

# Columbus County Board of Health

## Minutes

Regular Meeting     Special Meeting

December 8, 2021 6:00 P.M.

Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC

<b>Members Present</b>	Pat Ray Dr. George Floyd Patty Hobbs Dr. Nicole Martin Frankye Boone Newkirk Dr. Christy Perdue Dr. Brent Lawson Charles McDowell
<b>Members Absent</b>	Dr. Randy Kirby, Shane Cartrette, Drew Cox
<b>Staff Members Present</b>	Kimberly L. Smith, Yvonne Armstrong, Sandy Cothorn, Charlene Bush, Daniel Buck, Lily Buck, Jamika Lynch
<b>Guests</b>	

**Quorum was present.**

### I. Call to Order

Pat Ray called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

### II. Welcome/Invocation

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

### III. Approval of Agenda

Item VIII, Patti Nance was absent and Kim Smith will be giving the update. A motion to accept was made by Dr. Christy Perdue seconded by Patty Hobbs and carried by the board.

### IV. Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

### V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept was made by Dr. George Floyd, seconded by Dr. Brent Lawson, and carried by the board.

**VI. Women, Infants, Children**

Sandy Cothorn, WIC Director stated the following:

**A. Annual WIC Update**

*(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)*

- Currently there is at least one open nutritionist position that continues to be advertised. This position is listed several places which has generated interest by potential candidates in the past. Several applicants have voiced interest, but have turned down completing an application after noting the salary. A former staff member, who retired has come back part time, at least until we have more staff.
- We are continuing along with several changes that were instated in 2020; these were implemented to ensure the safety of both our participants and our staff. The Nutrition Services Branch (of which WIC is a part) has been granted extensions of several waivers of our normal procedures/actions. Among these waivers are:
  1. Waiving of physical presence (we are seeing most of our patients over the phone).
  2. Easing of some of the strict food requirements patients had to follow.
  3. Easing of vendor monitoring requirements (both in how many we have to monitor, and what they can be held accountable for having/not having.)
  4. 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, a month 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 our caseload is 1,524 participants (the number we are to serve each month). We are serving 1600+ 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. Redemption rates saw a slight increase with the implementation of an increase in the Cash Value Benefits that was began as a part of President

	<p>Biden's COVID19 Relief Legislation; this was signed into law in March of 2021. This increased the Cash Value Benefit from \$9 &amp; \$11 respectively to \$35 per person, per month. These funds could be used to buy fresh, frozen or canned fruits &amp; vegetables. Currently, due to the continuing resolution passed by Congress this weekend, our Cash Value Benefits are at \$24/month for children and \$43/month for pregnant/postpartum women, and \$47/month for breastfeeding women. This was a very popular facet of the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All groceries, and both pharmacies, who are WIC vendors, completed their required training for 2021. This was an important year for vendors because this was a year when they had to renew their WIC contracts. This year the vendors completed most, if not all, of their paperwork electronically through a program called DocuSign.</li><li>• From October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021, WIC participants redeemed benefits worth approximately \$ 1,102,855.90 (up 2.83% from last year).</li><li>• The Breastfeeding team is also maintaining its support of Columbus County mothers/babies. They promote breastfeeding to our young families. Our two-breastfeeding peer counselors work together to reinforce our idea of breastfeeding as being the best way to feed infants. Currently we have 122 women who are breastfeeding, in some form/capacity, and 70 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).</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 Financial Statement, 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>, 2021. As you can see, we're at 29% of our budgeted revenue for State funding, insurance and self-pay. At 25% of county appropriated funds and 27% of our expenses.</li><li>• In Dental, we have not received any funding. We are still trying to bill. There was a mishap with the company we were billing through. This should have</li></ul>

