

# Health & Human Services Transcript 5-4-2022

## **SPEAKERS**

John Lant, Diana Edwards, Phil Barrett, Daniel Kuhles, Michael Prezioso, Several Supervisors, Eric Butler, Tom Wood

### **Phil Barrett**

Welcome to the May 4th Health & Human Services Committee of Saratoga County. Attendance has been taken. I'll entertain a motion to approve the minutes of April 6.

### **John Lant**

I'll make that motion.

### **Eric Butler**

I'll second.

### **Phil Barrett**

Second by Supervisor Butler. Discussion. All in favor?

### **Several Supervisors**

Aye.

### **Phil Barrett**

Opposed? Motion carries. All right, first up, Dr. Kuhles. Number three on the agenda. Are you doing?

### **Daniel Kuhles**

How is everybody?

### **Phil Barrett**

Good.

### **Daniel Kuhles**

All right. So thank you. The first item on the agenda is a request to accept a little over \$26,000 in funding from the State Health Department. This is our ongoing public health emergency preparedness grant. The subtext of this is that the state received more money from CDC and has passed this along to the Local Health Departments. One component is just a base that everyone, every county gets. And the second is a component called City readiness initiative, which is a federal program across the country for larger urban areas to help with medical countermeasure jargon for vaccines or antibiotics, distribution, dispensing those types of things. So it's really just being passed along to the local health departments.

**Phil Barrett**

Okay. Very good. All entertain a motion to accept that funding.

**John Lant**

I'll make that motion.

**Phil Barrett**

Mr. Lant.

**Diana Edwards**

I'll second.

**Phil Barrett**

Very good. Thank you. Discussion. Question. All in favor?

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Phil Barrett**

Motion carries. Okay, number four, Doc?

**Daniel Kuhles**

Thank you. This is a request to accept \$75,000 from NACCHO, and the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to the Federal Government for our Medical Reserve Corps. It's a was a competitive grant to respond, innovate, sustain, and equip, RISE to help bolster our Medical Reserve Corps. These are sometimes retired, sometimes not retired, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals that were so so valuable to us during our vaccination campaign, particularly in January when vaccines first came online, and we were trying to get the seniors done as quickly as possible. And this will enhance their working with us there'll be, we propose communication equipment, walkie talkies, training all of those sorts of infrastructure purchases and I credit Laurie Proc, who is our Preparedness Leader at the at the Health Department for going out finding this opportunity and successfully bringing these funds to Saratoga County for our MRC.

**Phil Barrett**

Good, I'll entertain a motion to accept that funding.

**Eric Butler**

I'll make that.

**Tom Wood**

Second. Supervisor Wood.

**Phil Barrett**

Mr. Butler, Mr. Wood? Discussion? All in favor?

## **Several Supervisors**

Aye.

### **Phil Barrett**

Opposed, motion carries. Doc. if you could give us an update as to the current situation with COVID cases. We sent out a press release in recent weeks that I know Chris and yourself worked hard on, we appreciate that. It was a good reminder, we wanted to remind everybody that as cases were rising, and there was a lot of publicity around that fact, it was it was a good opportunity to remind everybody that one Saratoga County has not stopped vaccination clinics of all types. And we've continued to offer those clinics right on through right through to this week. Every week, there's a clinic and the testing, we did close the Testing Center at Exit 12 which turned out to be incredibly well timed. When we opened that, thanks to your guidance, the testing site at Exit 12, very convenient location, that was open prior to when the last real surge of COVID occurred. So having that resource at Exit 12 in the county was incredibly important. But as cases dwindled and demand dropped off the Exit 12 locations closed, the testing was moved to the Public Safety Building. So, so if you could just give us a general update on the current situation as far as cases compared to maybe where we were two weeks ago.

### **Daniel Kuhles**

Yeah, thank you, Chairman. And so cases are increased, really across the state. The genesis of this is as the technical term sub variants of Omicron that was initially identified in central New York, but 25% more transmissible than they already are more transmissible. Omicron. And what you saw on the map, if you will, as we were plotting cases, was really spread again from the Syracuse area, north and south into the southern tier, and then out east and east and west. And so that's what the, you know, we've identified that with Wadsworth Center, at the at the State Health Department, and that's really what's driving the increase. In cases. Hospitalizations certainly are up a bit. You stayed, they generally lag behind cases. But it's a different level than what we faced in the past. And I think importantly, a couple points, as he pointed out, that deaths are not rising. And we have the tools, right, even though we're at a high community level of COVID, we have the tools to deal with us. And that's what we tried to emphasize in our press release and at our Public Health Advisory in our communication to the health care providers. And we're putting a lot of emphasis on access to treatment. Oral antivirals can be very powerful when initiated after the onset of symptoms within five days. So we've done a great deal of outreach to the providers, even today, we did another advisory to providers on oral antivirals, particularly when (inaudible). So cases are up the COVID level is, is at a high level, we expect it's receding a bit on Saturday, or we may have one maybe two more weeks. You know, you can't predict COVID.

### **Phil Barrett**

Yeah that's for sure.

### **Daniel Kuhles**

So I don't want it but if it follows that pattern, like it is in central New York, then it will likely recede. But again, the tools that we know about vaccination, masking, oral antivirals, those things can, people can take actions to protect themselves and their loved ones.

**Phil Barrett**

Okay, yeah, cuz we had given out many, many, hundreds had to be several 100, maybe 1000 test kits out of my office. And then that was over a period of several weeks. And then we went about a month and maybe five people came in, but last couple of weeks, we've had more demand again, so. So you know, I just wanted to stress in an interview that I did that there are resources available. If you need masks, if you need test kits, call your local Supervisor or Mayor, if you if you want testing, if you want vaccines, they're available every week. So that's it's all still out there and available. So anything else that we should be updated on just about the COVID situation at this point?

**Daniel Kuhles**

Well, you know, I guess the only other thing that I would add is that national and international public health leaders and clinicians are beginning discussions about what the in the northern hemisphere in the fall will look like whether there's going to be a, you know, in layman's terms or reformulated vaccine, and who should get that. And, you know, one common expectation is that the approach may resemble how we do influenza. I think the virus changes, you know, you can't predict the future. But it's, you know, it's likely that you'll have another vaccination campaign in the fall, right alongside influenza, and so our team is gearing up for that, particularly take care of the most vulnerable are seniors and others. And at the same time, we've been ready and are awaiting approval for vaccine for young children and we're ready to do that.

**Phil Barrett**

I think it's also important to know if you have test kits that are hitting the expiration They do, make sure you check before you throw them away because their times are being extended. And we had a batch that were due to expire in I think May.

**John Lant**

Some are about anytime now

**Phil Barrett**

And they extended to August.

**Daniel Kuhles**

We're gonna we're going to be putting, I'm sorry,

**Phil Barrett**

No yeah, so now I'm just gonna say so don't look at the box and throw them away, you know, check first and see if they're if their expiration date has been extended.

**Daniel Kuhles**

My apologies Chairman, I was gonna say we're putting, we're putting a link, we're gonna be putting a link on our website that goes to the FDA page where residents can type in the, you know, the brand of kit, there's a lot number on the box, and they'll be able to see whether that extension has occurred for their particular kit.

**Phil Barrett**

Oh. Good. When will that be up?

**Daniel Kuhles**

Later tonight or tomorrow morning?

**Phil Barrett**

All right. Good. I think that'd be very helpful. Yeah. All right. Very good. Any questions for Dr. Kuhles? Does anybody have any questions about COVID or anything health related while we have him here?

**John Lant**

Thank you and your staff for a great job for the residents and the rest of us.

**Diana Edwards**

I have the same thing happen to me, I noticed more people coming into Town hall to get those test kits that I have. And actually we're starting to ask for masks, and which totally dropped off. So I'm gonna need more of those masks. But yeah, I noticed a big change. And I'm hearing more about it as well. Everybody stay safe.

**Daniel Kuhles**

The tools are there. And we are all thankful and Public Health for the support that the Board has provided to us and not just for given the tools to the residents, but for, and the Administration, for giving us the tools in public health and the resources to do our job as best as we can.

**Phil Barrett**

Yep. All right, good. Thank you. Appreciate it. Any other business come before the committee today? Okay. Dr. Prezioso. You're still working on the items that we discussed at the last meeting. So yeah, so we still want to incorporate a Drug Addiction Treatment element to our Peer to Peer program for Veterans and Second Chance Program that the Sheriff has. Dr. Prezioso still working on that. So appreciate that. He's gonna keep me updated. And as soon as we have definitive information, we'll let you know. If there's no other business was there anything else you want to say?

**Michael Prezioso**

I think we are all set.

**Phil Barrett**

All right, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

**Diana Edwards**

So moved.

**John Lant**

Second.

**Phil Barrett**

Thank you. All in favor?

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Phil Barrett**

Opposed. Motion carries, thank you.