

**Hamilton County General Health District**  
**SPECIAL MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**April 2, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4:00 p.m., James Brett, President, called to order the special conference call 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  
James Brett, Vice President  
Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D.  
Dan Meloy  
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Interim Health Commissioner  
Dr. Jennifer Mooney, Assistant Health Commissioner  
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director  
Steffanie Taylor, HR Officer  
Mr. Mike Samet  
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer

Guests: Kathy Downs, Jim LaBarbara, and Charles Tassell

**3. Interim Health Commissioner's Update**

Interim Commissioner Kesterman reported that this agency has pulled together during these challenging times. Yesterday's press release shared that Hamilton County has experienced two COVID-19 deaths so far; both were males with underlying health conditions. HCPH staff are working extremely hard and express our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of the patients who died. These deaths are tragic, and we are doing everything in our power to flatten the curve and prevent as many of these unfortunate outcomes as we can.

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director, Amy Acton, MD, MPH, is working to speed up the test results. Numbers are updated daily at [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov) which has an interactive dashboard of COVID-19 statistics by county. Dr. Acton has given HCPH high praise for our efforts to flatten the curve. The local peak is expected in late April.

HCPH is aligning with the State of Ohio's stay at home orders. In the business community, there is a high call volume to HCPH from employees that are afraid to go to work. At HCPH, essential staff are following business guidelines and urge all essential business to follow the business guidelines as well. Only the HCPH lobby is open to the public for drop-off and pickup service and social distancing is enforced. Staff are working from home where possible and inspection staff are observing distancing guidelines. Environmental staff are only doing complaint inspections. Environmental Health has managed a significant number of calls regarding business closures and has done an excellent job managing these. Plumbing, Water Quality and Waste Management staff are doing inspections at businesses and job sites but

require that contractors and business owners provide a minimum of six feet. Some of their services have been cancelled to reduce public interaction.

We work to use education to gain compliance and when needed, reminders from the police have been effective. Epidemiologists and Disease Investigators are actively monitoring nearly 219 close contacts in Hamilton County. Dr. Feagins will share more about an Alternative Care Center that is under construction at Duke Energy Convention Center. Interim Commissioner Kesterman urged all citizens to reduce the frequency of their contact with others and to be responsible for self-distancing.

Mr. Rippe inquired about closed restaurants and the re-open procedure. Legally they can re-open without HCPH intervention; however, HCPH staff will visit as many as they can when they re-open and some restaurants may not re-open because of the financial impact that this has had on them.

#### **4. Medical Director's Report**

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director reported that getting tests and test result turnaround time are still key issues. For those quarantined, negative test results are essential to getting mission critical individuals (i.e. health care professionals) back onto the front lines. Healthcare facilities are gearing up for the peak to hit anywhere from April 10 to May 14. The highest peak projected is 5,400 cases in our Tri-State eight county region. The math for our number of beds does not add up and we need twice the number of ventilators that we have on hand. Governor DeWine asked Ohio's health systems to come up with a plan and local leaders are collaborating on the plan. We are currently on Level 1 which uses current ICU capabilities to care for patients. Level 2 is expanding ICU capabilities into other units which gets us close to projected peak numbers. Level 3 would require the development of an Alternative Care Site. The Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of the four health systems, who meet daily, asked Interim Commissioner Kesterman to contact EMA and instigate the National Guard to come evaluate a site for alternative care.

The Alternative Care Center would be used as a discharge hospital. COVID-19 patient care is averaging 17 days. We can stay on Level 2 if we can divert post-acute care to an alternative care facility freeing up critical care space at the hospitals. The Health Collaborative's Task Force with the National Guard have determined it would be most efficient for UC Health to be the unified command at the Alternative Care Center. Our initial request is to set up 500 beds with the ability to scale up as needed. Everyone is working together to get ready. The information is changing daily. PPE for the Alternative Care Center is utmost concern.

Mr. Rippe asked about hospital system's satellite facilities. Many facilities have been evaluated and it was determined that the Alternative Care Center at Duke Energy Convention Center will be the most efficient for delivery and optimization of care. Some satellite facilities may be used for non-COVID-19 medical care.

Mr. Rippe thanked Dr. Feagins and all HCPH staff for all their hard work and long hours during this pandemic.

Dr. Kelly had to leave the call at 4:30 p.m.

#### **5. New Business:**

- a) Personnel Policy Revisions Temporary Overtime Compensation-Exempt Employees Section 3.4-1A. Ms. Puthoff recommended removing the exemption of Interim Health Commissioner and the Board concurred.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve Personnel Policy Revisions Temporary Overtime Compensation-Exempt Employees Section 3.4-1A with the deletion of exemption of Interim Health Commissioner.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

- b) Personnel Policy Temporary Amendment to Sick Leave Policy Section 4.1. More changes may be needed based on new information just released about federal guideline on grant staffing. We still need to address present day, and we will revisit again at the April 13 Board meeting.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve Personnel Policy Temporary Amendment to Sick Leave Policy Section 4.1.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

- c) Personnel Policy Temporary Amendment to Outside Employment Conflict Section 2.10-B4.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve Personnel Policy Temporary Amendment to Outside Employment Conflict Section 2.10-B4.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

- d) Next Board Meeting April 13, 2020

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to meet on April 13 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom Conference Call, if Dr. Kelly is not available at that time, then the meeting time will be the regular time at 6:30 p.m.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Charles Tassell asked for Ohio's recovery statistics. Interim Commissioner Kesterman explained that the data in that category is not precise and that is why the state is not sharing those statistics. Mr. Tassell would like to be able to share success stories of everyone's efforts. Interim Commissioner Kesterman referred to the ODH website and the data drill down to the county level. Statistics without intervention are hypothetical; however, the Ohio State University and ODH projections are the best science available.

The Board again thanked Interim Commissioner Kesterman and HCPH staff for all their hard work. Interim Commissioner Kesterman will share that feedback with staff and thanked the Board for their support.

## **6. Adjournment**

**Mr. Brett** moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: April 13, 2020



Mark Rippe, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Interim Health Commissioner