

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
May 13, 2024 – 4 p.m.
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Dan Meloy, 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: Dan Meloy, President
Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., Vice President
Eric Knapp
Max Miller

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, 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 Present: Brigitte Carter, UCMC NP Student
Dominique Walker, Cradle Cincinnati Senior Data Management Specialist
Meredith Shockley-Smith, Ph.D., Cradle Cincinnati Executive Director

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Assistant Health Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, read the list of seven Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2024, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Presentation

Cradle Cincinnati Annual Report: Dr. Meredith Shockley-Smith & Dominique Walker. The presentation began with Dr. Shockley-Smith thanking the Board for the time to present. Dr. Shockley-Smith noted that each “number” represents a death and that there is a family behind each number.

Ms. Walker reported that there is a decrease in the infant mortality rate in Hamilton County and illustrated with a graph. Hamilton County is below the national average for infant mortality for the first time since we have been tracking this data. Ms. Walker noted that Black infant mortality in Hamilton County and the United States is greater than any other race but noted that it is on the decline as well. Ms. Walker clarified that live birth includes criteria such as heart rate.

Racial disparities continue to be an issue for Hamilton County. Black infants in 2023 were almost 2.5 times as likely to die as White babies in Hamilton County. Ms. Walker presented the universal goal in Hamilton County for 2024 Black infant mortality rate to be at 6.4. By setting universal goals, they can better identify which families in Hamilton County need to be the focus.

Ms. Walker continued her report by looking at some of the leading infant death causes from 2019-2023. Forty-six percent of infant deaths were from preterm birth-related issues and continues to be the leading cause. Other causes of infant deaths in Hamilton County are sleep-related, birth defect-related, and other causes. The rate of preterm birth-related deaths decreases in 2023 for both Black and White infants. 2023 numbers are preliminary and include 55 total deaths. Cardiac anomalies have remained the leading birth defect-related cause of infant death over the last five years. Sleep-related infant deaths remain a major concern and a stubborn problem. Overall rates for sleep-related infant deaths remain high and remain an important contributor to the overall infant mortality rate in Hamilton County.

Dr. Shockley-Smith described the partnership with Cradle Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Health and thanked the Board for their support. Commissioner Kesterman thanked Dr. Shockley-Smith and Ms. Walker for their presentation.

8. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman noted that the April 17 measles seminar was a great collaboration of 50+ health system professionals. He thanked Dr. Feagins for his contributions to making HCPH a leader in our region and State with information sharing.

Commissioner Kesterman explained the different markers of the First Quarter Performance Report data. Highlights include the average length of employment is 6.7 years, and it is increasing. The total grant funding received (annually) is increasing. Birth certificate issuances have increased. The number of health and social service referrals decreased; however, referrals are made based on needs. The syphilis cases that are started on treatment with 14 calendar days from the date of case assignment are fluctuating. Ms. Lindner shared a specific case regarding someone with challenges who needs treatment. The team works very hard and provides creative solutions to remove barriers for treatment. The percentage of newly confirmed HIV+ clients that attend their first medical appointment <30 days of HIV+ test date is on an upward historical trend. Commissioner Kesterman displayed a graph showing the historical trend of the percentage of eligible children with medical handicap families contacted each quarter. He indicated the Board's support for ensuring appropriate staffing in the Children with Medical Handicaps (CMH) program is having a positive impact on programming.

Details of the first quarter progress on the Strategic Implementation Plan are included in the Board packet.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that he will be out of the office from June 19-26.

The Board is invited but not obligated to attend the May 21 Budget Commission Meeting. Commissioner Kesterman will report back to the Board at the June 10 meeting.

Tonight, under New Business, the Board is asked to consider closing the HCPH office from noon to four for two annual agency-wide celebrations.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, shared the first resident rotating with the sexual health clinic has started her service. We will continue to increase the number of residents and our ability to support this partnership.

Dr. Feagins expanded upon the measles seminar that took place on April 17. This seminar was a beginning point and there will be more seminars on different topics. Future seminar for tuberculosis (TB) is being planned.

Dr. Feagins reported there are no influenza H5N1 virus symptomatic or sick individuals reported in Ohio. There continues to be one human case reported in Texas associated with highly pathogenic avian influenza in cattle. The risk to the public is still considered to be low with no evidence of person-to-person transmission.

Hospitals are no longer be required to report COVID-19 data after May 1, 2024. The data from hospitals collected since March 2020 helps inform healthcare system stress, capacity, and capabilities. COVID-19 hospitalizations are around the lowest levels since the start of the pandemic. Dr. Feagins displayed a graph showing the COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100K population by Ohio regions.

May is Lyme disease awareness month. Dr. Feagins displayed a graph of Lyme disease cases from 2012 to 2021, demonstrating peaks in the summer.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency is moving marijuana classification from Schedule I to Schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act. Recreational cannabis is legal for adults over the age of 21 in 24 states (including Ohio) and polls indicate approximately 40 percent of Americans use cannabis. Dr. Feagins noted that marijuana is still considered a banned substance by NCAA and professional sports. It is still not allowed by most employers, including residency programs.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner, Ms. Lindner, congratulated two staff members who were awarded National Association of County and City Health Officials Promising Practice Awards.

Ms. Lindner noted that on May 3, a coffee chat forum was held at the FCC stadium for the Recovery Friendly Hamilton County initiative. Over 50 employers have signed on to this important initiative.

Ms. Lindner encouraged the Board to look through the Board packet to see all the work from the WeTHRIVE! team and staff members.

There will be a presentation from the Harm Reduction Staff at the June Board meeting.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, noted HCPH Plumbing Division continues to conduct inspections for Brown County. The statistics are in the Board packet.

HCPH maintains 24-hour emergency response capabilities, which allows access to HCPH staff after hours in emergency situations. For environmental concerns, the Division of Environmental Health shares responsibility for managing the after-hours phone schedule among all division staff, rotating responsibility weekly.

Mr. Davidson shared that Ohio is in the high tier of state performance for emergency preparedness from a report from Trust for America's Health. Full details are in the Board packet.

Mr. Davidson participates in Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's ImpactU Improvement Science Leadership Program. In addition to the coursework, he formed and led a team from the Environmental Health Division through a quality improvement project to apply the skills and methods presented in class. Mr. Davidson noted that overall, this has been a great learning and networking opportunity and he looks forward to being able to recommend other members of the team for invitations to apply to the program.

Mr. Davidson concluded his report with the environmental health enforcement updates included in the Board packet.

9. Finances

The April 2024 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

10. New Business:

Mr. Miller moved to close the office from 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. on September 18 and December 18 for the agency-wide celebration gatherings.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

11. Executive Session

Mr. Knapp moved to go to executive session to discuss personnel matters at 5:19 p.m.
Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Dr. Kelly made a motion to end the executive session at 5:40 p.m.
Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Executive Session ended with no decisions being made.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Meloy moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m.
Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: June 10, at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

