

Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
July 10, 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 A. Rippe

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Jacob Henderson, Epidemiologist
Todd Rademaker, HIV/STD Program Supervisor
Martha Walter, Director - Disease Prevention

Guests: Jessica Santiago and Annita Bryant (The Home at Hearthstone)
Rosemary Brown (Village of Woodlawn)
Ruby Kinsey-Mumphrey (Mayor, Village of Lincoln Heights)

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of ten Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Ms. Santiago and Ms. Bryant from The Home at Hearthstone were present to receive a six-time award.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Rippe moved to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2023, Board of Health meeting.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Presentations

Hamilton County and regional Syphilis updates: Commissioner Kesterman introduced Martha Walter and Todd Rademaker who are presenting tonight. Commissioner Kesterman thanked them for their leadership and explained to the Board it has been a rocky road of challenges in their department. He especially appreciates their resiliency and flexibility. Ms. Walter explained the Syphilis Program, ODH requirements, statistics, treatments, and grants. Treatment prescriptions are also given for patient partners through expedited partner therapy (EPT). Dr. Feagins explained the disease is a greater risk than treatment, so EPT is valuable intervention. Mr. Rademaker explained disease diagnosis, demographics, and disease investigations. Mr. Rippe commented on the local percentage of change, up 97 percent compared to other regions. Mr. Rademaker explained that other regions started increasing sooner. The population is hard to track (i.e., homelessness, mental health issues, anonymous partners). Ms. Puthoff asked what a high-risk heterosexual is. They are heterosexuals who engage in high-risk sexual behavior, e.g., unprotected sex, multiple/anonymous partners, etc. Dr. Kelly asked if any local statistics are higher than the state average. Mr. Rademaker thanked Jacob Henderson who pulled all the data. It does resemble state data. Dr. Kelly inquired about the rate of congenital syphilis. Mr. Henderson will get the rate data and follow up and he will compare Hamilton County to state and national averages. Dr. Kelly stated the challenge, if patients are not getting prenatal care, how do we find them? Dr. Feagins agreed and encouraged testing upon learning of positive pregnancy. HCPH's treatment is fast and effective. Dr. Feagins complimented the team for its diligence and pride in their work. Dr. Feagins shared that Mr. Rademaker will be one of the syphilis education panel presenters at an upcoming Association of Ohio Health Commissioner's conference, where syphilis is on the agenda as a top concern. Finding the individuals is extremely difficult and the symptoms could present as a different infection. It is important to get medical providers to conduct tests. Dr. Feagins explained new physician interns are starting and that is a great time to get in front of them and focus on the emergency departments. The Board received 40 minutes continuing education credit from this Syphilis update.

Commissioner Kesterman explained the UC Medical Student Service-Learning Project Presentation was on this agenda in error, that presentation will be at the August Board meeting.

8. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman stated that COVID continues to decline.

The demolition in the new clinic space has been completed and is now ready to start construction.

Hamilton County is researching spaces that might be able to accommodate multiple county departments.

Concerning language regarding tobacco was vetoed by the Governor, effectively removing it from the state signed budget bill so tobacco-free campuses can continue. There were no other major impacts to public health in the state budget. The House removed the additional funds for public health. Lobbying by Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) will continue to advocate for those additional funds.

The Public Health Accreditation Board overall feedback was positive, and HCPH staff were congratulated for their hard work serving our community. The Reaccreditation Report is

confidential and will be provided to the Board. Commissioner Kesterman thanked the entire team, especially during a pandemic, and Becca Stowe for managing the accreditation process.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, thanked Martha Walter for leading HCPH's transition to the Epic medical records system. Training will occur in August and the migration is on track for implementation by August 31. HCPH is the first local health department to transition to Epic. Ms. Walter shared that they are ahead of schedule and excited to get the training and have HCPH medical records online. The long-term benefits of integration of health information with other health systems will be tremendous. Mr. Rippe asked how Epic has been to work with. Ms. Walter indicated Epic has been great and supportive. Commissioner Kesterman appreciates the weekly "go live" project management status reports. Epic is excited to work with more health departments.

Dr. Feagins shared that 77 percent of blood donations have had COVID.

Dr. Feagins reviewed mosquito collection and testing statistics in the state. While no human cases of West Nile Virus, La Crosse virus, or other locally acquired mosquito borne diseases have been reported, tickborne illness Lyme Disease is increasing, making testing important.

