

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
1701 Patricia McCollum Way; Cincinnati, Ohio 45237
July 13, 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.
- Eric Knapp

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
- Greg Varner, Financial Officer
- Allison Babka, Public Information Officer
- Eva Whitehead, Director of Disease Prevention, Nursing and Clinical Services
- Martha Walter, Director of Disease Prevention, Community Services
- Stephanie Davis, Nursing Supervisor

Guests Present:

- Colleen Greaves, UC Grad Student

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

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2026, Board of Health meeting.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment - None

7. Presentations

a. Martha Walter, Director of Disease Prevention, Community Health Services

Ms. Walter began her presentation by presenting an overview of grant funding. This included funding details for HIV Prevention, STI Prevention, Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE), and Support and Scale-up of HIV Prevention Services in Sexual health Clinics (SHIPS). She provided information for each of these programs and the funding details as well as the activities that each program supports. Dr. Kelly asked Ms. Walter how they decide on funding partners. Ms. Walter answered that they do not do competitive contracts annually and the last time these partnerships were reviewed was 2022. Dr. Kelly asked how HCPH picked University of Cincinnati as a partner. Ms. Walter answered that UC is the model for the program and stated that UC does rapid testing compared for real time data. Dr. Feagins added that these are handled in the ER and the rapid tests provide results within 1 minute.

Ms. Walter provided an overview of data and trends. She stated that 92% of people that were newly diagnosed with syphilis were treated for syphilis and that there was a 23% decrease from 2024 to 2025 in region 8. She also reported that 90% of people who were diagnosed with HIV went to their first medical appointment, and all 7 counties in region 8 had a new HIV diagnosis in 2025.

Dr Feagins added that these are outstanding numbers for this size of county and the number of people in the county - they do a great job of finding them, he said. Dr. Kelly asked how our syphilis rate compares to the national average. Dr. Feagins said that generally speaking numbers are up across the country. He stated that we are higher than the state and national average - for HIV we are at the national average but slightly higher than the state average, he said. Mr. Knapp asked if we could get quarterly updates on this in future meetings. Ms. Walter answered that they could provide quarterly updates on this program.

Ms. Walter provided an overview of the program and outreach, sharing information on HIV testing and partner testing venues, HIV testing new or EHE testing venues, and outreach outcomes. This included 7 DIS positions, 46 funded HIV testing sites, 500,000 condoms distributed, 33 patients connected to 57 resources, 732 documented clinical consultations, 3,040 rapid HIV tests, and connections to care.

Ms. Walter reviewed the program goals which included:

- maximize access to clinical services
- maximize effective linkage to medical care, treatment, and prevention interventions to reduce transmissions and future rates of transmission
- maximize percentage of partners notified of their exposure
- provide early linkage of partners testing, medical care, prevention interventions, and other services

Ms. Walter presented common challenges, including finding people, risk factors, clinical barriers, communication, and other items like people not wanting to believe test results.

40 minutes of continued education is recorded for the presentation.

8. Reports

a. Health Commissioner's Report

Mr. Kesterman began his report by giving an update on the health department's move to 1701 Patricia McCollum Way. Mr. Kesterman stated that the team is all moved into the new building for the most part. He stated that the move has been great for cross-department synergies, and there has been a big improvement in workflow between multiple departments.

Mr. Kesterman reminded the board that there is a strategic planning retreat scheduled for August 3 from 8-10:30am, stating that the meeting will include directors.

Mr. Kesterman gave an update on Ebola traveler monitoring. He stated that at this time, 8 individuals have been verified to have travelled to other countries that are included in the high-risk area of concern. Of those 8 individuals, 7 of them are no longer being monitored while 1 individual is still being monitored, he said.

Mr. Kesterman gave an overview of the work that is being done by the communications team. He stated that the team is doing great work and they are being proactive to reach out to the media with stories to make sure the right information is being released.

Ms. Allison Babka went into more detail on the work that the communications team is doing. She highlighted that a key tactic is proactively reaching out to media partners with agency experts that are available for interviews. She also stated that there have been 100 media hits for the year through the month of June, and of those 100 media hits, 45 came from pitches that she had sent out and 30 came from reporter requests.

b. Medical Director's Report

Dr. Feagins began his report by welcoming a new class of PGY-1 (intern) internal medicine residents to the sexual health clinic and infectious disease fellows from the University of Cincinnati. He also stated that there will be a PGY-2 rotation with the environmental health services department this year that includes water quality, restaurant inspections, and housing / sanitation.

Dr. Feagins provided information on the ongoing cyclosporiasis outbreak. He stated that this is the largest outbreak the country has ever seen. The outbreak has been centered in Michigan and Ohio, he said. He stated that at this time, they do not know the root cause of the outbreak but it typically is most common in tropical climates and happens at the farm level or during the processing process. The illness can cause watery diarrhea and explosive bowel movements, he said.

Dr. Feagins provided an overview of the current Ebola outbreak. He stated that travelers returning to the U.S. from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan must land at designated airports for enhanced health screenings. In Ohio, local health departments are notified as travelers return to their jurisdictions, he said. He also stated that this is the second-largest Ebola outbreak in history. He also provided an overview of the national special pathogen system (NSPS) of care. This includes Level 1 (regional emerging special pathogen treatment centers), Level 2 (special pathogen treatment centers), Level 3 (assessment centers), and Level 4 (all other healthcare facilities), he said.

Dr. Feagins provided an overview of the screwworm outbreak in US cattle. He stated that there are currently 33 cases in the U.S. (mostly in Texas) and that it has been a little over 5 weeks from the initial detection. This is caused by flies producing larvae that feed on living tissue, causing disease in livestock animals, he said. In order to

combat the outbreak, officials are releasing millions of sterile males to halt reproduction, he said.

Dr. Feagins provided a list of symptoms of heat-related illness. These included heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

c. Department of Community Health Services

Ms. Lindner began her report by highlighting the team's efforts with multiple community events throughout the summer months. She highlighted that the Recovery Friendly Hamilton County team participated in a recognition event at the Cincinnati Reds game on June 23. Several staff members attended the game and were invited to be honored and recognized on the field, she said. Several staff members are also being invited to attend and present at conferences, she said.

Ms. Lindner stated that the team has been monitoring possible cyclosporiasis cases in the area. She reported that Ohio's case count was at 843 last Friday and that number has since expanded to 1600. The team has tried to get shopper card info and are trying to track the cases to find the source, she said. She also stated that there have been 23 confirmed cases in our area.

Ms. Lindner praised Ms. Walter for the work she did on the presentation to the board about disease-prevention funding sources and grants.

Ms. Lindner provided an update on staff changes, which included a new addition to the team with Dr. Lisa Haglund stepping into the role.

d. Department of Environmental Health Services

Mr. Davidson opened his report by sharing information about the sewage release at Winton Woods Park into Winton Lake. He stated that it was not as significant as when a sewer discharge occurred last year, but they did find elevated levels of *E. coli*. He stated that the water-quality team worked with Great Parks and the Metropolitan Sewer District to investigate and found that it was caused by local infrastructure failure in the park. Great Parks closed the lake to recreational activities and issued warnings to the community through press releases, he said. He stated that the issue has been resolved and recent testing showed bacteria levels are at normal levels again.

Mr. Davidson gave an overview of the enforcement reports. He stated that there were four condemnations and three food facilities that attended status meetings with Ms.

Chin. These facilities are on the right track to make improvements and will continue to be monitored over the next 180 days, he said.

9. Finances

The May and June 2026 disbursement reports are included in the board packet.

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the May monthly disbursements.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Dr. Kelly moved to approve the June monthly disbursements.

Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Varner gave a report on current financial status. He reviewed revenues, expenditures, fund balances, and grant activities with the board.

Mr. Varner reported that the second quarter continued to reflect solid financial revenue in vitals, plumbing, FSO, & CD&D. He stated that expenditures were slightly higher this quarter due to moving and transition costs to Hamilton County Central along with a couple of software renewals.

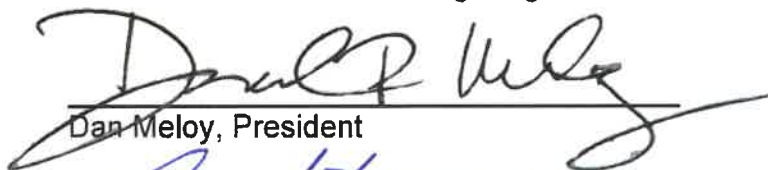
10. Adjournment

Mr. Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: August 10, 2026 at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner