Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
September 8, 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
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.
Eric Knapp
Max Miller

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Steve Feagins, M.D., Medical Director
Dmitriy Bikmayev, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Allison Babka, Public Information Officer

Guests Present: University of Cincinnati students Olivia Channel, Sebastian Felismino, Claire Girten, Chervonda Hefflin, Sukaina Jatta, Ashley Lockhart, Asia Pearson, Linda Reid, Ce'Airra Taylor, and Tia Vincent

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

4. **Clean Kitchen Awards**

Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Davidson read the list of four 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. Miller moved to approve the minutes of August 11, 2025, Board of Health meeting.
Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. **Public Comment:** None.

7. **Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman began his report with an update on several grants. HCPH is now scheduled to receive the full Public Health Emergency Preparedness award, which was initially only to be funded at 72 percent. In addition, the Support of Scale Up of HIV Prevention Services in Sexual Health Clinics (SHIPS), Integrated Harm Reduction (IH), and the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grants have all now received a notice of award. HCPH is still waiting for award notices for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Prevention (SUID/SDY) grants. Commissioner Kesterman also noted that the BioWatch program federal funding has ceased, and field operations—managed by the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services—has stopped.

Commissioner Kesterman thanked the Communications team and Ms. Babka for their communications on West Nile virus, Lyme disease, and pediatric immunizations. He also thanked Dr. Feagins for his contributions to HCPH's communications.

Commissioner Kesterman explained two different resolutions being presented to the Board of Health. The resolutions contain budget adjustments to support the acquisition of the HealthSpace software and budget reductions for the CD&D fund that reverse February's increase.

Also under new business is a personnel policy update that contains an addition regarding organ and bone marrow donor leave. Details of the proposed personnel policy revision were provided in the Board packet.

Ms. Puthoff asked a question regarding the new HCPH building. Commissioner Kesterman stated that JFS has a deadline for moving into the new site by the end of year, which is an indication that construction is still on schedule. Subsequently, HCPH's move date is the beginning of April 2026 and is also on schedule.

Staff Reports

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

Medical Director Dr. Steve Feagins highlighted statistics for hospitals "at capacity" in Southwest Ohio. He noted that August's at-capacity numbers were the lowest in review in the last few years. Ms. Puthoff asked to clarify what "at capacity" means. Dr. Feagins explained that "at capacity" means the number of hours health systems maintain at-capacity level.

Dr. Feagins reported on FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine updates. There are currently three different vaccines with their approved ages. Patients with high risk or underlying conditions qualify for the COVID-19 vaccine. A physician prescription may be required by the pharmacy to receive the vaccine. A slide was presented outlining the underlying conditions and the higher risks for severe COVID-19. Ms. Puthoff asked a question regarding what specifically a patient would need to provide to receive the vaccine. Dr. Feagins stated that certain pharmacies will not require a prescription or medical records. Mr. Miller asked if the one-fourth population that do not have underlying conditions could receive the vaccine. Dr. Feagins noted that clinicians would consult with their patients to determine the best path forward.

Dr. Feagins stated respiratory virus hospital visitor guidelines are recommended to begin October 1 and showed a graph of confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations in Southwest Ohio. Dr. Feagins presented a chart showing 2025-2026 combined respiratory vaccine recommendations. The chart breaks down by infants and children, pregnant women, adults ages 18-50, and adults 50+ by vaccine type. These respiratory vaccine recommendations include influenza, COVID-19 vaccine, and the RSV immunization.

Dr. Feagins provided 2025 Q2 Region 8 HIV new diagnosis data. Seventy-five percent are male, and twenty-five percent are female. A Southwest Ohio map by county was presented showing Hamilton County being the largest number of cases.

Dr. Feagins reported on the AOHC Medical Directors University Conference to be held on September 23. Presentations include topics such as a Medical Director Exchange that Dr. Feagins will co-lead and Communications in Changing Times that Ms. Babka will present.

Dr. Feagins concluded his report by stating that there will be a HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis summit on September 24 at the 5050 Section Avenue building.

Mr. Meloy asked where the AOHC conference will be held. Dr. Feagins stated it will occur in Dublin, OH.

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

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Jackie Lindner began her report by stating the Harm Reduction team participated in several community events, including the Addiction Services Council Overdose Awareness Day where several types of Harm Reduction supplies were distributed, including naloxone. Additionally, HCPH is hosting an overdose awareness day event on September 13 in Norwood at Victory Park. Several community partner agencies will be tabling at the event.

Due to recent community feedback and expressions of concern in Price Hill regarding substance misuse, homelessness, and discarded syringes, Talbert House on Glenway Avenue made the decision to rescind use of their parking lot for HCPH syringe services. Ms. Lindner stated that Talbert House provided a new location where the team will be able to continue to provide needle exchange services at 1515 Carll Avenue. HCPH has shared this proposed change in location with the city and will pursue moving services pending any response.

Ms. Lindner also shared that a new SSP location for Walnut Hills at Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services will launch on October 17. This will shift services from our Corryville location, given HCPH's impending move. HCPH is excited about this collaboration.

Ms. Lindner provided information on the upcoming HIV PrEP summit, which will include Dr. Feagins as one of the presenters on September 24. A flyer is included in the Board packet.

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Davidson explained the campground and swimming pool fee review that was completed. The team followed the same state-prescribed process and methodology as for the recent food program fee adjustments recommended at last month's Board meeting and used a standardized cost methodology. Staff propose a 10 percent increase in campground fees effective January 1, 2026 for most fee categories – slightly lesser increase for the additional site over 50 fee categories. The last adjustment to fees for this program was in 2023. No fee adjustment is recommended for swimming pool fees. Mr. Davidson noted that this proposed public hearing would correspond with the public hearing for the food service operation and retail food establishment program fee adjustments already scheduled for 3:45pm before the October 13 Board of Health meeting. A motion for the Board's consideration is under new business.

Mr. Davidson provided an update on our current use of Accela and our proposal to transition to HealthSpace Cloud. He noted that the new software program will be beneficial compared to the current system, which has resulted in many problems for staff. This new program would primarily be used for the Environmental Health division and will assist the Waste Management team, as well. Mr. Davidson provided details of the HealthSpace Cloud onboarding contract, details of this transition, and how the data migration will likely be managed. Mr. Varner noted that funds for this software would be allocated among the food, swimming pool, and body art programs. Mr. Miller asked a question regarding the Prosecutor's review of the terms of the contract with the vendor. Mr. Davidson responded that the contract would be reviewed by Ms. Chin's office prior to execution, as happens with all vendor contracts. Mr. Miller asked what the transition timeline would be. Mr. Davidson stated that they are looking at potentially a four-month integration although possibly able to, upon execution of a contract, immediately begin using the older software with an eventual transition to the cloud environment. Mr. Meloy asked how the team was feeling about this potential transition. Mr. Davidson stated that the team is enthusiastic about transitioning to more workable software that will be more efficient.

Mr. Davidson concluded his report by providing details on the Environmental Sanitation Regulation review and revision. Given the age of this regulation, a very in-depth and extensive review is being conducted and a comprehensive re-write of this regulation is nearly complete. Once the final internal review is complete and recommended revisions have been incorporated, the proposed regulation will be presented in an upcoming monthly report to allow the Board an opportunity to review and provide feedback. Local partners and elected officials will be notified and then a public hearing would be required should the Board decide to move towards adoption of the updated regulation. The required process for public notice of hearing and solicitation of comments will be followed and managed by staff as usual. Mr. Meloy asked a question regarding looking at other HCPH's regulations that are outdated. Mr. Davidson noted that the Environmental Health Regulation is unique and there were previous attempts to update it. Commissioner Kesterman noted that internally, there are seven to ten regulations that the team will work to update, and a couple have already been updated by staff and approved by the Board of Health. He further indicated that once the initial review of all regulations is completed, staff will begin reviewing them routinely on a five-year cycle based on the Board's prior feedback.

Environmental Health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

8. **Finances**

Finance Officer Greg Varner shared details of the 2024 fiscal audit report that HCPH received a "clean" opinion. The audit closed with no formal findings. The audit letter did include one written comment, which was addressed through modifications to HCPH's process that were implemented in final four months of 2024. In addition, auditors provided two verbal comments, which have likewise been reviewed and will be resolved shortly.

The August 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

9. **New Business**

The Board of Health approved a Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Edwin Conkey. A motion was not necessary.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve Resolution D: Resolution to Approve Funds Necessary to Convert to HealthSpace Cloud.
Mr. Miller seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Knapp moved to approve Resolution E: Budget Revision to Reduce the Revised 2025 CD&D Budget.
Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to hold a public hearing for the proposed Campgrounds, Temporary Camps, Resident Camps, Combined Park/Camps and Recreational Vehicle Parks program fee adjustments at 3:45 p.m. on October 13, 2025, at Hamilton County Public Health offices located at 250 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, OH.
Mr. Miller seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve Personnel Policy 4.9: Organ and Bone Marrow Donor Leave effective October 1, 2025.
Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Lindner answered two questions from the UC Nursing students regarding grant funds activity. Dr. Feagins answered their question regarding underlying conditions and age for the COVID-19 vaccines. Dr. Feagins and Commissioner Kesterman answered their question regarding how HCPH partners with health systems. Ms. Lindner answered their question regarding staff and communications with the Board of Health.

10. **Adjournment**

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 p.m.
Mr. Miller seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: October 13, at 4 p.m.

Elizabeth A Kelly

~~Dan Meloy, President~~ Elizabeth Kelly

Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner