

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
March 10, 2025 – 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 Kelly, M.D., Vice-President
Eric Knapp
Max Miller
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Allison Babka, Public Information Officer
Anne Arble, Director of the Division of Epidemiology
Alex Woroncow, Senior Epidemiologist
Devin Knutson, Senior Epidemiologist
Sam Horrocks, Senior Epidemiologist

Guests Present: Arela Dans and Cecil Williams (Food for the Soul)
Simone Grigsby (Alphabet Academy)

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. New Business

Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Gayle Foster

Health Commissioner, Greg Kesterman, read the proclamation recognizing the service of Gayle Foster, employee of Hamilton County Public Health. The Board of Health signed the proclamation and congratulated her for her years of service.

5. Clean Kitchen Awards

Assistant Health Commissioner, Craig Davidson, 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. Representatives from Alphabet Academy and Food for the Soul Transfiguration Spirituality Center received their awards in person.

6. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2025, Board of Health meeting.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2025, Public Hearing Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

7. **Public Comment:** None.

8. **Presentation**

Commissioner Kesterman introduced Anne Arble, Director of the Division of Epidemiology. Ms. Arble began her report by introducing senior Epidemiology staff members Alex Woroncow, Devin Knutson and Sam Horrocks. Ms. Arble defined epidemiology according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and noted that the main purpose of the Epidemiology Division is to decrease disease and injury and promote programs that help community health.

Twenty-two people work in the Epidemiology Division, including disease specialists and data scientists. Ms. Arble provided a summary of the overall work of the division, which includes support for the other programs in Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) divisions. They also collaborate with IT to build data automation, administrative projects, ad hoc analysis, data dissemination, and provide fatality reviews.

Ms. Arble continued her report by noting that the Epidemiology Division conducts disease investigations, interviews, and data collection, and also provides outbreak management. She noted that an infectious disease investigation serves three different functions: identify, investigate, and intervene. Ms. Arble highlighted maternal and child health and noted the Ohio Equity Institute initiative.

Ms. Arble shared that the Epidemiology Division conducts different fatality reviews and explained to the Board of Health that with every death in Hamilton County there is an investigation. From these investigations, the Epidemiology team forms different recommendations for intervention and prevention.

Ms. Arble highlighted injury surveillance within Hamilton County. Some of those surveillance reports include dashboards on their website including daily overdoses, monthly suicide, drug checking programs, and support with all harm reduction programs.

Mr. Meloy asked a question regarding domestic violence fatalities and Ms. Arble said that they do not review these specific statistics anymore.

Mr. Miller asked about the time range when the Epidemiology Division publishes their data. Ms. Arble answered that the type of data that is required determines different time ranges.

Mr. Meloy asked a question regarding the statewide addiction dashboard. Ms. Arble answered the statewide dashboard is online and is operational.

This presentation shall be counted as 30 minutes of continuing education.

9. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Greg Kesterman began his report by noting that HCPH is closely monitoring the changes at the federal government regarding funding. He noted that there are no dollars lost at HCPH at this time. Commissioner Kesterman stated that he has communicated with other health partners and noted that HCPH is aligned with other partners and continues to be cautious regarding general and restricted fund spending. Mr. Kesterman informed the Board of Health that they are directing employees to forgo any unnecessary travel and expenditures. Negotiations for the \$3 million federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Lead Hazard Reduction grant and grant are moving forward. Commissioner Kesterman noted that HUD reminded HCPH about federal language guidance on the agency website and the agency's LinkedIn profile. HCPH had already taken steps to align with federal requirements.

Commissioner Kesterman presented information about HCPH's current REACH grant that should have had a continuation application available before now; however, to date, it has not been posted. Another grant, the Ohio Equity Grant, has not been released at this time. This may be due to changes in funding or due to changes from the federal administration, which funds the grants. Commissioner Kesterman provided the Board of Health with an update on the Overdose Data Action grant, which is moving forward. This grant is for more than \$3 million and is scheduled to be funded for three more years.

Commissioner Kesterman told the Board of Health that he testified at the Ohio House Natural Resources Committee. His testimony was in favor of Ohio House Bill 96, which creates standardization of fees when construction and demolition debris waste is disposed at a solid waste facility. He noted that should the bill pass, it would result in additional funding and would benefit HCPH's programs and increase our ability to serve the community with new and enhanced programming.

Commissioner Kesterman continued his report by noting that the District Advisory Council (DAC) will meet on March 11, 2025. He noted that 26 leaders have committed to participating, and he hopes to have a quorum. He noted on the DAC meeting's agenda that there will be a five percent increase for the village and township assessments as approved by the Board in the 2025-26 budget process. Another agenda item will be the re-election of Dan Meloy for a new term as a Board of Health board member.

Mr. Miller asked a question about the details of the state funding bill regarding solid waste fees. Commissioner Kesterman responded that the solid waste fees are not affecting the total cost of the operator, but the proposed Ohio Bill will change the distribution of the fees.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Commissioner Kesterman spoke for Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, who was absent. He noted that the influenza infections and the measles outbreak in west Texas are the most urgent topics to discuss. Commissioner Kesterman provided the Board of Health with Hamilton County's estimated vaccination rates for measles. He noted that for the

kindergarten population the vaccine rate for measles is lower and the agency plans to continue to bolster outreach.

Epidemiology's monthly Communicable Diseases report was provided in the Board packet.

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Jackie Lindner began her report by providing information on H5N1 bird flu. On February 12, 2025, the Ohio Department of Health announced the first human case of H5N1 in Ohio, identified in a Mercer County farm. Currently, there is no evidence of human-to-human spread of bird flu, and the risk to the Hamilton County public is low. She noted that there are 70 bird flu reported human cases nationally.

Ms. Lindner noted that the Board packet contained a letter from the Ohio Department of Health regarding a site visit to assess the Tobacco Grant of HCPH. In the letter, there was positive feedback and reactions given by the staff of the Ohio Department of Health Tobacco Use and Prevention Program.

Ms. Lindner continued her report by talking about World TB Day, which is celebrated on March 24. Ms. Lindner noted that tuberculosis awareness is promoted on this day, and HCPH will be involved in diverse ways. She noted that Kate Gross, Nursing Supervisor, will be presenting at a TB 101 training session at the Greater Cincinnati Dayton Area APIC Chapter Meeting on March 18. HCPH is also hosting a tuberculosis summit on March 26, which will include topics of contact-tracing and updates on treatment by Dr. Huaman.

Mr. Meloy asked a question about a vape shop in Forest Park and its proximity to a school. Ms. Lindner noted that certain policies are being proposed.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner, Craig Davidson, began his report by giving an update on enforcement of orders for out-of-compliance sewage treatment systems when the property ownership is out of state or with a limited liability company. He noted that there is continued difficulty enforcing corrective action with owners of these properties. The current protocol of enforcement being pilot tested is to give a standard notice of violations followed by a notice to condemn. He noted that this new notice with an intent to condemn protocol has been successful. Five properties are now cooperating with HCPH for compliance.

Ms. Chin from the Prosecutor's Office gave further clarification on the enforcement process. Mr. Davidson recommended that the Board approve the Water Quality Division continuing to work closely with Ms. Chin to identify properties for referral to her, to which the protocol can be applied as part of the Division's standard enforcement process moving forward. The Board of Health affirmed that the Division can continue with the enforcement process.

Mr. Davidson continued his report by providing a summary of animal bites and exposures throughout Hamilton County. He noted that this report was submitted to the Ohio Department of Health. Overall, animal bites are down from previous years. Mr. Davidson noted a recent Colerain Township incident that the Environmental Health Division is currently following up on to ensure that transmission of rabies is not of concern.

Mr. Davidson noted that HCPH's role when there is an animal bite is to create a report and give direction to quarantine the animal for 10 days along with ensuring rabies vaccinations are current. Commissioner Kesterman noted that HCPH's role is solely in preventing potential rabies infections.

Mr. Davidson noted that the Emergency Preparedness Division participated in a regional tabletop exercise concerning a chemical incident response scenario. He added that the Emergency Preparedness Division also participated in a dispensing drill to demonstrate completion of a required grant deliverable for the Cities Readiness Initiative funding.

Environmental Health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

10. Finances

The February 2025 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

11. Executive Session

Ms. Puthoff moved to go to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 4:55 p.m.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to end Executive Session where no decisions were made at 5:33 p.m.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

12. Adjournment

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

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: April 14, 2025, at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

