

**Hamilton County General Health District**  
**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**September 14, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4 p.m., James Brett, Vice 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: James Brett, Vice President  
Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D.  
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: None

**3. Clean Kitchen Awards**

Commissioner Kesterman read the list of 12 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**Dr. Kelly** moved to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2020 Board of Health meeting.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

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

Commissioner Kesterman reported that on the COVID-19 front, Hamilton County continues to track third in the state with 12,473 cases, 1,095 hospitalizations, and 307 deaths. This third highest ranking aligns with our third highest county population. There was a decline in cases after face masks were mandated, but the recent uptick is attributed to colleges re-opening. Butler County colleges have more cases than Hamilton County colleges. Public education communication has been increased at the colleges as well as increased support to all 178 schools.

The COVID-19 new Test and Protect Program is setting up testing sites in our community and will, upon request, go into workplaces through the remainder of 2020. Test and Protect aims to mitigate COVID-19 through rapid, efficient testing in those areas and organizations

within Hamilton County that need it the most. Hamilton County's current risk level is holding steady at 2 and is not expected to change.

There has been a decline in face mask compliance complaints. HCPH has new funding for enforcement.

Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is moving their PPE and other mutual aid supplies into HCPH's larger warehouse. This will allow for better management of supplies and accommodate the necessary cold holding units for when vaccine distribution begins.

The Board welcomed Craig Davidson back to HCPH and everyone is excited that he will be overseeing the Department of Environmental Health Services.

Commissioner Kesterman was pleased to share that HCPH's Director of Waste Management Chuck DeJonckheere has been re-appointed by the governor to a three-year term on the Materials Management Advisory Council (MMAC) who provides guidance on solid waste issues to Ohio's EPA Director.

There is an infectious waste treatment facility, GreenWay Innovations, being proposed in Sharonville, Hamilton County. The facility uses an ozone process to shred and sterilize medical waste to then be taken to Rumpke landfill. The facility permitting would come through the Ohio EPA, but licensing would come through HCPH. Based on tonnage, the estimated license fee would be \$5,000 with \$2,500 retained by HCPH to support inspection/enforcement work and \$2,500 transmitted to Ohio EPA. The Board will be notified upon a license request and will be required to take action. Commissioner Kesterman indicated that he would keep the Board updated on permit status with the Ohio EPA.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator position would further HCPH's vision "Healthy choices. Healthy lives. Healthy communities." The DEI Coordinator would help with HCPH strategy, recruiting, and focus on community needs assessment. This will ensure community messaging is on point and integration of health equity work across HCPH. Current funding plan is 50% funded by grants. There are more COVID-19 dollars through the end of 2021 for health equity. No Board motion to hire is necessary, Commissioner Kesterman is just seeking Board support to fill the position now. There is ample funding within our current budget to fund the position. Mr. Meloy asked about funding sustainability. Commissioner Kesterman reported funding 50% from the general fund initially. If there are no grants in the future, then draw down the surplus general fund balance. Dr. Kelly asked about the positions access to administration. The position would have a seat at the table with administration and will enhance HCPH's accreditation process. The Board supported filing this position.

## **Staff Reports**

### **(a) Medical Director's Report**

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director reported that electronic medical records (EMR) sharing will be expanded after November 2 due to the 21st Century Cures Act. EMR chart records must be released to other providers and to patients. This region is ahead of most as we have been sharing data for years. But releasing data to patients in real time is new as well

as releasing all clinical notes. Our region is prepared and looking to standardize clinical notes documentation. This change in medical practice is equivalent to the original protected health information privacy laws from the passage of the Health Insurance Portability And Accountability Act (HIPAA) in 1996.

Dr. Feagins thanked the Region Six Infection Control Working Group for their leadership and excellent work throughout this pandemic.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) is the governing body of athletic programs for junior and senior high schools in the state of Ohio. Under the guidance of Ohio Department of Health (ODH), interscholastic sports will return to play following the state guidelines. OHSAA continued sports play due to the unintended consequences of non-sanctioned (less compliant) clubs emerging if interscholastic sports were cancelled. Dr. Feagins explained spectator limitations and the Return to Play after COVID-19 Infection in Pediatric Patients flow chart.

Dr. Feagins reviewed a chart of Operation Warp Speed vaccine candidates, explaining the types, storage requirements, trial status, and timelines. Full details of COVID-19 treatment updates is in the Board packet.

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

Mr. Brett asked for a status on the coming flu season and how front-line healthcare providers will differentiate the flu from COVID. Dr. Feagins reported the southern hemisphere is a good predictor of the flu and they had low indicators. COVID rapid testing is better now so providers can differentiate in the emergency room. Cold weather and indoor activities are the biggest risk factors. Masks and sheltering in place should help.

#### **(b) Department of Community Health Services**

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney reported contact tracing resources are robust and HCPH is prepared for schools reopening. Staff are working hard to make certain that if HCPH sees increases in COVID-19 cases within our community this fall, we have the necessary contact tracers and outbreak investigators to comfortably manage any increase.

Contact tracing is the crucial step that follows testing. During contact tracing, staff contact each positive test to determine close contacts and provide guidance for quarantining. Staff also follow positive cases throughout their illnesses to monitor the situation and continue to provide guidance. HCPH has 21 full-time equivalent (FTE) contact tracer contractors. Most clients appreciate the follow ups. Staff have done a great job coordinating the contracted contact tracers.

HCPH also has 24 FTE contractors and eight staff assisting with outbreaks in different facilities and businesses in Hamilton County. The eight staff volunteered to help with outbreaks. As schools re-open, we expect to see an increase of outbreaks. HCPH is currently working with 31 schools, 28 nursing homes, 7 congregate living facilities, 4 health care agencies, 2 communities, 6 day cares, and 30 workplaces. We are actively looking to bring on several more contractors to assist with schools and outbreaks.

Mr. Brett commented on the two cases of congenital syphilis and how to get back to zero like last year. Dr. Mooney's staff are working on a targeted media campaign around

prevention, screening, and awareness. Staff are also working to standardize best practice language on clinical care.

**6. Unfinished Business:** None.

**7. Finances**

The August 2020 Disbursement Reports are 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. New Business:**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved hold the October 12 Board Meeting at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**9. Adjournment**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: October 12, 2020 at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

  
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Mark A. Rippe, President

  
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Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner