

**Chatham County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 24, 2022**

The Chatham County Board of Health held its monthly meeting on Monday, January 24, 2022, virtually on GoToMeeting.

Attendees

BOH Members: Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair; Stephanie Freese, DVM, Vice-Chair; Zachary Brian, DMD; Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner; Judith Malone, RN; Ashley Pappas, PharmD; James O’Keefe, P.E.; Tammy Lynn Morris Lloyd, MD; William Roscoe, OD; Carol Reitz-Barlow, RN

CCPHD Staff: Michael Zelek, Vicky Guetgemann, Casey Hilliard, Zachary Horner, Beth Dickens, Zach Deaton, Anne Lowry, Julie Wilkerson, Maia Fulton-Black, Dorothy Rawleigh

Others: Danielle White, Jennifer Platt

Welcome and Call to Order

Dr. Barbee started the meeting at 6:01 pm, welcoming everyone back from the holiday break.

Introductions

Michael Zelek, Public Health Director, said that Vicky Guetgemann, Clerk to the Board of Health and Administrative Assistant for the Health Director, will retire in April after nearly 20 years with the county. She has served as the clerk to the Board of Health. Danielle White has been hired to replace her in this role. She will start in mid-March to train and then take over the role in early April. She has worked with the county for 15 years, including 13 years with the Chatham County Public Health Department (CCPHD).

Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were reported by board members.

Approval of Agenda

The motion to approve the agenda was made by Dr. Pappas and seconded by Carol Reitz-Barlow. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Barbee said that Item H has been added to the Consent Agenda, regarding Smart Start funds received by the CCPHD. Dr. Roscoe asked how many fathers go to Focus on Fathers meetings. Mr. Zelek said that around 20 fathers are enrolled in the program at any time, with CCPHD staffers Anthony Izzard, Focus on Fathers Coordinator, and Nellie Benitez, Focus on Fathers Program Specialist, running the program. Dorothy Rawleigh, Health Promotion & Policy Division Director, added that Mr. Izzard meets with or talks with each of the fathers at least once a week.

Approval of Consent Agenda

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Ms. Reitz-Barlow moved to approve the consent agenda with Item H added. This was seconded by Mr. O'Keefe. The Consent agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Public Input Session

There were no attendees from the public to speak.

Health Director Report

Mr. Zelek offered his report:

- Mr. Zelek said that budget season is upon us and that this is the time to put together the budget for the next fiscal year, and that a Budget Committee meeting will take place in February. The full budget will be considered by the board next month.
- The county has received funds through the American Rescue Plan. The county is leading conversations with county staff and community members to figure out how to best spend the funds. Some COVID funds have come through that, with about half of that money spent so far.
- This year, the CCPHD is planning to implement postpartum newborn home visits. A returning staff member came into the role last year and will shadow someone in a similar role in another county.
- The Board of Health voted last year to divest out of child health primary care, and the county's Agreement Addendum has been approved. Services included in the agreement addendum are home visits, medical nutrition therapy and car seat safety.
- The CCPHD will be re-posting the Youth Health position formerly held by Anna Stormzand.
- Cristal Ruiz was named the county's Employee of the Year. She is one of the foreign language interpreters at the Siler City clinic.

State of the County Health Report 2021

Zach Horner, Communications Specialist, Julie Wilkerson, Chatham Health Alliance Executive Director, and Maia Fulton-Black, Population Health Data Scientist, presented the 2021 State of the County Health Report (SOTCH).

Mr. Horner mentioned that the SOTCH report is an annual report required of each local public health department in North Carolina to cover progress on health impact priorities as identified in the most recent community assessment. The five-page SOTCH report also serves as the Health Alliance's annual report, and it is part of the local health department's accreditation yearly requirement when there is not a Community Assessment Report.

The SOTCH report requires four priorities:

- Demonstrate that the health department is tracking priority issues
- Identify emerging issues
- Identify new initiatives
- Include progress on each health priority

Mr. Horner highlighted the relationship between the Health Alliance and the health department in the leadership of each organization aligning with health priorities.

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Ms. Fulton-Black provided an update on health data aligning with the health priorities from 2018. She reported that Chatham County's population grew 20% from 2010 to 2020 and 25% of the county's population is age 65 or older.

Ms. Fulton-Black reported that the poverty rate has declined and provided information on the leading causes of death in the county, which have changed in recent years. She reported that diabetes dropped from the top five causes of death and was replaced by Alzheimer's. She said that is likely because the county's population continues to get older.

Ms. Fulton-Black mentioned that there is now an equity subcommittee standing committee and the upcoming Community Assessment will have more information on the committee as well as existing health inequities. She also encouraged the board to look at the fall 2020 health inequities report.

Julie Wilkerson, Executive Director of the Chatham Health Alliance, presented information on the Alliance's transition to non-profit status. The Alliance started as an initiative of the health department in 2015. The membership and community programs have grown, and the Alliance began researching and evaluating various options for organizational structure to ensure sustainability. In the fall of 2021, the Alliance voted to transition to a standalone 501c3 organization in Chatham County with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor. Ms. Wilkerson mentioned that the contract with that sponsor is currently under development, and the intent is to transition by March 1, 2022.

Ms. Wilkerson shared that the Alliance also focuses on the work that is being done around health priorities. After each Community Assessment, members of the Alliance look at that gathered data, identify three areas to focus on and create a strategic action plan around those areas. She mentioned that access to comprehensive health services, healthy eating and active living, and economic stability and resilience are the current priorities. She added that the Alliance has a standing Equity Subcommittee separate from the health priority committees.

Ms. Wilkerson mentioned an initiative to provide free meals throughout the county in partnership with local agencies and food vendors through Community Resource Hubs. There have been 803 free hot meals distributed to date.

Mr. Horner mentioned new CCPHD division initiatives in 2021:

- Nutrition Services – Focus on nutrition services and diabetes prevention and management
- Well and Municipal Water Quality – PFAS exposure and mitigation – Address Dioxane released from the Wastewater Treatment plant in Greensboro
- Farm to Early Child Care (F2ECE) – Childcare consultation program expanded its evidence-based Farm to Early Care and Education program to include two childcare centers and three family childcare homes. The F2ECE program is facilitated by Chatham County's Child Care Health Consultant, Miranda Lanning, funded by the Chatham County Partnership for Children.

Mr. Horner mentioned Covid-19 was last year's emerging issue, and this year it is Covid-19 vaccination. There will be a full coverage and data on Covid-19 and the Delta and Omicron variants in the Community Assessment.

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Ms. Fulton-Black provided an update on the ongoing Community Assessment and reported that the community survey collection has been completed and data from those surveys is being analyzed. Additionally, the report will utilize a supplemental survey from the Alliance and qualitative data from Story Circles. She mentioned that all data collection has been completed and they are working on the analysis. The Community Assessment draft will be presented to the Board in a few months.

Approval of SOTCH Report

Ms. Reitz-Barlow motioned to approve the SOTCH report, Dr. Roscoe seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

COVID Update

Mr. Zelek said the Omicron spike of COVID-19 makes previous spikes look like little hills. He said there has been a rise in hospitalizations and that all are eager to get over this hump and see the numbers come down. A peak is expected soon, but it will likely be a few weeks until Chatham returns to pre-Omicron levels.

Mr. Zelek said there has been a strong demand for COVID-19 testing since right before the holidays. Optum Care is doing COVID-19 testing in Pittsboro and Siler City and there are other options in the county as well. Ms. Reitz-Barlow asked if Optum had PCR and rapid tests, and Mr. Zelek said they usually have both, but it depends on supply. Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, said the Optum Pittsboro site ran out of rapid tests and they are not expecting more for a few weeks.

Mr. Zelek said the CDC has updated COVID-19 guidance around isolation and quarantine. Staff has been working hard to keep the community informed, including working closely with schools and childcare facilities.

Zach Deaton, Clinical & Community Health Services Division Director, said there has been a steady demand for vaccines at the CCPHD clinic in Siler City. The clinic offers both the Moderna and pediatric Pfizer vaccine and has been giving 15-20 boosters and 5-10 pediatric Pfizer doses a day. Some primary series doses are also being given for adults, but demand is lower. The vaccine continues to be offered at the clinic on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The CCPHD and Chatham County DSS received a few thousand N95 masks, and they were distributed to multiple high-priority sites in the county between January 12-13. Community Resource Hubs continue to happen each month, usually between 3-5 events a month. CCPHD staff regularly attend the events to connect the community to resources.

Dorothy Rawleigh, Health Promotion & Policy Division Director, said that Zachary Horner, Communications Specialist, created a new webpage with FAQs about COVID-19 vaccination and promoted it through social media ads and a press release. There have been multiple press releases on COVID trends, booster shots, testing locations, and changes in CDC guidance. More than 1,000 flyers were provided to The Hispanic Liaison's community health workers to share information about vaccination, testing, and other COVID-19 needs.

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Ms. Rawleigh said Miranda Lanning, Child Care Health Consultant, has received an increase in the number of calls from child care programs on guidance and a number of child care programs have had to close classrooms or entirely close the facility recently due to COVID-19. NCDHHS guidance for child care programs has been updated. The Child Care Subsidy Program funds will also be continued.

Mr. Zelek said that the work continues around COVID-19 with testing, masks, vaccinations, boosters, and sharing guidance.

Ms. Rawleigh mentioned that Nellie Benitez, Focus on Fathers Specialist and Environmental Health Program Assistant, did a great job in a Facebook Live information session with UNC Health and The Hispanic Liaison to talk about the importance of boosters and vaccinations for children. There was also a story in the Chatham News + Record about the Facebook Live event.

EMBRACe Update: Abstract \$500,000 BCBS Infant and Maternal Health Grant Funds

Casey Hilliard said she presented previously to the Board about EMBRACe (Equity for Moms and Babies Realized Across Chatham), a partnership between Chatham Hospital, CCPHD, Piedmont Health Services, UNC Family Medicine in Chatham, Chatham County DSS, and Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity (CORE). The project is currently in a no-cost extension through the end of February. Ms. Hilliard said that working through equity in systems and service alignment, especially through a pandemic, is challenging and there is work to be done.

EMBRACe applied for a grant with BlueCross BlueShield back in December for infant and maternal health equity. The grant was up to \$500,000 for 3 years of programming, and EMBRACe was awarded the entire \$500,000. The project will focus on three specific strategies:

- Engagement and mobilization: Building relationships with women in the community and empowering them. Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity will partner with EMBRACe and lead this. A birth equity symposium is planned for the fall to discuss opportunities for action. In Year 2, the community organizer at CORE will lead a curriculum to establish an equity for moms and babies coalition.
- Evidence-based wraparound person-centered services: This point is specifically for CCPHD, focused on providing wrap-around community-based services. This includes nurse home visiting, mom groups during the prenatal period and community health workers. CCPHD will work with partners Chatham Hospital and Piedmont Health Services.
- System alignment: This focuses on investment in the collaboration and processes that knit partners together. The idea is to bring the community to the table for systems alignment.

Approval of SOTCH Report

Ms. Reitz-Barlow moved to approve accepting the funds. Dr. Lloyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Recommended Environmental Health Fees

Ms. Lowry provided proposed Environmental Health fees for the new fiscal year. This is part of the budget process. She said there is a standard process for evaluating fees by comparing them against

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several neighboring counties including Randolph, Moore, Orange, and Lee counties. She said that when she sees staff struggling to keep up with applications, there is an opportunity to increase staffing, in part by increasing fees. One fee was not included in the spreadsheet in the packet: a restaurant transitional fee. These fee increases will be passed on to the County Manager's Office and Board of Commissioners for final consideration and approval.

Ms. Lowry said not all previous proposed fee increases have been accepted in the past, so it is not a guarantee that all of these will be approved. She said she tries to keep the county on a scale of how much staff is working and what it will take to keep staff responding to the community in a timely fashion. She said that staff is very busy right now, as septic system applications have increased by nearly 50% in the last two years. Dr. Barbee said there will also likely be a major increase in demand in the coming years. Ms. Lowry said there is a proposal to increase Environmental Health staffing levels to meet community needs. Ms. Lowry said most of the increase in demand is in the northern part of the county in the 15-501 corridor.

Mr. Gomez Flores asked if there was a limit to increasing the fees. He said there is a lot of demand with new developments, noting that Chatham remains lower than Lee and Moore in some of the proposed fees. He asked if the proposed fees were firm. Ms. Lowry said she kept the proposed fees reasonable based on her experience with past county managers and commissioners.

Approval of Recommended Environmental Health Fees

Ms. Reitz-Barlow moved to approve the Recommended Environmental Health Fees. Dr. Roscoe seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Board of Health Engineering Seat Vacancy – Appoint Committee

Dr. Barbee said Mr. O'Keefe would not be able to renew his term as the Engineer on the board. She thanked him for his service. This means that his seat would need to be filled and could be as soon as February when his term expires. Ms. Guetgemann said the opening will be advertised until February 18th. No applications have been submitted yet.

Dr. Barbee said three board members are needed to review applications and come to an agreement on who would be recommended to the board. Dr. Barbee asked if Mr. O'Keefe would be willing to extend his term until someone is appointed, and he said he would. A question was raised regarding if retired engineers could serve on the board, and Ms. Guetgemann said they could as long as their licensure is current. Ms. Guetgemann said the position has been advertised through social media, the county website, and through the county's eNotify system. She said the position would be readvertised soon. Mr. Zelek said word of mouth is a very effective recruiting mechanism for this seat.

Dr. Roscoe, Mr. O'Keefe, and Dr. Pappas volunteered to serve on the committee.

Other Business

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Dr. Barbee said this board meeting was moved online due to COVID case increases. She said the plan is to keep further board meetings online for now, starting with February. Board members said they were OK with that plan.

Adjournment

Dr. Roscoe moved to adjourn, Mr. O'Keefe seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM.



Karen Barbee, EdD – Chair



Secretary Ex-Officio
Michael Zelek, MPH, Health Director