

Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
July 13, 2020 – 4:00 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, conducted by conference call, 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
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Stephanie Taylor, Human Resource Officer

Guests: Ryan Adcock, Cradle Cincinnati Executive Director
Stefan Densmore, Village of Golf Manor Mayor

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Interim Commissioner Greg Kesterman read the list of five Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Brett moved to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2020 Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Interim Health Commissioner's Report and Environmental Health Services Report

Interim Commissioner Kesterman reviewed updated ODH and HCPH COVID-19 statistics. The Ohio National Guard conducted local testing at the end of June and early July in targeted zip codes. There were several last-minute glitches in logistics, coordination, and funding that Interim Commissioner Kesterman was able to resolve successfully. A big thank you to HCPH staff and host communities who stepped up to complete pre and post tasks to pull this off. There was a huge turnout, in some cases, traffic was lined up around the block. Of the seven locations, the lowest number of tests was 602 and the highest number of tests was 1,083. The seven days of testing resulted in the completion of 6,100 tests.

Contact tracing is averaging 74 new cases per day and they are managing approximately 700 active cases. The 2020 grant is for \$540K and the grant for 2021 is \$1.1M. Contracted staff are up to 28 tracers, 5 outbreak contractors, and 9 volunteers assisting with close contacts.

The Ohio Alert System is broken down by county. Both Hamilton and Butler Counties are approaching Level 4 Public Emergency. Interim Commissioner Kesterman explained the types of data and frequency of data updates that populate the alert system. Over 60% of Ohioans are considered high-risk based on CDC guidance. High-risk individuals are an increased risk of severe illness and should take every precaution to guard against contracting COVID-19, including following higher risk level guidance.

Face masks are important to help deter the spread of COVID-19. Since the governor's mandate, significant improvements in the number of people masked have been observed. Complaint statistics and response were reviewed. Businesses are encouraged to post "face masks required" signs. HCPH strives to provide education and materials over enforcement. HCPH calls each business in which a complaint is received. Upon third complaint, HCPH goes to the business and provides a sign. Additional complaints will be reported to the jurisdiction that may pursue additional action against locations and individuals that are non-compliant.

Mr. Rippe asked if all the complaints were mask related. Yes, they are about employees and customers not complying.

Interim Commissioner Kesterman explained a county map highlighting COVID-19 hospitalized cases per sewershed. HCPH Epi team and Division of Water Quality worked together to provide the exact number of known COVID-19 cases located within each sewershed for all of Hamilton County (including Cincinnati, Norwood, and Springdale). This data is helpful in COVID-19 monitoring and has gained national interest. Both USEPA and CDC were impressed with the data and the ability to "zero in" on particular sewershed which could show hotspots ahead of when cases are reported in the more traditional method.

Rebecca Stowe, Performance Management & Grants Coordinator, compiled and submitted HCPH's 2020 PHAB annual report. This report is a requirement for accredited health departments. PHAB congratulated HCPH for their work and full accolades are in the Board packet.

Mr. Rippe and the Board congratulated Ms. Stowe and staff for the annual report and positive feedback.

Interim Commissioner Kesterman and Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney reviewed the Second Quarter Program Implementation Plan (PIP) results. It is no surprise that COVID-19 response has impacted HCPH's ability to all hit metrics, but the negative impact is not as bad as expected. Mr. Varner will provide second quarter financial results later tonight.

Mr. Brett said great job by everybody to keep up on their normal busy schedule and pick up the COVID-19 response. Dr. Kelly is very impressed with staff and their nimbleness and response to ODH. Mr. Brett thanked Dr. Mooney for participating tonight while on vacation.

Commissioner Kesterman introduced Ryan Adcock from Cradle Cincinnati who provided a 2020 Infant Mortality Report. Mr. Adcock thanked HCPH for their outstanding leadership during this pandemic and for their ongoing collaboration with Cradle Cincinnati. Mr. Adcock explained the definition of the rate and criteria of the data. 2019 Trends show Hamilton County with 3 more deaths than 2018 with an average rate of 9.0. For the second year in a row, the number of preterm birth-related deaths in Hamilton County was lower than the historical average. Hamilton County is still substantially higher than the state and national averages. We are seeing initial signs that the racial disparity in extreme preterm birth is shrinking. However, black infant mortality in Hamilton County and the United States continues to be far greater than other racial and ethnic groups. The local leading cause is pre-term birth. The birth defect leading cause is cardiac anomalies. Sleep-related deaths rose in the first half of 2019 then dropped sharply with focused, collaborative and community-wide efforts. The full annual report is available online at <https://www.cradlecincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2019-Cradle-Cincinnati-Annual-Report-Web-.pdf>. Mr. Adcock thanked founding member Dr. Kelly for her ongoing leadership and partnership.

Mr. Rippe thanked Mr. Adcock for his presentation and Cradle Cincinnati's great work. Mr. Brett was glad to see their recent positive press. Ms. Puthoff asked about the risk factors that are resulting in improved numbers. We have the lowest rate of smoking we have ever had, and community efforts in high risk neighborhoods are making a difference. Stress levels are being monitored for its impact. Mr. Meloy asked about community activism efforts. A pilot was done in Avondale that was extremely successful. So much of today's work is to scale up that work. Women from each neighborhood are in community forums, assigned nurse case managers, and assigned a community health worker to address social needs. There is urgency to address expecting mothers in those populations as early as possible. Dr. Kelly thanked Mr. Adcock who does not get enough credit for his terrific leadership in this important work. The presentation shall be credited to the Board for 30 minutes of continuing education.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director reported the Infection Control Working Group continues to meet weekly and they make recommendations to providers and the multi-agency task force. Dr. Feagins reviewed clinical practice guidelines that were created for congregate care patients who do not require hospitalization. Dr. Feagins reviewed protocol for healthcare workers who test positive, co-mingling COVID-19 patients, addressing staffing limitations, and healthcare worker quarantine protocols. Full details are in the Board packet.

Dr. Feagins presented updated COVID-19 statistics, percent of beds in Southwestern Ohio hospitals, R factors, and test results by county and region. There are more COVID-19 patients in the hospital, but the acuity and death rates are less. Mr. Rippe asked if patients' age is a contributor. Dr. Feagins sited average age is now 47 and reported the treatment has rapidly evolved so we have better treatment and shorter hospital stays now. Mr. Brett asked about the different treatment drugs. Dr. Feagins reported a committee chooses the criteria and who gets it. Immediately following the media release, prices shot up. So there have been supply chain issues, but we do have a sufficient quantity. Today's therapy in Hamilton County is the best in the world.

The Board thanked Dr. Feagins for his great work and leadership throughout this pandemic.

The monthly Communicable Diseases Epi report was provided in the Board packet.

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney reviewed changes in PIP attributed to COVID-19 response. Childhood immunizations are down during the pandemic; staff are working on public education campaign prior to school reopening. Dr. Mooney is so proud of staff who are remaining positive, being strategic, and working as a team.

Mr. Rippe asked for an update on the harm reduction van acquisition. Greg Varner reported we are picking up the cargo van next week. The bid process is this month on the larger vehicle and OD2A should cover the cost.

Mr. Rippe asked about increased harm reduction syringe distribution in June seems high compared to other months. Dr. Mooney explained social distancing measures and the needs-based model changed from two weeks to a monthly supply. Now segueing back to the old distribution model.

Mr. Rippe asked about uptick in 911 dispatches. Dr. Mooney explained that the extent that people reach out ebbs and flows with the pandemic. This is a new landscape and staff are talking with CDC to better integrate harm reduction programming during COVID-19 response.

6. Unfinished Business: None.

7. Finances

Finance Officer Greg Varner reviewed the Second Quarter Financial Results, explaining timing variances and updated status of revenue, expenses, grants, staffing, and fund balances. HCPH is in a strong financial position.

Mr. Brett asked about other county offices re-opening if HCPH is still getting extra staff. No, HCPH has transitioned to contract employees where needed.

The June 2020 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

Mr. Meloy moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Ms. Puthoff abstained on Mayers Electric Co. Inc. and Mr. Brett abstained on White Water expenditures.

8. New Business:

Personnel Policies changes are needed based on the 2019 audit. Human Resource Officer Stephanie Taylor explained why the personnel policy manual is the best place to make an adjustment. The proposed adjustment acknowledges public records policy in two places. This adjustment mirrors the county policy. Mr. Rippe asked how existing employees are handled. Ms. Taylor explained that all staff sign off on key policies annually and this will be added.

Ms. Puthoff moved to change the Personnel Policies Sections 2.13 and 6.16 as presented.
Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to hold the August 10 Board Meeting at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to hire Greg Kesterman as the permanent Health Commissioner effective July 13, 2020.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Board Members congratulated Commissioner Kesterman and thanked him for his outstanding service as Interim Health Commissioner this year. A press release will go out.

Ms. Puthoff moved to post the Assistant Health Commissioner for Environmental Health position and open the position for applicants.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Brett and Ms. Puthoff volunteered to help with the search committee.

9. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: August 10, 2020 at 4 p.m. via Zoom.



Mark A. Rippe, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner