

# Newton HHS Advisory Council

Minutes from Thursday February 10, 2022 meeting

In attendance:

Rebecca Mozaffarian, Asa Fanelli, Brenda Anders Pring, Matt Stafford, Linda Walsh

Department update given by Linda

Budget overview for FY '23 – Reviewed goals

1. Provide effective COVID-19 guidance to Newton residents and community partners as we transition from pandemic to endemic
2. Offer evidence-based programs with a focus on health equity and health concerns that were neglected because of or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Identify, develop and deploy supports for those with mental health/substance use needs in an equitable manner, recognizing increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic
4. Provide high quality direct services to address critical needs with a focus on historically underserved populations.
5. Implement new online software program (NEWGOV) that streamlines the process for permitting and licensing.

COVID-19 data was shared. A recent spike in cases due to the omicron virus created a crushing workload in December and January with a 13% positivity rate at its height. As of this week the percent positivity has decreased to 3.6%. It appears this surge is waning.

The department remains alert to future variants of concern. Vaccination clinics continue. Newton residents and students are highly vaccinated.

The mask mandate for the City and Schools is under review now. Both will likely be rescinded in the next few weeks/days.

The Impact on social services has been great with an increasing demand for services of our most vulnerable residents. Food security, rental and utility assistance has been a priority.

No other business discussed

Respectfully submitted by Linda Walsh