

**Hamilton County General Health District  
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH  
July 14, 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 A. Kelly, M.D., Vice-President  
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.  
Eric Knapp  
Max Miller

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner  
Steve Feagins, M.D., Medical Director  
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer  
Alison Babka, Public Information Officer

Guests Present: None.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Clean Kitchen Awards**

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

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**Dr. Kelly** moved to approve the minutes of June 9, 2025, Board of Health meeting.

**Mr. Miller** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**Mr. Knapp** moved to approve the minutes of June 9, 2025 Public Hearing on Plumbing Fee and Regulations.

**Mr. Miller** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**6. Public Comment: None.**

**7. Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman began his report by providing a federal funding update. On July 14, HCPH secured full funding on the HIV Prevention Grant, and they recently received notice of award for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant, both of which were

initially delayed. The Biowatch program, managed by Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, has not received a funding notice. However, the Federal Government was able to give the Biowatch team a letter of commitment of funds. That means the staff are retained, and they will continue with an abbreviated schedule for the time being. He also noted that for some future grants, the government has indicated that partial grant payments may be disbursed in stages rather than the full award.

The Ohio budget included provisions for the Public Health Lab, leading to services remaining intact. The ODH Lead Safe Home Program fund is essentially eliminated. HCPH utilizes state dollars to match federal awards. Moving forward, this strategy will have to be reimagined. The budget retained the ability for LHDs to require soil tests when new sewage treatment systems are installed, thanks to a line-item veto by the Governor.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that he will be out on vacation July 18-28. Mr. Varner is serving as the signature authority on July 18 while Mr. Davidson and Ms. Lindner are out of town. During the rest of his time away, Mr. Davidson will be in charge.

Commissioner Kesterman noted under new business, he is seeking board approval to close the office on September 10 and December 10 to celebrate the HCPH team.

After 9/11/01, the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) formed the Public Health Preparedness Committee (B-Team) and HCPH has consistently been involved. Commissioner Kesterman was appointed Vice Chair of the B-Team. Commissioner Kesterman was also asked to consider running for President-Elect of AOHC. Commissioner Kesterman displayed interest and shared that it is a three-year term (President Elect/President/Immediate Past President). If he were to be elected to that position, it would be advantageous for HCPH. Commissioner Kesterman seeks direction from this Board whether to pursue this opportunity or not. The election for this position would be in September 2025. The Board recommended that Commissioner Kesterman participate in the election for this position.

Commissioner Kesterman answered a question from Mr. Miller regarding zoning regulations on tobacco usage.

## **Staff Reports**

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

Medical Director Dr. Steve Feagins highlighted academic partnerships with medical and nursing students along with medical residents and noted their assistance with HCPH. He stated that extending the academic partnership with health systems and students is critical. He also noted that local residencies and medical schools are using artificial intelligence tools and learning modules to teach residents and medical students how to identify measles rashes on different skin tones.

Thirteen counties in Ohio, including Hamilton County, have reported positive mosquito pools for West Nile virus. Dr. Feagins shared the infection cycle and statistics. There have been 130 hospitalizations and 1,300 diagnoses. The last time Ohio reported a West Nile virus infection was in 2012. He noted that most people with West Nile virus do not develop any symptoms. Mosquito-borne diseases that are diagnosed in Ohio usually stem from international travel.

The Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices met June 25-26. This committee removed thimerosal from vaccine multi dose vials. Lack of multi-dose vials will impact health systems, skilled and nursing homes, and public health vaccination costs for influenza vaccine.

Dr. Feagins highlighted the parvovirus B19 case increase. A public health message to pediatricians has been distributed. With this virus, clinicians may check the immune status of pregnant teachers, day care workers, or other exposure to children. Communication with community-based clinicians is already underway.

