

Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
July 12, 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
Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., Vice President
James Brett
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
Amanda Carter, Electronic Media Specialist
Ali Kathman, Maternal and Child Health Coordinator
Jessica Skelton, Public Health Response Coordinator

Guests: Kiana Trabue, Village of Woodlawn

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of two 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 June 14, 2021 Board of Health meeting.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Public Comment: None.

6. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman is pleased to welcome everyone back in person after 16 months of virtual meetings. All COVID metrics continue to trend in the right direction including daily case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths. Average cases per day is 16, compared with 716 cases at the peak in December. Worth noting, this is up slightly from the prior week which had 13 cases. The vaccines appear to be working on the variants. The positivity rate (1.6

percent) continues to decline. The spike in the reproductive value was attributed to the overall lower quantity of cases, so the reproductive value remains not a concern. Hospitalization statistics continues to improve. Hamilton County has vaccinated at a higher rate than Ohio. Get Out The Vax reports 58 percent of total eligible population are vaccinated. Seventy percent of people over 60 are vaccinated. Over 200 providers have vaccine in Hamilton County with walk-in appointments available (details are posted online at www.testandprotectcincy.com). The three HCPH mobile units are going into the community making vaccines available where people are. Test and Protect (TaP) program grossly underspent so funds were redirected to underserved community messaging and service provision. Mr. Meloy asked if community fire and EMS are still being utilized. Yes, they have been a great partner replied Commissioner Kesterman. Mr. Meloy asked about front-line responders' vaccination rate. Dr. Feagins shared that healthcare workers vaccination rate is about 60 percent (physician and nurse percentages are higher) and providers are having discussions around mandating vaccinations. Commissioner Kesterman reported HCPH staff is about 85 percent vaccinated.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that second quarter performance metrics are 96 percent on track. Steady progress is underway and HCPH is seven percent ahead of where we were last year.

HCPH's records retention schedule is ten years old. Revisions for electronic media retentions have been submitted to Ohio for approval. A copy with full details is in the Board packet. Mr. Rippe asked about email retention. Emails associated with records are required to follow the record retention schedule. Generally, emails are added to the file to ensure that they are part of the retained record.

Ohio's House Bill 110 (the budget bill) has been signed. Local health departments that are not accredited by 2025 are required to complete a study to determine if a merger would be beneficial. HB 110 also banned the use of vapor product use in public places and included a \$1.6M subsidy for accredited public health departments.

Commissioner Kesterman thanked Mr. Rippe for securing the Queen City Club for the October 9 Board strategic planning session. Commissioner Kesterman will be circulating a Board survey to prepare for that session.

On today's agenda are three Personnel Policy modifications and Resolution A to revise the 2021 budget.

July 14-23 is Commissioner Kesterman's first vacation in a year and a half! While he is out, Mr. Davidson will have Commissioner signature authority.

The Board likes the new conference room furniture and room layout. If the Board tables are replaced, Mr. Rippe would like to have technology connections in the tables.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director's presentation last month was on the Equity Task Force work and is pleased to share their testimony to The President of the United States. The President incorporated several of the task force recommendations including addressing long

COVID and primary care as first line of treatment. The Infectious Disease Committee continues to meet. Hamilton County providers continue to implement best practices.

COVID-19 virus mutations are more transmissible. Treatment for the mutations is the same and the vaccines continue to be effective. Vaccine effectiveness is measured by breakthrough cases. Vaccine boosters are being developed but are not needed at this time. Providers are only issuing a third vaccine dose on a case-by-case basis. Many health systems in the country are mandating the vaccine for their employees. Locally, health systems are expected to mandate vaccine uptake after the vaccines receive full FDA approval.

The reproductive number exceeds a value of 1.0 due to the previously low case numbers. The R factor is still being used as a community spread measurement, but it is more relative than absolute.

Ms. Puthoff asked if local healthcare providers are waiting for FDA approval to mandate employee vaccinations. Yes, there are facilities in the country who are mandating but local systems are waiting for full approval, which is expected by the end of summer.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney stated the disease prevention team is doing great work. Mobile clinics are focusing on reaching young adults and populations with lower vaccination rates.

