

**Chatham County Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, September 23, 2024  
Dunlap Building – 80 East Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312**

The Chatham County Board of Health held a regular meeting on Monday, September 23, 2024, in the Board Room of the Dunlap Building in Pittsboro.

**Attendees**

**Board Members:** Stephanie Freese, DVM, Chair, Dana Iglesias, MD, Catherine Crawford, PhD, Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner, Karen Davis, EdD, Erika Dunnon, MPH

**Absent Members:** Alan Rimer, PE, Zachary Brian, DMD, MHA, Vice-Chair, Ashley Pappas, PharmD, MH, Rya Williams, BA, Heather O'Mara, OD

**Staff:** Mike Zelek, Kyle Chambers, Danielle White, Zach Deaton, Sara Green, Kevin Overcash, Maia Fulton-Black, Alecia Marsh, Cheryl Garrett, James Tiger

**Guests:** Eric Wolak, Chatham Hospital

**Welcome and Call to Order**

Dr. Freese started the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

None.

**Introductions**

None.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Commissioner Gomez Flores made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and Dr. Iglesias seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**Consent Agenda**

*Commissioner Gomez Flores made a motion to approve the revised consent agenda with Items I and J added, and Dr. Davis seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**Public Input Session**

None.

**Reports**

### **Child Care Health Consultant Program Update**

Alecia Marsh, Child Care Health Consultant for the Chatham County Public Health Department, presented an update on the Child Care Health Consultant Program.

Ms. Marsh introduced herself as a Chatham County native with a background in education before she began her current role at the health department. According to Ms. Marsh, the Child Care Health Consultant focuses on children aged 0-5 to ensure high quality, safe and secure environments. As the county's child care health consultant, Ms. Marsh performs the following duties:

- Assesses early care and education practices and environments
- Provides health and safety technical assistance and training
- Develops strategies for including children with special health care needs
- Supports early educators in preventing and managing injuries and infectious diseases
- Connects early educators and families to community health resources
- Provides up-to-date information on regulations and best practices

Ms. Marsh said that she is certified to provide a wide variety of training for childcare health providers. Most of her focus is placed on the 42 licensed childcare facilities/programs in Chatham County, which serve more than 1,000 children. She is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of Chatham County's youngest residents. One specific area of strength for Ms. Marsh is immunization support and reporting, Ms. Marsh recently stated that 100% of facilities followed NC Immunization requirements as of last fiscal year.

Mike Zelek, Health Director for the Chatham County Public Health Department, mentioned that the number of children who are current with their immunizations in childcare facilities is now also very high, a testament to the work of the Child Care Health Consultant.

Dr. Iglesias asked if there is a location where the public can find a list of these 42 facilities. Ms. Marsh specified that this information is available through the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education website.

Commissioner Gomez Flores inquired if prevention of chronic disease for youth falls under Ms. Marsh's role. Ms. Marsh replied that yes, if a condition presents itself in a childcare setting and she becomes aware of it. Commissioner Flores questioned whether there is an educational component to this in Child Care Health Consultant programming for facilities, specific to nutrition. Ms. Marsh said that this could fall under the purview of Tara Gregory of Cooperative Extension or Tia Brown, the Youth Health and Tobacco Lead for the Chatham County Health Department. Ms. Marsh also specified that early health and nutrition education could be explored through connections with other staff in the health department. Mr. Zelek mentioned this coordination is one of the advantages of having this position housed within the public health department.

Dr. Davis asked how unlicensed facilities are discovered. Ms. Marsh replied that sometimes they are reported, while other times they are already on the radar of licensing. Dorothy Rawleigh, Health Promotion and Policy Division Director for the Chatham County Public Health Department, clarified that these facilities operate legally in most cases and that if facilities are not operating legally, they are shut down.

Dr. Iglesias inquired what programs are available to recognize chronic stress. Ms. Marsh clarified that she recently received training related to this and that training is available for directors to assess if their staff is under duress; strategies for management are provided. If further intervention is required, referral to a third-party resource takes place.

**Bad Debt Write Off Annual Report**

Cheryl Garrett, Accounting Technician at the Chatham County Public Health Department, delivered the Bad Debt Write Off Annual Report to the Board of Health.

FY 22/23 and FY 21/22 write-offs are as follows:

| <b>PROGRAM</b>         | <b>FY 22/23<br/>Write-Off</b> | <b>FY 21/22<br/>Write-Off</b> | <b>% Change</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Adult Health</i>    | \$1,377.93                    | \$3,964.94                    | -65.0%          |
| <i>Child Health</i>    | \$1,087.70                    | \$2,721.20                    | -60.0%          |
| <i>Family Planning</i> | \$19,194.04                   | \$9,803.78                    | 49.0%           |
| <i>Immunization</i>    | \$461.10                      | \$376.00                      | 18.0%           |
| <i>Maternal Health</i> | \$1,210.80                    | \$2,700.00                    | -55.0%          |
| <i>Tuberculosis</i>    | \$0.00                        | \$0.00                        | 0.0%            |

|               |                    |                    |              |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>\$23,331.47</b> | <b>\$19,589.92</b> | <b>16.0%</b> |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|

According to Ms. Garrett, a total of \$186,333.92 in receipts from debt set-off has been generated to date.

*Dr. Davis made a motion to approve the bad debt write-off report for fiscal year 22-23 as presented and Commissioner Gomez Florez seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**Community Assessment Update**

Maia Fulton-Black, Population Health Data Scientist, provided an update on the 2024 Community Assessment (CA), an in-depth overview of health and well-being in the county produced every three years. According to Ms. Fulton-Black, the goals for the CA in 2024 are to ensure rural residents and historically marginalized populations are accounted for in the new survey cohort. Building community engagement is also a focus; Ms. Fulton-Black explained that this year, the CHA expanded its Community Action Team, launched a supplemental survey to gather data from partners and began collecting qualitative data through focus groups.

Ms. Fulton-Black stated that survey data collection for the CA concluded in summer 2024. More than 25 individuals volunteered for survey collection and focus groups. 13 focus groups were held, sourcing data from 93 community members. A total of 411 cohort surveys were collected, of which 253 were collected in person.

Throughout fall 2024, Ms. Fulton-Black stated that much of her efforts will be dedicated to preparing the CA report. According to Ms. Fulton Black, the Chatham Health Alliance also will soon begin its health priority prioritization process. Two prioritization meetings will be held on Saturday, October 5 and Tuesday October 8 from 10 A.M. – 12 P.M. Ms. Fulton-Black aims to finalize the report and receive necessary approvals during the winter season. Dissemination of the report is projected to occur in spring 2025.

**Old Business**

**Electronic Health Record System Transition Update**

Kevin Overcash, Administrative Services Manager in the Clinical and Community Health Services Division, delivered a report on the public health department’s electronic health record system transition.

Mr. Overcash said the clinic is one week out from the official “Go-Live” date for EPIC, the public health department’s new electronic health record system. Thanks to the help of Chatham County IT and UNC Health, the technical dress rehearsal should be able to take place on

Wednesday, September 25. Following this, the operational dress rehearsal will take place on Thursday, September 26, which will allow the clinic to see how the new system works onsite.

Per Mr. Overcash, 75% of staff have completed online EPIC training, while 93% have completed in-person training.

According to Mr. Overcash, the billing division will likely not experience challenges until actual patient billing begins. EPIC will not allow the public health department to carry forward any balances from Patagonia, so a few workarounds are being explored to mitigate this issue. Mr. Overcash stated that this may lead to complications with bad debt reports, collections, and managing legacy debts for years to come.

As of present, the old Patagonia billing system remains in place, rather than using EPIC. Mr. Overcash mentioned that the department is very close to finding an EPIC-compatible lab to replace Quest Labs for the long term.

Mr. Zelek noted that Durham, Orange and Alamance County health departments have already transitioned to EPIC and are providing lessons they have learned.

## **New Business**

### **Board of Health Training**

Stephanie Freese, DVM, gave the Board of Health a training on its authorities and responsibilities, noting that it is required for Health Department reaccreditation. Dr. Freese said that the purpose of the Board of Health is to provide guidance to protect health in the county. The Board of Health's responsibilities include the following:

- Rulemaking
- Adjudication
- Administration
- County Expertise on health issues from multiple perspectives

Dr. Freese outlined recent, key actions that the Board of Health has undertaken to protect public health, including implementing lead poisoning prevention rules and well-related rules, supporting tobacco-free initiatives and adopting a resolution recognizing structural racism as a public health crisis.

According to Dr. Freese, the Board of Health's rulemaking ability must follow the below guidelines. A rule must:

- Prohibit citizens from doing something
- Require citizens to do something
- Follow the Five-Part Test to be valid\*

- (1) be related to the promotion or protection of health
- (2) be reasonable in light of the health risk addressed
- (3) not violate any law or constitutional provision
- (4) not be discriminatory
- (5) not make distinctions based upon policy concerns traditionally reserved for legislative bodies

She then provided specifics on the key recent action the Board of Health has taken, noting that only she and Dr. Davis were on the Board in 2020.

Dr. Freese also reflected on how the Board of Health provided guidance and volunteered to support public health during the COVID-19 pandemic. She shared information she provided to the community early in the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on One Health. She concluded her presentation by stating that each member of the Board of Health brings expertise to improve wellbeing within Chatham County through their own unique perspectives.

Mr. Zelek noted that the presentation would be sent out to the full Board to ensure those not in attendance would receive the information.

### **Health Director Report**

Mr. Zelek delivered the following updates:

- At the NC Public Health Association Conference last week, we were awarded an Ann Wolfe mini grant for \$8,000 to purchase safe homes supplies. Our wonderful public health social workers led the effort, and they will work with the Department of Social Services and Safe Kids to distribute items like plug covers, pack ‘n plays, and baby gates to families in need.
- Gabriela Arciniega-Sarmiento and Sam Owusu from the same team were nominated for the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Award at NCPHA Conference for the Parent Navigator Program. The Parent Navigator Program provides guidance and support for families and children with developmental delays.
- COVID-19 and flu vaccines are now available at our clinic in Siler City. We are once again able to offer them at no cost to those without insurance. We were also awarded additional funding and vaccine through the State focused on vaccinating farmworkers.
- We will be receiving a vending machine through a BCBS Grant for harm reduction supplies, including naloxone as well as Fentanyl test strips – and COVID-19 tests. It will be located at our clinic in Siler and is climate controlled for 24-7 access outdoors. We expect it to arrive in October and will have a ribbon cutting once it does.
- The clinic parking signage seems to be deterring illegal parking, and we have not had to tow anyone yet.
- We are readying a space at our clinic in Siler City to host WIC staff from Piedmont Health Services (PHS). In Chatham and Orange Counties, WIC is run by PHS. Given their limited



space, we have offered them a small room at our clinic to support them and help create linkages between our programs and teams.


- Laura Hearn is starting a new Diabetes Prevention Program cohort and is also facilitating the next community-based Diabetes Discussion Group on Tuesday, September 24, 11 A.M. – 12 P.M., at Goldston Library. Anyone with diabetes or who is interested in learning more about nutrition and diabetes is welcome to attend.
- We will be conducting interviews for the Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator position in early October. We received over 40 applications.
- The Chatham Community Assessment Prioritization meetings are coming up. Please consider attending one of the following: Saturday, October 5 OR Tuesday October 8, both are from 10 A.M. -12 P.M. at the Ag./Conference Center.
- We will be a part of the Recovery Celebration and 5K – this Saturday, September 28 from 10 A.M. – 3 P.M. at Chatham Middle School in Siler City. Free lunch and local resources will be available.
- We enjoyed participating in the Hispanic Heritage Fiesta at Shakori Hills last weekend. The event is organized by the Hispanic Liaison.

Mr. Zelek noted he would share additional updates by email to the full Board.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Davis made a motion to adjourn, and Dr. Iglesias seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.*

  
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Stephanie Freese, DVM, Chair

  
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Secretary Ex Officio  
Michael Zelek, MPH, Public Health Director