Local air quality recording started in 1999. In early July, Cincinnati saw the highest Air Quality Index (AQI) at 183 due to the Canadian forest fires. Cincinnati is in a valley which holds in smoke and particulate matter. A local data study showed 24 hours of pollution with the highest point at midnight on July 4 into July 5.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Ms. Lindner is at a conference. Commissioner Kesterman reported on her behalf. There have been many staff changes in harm reduction. Commissioner Kesterman and Ms. Lindner are working with the team to identify leaders and staff the entire department.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson recently received the Ohio EPA's letter of concurrence regarding granting an exemption request for the New Baltimore Construction and Demolition Debris Landfill Closure. An exemption is requested for the minimum cap deficiencies where final design and build of the landfill resulted in a nominal area (0.5 acre) where outside slopes exceed 25% as prescribed in rules for a standard cap. Both the Ohio EPA and HCPH's environmental engineering consultant agreed an exemption can be approved that will meet the following criteria: "unlikely to adversely affect the public health or safety or the environment, or create a fire hazard." The next step is for the Health Commissioner to issue findings and orders formalizing the exemption approval. As in the past, staff can proceed, or the Board can formally delegate authority to the Health Commissioner to proceed. Ms. Puthoff asked questions about the exemption. HCPH staff

in addition to the Ohio EPA and the consultant support HCPH granting the exemption. There was no disagreement among the Board members that the Health Commissioner could sign the exemption request without action of the Board.

As part of The Health Collaborative's (THC) TAP Health Summer Academy healthcare career pipeline initiative for high school students, 30 students visited HCPH to get an overview of emergency preparedness and public health services. Photos are in the Board packet.

Mr. Davidson explained that local mosquito surveillance started in 2000 when the West Nile Virus came to the region as a public health concern. The unified regional focuses on surveillance, education, and abatement where needed through larviciding and removal of potential harborage conditions (i.e. standing water). The Southwest Ohio Area Regional Mosquito Task Force (SWARM) reconvened in 2016 when Zika Virus first became a concern. While SWARM is not actively meeting, the regional approach remains and HCPH continues trapping, collection, and educational efforts.

The Waste Management Division's lead abatement funding request submitted to ODH was awarded at the requested amount -- \$1 million over two years. Because the HUD grant funds are somewhat restrictive, they will be used for supplementing HUD funded projects including temporary housing during abatement project work as well as for community outreach to promote testing and referrals to the program.

Mr. Davidson reported there were four housing condemnations detailed in his report.

9. Finances

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

Mr. Brett moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

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

Greg Varner, Finance Officer, reviewed the year-to-date June 30, 2023, revenue, expenditures, fund balance reports and grant summary. The state audit begins today, and Mr. Varner asked the Board to be on the lookout for their fraud questionnaire and to respond promptly. The full report is included in the Board packet. Mr. Varner explained the difference between grant expenditures and grant revenues year-to-date is due to spending the "earned revenue" in the past deliverable grants as well as several expenditures in grants that ended June 30th and we can no longer hold onto revenue past the grant year-end and expenditures in the OD2A grant that ends in August. Mr. Rippe called out an error in the Finance memo in the Board reports, date should be June 30. Ms. Puthoff asked for the projected surplus amount. That is not available yet as there are too many variables, and the construction project could go into next year. Mr. Brett asked about the receipts narrative, and Mr. Rippe asked specifically about check scanning. Mr. Varner explained how receipts are processed, checks are scanned, and cash is deposited daily. He reviewed internal auditing procedures for this quarter, and the previous three quarters shall be credited as 15 minutes of continuing education for the Board.

10. New Business:

Guests from the Village of Woodlawn and Village of Lincoln Heights were thanked for attending and given the opportunity to ask questions. Mayor Kinsey-Mumphrey asked about the condemnation process. Commissioner Kesterman explained that HCPH responds to community complaints or concerns from local jurisdictions. Mr. Davidson explained HCPH had 18 total so far this year so far with an average of 2-4 per month with more activity in the summertime. HCPH first works closely with property owners and residents to understand the issues and work toward compliance. Mr. Brett appreciates the after photos of successful remediations. Mayor Kinsey-Mumphrey appreciates the WeThrive! mini grants too.

11. Adjournment

Mr. Rippe moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: August 14, 2023



Dan Meloy, Vice President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

