

Mayor's COVID-19 Community Task Force

Meeting Notes

June 25, 2021

What's On My Mind (Mayor Biss)

- We remain in Phase 5
- Statewide metrics continue to look encouraging
- As we enjoy the weather and in-person meetings, we should remain diligent to continue encouraging vaccinations for those who don't have them yet

Brief Prior Day's Situation Report (Mayor Biss)

- 83% of IL residents have at least one dose
- Many metrics are tending toward established goals
- The current infection rate is .63% in Cook County
- Currently no confirmed cases in Evanston
- Seven day positivity rate is at .18% very low for Evanston
- Neighboring communities are slightly higher than Evanston, however they remain very low
- The vaccination rate remains high
- 72% of twelve and over residents are fully vaccinated
- 82.3% of residents have at least one dose
- 83% of IL residents, sixty-five and older residents have at least one dose
- Metrics continue to remain stable but there room for improvement
- The Delta Variant would provide "some" risk for a modest amount of community spread
- As a community we should ensure the vaccination metrics continue to increase

Sector Leader Topic: Recap the ARPA Discussion, Issue Engagement and General Organization

- The City hosted several town halls to receive community input regarding the investment opportunity stemming from the American Rescue Plan Act
- Not finish with the output of those meetings
- The Mayor will continue to work with the community regarding deploying the investment
- Planning to continue to ask the sectors for additional feedback around this topic
- The Business sector has had discussions with the sector group regarding ARPA priorities
- Information was presented to the City's Economic Development committee
- The focus fs the exterior of the store front buildings, making them attractive, and finding ways to fill them via new business or incubation efforts
- Encouraging other business leaders to attend the town hall efforts to gain a perspective on what should be the focus
- Healthcare noted that mental health may be a priority to serve the community moving forward

- The Senior Living subgroup is meeting less frequently. Most providers have returned to a “new normal” for the past several weeks
- The only exception would be an increase in issues due to the Delta variant
- The Mental Health group relayed that “organizing” the group may be beneficial
- Potentially organizing the meetings around topics that are critical to the City
- One suggestion was focusing on topics instead of silo reporting to make the hour more beneficial for sector leaders to share and learn
- Would like to explore the option of in-person meetings soon as well
- Changing the cadence of the meetings is another option from two weeks to once a month
- The taskforce information has been helpful to get information from the various sectors to the community. Many members relay messages to their network for action and dissemination of information
- The Mayor will produce a survey with a matrix of options for the group to evaluate some alternate avenues and for leaders to additionally weigh in
- Everyone is in favor of the meetings continuing
- Another option is to change the agenda so it will focus on a significant topic or let the agenda remain the same with a Spotlight Guest
- A future topic of discussion will be Mental Health

Hospitals

- **Northshore Evanston Hospital (Matthew Waskerwitz)**
 - 4 confirmed covid cases
 - Positivity rate is at 1.4%, reflecting a very small uptick
 - Continuing to maintain CDC hospital guidelines
 - Covid vaccines are still available, please encourage friends to get it
- **Amita St. Francis (Martin Siglin)**
 - 1 confirmed covid case, and 1 person under investigation
 - Mass vaccinations have ceased and now the focus is offering vaccinations to everyone
 - Visitation policies have resumed to normal, however continuing to have patients wear masks
 - Amita maintains a goal of 80% of staff being vaccinated
 - Currently at 70%
 - Amita’s new CEO, Eric Rhodes will be arriving Aug 8th

Senior Living (Mary Leary)

- Metrics show less than five positive cases among the Providers
- The cases are among unvaccinated employees
- Meetings are informational for the benefit of bring back day-to-day operations

Private Non-Profit (Maricar Ramos)

- The Evanston Community Foundation has a new Executive Director
- Sol Anderson has accepted the position of Executive Director

- He has extensive experience with non-profit organizations and a history with the City of Evanston's youth department

Northwestern University (Luke Figora)

- Metrics remain stable
- There are zero cases on campus
- The student vaccination requirements are still in effect and for staff as well
- Reaffirming NU's involvement in the community's continued efforts to curtail the virus

Education (Eric Witterspoon D202 / Raphael Obafemi D65)

- In-person classes will happen this Fall for District 202 the second week of August
- Hosted several High School vaccination clinics
- The turn out was very positive
- Students are anxious to be back in school
- ETHS continues to have no reported cases of the virus among students
- Summer school and summer camp continue without incident
- District 65 is preparing for the return of all students in the Fall for in-person instruction

Legislators

Jan Schakowsky's Office (Ann Limpco)

- **HUD FHA Forbearance Relief:**
Please see information on the availability of a COVID-19 forbearance relief for delinquent FHA borrowers: https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus/resources_for_homeowners#forbearance
- **FEMA Funeral Assistance:**
The COVID-19 pandemic has brought overwhelming grief to many families. Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA is providing financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020. More information on how to apply for assistance can be found here: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>
- **IRS announces two new online tools to help families manage Child Tax Credit payments:**
The IRS has launched two new online tools designed to help families manage and monitor the advance monthly payments of Child Tax Credits under the American Rescue Plan. These two new tools are in addition to the [Non-filer Sign-up Tool](#) — announced last week — which helps families not normally required to file an income tax return to quickly register for the Child Tax Credit. The two new tools are:
 1. The [Child Tax Credit Eligibility Assistant](#) which helps families determine whether they qualify for Child Tax Credit payments, and

2. The Update Portal which helps families monitor and manage Child Tax Credit payments
3. The Child Tax Credit Update Portal is [available here](#). Frequently asked questions about the 2021 Child Tax Credit and Advance Child Tax Credit Payments are [available here](#). Resources and guidance about the 2021 Child Tax Credit and Advance Child Tax Credit Payments are [available here](#).

Laura Fine's Office (Ben Isabel)

- 6/28 will begin a new portion of the rental payment program
- Residents will be able to apply for rental assistance
- More information can be found at <https://www.ihda.org/about-ihda/illinois-rental-payment-program/>
- A call center will also be available to assist

Robyn Gabel's Office (Christian Sorenson)

- The town hall meetings have been rescheduled to the third week in July
- In-person meetings are scheduled and more information will be available in the future

Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz's Office (Liam Harding)

- The State of IL will be hosting a vaccine lottery
- If you have at least one dose administered by July 1st you are eligible
- July 8th weekly drawing for a \$10M pot will begin

Commissioner Larry Sufferdin's Office (Adam Newman)

- No update at this time

Business (Roger Sosa)

- Large uptick in new businesses, grand openings and the Orrington Hotel
- In-person events and live networking is taking place and well attended
- Continue to support the local area businesses and stay the course

Mental Health (Christine Sommerville)

- Working group met with the City to demonstrate a beta version of the mental health dashboard
- Received constructive feedback for enhancements
- Identified ways to move the dashboard work forward
- Also met with Officer Sophier of the EPD (Evanston Police Department)
- The Police Dept will be able to provide quarterly reports around mental healths calls and screening for the dashboard
- The Youth mental health work group is working on supplementing the current mental health supports for a few of the summer events

- Continue to address the needs of teens and adolescents
- A clinical social worker and interns will assist to disseminate the message of mental health being essential and also having talks around needs assessments where events are happening
- The group also discussed gaps in services for younger children potentially in danger in cases of abuse and neglect
- Spanish language mental health group held a meeting last evening
- The Evanston library's July program is on target . Events are scheduled for July 13 at 7:00pm. Daria Winley will be the speaker discussing affordable mental health services, along with a few other speakers

Faith-Based (Rev Nabors / Rabbi London)

- Houses of worship will be opening up for services this weekend
- Continuing to follow CDC and IDPH guidelines for safety

Next Meeting: Friday, July 9 at 1:30 p.m.