

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
October 14, 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
Steve Feagins, M.D., Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Allison Babka, Public Information Officer

Guests Present: None

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Health Commissioner Greg Kesterman read the Clean Kitchen Award recipient 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 September 9, 2024, Board of Health meeting.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman was pleased to share the news that HCPH became an Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace. In August, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine visited Hamilton County to launch the program. HCPH was honored by having Gov. DeWine come and congratulate HCPH personally and recognizing HCPH as the first in Ohio to have a Recovery Friendly program for businesses.

Commissioner Kesterman shared Hamilton County's new branding and logos. At this time there are no plans for HCPH to align with the County's new logo.

There was a planning meeting on September 25 regarding Hamilton County's purchase of the Mercy Health building in Bond Hill. The timeline for moving into the building likely would not include tenants moving in until 2026.

HCPH has submitted materials to be included in an exhibit at the CDC Museum in Atlanta, Georgia. HCPH is honored and is providing health equity reports and initiative graphics that will be showcased. More details will be shared once the exhibit opens in November.

Commissioner Kesterman thanked Board Members for their support of HCPH's Staff Appreciation Fall Fest and shared pictures from the event.

Commissioner Kesterman shared pictures of the styrene rail car release in Whitewater Township on September 24. He gave acknowledgement to the first responders who helped resolve this incident quickly and without significant harm to the community and environment. He reviewed the timeline of events that began on September 24 and concluded on September 27, 2024. He provided specific styrene exposure limits relative to potential for causing risks to human health and provided an exposure analogy for parts per million and parts per billion concentrations. Commissioner Kesterman provided styrene air sample results that were collected from first responders and compared them to NIH and OSHA workplace standards. All readings were well below OSHA permissible exposure limits for styrene. Some of the readings also included "background noise" — fumes such as diesel trucks and open gasoline that impact readings.

Commissioner Kesterman answered Mr. Meloy's questions regarding the after-action report and communications regarding the timing of when HCPH was notified.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, began his report by describing the styrene rail car release from a healthcare perspective. He noted that the closest medical facility to the leak was Mercy West, and they were fully staffed and ready. He stated that a few people came in to be examined for exposure, but none were hospitalized. Dr. Feagins noted that people should continue to get checked out if they do not feel right. He noted that styrene is a volatile liquid that converts to vapor almost immediately when vented to the atmosphere. There is a sweet odor at low concentrations, and it can create skin and eye irritation and upper respiratory tract irritation.

Dr. Feagins continued his report by stating that there is a critical national shortage of IV fluids. Baxter International's North Cove facility in Marion, North Carolina, shut down after flooding from Hurricane Helene. He noted that 60 percent of the US's supply of IV fluids (85 percent of Ohio's supply) come from this North Carolina manufacturing plant. The plant in North Carolina is getting back to production but it will take time to catch up. Health systems are already implementing protocols to reduce IV fluid usage and waste, and Baxter's competitors are ramping up production. Dr. Feagins also noted the different healthcare supply manufacturing industries in Florida which were affected minorly from Hurricane

Milton. He also explained Ohio Task Force One, its purpose, and its currently deployment in Florida after a week helping in North Carolina.

Dr. Feagins shared that HCPH staff presented with other healthcare providers at the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) fall meeting on "The Role of Electronic Medical Records in Public Health."

He also noted that the Tuberculosis Summit will be held November 20.

Commissioner Kesterman thanked Dr. Feagins for his leadership with the styrene rail car release response and for his calmness during the press conferences.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Jackie Lindner began her report by describing the current trend of overdoses occurring for the homeless. HCPH staff worked on a contract with Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS). This contract will give GCBHS a grant to augment their homeless outreach and provide funds for their outreach program. This program will provide data that will be reviewed through September 2025.

Ms. Lindner highlighted from her report the REACH Grant that is assisting with creating active transportation plans in Mt. Healthy and Lincoln Heights. Full details are in the Board packet.

Ms. Lindner also described the current clinic billing project which switched to EPIC for the electronic medical record. As part of the switch, HCPH has had to independently contract with each insurance provider to allow for billing. Ms. Lindner noted that the overarching goal of the billing process is to align with standard clinical billing practices, while still accommodating the needs of our patient population to reduce financial barriers. In addition, HCPH is in the process of transitioning lab billing to the patients. After the switch, patients with insurance would be required to pay for all labs received. Patients without insurance would likely continue to be managed by HCPH, as we would remain the biller of last resort. She noted that the department is close to hiring a social worker and how they can be sustainable with the grants. Ms. Lindner also noted Disease Prevention staff will be receiving training on the new process this month, with a planned go-live launch during the first weeks of November.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson recapped the proposed food service operation and retail food establishment licensing fee adjustments. The public hearing was held prior to this meeting.

Mr. Davidson noted that the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) conducted a survey of HCPH's Food Service Operation program from 2019 through 2023. The survey was to ensure all Ohio program requirements are being met. The general response from ODH was positive. HCPH was approved and the two minor action items from the survey are now resolved and resent back to ODH to officially close the survey.

ODH also reviewed the HCPH's Lead Investigation Program from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. He noted that from the items ODH recommended, the Waste Management team has already begun to address them and is more closely and regularly monitoring case investigation records along with the follow-up for properties under enforcement orders. A copy of both of ODH's reports are in the Board packet.

There was a public hearing meeting on October 3 regarding the proposed Kenwood Hills local sewer project with the residents of that community and the County commissioners. Representatives from HCPH were there to answer questions and support this initiative. Residents would tie their household sewage into the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) sewers that will be constructed. He noted the different concerns that the residents expressed at the meeting, including homeowner cost and some reservations on the proposed design. Mr. Davidson noted that the hearing is still open, but the meeting was adjourned. County commissioners will ask MSD to bring more plans and information for the residents in the future.

Environmental Health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

8. **Finances**

The September 2024 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet. Mr. Greg Varner, Finance Officer, answered a question from Mr. Miller about a specific financial account regarding the Water Pollution Loan Control Fund.

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Varner presented the third quarter financial review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances, and grant activity. HCPH is in a strong financial position at the conclusion of the third quarter. Mr. Varner also presented the 2024 audited financial statements. He noted that there were no public findings or questioned costs. The first recommendation the auditors gave was related to timely deposits of cash. Cash must be deposited in no less than three business days and if \$1,000 or more is received, the cash must be deposited in the next business day. Mr. Varner noted that steps are already being taken to ensure cash is deposited in an expedited fashion. The second recommendation from the audit was that language in budget approval resolution for new year that the Board of Health is approving the dollar limit for blanket purchase orders. Mr. Varner noted that the audit team says HCPH does not have to adopt a resolution for each blanket purchase order.

9. **New Business**

Dr. Kelly moved to approve Regulation 2-2024 adopting revised local fees for food service operations, retail food establishments, temporary food service operations, vending operations, and mobile food service operations.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Knapp moved to approve Resolution C-2024 revisions for stormwater budget.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

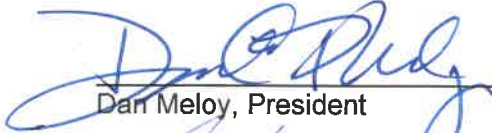
10. Adjournment

Dr. Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: November 12, at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

