

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
May 11, 2026 – 4 p.m.
Minutes**

**Board of Health Agenda – Regular Meeting
1701 Patricia McCollum Way; Cincinnati, Ohio 45237**

May 11, 2026

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Max Miller 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.
- Eric Knapp
- Max Miller, Vice President
- Mark Rosenberger

District Staff Present:

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

Guests Present: Two guests accepted Clean Kitchen Awards – one each for Alphabet Academy and Wingstop #50833, respectively. Names were not provided on the guest sign in sheet . Dr. Meredith Smith, Executive Director of Cradle Cincinnati, and Dominique Walker, Cradle Cincinnati

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. Representatives from Wingstop #50833 and Alphabet Academy were present and Mr. Davidson presented them with certificates for their efforts.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2026, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Rosenberger seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment (2 minutes per participant) - None

7. Presentations

a. Cradle Cincinnati: Dr. Meredith Smith and Dominique Walker

Meredith Smith began the presentation by giving an overview of the work that Cradle Cincinnati has done, expressing her gratitude for the involvement of all of the hospitals in the Hamilton County area. She said that hospitals typically don't share data but noted that all hospitals in Hamilton County agreed to share their data with Cradle Cincinnati. Dr. Smith reviewed Cradle Cincinnati's 2025 annual report data for the Board and highlighted many key statistics in our community regarding infant mortality. She reported that there were 89 infant deaths in Hamilton County in 2025, of which 55 were Black. She also highlighted that 22 of those deaths were sleep-related deaths; 19 of them were Black infants. Dr. Smith noted that 2023 was the lowest infant mortality rate on record, but this number has increased over the past two years. She highlighted the work that is being done to organize these deaths into categories and the partner collaborations that could provide understanding of these leading causes to develop action plans about how to engage the community to help prevent infant deaths. Dr. Smith explained the importance of creating messaging built around safe sleeping habits in the community. She also highlighted a variety of things they are doing to spread awareness, including posters and flyers throughout

the community, the engaging medical practices, quarterly meetings at United Way, mommy meet-ups, and postpartum support groups.

Dr. Kelly thanked Mr. Kesterman for his leadership and agency's support of Cradle Cincinnati and reiterated the importance of this program to help lower the local infant mortality rate.

Mr. Knapp asked if this is a top health issue in Hamilton County. Mr. Kesterman answered that it is absolutely a top priority in the county.

Mr. Knapp asked about the City of Cincinnati's involvement. Mr. Kesterman answered that the City of Cincinnati is very supportive and that the Cincinnati Health Department works closely with Cradle and HCPH as a key collaborative partner.

Mr. Miller thanked them for what they do and said that it has a major impact.

b. Division of Waste Management, Lead Program, Chuck DeJonckheere & Amanda Preslicka

Chuck DeJonckheere began the presentation by providing an overview of his background and experience as the Director of the Division of Waste Management. He highlighted all the services that the division provides and gave an overview of all the programs they oversee. A few items that he highlighted included environmental assessment and monitoring around landfills, lead poisoning assessment and mitigation, and radon gas testing and mitigation.

Amanda Preslicka, Division of Waste Management Supervisor, highlighted information and statistics specific to radon testing and mitigation. She gave an overview of radon gas and highlighted the risks associated with it, noting that radon is the number-one cause for lung cancer in non-smokers. She said that radon is a radioactive gas that comes into homes through cracks in foundations. Ms. Preslicka noted that the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) recommended action level is set at 4.0 picocuries per liter, but the World Health Organization recommended action level is set at 2.7 picocuries per liter. The risk level is broken down by county, and Hamilton County is in the high-risk category. Ms. Preslicka highlighted several ways of testing for radon in a home, including real estate transaction tests through a home inspector or a home test kit. She noted that radon readings tend to test higher in the winter months. She also highlighted that HCPH's waste management division has tested 26 homes to date, and four of those tested

above the USEPA action level. The division has a grant that provides money to install radon mitigation systems for these homes as long as the gas was found through the Lead Hazard Reduction Program.

Dr. Kelly asked Mr. DeJonckheere when the grant will end. Mr. DeJonckhere said that the grant goes through 2029. Mr. Kesterman provided additional information and stated that if HCPH uses these funds, the agency could apply for additional grant money.

Mr. DeJonckhere provided an overview of what happens after they test and it comes back positive for lead or radon, saying that the team writes a specification of the work that is needed which may need to happen after lead mitigation work. HCPH completes a walkthrough and currently has six contractors that are approved to bid the work. Once the bids are collected, a committee that includes Ms. Chin from the Prosecutor's Office convenes to choose the contractor to complete the work based on price and time to complete the project.

8. Reports

a. Health Commissioner's Report

Mr. Kesterman began his report by stating that all Hamilton County Board of Health members in attendance will receive credit for 50 minutes of continuing education credit thanks to the waste management presentation.

Mr. Kesterman provided an update on the health department's move to the new location at 1701 Patricia McCollum Way, stating that everything is still on track to begin the move before Memorial Day weekend. He said that public operations would close on May 19 and would resume from the new building beginning Tuesday, May 26.

Mr. Kesterman informed the board of the budget commission meeting and noted that he will be attending the meeting with Greg Varner. He noted that these meetings typically last about 5 minutes, and it is not a requirement for the board to attend.

Mr. Kesterman presented the board with a list of dates in August and September to schedule a strategic plan discussion. The board agreed that they were all available on August 3, from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., and Mr. Kesterman said the meeting would be scheduled for that time.

b. Medical Director's Report

Dr. Feagins began his report by highlighting Ohio Department of Health school immunization statistics, saying that schools are required to report data but there are no repercussions for not reporting. ODH recently made the data available to the public, he said. Dr. Feagins reviewed statistics from ODH's database and said that we do not know the vaccination status of 1 in 4 students in Hamilton County.

Dr. Feagins highlighted a University of Cincinnati measles outbreak exercise that was completed a few weeks ago. He noted that it is very important to know your vaccination status and have proof of vaccination.

Dr. Feagins reported that May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month, and May is when we start to see an increase in Lyme disease cases. Due to the number of cases reported, there are discussions in our region about prescribing medication for tick bites instead of awaiting confirmatory testing for Lyme, he said.

Dr. Feagins provided an overview of the TACT Study. Dr. Huaman, Medical Director for the HCPH tuberculosis program, is a lead investigator on this study, which is aimed at examining how latent TB affects the risks of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Feagins gave an overview of hantavirus and why it is not like COVID-19. He gave a brief overview of the history of the disease and highlighted key statistics. He reported that the incubation period for hantavirus is up to 42 days.

Dr. Feagins highlighted the public health stress test in 1976 and gave an overview that included swine influenza, Ebola virus disease, and Legionnaires' disease.

c. Department of Community Health Services

Ms. Lindner began her report by highlighting her team's efforts with several community events. She noted that these events will continue to ramp up over the summer months. The team distributed naloxone kits and fentanyl test strips at these events, she said.

Ms. Lindner highlighted staff member Susan Fithen's appearance on an episode of NaRCAD's (National Resource for Academic Detailing) podcast, "Changing Minds." In the episode, Susan shared how she presented information about overdose prevention, stigma, and patient-centered care to students in healthcare related fields.

Ms. Lindner highlighted the 2025 WeThrive! report and gave an overview of the work that has been done in the community.

Ms. Lindner noted that Dr. Hauman will be leaving HCPH as Medical Director in July as he is pursuing a new professional endeavor. HCPH is working closely with UC Health's division of infectious diseases to identify a new medical director for the TB program.

Mr. Knapp gave Ms. Lindner praise for the work that has been done in the WeThrive! program and asked if the team is prepared for the warmer months where there is typically an uptick in overdoses and needle exchanges. Ms. Lindner responded that the team is prepared and will continue to make an impact in the community.

d. Department of Environmental Health Services

Mr. Davidson opened his report by providing an update on 2026 food licensing. He said that there were 390 facilities with mandated late fees assessed and noted that they had until March 1 to file before they received the late fee. The report that Mr. Davidson shared listed total license numbers for levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Mr. Rosenberger asked Mr. Davidson if he could clarify the levels and give an overview of what they mean. Mr. Davidson said that Level 1 is the lowest risk level and generally consists of the sale of prepackaged foods. Level 2 is food that is not prepared but some may be refrigerated. Level 3 is a food preparation facility like a restaurant (an example was given of a pizza restaurant). Level 4 is a grocery store or restaurant that provides full-service prepared food services.

Mr. Davidson highlighted recent media engagement that was focused on tickborne illnesses prevention, saying that Jeremy Hessel, Director of Environmental Health, and Dr. Stephen Feagins, Medical Director, participated in two media opportunities to discuss this.

Mr. Davidson provided an overview of the agency's regulatory oversight of body art facilities and recent presentations offered by Amanda Preslicka, Division of Waste Management Supervisor. He noted that items being reviewed included statutory definitions, facility inspection standards, emerging trends, and public health risks. He stated that 33 of the 68 facilities licensed by HCPH specialize in permanent cosmetics.

Lastly, Mr. Davidson provided an update on current environmental health enforcement issues and stated that in April, he and Ms. Chin met with two food facilities that had critical violations and failed their inspections. He noted that these facilities will be monitored over the next 180 days.

Mr. Miller asked Mr. Davidson how frequently these follow-up inspections are completed during the 180 days. Mr. Davidson answered that they are done at least once a month until they are phased out once the facility comes back into compliance.

9. Finances

The April 2026 disbursement reports are included in the board packet.

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

10. New Business

Mr. Knapp moved to allow the Hamilton County Board of Health offices to close on September 9, 2026 and December 16, 2026 for annual agency celebrations.

Mr. Rosenberger seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

11. Adjournment

Mr. Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: June 8, at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President

Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner. Adjournment

