

**Hamilton County General Health District**  
**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**February 8, 2021 – 4 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4 p.m., Mark A. Rippe, President, called to order the regular session of the Board of Health of Hamilton County General Health District, conducted by conference call, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call of Members**

Members Present: Mark A. Rippe, President  
James Brett, Vice President  
Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D.  
Dan Meloy  
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner  
Dr. Jennifer Mooney, Assistant Health Commissioner  
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner  
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director  
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer

Guests: Tom James, Jim LaBarbara, and Marietta Orłowski

**3. Clean Kitchen Awards**

Craig Davidson read the list of 12 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Meloy** moved to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2021 Board of Health meeting.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**5. Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman indicated tonight's reports will primarily focus on vaccine distribution. The number of COVID-19 cases in Hamilton County are on the decline after peaking in December. The impact of Superbowl parties has yet to be determined. The R factor has been below 1 for the past couple of weeks. Hospitalizations are on the decline as well, which is a much-needed relief to healthcare providers. Hamilton County will stay in the red (Level 3) with high incidence. If it were not for the high incidence of cases, Hamilton County would be able to transition to orange (Level 2) in the coming weeks.

The 65 and older population vaccination that opened today has created a lot of demand. Ohio needs more vaccine to meet the demand. The HCPH website has a comprehensive list

of testing, vaccination registration, and transportation resources for the community. There are 40,000 of the 70,000 people registered on HCPH's website that meet age requirements to receive the vaccine. School employee vaccinations are starting this week and will take two weeks to complete. Approximately 65- 85% of staff are requesting the vaccine. Commissioner Kesterman explained the Incident Command chart and reviewed the team's roles that enable HCPH to scale up when vaccines become available. Vaccination statistics for HCPH were reviewed and compared to statewide statistics. Commissioner Kesterman is working with the state to get consistency with the allocations. All HCPH doses are being used despite the challenges of short notification. The reduction in cases is attributed to the vaccines and the public's compliance with public health prevention measures. The last doses at the end of day are given to police so that no doses are wasted. This is typically from 1-5 doses each day, at most.

Dr. Kelly asked about Developmental Disabilities Services. DDS received vaccinations directly from HCPH.

A state-wide registry will only be successful if all the providers sign on. Mr. Rippe asked about the number of doses by HCPH vs. county wide. The 1,400 for Week 8 are just for HCPH. The entire county will see 21,000 doses. Ms. Puthoff asked about age distribution percentages. Ohio is not opening more tiers until the current tiers are caught up. To receive their vaccine faster, citizens should register with multiple locations. More supply is needed to complete the current tiers. Ms. Puthoff asked about the timing for the next tier and the total population. Schools vaccinations will take place in February and March, while this period will also be used to complete the 65+ tier. Kroger and other pharmacies are getting more vaccine directly from the federal level.

HCPH website lists all providers with links and phone numbers and transportation resources, as well as 211 for all resources by phone. Mr. Rippe asked about ArmorVax. HCPH will send a private link when that opens. Ms. Puthoff asked about acceptance rates. Response depends on each community, but overall urban percentages are better than rural percentages. Ms. Puthoff asked if Kurstin Jones, Health Equity Coordinator, is tracking the underserved population. Yes, Ms. Jones put a plan together and HCPH is working to continue serving minority communities. Mr. Rippe asked that the positive comments in the meeting packet be shared with staff and to thank them for their great work.

## **Staff Reports**

### **(a) Medical Director's Report**

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director spoke to the safety of the vaccine. The vaccine is working on keeping the workforce healthy as outage numbers are down. Expecting to see more transmittable variants but the timing is not known. The vaccines on the market could be less effective against the South African variant. There is evidence the vaccines are effective at combating the variants, though at a lower level. Booster shots are to be expected. A third vaccine from J&J has been submitted for emergency medical use authorization and it is a one-dose vaccine.

Dr. Feagins continues to monitor vaccine safety data and explained the Pfizer & Moderna clinical trial adverse effects data. The adverse event reporting system is how the CDC tracks the information. The V-safe program provides real time feedback and Dr. Feagins explained the data. Overall, symptoms are consistent. Mr. Rippe asked how the information

compares to the normal flu shot -- similarly. Dr. Feagins explained the COVAX anaphylaxis rate. No deaths were linked to the vaccine. Mr. Rippe asked about the importance to the number of days between doses. The number of days is a minimum, there is no maximum number of days. The anaphylaxis data will go down when the volume of doses increases. The vaccine is very safe so far and the real time data is extremely helpful.

The monthly Communicable Diseases report was provided in the Board packet.

**(b) Department of Community Health Services**

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney reported contact tracing is still happening and staff will migrate into vaccine coordination. The HCPH clinical team has been able to resume its regular clinical work as they have onboarded twenty-plus contract nurses for vaccine administration. HCPH partnered with Xavier College of Nursing to utilize nursing students near degree completion and after passing vaccine administration requirements. These cohorts are providing education and administering vaccines under supervision. HCPH is working with with UC College of Nursing for similar vaccine related community work.

The Harm Reduction Subcommittee as a subcomponent of the Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition (formerly Heroin Coalition) is expanding the stakeholder reach to include many other sectors other than treatment, public health, and healthcare. The team hopes to include housing, workforce development, recovery housing and others in the subcommittee membership. HCPH's nurse practitioner has experience with FQHCs and will be expanding harm reduction's efforts in creating a holistic wellness program. The team has also moved into the Price Hill space and is ramping up services for that community.

In January, there was a state-wide change that impacted the way data was received and imported into the epi surveillance system. Northern Kentucky hospital data was not received. Dates of incidents have moved from one field to six fields, so the code needs to be re-written. The state also changed race and ethnicity data collection. After HCPH incorporates all these changes, the online portal will be a great resource.

Mr. Rippe asked about Harm Reduction from a life course perspective. He is working with another agency who may have input. Dr. Mooney will send an outline. Staff are looking longitudinally and appreciate feedback from all sources.

**(c) Department of Environmental Health Services**

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson reviewed the Sharonville Convention Center POD operation. Pictures are in the meeting packet. Recognition to Cameron Kunkle in Water Quality who has been instrumental in planning the POD setup. POD survey feedback was very positive, although some dissatisfaction with the ArmorVax app was indicated. Many improvements and updates to the app have since been issued. Staff are looking forward to getting more vaccine to distribute.

Plumbing and medical gas inspections continue in Brown County. The partnership has been mutually beneficial to Hamilton and Brown Counties. Mr. Davidson reviewed the statistics and reported most work is residential, with some potential new opportunities to see growth in commercial permits.. The dynamics are great and HCPH's support and service has changed Brown County for the good with a higher quality service and better value for its

residents. Mr. Rippe asked if the code is the same as Hamilton County. Yes, they have the same residential code as it was required that they adopt our standards. Commercial code is set by the state.

HCPH signed a new contract with the Ohio Department of Commerce (ODC) to continue inspecting mobile home parks. However, ODC reduced HCPH's inspections to only those located within Hamilton County. This is a significant reduction from 86 to 27. Previously HCPH provided inspection services for Butler, Clermont, and Brown County.

There were enforcement actions or condemnations to report.

**6. Unfinished Business:** None.

**7. Finances**

The January 2021 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**8. New Business**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve the Medical Director contract and authorizing Mr. Rippe to sign it.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Mr. Rippe requested the meeting slides be emailed to the Board. Commissioner Kesterman will send out after the meeting.

**9. Adjournment**

**Mr. Brett** moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: March 8, 2021 at 4 p.m. via Zoom.



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Jim Brett, Vice President



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Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner