

The Cleveland County Public Health Board met on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Board members present: Marty Hamrick, Robert Miller, Kale Meade, Sara Karner, and Ronnie Whetstine.

Board members present remotely: Deanna Moseley Lawrence and Street Hamrick.

Health Department staff present: Tiffany Hansen, DeShay Oliver, Alisa Leonard, Anne Short, Nathan McNeilly, Leslie McSwain, and Heather Willis.

County Attorney's present: Martha Thompson (remote).

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:**

Tiffany Hansen called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed everyone.

Mr. Miller gave the invocation.

**CITIZEN RECOGNITION:**

No citizens requested to appear before the Board.

**ELECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD CHAIR:**

Ms. Hansen asked for nominations for the position of the Public Health Board Chair to serve for the 2022 year.

**Motion: A motion was made by Robert Miller with a second by Ronnie Whetstine to nominate Sara Karner to serve as the Chair of the Public Health Board. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ELECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD VICE-CHAIR:**

Chair Karner asked for nominations for the position of the Public Health Board Vice-Chair to serve for the 2022 year.

**Motion: A motion was made by Robert Miller with a second by Ronnie Whetstine to nominate Kale Meade to serve as the Vice-Chair of the Public Health Board. The motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR JANUARY 11, 2022, PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEETING:**

Chair Karner presented the proposed agenda for the January 11, 2022, Public Health Board meeting for consideration of adoption.

**Motion: A motion was made by Ronnie Whetstine with a second by Robert Miller to adopt the agenda for the January 11, 2022 Public Health Board meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 9, 2021 PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEETING MINUTES:**

Chair Karner presented the November 9, 2021 Public Health Board meeting minutes for consideration of approval.

**Motion: Kale Meade moved that the minutes of the November 9, 2021 Public Health Board Meeting be approved as presented. Marty Hamrick seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION:**

DeShay Oliver presented awards to long-serving Public Health Board members Tom Spurling and Randy Sweeting. She thanked them for their commitment to public health, and their service to Cleveland County over the last ten years. She expressed a profound appreciation for their time and dedication and provided a plaque and thank you cards signed by the Health Department team.

**LAB, CHILD HEALTH, CMHRP AND CMARC PROGRAM PRESENTATION:**

DeShay Oliver introduced Heather Willis, the Health Department's Nursing Supervisor over Lab, Child Health, CMHRP and CMARC (Case Management) programs. Heather presented an overview of the program areas she provides oversight to. For the Child Health program, it is a fully functional pediatric clinic. There is one Provider and one Nurse that maintain this clinic. They see children from birth to 18 years old. This clinic has both sick and well child visits, as well as offers telehealth visits. The telehealth visits is a new opportunity in 2020 with COVID19, and has been a great benefit to patients that have challenges with transportation. This clinic accepts private insurance, Medicaid, Managed Medicaid (Prepaid Health Plans) and private pay on a sliding fee scale. Heather shared that this clinic also does several referrals to get continuation of care for all pediatric patients, as well as follow-up.

Ms. Willis went on to share about the Laboratory program. We have a moderately complex lab in the Health Department. Complex labs are sent out to a contract lab, called Quest. The lab is CLIA certified, which she shared there is an upcoming review on-site. We have two labs in the Health Department, the main lab, as well as a small lab in Employee Wellness. We have three Lab Technicians that work in the main lab and Quest provides a part-time Lab Technician.

She went on to share the CMHRP (Case Management for High-Risk Pregnancy) program reaches out to pregnant women that come through our clinics, as well as referrals from other providers/agencies in the County. This program focuses on high-risk pregnancies, which include smoking, pre-term labor, or patients that miss several follow-up appointments with their providers. This program has three Nurses and one Social Worker. This program can follow patients up to two months postpartum, with a focus on getting them in for their postpartum visit and future planning. Goals of this group are education and prevention around healthy pregnancies and healthy children. They connect our patients with resources throughout the County, which include transportation, food, housing, schooling, other provider appointments, etc.

Ms. Willis also provided an overview of CMARC (Case Management for At Risk Children) for children that are 0-5. The main goal is to prepare children to go to kindergarten. Referrals for this program can come from anywhere in the community. This program is also focused on education. The children enrolled in this program have medical needs, behavioral needs or have missed provider appointments. She went on to share that we work closely with DSS on safety plans for children enrolled in the program that are applicable. This program provides resources for food, shelter, clothing and supplies to patients enrolled. One Social Worker and two Nurses oversee patients as part of this program.

She shared that both Case Management program areas are fully funded through Medicaid and focus on face-to-face visits with patients. They will work with area clinics to meet patients in their facilities, or home visits if needed. They travel throughout Cleveland County and do have some out-of-County patients depending on the needs of the patient. The program also has one Processing Assistant that assists both areas.

Chair Karner asked if the program ever takes donations to support the programs. Ms. Willis replied and stated that people can reach out to her directly and she would be happy to talk through what we can accept. She also mentioned that several Churches in the community accept donations and they make referrals to patients to seek out resources there as well.

**BOARD OF HEALTH/HEALTH DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER N.C. GENERAL STATUTES:**

Tiffany Hansen presented the General Statutes that outline responsibilities of the Board of Health, as well as those responsibilities outlined for the Health Director. She mentioned that the General Statutes are focused on communicable disease prevention, including TB, STD, HIV along with environmental health components within our community.

**COVID-19 STATUS UPDATE:**

Tiffany Hansen provided a COVID-19 update to the Public Health Board. Ms. Hansen stated our total case counts for COVID-19 are at 22,523 cases in total for the pandemic. She stated there had been 167 cases reported since yesterday. Over the last 14 days, there has been 2618 cases reported, which is an average of 187 cases/day. Compared to the last update provided in November, this is

nearly 8 times as high. She stated there has been 1539 cases reported in the last 7-day period, which is 220 cases/day average. Cleveland County has had 326 deaths due to COVID19 over the duration of the pandemic. Ms. Hansen also shared the percent positive COVID19 labs for the State is at 30.5% and Cleveland County is at 29.6%.

Ms. Hansen reviewed the updated CDC Community Transmission Map, which the State of NC remains all in red, indicating high level of community transmission. She also provided the age breakdown for COVID19 cases, which are impacting all age categories. She shared an update on the Variant Proportions for HHS Region 4. The proportions of samples that are sequenced across the region has shifted to Omicron, with nearly 99% of all sequenced labs being Omicron.

Mr. Whetstine asked about the level of hospitalizations being seen throughout the County. Ms. Hansen shared that we are still seeing hospitalizations across the County although a major difference between the Delta surge and the Omicron is a decrease in the severity of illness. Therefore, less patients are requiring ICU or ventilation.

She stated that vaccinations continue to be the primary preventative strategy. For those individuals 5 years of age and older that have received one dose of the COVID19 vaccine we are at 50,956 (55%) and for those that are fully vaccinated in those age ranges it is 47,567 (51%).

Chair Karner asked about individual's vaccine records and how patients may access their COVID19 records if they are not aware of the date of their last vaccination. Ms. Hansen share those patients can access their CVMS records, which is the database the State utilizes to track COVID19 vaccinations.

She shared an updated vaccine eligibility chart that was created to outline all available FDA & CDC approved COVID19 vaccines, along with the age groups that are eligible.

Ms. Hansen also gave an update on the level of testing demands that are being experienced throughout the County. The rate of testing increased from 2000 tests/week to 3600 tests/week. She expressed that the demand for testing is very high right now, and the community is struggling to locate available testing resources. Some ways in which the Health Department is working to meet the needs is partnering with StarMed to do every Saturday drive-thru testing events, along with distribution of at-home test kits to County Employees. She also shared that area providers continue to test as well, and they utilize them as resources for the community too.

She also shared the updated guidance from CDC and DHHS for the general public for both quarantine and isolation. Overall, depending on your specific vaccination situation it is likely that patients would only need to be out for 5 days and wear masks for an additional 5 days. She shared updated flowcharts that have been distributed to assist with understanding the new guidance.

#### **ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION GRANT EVALUATION DATA:**

Anne Short provided the adolescent pregnancy prevention grant evaluation data, which is a summary of the work that was done from July 2020 through May 2021. She reminded the Board

that in the fall of 2020 school was operating remotely, so not as many opportunities were available to teach the materials. Therefore, in the spring of 2021 curriculum was delivered to Crest and Shelby Middle School in an abbreviated version of Making Proud Choices.

Ms. Short shared that they were able to serve 303 students, functioning on a hybrid schedule with many obstacles. 83% of students participated in at least 75% of all of the classes. She shared that they utilize a pre and post test to track knowledge increase consistently. 80% of youth demonstrated an increase in knowledge that supports the prevention of pregnancy and STIs. 46% demonstrated an increase in attitudes supporting abstinence. 63% demonstrated an increase in attitude supporting condom use for preventing pregnancy and STIs.

Chair Karner asked what age the curriculum is taught to. Ms. Short responded that the curriculum is taught in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Crest and Shelby Middle School, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Burns and Kings Mountain High School. Puberty is taught in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, which she stated is a basic 1-hour class.

### **BUDGET AMENDMENTS:**

Leslie McSwain presented the budget amendments.

### **ITEM NUMBER ONE**

Cleveland County Health Department has been allocated an additional \$257,204 from NCDHHS to assist with COVID vaccination administration. These funds will be used to support existing salaries, purchase of medical supplies, PPE, and contracted labor cost for RN assisting with administering children's COVID vaccinations. We request that the funds be budgeted in our Carolina Access (546) department.

**Motion: Robert Miller moved that the Budget Amendment be recommended to the Board of Commissioners for approval as presented. Kale Meade seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

### **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:**

Chair Karner asked if there was any miscellaneous business to discuss.

Tiffany Hansen reviewed a new program that will begin January 17<sup>th</sup> at the Cleveland County Health Department Pharmacy, called AccessMeds. This pharmacy program is available to uninsured, or underinsured community members based on their qualifying income, and creates another path for patients to get connected to free and discounted medications within the County.

Deshay Oliver also reminded Public Health Board members that annually the Conflict-of-Interest Policy needs to be reviewed and signed by each member. She provided copies to all members present in-person for signature.

**ADJOURN: 7:13 pm**

There being no further business, Chair Karner called for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion: Robert Miller moved, with a second by Kale Meade that the Cleveland County Public Health Board meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.**

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Tiffany Hansen, Secretary  
Cleveland County Public Health Board