



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 29, 2019

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Doug Kress - HHS, Mary Cassesso - CHA, Lynette Alberti - CHA, Kim Keough - CHA, David Cecere - CHA, Patrick Wardell - CHA, Gerry McCue - CHA, Gregory Hagan - CHA, Rupsha Biswas - HSPH, Peter Hagan - HSPH, Peter DeMarco - resident, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Clingan and adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Approval of the April 1, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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207873: That representatives from the Cambridge Health Alliance discuss with this Council's Committee on Public Health and Public Safety, at its April 29, 2019 meeting, the findings of the external review of the death of Laura Levis.

Ms. Cassesso from CHA, introduced a number of staff members that appeared at tonight's meeting who would be able to answer questions from the committee. The CHA members in attendance were Ms. Alberti, Mr. Wardell, Mr. McCue and later Dr. Hagan. Ms. Cassesso works closely with the City of Somerville Health and Human Services department. It was stated that CHA continues to have a commitment to understanding what to do to improve safety and to become a better organization. Last fall, they established a process to look into the events that morning of Ms. Levis' death. Additionally, a law firm was hired to conduct an independent study which the report is public on their website. It was also stated that CHA leadership accepted all the findings from the report. Additionally, it was also stated that no single individual or group, but rather system failures. CHA hopes to establish a way to honor Ms. Levis' legacy. It was stated that simple access as walking through a door was a profound impact on CHA. This has been investigated and corrected working with Mass. Hospital Association. Ms. Alberti from CHA identified a number of issues to be addressed such as: improved exterior

lighting and signage, second walk-in entrance along with main entrance, ambulance sensor to alert when patients are there and open 24/7. Ms. Alberti also co-chairs a work group to look at what is needed to improve all three campuses. It was stated that some information from Ms. Levis' 911 call did not reach the emergency department. There are other improvements made such as: reinforced staff, conducting drills (new protocol), video monitor across campus, new address 33 Tower St. vs. Highland Ave. which was updated in the GPS markers. There is an ongoing effort to educate physicians and nurses to communicate better with patients and families.

Mr. DeMarco, Laura's husband, who was also recording the meeting, talked about how much he and his wife loved Somerville. He stated that CHA has tried to be accountable since the story came out and use Laura's death to save someone else's life. There were questions why there were no emergency signs at the hospital which has not been addressed in CHA's report. Mr. DeMarco, Senator Jehlen, Councilor Hirsch and others filed two bills for a safe patient access for signage and lighting. CHA wants to be supportive of the bill and questioned whether they should be regulated in that fashion or not.

Councilor McLaughlin heard from employees at CHA on the following:

- Lack of accountability
- Lack of cohesion with hospital
- Lots of turnover, morale issues
- Lack of support

CHA stated they are having an annual retreat with senior staff and these issues will be a major topic.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207040: That the Chief of Police and the Chief Fire Engineer, and related staff, discuss how each department receives and handles a 911 call, including the dispatch of State Police, E911, Fire Alarm, and Cataldo Ambulance, and including the handling of asthmatic-related emergencies.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207041: That the Director of Health and Human Services, or related staff, discuss education efforts for the general public or child-serving providers on how to determine the severity of an asthma attack.

It was stated that a little boy passed away at home from an asthma attack. Mr. Kress talked about parent education to understand children's needs. Medical records need to be updated regularly. Student inhalers are available at school along with a picture of the student. Inhalers must be used with a school nurse. There are no school nurses at after school programs, but are training all after school program leaders. Mr. Kress is trying to negotiate with nurses to do extended day to provide coverage.

Dr. Hagan from CHA talked about inhaler use by students and how crucial it is in school settings to have a nurse to access the medicine use. He stated that asthma is unpredictable and may be caused by allergies, infections, and the experience may be different if have the flu. Dr. Hagan described how asthma can be different for many people.

Mr. Kress stated that May is Asthma awareness month and the city is sending out information.

Mr. DeMarco talked about asthma awareness and how he is working with Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. He has done a video and written an essay on education.

Ms. Cassesso talked about CHA's plan on well-being of the community report in 2017 which identifies the needs of the community. She stated that the community has changed with a younger population. There were also discussions about a safety-net hospital which accepts all patients whether they have insurance or not, convening an advisory taskforce, and 17,000 emergency visits a year.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207328: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board of the protocol for notifying the public and families when there is an incident in a public building.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207329: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board on school-related safety policies and procedures listed within.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207446: That the Director of Health and Human Services inform this Board's Committee on Public Health and Public Safety about Cambridge Health Alliance's plans to turn Somerville Hospital's Emergency Department into an urgent care center.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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