

**North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors**  
**Association Business Meeting**  
**October 17, 2019**  
**Cardinal Room. NC Division of Public Health, Six Forks Rd, Raleigh, NC**

**Minutes**

**Meeting Called To Order – Steve Smith**

Colleagues and friends gathered in the Cardinal Room, filling it with movement and banter. As the assemblage settled in, the reflections of Melissa Viviane Jefferson hung about the space...“Think about how you can make the world a better place in the real world. We need you out here.” Turns out, she’s 100%...spot on! The meeting then began at 0933.

**Approval of Minutes – Stacie Saunders**

Motion to approve September minutes made by John Rouse (Harnett) and seconded by Chris Dobbins (Gaston). No further discussion. Vote called and motion passes.

**Treasurer’s/Financial Report – Stacie Saunders**

Motion to approve financial report made by Dorothea Wyant (Cleveland) and seconded by Dennis Joyner (Union). No further discussion. Vote called and motion passes.

**President’s Report – Steve Smith**

President Smith inquired if any new or retiring Health Directors were present. At this time, Joanne Pierce informed the membership that she is serving as Interim Health Director in Durham County. Additionally, Doug Urland introduced Jennifer McCracken who will be serving as the Interim Health Director for Catawba effective October 25.

President Smith then recognized Dennis Williams, DPH Medicaid Policy Director, who is retiring in 15 days. President Smith expressed immense gratitude to Williams for his years of assistance and support to local health departments.

President Smith attended the New Health Directors’ Orientation and provided kudos to Tommy Jarrell (Richmond) and Quintana Stewart (Orange) for their work on planning the content of the orientation. President Smith commented on the need to capture historical and institutional knowledge from retiring health directors.

President Smith acknowledged the Accreditation Work Group and the time and effort going into reviewing the standards. Additionally, President Smith recognized the ongoing work in informing the Fiscal Research Division of General Assembly and thanked health directors that have been involved in those meetings. President Smith recently attended the UNC School of Public Health Practice Advisory Meeting. This was a good opportunity to advance the needs and development of future workforce.

President Smith acknowledged the work of many health directors and of Bo Bobbitt in explaining the unique nature of public health and its work to Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs). PHPs are gaining more understanding and acceptance on the provisions that are important to contract language. Tracey Simmons-Kornegay (Duplin) added that she attended a meeting regarding care management programs. PHPs, Division of Health Benefits, and DPH representatives also attended.

President Smith expressed appreciation for those who have paid dues.

**NC DHHS Assistant Secretary for Public Health: Mark Benton**

Mark Benton began by wishing the membership a Happy Boss’ Day.

Benton provided a legislative update. This has been an unusual session, which could end as early as October 31 but will know more in the following week. Benton stated that a quick adjournment might make the path to Medicaid Expansion more difficult. Benton also reminded the group that both chambers have not overridden the Governor’s budget but instead have been implementing work-around measures for the budget called “mini-budgets”.

Benton shared the embargoed Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) Statistics including that for the first time in NC the IMR rate has dropped below 7.0 deaths per 1000 live births. Benton also stated that decreases were observed in IMR disparities.

Benton stated that WIC participation numbers appear to be increasing. Benton acknowledged the magnitude of work currently in Epidemiology and thanked local health departments for their work on recent concerns including mumps, Legionnaires, measles, and vaping illness. Benton reminded membership that NC DPH and various local health departments will participate in the November 4 national Ebola Full Scale Exercise. Additionally, seven (7) other states will be participating.

Benton mentioned that Environmental Health has gotten through the Rules Commission. Effective October 1, rules will be on the books that will require childcare centers to test their drinking water for lead. Initial testing will occur on or around January 1, 2020. Environmental Health is currently working on some temporary rules regarding artificial swimming and recreational lagoons. These lagoons do not fit into the existing swimming pool rules and therefore there is a need for temporary rules. Lastly, on the Environmental Health front, Benton reminded membership that the NC State Fair begins this week.

Benton ended by stating that public health world is changing with Medicaid Transformation. With these changes also comes new levels of accountability and outcome measures. Given that there will be a good deal more accountability in the future when it comes to Medicaid payments, Benton asked membership to ponder if this is a good time to reflect on existing requirements and accountability the Division already places on local health departments through program agreements. DPH is being very sensitive not to put additional requirements on local health departments. Benton urged membership to take the next month to discuss amongst themselves and he will discuss with DPH staff. He stated he would like to discuss further in the coming months.

#### **Chief Medical Officer/State Health Director Report- Dr. Betsey Tilson**

Betsey Tilson stated she had the opportunity to testify before Congress regarding the dangers of e-cigarettes/vaping devices. Tilson stated the written testimony is available to local health departments.

Tilson stated that by statute there is to be a joint meeting of the NC Medical Society and the NC Public Health Commission at which the State Health Director must report. Tilson reported that the joint meeting was successful and she reported on departmental priorities and emerging issues in Public Health. The report is available on the NC Medical Society website.

Tilson informed membership that the Public Health Leaders Conference will occur in January 2020. The conference will include a Healthy Opportunities panel consisting of local and state panelists discussing Social Determinants Screening Tool, NCCARE360, and Healthy Opportunities Pilots. Additionally, Tilson reported that NCCARE360 is live in 21 counties and received its 1000<sup>th</sup> referral last week. She stated that local health departments are leading the way with community referrals. She believes that the use of NCCARE360 may have also had an impact on the increase in WIC participation rates. Tilson stated that at a future meeting, she would like to share the NCCARE360 data dashboard with NCALHD.

Tilson stated that open enrollment for Medicaid Transformation went live two (2) days ago. A webinar was available yesterday regarding open enrollment. She also mentioned that the RFP for the Healthy Opportunities Pilots would be released soon.

#### **Executive Director - Lynnette Tolson**

Lynnette Tolson reminded membership that Public Health Leaders Conference will begin January 22 at the North Raleigh Hilton. Registration is now open, follow the link at NCPHA website. Tolson stated that the day before the conference, the NCALHD holds the Annual Meeting at noon where awards will be presented. Immediately after the annual meeting, the NCALHD will hold their monthly meeting.

Tolson asked that members please review the NCALHD website and contact Kim Dittman or Tolson with any changes to health directors, services, or other information.

Tolson reported that Fiscal Research Staff plan to visit Johnston County Health Department in November. This meeting will highlight the good work that is happening at local health departments. Tolson informed members that Fiscal Staff requested to visit other health departments and Tolson will be in touch with health directors in those areas once Fiscal Staff has confirmed their availabilities.

Tolson stated that public health advocates including Representative White have been working to get the Communicable Disease funding into one of the previously mentioned mini-budgets.

#### **Committee Reports**

##### **Technology – Wes Gray**

**Action:** None

**Information:** Wes Gray reported that Mary Beth Cox and Amy Patel presented the Opioid Action Plan 2.0. The Opioid Dashboard switched to new platform, Tableau, allowing user to hover over counties for some comparison indicators. Gray also reported that the Community Linkages to Care (CLC) application is open and are due October 25.

##### **Planning and Innovation – Stacie Saunders**

**Action:**

**Information:** Stacie Saunders reminded committee chairs and DPH liaisons to have agreement addenda ready for review at November meeting. Beth Lovette (DPH) then provided a summary of the NC AHEC presentation by Chris Weathington regarding

Medicaid Transformation practice support. DHB has contracted with NC AHEC for practice support. NC AHEC has contacted 90% of the AMH providers except local health departments. Lovette encouraged Chris to reach out to local health departments that have attested to AMH Tier 3. Lovette informed the members that if they attested to higher level AMH and now need to revise that attestation then guidance is available by DHHS on how to revise that attestation. Lisa Macon Harrison (Granville Vance) stated that they have hired a care manager for primary care patients now with local and grant funds in anticipation of PMPM funds in the future. Others in the room affirmed that decision. Joyner asked about the capacity of the CIN in supporting local health departments. Lovette reiterated that the CIN in the public health work is focused on comprehensive primary care for adults and children. Tilson stated that the capacity issue is coming up more now that requirements are more readily being discussed.

**Policy and Finance – Scott Harrelson**

**Action: None**

**Information:** Scott Harrelson reported that committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the Accreditation Workgroup recommendations. Harrelson reported that it was difficult to determine a pattern in the feedback obtained by local health department. In January 2020, the group will begin the work of reviewing the guidance documentation. This work will not require any change to the statute but rather likely changes to the Rules Commission. Harrelson stated that the next NCALHD meeting is November 21 and the next Accreditation Board meeting is November 22. The goal is to get documents out to membership for review and subsequent vote at November NCALHD meeting. Harrelson reported that John Rouse agreed to serve as the third health director representative on the committee; Chris Dobbins and Teresa Ellen currently serve as representatives. Harrelson stated that Region 1 provided feedback on the draft practice guidance regarding hostile environment at site visits. Region 1 suggested that an appeal process be available for the local health department.

Bill Smith (Robeson) mentioned that at committee reciprocity to national Public Health Accreditation (PHAB) was referenced. Smith inquired if reciprocity to that accreditation process was the goal. Lovette stated that the use of reciprocity was not the intent but agreed with Smith that rather the intent was recognition that NC Accreditation process was effective and valid by those third parties. Davin Madden (Wayne) inquired if the peer review versus third party review approach had been discussed. Dobbins acknowledged that subjectivity exists when humans are a part of the process. Dobbins then added that PHAB is looking at applying a process to local health departments that recognizes the diversity in the national health department profile (ie health department that does only core services versus a health department that may also include clinical services). Lastly, he mentioned that in order to achieve additional objectivity additional funding of the process may be needed.

**Preparedness/EPI – Lillian Koontz**

**Action: None**

**Information:** Dr. Zack Moore thanked the response team on the Legionella outbreak at the Mountain State Fair. With 140 lab confirmed cases, this was a large event with a rapid response. Hopefully, at this point all local health departments have received the memo regarding new guidance with vaping related illness. To date, testing of products related to lung illness, 80% contain THC. Still more to understand about lung illnesses related to vaping, but made great strides in understanding and have more tools to develop policies to minimize risk. In the communicable disease world, still handling Mumps on college campuses great partnership with local health department staff and university staff. If anyone needs guidance regarding third dose options, the State is available to help. Currently involved in monitoring regarding a Measles---exposure to passengers on a flight. Preparedness Team will be conducting a full scale exercise November 4-8 with participation across the state. This exercise is to test transport capabilities in an Ebola outbreak. The Branch is requesting a letter of support for ATSDR’s Partnership to Promote Local Efforts to Reduce Environmental Exposures grant. This is related to the Health Assessment Consultation and Education grant received in the past. The Officers are supportive of this letter, President Smith will work on completion. Reminder of the upcoming Molecular Epidemiology Symposium on November 4 in Chapel Hill, the topic is Molecular Epidemiology of Infectious Disease and Public Health Applications you may register at: <http://www.cvent.com/d/mhqxt>

MegAnn Smith and Alan Dellapenna shared a handout(attached) and information on preparation for continuation of MAT during disasters. Hurricane Florence was the first major storm in North Carolina since the legalization and popularization of SEPs in our state. We need to prepare for displacement of users of SEP and MAT considering guest dosing, provision of Naloxone, and SEP. Since inception the State opioid tool kit has not been significantly updated, looking into that. December 13, OPDAC meeting regarding training for MAT in the jail setting. Upcoming grant funding is prevention heavy-up to 75% of awarded dollars are to be spent on prevention rather than response.

Lillian Koontz thanked those who responded to the request for information on local health department immunization requirements. Of the 52 responses:

|                    | <b>Required All Employees</b> | <b>Required Some Employees</b> | <b>Declination Required</b> | <b>No Policy</b> | <b>Other</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>Flu Vaccine</b> | 13.46%                        | 13.46%                         | 19.23%                      | 36.54%           | 17.31%       |

|                  |        |        |     |       |        |
|------------------|--------|--------|-----|-------|--------|
| <b>MMR</b>       | 31.59% | 28.85% | n/a | 1.92% | 9.62%  |
| <b>Varicella</b> | 44.23% | 38.46% | n/a | 3.85% | 13.46% |

Regarding exclusion policies, 26.92% had exclusion policies for vaccine preventable diseases during an outbreak, 63.46% did not. I have requested policies from those health departments that reported having policies, i.e. require staff to wear masks during flu season without a vaccine, require staff to sign declination form, exclusion, etc. You may email [Lillian.Koontz@DavidsonCountyNC.gov](mailto:Lillian.Koontz@DavidsonCountyNC.gov) to request a copy of a policy.

Caroline Moser (Pender) inquired about recent memo from Carl Williams regarding facilities rehabbing wildlife. Moser encouraged members to review the memo as it does include that health director must be notified of such facility.

**Maternal & Child Health – Teresa Ellen**

**Action:** None

**Information:** Maternal Health and Medicaid Transformation: A Rural Local Health Department Perspective – Lisa Harrison Lisa shared with us a presentation she gave at the Institute of Medicine’s Annual Conference. She reported that in the room were several of the Prepaid Health Plans (PHP’s). Her objective was to share who we are and what we do in a local Health Department. She wanted them to understand there are multiple ways we serve pregnant women other than just the clinical setting. She also wanted to impart the care managers are very dedicated people who are often in difficult situations as they make home visits. She tried to help them understand the level of intensity that goes into our care management programs. She stated that our care managers will affect a lot of the outcomes we are trying to reach. She went on to report that many of the patients at Granville Vance Health District have been very confused about the process for choosing both a PHP and a provider. She stated that you must choose the provider not the practice. Dr. Pearson reported this is going to be changing very soon. Lisa reminded us that we can continue to serve patients even when we are not their designated primary care provider. Beth Lovette then added that our relationships with the prepaid health plans is going to be very important.

WIC Update – Grisel Rivera and Sara Moss: Ms. Rivera began her presentation reminding us about the injunction regarding public charge, however WIC was not included in the public charge rule. She then shared with us proposed changes to the WIC Rules. A Public Hearing was held October 14th and the open comment period will last until November 4th. They plan to present the rules back to the Commission for Public Health on November 6th. The proposed rule changes are as follows:

1. Rule amendment to remove language associated with paper food instrument/cash value vouchers. With the implementation of EBT this language is no longer needed.
2. Rule amendment to expand the number of supplemental foods approved for issuance to WIC participants. The limitations of the current rule became evident amid the response to Hurricane Florence.
3. Rule amendment to align the peer group structure with Federal regulations. The peer group structure is a system that categorizes WIC vendors into groups for maximum allowable reimbursement levels. Federal regulations require states to include a measure of geography in determining peer groups. Our current rule does not include this measurement.
4. Rule amendment to update the fair hearing procedures. It will allow 72 hours to reschedule a hearing date when an appellant has a conflict and to otherwise conform with federal fair hearing requirements.

Ms. Moss began her portion of the presentation with the good news that statewide our WIC participation rates are increasing. They are still below the 6.5% participation threshold, but we are trending in the right direction. She reported that Breast Feeding Peer Counselor funding is still pending approval of the state budget. It has been 60 million for the last 10 years. The House budget proposed 90 million this year and the Senate budget 80 million. They are eager to see where the compromise will land. She then reported on the statewide WIC media campaign. The WIC Branch has launched digital ads across many social media platforms as well as a Google ad campaign. They have also been sending targeted email blasts. They created a new landing page on MY WIC and added a self-referral form to the site. In addition, they have purchased ad time on various television networks and have purchased ads for both inside and outside of buses. Radio ads have also been purchased.

**Environmental Health – Battle Betts**

**Action:** None

**Information:** Did not meet

**Public Health Prevention & Promotion – Joy Brock**

**Action:** Karen Stanley presented in the Healthy Communities Agreement Addendum. Two strategies were added one regarding tobacco/smoking initiatives with colleges and universities and the other regarding increasing access to health foods venues. **Motion from committee to approve the agreement addendum. Motion from committee needs no second. No further discussion. Vote called and motion passed.**

**Information:** Joy Brock added that the committee received a presentation from Blake Fagan, Mountain AHEC, regarding technical assistance for local health department interested in Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). See attached flier.

**Nominations and Bylaw –Dennis Joyner**

Dennis Joyner mentioned that in November, membership vote for 2020 slate of officers.

**Education and Awards: Tommy Jarrell**

Tommy Jarrell reported that the second session of new health director orientation occurred. The final session for orientation is scheduled for December 17. The location is to be determined.

Jarrell also reported that Legislator of the Year, Health Director of the Year and the Public Health Partner of the Year applications are available. The deadline for submission is December 13. Awards are presented at the January meeting.

**Public Health Regions-** No action or information items

**Partner Reports**

**NCAPHA Report-** Tolson reported that NCAPHA Board is meeting in November and is currently working on bylaws and articles of incorporation

**NCPHA Report** – Ellen reported that the conference was successful with over 600 attending.

**NCSOPHE-** Julie Gooding-Hasting reported that the NCSOPHE Annual Conference is November 7-8 in Greensboro.

**NACCHO** – No report

**ANCBH/NALBOH** – Barbara Ann Hughes reported that NALBOH 2020 conference will be in Grand Rapids Michigan August 18.

**NCIPH/SPH Update-** Rachel Wilfert reported that Spring workshops are open for registration.

**UNC-School of Government** – No update

**Meeting Adjourned**

Motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 1055 am.

**Next Meeting** – November 21 at 9:30 am Location: DPH, Cardinal Room, 5605 Six Forks Road, Raleigh, NC