

Columbus County Board of Health

Minutes

☒ Regular Meeting ☐ Special Meeting

April 26, 2023 6:00 P.M.

Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC

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

Quorum was present.

I. Call to Order

Pat Ray called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Welcome/Invocation

Pat Ray welcomed everyone to the meeting. Invocation was given by Pat Ray.

III. Approval of Agenda

Kim Smith asked that VIII. Social Work, would be tabled until the next meeting. A motion to accept, with the requested change, was made by, Dr. Nicole Martin seconded by, Dr. Brent Lawson, and carried by the board.

IV. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept was made by Scott Floyd, seconded by Dr. Christy Perdue, carried by the board.

VI. Financial Update

Charlene Bush, Budget Director stated the following:

A. Financial Statement February and March

(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)

- Are there any questions?

Dr. Brent Lawson stated he had been looking at the numbers in Dental. He asked if we were maximizing the numbers as much as possible. Kim Smith responded that we were waiting for a generator for the bus. This was why Dental was not out in the schools. When they are at the schools, they see more patients there, as opposed to the number that comes to the clinic. In the past, we have double and triple booked, to get the number we need; but we still have a lot of no shows. The generator was installed a couple of weeks ago. Pay Ray added there was a holiday during that time as well. Dr. Brent Lawson asked if primarily most of the services come out of the Dental Bus, and not the clinic. Kim Smith answered that was correct. Dr. Brent Lawson asked was there any way to maximize the clinics usage? Kim stated that we only have one dentist. Dr. Brent Lawson inquired if the Dental staff was here four, to five days a week. Kim Smith stated yes, four days a week (Monday thru Thursday).

Motion to accept Financial Statement for February and March was made by Frankye Boone-Newkirk, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.

Charlene Bush continued with the following:

- The month of November we saw 137, and we were in the schools then. That gives you 34 to 35 patients per week. If you drop down to March, you see 13 to 14 patients a week.

Dr. Brent Lawson stated the reason he was asking, was because they are inundated with calls, about not being able to see Medicaid kids. Kim Smith stated to have them call the Health Department. Dr. Brent Lawson responded that if they are on the bus, and at the school, then they are having trouble getting in here. Kim Smith stated that Dental is usually at the schools Monday thru Wednesday, up until about 2:30pm. Then they come back to the Health Department, and on Thursday's, they are in the clinic. Around a quarter to 5:00pm, they start cleaning up and getting prepped for the next day. Charlene Bush added that currently they are here now all the time, due to the schools starting EOG's (End of Grade testing). If they will call here, they should be able to see them, because they will not be going out the rest of this year. Dr. Brent Lawson informed the board that there are no periodontist in the area, who accept Medicaid. Kim Smith stated that we are having the same issue, with kids here that need more attention. Frankye Boone-Newkirk asked why Medicaid reimbursement was so bad. Dr. Brent Lawson explained that you might do a \$150 procedure, and Medicaid would reimburse you \$45. Pat Ray asked what if local

Dentist set aside two hours, once a month, to help out. Charlene Bush responded, you may get one patient only, for those two hours; depending on their needs. Dr. Brent Lawson added that with Medicaid, you would have to see a lot of patients, to compensate for what you are losing.

Charlene Bush continued with the Financial Report:

- Are there any other questions regarding the February and March statements?

Motion to accept the Financial Statement for February and March was made by Frankye Boone-Newkirk, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.

B. Service Cost Update (*Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6; Benchmark 39, Activity 39.3*)

- Rotarix went from \$144.00 to \$152.00
- Prevnair 20, which is new, is \$327.00

C. Patient Count-February & March (*Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6*)

- In your packets are the Patient Counts for February and March. We've discussed Dental, and as you can see COVID numbers have come down.

Kim Smith stated that we have not given any vaccines or boosters, since the middle of March.

Charlene Bush continued:

- Adult Health numbers have gone up each month, since the first of the year.
- Maternal Health numbers have gone down, since the first of the year; as well as Family Planning.
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases have gone down.
- Child Immunizations have gone up.

Dr. Brent Lawson asked how we went from two TB cases to 23.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- Since July of 2022, we've had two to three cases of TB, and with that we have to test their contacts.

D. Care Coordination for Children Financial Update (*Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6*)

- This is for children, up to the age of 5, with any kind of disability.
- From State Funding we get \$649.00.
- It is fully funded by Medicaid; averaging \$10,465.98, which comes to \$4.56 per child ages 0 to 5, receiving Medicaid.
- We have not been fully funded in this program, Medicaid wise since we switched over, to Medicaid Managed Care.

Kim Smith stated that the Medicaid Managed Care has been around for two years now.

Pregnancy Care Management (*Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6*)

- This fund is for any person of child bearing age, and you get \$4.96 per female, in that age group, up to age 40.

Child Fatality Financial Update *(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)*

- We get \$679.00 for Child Fatality.
- There are several things that we have to do with this, goals we have to meet; and they are located on the sheet in your packet. We usually hold a Child Abuse Vigil. It is to recognize the children, in North Carolina, who have been killed, due to child abuse. It is very emotional. They read out the child's name, and what they passed from. We use to release balloons, but have released butterflies in the past few years.

Kim Smith stated that the Health Department works closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) on this.

E. Health Department Fees *(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2 and 39.3)*

- There hasn't been any changes with the fees this year. We want to be at the same rate, or above, the Medicaid rate.

Motion to accept the Health Department Fees, as presented, was made by Drew Cox, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.

F. 2023 / 2024 Budget *(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.2; Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)*

- You got a copy of each department's budget.
- The last page at the very bottom (page 26 of 26) tells you how much money the Health Department expenditures are projected to be. That number that I turned into the county is \$5,887,026.00.
- Health Department Revenues are projected at \$2,666,300.00. This is only Medicaid, State figures, and any local fee money that is taken in at the door.
- This is what was submitted to Finance. Finance called me to see where we could cut from. We took \$120,000.00 from Environmental Health and \$120,000.00 from Dental. Both of these were for scanning of records. We are trying to get all of their files scanned in, because if they have to pull something, it would take forever. I took those two items out, as well as one full time vacant position. In six months, if the revenue is up, we can put this position back in. We also removed four part-time emergency positions. Finance asked me what programs were pulling from the county. The first one is Maternal Health. You cannot do anything with it, it is a mandated program. Next was Environmental Health, you cannot do anything with this because it is also a mandated program. 99.9% of it is funded by the county. The other was Dental. I told them for Dental, I have budgeted for next year, \$326,000.00 coming out of the county. Some of the other vacant positions we have, are in WIC, and they are federally funded positions, and cannot be touched.

Dr. Brent Lawson stated that Dental is not mandated, so it can be cut.

	<p>Kim Smith replied yes. Kim Smith added that the money that is made in a particular program, has to go back in to that program.</p> <p>Charlene Bush stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are over in revenue in several of our budgets. When they use to do Medicaid cost, I never used that money to budget, because it could come in or not. Last year I received money from 2016 / 2017. Now we get paid every quarter. <p>Kim Smith stated that the only new position we have, that has not been filled, is in Environmental Health. This position has been established with the state previously, but just not filled. Charlene Bush added that in our budget, there are vacant positions, like in WIC. Shane Cartrette asked with Teen Pregnancy Prevention, is that grant money we are given. Charlene Bush responded that we get \$75,000 from the state, and we have to match \$25,000.00. I usually show it as an in-kind expense, like rent for her office phone, lights, some of anyone's salary who has to do bills, or manage this position. This was renewed for three more years. If you don't use it, you lose that money. Kim Smith stated that we will report back to the board in our June meeting, regarding the approval or denial of the upcoming fiscal year budget, unless we need the board's voice sooner.</p> <p>Motion to accept the 2023-2024 Budget Review was made by Dr. Nicole Martin, seconded by Dr. Brent Lawson, carried by the board.</p> <p>Shane Cartrette wanted to know what the budget item was, that is listed for the Fire, Rescue & EMS. He noticed it was a budget item from last year. Charlene Bush explained that this is where they come and get their TB skin test done, at no charge to them.</p>
<p>VII. Nursing</p>	<p>Patti Nance, Director of Nursing gave the following update:</p> <p>A. Nursing Staff Update (<i>Benchmark 37, Activity 37.6</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are fully staffed, as of today. Just hired a new Pediatric nurse. She has come to us from Loris. <p>Pat Ray asked if she still needed the training and orientation. Patti Nance responded yes, but they are still able to support the immunization clinic.</p> <p>Patti Nance continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We still have the contract nurse coming to take care of the Well Child visits, two to three days a month. <p>B. 2019 Novel Coronavirus (<i>Benchmark 40, Activity 40.1</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Columbus County, the numbers are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20,328 total cases, as of yesterday ○ 289 deaths that we can account for. The State has us at 300. <p>Kim Smith stated this number was likely due to individuals, with a Columbus County address, passing away in different parts of the state, after they had moved from the area.</p> <p>Patti Nance continued:</p>

- We have given out around 8,000 home test. We've supplied other county departments with cases.
- Some staff members have delivered test throughout the various communities, delivering to barbershops and beauty salons, so they can pass them along to their clients.
- The Health Department has not given any COVID vaccine since March 21st. No one has called and come in to request one. Last week they sent out a notification, that monovalent vaccines are no longer recommended for use, in the United States. We only have the bivalent in house now. Anyone six months and older, can receive this vaccine.

C. COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Ends

- The Public Health Emergency will end on May 11 at 11:59pm. When we first started giving the vaccine, we were using CVMS (COVID Vaccine Management System). They have fixed a way where NCIR (North Carolina Immunization Registry) will pull from CVMS. They have been transitioning folks from using CVMS to NCIR, this way providers will only have to go to one site to document. Anyone needing to get proof of vaccine, can see a NCIR provider to get that information, starting June 1st.
- Commercialization of the vaccines; the Federal Government wants to exhaust their supply, before we branch over to purchasing from vaccine providers. On June 30th, insurance companies will no longer be mandated to cover COVID test for free. They can choose to charge.
- The Star-Med support, for that program, ended on March 31st. Uninsured individuals will now have to pay out of pocket, where before, it was free.
- Paxlovid and Molnupiravir will remain available at no cost, until the federal supply is depleted. It's expected to last until the last quarter of this year.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- We have a chance to get some home test from the state. They have stated they will not be shipping anymore out after the end of June. If we wait, we will get the ones with the latest expiration date.

Dr. Christy Perdue asked if we were going to do any local public service announcement, letting people know that with the bivalent vaccine, that was last given three to four months ago, you can administer a booster. Kim Smith replied that we are waiting on the Standing Order from the State. Pat Ray asked was there any indication as to when you might have that Standing Order. Kim Smith replied that the announcement was made last Tuesday, but hopefully

	by Friday. They do not give you a heads up; they just send it out. We will put it out on our Facebook page, the counties page, and the county website.
VIII. Social Work	<p>These items were tabled until the next meeting.</p> <p>A. Update – Care Coordination for Children (<i>Benchmark 39, Activity 39.4</i>)</p> <p>B. Update – Pregnancy Care Management (<i>Benchmark 39, Activity 39.4</i>)</p>
IX. Health Education / Promotion	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director, gave the following update on behalf of Jamika Lynch, Health Educator:</p> <p>A. State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) 2021/2022 (<i>Benchmark 1, Activity 1.2 and 1.3</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamika (Lynch) is at a conference in Kill Devil Hills, NC and could not make it back in time tonight. • With the State of the County report (SOTCH), the state website is undergoing an update. Once she gets notified, that the scorecard has been updated, then she'll be able to enter the information. • The planning for the CHA (Community Health Assessment), this has to be done by March 2024. We have sat down, and talked about the individuals we need in our group. She is trying to contact these individuals, to schedule a meeting date, so we can start that process. • With the SOTCH report, it was looking back to fiscal year 2022. Hopefully by the next meeting, we'll be able to have it up on the board for you. <p>Motion to accept the State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) 2021/2022 was made by Frankye Boone-Newkirk, seconded by Scott Floyd, carried by the board.</p> <p>B. 2023 County Health Rankings (<i>Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2023 rankings came out around March 20th, and I was very satisfied with them. Considering the deaths we had from COVID, I knew we were going to go down, but we didn't, we stayed the same. • Overall ranking is 91. • In 2021 it was 92. <p>Scott Floyd asked how do we improve this number. Kim Smith replied that you get people out taking up exercising, better eating habits, more doctors in our area, clean the air up, get folks back to work, bring down the homicide rate and dropping the numbers in opioid and alcohol abuse. Drew Cox asked if there was anyway Kim Smith could share the criteria with the Board of Health. Kim Smith stated she would be glad to. Drew Cox went on to say that he remembers hearing some of these things in the news. Until we get younger folks in here, it's going to be impossible to move the bar. You look at loosing tobacco and textiles; people don't have jobs. A</p>

	<p>lot of this goes back to jobs. Until we bring jobs back to the county, it's going to be hard to move those numbers. Dr. Nicole Martin asked if she remembered correctly, wasn't this information first produced to them around ten years ago. Kim Smith responded yes, 2010 is when the first rankings came out. We were ranked 100 for six years in a row. We have moved up; that is positive. Kim Smith continued to report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our health behaviors were 85 last year, we have moved down to 89. This is where the tobacco use, diet and alcohol, sexual activity, drug use, comes in to affect us. • Clinic care was 94, it's now up to 95. Access to care and quality of care is what determines this number. <p>Pat Ray stated that all of us can really spread the word about some of these things. Overall prevention; there is a lot we can do. Kim Smith continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our physical environment, we were 53 last year, and now we are at 74. This is your air and water supply. Housing and transit are some of the issues as well; affordable housing. I know there is a large apartment complex going up behind Tractor Supply, and that there is a problem with affordable housing. • If you look at the health outcomes on the state map, the darker ones are the ones that are ranked closet to 100. If you see the colors in the middle of the state, they are your areas of growth, and more job availabilities. You'd think where you have a lot of recreational water, you'd see growth, but that's more tourist revenue coming in there. <p>Drew Cox asked if our population number included the prison population. Kim Smith replied that she does not think it does. Kim Smith continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are people calling from up north, who are wanting to purchase a piece of property, or have purchased a piece, and needing a septic system. They are making these request without traveling down here. Due to folks wanting to be closer to the beach. Mainly, this is why all the growth is starting down towards the South Carolina border. The county will be providing the water, and Grand Strand is providing the sewer. With all that growth, comes your restaurants and public pools. We are trying to work with these developers to make sure they include green spaces.
<p>X. Chairperson's Forum</p>	<p>Pat Ray, Chairman, gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have one thing I'd like to mention, one of our former employees here, and native son, Phillip E. Tarte, Jr. passed away. He spent most of his career in the Public Health field. I'd like to share a moment of silence, for thanksgiving of his life, and for his family.

XI. Director's Forum

Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following updates:

A. Chemours (*Benchmark 40, Activity 40.1*)

- The Secretary of DEQ met with county officials and health directors, from the four counties of Brunswick, Pender, New Hanover and Columbus on Tuesday, at New Hanover County's new office. The big thing she pointed out, was that they are practically speaking with our federal representatives, on a weekly basis, regarding the fallout from Chemours. New Hanover has built their new system. Brunswick is putting in a reverse osmosis system, which will be ready some time in 2024. Pender has the same filtration system as New Hanover. All of this has cost the individual user to pay more for their water. I agree with the consumer; I wouldn't want to pay for what Chemours has done. All of our Columbus County wells, through the water system, have been tested for PFAS and GenX. We are under the EPA level. There were several wells that had no amounts to show. The one that is a little closer to the Cape Fear River, had some; but it was below the EPA's level of four parts per trillion.
- The barrier wall was also discussed. If you go to Google Earth, you can see the barrier wall being built. It's about halfway completed. The EPA is testing every 100 ft. It's supposed to block 99.9% of PFAS & GenX from entering the water. It starts at Willis Creek, and goes down to lock and damn #3. I believe it is just over a mile long.
- Now they are starting to test the air quality. Chemours had a five year renewal contract with the state. Chemours has sent in for renewal from the state, and the state is wanting more information from them. It seems that the annual testing of their thermal oxidizer, did capture 99.9% of the GenX and PFAS that is being released into the air. It seems that our area of the state is not the only one to have problems with PFAS and GenX. There are twelve signature compounds to come out of Chemours. There are other compounds coming out of Chatham County.

B. Opioid Settlement (*Benchmark 40, Activity 40.1*)

- There were 24 referrals that came through the referral line. Two were not accepted; 22 were referred to the Healing Place. The Healing Place reviewed them and stated that those two needed medically managed detox, in a hospital setting.
- The Healing Place is still waiting on their detox facility to be inspected. I along with Nichole Hopkins, went to the Healing Place around the end of March, first of April. It is a beautiful campus. They will have an open house on May 11th.
- It was interesting to see the hierarchy of the organization. You have those who are recovering, from an addiction, helping

those who are just walking in the door. You can tell those that are new, as opposed to the ones who have been there longer. They have an excellent cafeteria and large meeting rooms. They are going to start doing garden boxes. They can leave campus, but they have to be back certain times for their meetings. If I had a family member with an addiction problem, I wouldn't mind them going there.

- It sounded really nice on paper. I would have told you way back, when it first came around, that this wouldn't work; but it is working. We went up to a couple of individuals, and they stated they were getting help, and it was working well for them. They can stay there as long as they need to.

Pat Ray asked what the average time was for someone there. Kim Smith stated she thinks it is somewhere around eight to nine months. Kim Smith continued:

- It is going to be interesting, when they get the detox units licensed.

Shane Cartrette stated I have a friend who couldn't speak highly enough, of the program. They had stated between the Healing Place and God, they did receive the help they needed. One program they use is Celebrate Recovery. It's a really good program. Is it appropriate for the Health Department, to reach out to these churches, which have this program going on, and refer people to it, and get them focused that way? Kim Smith stated that not all referrals are appropriate to go to the Healing Place, but we can get a list together of these places. Shane Cartrette added that Mr. Darren Mills has a lot to do with the Celebrate Recovery program at Western Prong. Pat Ray added that the ministerial group at the hospital could also benefit from this information. Shane Cartrette added that Peace Baptist Church also holds Celebrate Recovery meetings. Kim Smith informed everyone that First Presbyterian has it as well.

C. Updated Policies

- There are not many changes on these policies, but I will need an individual vote on these. These are four policies that the board has to vote on, due to them being personnel policies.

Employee Complaint / Concern Resolution

- The only change on this one is that it used to say Department Head, now it says Department Manager.

Motion to accept the changes made to the Employee Complaint / Concern Resolution Policy was made by Dr. Nicole Martin, seconded by Scott Floyd, carried by the board.

Unlawful Workplace Harassment

- On page two, at the very bottom it states: if an employee believes they are a victim of harassment, they may talk with an immediate supervisor, health director or pursue a formal complaint, in accordance with Columbus County Health

Departments Appeals Policy and Procedure. That is the only change

Motion to accept the changes made to the Unlawful Workplace Harassment Policy was made by Drew Cox, seconded by Shane Cartrette, carried by the board.

