

## HEALTH BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE (BRC) MEETING NOTES 27 JANUARY 2021

**Voting members present:** Kathie Lynch (Chair), Ann Birner (Minutes), Bianca Monteiro, James Petersen, Kristin Shaw for Kim McNamara, Richard DiPentima

**Non-voting city staff present:** Stephanie Seacord, Toni McLellan

**Action items below identify name of responsible party in bold font.**

Kathie read the approved waiver for remote meeting participation during the pandemic and participants identified location and any others present at that location. A motion to approve the minutes of January 19<sup>th</sup> was made by Rich and seconded by James. The minutes were approved without comment or discussion.

The dashboard was presented with much discussion regarding percent of positive cases (“positivity”) with data varying substantially by source. Respected sources may give divergent results depending on method, time points for data cut, etc. This is difficult for BRC members to parse out, and likely moreso for the lay public. Pros and cons of various ways to address this problem included an emphasis on local source (NH DHHS) and a suggestion to add a footnote explaining that different positivity results may be reported by sources based on differences in methodology. Specifically, all agreed that **Stephanie** will format the dashboard as follows:

- Insert NH positivity sourced from NH DHHS into dataset in the upper left corner
- Remove the graph above the NYT national map – give more space to the NH graphics
- Add a footnote explaining that other sources may show different positivity results based on methods

Further discussion prompted by the dashboard included historical context for the current plateau...plateau is better than increase, yet the plateau is at a high level that represents a continued risk of broad community transmission. Pandemic fatigue and vaccine optimism may lead to a reduction in safeguard adherence. Continued vigilance is and must remain an important message to the public for the foreseeable future.

The versions of Daily Life and Mask FAQs circulated by Ann, and the “I Had COVID-19: What Now?” FAQ circulated by Kathie, all as revised by Stephanie, were approved for posting by **Stephanie**. “COVID Long” has been a hot topic in the lay press lately, and there is a webinar on that topic later this week. **Kathie** will join the webinar and report back by revising the post-infection FAQ and/or updating members as indicated.

Kristin reported that vaccination rollout phase 1B is running smoothly. Delivery is good, future success will depend on continued supply. Clinics are being conducted by the Fire Department and Public Health Network. About 350,000 NH residents are eligible for Phase 1B but there may be some overlap with those already vaccinated during Phase 1A. The phase 1B website launch resulted in a response of about 200,000 early on.

The BRC’s handling of research and recommendations in the scientific vs lay press was discussed. The bottom line is that if a member sees something interesting in terms of health journalism, it is best to first share with members as we have been doing. If the source is in the lay press, professional/scientific support should be sought and provided along with the news article. If members agree with the merits of the findings, the findings may be incorporated into an FAQ, may prompt a new FAQ, and/or may be posted for public viewing. If identified as appropriate for public posting, Stephanie will find it helpful to have guidance from the group as to where and how to do so. **Ann** will send to the group an example from the NYT about air circulation in cars

Bianca made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Ann, all agreed.