

**Chatham County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 22, 2024
Dunlap Building – 80 East Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312**

The Chatham County Board of Health held a regular meeting on Monday, January 22, 2024, in the Board Room of the Dunlap Building in Pittsboro.

Attendees

Board Members: Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair; Stephanie Freese, DVM, Vice Chair; Carol Reitz-Barlow, MSN, RN, CCRN; Rya Williams; Delfino Benitez; Alan Rimer, PE, PhD; Ashley Pappas, PharmD, MHA; William Roscoe, OD

Staff: Michael Zelek, Danielle White, Zach Deaton, Dorothy Rawleigh, Anne Lowry, Bianca Sahota, Sara Green, Ann Clark, Laura Hearn, Patricia Lutterloh, Kathleen Pegram, Elaina Young, Barry Oldham

Guests: Eric Wolak, Chatham Hospital

Welcome and Call to Order and Introductions.

Dr. Barbee started the meeting at 6:01pm.

There were three introductions for new staff and one introduction for a position change. Zach Deaton, Community and Clinical Health Services Director, introduced new staff, Kathleen Pegram, Infection Control/Preparedness Nurse Coordinator, and Patricia Lutterloh, Communicable Disease Nurse Coordinator. Samantha Owusu, Community Health Social Work Supervisor, introduced Elaina Young, Public Health Social Work Behavior Specialist. Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, introduced Barry Oldham, whose new position is Food & Lodging Program Specialist. He will be the lead for childcare, schools, and the lead program.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Rimer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, and Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Pappas made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, and Dr. Freese seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Input Session

None.

New Business

Well Program Update

Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, provided an overview of the well and water quality program update.

Ms. Lowry stated the Chatham County Public Health Department (CCPHD) submitted an expansion request to the BOC for FY 25 to pilot a program to offer reduced cost or sliding scale fees for water testing for well owners. The goal of the initiative is to increase access to water testing. This is in response to the following:

- Chatham County adults selected water quality as the top focus to improve health and quality of life in the 2021 Community Assessment
- Concern around water quality has been high in recent years, particularly with the discovery of chemicals in water supply that are linked to health issues
- Testing (and treatment) can be cost prohibitive for lower-income residents.

There was discussion around the cost of well sampling and what is recommended. Mr. Zelek added that the Department has had initial conversations with a local non-profit organization that may be able to assist with repairs or treatment for low-income households where concerns are identified through testing.

Ms. Lowry also requested the Board consider voting to approve the removal of the well camera and the associated fee with the following justifications:

- The well camera was purchased in 2007/2008 when many well drillers did not have a well camera to diagnose water quality issues. Most if not all well drillers now have a well camera.
- CCPHD staff have completed twenty-three well camera visits between 2009 and 2018. No other well camera visits have taken place in the last 5 years.
- The NCDHHS Well Regional Specialist now has a well camera that can be used to evaluate water quality issues.
- The current camera would need to be replaced, which would cost thousands of dollars.

Dr. Roscoe made a motion to approve the removal of the well camera service and the associated fee as presented, and Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Nutrition Program Update

Ann Clark and Laura Hearn, Public Health Nutritionists, provided an update on nutrition program services.

Ms. Hearn shared information on the following programs:

- Diabetes Self-Management Education Program

- One-on-one and Group diabetes education
- Must have been diagnosed with diabetes
- Must have a referral from provider
- Topics covered include nutrition, physical activity, prevention of acute and chronic complications, medications, monitoring, healthy coping, and stress management.
- Diabetes Prevention Program
 - Goal is to prevent diabetes from happening
 - Nearly year-long program for those with pre-diabetes or those at risk of developing diabetes
 - Evidence-based, CDC-funded

Ms. Clark said they also offer Medical Nutrition Therapy:

- One-on-one nutrition counseling
- Discuss a variety of nutrition-related topics and diagnoses (hypertension, diabetes, pre-diabetes, high cholesterol, weight loss, gut health, food allergies, etc.)

Ms. Williams asked how many nutrition visits a resident can receive for Medical Nutrition Therapy. Ms. Clark stated that they can get a general nutrition visit without a referral, and that most insurances cover at least six visits a year for a patient with diabetes. Chatham County covers unlimited nutrition visits through the County BCBS insurance plan. Ms. Clark shared that some residents do not understand what it means to have diabetes and she takes the time to explain the diagnosis and help them work toward lifestyle changes. Mr. Deaton stated CCPHD has a sliding fee scale based on income and household size for residents who do not have insurance.

Ms. Clark shared the following nutrition services they have offered beyond the clinic:

- Wellness Lunch & Learn Series
- Food Literacy classes at the 3 Chatham library locations
- Diabetes Discussion Groups
- Nutrition classes at Centers for Active Living
- Annual Diabetes Awareness and Heart Health classes
- Annual Training Day for Sheriff's Department
- Chronic Disease Prevention for Fire Department and 911 dispatch
- Guest speaker for local conferences
- Wellness classes for local churches
- Chatham HEAT led initiatives for county employees
- Schools: Health Science classes/Athletic teams
- Review nutrition-related policies
- Local Churches (Faith Based Community)

Ms. Clark shared that they are always open to new opportunities and ideas.

Mr. Benitez asked if they do hands-on cooking classes. Ms. Hearn said they have done cooking classes before. Mr. Benitez also asked if they could be tailored, as residents in rural parts of the community do not have access to certain types of foods. Ms. Clark stated they try to meet their patients where they are at, and Ms. Hearn stated they try to go where the people are.

Ms. Clark asked the Board to advocate for their services and if they had any ideas on getting the word out about their services to please let them know. Dr. Roscoe asked if they had business cards. Mr. Deaton stated they will make a visit to his office and share flyers.

Ms. Hearn also shared that looking ahead they plan to do the following:

- Continue to grow clinical nutrition services
- Increase community engagement efforts
- Build upon partner relationships
- Continue to be a trusted resource in Chatham County
- Build a healthier Chatham

Dr. Freese brought up an idea of reaching some residents at risk of diabetes through their animals, who may also suffer from nutrition-related diseases.

Strategic Plan Update

Sara Green, Strategic Planning & Development Officer, provided an update on the CCPHD strategic plan.

Ms. Green shared that the 2019-2025 Strategic Plan began shortly before the pandemic and was coordinated by Casey Hilliard. She said we currently have three cross-division teams (Substance Use and Harm Reduction, Equity for Moms and Babies and Community Engagement) to focus on priority areas. In addition, there are standing teams (e.g., Epi Team) that work on the remaining priorities.

Progress in 2023 on these priorities includes:

Strategic Priority 1: Health Equity

1.4: Achieve successful and equitable birth outcomes for women and infants.

- Started birthing classes
- EMBRACe Community Events
- Grant funding secured for Embrace
 - Working to establish a community doula program.

1.7: Prevent and educate on the harmful consequences of substance use through compassionate and person-centered prevention and harm reduction strategies. (Substance Use and Harm Reduction Team)

- Hired Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator (Morgan Culver) with opioid settlement funding, which includes focus on data collection and dissemination.
- Ongoing Naloxone training and distribution. These are not all the accomplishments of these two teams but some of the highlights.

Health Equity Goals and 2023 Outcomes

1.1: Reduce and mitigate the harmful and disparate health effects associated with emerging threats including climate change and environmental contaminants- Developed Chatham County Health Action Plan. Water quality is a focus of the Environmental Health Strategic Plan.

1.2: Prevent the spread of and serious illness from novel and seasonal viruses- Launched program to offer flu and COVID vaccines at no cost to those without insurance. Established Emergency Preparedness position. Preparedness and monitoring novel diseases are a focus of the Epi Team strategic plan.

1.3: Support Chatham County residents in achieving the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health- Developed communications campaign around sexual health.

1:5: Improve childhood and adult nutrition among food insecure household and low-income communities- Developed Action Plan for health department's nutrition program to achieve strategic goals.

1:6 Foster healthy and trauma-informed environments for children's families- Ramping up newborn/postpartum home visits. Working to secure additional funding for Focus on Fathers and Childcare Health Consultants programs.

1.8: Improve outcomes and reduce disparities related to behavioral health- Established Community Health and Social Work Services Unit with new supervisor position.

1.9: Improve quality of life by lessening incidence and burden of chronic disease (adult health, healthy again) Nutrition is doing more outreach into community to expand services.

Strategic Priority 2-5: Engaged, Thriving Workforce; Center Equity; Strategic Engagement Infrastructure for Excellence

II. Engaged, Thriving Workforce

2.1 Increase opportunities for growth and career advancement within the Department & 2.3: Build Collaboration Across Divisions.

- Launched job shadowing program where staff from different divisions can learn from others.
- Created a yearly community service requirement.
- Started staff Lunch and Learn Program (Anne and Laura have been doing a lot of work around this)

- The monthly staff newsletter highlights staff work and accomplishments.
- Leveraged ARPA grant funds to provide staff training opportunities.
- Personnel Working Group meeting regularly to talk through strategies

III. Center Equity

3.1 Invest in a culture that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion; 3.2 Cultivate and retain a culturally humble and equity-focused workforce; 3.3 Leverage data to assess and advance equity goals.

- Invested in Emtrain DEI training platform, now used County-wide leveraging CCPHD grant funding
- Equity Committee continues to meet monthly to advance department equity goals
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer transitioned to County-wide position working across departments
- Led *Inclusive Conversations* book club with Milestone and Equity Committee
- Created CCPHD hiring guidelines including promotion of diverse hiring panels
- Equity Committee is developing a "This is Me" employee toolkit that focuses on understanding staff preferences around communication and meetings.

IV. Strategic Engagement

4.1 Advance strategic cross-agency partnerships to achieve collective impact goals; 4.2 Foster community engagement and community-led action in pursuit of our health priorities; 4.3 Execute a strategic communications strategy (communicating public Health effectively within and external).

- Hired a Community Engagement Specialist, Jiona Mills. She will lead the cross division team
- Created an internal calendar to attend and prioritize outreach events within the community.
- Continue to lead/serve on several community collaboratives (Chatham Health Alliance, Sheriff's Prevention Partnership, EMBRACe, and others)

V. Organizational Infrastructure for Excellence

5.1 Build organizational structure and capacity that supports Public Health 2.0; 5.2 Grow reputations as a community leader in data-driven innovation and accountability; 5.3 Invest in infrastructure and technological resources that foster partnership, improved local data, and innovation.

- Reaccredited with Honors (23 FY)
- State of the County report and topical reports created
- Invested in data collection, tracking and analysis resources (e.g., SAS)

- Worked with Chatham Health Alliance and Chatham Hospital to secure additional external funding for Community Assessment which is what Maia is working on.

Ms. Green stated we are utilizing Cascade, which is a strategic planning online tool. Priorities are entered into the platform, and she can keep track of the goals and if something is behind, she can reach out the team lead. She added that there is a set number of Administrators you can use the platform at once. Each plan can be updated and tracked, and progress notes can be made for each of them. It is an effective way to track our strategic planning goals. She has started a quarterly reporting form to update Cascade and to see where they are at any issues or new strategies for each of the action plans. Ms. Green has also worked on a strategic plan with the nutritionists, and they will also be reporting quarterly and then meeting at least every other quarter to see if there are any issues. Ms. Green shared that anyone could come to her if they want help with goals or strategic plans and meetings.

Questions:

Dr. Pappas asked when the health department will start planning for the next strategic plan. Ms. Green stated some things were delayed due to COVID but this will need to be fleshed out. Mr. Zelek said we will have new priorities with the 2024 Community Assessment in spring 2025, which aligns with the timing for a new plan, but he expects some focus areas to continue to be included.

Old Business

None.

Health Director Report


Mr. Zelek shared the following updates:

- It is Budget Season. The Budget Committee will meet before the next Board meeting to go over everything so we can share a proposed budget next month.
- The Clinic Renovation work group continues to meet to discuss clinic building renovations. Mr. Deaton shared that they have formed a work group of about fifteen employees to provide ideas for better utilization of space, improving functionality for staff, clients, and the community. He also mentioned having a meeting space where we can hold a Board meeting. Mr. Rimer asked if they had reached out to anyone from the outside for recommendations on space needs. Mr. Deaton stated once the work group comes up with a preliminary plan they will share it with Brian Stevens, County Facilities & Construction Director, for feedback, and contractors can be brought in for additional perspective.
- There is a new Executive Director, Heather St. Clair, at the Chatham County Partnership for Children, and staff will be meeting with her tomorrow.
- Community Assessment data collection, including door-to-door surveys, will take place late March-April.

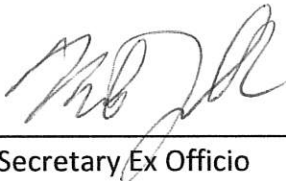
- The Sheriff's Prevention Partnership meeting took place on Wednesday 1/17/2024, where committees planned goals and activities for the next year around overdose prevention.
- Over fifty applications for the Communications Specialist position were submitted and the hiring team is currently going through them. This is the only current permanent position vacancy in the Department.
- We have notified Patagonia of our planned transition to another electronic medical record (EMR) system transition, which is now expected go live in August.
- Several Board members are coming up for their final term. We plan to start recruiting in March for those seats to ensure a strong candidate pool.
- Ms. Clark shared that there is a CCPHD team in the annual polar plunge organized by the Sheriff's Office to support Special Olympics. Information on how to support in the January newsletter.

Adjournment

Dr. Freese made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair



Secretary Ex Officio
Michael Zelek, MPH, Public Health Director