

**Meeting Discussion Information Items  
Chatham County Public Health Department  
Monday, February 22, 2021  
Virtual Meeting**

The Chatham County Board of Health held its monthly meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021 by GoToMeeting.

**Present**

Carol Reitz-Barlow, MSN, RN, CCRN, Chair  
Tammy Lynn Morris Lloyd, MD  
Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner  
John Kessler, PharmD  
William Roscoe, OD  
Marcia Herman-Giddens, PA MPH, DrPH  
James O'Keefe, P.E.

**Staff**

Mike Zelek  
Vicky Guetgemann  
Anne Lowry  
Gary Thomas  
Beth Dickens  
Zachary Horner  
Cheryl Garrett  
Zach Deaton  
Maia Fulton-Black

**County Manager**

Dan LaMontagne

**Absent**

Lewis Lampiris, DDS, MPH, Vice Chair  
Judith Malone, RN  
Karen Barbee, EdD  
Stephanie Freese, DVM

**Welcome and Call to Order**

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

**Introductions**

None.

**Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest**

None were noted.

**Meeting Agenda**

Chair Reitz-Barlow presented the 02-2-21 Meeting Agenda for consideration.  
Chair Reitz-Barlow requested an approval of the Meeting Agenda.

**Motion**

Dr. Herman-Giddens motioned to approve the Meeting Agenda; this was seconded by Dr. Kessler. The motion carried unanimously.

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**Consent Agenda**

Chair Reitz-Barlow presented the 02-25-21 Consent Agenda.

Chair Reitz-Barlow requested an approval of the Consent Agenda.

**Motion**

Dr. Herman-Giddens motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; this was seconded by O'Keefe. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Input**

None.

**Health Director Report**

Mr. Zelek said his reports will be brief due to the Cyber Incident Update and the Covid-19 Update being separate items on the meeting agenda.

Mr. Zelek updated the Board on the annual clinic fees. In the past, the Clinical and Community Health Services Division presented flat fees for clinic services with requested changes for the board's approval. However, two years ago, the board approved to move from a flat-fee method to a formulary approach based on the cost of service, therefore providing the department flexibility to adjust fees as needed if costs changed during the year. The fluctuating cost of vaccines is a primary example. Mr. Zelek said he is bringing this up as a reminder that the clinic is continuing to use this method.

Mr. Zelek said the health department has received 20 additional state slots for the Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP), bringing the agency to 40 overall. He added that this is good news, since the department was down to just 5 clients a couple of years ago and consideration was being given to ending the program. Due to the team's hard work, including an uptake in communication and recruitment efforts, the department was able to receive additional slots. Ms. Reitz-Barlow mentioned that the BCCCP is increasing in numbers.

Mr. Zelek reported that the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Board met on Friday, February 19 to discuss potentially extending the accreditation deadline by one year. He said that the Chatham County Public Health Department's (CCPHD) site visit has been scheduled for the fall of 2021, and he is hopeful that it will be extended another year.

Ms. Reitz-Barlow mentioned that the CCPHD was one of the first health departments to be accredited by the state and has been leading the way with accreditation.

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Mr. Zelek stated that accreditation falls under Beth Dickens, Quality Control/Quality Improvement Coordinator, and said that the health department consistently has high scores on accreditation. He mentioned that an extension would be welcome due to the impact COVID-19 has had on health departments' capacity.

**Reports**

*Cyber Incident Update*

Dan LaMontagne, County Manager, presented a summary of the recent Cyber Incident that affected the county government. He said it has been quite challenging for the county and appreciates the staff's efforts to adapt to this new situation and continue to provide services, especially not in-person, while losing access to certain technology during the global pandemic.

Mr. LaMontagne said he wanted to take the opportunity to commend the health department's wonderful job providing Covid-19 vaccinations. He added that the Board of Health has done a wonderful job naming Mike Zelek as the Health Director and that Mike's leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic has been stellar. He said that he enjoys working with Mike and that they work well together. He added that Mr. Zelek is part of a countywide team that works well together, partly because Mr. Zelek is very capable and everyone enjoys working with him. He thanked Mr. Zelek and the Board of Health for selecting Mr. Zelek to the permanent Health Director position.

Mr. LaMontagne mentioned that the county is beginning to come out of the cyber incident and provided a presentation of the events up to the present.

Mr. LaMontagne reported that on October 28, 2020, the Chatham County's MIS staff identified a ransomware attack by the group DoppelPaymer against the county's network. The MIS staff quickly isolated the affected system by stopping communication across the county's network and externally. MIS staff immediately called local and state partners and enlisted assistance from state and local agencies that have experience with this type of incident. Analysis revealed that the ransomware entered the network through a phishing email with a malicious attachment. He mentioned that threat actors like DoppelPaymer have become increasingly sophisticated, and that we cannot let down our guard because many of these phishing emails look legitimate.

Mr. LaMontagne reported that the threat actor acquired data from a limited number of the county's systems and at the time, the county could not specifically determine the data that was acquired. Mr. LaMontagne said the county did not pay the ransom because doing business with them is against federal law. Mr. LaMontagne stated that this is criminal activity, and there is an ongoing investigation into that crime.

Mr. LaMontagne reported that because of the incident, the county lost its use of computers, internet access, office phones, voicemails and almost all other technology. He reported that the county was able to get loaner laptops from a number of surrounding counties and towns, and NC Emergency

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Management provided the county with internet hotspots as well as temporary telephones. He reported that the staff reacted well to these challenges. Immediately after the event, departments began working through paper forms, and temporary Gmail accounts were set up for communication both internally and externally.

Mr. LaMontagne reported that as part of recovery efforts, Chatham County Emergency Management helped the county coordinate daily briefings with stakeholders during the first two weeks of the incident. He said many local governments have been hit with this type of event in 2020, including many in North Carolina. Many partners mentioned that this was handled as if it was a disaster, such as a hurricane. Emergency Management's leadership, Mr. LaMontagne said, was very beneficial and an example of how this kind of response should be done.

Staff and agency partners worked on a full rebuild of the system and the network infrastructure, worked with existing vendors with business system software to restore those systems, and wiped and reimaged the county's servers on more than 550 individual staff computers.

Mr. LaMontagne said the process of restoring the county's business systems, phones and network connection, as well as getting the computers back to staff, was nearly complete and the business systems are almost all backed up and running. He reported that a full system recovery effort will continue through early 2021. The county will also switch permitting software, which was already planned, with the incident accelerating the need to do so.

Mr. LaMontagne said that the county has been engaged with staff from the NC Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) and the NC Attorney General's Office (AG) to ensure the county meets the notification/reporting requirements related to disclosures of a breach of protected health information (PHI) and/or personally identifiable information (PII) data. Mr. LaMontagne reported that the county continues to meet with the breach counsel at DHHS to ensure that the county responds in the most appropriate way to any data accessed from the county's network during the ransomware incident. Mr. LaMontagne said that MIS is going through the impacted files on the server to collect any names and addresses of individuals whose PII or PHI may be at risk of exposure, and those individuals will be notified directly of the situation. The county is setting up a call center to answer any questions those individuals may have.

Mr. LaMontagne reported that on February 8, 2021, the county discovered that the threat actors had posted information from the incident on the dark web about a week prior to that date. He said the county is going through that information in detail and will contact affected individuals as soon as possible.

Mr. LaMontagne said Chatham MIS is evaluating the existing security protocols to further build upon the security of the county's network, along with putting new things in place. He said the county is evaluating any additional security and looking at how it can reinforce the county's employee training to ensure they are more aware of this type of threats. The threat from outside individuals is constant, and as such, he said, Chatham County aims to take all reasonable actions to secure its data and infrastructure.

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Mr. LaMontagne said that during this time the county took the opportunity to improve and update some of its software and move to Office 365, a more secure method that stores a lot of information on the cloud, change the county's email domain from the .org to .gov, changed from CityView to OpenGov software for permitting and upgrade Northwoods/Laserfiche at DSS.

Mr. LaMontagne stated that it is his promise to everyone that the county will not let budgetary restrictions stand in the way of Chatham County becoming more secure. He pledged that the county would come out of this event stronger on the security of the county's system than it was prior to this cyber event.

Mr. LaMontagne thanked the Board for allowing him to present information on the Cyber incident.

*Covid Update*

Mr. Zelek provided a Covid-19 update. He said that one of the metrics that the health department uses is cases per 100,000 people over the past seven days, something seen in CDC guidance. Mr. Zelek reported the current cases per 100,000 over the last seven days is 90, which is the lowest it has been in a long time – it peaked closer to 300 – and that the trajectory is good news. He reiterated that it is still not zero, and to keep in mind that the pandemic is real and continues to rage on. He said that while it is not as bad as it was a month ago or over the holidays, it continues – our guard cannot be let down by not wearing masks and having large gatherings.

Mr. Zelek reported that Chatham's positivity rate, the percentage of the tests that come back positive, is 3.8%, which has also been on the decline. He reported that as of February 22, 4,076 Chatham residents have been diagnosed with COVID-19 over the course of the pandemic – which is coming up on a year since the first case was identified in North Carolina, March 3, 2020. Since that time, more than 4,000 individuals have tested positive for Covid-19 in Chatham County and 75 residents have died due to Covid-19.

Mr. Zelek added that the Flu Season has been practically non-existent compared to previous years due to the impact of the mask wearing and social distancing. He reported that the nationally only a couple of hundred have been hospitalized from the flu.

Mr. Zelek reported that as of earlier today, Chatham County had just over 14,000 residents who have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, which is 18.8% of Chatham's population, and just under 8,000 have received their second dose, making up 10.7% of the population in Chatham County. Mr. Zelek reported that statewide about 11.7% of residents have received at least one dose, placing Chatham above the state average. He added that many Chatham residents are getting their vaccine outside of the county.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the vaccine supply continues to be a challenge, and as of today, there are no more vials in the freezer. The department is expected to receive more vaccine in the coming days.

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Mr. Zelek highlighted the tremendous work and team effort to provide the vaccine to the community. He said that it has been about a year since the pandemic begun and with the recent cyber incident on top of that it has been quite a challenging year. The county has the potential now to move beyond the pandemic, and the uptake of the vaccine has been very good so far. Mr. Zelek reported that the health department has administered just over 2,300 first doses and a little over 1,100 second doses to date.

He mentioned that a shipment that was delayed the previous week has impacted Chatham County by delaying the arrival of 400 first doses. He reported that the health department has been notified that they will be delivered on 2-23-21 along with 600 additional doses and 200 expected second doses. He said that the health department will be working quickly to get those vaccines out later this week or the beginning of the following week, assuming that all the vaccine comes in.

The health department has been very cautious in terms of scheduling and has not had to cancel any appointments or events because the health department waits until the vaccine arrives to schedule appointments. Mr. Zelek mentioned that the vaccine no-show rate has been quite small, which is very good, especially for second doses.

Mr. Zelek reported that vaccination events have been conducted at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center in Pittsboro, including today during which all doses were administered. He mentioned that last week the health department conducted an outreach vaccination event at a church in Goldston and has the capacity to do more events like that. Mr. Zelek informed the Board that the health department has conducted vaccinations at independent and congregate facilities as well as at the clinic.

Mr. Zelek said the next vaccination events will be on Friday, February 26 and on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Agriculture Center, assuming the doses come in. He mentioned that the health department will be incorporating Group 3A for Child Care Workers and School staff as the Governor announced beginning on February 24<sup>th</sup> and will continue to vaccinate those folks that are in the currently eligible vaccinating phases of Groups 1 and 2 who are left. The department will quickly move to those groups and move a portion of the vaccines to begin those vaccinations.

Mr. Zelek said the health department has been coordinating with the school system, the child care facilities, private schools and non-public charter schools for quite some time to assemble a list of staff who are interested in getting the vaccine. That list currently has about 1,000 people who work in those facilities in Chatham County out of approximately 1,800 who are eligible. The department is planning to start vaccinating that group with those 50 and older, given the higher risk of severe illness. There are around 400 people that would be included in the first 1,000 doses to be administered on 2/26/21 and 3/1/21.

Mr. Zelek said the health department has conducted a number of outreach activities raising awareness and providing information about the vaccine, including on its safety and efficacy. He mentioned that the Health Policy & Promotion team has done tremendous work to get that information and awareness out

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through churches, childcare facilities, and non-public schools. Mr. Zelek mentioned that there is currently ongoing work focused on marginalized populations. Mr. Zelek informed the Board that the National Guard recently joined the health department by volunteering at its mass vaccination clinic efforts.

Zach Deaton, Community and Clinical Health Services Director, said that the health department is very grateful for the assistance of the six National Guard members present at the vaccination clinics, performing tasks ranging from administering vaccines to CVMS review, serving as runners, and other duties as assigned. He mentioned that their support has given health department staff the ability to catch up and be able to rotate.

Mr. Zelek said the health department has received many grateful comments from the Chatham community about the customer service that staff is providing and he appreciates that the work of staff is being recognized. He said that the health department is aware that people are frustrated trying to get the vaccine, and due to the current limited number of doses, it can only provide the vaccine that it has to the community.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, has been a tremendous asset planning the mass vaccination clinics.

Mr. Deaton said that the health department is very grateful to all its partners and volunteers and mentioned that the state has also provided staff to assist with data entry and the call center. He said that Mr. Zelek had done a wonderful job spearheading and leading the agency during these trying times.

Mr. Zelek responded to Dr. Kessler's observation regarding the presence of Law Enforcement and the National Guard during the vaccination clinics and how it can potentially be intimidating to the marginalized communities. Mr. Zelek said that law enforcement serves as a precaution if there is a situation where their assistance would be needed. He mentioned that it is something to be mindful of as the health department plans focused events, especially as those events are focused on marginalized populations.

Mr. Zelek responded to Dr. Kessler's comment regarding the prioritization vaccine phases for the caregivers that provide services to those with developmental disorders. Mr. Zelek stated that the health department as a provider follows the established state prioritization criteria. He mentioned that health care workers that provide services to people with developmental disorders qualify as health care workers under Group 1.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the state has a prioritization tool in place with information to define where a person falls in the group phases to get the vaccine. The state tool can be accessed at [yourspotyourshot.nc.gov](https://yourspotyourshot.nc.gov).

Dr. Kessler would like to see where the health department stands in Chatham in terms of messaging to healthcare workers that may not consider themselves healthcare workers because they provide direct

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support, not necessarily healthcare. Dr. Kessler stated that he would like to see this clarified to the community.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that caregivers are categorized as personal care aides under Group 1 and the health department will do more to get the message out, for example through press releases and media posts, to ensure these residents know that they fall under Group 1 and are eligible to get the vaccine.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the health department appreciates all the support and nice messages that have been given and highlighted the tremendous work of the health department's team working through the pandemic.

Chair Reitz-Barlow reported that she just received word from Beth Dickens, QA/QI Coordinator, that Re-Accreditation has been postponed for another year and the Re-Accreditation visit to the Chatham County Public Health Department will be in the Fall of 2022.

*Bad Debt Set-Off*

BOH 2018-2019 BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF PRESENTATION

Cheryl Garrett, Accounting Tech IV, presented the 2018-2019 Bad Debt Write-Off to the Board of Health.

The Health Department writes off bad debts each year. Patient debt is written off after a year of no activity, meaning that the patient has not been into the Health Department at any time during the past year.

The TOTAL Write-off for Patient Fees for **FY 18-19** is **\$40,844.08**. The TOTAL Write-Off for Patient Fees in **FY 17-18** was **\$52,428.02**. Looking at the Debt Write-Off for FY 18-19, the Total Write-Off for Patient Fees has decreased **by 22.0%** when compared to the FY 17-18 Write-Off.

Ms. Garrett reported that **\$9,439.69** of the **\$40,844.08** has already been sent to Debt Set-Off for collection.

The Debt Set-Off Program is a program that allows the Health Department to submit patient debt that is \$50.00 or more AND at least 60 days old. If a patient that has been submitted to the Debt Set-Off Program gets a State Tax Refund or lottery winnings, their refund or winnings could be offset by the amount that is owed to the Health Department.

For **FY 18-19** the **Chatham County Public Health Department** collected **\$11,691.77** from the **Debt Set-Off Program**. **Year to Date** the Chatham County Public Health Department has collected a total of **\$159,930.63** from Debt Set-Off since it first started participating in the program back in 2005.

**Motion**

Dr. Herman-Giddens motioned to accept the Bad Debt Set-Off as presented; this was seconded by Dr. Morris Lloyd. The motion carried unanimously.



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**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

**Proposed Budget Discussion Overview**

Chair Reitz-Barlow reported that the Board of Health Budget Committee met and reviewed the budget in depth.

Gary Thomas, Accounting Specialist II, presented the FY22 Proposed Budget Overview. The budget factored in a net Decrease of 6% (\$260,513) cost to the County from the FY 2021 Amended Budget.

**Change in Revenues:**

- State COVID-19 funds (over \$300,000) received in FY21 that the health department will not receive in FY22.
- Additional State Funds (\$18,189) received in FY21 that cannot be predicted for FY22. The health department received additional State Funding during this year for Maternal Health and Immunization Programs.
- 6% increase in Fees, Medicaid, Medicare, Private Insurance. A change in reimbursement methodology for the CAP Program leads to increase in Medicaid reimbursement; Environmental Health revenues are up.

**Change in Expenditures:**

- The cost of Health Insurance is increasing next year; that cost is currently unknown and not included at this time.
- Pay raises also are not included in Salaries/Fringe.
- FY21 Amended Budget for Salaries/Fringe was inflated this year due to COVID-19 funds from the State being used for salary/fringe of staff involved in COVID-19 Response. This helped save County dollars for salary/fringe this year.
- FY22 computer replacement costs are not included in Operating. MIS is still working on those totals. There are not many computer replacements for FY22 so it should not be a significant cost.

**Carry over funds** (unspent balances from grants) **from FY21 are not included in FY22 expenditures-** Diabetes Prevention Funds, Env. Health AFDO Grant, Healthiest Cities & Counties, Kresge Foundation, CSII Grant, etc.

**The only grant funds that we know are coming for FY22** are SMART START (Focus on Fathers & Childcare Health Consultant) & Duke Endowment, which is ending on 12-31-2021. Any other grants are unknown currently. There was no capital outlay for FY22 (Vehicles or Equipment)

**Expansion Requests include:**

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Funding of the salary & fringe benefits for the Chatham Health Alliance Coordinator position that was being funded through Duke Endowment which is ending on 12-31-2021: \$80,394  
Total Expansion Request for FY21: \$80,394.

The FY22 Total Requested budget is **\$6,158,655**  
The Net Cost to the County is **\$4,324,604**  
6% Net Decrease from the FY21 Amended Budget totaling **\$260,513**

Mr. Thomas mentioned that overall, the FY22 budget will remain steady because it does not factor in the increase in health insurance costs in the upcoming year, any potential pay raises, carry-over funds from FY21 and FY22 computer replacements.

Mr. Zelek mentioned that the reported numbers are a little misleading because certain items are missing and what looks like a cutback is not reflective of the actual situation. He said the budget is very stable except for one requested position for the Chatham Health Alliance Coordinator position. Mr. Zelek thanked Mr. Thomas for doing a tremendous job in getting the budget ready during this trying year.

Chair Reitz-Barlow mentioned that the Board's Budget Committee recommended to approve the budget and asked for a motion to approve the budget as presented to take to the County Commissioners.

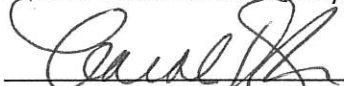
**Motion**

Dr. Morris Lloyd motioned to accept the FY22 Proposed Budget as presented; this was seconded by Dr. Kessler. The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment**

**Motion**

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

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

  
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Secretary Ex-Officio  
Michael Zelek, MPH, Health Director