Chair James Morrison initiated the roll call of the Board. Nathaniel Javid conducted the roll call of the Board members. All Board Member seats or their designated representatives were present except Gina Green-Harris, Dr. Robert Corliss, and Charles Warzecha. There were no attendees on the public telephone line.

Item 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve the minutes of the March 23, 2021 Board Meeting as submitted. **Greg Pils** entertained a motion to approve the minutes. **Dr. Richard Moss** seconded the motion. The voice vote approving the minutes was unanimous.

Item 3. REORGANIZATION OF AGENDA

There was no request to reorganize the agenda.

Item 4. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Keith Poulsen from the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

Item 5. BOARD MEMBERS' MATTERS

There were no board member matters.

Item 6. BARRY IRMEN WSLH BOARD RETIREMENT

Chair James Morrison noted that Barry Irmen is retiring from serving on the Board of Directors after 17 years of service as a Dane County Medical Examiner. Mr. Morrison thanked Mr. Irmen for his service to the Board, and the people of Wisconsin. Mr. Irmen thanked the Board, Dr. Schauer, and the experts at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) along with the service the WSLH has provided to the Coroners and Medical Examiners. Dr. Schauer thanked Mr. Irmen for his kind words and service.

Item 7. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Dr. James Schauer highlighted the strategic initiatives for the Board including the new initiative of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which is an important issue for public health, society, and UW-Madison. Dr. Schauer provided a brief overview of each initiative including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Outreach, Advancing the Public Health Mission of UW SMPH, Bioinformatics, Clinical Biomonitoring, Point of Care Testing, Scientific Investment, Modernization of LIMS, eGovernment, and Space Optimization. Diversity, Inclusion and Equity (DEI) will be led by WSLH Clinical Laboratory Director, Dr. Errin Rider. Since this is a new initiative, Year 1 goals and outcomes include providing formal DEI training for WSLH staff, performing an assessment of the laboratory environment, culture, and current practice, and engaging with the Association of Public Health Laboratories and University of Wisconsin-Madison DEI efforts. Also, WSLH leadership will continue to participate in DEI training and educational opportunities. Outreach will be led by Public Relations Manager, Jan Klawitter. The implementation strategy for Outreach will depend on the results of internal and external stakeholder input. Based on initial feedback to date, activities may include: training and educational videos, tutorials, and resources on the WSLH website, additional communication tools and resources, and expanded external stakeholder meetings, event outreach, and the WSLH Speakers Bureau. The Advancing the Public Health Mission initiative is led by WSLH Newborn Screening Co-Director, Dr. Mei Baker. The implementation strategy for this will focus on enhancing established partnerships and developing new partnerships between the WSLH and academic departments in SMPH. These including WSLH providing research seminars for SMPH, WSLH initiating research programs or services relevant to SPMH missions, WSLH faculty and staff strategically pursuing teaching opportunities in SMPH, and strategic hires for faculty with joint appointments at the WSLH and in SMPH departments. Bioinformatics will be led by Dr. Kelsey Florek with a

capacity building focus on development of computer infrastructure to meet the demands of data analysis, developing a skilled workforce capable of designing and running bioinformatics strategies, and building an integrated data storage system. The Clinical Biomonitoring initiative is led by Noel Stanton. Implementation will focus on maintaining and expanding partnerships with entities supporting and engaging in biomonitoring activities, along with the expansion of testing capability. Important partners include but are not limited to: the National Biomonitoring Network, Society of Forensic Toxicologists, and the Lab Response Network, public health surveillance and research programs, population health, environmental toxicology, occupational medicine and other researchers. The Point of Care Testing (POCT) initiative is led by Laboratory Improvement Division Director, Kris Hansbery. The WSLH can potentially fill several roles relating to this testing evolution including the provision of proficiency testing or characterized samples to help assure result reliability, delivery of training for users and serving as an objective technical resource for users. Also maintenance and loaning of field equipment for use by public health, safety, and natural resource partners. The Scientific Investment initiative is led by Dr. Mei Baker. WSLH Administration, Faculty and Research staff will work together to develop the programs for scientific investment. The WSLH Faculty and Scientist Committee will help direct these programs and help identify additional opportunities to advance scientific leadership within and across all WSLH divisions. The Modernization of LIMS strategic initiative is led by Office of Information Services (OIS) director, Allen Benson. The background and rationale for this is that LIMS software is critical to the successful recording and distribution of lab results within and outside of the lab. The following steps have been taken to ensure OIS can support and enhance the LIMS environment at the WSLH: Using open positions, OIS has created a team focused on supporting the various lab's configuration and usage needs of WSLH software systems (including LIMS). This has helped WSLH to share technical expertise, methods, and training across labs. OIS is developing improved support models for LIMS and LIMS admins. Mr. Benson also leads the eGovernment strategic initiative. Some ongoing efforts for this include configuring and rolling out LIMS Outreach features, building and enhancing data sharing interfaces with other government agencies, and building and enhancing data sharing interfaces with client organizations; for example, electronic lab report, web lab report, and electronic test orders and results. The last strategic initiative, Space, is led by WSLH Environmental Health Division Director, David Webb. Some existing and future needs include maintaining existing space to acceptable and high-quality standards, identifying new space to expand into or move a program or department or division to relieve existing pressure such that space constraints do not hinder capability and capacity and increasing the extent to which the WSLH controls its space for cost, sustainability, backup and emergency needs.

After presenting the initiatives, Dr. Schauer noted that he will leave this up to the Board for their endorsement. Chair Jim Morrison said he is supportive of this strategic plan. **Jeffrey Kindrai** entertained a motion that he is OK with moving forward. **Dr. Richard Moss** seconded the motion. The strategic plan was approved by the Board. Dr. Schauer thanked the Board for their input and noted that the WSLH will keep the Board informed on the progress of the Strategic Plan.

Item 8. FINANCIAL REPORT

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

Mr. Karbowski reviewed the Statement of Income for the period of July 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021 with the Board. He noted that we have a \$211,341 budgeted loss, with a year-to-date actual loss of \$810, 870. This significant difference is due in large part to inflation on supplies costs from COVID. Also, although we increased testing in some areas due to the pandemic, we also experienced areas of the lab with decreased testing. We also have not had a newborn screening card increase in more than eleven years. All of these factors combined explain the difference between the actual year-to-date loss and budgeted year-to-date loss. Mr. Karbowski had the Board refer to the packet for more details on the income statement. Next, Mr. Karbowski presented the working capital to the Board. Our working capital has decreased by \$2,142, 587 since June 30, 2020. Since our revenue has gone up, our operating contingency has also gone up. Of the \$2, 142, 587, we have a \$440, 103 increase in the reserve we need to hold, giving us a total working capital decrease of \$1,702, 484. About 82% of this decrease is due to the newborn screening card expenses and essential newborn screening equipment purchases needed to maintain program accreditation. The remaining decrease is due to various gains and losses. Mr. Kindrai asked Mr. Karbowski if these equipment purchases are planned or unanticipated. Mr. Karbowski responded that these were planned and Dr. Schauer noted that we also will need to replace equipment once a vendor stops supporting it in order to maintain accreditation.

Item 9. CONTRACTS REPORT

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

Mr. Karbowski provided the contracts summary since the last Board Meeting. The total amount of contracts signed over the last three months is \$1,603,002 in additional work, all with the WI Department of Health Services. Mr. Karbowski had the Board refer to the packet for additional details.

Item 10. FY22 BUDGET APPROVAL

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

Dr. Schauer noted that although the losses are higher this year than we want, they are still within reason within the context of the pandemic and our \$60M per year budget. We have the reserves to cover this, but also want to make sure we are not depleting the reserves as we need this as part of our investment. This feeds into our plans for the FY22 budget. Mr. Karbowski presented the budget on both an accrual and cash basis. This year's budget presented a number of challenges with trying to break even. In this budget, we've assumed that our prices for supplies have not decreased. Proposed salary increases are also not reflected in this budget. We are expecting to ask the Board for a 4-6% price increase to help cover costs. Mr.

Karbowski noted that we do not want to ask for more than we need, so we are not planning to ask for a price increase at this time. Dr. Schauer noted the growth of our lab in recent years with the volume of work with our revenues and expenses. We hope to grow even more next year. The loss from a cash point of view is pretty small relative to a \$60M budget. On an accrual basis, we have a loss of \$624,669 and on a cash basis we have a loss of \$108,710. Chair James Morrison noted that the price increase in newborn screening appears well justified. Chair James Morrison entertained a motion to approve the budget as presented, so moved by Jeffery Kindrai. German Gonzalez seconded the motion. The FY22 WSLH Budget was accepted by the Board.

Item 11. HR UPDATE

■ Cynda DeMontigny, HR Director, WSLH

Ms. DeMontigny provided the HR update to the Board. We had nineteen recruitments from the period of March 18 to June 11, 2021. There were four recruitments in both our Disease Prevention Division and Administration, five recruitments in both our Environmental Health Division and Communicable Disease Division, one recruitment in our Laboratory Improvement Division, and none in our Occupational Health Division. Ms. DeMontigny noted the hires, resignations, and retirements for this period as well. Overall, there were 24 hires, 7 resignations, and 4 retirements.

Item 12. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

■ Dr. Jamie Schauer, Director, WSLH

Dr. Allen Bateman, WSLH Communicable Disease Division Director, presented on COVID-19 testing and sequencing trends. Dr. Bateman presented graphs on new reported cases by day, hospitalizations, tests by day, and new reported deaths by day in the U.S. Dr. Bateman also presented data on new confirmed cases and percent positive by test cases in Wisconsin. Overall, we are at some of the lowest rates we've seen since March 2020. Dr. Bateman next reviewed some technologies for whole genome sequencing including MiSeq, MinION, NextSeq, and GridION. Dr. Bateman reviewed some of the applications of whole genome sequencing including tracking transmission, estimating the reproductive number, estimating the prevalence of infection, answering questions about individual use cases, tracking mutations, and detection of novel variants of concern. Dr. Bateman noted the work of WSLH Bioinformatician, Dr. Kelsey Florek in developing the Wisconsin SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Dashboard, which contains statewide variant information. Dr. Bateman included graphs on total sequences by county and time period. Also, Dr. Bateman presented a graph on the proportion of sequenced strains that are variants over time by sample collection date. Last, Dr. Bateman reviewed the national roles of WSLH CDD in SARS-CoV-2 testing and whole genome sequencing.

WSLH Assistant Director and Environmental Health Division Director, David Webb, provided an update on PFAS Testing and a summer workshop. Mr. Webb noted overall interest in PFAS continues to increase. The matrices that have become of interest lately are in serum, fish, water and air. We have developed and validated a method for PFAS in serum. This will hopefully give us a pretty good representation of PFAS in Wisconsin. There is a lot of federal interest in

monitoring for PFAS. Part of the challenges in monitoring PFAS is developing the methods and matrices and examining new approaches. We are looking at new ways for measuring PFAS -- as there is so much interest -- but it is an expensive and complicated test. Pre-COVID, we planned to have a workshop about PFAS. Now, we are thinking again about having a WI based and research focused workshop led by the UW Aquatic Sciences Center to analyze data gaps and come up with a research agenda and address exposure, toxicology and measurement.

Next, Mr. Webb presented on space. We are experiencing a lot of growth and expansion in the lab. Examples of this include sequencing, surveillance, PFAS, Forensic Toxicology, the Soils Lab, and COVID in wastewater. We are looking at renovating, building, and leasing options and are seeing what we can do to make better use of our space in Stovall as parts of Stovall vacated over the years when labs moved to Ag Drive. There are a number of joint efforts with our state and UW partners and colleagues in figuring out how to make good use of existing resources and possible new ones.

Mr. Webb presented an update on the soils lab at the WSLH. This has been a great partnership and team effort with the UW College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Lab is currently in Marshfield, but we hope to occupy the Madison lab space in late September (Hill Farms). The Director has been hired and one chemist position is posted. Starting July 1st, the soils lab will be operating under the WSLH but it is currently still in Marshfield, WI. During the transition from Marshfield to Madison, we hope to minimize closure. Once the lab is operating and stabilized, we can discuss future services, innovation and agency partnerships.

Allen Benson, WSLH Office of Information Systems Director, presented to the Board on the relocation of WSLH servers to an off-site location, OneNeck Data Center. OneNeck is a DoIT leased and managed space. For this facility, the WSLH would be billed by UW Madison monthly (DoIT). This is a well-planned approach for tying us into DoIT along with providing us cost savings. This includes many benefits including fully redundant power and network provided, no locally hosted data center for much better flexibility, reduction in capital for data center components, 24X7 support provided by OneNeck, expandable service as needed, and a secure facility with limited and controlled access to our equipment.

Dave Webb presented the water systems boil notice to the Board. There was one boil notice for Marinette County.

Jan Klawitter, WSLH Public Relations Manager, presented the WSLH recent events to the Board. These include the announcement of Dr. Heather Barkholtz joining the WSLH and the UW School of Pharmacy and Dr. Alana Sterkel as the new WSLH Communicable Disease Division Associate Director. Ms. Klawitter also highlighted events such as the virtual National Violent Death Report Systems meetings with US Congress members, the Wisconsin SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Dashboard, and the National Atmospheric Deposition Program Spring 2021 virtual meeting. Ms. Klawitter noted Emeritus WSLH Director Dr. Peter Shult received the APHL Lifetime Achievement Award. In early June, the DNR issued new advisories for PFAS fish consumption for the Yahara chain of lakes and waterways. This was very much a team effort between the WSLH and the DNR. Ms. Klawitter had the Board refer to the Board packet for more details.

Chair James Morrison made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 P.M. **Jeffery Kindrai** accepted the motion and **Barry Irmen** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James J. Schauer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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