

Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
February 13, 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
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: Kris Traly, Linda Howard, Patricia Mitchell, Loveland City Schools

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Mr. Davidson read the list of 16 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Kris Traly, Linda Howard and Patricia Mitchell were present to accept the award on behalf of Loveland City Schools.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Brett moved to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2023 Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Public Comment: none

6. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman reported COVID cases have continued downward. County vaccination rates for the bivalent booster are lower than 50 percent but mirror national figures. Influenza cases, while rapidly rising early in the season, have dropped significantly.

The agency's Community Health Improvement Plan metrics were all on target for 4Q 2022. The Program Implementation Plan achieved or exceeded more than 97 percent of metrics

performing at “exceeding/complete” metrics. The Strategic Plan achieved desired benchmarks for 4Q.

Mr. Kesterman reported that the lease extension for 184 E. McMillan is in process. The County Administrator has signed the lease and awaits signature from the building owner. The lease provides for two years of occupancy with a six-month “out” clause available for both parties.

The Public Health Accreditation Board has reopened its submission portal. HCPH’s entry will be uploaded shortly. Mr. Rippe asked how other boards of health are completing accreditation processes, to which Commissioner Kesterman replied that approximately 70 percent of Ohio health departments are currently accredited.

Commissioner Kesterman asked the Board to consider two areas of new business: 1) an increase in budget for nursing staff; and 2) consideration of bylaws for the Board of Health. Hamilton County Public Health is competing with hospitals and healthcare systems for nurses. These systems pay considerably more for nursing positions. The high volumes in the tuberculosis and Children with Medical Handicaps (CMH) programs require additional professional staff. The resolution for the Board’s consideration will allow for the necessary funds to cover costs to adjust salaries for registered nurses, from 55k to 65k per year, and fund two additional positions in the Disease Prevention clinic. The adjustments will hopefully be sufficient to attract new nurses and retain current staff. Mr. Rippe asked about activity in the TB program, to which Commissioner Kesterman responded that there are currently 15 active cases, each of which requires many interactions. Dr. Feagins added that each case can require 20-30 contacts and that extreme cases of drug resistant TB can cost approximately \$300,000 to treat. Dr. Kelly added that current CMH case load is impossible to cover at current staff levels.

Staff Reports

(b) Medical Director’s Report

Dr. Feagins reported that *Candida auris* cases in Southwest Ohio are particularly notable, as 76 of 90 Ohio cases are in Hamilton County. He reported that region physicians were alert to looking for infections and that there are cases identified in long term care facilities. There is currently a work group comprised of regional infection prevention staff to examine and react to the issue.

The COVID-19 public health emergency officially ends May 11, 2023. At that time, vaccination and treatment will transition to commercial markets. It is expected that costs for vaccine will be approximately \$130, while a course of Paxlovid will cost approximately \$500. The current supply of Novavax vaccines expires February 28, and no more will be ordered. In nursing home settings there have been more cases among staff than residents as 82 percent of residents and 76 percent of staff in Ohio have completed primary series of vaccination.

The Mpox health emergency ended January 31, 2023. The case numbers have dropped into the single digits from 400 cases during the summer.

Unintentional drug overdose deaths in the US increased 16 percent in the U.S. in 2021. There is a current concern with the drug xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, currently being used as an adulterant in drug supplies. As this drug is not an opioid, it does not respond to naloxone treatment.

(c) Department of Community Health Services

Ms. Lindner reported that the agency's clinical services can be divided into four areas: TB, STI/HIV, immunization, and x-ray. TB and STI/HIV consume the majority of resources (+90 percent). She also reported on the challenges of treating syphilis cases and tracking potential partners. Dr. Kelly inquired about available data on congenital syphilis cases, to which Ms. Lindner responded that she would have statistics at next Board meeting.

Commissioner Kesterman inquired if the Board liked the clinical services slide and chart reporting mechanism. Board members unanimously agreed with the format.

(d) Department of Environmental Health Services

Mr. Davidson provided an overview on the Evans Landscaping enforcement action. The consent order specifies \$550,000 in penalties for future violations of the order. A penalty of \$137,500 has been paid to Little Miami Conservancy. Mr. Rippe inquired about restrictions on using fine dollars, to which Mr. Davidson replied that they are for construction and demolition debris use. Additional penalties of \$7,500 have been paid for violations of the consent order. Payments to satisfy the remainder of the \$550,000 are forthcoming over the next year

Mr. Davidson reported that Waste Management director, Chuck DeJonckheere was featured on WXXU radio participating on a panel to discuss lead abatement in homes.

Mr. Davidson updated a report on the agency's animal exposure and rabies prevention program. This is the time of year health departments report incidents to the Ohio Department of Health. There were 743 exposures reported in 2022. Mr. Rippe inquired as to the origin of animal bite reports, to which Mr. Davidson replied healthcare and law enforcement are the primary sources.

7. Finances

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

Mr. Brett moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

8. New Business:

a) Resolution A: Hamilton County Board of Health Bylaws

The Board reviewed and had no recommended edits to the proposed bylaws as drafted.

Mr. Rippe asked to table discussion until Ms. Puthoff has had a chance to review. Board unanimously agreed to table until next Board meeting.

b) Resolution B: Increased Personnel Cost for Tuberculosis and Children With Medical Handicaps

Mr. Meloy moved to approve Resolution B.
Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

9. Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters and Acquisition of Real Estate

Mr. Meloy moved to go into Executive Session at 5:24 p.m.
Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

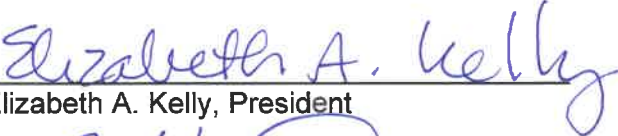
Mr. Rippe moved to end the Executive session at 5:47 p.m.
Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Dr. Kelly moved to send a letter commending Dr. Feagins' work as Medical Director to Mercy Health management.
Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

10. Adjournment

Mr. Rippe moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:49 p.m.
Mr. Brett seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: March 13, 2023.


Elizabeth A. Kelly, President


Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner