

**Chatham County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023
Dunlap Building – 80 East Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312**

The Chatham County Board of Health held a regular meeting on Monday, September 25, 2023, in the Board Room of the Dunlap Building in Pittsboro.

Attendees

Board Members: Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair; Carol Reitz-Barlow, MSN, RN CCRN; Judith Malone, RN; Delfino Benitez; Zachary Brian, DMD, MHA; William Roscoe, OD; Alan Rimer, PE, PhD

Staff: Michael Zelek, Danielle White, Bianca Sahota, Sara Green, Zach Deaton, Diana Soto, LouAnn Riddle, Dorothy Rawleigh, Zachary Horner

Guests: Elizabeth Plata, Chatham County Manager's Office; Marni Holder, UNC Family Medicine; Lynell Hodges, Piedmont Health Services; Eric Wolak, UNC Health Chatham

Welcome, Call to Order and Introductions

Dr. Barbee called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Zach Deaton, Director of the Clinical and Community Health Services Division, introduced Diana Soto, the department's new Family Planning Nurse Program Coordinator.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

None.

In the interim, Dr. Barbee presented Ms. Malone with a gift in recognition of her time on the Board of Health. Ms. Malone has been on the Board for nearly four years and is stepping away soon. Dr. Barbee said the Board would like to extend their gratitude to Ms. Malone for her service.

Approval of Agenda

Zachary Brian made a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting, and Carol Reitz-Barlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Alan Rimer made a motion to approve the consent agenda for the meeting, and Delfino Benitez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Input Session

None.

New Business

(HRSA) Maternal Health Grant

Marni Holder, of UNC Family Medicine, and Lynell Hodges, Piedmont Health Services (PHS), provided a presentation on a maternal health grant. Ms. Holder (Director of Community Health Initiatives at UNC Family Medicine) stated that the grant is focused on maternal health equity.

Ms. Holder stated that HRSA released a grant called the Quality Improvement Fund to Maternal Health focused on national disparities. She said that all of the work that has been going on in Chatham made the local work very competitive for the grant, specifically work done by EMBRACe alongside community partners. Ms. Hodges is Piedmont's new project manager for maternal health improvement and innovation.

Ms. Hodges stated that the grant was given to 36 health centers across 25 states covering 386,000 female patients aged 15-44. She said the work began on June 1 of this year. The expectations for the grant include partnering with patients and the community to do a number of things:

- Develop and pilot innovative, patient-centered, scalable models of care delivery
- Address the clinical and health-related social needs of health center patients
- Improve maternal health indicators
- QIF-MH award recipients are engaged in peer learning and evaluation activities with other QIF-MH award recipients
- The QIF-MH program also supports health centers to systematically design, implement, and evaluate ways to improve maternal health outcomes across the entire Health Center Program

The grant, Ms. Hodges said, is about allowing groups to work on innovative ideas and projects and share that information with other health centers around the country. The project proposal has three core objectives:

- Improving Piedmont's interdisciplinary team care model
- Increase access to care for rural, high-risk women through a virtual care model and a UNC Maternal Family Medicine specialist and PHS PN providers
- Train and deploy concordant community doulas. This initiative is working in partnership with the Chatham County Public Health Department and EMBRACe.

Ms. Hodges said the local group is responsible for monthly progress reports to HRSA and will collaborate with contractors for technical assistance and evaluation.

Michael Zelek, Chatham County Public Health Director, said the department is excited to collaborate with PHS and UNC Health on this effort. He said that it takes a village to address this issue of maternal health inequity and partnership is what matters the most.

Discussion:

- Ms. Malone asked if the program includes postpartum doulas. Ms. Holder said the training is primarily focused on pre-birth doulas, but they can be trained on postpartum

work as well. Mr. Zelek added that the public health department has a trained doula and nurse that does postpartum visits and services. He said the public health department's work is intended to be part of wraparound services alongside the work done by PHS and UNC Health.

- Dr. Rimer asked if the grant was recurring. Ms. Holder said it was not.
- Dr. Eric Wolak, COO and Chief Nurse Officer at UNC Chatham Hospital, asked if data existed showing what the right number of doulas was in a community. Ms. Holder said they were not aware of one, but that "more" is the goal right now. She said the project is focused primarily on rural sites, but that any doulas anywhere helping health center patients is good. Ms. Holder said there aren't that many at the time but the group is looking, particularly for individuals who can speak Spanish. Mr. Zelek said Casey Hilliard, EMBRACe Project Coordinator, said that there is a lot of interest in relation to doula training.

Board of Health Seat Vacancy Recommendation

Dr. Barbee stated that the Board is now going to consider individuals for a vacancy coming up on the board. The Board's recommendation would go to the county commissioners. Dr. Lloyd and Dr. Roscoe said there were 20 strong applicants for the position. The Nominations Committee put the top four applicants in the meeting packet, and another was held off for recommendation for an opening coming up next year.

Dr. Brian asked how the Board was doing related to representation across county commissioner districts. Mr. Zelek and then Ms. Reitz-Barlow stated the Board has been working on this, but Ms. Reitz-Barlow stated that it has been difficult to get candidates from the west side of the county.

The Board discussed various qualifications and things to consider, including experience, area of focus and diversity among the applicants.

Carol Reitz-Barlow made a motion to recommend Rya Williams for the vacant position for the Board of Health, and Tammy Lloyd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Quality Improvement Update

Bianca Sahota, Policy and Quality Improvement Officer, gave a Quality Improvement Update. Ms. Sahota began in the role in the end of May and gave an update on some of the projects she has been working on:

- The department received reaccreditation with honors. Ms. Sahota stated that she is now the Agency Accreditation Coordinator, and Sara Green, Strategic Planning & Development Officer, is the co-Agency Accreditation Coordinator. Both Ms. Sahota and Ms. Green attended a two-part training for people new to their accreditation roles. Ms. Sahota added that the department is already working on collecting evidence for the next site visit in 2026.

- Ms. Sahota said she has already onboarded a couple new employees and has been working on improving internal organization processes, including annual training requirements and documents. She added that she is working on a single document that outlines the hiring process.
- Ms. Sahota stated that she participated in a lean process project with Environmental Health in partnership with NC State. The training focused on improving the internal process and client experience in Environmental Health (EH) permitting. The project concluded with a short-term and long-term goal. The short-term goal was to require one site plan map meeting to meet all divisions' requirements within EH, and the long-term goal was to create a combined application so clients are filling out multiple applications, thus limiting their trips to the office and the number of fee payments. EH has stated that the site map meeting requirement is close to being finalized and the long-term goal is set to be completed in three months.
- Ms. Sahota stated that all department policies have been reviewed and signed in PowerDMS once, and workflows have been revised so only necessary staff members sign their relevant policies. Staff members have given positive feedback on PowerDMS. A future goal is to utilize PowerDMS for make-up annual required trainings that have been recorded.

Discussion:

- Dr. Rimer remarked that the work done to hyperlink all the forms in one place was important work to be done and makes things easier to find.

Old Business

None.

Health Director Report

Mr. Zelek reported on a few items, including:

- A few vacant positions in the department have been posted, including the Child Health Care Consultant position and two nursing positions.
- The North Carolina Public Health Association annual conference is this week, and several staff members will be attending.
- The food for tonight's meeting is from Aye Toro in Pittsboro in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, which is September 15 to October 15.
- Medicaid expansion starts December 1st in NC. The governor will allow the state budget to become law without his signature, formally approving Medicaid expansion in the state. Mr. Zelek said the expansion should affect around 4,000 Chatham County residents. He added there was some money for local health departments in the budget, two years of \$50,000 a year for general health department support.
- Mr. Zelek concluded by acknowledging Ms. Malone for her service and expertise on the board.

Zach Deaton provided clinic updates:

- Mr. Deaton stated that many local health departments are not giving RSV vaccines due to billing challenges that pharmacies do not have. He said that several pharmacies in Siler City offer the vaccine.
- He added that the flu vaccine has arrived and the clinic has begun to administer them. The county will offer an employee flu clinic on October 12th.
- The new COVID-19 vaccine has been ordered. Three different supplies of vaccine will be tracked from three different sources. The department will offer the Moderna vaccine. Mr. Zelek added that the flu and COVID vaccines will be offered at no cost. Mr. Deaton said the department has been coordinating with partners to discuss a vaccine event, both with community partners and maybe another one at the clinic itself.
- The clinic folks have been working some weekends on outreach events, including the Recovery Celebration on September 9th and the Hispanic Heritage Fiesta on September 16th. Mr. Benitez said that 7,000-8,000 people attended the Fiesta event.
- The department's childbirth classes kicked off earlier this month.
- Phase 1 renovations at the clinic have begun, which included creating 5 additional offices in the administration area. Phase 2 renovations are scheduled for calendar year 2024 to improve functionality and flow of clinic space. The idea is to create a patient-centered space, including a large space for group classes and staff meetings.
- The clinic has also begun a wellness lunch and learn series. The first class had more than 20 participants.

Adjournment

Judith Malone made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and William Roscoe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair



Secretary Ex Officio
Michael Zelek, MPH, Public Health Director

