

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
January 9, 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
James Brett
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.
Mark Rippe

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Mike Samet, Public Information Officer

Guests: Amanda Mason, Fountains Transitional Care (Clean Kitchen)

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Mr. Davidson read the list of 14 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Amanda Mason was present to accept the award on behalf of Fountains Transitional Care.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Meloy moved to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022 Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Brett moved to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022 public hearing.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Public Comment: none

6. Health Commissioner's & Community Health Services Report

Commissioner Kesterman reported COVID cases have been on a downward trend for the past several weeks. The County remains in the "medium" risk designation. There remain

highly infectious variants of concern circulating in the U.S. as well as locally. The agency vaccination center remains active, although demand is reduced to an average of 10-20 per day.

Influenza remains active, although appears to have possibly peaked. Dr. Feagins added that in Australia, there was only one recorded influenza peak, which may help predict flu in the northern hemisphere. The agency also continues to offer mpox vaccine.

HCPH is currently monitoring the measles outbreak in Franklin County. Dr. Feagins reported that Columbus identified four index cases, one of whom did not isolate and are though responsible for the transmission. Columbus now has 75 percent of the measles cases identified in the U.S.

Commissioner Kesterman reported the House Bill 463 and Senate Bill 324 have “sun-setted,” although we will continue to keep an eye on legislative activity in these areas. The legislature closed a loophole and implemented legislation to legalize the distribution of fentanyl test strips.

State legislature has changed the process by which food programs are audited. The new process will test inspector knowledge vs. the current system requiring multiple violations to be recorded. Finally, House Bill 503 prohibiting local legislation on tobacco was vetoed by the Governor.

The District Advisory Council will hold its annual meeting March 14. This will be the first in-person meeting in two years, as the pandemic has necessitated meeting virtually. Dr. Kelly’s next term on the Board of Health will be voted on by the Council.

Mr. Rippe asked about employee retention numbers. Commissioner Kesterman responded that the agency recorded nine resignations during the third quarter of 2022. Two were terminations – one during and one post probation. For the remainder, there was one retirement, while six left to pursue other opportunities, including four pursuing work out-of-state. There was no “pattern” of resignations from a single department. Commissioner Kesterman shared that he reviews exit interviews and a common theme continues to be pursuing work that is fully remote. Currently HCPH employees in compatible positions are able to work two days per week from home. There is a benefit from working together in the office and building comradery. Commissioner Kesterman reported that vacancies are filled on average in approximately six weeks once the position is posted.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director’s Report

Dr. Feagins highlighted the relationship between public health and sports medicine, both of which are areas of his work. The overlap includes concussion guidelines, sports hygiene, sudden cardiac arrest, nutrition and eating disorders, among others. There is heightened awareness of sudden cardiac arrest following the case of the professional football player at a Bengals game. Chance of survival from cardiac arrests decreases with increasing minutes until defibrillation is applied. Mr. Brett asked the cost of an automatic external defibrillator (AED), to which Dr. Feagins responded approximately \$800. There are several

legislative actions providing guidelines for sports teams and concussion, sudden cardiac arrest and training for coaches.

Dr. Feagins reported that cardiovascular conditions are currently the leading cause of maternal mortality, followed by infection/sepsis and cardiomyopathy. Dr. Kelly added that 36 percent of maternal deaths are pregnancy related, while the remaining leading cause is overdose. Other leading causes include suicide and intimate partner homicide.

Dr. Feagins concluded his report with a brief discussion on gambling addiction, as sports betting is now legal in Ohio. Betting provides a “rush” that can lead to addiction. Symptoms can include making bigger bets more often.

(b) Department of Environmental Health Services

Mr. Davidson reported receiving a new supply of COVID test kits that were quickly pushed out prior to the holidays. Recipients included faith-based organizations, Hamilton County Job and Family Services among others. Commendations to the team for quickly getting kits out prior to people congregating for the holidays.

The Emergency Preparedness Division recently hosted a cohort of first year medical students from the University of Cincinnati as part of a community health service-learning program. This is part of the agency’s strategic plan to expand collaboration and partnerships with academic institutions.

Mr. Davidson reported that the Plumbing Division is working through a contract with Warren County to conduct medical gas inspections at the new Mercy Health Kings Mills hospital.

Mr. Davidson concluded his report with a success story on a condemned home ultimately made livable. Mr. Brett cited Tucker Stone and Tony Buschle for their professional and compassionate work during difficult circumstances.

7. Finances

The December 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.

Mr. Varner provided a year-end financial review. HCPH received 107 percent of its 2022 budgeted revenues and recorded an overall favorable variance of \$2.25 million. Total expenditures were 86 percent of 2022 budget, with personnel costs comprising nearly 90 percent of agency budget. General Fund increased by some \$500,000 and \$1.83 million more than budgeted deficit. Total grant activity for the year was \$11.7 million.

Ms. Puthoff asked about the naloxone grant. Mr. Varner indicated that the grant has shifted and a new grant for which we are applying will cover naloxone and other initiatives beginning in early March.

8. New Business:

a) Medical Director Contract

Ms. Puthoff asked if the proposed contract is the same as previous, to which Commissioner Kesterman responded that only the dates have changes.

Mr. Rippe moved to approve the medical director contract.

Mr. Brett seconded the motions

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

b) HCPH Personnel Manual: Tuition Reimbursement

Commissioner Kesterman asked for a motion to approve a change in the policy to align with Hamilton County's current policy. The new language clarifies that employees who end employment with HCPH are required to reimburse the agency a prorated share of tuition assistance based on length of employment following completion of degree. While this is not a change in practice, it does provide clarity within policy. Mr. Rippe asked if termination should indicate "for cause." Commissioner Kesterman responded that if employees voluntarily leave, they would still be responsible for tuition program repayment.

Mr. Meloy moved to approve the Tuition Reimbursement update.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motions

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

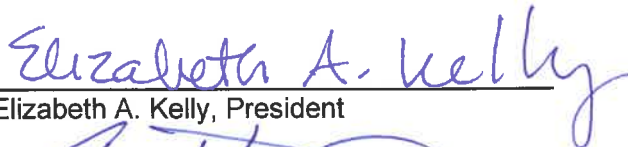
9. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: February 13, 2023.



Elizabeth A. Kelly, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner