

Board of Health meeting September 14, 2020.

Inquiries from Board members received by the Health Department:

- Can you please list the definitions of abbreviations used, I am an old man and forget from month to month, PTWA, etc.
 - Response: If the Board requests that abbreviation definitions be included in monthly Health Department reports, that request can be accommodated going forward.
- For the July 2020 monthly Health Department Report:
 - Why were there so fewer calls for the Dial-A-Ride program, do we think it's because people were worried to ride because of COVID-19?
 - Response: We did not take an official poll, but overall our riders were concerned about the risk for acquiring COVID-19 at various locations that they would be brought to, not necessarily the ride itself.
 - What happened to the tires at 299 Changebridge Road?
 - Response: They were removed by the property owner.
 - There were 3 children at the Child Health Clinic, are these clinics now going to be regularly scheduled?
 - Response: Yes.
 - In the communicable disease report, why are there so many COVID-19 cases listed as new investigations, and so few confirmed cases?
 - Response: as it states on page 8, the 82 new investigations included 8 positive cases, 52 pending cases that turned out to be negative, 3 pending cases that turned out to be inconclusive, and 19 pending cases that turned out to only be serology results. All of these cases have to have at least some level of investigation in order for them to be closed in CDRSS.
 - In the communicable disease report, under hepatitis B, there are 4 cases listed as year-to-date investigations, including 2 new investigations this month, and 1 case closed previously. Does this mean that there are still 3 cases open to investigation?
 - Response: Yes. At the end of July, there were 3 cases still open and being investigated. One of those cases was closed in August (not a case), 2 remain open.
 - In the communicable disease report, I am concerned about the salmonella cases. Given the recall of onions and peaches, that and the shiga-producing cases (question was not completed)
 - Response: I assume the question was whether or not the salmonella and/or shiga-producing E. Coli cases were related to the recalled onions and/or peaches. They were not.
- For the August 2020 monthly Health Department report:
 - Were retail food establishments which had outdoor seating reviewed actually inspected and cleared?
 - Response: All retail food establishments that requested approval for outdoor dining were visited to ensure compliance with regulations. Sometimes these were in conjunction with their regular inspections, and sometimes they were spot checks for that purpose alone.

- What is the follow-up for R&R deli?
 - Response: They submitted the renewal application and accompanying fee and were reopened shortly (but this occurred after the end of August, which is why it is not listed on the report as being abated).
- Thank you so much for going out to Tuscany Villa and Concurso's. I see that the PD went out with you, what was the disposition. Although I love both of those establishments, I am concerned that they are not complying with some very simple requirements.
 - Response: As of today, appropriate barriers were installed, and all employees were observed wearing the appropriate face coverings.
- In the communicable disease report, there was another case of salmonella. Was it investigated as perhaps part of the onion or peaches outbreak?
 - Response: A detailed food history is taken for all suspected food-borne illnesses. Neither onions nor peaches were implicated in this investigation.
- For the COVID summaries:
 - Is it possible to delete previous month's entries? It makes it difficult to efficiently review the new data. For one who doesn't like to read from the monitor, I print the reports and I am wasting lots of toner and paper.
 - Response: I'm not sure what is meant by previous month's entries. Regarding any data, for this report it is updated, and not repeated from previous months. For things such as COVID-19 basics, response, and authority, some of this information is included on each report, but this report is meant to be a comprehensive summary from the beginning of the pandemic until now. If the Board requests that information is removed from this summary each month, that request can be accommodated going forward.
 - You keep saying that there are no clusters, perhaps we are playing semantics here, but the fact that Towaco is consistently over-represented by cases should be of interest as a potential cluster, and needs a simple study to try to explain it. It certainly could be caused by a random variation, but it appears to be consistent month to month.
 - Response: In the most recent COVID summary (dated September 9), Montville has 50.6% population, 47.5% of cases, Towaco has 24.7% of population, and 26.8% of cases, and Pine Brook has 27.2% of population and 23.8% of cases. This is a very small difference. There are many possible reasons why the Towaco section consistently has a slightly higher percentage of cases to population (2%) while in the other two sections it is slightly lower (by about 3% each). To list just a few: it could be that these residents don't follow recommendations as closely, or it could be that they are more likely to seek testing (perhaps they are more health-conscious, or have better access to healthcare if they test positive, or they have less worries about being excluded from work if they test positive), or it could be just natural variation. If the Board wishes to commission a study to be conducted, that request can be considered. However, our department does not have the staffing or resources to design or conduct such a study, and Administration would have to approve that expense.
 - Regarding potential excess deaths by month. I am attaching graphs of the number of deaths by month for the past years, as provided in the COVID-19 summary report. I think that the graphic is more striking.
 - Response: Thank you.

