

City Health Board Meeting Discussion Record
April 20, 2020

Voting members in attendance: Dr. Mary Milroy, City Manager Amy Leon and Mayor Nathan Johnson.

Ex Officio members in attendance: City Attorney Ross Den Herder, Police Commander Jason Foote, Community Development Manager Brad Bies and Community and Economic Development Director Dave Mingo.

Other Attendees: Dr. David Basel and Doug Ekeren.

Dr. Basel presented COVID-19 modeling information related to the State of South Dakota and the Avera Health System. They have used multiple modeling methods and come up with similar results from all of them. That similarity makes him more confident in the forecasting. This information has been reviewed with the South Dakota Department of Health and Sanford Health with all agreeing with the results.

Dr. Basel stated that one of the biggest problems with this virus is the length of stay required if someone gets sick enough to go to the hospital. Typical hospital stays for those very sick with the flu will last a few days. With COVID-19, those stays have been over a week and sometimes multiple weeks. That length of stay creates a buildup of patients in the hospital which in turn causes a shortage of beds and other supplies.

The model predicts that Sioux Falls will have an earlier peak than the rest of the state. Sioux Falls is estimated to peak around May 13th with the rest of the state peaking around May 31st. The surge for the state is projected at 2,189 hospitalizations, which is less than original projections. That lower number shows that social efforts are working.

Dr. Basel stated that they will have more specific predictions for Avera Sacred Heart Hospital later in the week but initially it looks like a need for 150-200 beds about the 1st of June if basing the model on the state infection rate. Avera Sacred Heart serves a region equal to 10 percent of the state's population. We will know much more in a couple of weeks, but the impact on Sacred Heart looks potentially more difficult to manage proportionally than the issue in Sioux Falls because Sioux Falls has many more beds. There may be a need to share hospital capacity between communities.

Leon asked Dr. Basel about the timeline predicted for reopening considering all the modeling data. Dr. Basel said the rest of country is ahead of us so we can learn from them. He stated it would be best to wait at least two weeks after the peak to begin a phased, gradual reopening.

Johnson stated his concern that people are ready to reopen and statistically, that is not a good idea. Testing will still be the key to clearly creating a reopening plan but we have testing limitations too.

Dr. Basel stated the modeling assumes we are capturing 10 percent of the positive tests and another 90 percent are walking around possibly unaware that they have COVID which is why social distancing is so important. Leon agreed that the next two to three weeks are critical for Yankton.

Ekeren reported that Avera has done a lot of planning work regarding staffing pools at Sacred Heart and in the rest of their system. This allows reassigning staff at Sacred Heart and could also provide for staffing reallocations between facilities. Sacred Heart is capable of handling 125. He stated 175 would be difficult to handle but they are preparing for even more in a worst case scenario. He stated they are in good shape on the

supply side right now as long as orders that have been placed come in. There is always a concern that ordered supplies are redirected elsewhere like to larger communities. Being part of a health systems helps because they can move supplies around as needed, maybe even staff.

Johnson stated that we have improved the situation by social distancing but still have over a month in this marathon. Dr. Basel agreed with Johnson.

The Health Board discussed what recommendations should be made. Milroy stated that what are we doing is working and we need to hold tight until at least early May to reevaluate. Leon stated that she was thinking about an amendment to the ordinance but has reevaluated that based on Dr. Basel's presentation.

Johnson asked the board to discuss hair salons and pet groomers. Milroy stated she thinks the ordinance language should stay the way it is but those businesses should be included in the first phase of relaxing the ordinance.

Foote agreed that the data shows we need to wait. He suggested Beadle County is a good example of a location that successfully flattened the curve and we can learn from them.

Mingo stated that the community was very busy this weekend so we should learn a lot in the next two weeks. Did that level of activity change our trajectory? He suggested extending the ordinance by resolution for a week or two and then reevaluate. Bies agreed and stated we can learn a lot from others that are ahead of us in the curve.

Johnson commented that it is all about health care capacity.

Den Herder stated that he thinks statistically, what we have done has mattered and made a difference. He does not want to recommend more restrictions but does not want to lessen the restrictions either.

The Board discussed the time line for making a recommendation to the City Commission. It was agreed by all to discuss the issue again Thursday and probably next Monday also. Any local changes in data will have an influence on the recommendation given to the City Commission on Monday the 27th. Every day means more data, which is critical. The Board understands that is frustrating to people but this is fast moving and better decisions are dependent on more information.

Leon reported that her and Den Herder are discussing reopening strategies with other communities.

Johnson reported that he heard over the weekend that mask use is not uniform in businesses. Leon heard that comment also. She also heard some businesses want to face cover but they did not have them or were waiting for them. Milroy reported that face coverings are now more available so maybe it won't be as big of a problem.

Johnson thanked the members of the public that are following the advisory.

An epidemiologist from SDSU will be joining the meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2020.

Motion to adjourn by Johnson, seconded by Milroy.