Dr. Mooney shared a success story where staff were able to track down a syphilis case and get them transportation for treatments. The Harm Reduction team is hard at work to reduce HIV locally, as well as assisting Butler County and Middletown to provide services. The Harm Reduction pilot project in Price Hill is focused on its high percentage of overdose deaths. They are meeting every two months to make a difference in the community. Current focus is working with young people and starting up a youth power group. There is a need for Spanish speaking services. The Harm Reduction team is also working on campaign to reduce the stigma associated with addiction.

The performance metrics show that HCPH teams are doing remarkably well. The overdose fatality review will start now that the open position has been filled.

The annual WeTHRIVE! recognition event will be held November 10 in Sharonville. The Board is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

Ms. Puthoff stated around 20 years ago, HCPH took on the syphilis project and had great results. How does it compare today? Dr. Feagins indicated HCPH jurisdiction numbers are near the national average. More testing is needed. Many clients test positive for HIV. The 2020 data is skewed due to the pandemic; however, Butler County is higher than prior year. HCPH's infectious disease group is better at contact tracing than ever before. Patterns are emerging as they continue to trace. The goal is to have greater than one percent positivity, which is an indicator that we are testing the most at risk populations.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson indicated the COVID-19 response local and regional report and highlights are in the Board packet. Mr. Davidson was pleased to report the response efforts get credit for the ODH Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) grant functional exercise requirement. The grant after action report/improvement plans will be completed by the October 29 deadline.

Performance metrics are back on track and trending positively – even better than last year. Staff are happy to be back up and running with their normal program work.

Food licensing payments were extended to July 1 and are up over last year by more than 100 licenses. The largest increase is with mobile licenses.

There were three residential condemnations and two restaurant voluntary closures. Details are in the Board packet.

7. Unfinished Business: None.

8. Finances

Mr. Varner, Finance Officer, presented the second quarter financial review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances, and grant activity. HCPH had an overall successful fiscal second quarter. Ms. Puthoff asked about OD2A grant spending and if there are open grant positions? Grant spending for the first two years is at the halfway mark of the total grant award and open positions will be filled. HCPH's initial request for OD2A funds was extremely ambitious and will most likely not be fully spent. Staff is reviewing by line item to see what additional expenditures may be necessary for success. Other grantees are in a similar situation. The CDC expanded the grant definition to include fentanyl test strips.. Mr. Rippe asked if the budget is being normalized back to a regular year. Yes, but there are still COVID-19 grants through August, 2022.

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

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

9. New Business

Resolution A: Supplemental appropriation to the 2021 revised budget, effective July 12, 2021 was tabled for a future Board meeting.

Personnel Policy Section 5.10: Parental Leave: Ms. Puthoff asked if the policy has to be limited to two times per family. Commissioner Kesterman said Hamilton County did that to control expenses. Other Board members agreed with removing the two times per family limit. Mr. Rippe asked what happens if a new hire gets pregnant. Employees must be here for 12 months to qualify, but they would still be eligible for FMLA. Dr. Mooney thanked Ali Kathman, Maternal and Child Health Coordinator, for all her work on the policy revisions.

Mr. Brett moved to approve Personnel Policy Section 5.10: Parental Leave with the modification to remove the two times per family limit.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

The Board requested additional information and revision on Personnel Policy Section 2.3: Employee Status and 1.3: Definitions. The Health Commissioner asked to delay vote until additional details could be provided at a future meeting.

10. Executive Session

Mr. Meloy moved to go to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 5:15 p.m.
Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to close the Executive Session at 6:20 p.m.
Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Brett moved to increase the wages of staff making less than \$50,000 by \$2.00 per hour. For those staff making more than \$50,000, their wage would be increased by \$1.50 per hour. In addition, the pay scale shall be adjusted by the same rates.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

The Board directed the Health Commissioner to continue to review wages to ensure that HCPH is able to attract potential employees and retain good employees. Additional adjustments may be needed to specific job classifications or more broadly and should be considered during the annual budgeting process.

Mr. Meloy moved to authorize Board President Mark Rippe to conduct an annual employment review and compensation adjustment with the Health Commissioner.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye


11. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

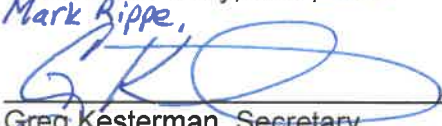
Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: August 9, 2021.



Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., Vice President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

