

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
1701 Patricia McCollum Way; Cincinnati, Ohio 45237
September 14, 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
- Max Miller – Vice President
- Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D.
- Eric Knapp
- 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
- Greg Varner, Financial Officer
- Allison Babka, Public Information Officer
- Christa Hyson, Director of Emergency Preparedness

Guests Present:

- Alexndra DeAndrea, Maggie Cosker, Fidele Koumanimben, Katherine Jones, Braden Cheesman, Angela Hubel, Theresa Souer, Hannah Carithers, Paige Simpson, Adam Shafer, Kristen Gebart, Katrina Apolinario, Emma Edgar, Daniel Betancourt, Lien Dip, Lindsey Washington, Elizabeth S. Ha, Mia M. Nguyen, Taylor Swann

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

There were no clean kitchen award winners this month.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2026, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Rosenberger seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment - None

7. Presentations

a. Chrysta Hyson, Director of Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Hyson, Director of Emergency Preparedness, presented on work performed by her division, which was formed in 2021 as part of the agency's COVID-19 response. Ms. Hyson explained that a public health emergency can be anything from a catastrophic weather event to an intentional event that poses a high risk of fatalities or serious long-term impacts to the population. She stated that her team currently consists of two employees but would grow depending on the type of response.

Ms. Hyson shared that HCPH works closely with the Hamilton County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. She said that when responding to a major incident, HCPH is responsible for Emergency Support Function 8, public health and medical services, and also actively participates with other partners in managing ESF 15, external affairs and media relations. She provided an overview of these ESF responsibilities, which include coordinating the county response to public health problems at the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center; providing consultation on household sewage disposal, disaster debris disposal, housing sanitation, vector control, and public health nuisances; inspecting water hauling contractors and temporary water systems; conducting public health assessments and ongoing surveillance of affected communities to identify and address problems; and coordinating food service sanitation programs.

Ms. Hyson emphasized that public health emergencies are complex and require a coordinated response, noting that partnerships between government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, and businesses are crucial. She stated that this collaboration allows for the sharing of resources, expertise, and communication channels, ultimately leading to a more effective and equitable response to public health threats. She added that she strives to maintain countless relationships, because the

worst time to have to exchange contact information is during a response to an emergency.

Ms. Hyson provided two recent examples of her team's work, including the September 24, 2024 styrene leak that occurred on the west side of the county and this summer's flooding that occurred on the Whitewater River.

The Board asked about funding and staffing levels. Ms. Hyson shared that she has been seeking new grant opportunities to further fund her team and new initiatives but has not found strong matches to date.

25 minutes of continued education is recorded for the presentation.

8. Reports

a. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman began his report by sharing with the Board a few screenshots from HCPH's new nuisance database. Mr. Kesterman indicated that the database was created to improve upon the prior Access database, which was cited as a hindrance during the last all-staff survey. He explained that the new nuisance database allows for easy data entry for staff, and that for management it creates a tool for understanding the types of complaints being received and the counts of violations that are written. He added that the new database also provides tools for creating notices of violation and will help management understand trends in the jurisdiction.

Mr. Kesterman also reported on a condemnation, referenced in last month's Board of Health report, that occurred at 661 Park Avenue. He shared that the tenant sued HCPH's environmental health supervisor in small claims court, alleging that HCPH entered the dwelling illegally. Mr. Kesterman noted that this was the first time during his career that an individual inspector had been sued, and he thought it worthy of bringing to the Board's attention.

Mr. Kesterman stated that HCPH's administration takes all complaints of services seriously and quickly reviewed the case to determine whether staff acted appropriately. It was determined that the supervisor acted in accordance with the SOGs that are in place. Mr. Kesterman, Mr. Davidson, and the Environmental Health Director accompanied the inspector to court to show support and, if needed, to provide testimony that the inspector acted in alignment with his job responsibilities. He reported

that HCPH was represented by the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office and that the judge found in favor of HCPH.

Mr. Kesterman shared that as a result of the case, a few minor adjustments and improvements were made to the SOG to ensure that staff have the necessary support needed.

b. Medical Director's Report

Dr. Feagins began his report by stating that 10 to 20% of pre-K and grade school children will get the flu each year. He reported that for the 2025–2026 flu season the CDC reported a total of 191 pediatric flu deaths and noted that we do not know what to expect this year since every year is different for the flu.

Dr. Feagins reported that the Ohio Department of Health recorded 6,063 cases of cyclosporiasis across 84 counties, that Michigan reported 14,277 cases including two deaths, and that Hamilton County had 55 cases. He stated that lettuce was the source of the cyclosporiasis outbreak.

Dr. Feagins said that the FDA approved COVID-19 vaccines for the 2026–2027 respiratory season, with Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax as the providers. He noted that pharmacies can vaccinate and that Medicare and major private insurance will continue to cover the vaccinations.

Dr. Feagins then discussed mosquito activity caused by the heavy rains. He reported that the CDC noted an early start to the West Nile virus season back in June, and that confirmed West Nile case numbers were below the 2025 season. He explained that West Nile is one of the neuroinvasive viruses spread by mosquitoes.

c. Department of Community Health Services

Ms. Lindner began her report by sharing that Rachel Harding, Community Outreach Coordinator, tabled an event at the Esquire Theatre for the film 'Union County,' which highlights recovery during the opioid epidemic in rural Ohio, and provided naloxone to attendees.

Additionally, the maternal and infant vitality grant coordinator participated in a recent 513Relief Bus event to promote maternal and child health resources and offer the opportunity for pregnant and newly post-partum women to enroll in the MIVI program.

Lastly, our senior MCH epi presented alongside staff from Cradle Cincinnati at the Sudden Unexpected Infant Death/Sudden Death of Youth recipient meeting. Their presentation focused on our collaborative data sharing work which is used to inform prevention strategies around infant mortality.

Dr. Kelly asked if the 513Relief Bus event was effective in reaching the desired population and if Ms. Lindner could share any data on number of women reached. Ms. Lindner indicated that she would follow up with staff on exact numbers of women reached at the event, adding that our partnership with Cradle Cincinnati has been the most successful means of reaching this population.

On infectious disease, Ms. Lindner thanked Dr. Feagins for his cyclosporiasis update, sharing that the infectious disease team responded to 174 cases of reportable gastrointestinal illnesses in the jurisdiction between January 1 and August 31, 2026, which has increased the workload in the epi division over the past few months, largely related to cyclosporiasis.

Ms. Lindner also shared that the agency's disease prevention social worker continues to be an impactful and important addition to the clinical team. The social work recently assisted several patients with navigating Medicaid and SNAP processes after initial denials and continues to assist clinic patients with the clinic financial policy, encouraging them to share documentation need which will allow them to benefit from reduced fee and payment opportunities. Ms. Lindner also noted that HCPH had just submitted a grant application that, in part, would provide for expansion of social work services to the EH division, primarily to assist individuals who are displaced due to condemnation. such as healthcare, housing, food, insurance and more.

d. Department of Environmental Health Services

Mr. Davidson opened his report by providing an update on mosquito trapping. He reported that the EH Division has been monitoring traps throughout the HCPH jurisdiction since late spring. The division uses gravid traps, with five currently deployed at strategic locations across the county. Collected mosquitoes are counted into groups of 50 and shipped to the Ohio Department of Health, which tests them for West Nile virus, and trapping will continue until October or until ODH concludes seasonal testing. As of August 27, HCPH has submitted 155 sample vials for testing. One submission,

trapped in Green Township in late July, was confirmed positive for West Nile virus by ODH on August 26. Per established protocol, a media release was issued and the EH team conducted surveillance within a half-mile radius of the trap location, distributing educational materials to residents and draining or dunking potential breeding sites. No human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported within the region to date.

Mr. Davidson further shared that the team completed the annual inspections for the Manufactured Home Park Program, a contracted program through the Department of Commerce. For the current contract period, HCPH was contracted to conduct inspections from March 1 through June 30, 2026. The most common issues observed were missing lot numbers, potholes, and trash on lots. All reports were sent to the Ohio Department of Commerce within the 10-day requirement and completed by the end of June. There were 28 total inspections conducted and \$5,075 in fees invoiced for the contract period.

Mr. Davidson provided a brief overview of the recent Whitewater River flooding, specifically regarding the Connersville, Indiana, sewage plant failure. He reported that HCPH sent a press release to local media. Mr. Davidson reported that the plant is now fully back online and the environmental risks have been resolved.

He concluded his report with an enforcement update. One food service operation met with Ms. Chin and had made significant improvements prior to the meeting. There were three condemnations this month.

9. Finances

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

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the August monthly disbursements.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Varner shared with the Board that the 2025 fiscal audit is now complete. He noted that the Board would likely receive an email later in the week from the auditor with the results. He reported that it was a clean audit with no findings. Mr. Varner shared that the audit letter would include a note recommending that HCPH make improvements in its clinic billing and Epic documentation to ensure that patient charges are clearly delineated and auditable.

The Board congratulated Mr. Varner and his team for all their work.

10. New Business

a. Regulation 2-2026: Regulation adopting revised local fees for food service operations and retail food establishments, including temporary, vending, and mobile operations.

Mr. Meloy stated that Regulation 2-2026 was related to the public hearing that took place just prior to the Board meeting.

Mr. Miller moved to approve Regulation 2-2026: Regulation adopting revised local fees for food service operations and retail food establishments, including temporary, vending, and mobile operations.

Mr. Knapp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

b. Board of Health Meeting Time Discussion

“...motion to move the time of Board of Health meetings to the second Monday of each month at ____ p.m. “

The Board discussed moving the meeting time from 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to better accommodate schedules. There was discussion about potentially moving the time earlier in the day, even as early as noon. The Board agreed to hold the October meeting at 3:00 p.m. and would evaluate further whether the time should be adjusted.

Dr. Kelly moved to hold the October Board of Health meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

11. Adjournment

Dr. Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

Mr. Knapp seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: October 12, 2026 at 3 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President

Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

