

**Hamilton County General Health District  
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH  
June 12, 2023 – 4 p.m.  
Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4 p.m., Elizabeth A. Kelly, President, called to order the regular session of the Board of Health of Hamilton County General Health District followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call of Members**

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

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner  
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner  
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner  
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director  
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer  
Phillip Graham, Senior Health Coordinator  
Tyler Meenach, Harm Reduction Division Health Coordinator

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Clean Kitchen Awards**

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

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Meloy** moved to approve the minutes from the May 8, 2023, Board of Health meeting.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Mr. Rippe abstained.**

**6. Public Comment: None.**

**7. Health Commissioner's Report**

Tyler Meenach, HCPH Harm Reduction Division Health Counselor, provided the Board with an annual update and presentation on the HCPH Recovery Friendly Hamilton County Program. Mr. Meenach serves as a liaison between HCPH and the business community, and he recruits businesses to participate. The Workforce Innovation Center, a program of the Chamber of Commerce, hosts an online filterable list of recovery friendly job opportunities, which allows businesses to include a Recovery Friendly designation. Mr. Meenach also reminds employers that the Bureau of Workers Compensation reimburses for specific items related to recovery (i.e., Narcan, test strips). The Recovery Friendly Program

helps employers retain quality employees and helps employees get access to treatment and resources.

Mr. Meenach will get more best practices at the Safe States Injury & Violence Prevention Annual Conference in September 2023. Locally, HCPH is hosting a one-year anniversary celebration for the program at Paycor Stadium with Safe States grant funds. A few months ago, HCPH received an award from the Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio. The whole Recovery Friendly Program started in New Hampshire and has spread throughout the country. Mr. Meenach is speaking to a public health department in Wisconsin to help them launch their program. Summit County Public Health is a mentee and Mr. Meenach is meeting with them this week to record a Voices for Voices podcast. HCPH is seen as the model for how to do this at the county level, particularly within the state of Ohio.

Businesses are prioritized based on OD deaths by occupation data, researched by the HCPH Epi team. The highest three industries are construction, food service, and manufacturing. Thirty-four businesses are on board with more prospects in the wings. Mr. Rippe asked what are the business requirements? A letter of intent from the C-Suite, open declaration to staff they are joining (templates for both are provided), display posters of resources in prominent locations, and a 45-minute training with Mr. Meenach. Mr. Rippe asked how many people were served. Services received are anonymous, but we do know the number of resource scans (QR codes are unique to each business). The Hotline is less utilized, but exclusive to HCPH. Mr. Meloy asked if there is a conflict with BWC's Drug Free Workplace. The Recovery Friendly Program is not in conflict with BWC's Drug Free employers. Mr. Meloy asked if progress is meeting or exceeding expectations. Mr. Meenach said the program is exceeding expectations and getting national traction. Mr. Meloy appreciates HCPH being a point of contact for other communities and helping move the program forward. The Board asked if the program is for all types of addictions. The focus is on alcohol and drug addictions. The Board appreciated the update. Commissioner Kesterman added that both Mr. Graham and Mr. Meenach are funded by the four-year OD2A grant. The presentation will count towards 40 minutes of Board of Health continuing education.

Commissioner Kesterman was pleased to share that this will be his last official COVID-19 update. Cases and hospitalizations continue to decline. The CDC is discontinuing several of its community reporting measures as well.

Commissioner Kesterman thanked Mr. Rippe and Mr. Meloy for their help throughout the new lease process for the public health clinic and other services. Both helped to navigate positive terms and Ms. Chin was instrumental as well. The lease was signed giving the project six months for construction to be completed. The owner of 184 E. McMillan has offered a lease extension should the new space not be available. Once available, HCPH will have ten days to vacate the current clinic. Mr. Rippe asked if the architectural drawings were completed. They are anticipated to be completed by the end of next week. Mr. Rippe advised Commissioner Kesterman to document the entire process in case there are delays.

Next week is the reaccreditation site visit. They will review HCPH's five major plans and review agency progress. No issues are expected.

Flood details at the East McMillan site are in the Board packet. Over the holiday weekend, HCPH's janitorial contractor found a sink overflowing. Security video shows no traffic in the space and a fallen soap dispenser is suspected as causing the faucet to turn on. All other

soap dispensers have been replaced as a precautionary measure. Brock Restoration did a great job and removed three 500-gallon tanks of water. The flood covered 75 percent of the space. An insurance claim was submitted and it is anticipated that the loss will be covered.

Mr. Rippe suggested hiring an owners' rep to oversee HCPH's interest in the construction of the new clinic and office. It will cost HCPH but will be a benefit in the long run to have the construction expertise. Ms. Puthoff asked about Hamilton County's financial involvement on the project. That will be covered in Mr. Varner's financial report and the review of Resolution C.

## **Staff Reports**

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

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director was pleased to report that all medical equipment was spared in the flood.

HCPH's Epic Electronic Health Record implementation is on track. HCPH staff will receive thorough training and the new system will integrate with other health systems. "My Chart" is the portal for clients to get their own test results and schedule appointments. Staff will also have access to academic journals and other references as a benefit of being on EPIC.

Public health is encouraging testing for Candida auris to determine prevalence in hospitalized patients. The routine test through a Wisconsin reference lab takes 10+ days, which presents a challenge for clinicians to determine what to do with this information. The infectious disease group and Gravity Diagnostics have developed a PCR test that has been validated by the Wisconsin reference lab and duplicates the CDC threshold. More information is to come.

Maternal mortality rates in the US are on the rise, especially among African Americans. Ms. Puthoff asked Dr. Feagins to clarify the numbers. The US is the highest of developed nations but compares one year for the US vs. 42 days for other nations, so the data is not perfectly comparable. Dr. Feagins does not know if the US data can be converted to 42 days. Hamilton County had five maternal deaths in 2021. The Maternal Health Review in Hamilton County is underway and will continue to bring greater understanding and awareness to this problem.

COVID-19 data is transitioning to monitoring/treating similar to the data for influenza. COVID-19 vaccination rule has ended for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services certified healthcare facilities; however long-term care facilities still require education and vaccinations (required for Medicare/Medicaid clients).

Wastewater is a prevalent source of prevalence data for COVID-19. Research in a Columbus sewer shed is tracing back to what is presumed to be one individual since the original strain from Wuhan continues to be detected. A new symptom-based scoring system helps to diagnose Long COVID.

Syphilis and congenital Syphilis continue to increase nationwide. Dr. Kelly asked for Hamilton County data. Ms. Lindner will include local data in the next meeting packet.

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

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Ms. Lindner thanked the Board for increasing nurse salary earlier this year. The increases significantly helped to recruit new hires and fill vacant positions. HCPH is contracting with the Ohio Public Health Association to cover a staff member on maternity leave. In anticipation of the move to a new location, staff launched a QI project to establish continuity of process and pathways. It has been an involved process, but it helped bring staff together and gain efficiency. Special thanks to Disease Prevention and other HCPH staff who stepped up to help with the flood and rescheduling appointments.

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson reported that swimming pool licensing ended and staff are keeping tabs on public pools during the summer through routine inspections. Last year there were 397 and this year there are 388 licenses. License renewals were due by May 1 and 48 pools received a late fee this year. Final notices for payment have been sent out and facilities that have not paid for their license by June 9 will be posted closed.

HCPH's Campground Program was audited by the Ohio Department of Health for the 2018-2021 licensing periods. Overall results were very good with one comment to ensure applications are processed within a 30-day period. The full audit report is in the Board packet.

Odor complaints at Rumpke are trending downward at 141 in 2022 compared to 173 in 2021. HCPH staff remind Rumpke to use keep the working face as smallest space as possible at a time, put place daily cover on it, and follow utilize odor elimination processes when needed.

Mr. Rippe asked for an update on enforcement actions against Evans Landscaping. HCPH and OEPA have submitted a final plan to Evans with the hopes that work can begin on remediation of the site next week. The response letter indicated they have indicated that they are not pleased with the plan submitted and reserve the right to seek court intervention. Mr. Rippe asked how large is the area? Approximately 5 acres.

Mr. Davidson reported there were five housing condemnations detailed in his report.

**8. Finances**

The May 2023 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

**Mr. Rippe** moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**New Business:**

Resolution C: Increase Funding and Expenditures for the Public Health Clinic, Harm Reduction & Administration for the Hamilton County General Health District. Commissioner Kesterman explained Hamilton County allocated \$1.5M from the indigent care levy to the HCPH TB fund for tenant improvements over and above the allowance in the lease rate. In order to spend these funds, the Board of Health must authorize the expenditure. Mr. Varner

reviewed the calculations and answered questions from the Board. In total, a net \$1.03M change to HCPH budget. This amount includes new furniture, IT cabling, phone system, signage for the clinic, cost of moving, and a contingency for other improvement needs. If this entire amount is used, it still should allow the agency to maintain a healthy fund balance in both the General Fund and the TB restricted fund. Mr. Rippe explained that the location rebuild is an “open book” project so the landlord must disclose all costs of the building renovation.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve Resolution C: Increase Funding and Expenditures for the Public Health Clinic, Harm Reduction & Administration for the Hamilton County General Health District as written.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

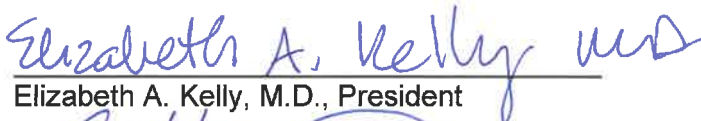
## 9. Adjournment

**Mr. Meloy** moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

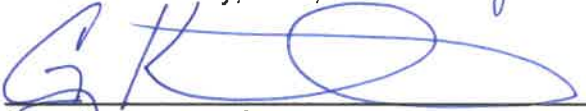
**Mr. Rippe** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: July 10, 2023



Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner

