

Columbus County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting Special Meeting

August 25, 2021 6:00 P.M.

Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC

Members Present	Pat Ray Dr. George Floyd Dr. Nicole Martin Dr. Brent Lawson Drew Cox Shane Cartrette Dr. Christy Perdue Charles McDowell
Members Absent	Dr. Randy Kirby, Patty Hobbs, Frankye Boone Newkirk
Staff Members Present	Kimberly L. Smith, Yvonne Armstrong, Dr. Breanna Benbow Mitzi Ward, , Charlene Bush, Patti Nance, Kristie Priest, Daniel Buck, Lily Buck, Jamika Lynch
Guests	

Quorum was present.

I. Call to Order

Pat Ray called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. Welcome/Invocation

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

III. Approval of Agenda

Kim Smith stated she would like to add to the agenda, under Nursing, COVID-19 Update, it has been brought to my attention that one of the Board of Health members would like to discuss a Mask Mandate for Columbus County. Motion to accept the addition of Mask Mandate was made by Dr. George Floyd seconded by Dr. Brent Lawson and carried by the board. Motion to accept the agenda with the addition, was made by Charles McDowell, seconded by Dr. Brent Lawson and carried by the board.

IV. Public Comment

There was one public comment, which was made in agreeance, that facemask should be made mandatory to keep children and teacher's safe, at all times.

V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept was made by Dr. Brent Lawson seconded by Shane Cartrette and carried by the board.

<p>VI. Dental</p>	<p>Kimberly Smith, Health Director stated the following:</p> <p>A. Introduction of Dr. Breanna Benbow, Dentist Kimberly Smith read Dr. Breanna Benbow's bio and introduced her to the Board of Health members.</p> <p>B. Changes to Dental Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shana Skinner has returned as a Dental Assistant. Ariel Bell is still in training to become a Dental Assistant, and we have hired Shericka Murphy as the Dental Office Assistant. I truly believe we have a great team
<p>VII. Financial Update</p>	<p>Charlene Bush, Budget Director stated the following:</p> <p>A. Financial Statement June Annual <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6) (Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your packet, you received June's Financial Report. Are there any questions? • That was the end of the fiscal year. • Next, you will see the Year to Date review. We finished up at 85% of total revenue received. We used 77% of what was budgeted of local appropriations. We are right at \$1,300,000.00 under our total expenses. Therefore, we are at 76%. <p>Motion to accept Financial Statement for June was made by Dr. George Floyd, seconded by Charles McDowell, carried by the board.</p> <p>B. Service Cost Update <i>(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2) (Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shingrix has gone from \$176 to \$186. <p>C. Funding Update <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last time we met, we were in the process of budgets with the county. Our budget was received, and accepted, as it was. I made a couple adjustments when asked afterward to cut a few things, and I did. Overall, our budget stayed pretty much what we had initially submitted. • Our total budget for this year is \$4,732,472.00 • Of that, 52% will come from local appropriations. The rest will come from Medicaid, State, Federal and local collections. <p>D. Patient Counts June Annual <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p>

	<p>Dr. George Floyd asked if we had noticed a drop in July, due to people staying home. Charlene Bush answered yes. You can tell a difference in June and May of last year, as well as money wise, due to not being able to bill.</p> <p>E. Child Fatality, Environmental Health, Budget Reviews <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Fatality is the same funding we got as last year \$649.00. I gave you a sheet that tells you what the deliverables are. • Environmental Health local county money was \$217,174.65. Local fees they took in, \$126,461.99 for last year. County appropriated money for mosquito spraying was \$8,000.00, and we received their Food and Lodging Money which was \$13,145.00; this amount is based on inspections completed, and that was at 100%. • Dentals funding is for last year. Due to COVID, that put us out of the schools. We received \$47,171.68 of Medicaid for last year. No local money was received. The local money we do receive, comes from a children’s health state grant. This is used for anyone who is seen at the schools, but doesn’t have any kind of dental insurance. Before COVID, we were using all \$30,000.00 that was allotted. <p>F. Fee Schedule Changes <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are the fees that Medicaid pays at their rate, plus ten percent. We added to it because we want a little bit of leeway. They will pay us \$30, if we charge \$40, but when I do the Medicaid Cost Report, they go back and take what we charge. They base our money on what we charge. So what we want to do is stay a little above it. • You’ve got all the fee changes for Dental, which is a lot. • There are only four changes in Maternal. <p>Motion to accept the Fee Schedule Changes motion made by Charles McDowell, seconded by Dr. George Floyd and carried by the board.</p>
<p>VIII. Child Fatality Report</p>	<p>Mitzi Ward, Child Fatality Chair, gave the following report:</p> <p>A. Annual Child Fatality Report <i>(Benchmark 19, Activity 19.1)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Columbus County, for the year of 2019, there was a total of nine deaths from the ages of 0 to 18.

	<p>In 2018 there were four, and in 2017 there were eleven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes of death for 2019 were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two originating from Perinatal Period ○ One from unintentional injuries ○ One homicide ○ One with congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities ○ One from benign neoplasms and neoplasms of uncertain origins ○ One intentional (suicide) ○ Two fell under all other causes (residual) • Columbus County ranks at 78.3% based off comparison with the other counties. • This year I included in the packet an infant mortality report. This breaks it down by ethnicity and county. It also shows North Carolina's total for infant deaths. <p>Kimberly Smith asked Mitzi Ward to share who sits on the board with her. Mitzi Ward stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSS's Child Protection Team, we partner with them. During COVID we hadn't had any meetings. We tried to schedule a Zoom meeting, but that fell through due to them being overwhelmed. We also have someone from Guardian Ad Litem, School Counselors, there is supposed to be a citizen of Columbus County, which we do not have at this time, a law enforcement officer, many of these boards also have a county commissioner on there as well. It is mainly DSS, Health Department, County School System, and Guardian Ad Litem. <p>Pat Ray asked when the Child Fatality Awareness Celebration would be. Mitzi Ward answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We always do that in April. We have not done it the past two years; but we try to do it in April, the Month of the Child. If we have one next year, I hope we can still do the butterfly release.
IX. Nursing	<p>Patti Nance, Nursing Director gave the following update:</p> <p>A. COVID-19 Update <i>(Benchmark 2, Activity 2.4)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Columbus County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Columbus County Completed COVID test numbers: 68,527 ○ Total of 8,592 positive cases in the county. ○ Currently Hospitalized – 40 (36 in the county and four in outlying hospitals).

- Deaths – 175
- Recoveries – 7,679
- Isolation – 698
- Quarantine – 1,740
- Positivity Rate 17.9% which is down from our 19.7% positivity rate

- We are having approximately 148.6 cases per 10,000 residents, every 14 days. Most days we are having at least 50, sometimes 120 to 150 cases per day for the past three weeks.
- We have 21,131 in the county who have had at least their first dose of COVID vaccine.
- There are 18,722 that have received their second dose. 10,972 of those doses have been given here at the Health Department.
- Regional numbers are as follows:
 - Hospitalizations – 166 with 86% of hospitals reporting
 - State Positivity rate is 13.5%
- On August 23rd, Pfizer was given full approval to administer to 16 years and older, by the FDA.
- We still have five outbreaks and one cluster in the county at this time. An outbreak is two or more cases, within a 28-day period in a congregate living facility. A cluster is five or more individuals, in one common area within a 14-day period that are positive, like schools, church, and workplaces.
- Since March 1st, 2021, those less than 17 years of age and less, that have tested positive, are as follows:

AGE	Number of Cases
0 to 1 year olds	82
2 to 4 year olds	104
5 to 7 year olds	202
10 to 14 year olds	346
15 to 17 year olds	312
TOTAL	1,046

- 98% of the cases are the Delta variant
- Unvaccinated individuals are three in a half time more likely to contract COVID, than fully and vaccinated individuals.
- Unvaccinated individuals are four times more likely to die from COVID than a fully vaccinated individual is.
- 18% of COVID cases are fully vaccinated.

- We must continue to use our layered prevention strategy:
 - Vaccine
 - Mask
 - Social Distancing
 - Wash Hands Frequently
 - Testing
- Each alone are not perfect, but when used together, we can help slow and even stop, the spread of COVID-19.
- We have been holding vaccination clinics here at the Health Department. We have also assisted StarMed to go out in various areas of the county, to do vaccination clinics. They have been to the schools and administered some vaccines, not as many as we would like to see, but some have participated. We have dates as to when they will do second doses.

Kimberly Smith added that they would administer first doses if someone were there in need of one. Patti Nance continued:

- We are doing vaccines every Friday at the Health Department. If someone comes in and they want one that day, we give them one. Local pharmacies are continuing to administer vaccines as well.
- All the schools in the county have changed their mask policies. Everyone will be wearing a mask, except when eating, this school year.
- State of North Carolina numbers are as follows:
 - New Cases Today - 6,130
 - Deaths as of August 24th – 14,152 today August 25th, they are – 14,212
 - State positivity rate is 13.5%

Pat Ray asked if someone is working in a home, and if one or more people have had COVID, when can they feel safe to work in that home again. Patti Nance asked in what capacity were they working in the home. Pat Ray stated they are cleaning, and are fully vaccinated. They have also completed their isolation period. Patti Nance suggested that as long as they are fully vaccinated, wear their mask and wash their hands frequently, they should be fine. CDC does not recommend for you to test after you have completed isolation.

Pat Ray asked if we were getting adequate reporting and identification at the Health Department, of positive cases in the county. Patti Nance answered yes she feels that we are.

Kimberly Smith stated:

- In the beginning, we had an issue with a physician's office. Once we sent this physician's office the requirements that the state health department had put out, and that it is a reportable disease and COVID is supposed to report within 24 hours, they started to comply. We then had a short discussion with this office and started receiving them on time. We have another testing facility that was sending us the report, but not the demographics that we need. We are working through that.

Pat Ray asked do you think that organizations are keeping a list, when more than 30 people are gathered. Do you think they are keeping a list of a name and a contact of everyone who was in that group, if it was indoors? Patti Nance stated that if they are, they are not very free and forthcoming with that information.

B. Mask Mandate for Columbus County

Kimberly Smith stated the following:

- One of the Board of Health members asked me to place this item on the agenda, to discuss a Mask Mandate. Can you tell me what your thoughts and concerns are on making a public health rule on mandating mask, throughout the county? I will start by saying I see enforcement issues. We would definitely have to have not only the Sheriff's department, but also local municipalities' police departments on board with this also. Public health's issue would be to give us a time or two to educate the citizens, and then it would be turned over into the enforcement piece.

Kimberly Smith asked for Amanda Prince, Columbus County Attorney, to give her thoughts on the Mask Mandate enforcement.

- There are multiple difficulties with enforcement, legally and logistically. You already have law enforcement, who are stretched as it is, and then to have them go around and find people who do not wear a mask; it is just too time consuming. In addition, there are so many excuses not wear a mask that include disabilities, health conditions, religious, etc.

Dr. Brent Lawson stated that he was the one who questioned Kimberly Smith about this topic. Dr. Brent Lawson stated:

- The commonality of this is that we are all tired of

COVID at this point. We have a county that is very resistant of vaccines. I'm frustrated with the fact that people could be doing more. I've noticed several county's issue Mask Mandates and was wondering if we could possibly do the same. My question to Kim was if this was a possibility. I realize what Amanda is saying, it will be very difficult; I don't want it to be like that, but I wanted to inquire and see what options we could give people to help get rid of COVID before it got out of hand. At my office when people come in, I pretty much require them to wear mask. Most physician offices are doing that, and asking for a negative COVID test as well. I had an employee today, who could not be seen by a physician until she received a negative test. We are getting stringent mandates by different employers, and that is my concern.

Charles McDowell stated the following:

- I agree with you. Everywhere I go, I see a mixture of mask. I agree with Amanda, if we as a county issue a mandate, how would we enforce it, where would it go? Like it or not, it is up to an individual, who has to make a decision if they are going to assist in getting rid of this virus; or am I going to run the risk of spreading it. As a business, it is their property, and they can mandate that. I think this would lead to more resistance than compliance. A mandate would be a push. As Kim stated earlier, if we could educate and ask people to do what is right. There is always going to be a small number of the population that is going to rebel against whatever the majority is doing. Now I believe more individuals who were afraid, because the vaccine was under emergency approval, and stating it had not been tested, now they'll start feeling like it's been tested more, and start thinking I feel more comfortable with it. We will also see people who will see friends and loved ones sick, and possibly dying, that are now going to change their minds. At that point and time, this might be a discussion we might need to have seriously; but I do not think we are there yet. I think it would be more negative than positive. This is my personal opinion. It's not easy to throw something on the books that can't be enforced. That deludes the authority of the officials, when you cannot enforce what you are telling

	<p>people that they have to do.</p> <p>Dr. George Floyd stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I personally am in favor of a Mask Mandate. That is what I do, no matter where I go. I also understand exactly what you are saying. If nothing else, maybe we can issue a statement that we strongly recommend wearing your mask, and place it in the newspaper. Encourage citizens that it is the right thing to do, to protect you, but your family as well. <p>Pat Ray asked if she understood correctly that the Board of Health should make some sort of statement. Dr. George Floyd responded yes.</p> <p>Charles McDowell stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe we can formulate a Statement of Recommendation. Send it to the Chamber of Commerce, so they can share it with the businesses. Share it with the schools, and all of the major employers of the county, and ask them to post it in a visible area. People would more than likely act more positively to a recommendation, as opposed to a mandate. <p>A motion for the Board of Health to develop and issue a Statement of Recommendation, under the guidance of the Health Director, to be used countywide, to encourage the use of wearing a mask was made by Charles McDowell, seconded by Dr. George Floyd, carried by the board.</p> <p>Kimberly Smith stated that what she could do is develop something and send it out to the board, and changes can be made.</p>
<p>X. Environmental Health</p>	<p>Kristie Priest, Supervisor stated the following:</p> <p>A. Food and Lodging Report <i>(Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristie Priest introduced Ayanna Avery, our new Environmental Health Specialist. We are fully staffed in Environmental Health. • For the Fiscal year we completed 415 Food and Lodging Inspections. This number is lower than the previous year due to the pandemic. I have attached the memorandums from the governor regarding the shutdowns for the restaurants. We had completed 100% of our inspections up until that point. <p>Motion to accept the Food and Lodging Report was made by Dr. Brent Lawson, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.</p> <p>B. Well Sampling Report</p>

	<p><i>(Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We conducted 159 new well sites, and repairs. We sampled a total of 120 water samples. These are collected and sent to the State Lab in Raleigh. <p>Motion to accept the Well Sampling Report was made by Charles McDowell, seconded by Dr. Brent Lawson, carried by the board.</p> <p>C. Onsite Waste Report <i>(Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though our restaurant inspections slowed down, greatly, our septic did not. We got to the point we were five to six weeks out, due to so many applications coming in at one time. • We issued 361 Improvement Permits, 224 Construction Authorization Permits and 219 Operation Permits. <p>Motion to accept the Onsite Water Report was made by Dr. George Floyd, seconded by Dr. Brent Lawson, carried by the board.</p> <p>D. Child Lead Report <i>(Benchmark 4, Activity 4.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no report in your packet this time, because we did not have a confirmed lead case this past year. This is for children under the age of six. We did have some that were elevated. When that happens, Environmental Health offers to investigate, but the parents do not have to accept that investigation. We had one that was lingering from the year before. We were able to close that case out, and the child's levels did come down. <p>Motion to accept the Child Lead Report was made by Dr. George Floyd seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.</p>
<p>XI. Health Education/Promotion</p>	<p>Daniel Buck, Health Promotion gave the following updates:</p> <p>A. Update Teen Pregnancy Prevention Grant (Making Proud Choices) <i>(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamika Lynch is going to provide you with an update on the Teen Pregnancy Program. Just wanted to say thank you to the board for writing a letter to the school board, in hopes to re-instate the program. <p>Jamika Lynch stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of July 12th, the Columbus County Board of Education approved "Making Proud Choices" back into the schools. I have not started yet, waiting on

	<p>the teachers to get back and acclimated. Looking to start back in the next several weeks. Thank you so much for your support, and I do not think this would have happened without your support.</p>
XII. Chairman's Forum	<p>Pat Ray, Vice-Chairman gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are so appreciative to Kim and the staff here for the strong teamwork, in challenging times.
XIII. Director's Forum	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following updates:</p> <p>A. Bad Debt Write-Off (<i>Benchmark 33, Activity 33.7</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year (July 2020 – June 2021) we have \$1,803.82. This is the debt that we are unable to collect. <p>Motion to accept the Bad Debt Write-Off was made by Dr. Brent Lawson, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.</p> <p>B. Debt Set-Off (<i>Benchmark 33, Activity 33.7</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt Set-Off is when we notify them that we are going to submit their debt to the State of North Carolina's Department of Revenue, \$50.00 or more. Therefore, if they receive a refund from their taxes, what they owe us, will be deducted. Then they'll get what is left. If they can come up with what is owed, within 30 days, then we'll cancel that. • This year, the Debt Set-Off amount, we were able to recover, was \$ 2,448.34 • Last year we collected \$ 4,265.72 • They will send the letter and give you time to come in and pay it. If it is less than \$50, it ends up in the Bad Debt Write-Off <p>Motion to accept the Debt Set-Off was made by Dr. Nicole Martin, seconded by Charles McDowell, carried by the board.</p> <p>C. Board Training – Healthy NC 2030</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I say let us forgo our training. We have to do this training once every four years; I am not waiting until the last minute, but if it is acceptable, we will tack in on to another meeting.
Comments-Board of Health	

Next Meeting Date

October 27, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted: Kimberly L Smith Secretary 102821
Signature Date