Appeals Policy and Procedure

- We made no changes to this one, except for the date.

Motion to accept the changes made to the Appeals Policy and Procedure Policy was made by Scott Floyd, seconded by Frankye Boone-Newkirk, carried by the board.

Separation, Disciplinary and Reinstatement

- On page one, an employee may resign with a minimum of a two week notice. Ours previously stated 30 days, but the State Office of Personnel says we have to have the same as the county. Since I can't get the county to change to 30 days, we have gone back to two weeks.
- Next, on page two, next to the last paragraph it reads, an employee who has exhausted sick or personal vacation leave, may be put on a leave of absence, without pay, for disability reasons. Leave without pay period, may not exceed more than six months. An employee may be separated, from employment, after the six month period. The leave without pay period is not to exceed six months. This the change.

Shane Cartrette asked how FMLA played into this. Kim Smith responded that this was once all of your FMLA ran out.

Motion to accept the changes made to the Separation, Disciplinary and Reinstatement Policy was made by Scott Floyd, seconded by Shane Cartrette, carried by the board.

C. History of Columbus County Health Department

- The Columbus County Health Department was organized on April 3, 1911 as a part-time agency. H.B. Maxwell was appointed County Superintendent of Health, at a salary of \$20.00 a month. His chief responsibility was to act as a quarantine officer for contagious diseases.
- Dr. Grover S. Cox of Tabor City served as full time Health Officer on September 4, 1913.
- On January 15, 1917, this office again became a part time service, with Dr. R.C. Sadler appointed as County Physician. His service continued until January 8, 1918 when he joined the United States Army (World War I). Dr. J.R. Thompson was elected to fill the vacancy. Emphasis the next two years, was placed on Immunization, Whooping Cough, Typhoid, Diphtheria and Small Pox Vaccinations. In 1918 the severe Spanish Influenza epidemic occurred. Schools and all public gatherings were closed in order to prevent, as far as possible, the spread of disease. In February 1919 many schools were

	<p>turned into hospitals to care for the sick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1921 representatives of the NC State Board of Health met with the Columbus County Board of Health, and plans were made to again secure a full time Health Officer. Dr. Floyd Johnson of Cerro Gordo was appointed and served in this capacity until May 31, 1961 (forty years). The first activities of this office, was to make an effort, through education campaigns and personal supervision of cases, to control contagious diseases and to promote general sanitation in the County. • In 1933 Federal funds became available for relief work so a full time Sanitary Inspector, and two part time Nurses, were employed. When Social Security funds were allotted in 1936, Columbus County was able to organize what the U.S. Public Health Association considered a Standard Health Department for a rural county. The personnel consisted of a Health Officer, two Public Health Nurses, one Sanitarian, and one Secretary. An extensive maternal and infancy program including close midwife supervision was quickly added, as well as an intensive drive to locate and treat Venereal Disease. • The major breakthrough in protection against the dreaded disease of Poliomyelitis, came in 1955, with the discovery of Salk vaccine. • Dr. Floyd Johnson retired as Health Director on May 31, 1961 and Dr. J.R. Black was selected to serve as Director. • The added and expanded services through the years, has caused a much over crowded condition in the Health Center. This problem had been recognized, by the Board of Commissioners, and plans were made to move the Health Center, and all of its services, to the old hospital building upon completion of the new hospital, which is under construction. • The present staff consists of Dr. J.R. Black, Director, ten Public Health Nurses, four Sanitarians, eight Secretaries, three Personal Care and Family Aides, one Dog Warden, one X-Ray Technician and two Cleaning Assistants.
Board Comments	

Next Meeting Date

June 28, 2023 at 6:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted:

Signature

Kimberly L Smith

Secretary

Date

06/28/23