

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
October 11, 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 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

Guests: Gregg Pancero, Trio Bistro
Garth Truter, Chick-Fil-A Kenwood

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of 23 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Gregg Pancero, from Trio Bistro and, Garth Truter, from Chick-Fil-A Kenwood were present to receive their awards.

4. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2021 Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Public Comment: None.

6. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman was pleased to share that many metrics indicate that the second COVID-19 peak is winding down. Commissioner Kesterman reviewed a recent quarantine situation in a school within the agency's jurisdiction. Ms. Puthoff asked what happened after the quarantine order was sent to the parents. The parents refrained from sending the

quarantined student to school. While some school districts around the State are seeing relaxed guidelines, Hamilton County schools have, by and large, remained compliant.

Commissioner Kesterman reported hospitalizations are at 529 with 156 in the ICU and 123 on ventilators. These numbers are beginning to decline over the last 30 days. Ages 50-79 have the most hospital admissions. The CDC's COVID-19 map still shows the entire state of Ohio in high transmission, but the numbers are beginning to trend in a downward direction.

In Hamilton County, the vaccination rate for those over 12 years old is 70 percent. Commissioner Kesterman reviewed and discussed the percentage vaccinated by age group. While progress is being made, there is still work to do. The vaccination gift cards have helped to increase numbers only slightly. The FDA is meeting October 14 to discuss the Moderna booster and October 15 to discuss the Janssen booster for 18+. Review of Pfizer's request to amend its Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to allow vaccinations for children 5-11 years of age is anticipated October 26. Local providers continue to provide vaccine, and many offer the Pfizer booster as well.

Commissioner Kesterman reported that thanks to the dedication of the HCPH team, the Program Implementation Plan is 11 percent ahead of last year at this time. Assistant Health Commissioners, Dr. Mooney and Mr. Davidson will share more in their reports tonight.

Finance Officer, Greg Varner, will present the 3rd quarter financial update. Commissioner Kesterman is pleased to share that by year-end, HCPH will be ahead of budget plan. The 2020 State Audit was complex due to the frequent grant guideline changes and increases in grant funding. Many thanks to Mr. Varner and the finance team for handling the many changes while achieving a near perfect audit.

Mr. Rippe asked if the vaccine boosters are being tracked. Yes, the boosters are tracked in the state system.

Mr. Rippe congratulated Commissioner Kesterman for his recent appointment to the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners Board.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Feagins reported that 18 percent of all patients in hospitals are there for treatment of COVID-19. The mortality rate for patients on a ventilator is around 50 percent. The case rate has started to come down, but it will be four-to-six weeks before the decrease is realized in hospitals. Delta is still the dominant strain, and it is pushing out the other COVID-19 strains. Breakthrough cases (hospitalized patients who were fully vaccinated) are trending at eight percent in this region. Pfizer breakthrough cases seem to be the most common. Patient obesity is another factor in these cases.

Pfizer is submitting an EUA for vaccine for ages 5-11. The under-18 age group accounts for 27 percent of cases, which is 22 percent of the population. Dr. Feagins explained the number of vaccinations by age group that are needed to prevent future hospitalization over a six-month period. A typical influenza season has 50-150 deaths per day. COVID-19 peaked at 2,000 deaths per day. A recent Johns Hopkins study showed that childhood

vaccinations in general reduce overall death by nine percent. . Indoor sports make vaccination even more important in addition to reducing crowd density and increasing ventilation as we go into winter.

Development of oral treatments is more complex than injectable treatments. Molnupiravir (Merck) developed an oral treatment which is expected to be authorized by the FDA, but there will be limited supply. Ms. Puthoff asked if it prevents a person from contracting COVID-19. No, it is given upon the onset of symptoms and prevents the virus from growing (making someone sicker) and reduces hospitalizations by more than 50 percent.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considers post-acute sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC) or "long COVID" a disability as of July 2021. There are 12 domains for establishing a clinical case definition in adults and a separate case definition is necessary for children.

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 Harm Reduction staff are settled in new office space. The new space is working out great. We currently have a rotation for administration to have office hours at the space as well as several other divisions that provide support for the Harm Reduction Program.

The next competitive Ohio Equity Institute RFA was released. One adjusted change in this application process is the requirement to have a Racial Equity Coordinator as part of the program. There will likely be some crossover opportunity for Kurstin Jones, current coordinator.

Epidemiology has only one Program Implementation Plan metric behind schedule. Progress on the AHEAD tool has been delayed as the Epi team is ramping up surveillance activities. An additional person is being hired to assist.

The Harm Reduction team is making progress on its metrics. HIV testing has increased, and we now have a full-time person dedicated to coordinating the Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) with others from different disciplines and sectors. The diversity of the OFR team provides views from different lenses which is beneficial in trying to understand factors that lead up to an overdose death.

With the approach of flu season, the Disease Prevention team expects the only metric behind schedule, the vaccination metric, to increase in 4th quarter.

Mr. Rippe asked about the HCPH app for collecting syringes. Dr. Mooney explained the team created a Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) for our trained Harm Reduction team to safely collect and dispose of syringes. By utilizing a feature in the new app, citizens can notify HCPH of a found syringe and our team will respond within 24 hours. The data also helps to identify areas that need more Harm Reduction services. Mr. Brett asked how we educate the public how to respond when they encounter discarded syringes. Environmental Services has information, but HCPH can work to disseminate education in more ways.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, was pleased to share the Program Implementation Plan is trending positively relative to last quarter and last year. The metrics are rebounding in food safety education as well as backflow surveys and sewage treatment systems mapped. Surprisingly, the food service and retail food metrics are exceeding benchmarks. Commercial plumbing permitting is a function of the economy. Waste Management metrics are also on schedule. Lead exposures are up, which is attributed to kids going back to the doctor following a lull in office visits during the pandemic.

In the Board packet is a copy of the Ohio EPA Waste Management annual audit. The report indicated HCPH is in substantial compliance, no findings or deficiencies were noted, and they were complimentary of our program and Waste Management staff.

There were two condemnations this past month. Full details are in the Board packet.

7. Finances

Finance Officer, Greg Varner, reviewed the 2021 third quarter financial report, discussing year-to-date progress and variances. HCPH revenue remains stronger than anticipated and expenditures are less than originally budgeted. Overall, HCPH is fiscally strong for 2021.

Mr. Varner explained there was one noncompliance finding from the 2020 State Audit pertaining to the Public Records Policy. HCPH's records custodian document was dated January 2021 which did not count for 2020. There were verbal comments from the Audit on term changes mentioned in the Auditor of State (AOS) bulletins that were not in the original audit submission. There were errors totaling \$450 in the Schedule of Federal Award Expenditures and staff have a plan to resolve this in the future by reviews with the State to ensure HCPH numbers are compatible with state figures. There was a coronavirus grant indirect cost comment due to late information from the State and inability to correct the error prior to year-end.

The September 2021 Disbursement Report is included in the Board packet.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

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

8. Unfinished Business: None.

9. New Business

Mr. Meloy moved to approve Resolution C: Revisions to the 2021 Revised Budget

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Dr. Kelly asked for clarification on the increased birth certificate numbers. Mr. Varner reviews the three-year averages and we are well ahead of the averages. The Cincinnati Health Department is not currently providing birth certificates in person, so people are coming to HCPH to get them.

Mr. Brett moved to approve Resolution D: Supplemental Appropriation for Vital Statistics with the correction to remove "additional personnel" language.

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

Mr. Rippe congratulated HCPH staff on their Program Implementation Plan progress, the Solid Waste team for its positive annual Ohio EPA review, and the Finance team for great work on the State audit. Thanks to Rebecca Stowe for leading the strategic planning retreat and to everyone who worked on it. Great job!

10. Executive Session

Ms. Puthoff moved to go to Executive Session to discuss pending litigation matters at 5:16 p.m.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to end Executive Session where no action was taken at 5:46 p.m.

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

11. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

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

Next Board of Health meeting: November 8, 2021.



Mark A. Rippe, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

