



**New Jersey
Local Boards of Health Association**

Newsletter

Volume 24 Number 2 www.NJLBHA.org

Summer 2020

President's Message

Dear Fellow Board of Health Members,

Congratulations to Dr. David J. Adinaro MD, the new Deputy Commissioner in the NJ Department of Health, overseeing all Public Health Services. Dr. Adinaro assumed the position in June 2020.



Despite starting the new year in the usual fashion, we quickly came to the realization that it would be a very unusual year presenting unique challenges to our nation.

The new Corona virus pandemic and its associated COVID-19 invaded our nation quickly and silently with devastating results to the most vulnerable of our society.

Local, state, federal officials and the COVID Taskforce, continues to provide up-to-date statistics of disease progression, utilization of health care resources, and numbers of those who succumbed to the disease.

Guidelines have been issued directing changes in our behavior that govern how we interact and communicate with one another. Except for essential workers, we became isolated in our homes, we had a nation-wide shut down, are required to social distance from one another,

and must wear facial masks to cover our noses and mouths when in public places. Our healthcare officials, and healthcare workers continue to perform heroically, working tirelessly during this stressful time. Our local health officers, and local health and county health departments staff are also heroes, doing their part during this pandemic.

Presently, coronal vaccines are being developed, testing is continuing, and the challenging process of contact tracing has begun.

Throughout this pandemic, local health departments have been actively engaged in protecting and informing the public. And, given all that has occurred, it is increasingly evident that every municipality, township, village and city must have its own board of health regardless of county health department affiliation or shared services agreements. The member residents of your LBH have intimate knowledge of what is happening within the community and should be participating contributors to any dialogue and developing appropriate ordinances that addresses the problems. The BOH must also continue to be involved in discussions on Fall school reopening.

In collaboration, PHACE, of which NJBLHA is a member, submitted a "COVID 19 Response" letter, to the Governor, Commissioner and Legislators, addressing the "overall lack of communication with local health departments". A portion of the letter is in this Newsletter with a hyperlink to our website for its entirety.

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The Association is an active participant with Sustainable Jersey in developing a Gold Standard in Health. And our website has a new look.

Your Association will continue working with Commissioner Ms. Persichilli and OLPH Director Shereen Semple; maintaining our close association with our sister health organizations; advocating for public health policy; and continuing partnership with the legislature.

Your membership and participation in your State Association is important and needed. **Join** your state association, NJLBHA. Become an active member or select members from your Boards of Health to represent your concerns at the executive level. All are welcome. You will find the membership form on page 8. Visit our website at www.njlbha.org.

If you have questions, would like to participate or just attend meetings, please contact me at President@njlbha.org.



Christine Harris, BA, MPA, CBHM
President



LEGAL CORNER

Michael Richmond, Esq., NJLBHA Legal Counsel

At a recent White House Coronavirus Task Force briefing, Dr. Deborah Birx, commenting on the most effective program to fight the increasing number of Coronavirus cases, said that the most effective programs would be those developed at the local level. We all know what we have to do; now it is just getting people to do it.

People without masks need to know that their lack of concern for their fellow citizens isn't appreciated. Children need to know that wearing masks in public helps keep people healthy. And children shouldn't be afraid to voice this sentiment. Most national retailers have a policy of wearing masks in their stores. Supporting those policies at the local level will help develop the local community response of masking wearing.

We know the coronavirus is more active in low income neighborhoods. Getting testing into those neighborhoods is important. Once testing is done, the results must be available almost immediately. This isn't happening. Test results are not available for 5 to 7 days. On the local level we need to keep the pressure on the State to do better with test results. After the test results comes contact-tracing. This is probably the most difficult part of the process. Determining who is a contact of a symptomatic individual can be done, but what about someone who does not have symptoms? People who are contacted by a tracer may have a lot of different emotions.

Can cooperation be increased by explaining to the community in advance what constitutes contact? What does self-quarantine mean? It means someone who is identified as a contact and must for a period of 14 days, stay at home, away from family or roommates and pets, with a separate bathroom. And other questions: What about my children? What about my job? What about my invalid mother? I live on a farm, what about animals?

One aspect of the State's program of contact tracing is the use of a computer app which uses the COVID location app on new cell phones. The use of this app should be discontinued immediately. People are paranoid enough about "Big Brother". They shouldn't be subjected to one that is of no use because of the time between testing and results.

As the local board of health can you start playing the what ifs? Even though individual contacts will not be reported to your local board, you can still let the public how they can deal with many of the issues that come with self-quarantining. You can do something as simple as making thermometers available.

Once we as local boards have played the what ifs, can we let the community know that we have come up with answers? People who know someone else has asked the question and developed an answer is much more likely to comply with the solution. Even though the state is no longer on lock down, those who are in the at risk categories still need to stay at minimal contact. So we still need to help provide access to food and medical services.

Most inspections have been placed on hold. But inspections of a type that has for years been the responsibility of the state, are now the responsibility of the local health departments because of the great number of deaths. Inspection of assisted living and nursing homes are now the responsibility of the local health departments. These inspections need to be done to help control the spread of the virus.

Coronavirus doesn't die in summer. It will increase in fall and winter. There is a new virus in China which will be here in the fall. New Jersey has borrowed lots of money. Will we be closed down again? Local boards of health need to work with the purchasing agent in their communities to insure the personal protective equipment is purchased in quantities that will meet the requirements, of the pandemic twice as great as the one we are in.

Local boards of health should actively participate in bringing health workers of all skills back to a reserve corps, to relieve front line health workers during the next onslaught. There will be other pandemics and we must be prepared to meet them. Finally, Local boards of health should write their legislators and demand that funding for local public health is a priority. It trumps most other items in the budget. It is people's lives.

Public Health starts at the local level.



What does self-quarantine mean?

What about my children?

What about my job?

What about my invalid mother?

I live on a farm, what about animals?

A Letter to the Governor From The Public Health Associations Collaborative Effort (PHACE)

Healthcare, public health practices and smart legislative policies have waged war against a contagion that has impacted, but could have devastated the residents of New Jersey. The efforts of our political and legislative representatives in understanding and acting on interventions necessary to keep citizens safe is greatly appreciated. Accolades are warranted for the front-line health care personnel and first responders who are heroes in fighting the disease head on. We are grateful for all that has been accomplished.

At the same time healthcare professionals have managed the sick, thousands of public health professionals from all Local Health Departments (LHDs) have diligently worked around the clock to limit the spread of disease throughout their communities. Since March of this year local health departments in New Jersey have admirably and successfully responded to the extraordinary challenges associated with the spread of COVID-19. They have identified and reported the numbers of cases and the resulting deaths, counseled persons diagnosed, and managed cases on how to quarantine or isolate themselves. They have conducted contact tracing and educated the public on social distancing to prevent the spread of the disease. To date, we have investigated over 165,300 positive cases of COVID-19, which includes tens of thousands more contact tracing calls to advise people on quarantine and isolation procedures, where to find testing, and how to manage other challenges related to loss of work and quarantine restrictions. Clearly, COVID-19 prevention has been and continues to be a LOCAL response. *Click here <https://kidsnvue.com/njlbhal/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-Response-Letter-Final.pdf> to continue reading a letter that was sent to the Governor, Commissioner, and all the Legislators.*

The Mission of PHACE is to foster a single voice and face for the advancement of public health in New Jersey.

What is the 14-day quarantine travel advisory and how will it work?

Under the 14-day quarantine travel advisory announced by the Governors of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, traveling to or returning to New Jersey from states with increasing rates of COVID-19 are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days.

This includes travel by train, bus, car, plane and any other method of transportation. The self-quarantine advisory was issued to limit the spread of the virus within our communities. While the recommendation relies on personal accountability, state officials expect that affected individuals will follow the recommendation. Travelers arriving from areas with increasing COVID-19 cases may wish to postpone their travel to the region if they are unwilling or unable to follow the self-quarantine advisory. Learn which states are being included in the advisor and more by downloading this list of [FAQs](#) from the New Jersey department of Health website.

COVID-19 Testing Experience

By Stephen J Papenberg,
Pennington Board of Health

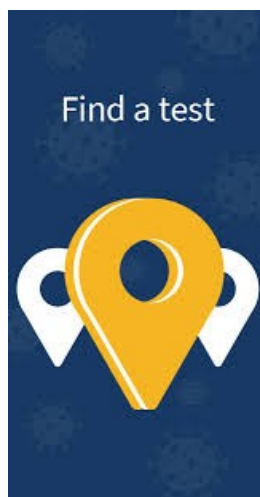
On Saturday, June 20, 2020, I took advantage of an opportunity to get tested for COVID 19. After checking the Pennington and Montgomery websites, I found that free drive-through testing was being offered at the West Windsor Community Park from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Arriving at the park at 10:40 am, I was directed by police to the staging area where I was approached by West Windsor Health Department personnel who recorded my information and directed me to the testing station. At the testing station, I was provided with the “Swab Test” and verbal directions on how to complete the test. Once completed, I handed the test kit back to the Health Department Personnel and then was told I would be notified of the results in 3-5 days. I left the site.

The next day, Sunday, June 21, 2020, I was notified of the results of the test by phone. I was extremely impressed by the well-organized testing program by the West Windsor Health Department with support from FEMA. This partnership is another example of a successful disease prevention effort at the local public health level. I congratulate our NJLBHA member, West Windsor Board of Health, Health Officer Jill Swanson and Health Department Staff for an effort well done. The entire process took less than one half hour from arrival to departure. I was also pleasantly surprised by the quick notification of my results.

I echo the New Jersey Commissioner of Health and the Governor’s request that everyone be tested. The results of which provide valuable information concerning infection rates and help stop the spread of COVID 19 through contact tracing of positive test results.

(For those interested I tested Negative for COVID 19!)

Stephen Papenberg is a retired Health Officer and a Past President of New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association.



For information on testing in New Jersey, visit <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing>.

If you receive a call from a public health official because you tested positive for COVID-19 and they want to know who you've been in contact with, **YOU SHOULD ANSWER BECAUSE...**

Your **INFORMATION** is very valuable.



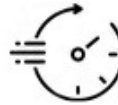
It's **CONFIDENTIAL** - your name is not given to anyone.



Your information is **SAFE** - we do not share information with law enforcement or other government agencies.



New cases are found quickly and isolated to stop the **SPREAD**.



Your contacts get the **HELP** they need.



Contact tracing is considered the gold standard for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.



NEW JERSEY QUITLINE

NJ Quitline Puts a Focus on Vaping

NJ Quitline (NJQL), a program that is supported by the NJDOH Office of Tobacco, Nutrition and Fitness, is a free telephone program dedicated to help NJ Residents quit using tobacco and vaping products. The NJQL has 30 years of experience of providing behavior change support and helps over 1,000 lives per day. NJ Quitline offers free smoking, tobacco and vaping cessation programs including '4 Steps to Quit Smoking/Vaping'.

NJ Quits has a provider toolkit that you can download at <https://www.njquitline.org/providerresources>, and public information <https://www.njquitline.org/quitlineknowledgeispower>.

CDC has public-friendly information and graphics at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm.

If your organization or board of health would like to arrange a virtual presentation on vaping please contact Cathy Butler-Witt, MA, BSW, NCTTP,



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Do you have news you want to share with us? Please send it to njlbhanews@gmail.com and we will include it in an upcoming newsletter.

Join NJLBHA!

As a member of NJLBHA you will meet fellow board members, other health professionals, and community leaders who are committed to improving public health in New Jersey.

A membership in NJLBHA will also help you personally in fulfilling your responsibilities as a public official in addressing the ever increasing barrage of public health problems. Issues such as influenza, lyme disease, tobacco control, groundwater contamination, emerging pathogens, public health preparedness, environmental issues, and inadequate funding for public health at all levels are only some of the problems you, as a member of the local board of health, must deal with on a regular basis.

Yes, count me (us) in as a part of the new Association that gives New Jersey's boards of health and their members a voice in Trenton, a way to communicate among ourselves, a force for progress in public health and more knowledge for board members.

Full Board – \$95

Board membership is open to municipal, county and regional boards of health. All board members are covered for the calendar year.

Individual – \$20

Individual membership is open to current members of municipal, county or regional boards of health whose full board is not a member.

Name of Board/Individual: _____

Principal Contact Person: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Day Phone: _____

Send your membership application to:
New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association
P.O. Box 5069
Kendall Park, New Jersey 08824