

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – August 19, 2024

**Classroom of the Henderson County Department of Public Health
1200 Spartanburg Highway Hendersonville, NC 28792**

I. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Health meeting was called to order by Mr. David Jenkins, Secretary to the Board, at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Jenkins qualified the meeting as the board’s annual organizational meeting and that he would only preside until a new chairperson was elected as specified in the operating procedures.

Members Present	Kathleen Baluha, Registered Nurse Maggie Hayes, Physician – Chairperson Bill Lapsley, County Commissioner Kenesha Smith, Pharmacist – Vice Chairperson John Bryant, General Public Member Samantha Roberts, Veterinarian Haley Perry, Optometrist Alison Reid, Dentist Jeffrey Young, Professional Engineer
Members Not Present	Scott Prechter, General Public Member Jennifer Hensley, General Public Member
Staff Leadership Present	Dave Jenkins, Health Director Camden Stewart, Administrative Officer Stacy Nash, Community Health Director Crystal O’Dell, Director of Nursing Seth Swift, Environmental Health Director

Quorum Present

II. Oaths of Office for Dr. Samantha Roberts, Veterinarian

Mrs. Camden Stewart, Notary Public, completed the Oaths of Office with Dr. Samantha Roberts to swear her in as a Henderson County Board of Health member effective August 19, 2024.

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III. Nomination and Election of Chair Person

Mr. Jenkins opened the floor to board members for nominations of candidates to serve as Chairperson. Ms. Baluha nominated Dr. Maggie Hayes for Chairperson. Mr. Jenkins inquired if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Mr. Jenkins closed the floor for nominations. **Motion:** Ms. Baluha made a motion for Dr. Hayes to serve as Chairperson for the FY 25 organizational year and Dr. Smith seconded. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote. Dr. Hayes thanked board members for their support.

Mr. Jenkins yielded the meeting to Dr. Hayes as the newly elected chairperson.

IV. Nomination and Election of Vice Chair Person

Dr. Hayes asked board members for nominations for the Vice Chairperson. Ms. Baluha nominated Dr. Kenesha Smith to serve as Vice Chairperson. Dr. Hayes inquired if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Dr. Hayes closed the floor for nominations. **Motion:** Ms. Baluha made a motion for Dr. Smith to serve as Vice Chairperson and Dr. Perry seconded. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

V. Public Comments

None.

VI. Approval of the Meeting Agenda

Dr. Maggie Hayes asked board members if they were prepared to approve the proposed agenda. Mr. Jenkins suggested removal of item VIII. c. Fiscal Year End Report. **Motion:** Dr. John Bryant made a motion for the agenda to be approved with removal of item VIII. c. Fiscal Year End Report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baluha. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VII. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Dr. Hayes requested approval of the following consent agenda items:

- a. June 11, 2024 Minutes
- b. AA 117 Public Health Infrastructure Grant
- c. AA 121 ARPA Funds
- d. AA 719 Bridge Access Program Funds
- e. Capacity Building Grant

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Motion: Dr. Bryant made a motion for the consent agenda to be approved and it was seconded by Dr. Smith. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VIII. Presentations & Reports

Public Health Strategies for Suicide Prevention

Mrs. Melissa Witmeier, Public Health Strategist - Behavioral Health, presented data to the board related to suicide in Henderson County. In 2023, there were 26 total completed suicides in the community, three of which were youth under the age of 18. As stated by the Surgeon General in 1999, "Suicide is a public health problem that requires an evidence-based approach to prevention...The public health approach defines the problem, identifies risk factors and causes of the problem, develops interventions evaluated for effectiveness, and implements such interventions widely in a variety of communities."

In partnership with many other local community organizations and the leadership of the Partnership for Health and Behavioral Health Summit, Mrs. Witmeier spoke about the strategies the community is proposing for suicide prevention, treatment and intervention including Zero Suicide, Sources of Strength, the Henderson County Suicide Postvention Response Team, Greif Response, and Harm Reduction.

In support of September as National Suicide Prevention Month, Mrs. Witmeier also presented a Suicide Prevention Month proclamation to the board for their review and endorsement. **Motion:** Dr. Bryant made a motion to endorse the Suicide Prevention Month proclamation and to provide support for the Henderson County Board of Commissioners to do the same in their September meeting. This motion was seconded by Dr. Smith. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

School Vaccination Rates

Ms. Crystal O'Dell, Director of Nursing, presented Henderson County School Immunization data to the board along with the associated NC Statutes regarding immunization requirements and allowable exemptions. There has been an increase in kindergarten religious exemption rates over the past 10 years, with the current rates in SY23 to SY24 being 3.44% and 5.48% respectively. This is higher than the kindergarten religious exemption rate of 2.69% in North Carolina overall. There has also been an increase in the percent of kindergarteners in Henderson County who are not up to date on their immunizations by 30 days after the 1st day of school.

The Health Department is focusing on parent education and provision of resources to improve these rates. Every spring, the Health Department has two retired nurses who call the

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parent of every rising 7th grader and 12th grader for whom they do not have a record of the immunization requirement (or record of exemption). They inform the parents of the requirement and connect them to resources to obtain the appropriate vaccines. The primary school nurse sends out letters to this same group at the start of the school year again informing the parents of the requirement and resources to obtain the appropriate vaccines.

The Health Department is hosting after hours clinics (4-7pm) on August 27th, 28th and 29th to offer more flexible hours for families with students to obtain vaccines.

Health Director's Monthly Report

Mr. Jenkins noted an increase in COVID cases. This is based on the number of test kits provided, hospital networks reporting increases through urgent care visits, and reports of employees being out due to COVID. Our department is still awaiting the latest vaccine.

The Communicable Disease division is handling a suspected case of chickenpox at a local childcare facility. The department is awaiting testing from the pediatrician that should be completed in 4-5 days. However, the physician has diagnosed chickenpox and the symptoms are consistent with chickenpox. The facility director has been very helpful in identifying possible contacts and is going to send letters home with every child to notify parents. This case was in an infant who is not old enough to be vaccinated for varicella (vaccination starts at age 1).

Mr. Jenkins has been made aware of a \$458 million dollar Medicaid shortfall. According to DHHS, State legislators didn't appropriate enough Medicaid funds for FY 24-25 and didn't agree on a budget revision over the summer. Unless changes are made during the upcoming long session, there will likely be cost trimming measures implemented. Unsure exactly what this means to local public health, but we will continue to monitor this.

IX. Old Business

DHHS AA Yearly Totals

Mr. Jenkins compiled a sheet which documents each of the department's Agreement Addenda along with the funding amounts received over the past 10 fiscal years. As he explained, funding for these programs has been consistent over time. The NC Association of Local Health Directors continues to advocate for additional funding and support within each of these program areas.

X. New Business

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Approval of the FY 24/25 Board of Health Meeting Schedule

Dr. Hayes referenced the proposed FY 25 meeting schedule that had been provided noting that it reflected a revision to meet on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. **Motion:** Dr. Smith made a motion to approve the FY25 Board of Health meeting schedule, and it was seconded by Dr. Bryant. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Approval of Van Purchase

Mr. Jenkins gathered a quote for the purchase of a cargo van to accommodate staff and supplies for the department’s mobile outreach events and programs. This was accompanied by a quote for a full vehicle wrap. If approved, the van and wrap will be purchased utilizing Medicaid cost settlement dollars. **Motion:** Ms. Baluha made a motion to approve the purchase of a van with wrap and forward the request to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Dr. Bryant. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

XI. Board Member Remarks

Mrs. Camden Stewart shared a letter received in the mail by former Health Director, Mr. Steve Smith, thanking the board for their support and continued service.

XII. Adjournment

Motion: Dr. Smith made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Ms. Baluha. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted: H. David Jenkins
Secretary to the Board/Health Director

 11/19/24
Date

Approved by the Henderson County Board of Health at the November 18, 2024 meeting.