

Health Advisory Committee Welcomes New Member and Discusses Everything From COVID and Monkeypox to Restaurant Inspections

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EDWARDSVILLE — The Madison County Health Advisory Committee met Tuesday, welcoming its newest member and continuing discussions of the new COVID-19 bivalent booster.



Health Department Interim Director Amada Pruitt introduced the committee's newly appointed member, Laura Burton, a nurse practitioner. Burton, who worked as an ICU nurse for 15 years, before obtaining her NP license, currently operates a practice at 21 E. Acton Ave. in Wood River specializing in holistic and functional medicine.

"I'm excited and honored to be here," Burton said. "It's right up my alley. I was chair of the Professional Practice Council at Alton Memorial Hospital for 10 years."

Pruitt provided the committee with an update of the COVID bivalent vaccine booster. On Sept. 30, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported there were 493,000 bivalent boosters administered in Illinois and of those 272 were given by the county's health department, she said.

Chairman Kurt Prenzler, who attended the meeting, stated he contacted several nursing homes, hospitals and a military recruitment office and none were requiring the "new" bivalent booster. He said some employers reported they still require the first two vaccines.

Several committee members said COVID testing isn't as reliable with new the variants and severe cases are rare. Patients who do test positive experience mild symptoms compared to earlier variants.

Committee members agreed that the public should ask questions about the new bivalent booster, which is under emergency use authorization.

Committee member Laura Deluca said since the new bivalent booster came out more people are questioning getting the vaccination.

Pruitt updated the committee that October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, with the emphasis on "awareness" of the health department's breast and cervical cancer program. She said the program is about early detection.

"We can assist women who are uninsured, underinsured and even women who are insured who have other obstacles," Pruitt said.

She said also in October the health department is experiencing the "back to school rush" with its immunization clinics, physicals and administration of the influenza vaccine for ages 6-months and older.

Pruitt reported to the committee on the number of Monkey Pox cases being investigated by the county. She said there are only eight cases reported in Madison County of the states 1,326 cases.

“The infection for all eight of those individuals has resolved,” she said. “Our staff is continuing its prevention messaging.”

Prenzler said that during COVID the health department was busy with its restaurant inspections and wanted Pruitt to give the committee a brief update. The county inspects more than 1,400 establishments throughout the year and some are inspected more than once.

“We are back to ‘business as usual’ for our restaurant inspections,” Pruitt said

“I want to complement our health department,” Prenzler said. “They’ve had a tremendous record of doing a good job with our restaurant inspections.”