Ohio Department of Health school vaccinations continue to require students to be fully protected against 10 vaccine-preventable diseases. Dr. Feagins explained the different vaccinations that are required for elementary and secondary students. Ms. Puthoff asked a question about students that don't receive necessary vaccinations. Dr. Feagins noted that there are waivers available, but compliance is based on reporting. He added that certain doctor systems refuse to treat pediatric patients who are unvaccinated. Ms. Puthoff asked about the availability of vaccinations, and Dr. Feagins shared that there will be ample vaccinations for influenza and COVID vaccinations. The current recommendations for COVID vaccinations are if they have current health symptoms per the current recommendations from CDC. The current rate of COVID infection is 20 percent.

Dr. Feagins explained several graphs for influenza severity assessment by season and by age group, preliminary influenza disease burden, 2024-2025 by age group, and influenza disease burden varied by season compared to prior years. He also noted monthly data for hospitals at capacity.

Dr. Feagins reported that his experience went well as the Medical Director at the FIFA Club World Cup. Cincinnati is a prospective base camp location for other FIFA World Cup teams.

The monthly communicable diseases report from epidemiology was provided in the Board packet.

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

Commissioner Kesterman presented for Jackie Lindner who was absent. The Community health services team participated in the Cincinnati Pride events and shared with the Board pictures of the event.

He also shared with the Board a clinic survey comment expressing appreciation for the service they received.

Commissioner Kesterman was pleased to highlight that the Cincinnati Reds are a new partner with the Recovery Friendly Hamilton County initiative.

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

Commissioner Kesterman presented for Craig Davidson who was absent. He provided details of the amendment for Regulation 3: Plumbing Rules which is under new business. The language of the amendment was proposed with consultation with Ms. Chin's office. Ms. Puthoff had a comment on the amendment language and noted that it should include

whoever is providing the letter of credit to post a replacement – that a letter of credit needs it. Mr. Miller noted a 90-day cancelling period. Commissioner Kesterman summarized the language will stay as is and there is a process in place currently with HCPH regarding posting a letter of credit.

Commissioner Kesterman shared a public comment regarding sewage treatment system team staff that praised employee Dave Ellert. He also praised the HCPH team, which participated with the radiation protection inspection, and he was pleased to announce that they passed the inspection with excellence. Mr. Miller asked a question about how employees are recognized. Commissioner Kesterman stated they have an employee commissioner award given and consideration is given for performance reviews. In addition, successes are shared on the agency intranet/Microsoft Teams channel.

Environmental Health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

## **8. Finances**

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

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

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Finance Officer Greg Varner presented the second quarter financial review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances, and grant activity. He noted specifically that even with the disorder of grant award timing issues, HCPH had a strong second quarter financially.

Mr. Varner highlighted grant activities and indicated that there will be some adjustments to the second quarter financial reports due to receiving notice today that two HIV-related grants are effective as of June 1, 2025. HCPH decided not to renew the Tobacco Prevention Grant.

Additional details can be found in Mr. Varner's report.

## **9. New Business**

**Mr. Knapp** moved to approve the 2025 agency gatherings & closures on September 10 and December 10 at noon.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**Mr. Miller** moved to amend Hamilton County General Health District Plumbing Regulation 3-2025 Section 2, Paragraph C to allow for contractors to post an irrevocable letter of credit in lieu of a surety bond effective July 15, 2025.

**Mr. Knapp** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

## **10. Executive Session pursuant to RC Section 121.22 (G)(2) to discuss the acquisition of property**

**Mr. Knapp** moved to go to Executive Session to discuss the acquisition of property at 4:50 p.m.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**The Board came out of Executive Session at 5:35 p.m.** *having made no decisions.*

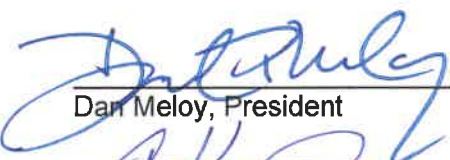
#### 11. Adjournment

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

**Mr. Knapp** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: August 11, at 4 p.m.

  
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Dan Meloy, President  
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Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner

