

Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
August 8, 2022 – 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
James Brett
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
Shana Merrick, Director of Harm Reduction

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson recognized Clean Kitchen Award recipient, Montgomery Elementary Cafeteria, 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 July 11, 2022 Board of Health meeting.
Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Public Comment: None.

6. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman shared an update regarding COVID-19 as cases seem to have plateaued in the past seven days. The seven-day average is 321 cases per day. The BA.5 variant is the main variant, although the BA.4.6 is starting to gain prevalence. The hospitalization numbers are at 207 with ICU admissions at 25, both of which are starting to slow down. The death rate in Hamilton County is one death every four days. The CDC data map shows 267 cases per 100,000 with Hamilton County at a high transmission level.

Vaccination efforts in Hamilton County continue, with clinics being held at the Board of Elections in Norwood and at HCPH. Over 1,200 vaccinations have been given for the six

months to five years of age group, which is significantly more than any other health department in the State of Ohio.

Commissioner Kesterman thanked the leadership team and staff for their contributions to making sure HCPH is positioned to be a leader in the community in regard to Monkeypox. Monkeypox is a self-limiting disease which usually goes away by itself in two-four weeks. Cases can become severe if lesions become infected, although with the availability of antibiotics, treatment is easily obtainable. Monkeypox spreads through close, personal, skin to skin contact. Pregnant women can transfer this to the fetus. Commissioner Kesterman shared that there are tier levels that designate who is eligible for a vaccination in Hamilton County. Vaccination clinics in Hamilton County will be available to those who are at highest risk with close contact with a Monkeypox case. Vaccines are extremely limited at this point. Testing is restricted to those patients with lesions. Commissioner Kesterman shared that his team put together a survey to identify risk groups and establish a vaccination priority list. At the end of the assessment, an email is sent notifying the person whether they are low or high risk and what the next recommended steps are for them. Ohio has 45 total cases of Monkeypox, with Hamilton County having three positive cases.

Commissioner Kesterman shared an update about the strategic space plan, showing square footage needs for the agency. Currently, HCPH's two additional locations are being paid for by grants. Mr. Varner shared that if HCPH was moved to one building based on the architect's square footage projection, the general fund would be charged \$247,000 per year and the grants and now restricted funds would be paying \$310,000 per year. Ms. Puthoff asked if the architect decided that the current space couldn't be configured to accommodate everyone? Mr. Varner responded that is correct. Commissioner Kesterman shared his recommendation is for HCPH to continue staying at 250 William Howard Taft Road, maintaining the space in the current building and to bring the Harm Reduction and Tuberculosis teams into a space together. Mr. Brett asked if Hamilton County has any additional spaces that are available? Mr. Kesterman shared that there is nothing available right now. Mr. Varner shared that if one combined building was pursued, it would probably be shared with other tenants, and parking space might become an issue. Commissioner Kesterman shared that he will continue pursuing all options. Ms. Puthoff indicated that she is in favor of retaining our current space (at 250 William Howard Taft) and pursuing an additional building that would house both our Main Street location and clinic services. The rest of the Board agreed with this position.

Commissioner Kesterman reminded the Board that the next meeting is Tuesday, September 6th with a public hearing at 3:45 p.m. before the Board Meeting at 4 p.m.

The second quarter Community Health Improvement Plan, Program Implementation Plan and Strategic Plan are included in the Board packet, with all metrics on track.

Commissioner Kesterman reported the Norwood contract services rate, initially established at \$31 per hour, allowed the City to continue services. The Commissioner recommended adjusting the rate when the contract renews to \$65 per hour to cover additional administrative assistance. The other option is asking them to give HCPH all environmental services, accompanied by a 90 day out clause. The Commissioner is not sure if Norwood will accept that offer, although it remains the best option for the HCPH team. Mr. Meloy commented that HCPH needs to be fairly compensated for its time and expertise. Commissioner Kesterman commented that Norwood needs to hire a health inspector. Mr.

overdose death rate. People shared that the highest levels of stigma seemed to exist in the medical field (even higher than law enforcement). She shared that this work is going to be published. Commissioner Kesterman commented that HCPH is leading the area in its Harm Reduction Work. Mr. Meloy shared that he appreciated the aspect of hearing what the community had to say and the importance of having conversations. The presentation included 45 minutes of Board of Health continuing education.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson reported that cost methodology was used to inform all fee recommendations for environmental health programs. Assessments were done to see where HCPH stands with fees and various programs when compared with other local health departments in Ohio. Mr. Davidson recommended that fees be adjusted for Food Service Operations, Retail Food Establishments, Food Safety Training classes, Public Swimming Pool, and Public Accommodation Facility license fees. The adjustments that are being recommended are approximately 5-6 percent for most of fee categories, while some range to 25-30 percent increase. There will be public notice put out for a hearing. More details are in the Board packet.

Mr. Davidson also shared that in August, he is asking the Board to certify the unpaid sewage treatment system operation inspection fees to the County Auditor. It is authorized by Ohio Revised Code. More details are in the Board packet. As of today, there are 546 parcels that would qualify for this, with some \$73,000 in fees to put toward the tax duplicates. There is still time for people to get their payments in, so that number might change. Ms. Chin commented that this will go on their tax bill.

7. Unfinished Business: None.

8. Finances

The July 2022 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 White Water expenditures.

9. New Business:

Resolution H: Certification of Delinquent Sewage Fees

Hamilton County General Health District Board of Health approved the attached list of names for delinquent sewage fees dated August 8, 2022 to be certified to the Hamilton County Auditor's office.

Mr. Meloy moved to approve Resolution H.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Resolution to close offices for 2 hours on October 5, from 11:30-1:30

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the Resolution.

Meloy encouraged Commissioner Kesterman to do what he needed to make sure that the agency is not lowering ~~our~~ standards or putting people in an unsafe environment.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director reported that there is a COVID Bivalent Vaccine booster that should be available in September. The vaccine which has been developed based on current circulating variants. The BA.5 variant grew to 90 percent of cases between May and August, demonstrating its high transmission rates.

Dr. Feagins shared a study on 528 Monkeypox infections at 43 sites in 16 countries. 41 percent of those cases were also co-infected with HIV. 95 percent of these cases presented with a rash. 13 percent were hospitalized for pain control and bacterial infections. Monkeypox testing is sent to ARUP reference lab, LabCorp, or ODH lab. There is a vaccine for Smallpox that was approved in 2018, that is also used for Monkeypox. Once you are infected, there is lifelong immunity for Monkeypox, which negates the need for a vaccine among those previously infected. Unlike Smallpox, Monkeypox will never be eradicated because there is an animal reservoir. He shared the CDC/ODH vaccine strategy, which recommends TPOXX treatment. TPOXX can be given orally instead of as an IV (which is extremely painful). It has been shown to help reduce pain in lesions and help them heal within 24-48 hours. Dr. Feagins expects to have more doses available soon.

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 that the clinic vaccinated its first Monkeypox patient last week. Protocols are currently being developed. The team is preparing to be able to vaccinate more patients.

Dr. Mooney mentioned the WeTHRIVE! link that is in the Board packet, which explains the Community Health Assessment is. Several staff were interviewed.

The Harm Reduction team met with County Administration and share the Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative. Hamilton County indicated an interest in joining the initiative.

i.) Harm Reduction Presentation

Shana Merrick, Director of Harm Reduction, shared the Hamilton County SAFE Services participant interview findings. She shared that the interviews were done over 30 days. The interviews consisted of actual conversations with participants. One of the first questions asked is, "Are we providing the tools to use drugs safely?" 97 percent of interviewees indicated yes. Another question asked was "What is the number one way to make using drugs safer for you?" and the highest response was to stop using drugs, which indicates that more conversations need to happen. This helps professionals know that lectures aren't needed about drug usage, but rather to meet people where they are. Ms. Puthoff asked if the answers were pre-written, or if people came up with them themselves? Ms. Merrick answered that people gave these answers themselves. Opportunities need to be taken to decrease the

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

10. Adjournment

Mr. Meloy moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m.
Mr. Brett seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: September 6, 2022.


Elizabeth A. Kelly, President *JANIA MELoy*


Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

