

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
October 13, 2025 – 4 p.m.
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Elizabeth Kelly, Vice-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: Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., Vice-President
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
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Allison Babka, Public Information Officer

Guests Present: Enisel Garcia, Taqueria la Henradala
Melvin Martinez, Delicias Chapinas
University of Cincinnati students Alejandro Brisolin, Alexis Bund,
Sebastian Felisimo, Claire Hoy, Jenna Paxton, and Maya Taylor

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Davidson read the list of 15 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 September 8, 2025, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman began his report with a recap of several federal updates and changes. The federal government shutdown's impact on local health departments seems to be minimal, at least initially, but will largely depend on the duration of the lapse in funding. HCPH has received all Notices of Award for 2025, though a few associated grant budgets

were not approved prior to the shutdown. Current activities and staffing are expected to continue, and HCPH anticipates ongoing funding for those approved activities. In advance of the shutdown, the finance team took precautionary steps by drawing down all eligible expenses, ensuring continuity of operations in the near term. While some federal data sets from the CDC are unavailable as well as technical assistance, HCPH is not currently affected significantly from the shutdown.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that he was elected to serve as the president elect of the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC). AOHC is the collective voice for local public health in Ohio, working with the governor's office, state legislature, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), and other key stakeholders to advance public health policy and practice across the state. Commissioner Kesterman thanked the Board of Health for their support in this opportunity.

Commissioner Kesterman provided a brief review of recent efforts from the communications team, similar to the previous two months. He thanked Ms. Babka and the communication team for the various recent earned and owned media campaigns that have been released. One of the campaigns contained information on the West Nile Virus which included expertise from Dr. Feagins and from Jeremy Hessel, director of environmental health. The three reviews shall be counted as 30 minutes of continuing education in total.

Commissioner Kesterman concluded his report by explaining two different resolutions being presented to the Board of Health. Resolution F formally approves HCPH's cybersecurity plan as mandated by the Ohio Revised Code. He noted that the cybersecurity manual portion is included in the Board packet and that the IT team already has a robust approach to cybersecurity. Adoption of this resolution will allow HCPH to meet our new Ohio Revised Code obligations while continuing to meet its responsibility to protect the technology infrastructure essential to our daily operations.

Resolution G – 2025 is a budget revision to the CMH budget. This revision adds \$25,000 to the revenue budget and adds \$25,000 to the personnel budget with a zero net effect on the CMH fund balance.

Mr. Miller asked a question regarding staffing and if vacant positions are being backfilled. Mr. Davidson said that they are being backfilled for the environmental health services department. Mr. Miller asked which grants are tied to the vacant positions. Commissioner Kesterman stated that two positions were in emergency preparedness.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Medical Director Dr. Steve Feagins thanked Allison Babka and her team for their public information releases. He then provided a graph of respiratory viruses and noted that there was a peak of COVID-19 in August, and it is trending down currently. He noted that the current federal shutdown has stalled CDC statistics distribution which prevents HCPH from gathering the latest information.

Dr. Feagins provided information on a locally acquired human West Nile virus case. There were no human infections in Hamilton County in 2024. West Nile testing of blood donors is summarized with Blood Center screening, which began in July 2003 with "minipool" nucleic

acid testing. So far this year, Hoxworth Blood Center reported six positive West Nile virus in blood donors, none with symptoms. Donors with positive West Nile NAT cannot donate blood for 120 days.

October 20, is the first day that internal medicine residents will rotate through the clinic at 5050 Section Avenue in sexually transmitted infection and TB cases.

MMR kindergarten vaccinations are down nationwide and in Ohio. Mr. Miller asked about the percentages of schools that are submitting their vaccination reports. Dr. Feagins noted that many school districts fail to report and it is likely that vaccination rates are even lower due to the missing data.

Dr. Feagins provided a graph showing Hamilton County new chlamydia diagnoses. A 12 percent decrease from 2023 to 2024 was noted. He then provided a graph of gonorrhea diagnoses for second quarter. Dr. Feagins provided information on expedited partner therapy for sexually transmitted infections, which authorizes a prescription to furnish a medication for a sexual partner of a patient diagnosed with chlamydia, gonorrhea, or trichomoniasis. The prescription contains the words “expedited partner therapy” or the letters “EPT.” EPT has been legally permissible in Ohio since March 2016.

An Epic “EPT” medical electronic submission form was presented and included the write-up for the doctor to give the patient. Epic medical records have been extremely helpful for continuity of care, Dr. Feagins said.

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 providing an update on new disease rules. Every five years, ODH submits an updated list of reportable diseases. Ms. Lindner noted that some of the communicable disease reports will shift due to the October 1 update from ODH. The link to the ODH full letter was included in the Board packet.

Ms. Lindner noted that point-of-care drug testing was approved by the ODH on September 29. CDC approved HCPH to begin point-of-care drug testing in year three of the Overdose Data to Action grant. This will allow participants to receive nearly instantaneous preliminary results while at a SAFE services site instead of waiting for up to two weeks for confirmatory testing through the UNC Street Drug Analysis Lab. Ms. Lindner noted that most of the results are sent to the University of North Carolina. Though participation has been low, with the point-of-care approved, her team hopes to see an uptick in participation due to a quicker turnaround.

Ms. Lindner recognized epidemiologist Sarah Huber, who was nominated and selected for the Cradle Cincinnati 2025 Champion of Change award as the Safe Sleep Champion. Ms. Lindner recognized Huber’s identification of a pattern of infant death that led to a collaborative effort and a media push to prevent infant death. Ms. Huber was recognized with this award at the September 23 Hamilton County Commissioner meeting.

The harm reduction team participated in several community events including the Hartwell Freeze and Feed grand opening, and the Potluck 4 The People event at Piatt Park. Full

details of these events were included in the Board packet. Ms. Lindner noted that the community engagement will wind down as the calendar shifts into the winter.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Davidson began his report by discussing the HealthSpace platform implementation by HCPH. He reported the contract with HealthSpace has been signed and the staff have been given access to utilize the old software. Employees were able to get more inspections done and provided positive feedback on its use. The team is very appreciative of the Board's support in moving this forward.

On October 8, Ohio Gov. DeWine issued an executive order regarding intoxicating hemp products. Mr. Davidson provided details of this executive order, which temporarily bans the sale of "intoxicating hemp" products, such as Delta-8 and THC-infused gummies and beverages, from retailers outside of licensed dispensaries. Mr. Davidson noted that the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio Department of Health will ask local health districts to assist in embargoing these products in retail food establishments and food service operations. The Ohio executive order has recently been challenged by a court order, and a temporary restraining order will likely be in effect. Mr. Davidson noted that HCPH drafted a postcard to send to licensees, informing them of what to expect and how to remain compliant should the order stand. Mr. Miller asked who is responsible for enforcement of the executive order. Mr. Davidson stated that local health districts would be overseeing enforcement in locations that we license while the Ohio Department of Agriculture would manage other retail locations and wholesale locations.

Mr. Davidson noted that in his report there are more details from the public hearing of the proposed fee increases for campground and food service operation and retail food establishments licenses. In his report, Mr. Davidson provided tables of the proposed fee increase, and compared counties' and cities' current license prices.

Mr. Davidson provided information to the Board of Health regarding the September 14 Rumpke facility fire. The fire originated in the working face of the landfill and quickly spread to the tire chip drainage layer. Colerain Township Fire Department and Rumpke staff were able to extinguish the fire by approximately 8:30 p.m. No damage was reported to leachate lines or the gas extraction wells. A repair was needed to the liner which has been made and certified Ohio EPA.

Ohio EPA audited the HCPH solid and infectious waste and construction and demolition debris (C&DD) programs in July. The report indicated HCPH is in substantial compliance and therefore remains on the approved list of health districts authorized to administer and enforce the laws and rules for solid and infectious waste and construction and demolition debris in accordance with Ohio Revised Code. No findings or deficiencies were noted, and both the OEPA director's cover letter and the surveyor's summary comments were complimentary of HCPH's program and waste management division staff.

Environmental Health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

8. Finances

The September 2025 disbursement reports are included in the Board packet.

Dr. Kelly moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Finance Officer Greg Varner presented the third quarter financial review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances and grant activity. HCPH reported a strong quarter for the summer of 2025 receipts in vitals, plumbing, FSO, CMH, and CD&D. Expenditures have been below year-to-date budget to this point. We began in August with using all of the workforce grant funds to move a few positions to the general fund, of which two EPI positions historically were charged to the general fund prior to COVID which allowed those personnel expenses to be covered by the COVID grants. Mr. Varner noted that a budget revision may be necessary at the November or December Board of Health Meeting related to the vitals receipts and state fees and changes in the state system.

Mr. Miller asked about the cash from the LOC on closed landfills, HCPH holds the Loveland landfill closure. Mr. Kesterman stated that the plan for the landfill is to have a new owner in 2026 which will make that \$179,000 come off the books of HCPH.

9. New Business

Mr. Knapp moved to approve Resolution F-2025: Cybersecurity Plan.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Miller moved to approve Resolution G-2025: Revisions for Complex Medical Help (CMH) Budget.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

10. Adjournment

Mr. Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: November 10, at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

