

**Meeting Discussion Information Items
Chatham County Public Health Department
Monday, January 25, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

The Chatham County Board of Health held its monthly meeting on Monday, January 25, 2021 – Virtual Meeting.

Present

Carol Reitz-Barlow, MSN, RN, CCRN, Chair
Lewis Lampiris, DDS, MPH, Vice Chair
Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner
John Kessler, PharmD
William Roscoe, OD
James O’Keefe, P.E.
Stephanie Freese, DVM
Marcia Herman-Giddens, PA MPH, DrPH
Tammy Lynn Morris Lloyd, MD
Karen Barbee, EdD
Judith Malone, RN

Staff

Mike Zelek
Vicky Guetgemann
Anne Lowry
Casey Hilliard
Beth Dickens
Zach Horner
Julie Wilkerson
Anne Blankenship Clark
Zach Deaton
Maia Fulton-Black

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Reitz-Barlow called the meeting to order and greeted everyone.

Introductions

Chair Reitz-Barlow introduced and welcomed new Board of Health member Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores. Mr. Gomez Flores is filling the Commissioner Seat on the Board of Health. The seat was previously filled by Commissioner James Crawford.

Commissioner Gomez Flores has been involved in many of community groups, including UNC Carolina Hispanic Association and the Chatham County Planning Board.

Zach Deaton, Clinical & Community Health Services Director, introduced Anne Blankenship-Clark, Nutritionist III, Registered Dietitian. He mentioned that Ms. Blankenship-Clark brings a wealth of experience to the clinic and community settings.

Ms. Blankenship-Clark begun working at the Health Department on December 7, 2021.

Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest

None were noted.

Meeting Agenda

Chair Reitz-Barlow presented the 01-25-21 Meeting Agenda for consideration.

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Chair Reitz-Barlow requested an approval of the Meeting Agenda and mentioned that there are two items in the Consent Agenda that need to be added. Item g. \$39,081 Abstract, Covid-19 Mass Vaccination Funds and item h. \$311,922 Abstract, Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Funds.

Motion

Dr. Lampiris motioned to approve the Meeting Agenda; this was seconded by Dr. Freese. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Chair Reitz-Barlow presented the 01-25-21 Consent Agenda with the two additional items for consideration.

Motion

Dr. Freese motioned to approve the Consent Agenda with the 11-23-20 Board of Health Meeting Minutes and the two additional abstract funds. The motion was seconded by O'Keefe. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Input

None.

Health Director Report

Mr. Zelek said that the health department is very excited to have Anne Blankenship-Clark join the Chatham County Public Health Department Team.

Mr. Zelek welcomed Commissioner Gomez Flores. He mentioned that Commissioner Gomez Flores is familiar with the health department services and is happy to have him on the Board.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that he will be providing a Covid-19 update along with the Managers during the next agenda item.

Reports

Covid-19 Update

Mr. Zelek informed the Board that Covid-19 cases continue to be on the rise and there has been an uptick in Chatham County and across the country over the last few months, noting that cases are as high as they have ever been.

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Mr. Zelek reported that one of the metrics that the state uses is the number of cases per 100,000 over the last 14 days, which is currently over 500, a level not seen previously. He reported that several weeks ago this metric was in the 200s and has kept rising.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the State uses a system that tracks COVID-19 community spread per county categorizing them red, orange, and yellow. The department has received media requests regarding this tracker, as Chatham was one of the last counties remaining in yellow until recently and now is categorized as orange (most of the state is red).

Mr. Zelek mentioned that he appreciates the community's adherence to the 3 W's, which helps Chatham remain better than most others. However, the reality is that the pandemic is as bad as it has ever been in Chatham County and the threat of getting infected is as high as ever. Around 8% of the tests are currently coming back positive.

He reported that in the last 10 months there have been 69 Chatham County residents' deaths from COVID and emphasized the seriousness of the situation.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the vaccination rollout has shifted the health department's focus and resources to some degree; however, staff continues to respond as best they can, especially in priority settings like long-term care, congregate living, schools, childcare and large employers.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the Board has most likely already heard of the Covid-19 UK variant, which is likely more infectious than the virus that has historically circulated in the US to date. He reported that the first case of this variant has been identified recently in North Carolina.

Mr. Zelek informed the Board that the health department continues to work with Starmed to provide Covid-19 testing on Mondays and Thursdays at the Chatham County Community College (CCCC) campuses.

Mr. Zelek added that the state has a dashboard with data on COVID cases and tests, and recently added vaccines to this dashboard.

Mr. Zelek reported that as of January 20, 2021, 5,500 Chatham residents have received their first dose of Moderna vaccine, not including today's mass vaccination clinic at the Agricultural Center.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that press releases have been shared with the Board and the community as information changes rapidly.

Mr. Zelek reported that the health department has received 1500 first doses of vaccine to date and has not had any wasted vaccine due to staff being very careful with vials and drawing extra doses when possible. He mentioned that to date 5500 Chatham residents have received their first dose. The health department has administered a little over 1300 doses and transferred 200 doses to Piedmont Health Services (PHS) to get them started with vaccinations since they had not yet received and allocation of vaccine at the time of the transfer. PHS used the vaccine to administer to health care workers with direct patient contact that needed to be vaccinated under group 1 as well as some adults 65 year and older. He mentioned that since then, PHS has received its own vaccine allocation.

Mr. Zelek informed the Board that in addition to vaccinations at the CCPHD clinic and the two mass vaccination events, the CCPHD has done some targeted vaccination events at congregate and independent living facilities which are high priority settings. At the mass vaccination on January 25,

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2021, the CCPHD administered 400 doses through a tremendous team effort. He mentioned that the vaccinations have moved from indoors to drive-thru events and it has worked well with an average of 30 minutes per client including the 15 minutes monitoring time.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that Dr. Freese, who holds the Veterinarian seat on the Board of Health, was a great help at the previous vaccination event, and can attest of how much faster the drive-through event was. She is a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the supply of Covid-19 vaccine is limited at the time and the CCPHD continues to work with partners such as the Council on Aging to identify clients. The CCPHD conducted an outreach event at an African-American Church in Goldston to add residents to the vaccine database which has grown tremendously, especially after the 65 and older population was added. He mentioned that originally the priority criteria included adults 75 and older and the state expanded the criteria about 10 days ago to include the 65 and older group, generating more phone calls, emails, and forms to be filled out bringing the database to over 10,000 Chatham residents and non-Chatham residents. He mentioned that the vaccine allocation is not keeping up with the demand for the 19,000 residents in this group.

Mr. Zelek added that the CCPHD learned last week that it will be receiving only 200 first doses of vaccine this week and it has more capacity that exceeds that amount. He mentioned that in calls and emails with other Health Directors and conversations with other providers, everyone is hoping for larger vaccine allocations. He shared that the state has said they would do as much as they can to give health departments some stability in terms of its allocations, which it is currently the limiting factor; however, the department will continue to plan these events as allocations allow.

Mr. Zelek informed the Board that the CCPHD has tentative plans to host mass vaccination clinics multiple times a week, but if the vaccine allocation is limited, as it currently is, the plan will be to hold a half-day mass vaccination as allocations allow.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that it has been a team effort and stated that the clinic team has been so essential throughout this process, not only administering vaccines but answering the many phone calls, scheduling appointments, and communicating with clients.

He mentioned that the Health Promotion & Policy Division has not just focused on education but also on community outreach to the different diverse communities across Chatham County and ensuring not only access, but equitable access to the vaccine working with partners.

Mr. Zelek informed the Board that a "Call Center" has been organized to schedule appointments along with an online scheduling platform.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the Environmental Health Division has done a tremendous job taking on so much of the planning of these mass vaccination events and managing safety. He reiterated that there is still a pandemic and encouraging individuals to remain safely distanced and continue practicing the 3 W's is key to avoiding spread during a vaccination event, which was also why is so important to move these events outside.

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Mr. Zelek mentioned that the Administration Division has been working on the overall coordination of the vaccination efforts and taking on tasks of translations and assistance with many of these efforts. He said that it has been truly a team effort, not only from the health department staff, but working very closely with Emergency Management as well.

He mentioned that the CCPHD has received tremendous support from the Chatham County Emergency Response Team (CERT) who has managed the traffic flow and other responsibilities and he thanked Dr. Freese for volunteering to work on those events as well.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that Chatham community volunteers have assisted with medical observation and other county staff have provided support in the Call Center as well as with data entry.

He stated that all this help is key to moving forward to take some of the load off the CCPHD staff, adding that it takes a team and a community to respond.

Mr. Zelek provided current information and mentioned that to date the 1500 doses that were given to the CCPHD have been administered and the CCPHD was able to draw some extra doses from that allocation. He is looking forward to the next 200 doses and hopes that the allocation increases.

He mentioned that Piedmont Health Services, UNC and the CCPHD meet to coordinate across providers getting the vaccine out to the Chatham community.

Mr. Zelek stated that it is early in the vaccination process and knows that people are eager to get vaccinated, as the CCPHD is also eager to vaccinate, but it is going to take some time.

He said that the main issue right now is allocation, and he is hopeful that the allocation will increase and the CCPHD can keep hosting these vaccination events and do all it can to get the community vaccinated.

Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, mentioned that she has nothing to add to Mr. Zelek's report and added that we are still dealing with a pandemic every single day, including contact tracing and the isolation.

She mentioned that the CCPHD is very happy to have more vaccine hopefully on the horizon and is prepared for when it arrives.

Casey Hilliard, Strategy & Planning Officer and Interim HPP Director, mentioned that the Health Policy & Promotion (HPP) Team is planning direct outreach to communities that are not reaching out to the CCPHD. She shared that the health department is being inundated with questions, but that does not represent all who live in Chatham County.

She mentioned that the Chatham Health Alliance (CHA) has organized Mobile Hubs to get folks into the vaccine interest database with the hope that if the health department receives larger vaccine allocations it will be able to bring out some clinics out to the community.

Ms. Hilliard reported that a weekly scheduling call center will be set up, as well as a staffed info-line for people to talk to a live person when they call during certain hours of the day to take some of the pressure off the front office staff who are getting inundated with phone calls.

Ms. Hilliard reported that 17,000 people have been entered into the vaccine interest database tool thus far.

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Zach Deaton, Clinical and Community Health Services Director, mentioned that it has been a complete team effort and a lot of volunteers came on board today to provide medical observation, vaccine drawing and CVMS data entry.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the media was present at the vaccine event on January 25, 2021 and said the Zach Horner, Information & Communication Specialist II, has done a great job sharing information. He mentioned that the CCPHD is trying to keep the public informed as best it can, while managing other responsibilities related to vaccination and pandemic response.

Mr. Horner reported that the media was not present at the first event, but Spectrum from Greensboro was present at the 1-25-21 mass vaccination event.

He mentioned that Mr. Zelek did a great job answering questions during the event and said that there are a lot of questions from the community and responses and information are on the Chatham County Public Health Department Facebook page and Nextdoor App.

He added that there will be a Questions and Answers (Q&A) article coming up with Mr. Zelek in the News & Record newspaper.

Mr. Zelek acknowledged that there are a lot of people in the Chatham community who are in the eligible groups that want to get vaccinated. He said that the allocation to the health department is limited and the public is also being referred to UNC and other providers in the area, but right now it is a systemic issue. He said that the health department recognizes that it is frustrating and stressful time for many, but the health department will continue to get the vaccine out to the community as quickly as possible.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gomez Flores about community members volunteering in the vaccination efforts, Mr. Zelek mentioned that the health department has a volunteer coordinator, Alicia Doran, for medical volunteers who would like to volunteer in the efforts against Covid-19. CERT is also an option for non-medical volunteers.

Mr. Zelek responded to concerns that have been brought up by residents to Commissioner Gomez Flores regarding counties having different policies, specifically only vaccinating their own residents. Mr. Zelek clarified that the state has made it very clear that health departments and providers are to follow the state's guidance prioritization criteria, adding that since this is a federal vaccine, the health departments must vaccinate not only Chatham County residents, but others as well. Turning away non-county residents would be a violation of state policy. Mr. Zelek mentioned that he welcomes any concerns so he can review and respond to them accordingly.

Mr. Zelek acknowledged CERT, an organized response team that has taken a huge load from the health department. Traffic control at vaccine events is coordinated thru them and Emergency Management.

Dr. Freese said that CERT is a very organized team that has been training for years to be helpful and its members are thrilled to be able to be able to assist the community by doing the things that are necessary, but not glamorous, such as traffic control and radio communications. Mr. Zelek said that the health department is very grateful to them.

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Mr. Zelek reported that the health department received 1500 doses of vaccine and 200 of those doses were transferred to Piedmont Health Services (PHS). The Health Department administered a little over 1300 with the extra doses that were able to be drawn. He mentioned that there have not been many reactions to the vaccine, and it is extremely rare, even though there were a few that required some follow-up by EMS on site but nothing severe thus far.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that EMS and an ambulance were on site through the course of the vaccination event to respond to any emergency. He added that the most common side effects are arm soreness at the site of the vaccine, fatigue and headache on the days following the vaccine administration and are typically minor.

Dr. Kessler mentioned that at the national level the profile of safety of the Covid-19 vaccine is much different in the younger population than the older population. He shared that older populations typically have fewer side effects and it is something to ensure that the public knows about, given the 65 and older population may become afraid of the vaccine when they hear about the reactions happening to the frontline healthcare workers, EMS and others who are typically younger and experience greater reactivity to the vaccine.

Mr. Zelek stated that the health department will do its best to keep the Board informed, noting that things are changing rapidly.

He reiterated that the health department is currently only one of the providers in the county and the CCPHD was informed that they will be receiving 200 doses this week compared to 1200 doses across Chatham County providers.

Chair Reitz-Barlow thanked Mr. Zelek and the CCPHD team. She said that the health department is doing a great job and the Board appreciates everything that is being done coming out of a cyber-attack and now with vaccinations.

Chair Reitz-Barlow stated that she is thrilled that so many people are interested in receiving the vaccine.

SOTCH Report

Maia Fulton-Black, Population Health Data Scientist, and Julie Wilkerson, Chatham Health Alliance Coordinator, presented the State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) 2020.

Ms. Fulton-Black mentioned that the SOTCH report is presented every year and contains the latest data on the health of Chatham County residents, as well as some of the new initiatives and updates on priorities through the Chatham Health Alliance (CHA).

Ms. Wilkerson mentioned that the last couple of years the reports have been combined since the Alliance Subcommittees are based on health priorities identified in the Community Assessment. She said that the CHA continues to grow every year with new individual members and new organization members partners.

Ms. Fulton-Black provided a report on a variety of metrics for the county's health.

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She reported that the 2019 census numbers show that the population has grown and continues to grow from 68,698 in 2014 to 74,470 in 2019; the housing units have increased and the percentage of residents living below the poverty level has seen a 50% decrease.

Ms. Fulton-Black reported that in the past five years there has been a reduction in uninsured residents and mentioned that Chatham County tends to have an older population than the state overall. She said that there are positive trends in terms of self-reported mental health and physical health with more people reporting as positive or excellent.

Ms. Wilkerson mentioned that the pandemic greatly affected the work of the health department and everyone this year. The CHA is no different and the subcommittees have been focusing on those priority areas.

She was pleased to report that the CHA's subcommittees were still able to accomplish a lot of work and completed strategic plans for each committee. She mentioned that the focus of each subcommittee shifted due to the pandemic but remained on the priority area.

Ms. Wilkerson informed the Board that the Access to Health Services subcommittee launched a community drive for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and over 10,000 reusable donated masks were given directly to community members through community hubs, community partners, nonprofit agencies, health care providers and childcare centers.

Ms. Wilkerson reported that the Access Committee worked on the EMBRACe project and has been working with the Poverty Subcommittee to come up with a NCCare 360 pilot, a platform that aims to help the referral process between healthcare and social service providers.

She reported that the Poverty Subcommittee created a Youth Advisory Council that currently has 10 participants. She mentioned that they are working on a strategic plan on how to involve youth in decision making.

Ms. Wilkerson informed the Board that a living database was created for job skills training and community events.

She shared that the Obesity Subcommittee was renamed the Healthy Eating, Active Living Subcommittee and has been able to implement a number of programs, including track trails, working with the Parks & Recreation Department and a physical activity trailer that is going to go to childcare centers to provide physical activity for the children at those centers.

She mentioned that they were also able to do a virtual year-long cooking course through the Chatham County Community College (CCCC).

Ms. Fulton-Black added that currently a lot of the health department team's efforts are focused on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic including medical treatment, case investigation, testing, communications, and now vaccination.

Ms. Wilkerson mentioned that all the CHA members were passionate about finding ways to work together and collaborate on projects around the pandemic, the largest being the community resource hubs, which have been in place for 8 months and provide resources to community members.

Ms. Fulton-Black reported that the CCPHD worked with the NC Institute for Public Health and UNC-Chapel Hill to conduct a survey focused on Covid-19 using the Chatham Community Assessment Cohort.

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She mentioned that the survey was conducted early in the pandemic and measured the impact of Covid-19 in the community.

Ms. Fulton-Black reported that according to the survey, people were very attentive to the 3 W's, washing hands, practicing social distancing, and wearing face masks.

She mentioned that an impact on household finances was seen, and some reported being affected by unemployment, being furloughed or having a reduction of hours worked, as well as business owners losing income and major impacts. She reported that 41% had issues getting some type of healthcare, such as dental, eye or other regular checkups, people had issues getting prescriptions and other issues such as mental health, health care or emergency care.

Ms. Fulton-Black shared that 27% reported a reduction in exercise since the beginning of the outbreak.

Ms. Fulton-Black highlighted a few of the new and growing initiatives of 2020 such as a new set of different approaches to women's maternal and infant health and expanding the Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP).

She reported on the New Initiative #1, Women's, Maternal & Infant Health and mentioned that the Chatham Hospital Maternity Care Center opened in September 2020 and they are on track to deliver 120 babies in the first year.

Ms. Fulton-Black reported on the EMBRACe Project, a collaborative effort focused on equitable birth outcomes. She said that it is a wonderful example of partnership on equity across many different sectors between the CPHD, Department of Social Services (DSS), CHA, Chatham Hospital, and many others.

Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, presented information on the New Initiative #2, Water Quality in Chatham County and what Environmental Health (EH) has been doing through its Well Program.

Ms. Lowry mentioned the NC PFAS Testing Network that is focusing on Chatham County. She shared that Duke University has been conducting several tests along the Haw River which is where the Town of Pittsboro gets its water. She mentioned that there are high levels of PFAS, a chemical that has been around for 50-60 years and is used in nonstick pans, weatherproof gear and firefighting foam and once it gets into the water it becomes very pervasive. She added that studies are starting to show that there are some health effects from PFAS.

Ms. Lowry informed the Board that the town of Pittsboro has high levels of PFAS because it gets its water from the Haw River and EH continues to work with the PFAS Network.

Ms. Lowry reported that EH established a Well Water Strategic Plan this year to make sure that residents that have well water in Chatham County get information useful to them.

She mentioned that the big push is for everyone to have their well tested at least annually for bacteria and every 2-5 years for inorganic minerals that include iron, manganese, arsenic and lead.

Ms. Lowry mentioned that Environmental Health was invited to join the Office of Environmental Epidemiology at the state to work on developing a data-driven intervention to address barriers to safe drinking water.

Ms. Lowry commented that EH is receiving more and more questions about the water quality, both well or municipal water, and is working to address these questions and provide information to be able to trust or treat their water, as necessary.

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Ms. Wilkerson presented information on the New Initiative #3 Community Hubs. She mentioned that in addition to the resource hubs distributing face masks to the community, they have also distributed nearly 300 medication lockboxes in partnership with Insight Human Services.

Ms. Wilkerson reported that over 1000 medication disposal kits have been distributed and the CHA worked with Safe Kids Chatham to have them at the hub events and the CORA mobile food market.

Ms. Wilkerson added that they were able to conduct approximately 40 car seat inspections and installed five new car seats for families to date.

Ms. Wilkerson mentioned that Chatham Food Hub was a great initiative in which the CHA partnered with UNC, as well as many Chatham organizations, and they were able to get people food from local restaurants to help restaurants that had to shut doors due to Covid-19. It also allowed these restaurants to pay staff who would otherwise not have a chance to work.

She mentioned that they worked with CORA to provide emergency food boxes at their site in Siler City.

Ms. Fulton-Black concluded the presentation with special thanks to Zach Horner for putting together the SOTCH Report.

Mr. Zelek acknowledged Ms. Fulton-Black, Ms. Wilkerson and Mr. Horner for their hard work. He mentioned that last year the CHA Annual Report and the SOTCH Report were combined, not only to create synergy and efficiency, but as a way to highlight the priorities.

He mentioned that the SOTCH report is a report that needs to be approved by the Board of Health and he asked for consideration for a motion.

Motion

Dr. Lampiris motioned to accept the SOTCH Report as presented; this was seconded by Dr. Herman-Giddens. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Board of Health Standing Committees Appointments/Budget Committee

Chair Reitz-Barlow announced that there are two vacancies on the Board of Health's Committees. She said that the two vacancies are due to Commissioner Crawford not serving on the Board of Health this year.

She mentioned that the vacancies are on the Budget Committee and on the Environmental Health Committee.

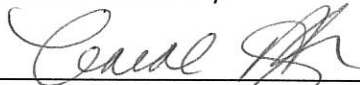
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Commissioner Gomez Flores volunteered to serve on the Budget Committee and Dr. Lampiris and Ms. Malone volunteered to serve as an additional member on the Environmental Health Committee.

Adjournment

Motion

Dr. Herman-Giddens motioned to adjourn the meeting; this was seconded by Dr. Freese. The motion carried unanimously.



Carol Reitz-Barlow, MSN, RN, CCRN – Chair



Secretary Ex-Officio
Michael Zelek, MPH, Health Director