

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

CITY OF AMARILLO

On the 10th day of January, 2012 the Amarillo Bi-City-County Public Health district Board met for a quarterly board meeting in the City of Amarillo, Department of Public Health conference room located at 1000 Martin Rd., Amarillo, Texas, with the following members present:

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Kenneth Crossland, DDS Chair, City of Canyon	Y	188	164
J. Taylor Carlisle, MD Potter County	N	84	27
Delores Thompson Potter County	N	12	08
Judy Smith Randall County	Y	62	50
Lanita Tidmore Randall County	Y	23	22
Belinda Gonzales Taylor City of Amarillo	Y	26	19
Kevin Hawkins Vice Chair City of Amarillo	Y	38	35

Administrative Officers Present:

Dr. Matt Richardson	Director, Public Health, City of Amarillo
Dr. Roger Smalligan	Health Authority, Public Health, City of Amarillo
David Chamberlain	Nutritionist III, WIC, City of Amarillo
Deree Duke	Director, Environmental Health, City of Amarillo
Shannon Barlow	Asst. Director, Animal Control, City of Amarillo

Others Present:

Rhonda Ramirez	Recording Secretary, Public Health, City of Amarillo
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Guests Present:

Alan Abraham	League of Women Voters
Robin Cupell	Texas Panhandle Pet Savers

Item 1: Chairman Dr. Crossland opened the meeting at 7:00pm, established a quorum, and conducted the consideration of the following items in the order presented.

Item 2: Dr. Crossland-Introduction of Members and Guests. Present were Alan Abraham representing the League of Women Voters and Robin Cupell representing Texas Panhandle Pet Savers.

Item 3: Approval of the November 8th, 2011 minutes

Dr. Crossland made a motion to approve the November 8th, 2011 minutes. There were no objections and the minutes were approved as written.

Item 4: Administrative Reports

Animal Control

Shannon Barlow rounded out the year of rabies cases at 65 for 2011 which is slightly higher than last year.

Environmental Health

Deree Duke reported that there has been an increase in bed bug complaints, primarily in motels. Complaints have been regarding bed bugs in apartments as well but Ms. Duke said they cannot investigate those. Question was asked how to get rid of bed bugs. Ms. Duke responded it is complicated, and that the bugs are becoming somewhat resistant to the pesticides. She said you can wrap in plastic and freeze or heat anything that has upholstery in it then spray with pesticides.

Health Authority

Dr. Roger Smalligan said they have their finger on the pulse of the flu. So far it is very still and typically hits in the first week of February. He stated he receives reports every week as the different doctor's offices and hospitals call in their reports to the Health Department (HD). The HD then sends him a summary of how many Flu A, B, and influenza like illnesses (ILI) have been reported in the emergency rooms and how many people have been hospitalized. He stated that for now it is running really low numbers. Dr. Smalligan again encourages everyone to get a flu shot and believes there has been very good publicity regarding the vaccine.

Dr. Smalligan also talked about tuberculosis (TB). He says the state is coming out with some alternative ways to look at Latent TB Infection (LTBI) treatment. The treatment would be shorter but directly observed. It will be considered more of an option than mandatory. Latent TB is when a patient has a positive TB skin test with no symptoms and a negative chest x-ray. This indicates the TB is dormant or sleeping and the goal is to keep it from waking up and making the patient sick. Dr. Smalligan said the conversion rate of untreated patients is 2-10%. The people who are most likely to turn from LTBI into active cases are those who are recent converters. Dr. Crossland asked who he recommends receives TB testing. Dr. Smalligan answered anyone entering a long term care facility or close quarter facilities such as prisons, nursing homes, etc.

Dr. Smalligan also informed the board that there is a new Texas state law requiring any student who is returning to college to receive the Meningitis vaccine (MCV4). He states he is not personally pleased with the decision because guidelines from Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and any scientific journal recommend the vaccine for those who are going to live in close quarters such as dormitories. The new law is bringing a hardship to many students in our area as the vaccine is not cheap at \$150-\$200 per dose. The HD had a small supply of the vaccine but is now out. Dr. Smalligan said it is causing some students to put school on hold because of cost.

Public Health

Administration:

Dr. Matt Richardson says he continues to talk about accreditation efforts and will be pursuing it. It is a slow process. The advocacy for increased funding from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is still active.

Refugee Services:

Dr. Richardson states the arrivals of refugees during the holidays slows down. He anticipates an increase in arrivals in the spring and screening efforts will be increased. He also states the TB morbidity, or illness related to recent primary refugees coming to Amarillo, continues to burden and is largely the LTBI. He is still concerned about TB monies being threatened.

Immunizations:

Dr. Richardson repeats what Dr. Smalligan said previously regarding the Meningitis vaccine. As a Public Health practitioner, Dr. Richardson states the HD is all about prevention. He says the problem with the mandate is the unintended consequences, we are not going to prevent a lot of disease from the new law change but the burden on the student and the institutions is pretty high. He anticipates the legislature will reverse the decision in 2013. He stated he testified to the Senate Public Health Committee and urged them not to cut immunization dollars but they did. After the cut, the state passed the MCV4 law. Public Health now has much less vaccine because the adult safety net was eliminated and the adult safety net is the program that covered the high-risk students or people who are under-insured. Dr. Crossland asked if there is enough vaccine available. Dr. Richardson said there is not a shortage of vaccine, just dollars to purchase it. The question was also asked why Meningitis is targeted. He responded that it is the bacterial meningitis that is deadly and typically happens in adolescent to mid-20's. He states that college students are notorious and it is a rapidly spreading infection from the oral route and it is fatal within 24-48 hours. If the patient survives they can have serious neurological consequences.

HIV/STD:

Dr. Richardson announces that the HD has a new nurse. The city commission approved a grant allowing a bit more funding than last year. He also announced that the HD is going to work on clinical services. The clinic does same day appointments right now for STD. The HD is going to implement a fast-track system for walk-in patients.

Communicable Diseases:

Dr. Richardson said flu season is upon us. The HD is seeing 4-6 influenza A's. That will go up into the hundreds soon. He reminded the board that 40,000 people per year die from the flu. He states it is a vaccine preventable disease. There are increased TB investigations and will be hiring another staff member.

TB:

Dr. Richardson said he is still pursuing additional dollars for the TB program.

Public Health Preparedness:

Dr. Richardson reported that he hopes to do a Syndromic Surveillance show-and-tell at the next meeting. He also announced they are going to do a capability based and a risk based funding formula that should start in July. He does not know how that will look for Amarillo or Texas. He said Texas usually gets about \$40 million dollars a year from the feds and we get about \$260,000 here in Amarillo for Public Health Preparedness. He also announced some new efforts in Medical Reserve Corp. (MRC) recruiting and we also have new tools for volunteer management. He also stated they can now text and activate MRC volunteers in emergency due to smart phones. The question was asked how someone volunteers. Dr. Richardson said they typically focus on medical professionals because they credential easily and they come with an assumed skill set. To do that, they are approaching the nursing association and medical association chapters in Amarillo for potential volunteers. He said they plan, for March 1, 2012, a recruiting effort where they will offer CEU's for some disaster preparedness training.

WIC

David Chamberlain stated WIC October numbers were ok at 8142 but in November they dropped to 8109 and in December dropped again to 8040 due to holidays.

Item 5: Public Comments

Dr. Crossland reminded the board and guests that the Texas Open Meetings Act prohibits the board from discussing any item in a meeting unless it has been announced 72 hours ahead of time. The board can listen to issues but cannot make a decision.

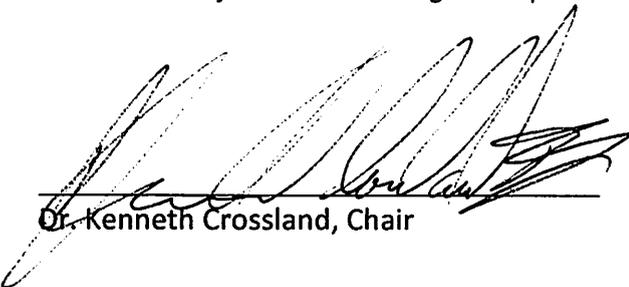
Robin Cupell stated she is with the Texas Panhandle Pet Savers (TPPS) which is a 501(C)3 non-profit pet rescue group. She states they have been working closely with Animal Control to reduce euthanasia rates. Ms. Cupell said one animal that falls in the category of those they are trying to save is the feral cat. She states the group believes

there could be a large impact in the overall euthanasia rate of feral cats. The group believes the most effective and humane way to control a group of free-roaming cats in the community is by implementing a trap-neuter-release (TNR) program. She says TPPS is interested in setting up such programs and applying for grants that will enable them to take on a large scale feral cat solution in the community. Ms. Cupell states TNR is conducted by a group of volunteers who trap wild cats and take them to be vaccinated and spayed or neutered. The veterinarian then tips the left ear of the cat so they can be easily recognized as a neutered animal. The cat is then returned to the area it came from. Ms. Cupell said the cats are not removed and euthanized because it does not reduce the number of cats in a colony over time like TNR does. She states that removing cats from an area creates what is referred to as a vacuum effect. When cats are removed from an area the resources still exist to support cats there and more cats will then move into that space, producing a never ending cycle. If a cat is neutered and returned to an environment it serves as a "place holder" not allowing other cats to take over that area. Ms. Cupell states that TPPS feels like a comprehensive TNR program can benefit the cats and people of the community. The group understands that many people do not want cats on their property and states that most complaints can be addressed by neutering the cats. She states that neutered cats don't fight with each other and do not exhibit the annoying mating behaviors that most complaints are about. She states that there are also simple ways to keep cats out of gardens and porch areas that do not involve trapping. TPPS in prepared to educate the public who may have questions and concerns about free roaming cats in their neighborhood. TPPS hopes to take on this project in a very positive way for the community and Animal Control. The group believes this program could free up resources for Animal Control that can then be used in other areas. Ms. Cupell talked about the public risks associated with the TNR program. She states the one that comes up most often is rabies. She states that the last documented case of a human contracting rabies from a cat was in 1975. She said it is not common. She states there is not a lot of handling of the animals. They are trapped, taken in and gassed by the vet, and are spayed or neutered, then once awake are released back into the environment they came from. She states the cats do not tend to seek out interaction with people and tend to avoid people. She states the risk of being bitten by a feral cat is very low and there is not documented case of a colony care giver contracting rabies from the cats. The group does not feel that rabies is a huge concern. She stated they also will be vaccinated for rabies and the argument would be that they are actually helping with controlling rabies in the area. Ms. Cupell stated that the vaccine lasts up to three years for rabies and the average expected life span of a feral cat is three years. Ms. Cupell provided hand outs to the board regarding TNR programs and different diseases that are in question and how the program can combat those risks. She also stated that the issue of leaving food out for animals would be a public health risk. She said that the colonies they have worked with in the past, the food is left out for about 20 minutes per day and then retrieved by the colony manager.

Dr. Crossland then asked Robin Cupell if she had a request of the board. Ms. Cupell stated TPPS wants to hear any concerns they can address prior to implementing the programs. She states that TPPS wants to be very prepared before jumping in a project like TNR. They also would like to hear any other area of concerns such as pet limit laws or leash laws in the community. She asked that the board put questions and concerns about the TNR program on the next Board of Health agenda. Dr. Crossland stated he had no objection to placing the item on the next agenda with a time limit of 30 minutes. No objections from the board.

Item 6: Adjournment

Dr. Crossland set the next meeting for April 3rd, 2012 at 7p.m. at the Public Health Department Conference Room. Dr. Crossland adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.


Dr. Kenneth Crossland, Chair


Rhonda Ramirez, Recording Secretary