

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
March 9, 2026 – 4 p.m.
Minutes**

**Board of Health Agenda – Regular Meeting
250 William Howard Taft Rd; Cincinnati, Ohio 45219**

March 9, 2026

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Dan Meloy 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
Tracey Puthoff

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Stephen Feagins, M.D. Medical Director
Allison Babka, Public Information Officer

Guests Present: Theodore Habiyaxare, UC College of Nursing
Jerry Schwah, Village of Newtown
Hannah Reynolds, UC College of Nursing
Sham Nasri, UC College of Nursing
Annette Lee, UC College of Nursing
Beck Barr, UC College of Nursing
Madisyn Diller, UC College of Nursing
Annie Murta, UC College of Nursing
Erin Stanforth, UC College of Nursing
Allison Barto, UC College of Nursing
Emmi Robison, UC College of Nursing

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Assistant Health Commissioner, Craig Davidson read the list of Clean Kitchen Award recipients 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 the February 9, 2026, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment (2 minutes per participant)

None

7. Reports

a. Health Commissioner

Mr. Kesterman began his report by highlighting a few items that the team is currently working on. He said the team is currently working on website updates to ensure they are up to date with the current ADA guidelines. He noted that the team is striving to have the majority of changes in place by April 2026.

Mr. Kesterman provided an update on the Adama I Pam hearing from last month. He said that the team went back to the facility after the hearing and found that Adama I Pam was not in compliance. They were issued a citation by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Adama I Pam then hired an attorney. He noted that an inspection was also completed prior to the Board meeting, today. Adama I Pam was largely in compliance with the Board of Health Order. He noted that the owner would like to open that part of his business again someday. Mr. Miller asked if periodic follow ups will continue for Adama I Pam? Mr. Kesterman informed the board that those inspections will initially be monthly and would taper off over time if it is confirmed that compliance with the Board of Health Order is maintained.

Mr. Kesterman reminded everyone of the District Advisory Council meeting that will take place on March 10th. He noted that 24 communities had RSVP'd for the meeting.

Mr. Kesterman also reminded everyone that in April, the Board will have reorganization and will set the monthly meeting schedule as specified in the bylaws. He noted that after the move, the Board will have access to multiple rooms that could facilitate the Board of Health meetings. The Board selected the executive conference room. He noted that the move date is officially set for April 22-24th.

b. Medical Director

Dr. Feagins began his report by talking about data associated with measles. He noted that last year was the highest number of measles cases the US has seen in 3 decades. He reported that we are on track to exceed those totals in 2026 with cases in South Carolina being the primary driver of those cases year-to-date. He said that in the last year, there have been 45 confirmed cases in Ohio - 9 of those were in 2026, and no cases reported in southwest Ohio.

Dr. Feagins provided data on measles cases in South Carolina. He said that the only treatment for measles is prevention through vaccination. He reported that South Carolina has 990 confirmed cases and the vaccination rate is 90% in Spartanburg County. He noted that the areas with low vaccination rates will continue to see cases of measles in the near future.

Dr. Feagins talked about how contagious the measles are and noted that an unvaccinated individual can still come in contact with measles more than 2 hours after a contagious individual has left a room.

Dr. Feagins expressed concern for when an outbreak of measles occurs in a community. He said that each case requires a lot of investigation and they have to trace contact and exposure to schools, churches, businesses, and healthcare.

Dr. Feagins reported on H5N1 data. He stated that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources continues to monitor this and work with the State for testing. Recently, 72 dead vultures were found in Clermont County with 2 being sent in for testing. Since 2024, there have been 71 human cases of H5N1, one of those cases being in Ohio, he said. He said that it is important to use gloves when disposing of dead birds.

Dr. Feagins reported that we are still seeing a surge in influenza B cases and that there are currently 100 hospitalizations per week.

Dr. Feagins discussed the increase in accidents during daylight savings time. He said that numbers show a 24% increase in heart attacks, a higher number of overdoses, and an increase in suicides during this time frame.

c. Community Health Services

Ms. Lindner focused her update on changes in grant funding. She noted that her team has been working on submitting grant proposals, and she mentioned that it is a slow process for getting approval decisions.

Ms. Lindner highlighted several changes to funding and allocations within the division of disease prevention.. She provided an update on HIV and STI grant funding and noted how these grants are funded at the federal and state level. Where in past years these grants have contained overlap, they are now being separated, creating challenges at the local level with staffing allocations and program activities. . She reported that the STI grant received a significant cut in funding of \$577,000 in a \$950,000 grant. She did note that the state awarded a 1-time boost of \$52,000 for the HIV grant, intended to bridge a three-month period due to the differing grant periods of STI and HIV. In collaboration with the finance team we are making adjustments to staffing allocations and making other necessary budget adjustments. Additionally, we are looking at additional grants to help bridge these gaps which include a new grant opportunity through NASTAD which is focused on expansion and improvement in HIV linkage to care, and a potential increase in the current SHIPS grant, which could bring an extra \$400,000 to the agency if awarded.

Mr. Knapp asked Ms. Lindner if there were any strategies in place for infant mortality and asked why that number continues to rise? Ms. Lindner reported that she can't answer that question

directly, but it could be a combination of things like sleep related deaths. She noted that Cradle Cincinnati and HCPH work collaboratively to identify causes of infant mortality through data analysis. HCPH also conducts fatality review boards which examine trends in infant and child deaths, citing a recent issue with nursing pillows that was discovered through this process.

Dr. Kelly asked Ms. Lindner if funding cuts will impact patients in clinical services?

Ms. Lindner said that it shouldn't impact any of the clinical services and that those should continue to be maintained. If there were cuts, it would be through external contracts.

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Lindner if these funding cuts will impact the ability to operate?

Ms. Lindner said that it may reduce some of the programs, but is unlikely they are cut out completely. She noted that it could impact the level of work they are able to do.

Mr. Kesterman noted that it is likely to reduce HIV testing in the county and the state if there are no sources of funding on this due to a reduction in funding for community partners who currently collaborate with HCPH in these initiatives

d. Environmental Health Services

Mr. Davidson provided an update to the board on Regulation 1-2026: Housing and Environmental Sanitation Regulations. He said that the regulation will be ready to be in place beginning April 1 should the Board move to adopt.

Mr. Davidson gave an overview of the annual animal bite survey data submitted to ODH. He noted that environmental health receives bite reports regularly from mammals that could be carriers of rabies. These reports are submitted to the state and the numbers show 754 bite cases compared to 755 last year. He noted that those numbers are on track with the 5 year average of 749 and that 77% of those cases are dog bites.

Mr. Davidson provided an update on the Brown County plumbing contract. He noted that the contract has been in place since 2011 and they have made great headway with this program. He said that Brown County can ensure they are getting high quality work done and that the positive revenue trend continues since the beginning of this program.

8. Finances

Mr. Varner shared that the 2025 State Audit has begun. He advised that the board would like receive the annual fraud risk assessment (FRAQ) audit questions via email in the coming weeks. The February 2026 disbursement Reports are included in the board packet.

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

9. New Business

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve Regulation 1-2026: Housing and Environmental Sanitation Regulation.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote - All Aye

Mr. Kesterman presented a Proclamation Recognizing Tracey Puthoff for her 20 years of service as a member of the Hamilton County Board of Health.

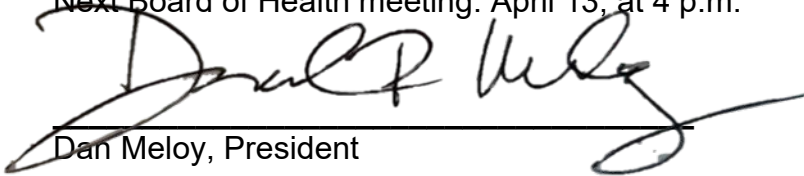
10. Adjournment

Mr. Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:44 p.m.

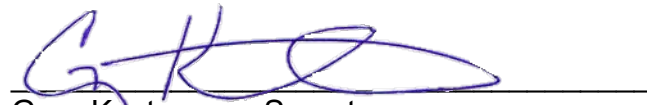
Ms. Putthoff seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

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



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner