



## TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building  
100 Maple Avenue  
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 05145

Date: August 18, 2023  
To: Board of Health  
From: Jennie Fishman, Chair  
Re: Board of Health Meeting Minutes  
ATTENDANCE: Jennie Fishman, Dr. George Abraham, Karyn Rossacci

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA):  
Soloe Dennis, Director of Public Health  
Karina Scott, Shared Services Coordinator  
Amelia Houghton, Chief of Public Health Nursing

The next meeting of the Board of Health will be held on **FRIDAY, August 18, 2023** at 8:00 a.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room located at the Richard D. Carney Municipal Building, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545, at which time and place the Board of Health will consider the following agenda:

- 1. Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m. by Jennie Fishman.
- 2. Review and approval of Minutes from the July 21, 2023 Board of Health Meeting.**  
On a motion made by Dr. Abraham and seconded by Karyn Rossacci on a roll call vote; Dr. Abraham, aye; Karyn Rossacci, aye; and Jennie Fishman, aye, the Board of Health voted to approve the Minutes from the July 21, 2023 Board of Health Meeting. Unanimously approved 3 - 0.
- 3. Review and Discuss Coronavirus / COVID-19 Update.**  
Amelia Houghton addressed the Board and discussed the following:

COVID-19 outbreak at Shrewsbury Nursing & Rehabilitation Center: This outbreak started at the end of July. There were ten (10) staff positive cases and fifteen (15) positive cases of residents. One (1) resident passed away that had tested positive for COVID-19; however, the cause of death is unknown at this point and time. The state reached out to the Worcester Department of Public Health requesting that they assist the establishment. The facility is well versed in what guidance to follow. As of today, there are no new positive COVID-19 cases.

Notable communicable diseases in the last month: Data is reflecting both Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 positive cases within the MAVEN database. There have been approximately seventeen (17) COVID-19 positive cases not including the cluster mentioned above.

COVID-19 Vaccine: Waiting to hear from the state when the vaccine will be available to purchase. This will be a new formulation. At that time, there will be conversations on when and where to host vaccination clinics. There will be access for the flu vaccine for children and she will coordinate vaccinations with the schools. This should take place within one (1) to two (2) months.

Question: Was the death at the Shrewsbury Nursing & Rehabilitation facility an employee or resident?

Answer: It was a resident. The facility follows the same protocols they always do (i.e. isolating anyone who tests positive, ensuring staff follow strict regulations that they have worked out with the state, daily disinfecting, cleaning high touch areas, and wearing masks. They are doing the best they can and following what the state has recommended.

Bi-annual Communicable Disease Surveillance Report: This report was previously shared with the Board. All of the information is extracted directly from the state database called MAVEN.

The Board was concerned that the report could be misleading. For example, the report listed forty six (46)

Tuberculosis (TB) cases. However, it was not clear who was following up on those cases (i.e. the state or the CMRPHA). Amelia Houghton explained that the report includes the cases that the CMRPHA does not need to follow up on because the state already has. It is difficult to tease out what we are actively following up and what the state is. There are not any TB cases that the CMRPHA has to follow-up/manage in Shrewsbury. A breakdown will be provided when the next report is published. It is believed that all these cases are latent TB and not active TB cases.

Question: Can the report be broken down so it is clear?

Answer: A call will be placed to an epidemiologist to discuss the matter. The Board will be informed of the outcome after that conversation.

The Board also expressed concerns that the report included 'refugee status' as a description of a communicable disease and asked Amelia Houghton to convey their concerns about attribution. If the information is shared publicly, it could be problematic in the public perspective.

Dr. Abraham provided an update: Both UMass Memorial Hospital and St. Vincent's Hospital are seeing an increase in the amount of positive COVID-19 cases. In all clinical areas employees, clinicians and visitors must wear a mask. The spike in positive cases may or may not be a temporary blip or if it is stemming from a sustained response. Inclement weather can be a factor. We are a year out on the bivalent booster now. This time of year, the disease tends to wane. If we start to see a little cluster from being indoors, then come winter, we will most likely see another surge. It will be critical for people to get the new COVID-19 booster coming out next month. Two Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccines have been approved. We will be asking the public to take three (3) different vaccines this year (Influenza "flu", RSV and COVID-19). The majority of the positive cases are indicative of the new variant, which is a variant of Omicron's double mutation.

4. **Review and Discuss Updates from the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA).** Soloe Dennis provided the Board with the Environmental Health data consisting of all the inspection types and number of inspections referencing the spreadsheet in their board packet. Working with Kerry Stockwell to identify nuisance and housing complaints that have come into the Health Department. Within the next week or so, the City of Worcester will be hiring an Environmental Health Inspector. At this time, Soloe Dennis introduced Karina Scott who will be working with the Alliance communities observing how the work is done and how to handle capacity.
5. **Review meeting schedule.** The next scheduled Board of Health meeting will be held on Friday, September 22, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room located at the Richard D. Carney Municipal Building, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545.
6. **Adjourn.** On a motion made by Dr. Abraham and seconded by Karyn Rossacci and on a roll call vote, Dr. Abraham, aye; Karyn Rossacci, aye and Jennie Fishman aye, the Board of Health voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 a.m. Unanimously approved 3 - 0.

Correspondence:

- Shrewsbury Board of Health Meeting Minutes – July 21, 2023
- Letter from George W. Woodruff, III of 5122 Avalon Way, Shrewsbury – July 25, 2023
- 271 Boston Turnpike – Permanent Solution Statement and Immediate Response Action (IRA) Completion – July 27, 2023