

**Hamilton County General Health District  
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH  
March 8, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.  
Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4 p.m., James Brett, Vice 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: 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  
Chuck DeJonckheere, Director Waste Management

Guests: None

**3. Clean Kitchen Awards**

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

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2021 Board of Health meeting.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**5. Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman reviewed the COVID-19 timeline and lessons learned over the course of the past year. HCPH is seeing a significant decrease in active cases in our community. The peak was 716 cases per day in December compared to present 100 cases per day. Positivity and hospitalization rates have gone down as well. Hamilton County is at Level 3 and is expected to go to Level 2 within a few weeks.

There have been a few cases of COVID variant strains in Ohio and only one case in Hamilton County, but the normal prevention methods and the vaccine are expected to keep those numbers down. Ohio's Phase 2B is opening so people are encouraged to register on every vaccine provider website listed on HCPH's website to have the best opportunity to get

vaccinated. State and Hamilton County vaccination statistics by population were reviewed. Ms. Puthoff asked for clarity about the African American statistics. Commissioner Kesterman explained the chart shows percent of total population and the goal is to get to 100 percent of each population. Dr. Kelly asked if that population data included all phases of the vaccine. Yes, percentages are of total population regardless of vaccine phase.

HCPH staff have successfully administered over 19,000 vaccine doses and nearly all doses are administered within one week of receipt. Population heat map by ZIP code are also reviewed to help target vaccine efforts. The vaccine supply quantity is increasing each week and distributions are being targeted to the zip codes most in need. The Johnson & Johnson one dose vaccine is very convenient for those who are homebound, mobile clinics and the public.

Cintas Center at Xavier University will be a regional mass distribution site administered by Kroger with backup support from HCPH and the Cincinnati Health Department. The clinic will begin operation March 18. This location is accessible to the public and its vaccine supply is in addition to what the County already receives. Vaccine equity distribution statistics and strategies were discussed. Churches have been very successful in scheduling and hosting clinic sites for vulnerable populations.

Ms. Puthoff is glad to hear HCPH is #2 in Ohio's success rates with vaccinating minority populations. Council on Aging has been transporting seniors to the Board of Elections clinic site. Commissioner Kesterman reviewed the revised CDC quarantine guidelines with projections of getting back to more normal activities.

All 2020-23 Community Health Improvement Plan priority areas are "On Track." HCPH staff continue to make significant progress despite the pandemic. Full details are in the Board packet.

All Board Members are invited to attend tomorrow's District Advisory Council (DAC) meeting at noon via Zoom. Ms. Puthoff's Board position is up for re-election.

## **Staff Reports**

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

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, shared flu death statistics compared with COVID deaths. The goal going forward is to get the COVID deaths within the flu range. The decrease in COVID cases is attributed to vaccines, masking, hand washing, and social distancing. Variations are a natural progression of the virus. The next surge (estimated in the next six weeks) is expected to be much less than the surge we just went through. Vaccine supply is increasing, and the expected higher percentages of vaccinated population will help.

Dr. Feagins reviewed the vaccine timeline, mortality, length of stay, and readmission rates. Dr. Feagins explained the vaccine trials authorization and recommendation process flow chart as well as the manufacturing process. All vaccines approved for use have 100 percent protection from hospitalization/death due to COVID-19. V-safe safety statistics were reviewed and show there have been no deaths related to the vaccine. Ms. Puthoff asked what the background rate is. Dr. Feagins stated the background rates are pre-COVID. Mr.

Brett inquired about baby immunity. Women who contract COVID during their pregnancy do transmit antibody protection to the baby for several months.

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

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney shared the biggest change this past month is the decrease in the demand for contact tracing because cases are continuing to decline. There is now an opportunity for the addition of no cost tracing resources from the state via Public Consulting Group. Nearly all contact tracing work will transition to the Ohio Department of Health around April 1. HCPH Epidemiology staff can return to pre-COVID activities. HCPH is looking to retain some of the high performing tracers to assist with vaccination efforts and to staff our vaccine call bank. Another great no-cost resource from the State is to bring on vaccine nurses via ProLink and the state pays for the service. HCPH is transitioning all contract nurses to ProLink to preserve HCPH funding for additional vaccination efforts.

Dr. Mooney was pleased to report that staff did a fabulous job distributing the Resource Grant funding in a very short amount of time. The final report was just submitted and over 400 families received aid thanks to HCPH partnerships with Kroger and Duke Energy. Also, the Overdose Data to Action Grant (from CDC) year 2 of 3 was a big challenge for staff to spend those resources during COVID. Other agencies experienced this too, so the CDC is adding a fourth year with level funding to help health departments continue the programming.

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson introduced the Director of Waste Management, Chuck DeJonckheere, who provided background information on Burger Environmental Construction and Demolition Debris Landfill. Mr. DeJonckheere described how the site it was converted to a landfill from a gravel pit and the basis for Burger Environmental's exemption request to re-direct surface water through the aquifer upon which it sits instead of overground. This re-direction would also help alleviate flooding in the Village of Newtown. Mr. Brett inquired about ongoing monitoring of the injections into the aquifer. Mr. DeJonckheere explained there are ground water monitoring wells, and they are currently monitored annually. Mr. Brett asked about an EPA monitoring schedule and testing requirements. Mr. DeJonckheere indicated that OEPA does not have additional requirements beyond the five year-post closure monitoring period for the landfill. The landfill has been inactive and monitored for years with no issues.

**Mr. Meloy** moved to authorize Commissioner Kesterman to issue Health Commissioner's Final Findings and Orders to grant the Burger Environmental exemption request allowing for diversion of surface and ground water and contingent upon approval from the Ohio EPA.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Mr. Davidson reported much of the vaccination response efforts have been discussed and full details of the point of dispensing (POD) clinics and transportation services are in the Board packet. Utilizing the Tristate Medical Reserve Corps at the clinics means more HCPH staff can return to their regular work.

HCPH submitted the Annual Animal Exposure report to ODH. Statistics by animal type are in the Board packet. The majority of exposures are animal bites. Staff tested 74 animals and there were zero positive for rabies.

Thanks to a complaint from the City of Sharonville, HCPH learned about a public health concern and issued a cease-and-desist order for a food service operation being run out of a home in a residential neighborhood. Ms. Puthoff asked if the food was free. There is no violation for free food; however, they were selling food and promoting it on social media.

Mr. Brett congratulated Mr. Davidson for using his background in public health to assist with the POD execution. The Board and Commissioner Kesterman are very happy to have Mr. Davidson back on staff.

**6. Unfinished Business: None.**

**7. Finances**

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

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

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye; Mr. Brett abstained on Whitewater expenditures.**

**8. New Business**

The Board will vote for the next term Board President at the April 12 meeting.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to meet on April 12, May 10, and June 14 at 4PM via Zoom

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**9. Adjournment**

**Mr. Meloy** moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: April 12, 2021 at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

  
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Mark Rippe, President

  
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Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner