

# Columbus County Board of Health

## Minutes

Regular Meeting     Special Meeting

**December 9, 2020 6:00 P.M.**

**Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC**

<b>Members Present</b>	Dr. Randy Kirby Shane Cartrette Drew Cox Dr. Darryl Diefes Dr. George Floyd Patty Hobbs Dr. Nicole Martin Frankye Boone Newkirk Dr. Christy Perdue Pat Ray
<b>Members Absent</b>	Charles McDowell
<b>Staff Members Present</b>	Kimberly L. Smith, Yvonne Richardson, Sandy Cothem, Charlene Bush, Patti Nance
<b>Guests</b>	

**Quorum was present.**

**I. Call to Order**

Dr. Randy Kirby called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**II. Welcome/Invocation**

Dr. Randy Kirby welcomed everyone to the meeting. Invocation was given by Dr. Darryl Diefes.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

A motion to accept was made by Pat Ray seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin and carried by the board.

**IV. Public Comment**

There were two public comments via Facebook. The first individual wanted to know why haven't we closed schools again with the current numbers. Kim Smith replied that she is not the individual responsible for closing the schools. She would be in a partnership with the schools. The schools are doing a very good job of screening the children, faculty and staff. Right now, I

don't see any need in closing the schools. I'm sure the Superintendent and the School Board's would have to be involved in that as well. The second comment was why the Food Lion in Tabor City was not enforcing wearing a mask. Kim Smith replied that she would send someone out there tomorrow. Dr. George Floyd asked Kim what was the procedure on that, when you receive reports. Kim Smith responded that she has someone from Environmental Health go out and speak with a manager, or restaurant owner, and do surprise checks on them. Dr. George Floyd asked if there was any recourse if they were not complying. Kim Smith stated we will call law enforcement. The last comment was how many employees have to test positive, in a workplace, before it is considered an outbreak. Kim Smith stated that would be a cluster, and a cluster is five individuals.

#### V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept was made by Dr. Darryl Diefes, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, and carried by the board.

<p><b>VI. Women, Infants, Children</b></p>	<p>Sandy Cothorn, WIC Director stated the following:</p> <p><b>A. Annual WIC Update</b>  <i>(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first item to update you on, is the retiring of Lorraine Matthews (WIC Director) in April of 2020, and the hiring of myself (Sandy Cothorn) in May 2020. I have been working in Columbus County WIC since 2004, and previously started my career in Robeson County WIC, in 1990.</li> <li>• Currently there are two open nutritionist positions. One nutritionist position is listed several places, that have generated interest by potential candidates in the past. No applications received at this time. One person expressed interest in the position, but was vastly over qualified. A former staff member who retired is going to come back part time, at least until we have more staff.</li> <li>• Several things we have done, to ensure the safety of both our participants and our staff; the Nutrition Services Branch (of which WIC is a part of) has sought and been granted several waivers of our normal procedures/actions. Among these waivers are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Waiving of physical presence (we are seeing most of our patients over the phone).</li> <li>○ Easing of some of the strict food requirements patients had to follow.</li> <li>○ Easing of vendor monitoring requirements (both in how many we have to monitor and what they can be held accountable for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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having/not having). The Nutrition Services Branch (NSB) also began conducting State Assisted Issuance and Assisted Extensions of Children Certifications. Each morning the NSB will load eligible participants with eWIC cards, with a month's worth of WIC. This has been a major help to local agencies in regards to maintaining caseloads. We have also been enrolling more participants to WIC.

- Currently we our caseload is 1,524 participants (this is the number we are to serve each month). We are serving 1,800 plus each month. While most agencies, including Columbus County, have seen an increase in participation rates, there has not been a corresponding increase in the monthly redemption rates. To give you some rough figures, WIC in NC now has approximately 250,000 participants (as of June 2020), but the redemption rate (how much food is actually bought) is less in June 2020 than that redeemed in January 2020. Local agencies (including Columbus County) are working on finding out why participants are not redeeming their benefits. There is a reason to believe that part of this dip is due in part to the increase some participants are receiving in the amount of SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits collected each month. Since SNAP is less restrictive on the foods they can buy, participants/guardians are choosing to use their SNAP benefits instead of their WIC benefits. We are also looking for ways to help them use all their benefits creatively.
- All grocers and both pharmacies, who are WIC vendors, completed their required training for 2020. A vendor summit was held with participants from state Nutrition Services staff, local agency staff, vendors and Solutran (eWIC operations card manager). This has generated several ideas that should help with both redemption and participation rates. From October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020 WIC participants redeemed benefits worth approximately \$1,071,631.01.
- The Breastfeeding Peer Counselor team is maintaining their support of Columbus County mothers/babies. They also promote breastfeeding to our young families. Our two breastfeeding peer

	<p>counselors, work together to reinforce our idea of breastfeeding, as being the best way to feed infants. Currently we have 88 women who are breastfeeding, in some form/capacity, and 83 infants who are breastfeeding in some way (the discrepancy comes from a couple of mothers who are breastfeeding their preemie infants who are still in the NICU).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Columbus County WIC continues to support and train students and interns in nutrition. This year we will have had dietetic interns from East Carolina University and Appalachian State University. These students provide us with an influx of excitement and creativity. In return, we provide the students with exposure to public health and community nutrition experiences. Our WIC program is growing and thriving. If we can work a few nutritionist this way, that would be great.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VII. Financial Update</b></p>	<p>Charlene Bush, Budget Director stated the following:</p> <p><b>A. Financial Statement September and October</b>  <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the Monthly Reports, you should have September and October. Are there any questions for the expenditures and revenue?</li> <li>• You should have also received a Year to Date Review. It is thru October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. As you can see, we're at 28% of our budgeted revenue for State funding, insurance and self-pay. At 21% of county appropriated and 25% of our expenses.</li> </ul> <p>Motion to accept Financial Statement for September and October was made by Patty Hobbs, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.</p> <p><b>B. Women, Infants, and Children Financial Report</b>  <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the money is Federal. As you can see they received \$273,042. This is how they elected to distribute those funds. Then they received an extra \$15,000, for Breastfeeding Peer Counselors; right now, they have two. WIC received some special funding this year, \$5,375. I believe Ms. Cothorn wrote a special kind of grant to get that. On there you can see what they used this grant for. They also received an additional \$19,140, for client services.</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Patient Count for September and October</b>  <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can see in your packet the Patient Counts. Does anyone have any questions regarding the Patient Counts?</li> </ul>

	<p><b>D. Service Cost Updates</b>  <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.5; Benchmark 39, Activity 39.3)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding changes for 8/27/20 thru 10/30/20, we received our 10% holdback from Medicaid cost. This was a holdback from FY 2016 to 2017. Medicaid usually holds back 10%, of what you are allocated, until they can come back and do a complete audit. Once that is completed, and no problems are found, they are to reimburse you this funding. We did get FY 2017 to 2018 this week. They are trying to catch up.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VIII. Nursing</b></p>	<p>Patti Nance, Director of Nursing gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. COVID-19 Update</b> <i>(Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We currently have had:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3,007 positive cases in the county as of 5pm today.</li> <li>2,259 have been recovered.</li> <li>74 deaths</li> <li>16 hospitalizations</li> </ul> </li> <li>Of our active cases we have:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>658 on isolation</li> <li>212 are offenders</li> <li>446 are in the General Public</li> <li>1,300 are on quarantine at this time.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The Health Department is currently doing drive thru testing on Fridays. We have done it for two Fridays now. At the first testing event, 56 individuals were tested and six were positive, and at the second drive thru testing clinic, 96 individuals were tested and nine were positive. We are conducting the drive thru clinic via appointments, and are taking in other individuals who may come up.</li> </ul>
<p><b>IX. Health Education</b></p>	<p>Daniel Buck, Health Educator gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. Community Health Improvement Plan Update</b>  <i>(Benchmark 22, Activity 22.1)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This goes along with the Community Health Assessment (CHA) that is done every four years in March. The follow up to that is the Community Health Improvement Plan that is due the following September. This deadline has been pushed back, as of now, because of COVID. We are working on it and hope to have it submitted soon.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. "Making Proud Choices" Update</b>  <i>(Benchmark 38, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <p>Jamika Lynch, Health Educator, gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since COVID, we've had three schools that</li> </ul>

	<p>participated, this semester:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Whiteville High School</li><li>○ East Columbus High</li><li>○ West Columbus High</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Students were logging on virtually, from home and from the classroom. We have a total of 103 students, which means we are meeting our targeted number of students.</li><li>● As the program went virtual, we were chosen to be a pilot to help transition from being in class to virtual. That went well, and this happened back in April.</li><li>● Columbus County “Making Proud Choices” program, utilizes the state curriculum. All adaptations have been approved. At the end of the program, all students will be completing a satisfaction survey. I will be completing classes this week, and thus far have 89 responses. Students were asked the following: Do you believe you can make proud and responsible choices about your sexual health, and 93% said yes.</li></ul>
<p><b>X. Chairman’s Forum</b></p>	<p>Dr. Randy Kirby, Chairman, gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. Health Director’s Evaluation</b> <i>(Benchmark 37, Activity 37.5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● That brings us the Health Director’s Evaluation. Everything that was rated, was rated either Excellent or Good.</li><li>● The ratings were as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Leadership: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Leadership of the Community: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Sensitive to Diversity in the Community: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Motivation and Enthusiasm: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Strong Advocate for Public Health: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Delegates responsibility and authority, seeking staff input on critical decisions: 9 Excellent, 2 Good</li><li>○ Keeps staff informed of Key Issues: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Promotes an environment in which employees are recognized and rewarded for achievement: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li><li>○ Is willing to address difficult issues and, if necessary, make unpopular decisions: 10</li></ul></li></ul>

	<p>Excellent, 1 Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeps Board of Health informed about all issues and conducts well organized meetings: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li> <li>○ Establishes a realistic budget and manages it effectively: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li> <li>○ Is effective in obtaining money from grant proposals as well as seeking grant opportunities: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comments were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A rock in good times and bad.</li> <li>○ Columbus County is a better place with her.</li> <li>○ Adapting to our new world well.</li> <li>○ Outstanding job for both the money and the pandemic.</li> <li>○ Ms. Kim has exemplified great leadership, through this most difficult time.</li> <li>○ Kim is an asset for our community. She is hard working and dedicated. We are lucky to have her.</li> <li>○ Thank you so much for all you do, especially during this pandemic, COVID-19; praying for a change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Motion to accept the Health Director's Performance Review was made by Dr. George Floyd, seconded Dr. Darryl Diefes, and carried by the board.</p>
<p><b>XI. Director's Forum</b></p>	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following updates:</p> <p><b>A. Annual Public Health Update</b> <i>(Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In your packets, you received the Annual Report for the last fiscal year. I'm going to compare to the previous year. A few items to point out are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Active TB Cases we have six which is an increase of four.</li> <li>○ Latent TB Cases we've increased by 27.</li> <li>○ HIV cases went down by two.</li> <li>○ Syphilis cases were up by two.</li> <li>○ Hepatitis B went up by two</li> <li>○ Gonorrhea was down by 47.</li> <li>○ Rocky Mountain Spotted fever, is the same, with one case.</li> <li>○ Chlamydia down by 27 cases; for a total of 334.</li> <li>○ NGU has stayed the same at eight.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Last year we were involved in a flu outbreak, in two</li> </ul>

of our Long Term Care facilities. However, we had no deaths.

- In Vital Records:
  - Births have decreased by 63.
  - Deaths have increased by 51.
- Environmental Health was going strong, up until COVID. They are down by about 399 restaurants, encounters / inspections and Long Term Care facilities.
- The number of home burials, which we went out to survey, did increase. We were up to 13, and that is an increase by nine.
- We increased the number of patients by 1,197. However, we did decrease the overall number of visits by 702.
- Sandy Cothorn gave you her update for WIC. The WIC program, last year, contributed \$1,071,631.00 to the Columbus County economy. This is an increase from last year of about \$87,000.
- In our lab, we've increased HIV testing by about 15 individuals. Pregnancy test went up 112. For last year, we have completed 9,573 labs, which were processed in house or sent to outside labs.
- In Health Education, our Making Proud Choices program has 103 students. Our Health Education Staff transitioned to open up and run our COVID-19 call center. It's available Monday- Friday. Daniel Buck is our Public Information Officer (PIO). He has done an excellent job at getting our press releases out, as well as speaking with the press when they call in or email; as well as making my schedule fit their schedule, for interviews.
- Dr. Ladner started on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. They are fully implementing our new EMR system, Open Dental, and it is going good. Dr. Ladner solely designed our new, Toothmobile. It finally arrived on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Under our Animal Bites, which we coordinate with Animal Control, we had the following:
  - Total Reported was 54 animal bites, all dogs. This is down by 20.
  - Of the 54, we had to treat 4 individuals
- The total budget for 2019/2020 was \$5,403,141.00
  - Total Revenues for Health Dept. Clinics: \$2,758,718.39
  - Total County Appropriation Health Dept.



Clinics: \$2,036,742.15

- Total Expenses for Health Dept. Clinics: \$4,795,460.54

- The issues we had during the year, included:
  - Toothmobile out of service for repairs
  - Medicaid Transformation
  - Hiring qualified staff
  - COVID-19
- Our concerns include the following:
  - COVID-19
  - Getting everyone vaccinated
  - Recruiting needed licensed staff
  - Competitive pay for all staff.
  - Decreasing funds from State and Federal sources while requirements for funds are more rigorous.
  - Medicaid Transformation is to take place on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
  - What is Medicaid Transformation going to do with our Medicaid Cost Settlement?
- Attached to your report is a sheet that informs the Board of the different ages, race, genders and ethnicities of our patients, for each of our programs.
- Any questions about the Annual Report?

Dr. Darryl Diefes asked if Kim Smith could clarify on opportunities for vaccinations. Kim Smith replied:

- No one in the county, has the ultra-cold storage that is needed for the Pfizer vaccine. Pfizer, CDC, and the Federal Government have come up with a box that looks like a pizza box, and shipping dry ice to keep the vaccine at the proper temperature. The first allotment that the state is getting is 85,000. The locations, within the state, that have the ultra cold storage, will be the first to receive these vaccines. They are hoping to send the Moderna vaccine to the other areas that do not have the ultra-cold storage. There is an application that has to be filled out and approved, in order to receive the vaccines; the hospital has submitted theirs and we have too.
- We have held two drive thru clinics before with the flu, and we are hoping, we can implement the same thing, when it comes to administering the COVID-19 vaccine.

Dr. Christy Perdue asked if Kim Smith knew as to when Columbus County could expect to receive its first allotment of the vaccine. Kim Smith replied:

- We've been told the week of December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. I don't think that's going to be a true date. I'm looking for it to be the first or second week in January.

Dr. George Floyd added:

- I've talked to the state people too, and as far as the Pfizer vaccine, we've made arrangements to receive dry ice. Because if you receive the Pfizer vaccine, then 21 days later you'll need to receive your second dose. If you get the Moderna vaccine, then 28 days later, you'll have to get the second dose of Moderna. They have selected certain hospitals and counties to allocate this first dose too. I'm surprised we were not on there, due to our numbers. The Federal government must first approve the Emergency Use Authorization, for the vaccines. Then within 24 to 48 hours, they can be shipped out. If we get the Moderna, then it has to be the same process; they will have to approve it first. I was led to believe that we would get some with the second allotment. The hospital is not sure which one it is going to receive first, but we will prepare and handle it.

Pat Ray asked what sort of campaign would be in place to notify the public about when different age groups, different risk groups, would be able to access the vaccine. Kim Smith replied:

- They are making the final criteria list. We have two webinars on this tomorrow, and the state has notified us that they will have some written materials to send out to everyone. We have used the reverse 911 system one time before, and I think that would be a great use of that system to alert everyone. We will also use radios, newspapers, and interviews. We will send it out to everyone we have ever been in contact with.

Dr. George Floyd added:

- First Phase approach will be the hospitals, medical workers and then after that they will do the next phase like over age 75. It may take up until the summer to get everyone vaccinated. It is going to be a patient process. I think they are planning it very well.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- The Long Term Care pharmacies have an opportunity to work with CVS or Walgreens as well as the state prisons. They have broken everyone up,

like George stated. The hospitals will do hospital staff, and Walgreens will do the Long Term Care facilities. I feel that the state plan and our plan is good.

Dr. George Floyd added:

- I had spoken with the staff at Bladen County hospital, and they stated they had received more vaccine than staff members; so they are administering to the Nursing Homes and EMS, through the hospital. I think the plan is very good. Just hearing the plans we have, along with other counties, we'll be able to get it to everyone. Just takes a lot of planning and documentation considering you'll be administering a second shot.

Pat Ray asked how many additional personnel will be needed to administer the vaccines. Dr. George Floyd answered:

- For us (hospital), we'll be able to handle it. I know we are stretched with the COVID patients; we are going to have to work at it to make it happen. We're hoping we get the Moderna, because it takes less work to keep it properly refrigerated. Of course, you will have to schedule your appointment ahead of time.

Kim Smith added:

- Here (Health Department) I've had two retired nurses to call and tell me that they are willing to work if we need them. Like George said, if I knew how many doses we were going to get, that would make it easier. I'm sure at some point we will be receiving alerts as to how many doses we will be getting. The state has authorized paramedics to help administer the vaccine. With us doing testing, things have gone well. However, I don't know how many more staff members we'll need. If it goes anything like the H1N1, we only received 100 doses of vaccine a week. So for right now, I don't think we're going to need any more staff.

- Any other questions?

#### **B. Medicaid Transformation**

- Medicaid Managed Care is scheduled for July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. They will open enrollment the middle of March and continue through May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- Most people currently receiving Medicaid benefits will need to re-enroll. The five plans that will be available in our area are:

- Well Care
- United Health Care
- Healthy Blue
- AmeriHealth Caritas
- Carolina Complete Health

- The contracts we've signed before, will still be in effect. We just need to start back on educating the staff on Medicaid Managed Care.

**C. Policy Approval-Placement on the Board of Health Agenda**

*(Benchmark 9, Activity 9.5) (Benchmark 32, Activity 32.2)*

- We had a policy about the public comments section on the Board of Health, but we have never had a policy on how someone would get on the agenda to make a presentation.

Dr. Darryl Diefes stated that the policy asks for a 15-day advance notice, how did we come up with that. That just seems like a long time. Kim Smith replied:

- I asked my Health Directors in the region and a lot of them stated they had 15 days. Board of Health packets are usually sent out the week before the meeting and the Chairman reviews the Agenda a week before the packets are sent out, but this can be changed.

Motion to accept the Policy Approval-Placement on the Board of Health Agenda was made by Dr. Nicole Martin, seconded Dr. Christy Perdue, and carried by the board.

**D. Dental Update**

*(Benchmark 19, Activity 9.1) (Benchmark 36, Activity 36.3)*

- We have not been able to find a Dental Assistant. Ariel Bell is our Dental Office Receptionist, and after discussing with Dr. Ladner, Ariel has expressed a desire to learn and become a Dental Assistant. We have started the training process and she has done some chair side training with Dr. Ladner.
- They had left some of the stools off the bus when they shipped it, so we had to wait for those and waiting to receive the title. Dental has passed out forms to the schools, which they are going to try to go out to. We are looking to get those back, so they can start the bus. We may have to grab someone from the front office to out with them. We are hoping to get the bus on the road. As soon as we do, we'll get the Press out here.

Dr. George Floyd asked if Kim Smith had thought about

contacting Southeastern Community College to start a Dental Assistant program. Kim Smith replied:

- I have not reached out to them recently; we have in the past, and I was told no that they could not offer this at the time. The explanation was given that it was due to the other programs available all around us.

Dr. George Floyd made the suggestion to reach out to the ECU satellite Dental facilities in the area. Dr. Darryl Diefes replied that from his understanding, they train dentist at those facilities, not Dental Assistants. Kim Smith replied that she could call because they may have individuals calling looking for a job. Then those facilities could in turn, could give them our information.

- I would like to say Thank You to the Board for my Evaluation.

Dr. George Floyd commended Kim Smith on the outstanding job she has done, with everything going on this year. Kim Smith replied:

- I have a great staff.

Dr. Randy Kirby stated the following:

- Thank you very much, for not only your presentation, but for all you do. Congratulations on a great evaluation. Thank you to all the participates, we appreciate your time and effort.

Dr. Nicole Martin stated the following:

- As an employer, I had to seek some help on navigating the world of COVID. The Health Department was extremely helpful and prompt. I really appreciate Ms. Kim's help. Really doing a fantastic job.

Dr. Darryl Diefes stated the following:

- I hadn't thought about doing this right now, but I am moving to Brunswick County. I have been on this Board since I believe 1999. So I don't know if this is going to have to be my last meeting or not. But through the years, I have been amazed at our Health Department. Not just the administration, but the people who have their feet on the ground, making it run. Years of meeting the needs of the citizens of Columbus County. It opened up my eyes to what being involved in community, and being on a Board really means. It has showed me what can be done, when people come in with no personal agenda, no personal ambitions, but one common goal. Although Board members and employees have changed, this

	<p>has been a consistently amazing organization. If I have to change my residence, then I cannot be on this Board. Whatever happens, I just want you to know that I am proud of all of you. I'm proud of you Kim and what she accomplishes. What a tough and difficult environment. George and I are the last of the old timers on this Board, seeing how the environment has changed; funding being cut, and mandates are still down. With that, I will say I love you all and I wish you all a Merry Christmas.</p> <p>Pat Ray and Dr. Randy Kirby thanked Dr. Darryl Diefes for his service. The Board of Health members wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.</p>

**Next Meeting Date**

**February 24, 2021 at 6:00 pm**

**Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully submitted: Kimberly Smith Secretary 042821  
Signature Date