

Columbus County Board of Health

Minutes

☒ Regular Meeting ☐ Special Meeting

October 25, 2023 6:00 P.M.

Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC

Members Present	Shane Cartrette Scott Floyd Patty Hobbs Dr. Randy Kirby Dr. Brent Lawson Dr. Nicole Martin Dr. Christy Perdue Pat Ray Dr. Amy Sessions
Members Absent	Drew Cox, Frankye Boone-Newkirk
Staff Members Present	Kimberly L. Smith, Yvonne Armstrong, Charlene Bush, Jamika Lynch, Kristie Priest
Guests	Nicole Hopkins

Quorum was present.

I. Call to Order

Pat Ray called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. Welcome/Invocation

Pat Ray welcomed everyone to the meeting. Pat Ray asked everyone to please remember the family of Wanda Diefes in your prayers this evening. Invocation was given by Pat Ray.

III. Approval of Agenda

Kim Smith stated she had two items to add on; Medicaid Expansion and NCDAVE. Motion to accept the agenda, with the addition of Medicaid Expansion and NCDAVE under Director's Forum, was made by Dr. Randy Kirby, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, and carried by the board.

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept with change presented (page 1, add a “y” to the end of Dr. Randy Kirby’s first name”, under Members Present was made by Patty Hobbs seconded by Dr. Randy Kirby, and carried by the board.

VI. Opioid Task Force Update

Nicole Hopkins, LCMHC stated the following:

Opioid Task Force Update (*Benchmark 41, Activity 41.3*)

- Thanks for having me tonight. Kim Smith and I have worked together a long time with JCPC (Juvenile Crime Prevention Council). Since first knowing Kim, around 15 years ago, I obtained my Master’s degree in Professional Counseling and I am a licensed Mental Health Counselor. When Kim asked me to lead this Opioid Initiative, I was honored to be able to work in such a capacity.
- In my role, I carry around this cellphone 24/7; I have also passed around the number for it, to you all. I try to answer on the second or third ring. This number is for public knowledge. We have tried to pass it out at the Health Fairs, meetings, as well as using marketing initiatives and social media. I encourage you to please share this number with as many as you can. This number is an Opioid Resource Referral Line.
- It is just that, we want to be a referral. We are the referral source, in the community, to meet the needs of those suffering with addiction. The opioid money that came down, this is that money at work. It pays my salary and many of the other initiatives that are represented here. Whether it is transportation, education, or safe drop boxes, that we are working on obtaining; we are just trying to hit the ground running and be there for as many people as we can.
- We have one of the first assessments for healthcare professionals. It is free, takes up about five minutes to complete. In that time, you are able to assess if someone meets the criteria for intervention. These individuals are depending on all of us to ask them these questions. Part of what I am offering your practices, and where you are serving, is an educational presentation on this assessment. It takes me about 45 minutes to do the expert presentation. I have already met with the hospital ER and the nursing administration, providing this training to

them. Also some of the remote areas with outpatient clinics. I encourage you to please call me, you can use that number to reach me. We can book a 45 minute lunch session and then you and your staff will be equipped to ask those difficult questions, and interview people, to get them the help they need, to transform their life. The county has a contract with the Healing Place, who boast a 75% success rate. It is a progressive type treatment plan. You go from detox, to an eight-person room, with a shared bathroom. As you graduate through the different phases of the program, you move on to another room with less people. You can be there from eight months, to a year. It is paid for through the county, if you do not have insurance, through the opioid funding. They equip you to be able to live a sober life.

- Part of my job was to build a resource manual. We have right at 500 vendors we have access to. Healing Place is number one and next is Port Health, who is right here next to the Health Department.
- We are doing a Narcan training for the public. It is just encouraging everyone to have Narcan in their home. We also do just a general Opioid Educational Presentation. We are in the process of establishing a transportation contract with Healing Hearts; they're located in Memory Plaza. As you all know, transportation is a real issue in Columbus County. We are working with them and they have been able to help us out, especially during the more inconvenient times. We want to respond when people call. That way they stay motivated, get where they need to be, to get the help they need.

Dr. Randy Kirby asked Nicole Hopkins how the Healing Place defines/measures their 75% success rate. Nicole Hopkins stated that she believes it is tracked by the number of individuals who do not relapse, once they have left the program. I will investigate and get you a definite answer, and send it to you.

Shane Cartrette asked if the referrals have to be through a physician. Nicole Hopkins answered that it does not have to be done by a physician. It is most important that we talk with the client seeking service, so I can assess them, and determine their level of motivation. With that population of individuals, we want to ask them what their criminal record

	<p>is, if they have any children in the home, if so, who cares for them. There is a lot we need to know, but it is important for that client to call us. That's not to say that other people cannot call the line. In order for it to be a legitimate referral to the Healing Place, I have to talk with that client.</p> <p>Shane Cartrette went on to state that he also represents the Fire and EMS members in the county, and those individuals encounter a lot of people who could benefit from this service. Therefore, we could refer these individuals to you on scene, immediately. Nicole Hopkins answered, absolutely.</p> <p>Pat Ray thanked Nicole Hopkins for coming to her church and presenting. What she has to say and offer is for everyone.</p> <p>Nicole Hopkins went on to inform the Board of Health of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim Smith and I were able to locate some office space for AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings. We are trying to grow that number of participants as well. It is important to have that support during whatever journey these individuals may be on. <p>Kim Smith stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our next Opioid Task Force meeting is on November 28th, from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. We have those meetings up in the Commissioners chambers up at County Administration. They are open to the public. <p>Shane Cartrette stated to Nicole Hopkins that the Fire and EMS have meetings every quarter, and asked if she would be interested in coming and presenting to them. Nicole Hopkins responded yes. Shane Cartrette added there is a huge need for what you are doing.</p>
<p>VII. Financial Update</p>	<p>Charlene Bush, Budget Director stated the following:</p> <p>A. Financial Statement July & August Annual <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6) (Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are going to start with the Financial Statements. While you are reviewing them, are there any questions? • On the Year to Date, we are at 7% of our insurance self pay, Medicaid, state funding. We've used 11% of our local appropriations and our expenses are at 11%. <p>Motion to accept Financial Statement for July and August was made by Shane Cartrette, seconded by Patty Hobbs,</p>

carried by the board.

B. Patient Count for July, August & September

(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)

- As you can see, Child Flu and Adult Flu have picked up in September.
- Child Immunizations are up. They usually go up right before and after school starts.

C. Service Cost Update

(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.5)(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.3)

- Gardasil has gone from \$278 to \$293
- Meningoccal B has gone from \$203 to \$211
- Menquadfi from \$165 to \$170
- ProQuad from \$287
- We just received our Moderna COVID-19 shots. They cost us now to receive them, they are no longer free. The six month to 11 year old vaccine is \$191. The 12 and up vaccine is \$140.

Kim Smith added:

- We do have 40 doses of what the state is calling The Bridge Program; this is for individuals who are underinsured or uninsured. Then of course, we have the vaccines for children program, which is through the state.

D. Funding Update

(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)

- This is additional funds we have received since the start of the new fiscal year in July.
 - ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) \$50,000
 - COVID-19 Vaccination Program \$ 116,500
- You cannot use this money to purchase vaccines. I can use it to pay a nurse for administering COVID vaccines.
 - Teen Pregnancy Prevention \$25,000
- You should have received several sheets with Child Health and Environmental Health.
- This particular sheet (Charlene held it up) I did not include it in your packets.
- This funding is additional money that we have received from July. This money was not budgeted in our original budgets that went to the county. Some of it we knew we were getting, it was a carryover. I did not use it to budget with, because you never know what the state is going to do. Therefore, this is what we have gotten so far.

Kim Smith stated the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ARPA funds we received are regional. Our nine county region received it. We had to write a grant, stating what we were going to use the funds for; everyone received \$50,000. I put in the budget some recruitment money; this is unrestricted money. I also included purchasing software for the staff to track and review policies, some Adobe Acrobat licenses and around \$20,000 for training. <p>E. Write-Off Approvals (<i>Benchmark 33, Activity 33.7</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Write-Offs are Medicaid and some Commercial Insurances. Most of this is Medicaid. What happens is once we file Medicaid, it does not matter whether they pay or not, we cannot bill it to you, because your insurance did not pay. I usually wait one full year, because Medicaid pays so sporadically; they may pay you then take it back. This is from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. This is for \$12,954.38. <p>Motion to accept Write-Off Approvals, was made by Dr. Randy Kirby, seconded by Dr. Amy Sessions, carried by the board.</p>
<p>VIII. Environmental Health</p>	<p>Kristie Priest, Environmental Health Supervisor, gave the following update:</p> <p>A. Environmental Health Staff Update (<i>Benchmark 37, Activity 37.6</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We currently have four RHS' (Registered Environmental Health Specialist) plus myself as supervisor. Of those four, two are interns. We have never had two interns at the same time. It is working out great. Eli Anderson is one of our interns. He is currently at CIT Training in Raleigh and he will be coming back on Friday. • Our other intern is Ayanna Avery. She has past her two portions of the national exam, and has one section left to go, and will be taking that exam in November. <p>B. Food and Lodging Report (<i>Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any questions regarding Food and Lodging? <p>Dr. Nicole Martin asked if they had to inspect at the fair. Kristie Priest stated yes, every fair, festival and event in the county.</p> <p>Motion to accept the Food and Lodging report was made by Shane Cartrette, seconded by Dr. Amy Sessions, carried by the board.</p> <p>C. Well Sampling Report (<i>Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2</i>)</p>

- That report is also in your packet. Are there any questions.

Kim Smith asked how many do you have to take a second sample on. Kristie Priest responded every new well. That is just not for Columbus County, this a rule that is across the state. The General Statute states that once the well is drilled, we have 30 days to go back, and take that sample. Shane Cartrette asked if that included irrigation wells. Kristie Priest responded that we do not test or permit irrigation wells; as long as they can assure us that they do not have plans in the future, to use it as a drinking well. Motion to accept the Well Sampling report was made by Dr. Nicole Martin, seconded by Dr. Randy Kirby, carried by the board.

D. Onsite Waste Report (*Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2*)

- We have increased greatly, and I do not expect this year to be any different.
- The engineered option permits, the Health Department does not get involved in those. They can hire an engineer directly. We have seen an increase in individuals utilizing these engineers this past year. There were around 13.

Kim Smith stated that the new construction of homes being built, in the southern end of the county, would be furnished water by the county, and sewer by Grand Strand. The land in that area will not hold a septic system.

Motion to accept the Onsite Waste report was made by Dr. Amy Sessions, seconded by Patty Hobbs, carried by the board.

E. Child Lead Report (*Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2*)

- This is for children under six who have a confirmed or elevated lead level.

Kim Smith stated that we have special funds this year for daycares and schools to test.

Kristie Priest continued:

- They are required by law to test their water dispensing fixtures for lead. They are supposed to send off testing for lead from water supplies. They are to use the lab that is provided on the form. We do not get involved unless it comes back extremely high. Then we will tell them to remediate the source.

Dr. Brent Lawson asked if the three incidents were at the Headstart or somewhere else. Kristie Priest stated the lead based paint that was found at Headstart, was from a regular site visit. No children that we are aware of, tested at an

elevated level. Due to it being a childcare center, it is under annual monitoring. We are to check every year and make sure there is no peeling or flaking paint, and make sure they have kept their end of the bargain, as to what they submitted to us.

Motion to accept the Child Lead report was made by Dr. Randy Kirby, seconded by Dr. Christy Perdue, carried by the board.

F. Environmental Health Legislative Updates

(Benchmark 15, Activity 15.2)

- We do not know the answer to these yet; we have been told to wait until November 1st.
- The first one is for re-inspections of an existing septic system. If you had a home and you get a new home, that's a re-inspection. Your old home had three bedrooms, then your new home has to have three bedrooms. No increase in water using fixtures or water flow. Now, they are not required to have a re-inspection on that system. They can choose to have an affidavit, provided by Building Inspections, that they agree to take on the responsibility, and then they can get their building permit, and start their new home. This came from the Building Council, not from Environmental Health. This is their form. If they bring it to us, we do have to take it.

Kim Smith asked what happens if they build a new house, hook up to the old system and it starts to fail. Kristie Priest responded that it states on the form, "that by signing this, you absolve the State and the Local Health Department of any liability regarding the existing wastewater system". Shane Cartrette asked if they could use their existing wastewater system. Kristie Priest responded yes, but they would not be required to have us go out and do an inspection, if they have this affidavit signed and notarized. Kristie Priest continued:

- In the past, this form was not an option. It is called an Affidavit of On-Site Wastewater Existing System. We have not had one of these to come into the office yet. NC Rebuild has been made aware of this. I think they will start using this, due to being held up on re-inspections across the state.
- The second update is regarding legislation change in qualifications to become an Environmental Health Specialist. When I started, you had to have a four-year degree, which was science based, with at

	<p>least 30 credit hours of science. If you did not have experience, you had three years to obtain your national certification and your license. That has changed to where we can offer positions as an Environmental Health Associate. That associate can work for five years, under direct supervision under another RHS or myself. After five years, they can apply for their license as an RHS. It is an avenue to recruit individuals, who do not have four-year degrees. In Environmental Health, over the past two years, there have been so many vacancies across the state.</p> <p>Pat Ray asked if someone with an Associate degree would be able to qualify for this position. Kristie Priest responded that as long as they had the 30 credit hours of science needed.</p> <p>Kristie Priest continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With that change, they also changed the years an intern can work without becoming licensed. All of my career, it has been three years, now it is two years. Our email regarding these changes stated not to do anything until we officially hear back from the State, on November 1st.
<p>IX. Health Education</p>	<p>Jamika Lynch, Health Educator, gave the following updates:</p> <p>A. Strategic Plan Update (<i>Benchmark 15, Activity 15.1</i>) (<i>Benchmark 38, Activity 38.2</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan goes from 2020 to 2024. The Health Department's Management Team provides this information. Our four main goals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COVID-19 ○ Pregnancy Prevention Initiative ○ Opioids ○ Dental Services • We want to maintain our accreditation standards and provide services based on community needs. <p>Kim Smith stated with the ARPA funding we received, she has set aside \$5,000 for a Strategic Planning Session provided by a team from UNCW. It will be in March. As soon as we nail down a date, I will let you all know. If anyone is interested in coming, we are going to do half days. I will get that information out to you. Leah Mayo will lead these sessions. This is something I have wanted to do for a very long time; have someone from the outside, come in and help us with our Strategic Plan, but I have never had the funds to do so.</p>

B. Community Health Assessment (CHA) Update

(Benchmark 38, Activity 38.2)

- I developed our steering committee several months back. We had our first steering committee meeting in August. We did a really good job coming up with the questions for the survey. There are 27 questions. I have developed a link, as well as a QR code for the survey. It went live on August 21st. As of right now, we have just under 300 surveys. We desperately need more.
- I have gone to health fairs, salons, schools, barbershops, the Department of Aging, and tomorrow I will be in Fair Bluff. We have been sharing on social media and on the county website. It takes people anywhere from six to seven minutes to complete the survey. We are going to close the survey on December 22nd. That way I will have time to take the back-end data and compile it, because the CHA is due in March of 2024. Some of the questions asked are:
 - How is overall your health?
 - Do you have an evacuation plan?
 - What is the reason most people die in this community?
- Some of the feedback we are getting to this question is HIV, opioid and heart disease. We want to know what issues individuals feel are important here in the county.
- This afternoon we had WECT come by and she is going to do a story. People are not aware of how important this survey is. It is not just about the Health Department, but it is about the county. With me being lead of this team, what I really want to focus on is as professionals, it is easy for us to take a survey, but we really need to hear from the people who really need the services and the resources. That is why I want to make sure this gets out.

Pat Ray asked Jamika Lynch did she have an overall goal, number wise. Jamika Lynch stated I do, at least 1,000. Pat Ray asked what areas have been covered well, and what areas do you need to target. Jamika Lynch responded that it's really easy to do Whiteville. I have a lot of good champions in the east end. Tabor City and Chadbourn I need to get. Bug Hill and some other areas of Columbus County, that I am not familiar with; but that is where I need to go. I have been contacting faith leaders to make

	<p>sure I can get into the churches.</p> <p>Pat Ray asked if she had contacted the Ministerial Association. Jamika Lynch responded that she has not. I did speak with Jess after the fair last week, and he instructed me to go to the Baptist Association and ask them to share it.</p> <p>Pat Ray added that there is one that has a lot of different denominations that Jeremy Simmons is affiliated with.</p>
X. Chairman's Forum	<p>Pat Ray, Chairman gave the following update:</p> <p>A. Health Director's Evaluation (<i>Benchmark 37, Activity 37.5</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your packets, you received your evaluation sheet. Please have these evaluations turned back in to Yvonne Armstrong by November 27th.
XI. Director's Forum	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following updates:</p> <p>A. COVID-19 Update (<i>Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We received our vaccinations. As far as the private doses, the nurses have to be very careful what they take out of the fridge for the individuals. • They made this vaccine based on the strand that was the heaviest at the time. The strand now is the EG5. It is easily transmissible, and has increased hospital stays. They are telling everyone to get the booster dose that is available now. • Vaccines for kids, we have 40 doses for six-month-old up to 11 years old. We have some under the Vaccine for Children program that are for children aged 12 to 19. • 40 doses of vaccine for Pediatric that we purchased. • 50 doses for the 12 and up we had to purchase. • Anyone in those age groups can call and make an appointment. • They are in individual syringes, so we do not have to worry about having five people to use up an entire vial. I do not think we will have to worry about wasting vaccines, since they are now in individual syringes. <p>B. Chemours Update (<i>Benchmark 37, Activity 37.6</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back in September, we got word that NC State was increasing their research. We posted and got word out to individuals, especially in the Riegelwood area, that NC State was going to be at Cape Fear Community College and New Hanover County Health Department, at these locations on these dates and times, to collect blood and urine samples.

I do not know how many individuals from Columbus County went down there. I hope that we will see what their blood and urine samples have stated.

- I have spoken with Chris Nobles and they are going to move forward with replacing the Riegelwood Sanitary District pipes. They have put in mini grants to help cover the funding for this. They are going to replace the whole line; this is on their list to do.

Shane Cartrette asked if there was any funding in replacing the lines on the customers side of the meter. Kim Smith stated that is a Public Utilities question.

Dr. Brent Lawson stated that Chemours is transporting four million gallons of GENX to process at their Fayetteville plant. Kim Smith stated she has not seen any action from the state regarding this. They have completed the wall, and it is working.

C. Medicaid Expansion

- This will take place on December 1st. The State budget that passed did include Medicaid Expansion. For anyone in our county, that will include anywhere from five thousand to seven thousand people that will be added on to the Medicaid roster.
- For us, it will be the individuals who have the Family Planning waiver. They get four visits per year, and these individuals will automatically qualify. Therefore, this will be about one thousand individuals. Medicaid Expansion may or may not increase our business. Medicaid Expansion is for 19 to 64 year olds. DSS (Department of Social Services) has to hire four more individuals to help with this.

Kim Smith asked Dr. Christy Perdue if her counterparts were taking new Medicaid patients. Dr. Christy Perdue stated that anyone who is accepting Medicaid should be thrilled about this, due to the fact individuals would be able to get more screenings done, which can have a positive impact on their overall health. Pat Ray added that this would help to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

D. NCDAVE

- NCDAVE stands for North Carolina Database for Vital Events. We started doing electronic death certificates in May of 2022. Starting January of 2024, we will be starting to have electronic birth

	records. We are probably one of the few states in the nation left, which has not switched to this.
Comments-Board of Health	Dr. Brent Lawson stated that our elders are misunderstanding the advantage plans, which are being offered to them. Is there any way the county can make information regarding this available. Our seniors are being taken advantage of in many ways, and they do not really understand the benefits. Pat Ray stated that there is supposed to be someone at the Department of Aging who can help with this. Kim Smith added that the program name was called SHIP. Dr. Brent Lawson added that individuals 65 plus are being bombarded with phone calls and some really do not understand this stuff. Kim Smith stated that she could make contact with Christy Massey, the director at the Department of Aging, and see what we can put together.

Next Meeting Date

December 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted: Kimberly Smith Secretary 12/13/23
Signature Date