

**Hamilton County General Health District  
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH  
June 10, 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  
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director  
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer  
Christa Hyson, Director Emergency Preparedness  
Hannah Schilling, Community Outreach Coordinator Harm Reduction  
Darci Smith, Director Harm Reduction Division

Guests Present: Lisa Barretta, Brookwood Retirement Community  
Mackenzie Buchanan, UCMC Student  
Jeffrey Dell, Brookwood Retirement Community  
Venita Dell, Helping Young Mothers Mentors Inc.  
Abby Groene, UCMC Student  
Adam Tullius

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Clean Kitchen Awards**

Health Commissioner, Greg Kesterman, read the list of 10 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Mr. Kesterman personally thanked Brookwood Retirement Community representatives who received their award in person.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**Dr. Kelly** moved to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2024, Board of Health meeting.  
**Mr. Miller** seconded the motion.  
**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**6. Public Comment: None.**

**7. Presentation**

Harm Reduction Presentation: Darci Smith & Hannah Schilling. Ms. Smith introduced Ms. Schilling who is the Community Outreach Coordinator in the Harm Reduction Division. The name of the presentation is Stories over Stigma which is Harm Reduction's stigma intervention and education program. Ms. Schilling provided a background of her experience which includes partnering with law enforcement.

Almost 70 percent of first responders report they do not have enough time to recover in between emergent events. Ms. Schilling showed the results of an evaluation conducted among Hamilton County first responders. Within the evaluation, Ms. Schilling noted that burnout and stigma were some of the results affecting first responders.

Ms. Schilling noted the goals of the collaborative effort between Public Health, individuals with lived experience, and local fire departments. The goals of the outreach program are to reduce stigma associated with substance use disorder through the opportunity to hear the lived experiences of a person in recovery. Additional goals of the program are to highlight the important role first responders can play in an individual's recovery journey and share resources.

Ms. Schilling noted that the 1.5 hour presentations were offered to multiple fire departments. Feedback and suggestions from the program included a desire for additional information on treatment, harm reduction strategies, and resources. Ms. Schilling provided program testimonials from several first responders.

Based on feedback from the first year of the program, the new presentation that Harm Reduction will provide to first responders is called Window of Willingness. This new presentation will be offered to additional sectors including healthcare and business.

Fourteen organizations and 154 participants have participated in the program so far. Ms. Schilling noted that 95 percent of participants agree that they learned new skills, new language, and empathy toward those who struggle with substance misuse.

Emergency Preparedness Presentation: Christa Hyson, Director. Commissioner Kesterman introduced Ms. Hyson who presented information about public health emergencies of potential concern for Hamilton County. Emergency Preparedness receives funding from the Ohio Department of Health through programs such as Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Cities Readiness Initiative, BioWatch, Urban Area Security Initiative, and Medical Reserve Corps. High winds and railroad derailment potentials are the threats/hazards that have been identified as being of highest probability and concern for Hamilton County. The Emergency Preparedness Division is responsible for maintaining and exercising many of the agency's plans and response documents.

Emergency Support Functions (ESF) are coordinated through the Hamilton County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. The Emergency Preparedness Division is partnered with numerous organizations such as the American Red Cross, YMCA, first responders, healthcare providers, faith-based communities, and private businesses to name a few.

The Board and Commissioner Kesterman thanked Ms. Smith, Ms. Schilling, and Ms. Hyson for their presentations. The presentations shall be counted as 60 minutes of continuing education.

## **8. Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman began his report by updating the Board on the Solid Waste Policy Committee. Commissioner Kesterman noted that a solid waste plan is functioning, and reminded the Board that the goal is to reduce landfill waste and meet State-mandated waste diversion targets. Commissioner Kesterman provided an update on the Whitewater landfill and the solid waste plan.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that the Hamilton County Budget Commission meeting occurred and HCPH's budget with the 2025 increased annual fees passed unanimously. At next month's Board meeting, there will be an update from the Department of Environmental Health Services on Southwest Ohio Air Quality agency fees.

### **Staff Reports**

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

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, began his report by sharing the 2023-2024 influenza season recap statistics. He noted that patients hospitalized with influenza over the summer should have subtype testing to evaluate a possible novel influenza. Dr. Feagins explained a graph showing confirmed influenza associated hospitalizations in the Southwest Ohio Region. He noted that this influenza season showed a peak in infections late in the season.

Dr. Feagins continued his report with Hamilton County overdose deaths. He noted that there were 65 presumptive overdose deaths in the first quarter of 2024, down from 84 in the first quarter of 2023. Dr. Feagins noted in a graph that total presumptive overdose death cases are going down.

Additionally, Dr. Feagins discussed the process of completing a death certificate in Ohio. Death certificates are signed electronically, and the attending physician is to sign the death certificate within 48 hours of a death. He added that the Hamilton County Coroner and Ohio State Coroners Association collaborated to produce a 10-minute video through the State Medical Board of Ohio.

The H5N1 virus has three human cases nationally so far and no symptomatic or sick individuals have been reported in Ohio. Two vaccine types are available from the National Strategic Stockpile.

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

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

Assistant Health Commissioner, Ms. Lindner, reported that HCPH is finalizing a document on drug trends for organizations and the general public related to nitazenes which are being identified through drug seizure data as well as through the HCPH drug checking program in conjunction with the SAFE Services van.

Ms. Lindner was pleased to share that the HIV Clinical Services grant that was applied for in January was awarded. HCPH is awaiting additional information from CDC on this grant.

**(c) Department of Environmental Health Services**

Commissioner Kesterman provided the report for Mr. Davidson who was absent.

Commissioner Kesterman provided a brief overview of the annual pool licensing process. He noted that there were two pools that had yet to make payment and would be closed by staff. Often, when this occurs, the license holder promptly purchases a license.

The Department of Environmental Health Services requires replacement water heaters in Hamilton County to be inspected and permitted. The inspection ensures Ohio Plumbing Code compliance and safety of the installation. He noted examples of the inspection team initiating a proactive response when improper installations are observed that could lead to potentially hazardous conditions.

Commissioner Kesterman explained the \$150,000 Ohio EPA grant from its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund administered by HCPH for sewage system replacements.

At the next Board meeting, Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency will provide a presentation related to their request for a fee increase. There will be a motion for the Board's consideration related to the air fees.

Environmental health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

**9. Finances**

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

**Dr. Kelly** moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

**Mr. Knapp** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**10. New Business:** None.

**11. Adjournment**

**Mr. Knapp** moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

**Mr. Miller** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: July 8, at 4 p.m.

  
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Dan Meloy, President

  
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Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner