

**Chatham County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 23, 2022
Dunlap Building – 80 East Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312**

The Chatham County Board of Health held its monthly meeting on Monday, May 23, 2022, in the Board Room of the Dunlap Building in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Attendees

Board Members: Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair; Stephanie Freese, DVM, Vice Chair; Carol Reitz-Barlow, MSN, RN, CCRN; William Roscoe, OD; Alan Rimer, PE, PhD; Ashley Pappas, PharmD, MHA; Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner; Tammy Lynn Morris Lloyd, MD

Staff: Mike Zelek, Theresa Buchanan, Elizabeth Plata, Danielle White, Dorothy Rawleigh, Maia-Fulton Black, Anne Lowry, Zachary Horner, Zach Deaton, Michaela McCuddy, Bonnie Dukeman

Welcome and Call to Order

Dr. Barbee started the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict disclosed.

Approve Agenda

No additions or changes to the agenda. Ms. Reitz-Barlow motioned to approve the agenda, Dr. Freese seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

No additions or changes. Mr. Rimer motioned to approve the consent agenda, Dr. Roscoe seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Input

None.

Board of Health Awards

Dr. Barbee recognized the Awards Committee members, Commissioner Gomez Flores, Dr. Freese, and Ms. Reitz-Barlow, for their work on these awards.

The first award was the Community Partner of the Year, given to The Hispanic Liaison. Dr. Barbee presented the award to Ilana Dubester, Hispanic Liaison Executive Director, and Will Mendoza, Hispanic Liaison COVID-19 Project Manager. Several Hispanic Liaison staff were also in attendance. Dr. Barbee read a quote from the nomination letter, citing The Hispanic Liaison's role in increasing COVID-19 vaccination rates for the Hispanic/Latinx community in Chatham. Dr. Barbee thanked the group and said she was glad to have them in Chatham County.

Ms. Dubester said the organization was grateful for the recognition and working with an awesome health department that lives up to its mission. She said this time around has been an intense partnership and nothing but a pleasure. Even as a small organization, Ms. Dubester said, she was proud that they were able to make a big impact in the community. Ms. Dubester also mentioned many CCPHD staff who have been good partners with The Hispanic Liaison throughout the pandemic.

Mr. Zelek said the health department was honored to recognize The Hispanic Liaison for their work. He said it was amazing to see the organization thriving and serving as an important part of the Chatham community. He referenced a vaccination event last September held by The Hispanic Liaison with more than 200 people getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Employee of the Year award was given to Maia Fulton-Black, Population Health Data Scientist. Dr. Barbee read a quote from the nomination form that said Ms. Fulton-Black has brought innovation to the community assessment process and a driving focus on equity across the department. Ms. Fulton-Black said she could not have done any of the work without her colleagues and thanked everyone.

Health Director Report

Mr. Zelek provided updates, saying:

- Congratulations to our well-deserving award winners. There are so many who deserve recognition and it is great to see Hispanic Liaison and Maia recognized for their amazing work.
- The Board of Commissioners is reviewing the proposed County budget for next fiscal year. There is a proposed 7% pay increase for County employees. The three Environmental Health positions are being recommended, though the Community Engagement Specialist position did not make it in the proposed budget.
- We have a meeting with the Unified Development Ordinance consultants tomorrow. You may remember that they presented to the board last fall. We added public health and equity elements to the process with some grant funds we receive and will discuss when we meet tomorrow.
- COVID-19 cases are back on the rise, and Chatham recently moved from green to yellow on the CDC's community COVID-19 transmission tracker. A few points to highlight with this news, which we have been sharing through social media and will be in the Chatham News + Record this week as well:
 - Be sure you are up to date on your vaccinations, including booster shots. This is the safest and most effective tool to protect against severe illness.
 - If you don't feel well or have tested positive for COVID, stay home.
 - If you have COVID symptoms or have been around somebody who had COVID, get a COVID test.
 - Maintain a supply of at-home rapid tests. Residents can get free at-home tests mailed from the federal initiative or at the Public Health Department. Community testing sites, including at the Old Ag Building in Pittsboro and the

Medical Office Building behind Chatham Hospital in Siler City, remain open and have PCR tests as well.

- Consider wearing a mask indoors around others, especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. N-95s are still available at no cost at any of Chatham's libraries.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 and are at higher risk, talk to your doctor about treatment options. Treatment is now available that can help lower your risk of ending up in the hospital.

REPORTS

QI/QA Report

Elizabeth Plata, Policy & Quality Assurance Officer, provided a brief presentation on the Road to Quality Improvement.

She discussed a few projects so far, including:

- An internal website to improve staff communication, automate training reminders
- Updating customer feedback cards, provide targeted feedback that is in line with re-accreditation benchmarks
- Consulted with IT for AV options for the Boardroom, including new equipment purchased and installed
- Moved boardroom calendar into a digital platform

She also discussed re-accreditation. Ms. Plata said the process was about 90% done, with a deadline of June 1st to upload everything. The official state site visit is October 6.

Mr. Zelek said Ms. Plata has hit the ground sprinting and kept the department rolling with accreditation.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Update on Blood Lead Level Follow-up Schedule

Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, provided an update on proposed changes to the county's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Board of Health (BOH) rules follow-up schedule. Chatham County has a BOH rule for lead poisoning for children under the age of 6. Previous levels were at 10 and 20 micrograms, and the BOH previously lowered them to 4 and 8, requiring different levels of intervention. NCDHHS has lowered the levels over the years and now those levels more closely align with the CCPHD's.

Ms. Lowry said the department would like to change levels to make the minimum for suggested action at 1 microgram. She said she was presenting it to the Board this month so they could

think about it. Ms. Lowry said staff came to her to recommend lowering the levels. She said around one-third of Chatham County houses were built before 1978, when lead in paint was banned, but children can also be exposed in other ways as well.

Ms. Lowry said the department will have to re-examine the current lead rules to ensure they match NCDHHS rules, but changes like this would require public notice and opening for public comment for a change. Ms. Lowry recognized staff members Nellie Benitez and Elizabeth Fridley, who work in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, and the work they have done to lower lead levels in homes across Chatham.

Mr. Zelek said that because NC LEADS reports lead levels down to 1 microgram, this rule proposal made sense. He said if the Board was in favor of pursuing this, the department could give an update in six months.

The Board provided general support for the proposed rule change, which will be brought to the Board next month for formal consideration.

Community Assessment Presentation

Ms. Fulton-Black provided a presentation on the 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment. She said that there is now a draft of the final report, which is an exciting step forward. The department is working with a designer at the NC Institute for Public Health, and a final vote from the Chatham Hospital Board of Directors and the Board of Health is upcoming.

The Community Assessment (CA) is a collaborative effort from the CCPHD, Chatham Hospital, and Chatham Health Alliance, along with community partners, to understand the needs of the community, identify factors that affect health and well-being, and understand what resources and supports are available or where the gaps are. The report is used by all organizations for accreditation, health priorities, understanding inequities, improving services, and pursuing funding. The 2021 focus areas were disaggregating the data to identify and understand health inequities and have more opportunity to community engagement.

The data sources for the project were a cohort survey, a supplemental survey, Story Circles, and secondary data:

- Cohort survey: Cornerstone of the community assessment, reflects demographics of Chatham adult residents. Randomly selected based on median household income of census area. Expanded to 1,860 in 2021. More responses this time than in 2018, even without having door-to-door in-person surveying.
- Supplemental survey: Questions selected from the longer survey by CA Prioritization Task Force, 207 responses gathered.
- Story Circles: Similar to a focus group, but participants are encouraged to share personal narratives.

Data Analysis and Report Writing: The department collaborated with the Institute of Public health to analyze survey data, including providing equity analyses. Subject matter experts took

on writing sections with data compiled from all sources. The department then contracted with the Institute to design and format report, with the next draft being worked on now.

Prioritization: The Alliance looked through the data and selects a series of priorities to focus on for the next three years. Prioritization meetings were hosted to review the top 10 priorities identified through compiled data, and members voted on those priorities. The Alliance voted to maintain current overall priority topics and subcommittee structure, but voted on three new priority strategy areas that each committee will be incorporating into strategic planning: Mental Health & Substance Use, Transportation, and Employment.

Next Steps: The Executive Board of Chatham Hospital is reviewing the draft and the full board will vote on it in June, with the final deadline at the end of June. Printing of paper copies will follow. The Alliance will lead Community Health Improvement Plan development in fall 2022, and other organizations will use findings to inform strategic plans. The CCPHD will share results with community, organizations, and others through a variety of avenues and platforms to continue the conversation. The department will also begin thinking about the 2022 cohort survey.

Ms. Fulton-Black concluded by thanking everyone who contributed to the process and mentioned her excitement for seeing the final product.

Dr. Lloyd mentioned it was incredible how many responses were gathered for surveys.

Maternal Health Transition

Mr. Zelek; Zach Deaton, Director of Clinical and Community Health Services; Dr. Michaela McCuddy, CCPHD Medical Director; and Bonnie Dukeman, Public Health Nurse Supervisor, presented on the CCPHD's proposed transition out of maternal health services.

Mr. Zelek said the department has been transitioning out of primary care services for several years and that this is the last of the programs within that bucket. He said the presentation will cover what the program has been, why a change is being proposed now, what services are available, and next steps.

The CCPHD ended adult primary care in July 2017, pediatric primary care in July 2021, and maternal health stopped accepting new clients in April 2021. Mr. Zelek said there is a demand from community and clinical providers for the CCPHD to focus on population health and community-based services complementing primary care, and the department has an increased focus on improving birth outcomes with a systems-level view. The BOH's Clinical Services Committee voted last week to approve this transition.

Mr. Deaton said that not accepting clients means the department must assure services. The county has several quality local prenatal care options for clients, while CCPHD provider coverage has declined significantly in recent years. He added that there was a downward trend in clients for this program but an increased demand for complementing services, like Newborn

Postpartum Home Visiting Services, and this transition would allow CCPHD to expand services to address community needs. For calendar year 2020, the program had 88 clients, with 22% of clients uninsured, the target demographic for this program.

Ms. Dukeman said the department has to sign an Agreement Addendum with the NC Division of Public Health where the department has to either provide or assure these services to the community. The department usually receives around \$23,000 from that particular agreement for maternal health and has been using those funds for provision of services. Ms. Dukeman said the funds will still be received but will be used for the postpartum visiting program instead, as well as some other wraparound services. The department will meet assurance requirements with a memorandum of understand (MOU) with Piedmont Health Services (PHS).

Dr. McCuddy said PHS' Siler City clinic had nearly 2,500 prenatal visits in 2021, with an estimated 3,000 visits for prenatal care in 2022. She said PHS is very well-positioned to take on the patients CCPHD has been seeing. Additionally, PHS has 14 providers that provide prenatal care, with three that are trained in high-risk obstetrics. PHS has agreed to take on referrals from the CCPHD while providing coverage for patients who would slide to \$0 on CCPHD's sliding fee scale. A referral process has been developed, where the health department would cover lost revenue for PHS for each uninsured person needing services at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. CCPHD estimates that around 20 patients per year would fall into this category, at a total cost to CCPHD for reimbursement to PHS of \$6,000.

Ms. Dukeman said the department would provide pregnancy testing, information, and referrals as appropriate, along with following up to assure that all clients with positive pregnancy tests have access to healthcare. She said CCPHD is expanding community maternal health education services, postpartum home visits with a nurse and social worker, and incorporating maternal care skilled nurse home visits for things not provided by an obstetrician. She said there are many things that can be done, but the department will take one step at a time and fill gaps.

Mr. Deaton said that if the transition is approved, the department will begin to publicize the change in several ways and terminate the department's CCNC network participation. In June, the department would finalize the MOU with PHS, update the maternal health AA from provision to assurance, notify partners, and provide updates at next month's BOH meeting.

Mr. Rimer asked if there are any mothers who do fall through the cracks and not get services. Mr. Zelek said it would take looking into all of the data from PHS, UNC, and others, but the department works to raise awareness of primary care practices and other services for people. Dr. McCuddy said this transition can be a way to address these gaps. She said identifying individuals falling through the cracks can be from Chatham Hospital who are delivering without any care. Mr. Zelek said the department will work to make sure people are connected.

Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if individuals are still approaching the department asking for these services. He said that some people in other countries, including Latin America, see the public health department as where you get free healthcare. Ms. Dukeman said there are still

occasional calls and those folks are referred to PHS. Mr. Zelek said the department still provides clinical services around immunizations, family planning, STIs, nutrition and other services.

Mr. Zelek said the department previously took a vacant provider position to split the previous Social Research Associate role into the Communications Specialist and Population Health Data Scientist. Another nurse role (Child Health Nurse) will be transitioned into a Preparedness Coordinator. He said the department is leveraging these vacancies into new positions to support core public health services. In terms of budgetary impact, Mr. Zelek added, providing these services costs the county and the \$22,000 from the state would cover the reimbursement to PHS.

Ms. Reitz-Barlow said these divestments have been made with the goal of not duplicating services, particularly with PHS nearby. She added that she appreciated the phased approach to these divestments. She noted the particular establishment of maternal health services at Chatham Hospital, and how the department can do other services in the community. She said this is the right move. Ms. Dukeman mentioned that Nicole Hanner, CCPHD staff member, can go on the hospital floor to meet with new mothers and schedule home visits.

Dr. Lloyd motioned to approve the CCPHD's transition out of providing maternal care services, Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Freese motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.



Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair



Secretary Ex Officio
Michael Zelek, MPH, Public Health Director