	<p>been fixed last week, so hopefully after that, everything should go through smoothly after we receive payment for that initial batch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dental bus is now going around to the different schools. Much of the funding for the schools is used by a grant, \$30,000. This is used for children who do not have Medicaid or Dental Insurance.</li> </ul> <p>Dr. Brent Lawson asked was dental billing being done using a clearinghouse? Charlene Bush responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, a number got changed. So hopefully that is all straightened out now.</li> </ul> <p>Motion to accept Financial Statement for September and October was made by Patty Hobbs, seconded by Dr. Christy Perdue, carried by the board.</p> <p><b>B. Women, Infants, and Children Financial Report</b> (Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, Infants and Children receive a total of \$301,752.00. Every month when I do my report, I have to break down which program these funds are coming out of; they are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Client Services: \$165,964.00</li> <li>○ Nutrition Education: \$ 84,491.00</li> <li>○ General Administration: \$ 9,051.00</li> <li>○ Breastfeeding: \$42,246.00</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The bottom item, Peer Counselor Breastfeeding is \$20,245.00, which is up \$2,000.00 from last year. This is for the two ladies we have contracted with to work directly with breastfeeding.</li> </ul> <p>Kim Smith added that the \$301,752.00 was strictly from the Federal government and the \$20,245.00 was from the State.</p> <p><b>C. Patient Count for September and October</b> (Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can see we are up almost 203 patients. This is due to flu shots. You can also see that Dental has increased. This is due to them being able to get back into the schools. They will make their rounds the first part of the year, and then the Spring Semester, they will come back around to the same schools.</li> </ul>
<b>VIII. Nursing</b>	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. COVID-19 Update</b> (Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We currently have the following numbers for the state of North Carolina: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 20,582,498 Completed Tests</li> <li>○ 1,555,216 total cases</li> <li>○ 2,104 new cases Statewide (overnight)</li> <li>○ 1,376 in Hospital with 97% reporting (342</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- ICU Patients 15% on vent)
    - 18,880 total deaths
    - 9.1% positive rate (down from 9.4%)
    - 69% of NC citizens are fully vaccinated
- For the County, the numbers are as follows:
  - 83,977 completed tests (as of December 7, 2021)
  - 11,071 total cases (1st case March 28, 2020)
  - 6 in Hospital (3 CRHS, 3 NHRMC)
  - 233 deaths (No deaths reported since Nov. 10, 2021)
  - 10,642 Recoveries
  - 190 Isolation
  - 380 Quarantine
  - 55 Regional Hospital cases with 86% hospitals reporting
- New Hanover Hospital is watching this number because they have noticed when Duplin and Columbus counties numbers start to rise, their hospitalizations start to rise.
  - 5.5% positive rate
- We have the second lowest positivity rate in our nine county region. This region includes, Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Robeson and Sampson county's.
  - 554 total post vaccination cases
  - 1st Dose 24,953 45%
  - 2nd Dose (fully vaccinated) 23,117 42%
  - Total doses given at the Health Department 12,064
- We do have two outbreaks, one of which is at Columbus Correctional. We had closed them out, and then had to reopen them two days later, due to a number of offenders. Right now, we are working with 14 offenders being positive. We have one nursing home outbreak in the county, and we should be able to close their case out in about a week, if they have no new cases.
- We have a slow uptick.
- StarMed is holding vaccination clinics at St. Mark AME Zion Church on 114 West Virgil Street, here in Whiteville. You do not have to have an appointment. They have all three vaccines and are open from 10am to 5pm, Monday thru Friday.
- Our local pharmacies are giving vaccinations, here in the county along with your large chain

	<p>pharmacies, CVS, Wal-Mart and Walgreens; and of course here at the Health Department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omicron variant has been identified in about 17 states. Georgia is the closest state to us that has a positive omicron variant case. It is probably here in NC, but we just have not found it yet.</li> </ul> <p>Pat Ray asked how has the output of vaccine been in the last two weeks, considering the new variant. Kim Smith replied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have not seen an increase in vaccines. We are currently scheduling for the 14<sup>th</sup> of December; we're about a week out. St. Mark AME Zion Church is not as busy as they would like, and anyone can go there.</li> <li>• StarMed is providing vaccines at the schools. They did four county schools, and one city school (Edgewood). They are currently now doing their second round at these locations.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Schools COVID-19 Liaison</b></p> <p>Lily Buck, COVID-19 School Liaison, gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am the COVID-19 Liaison for the county and city school systems. I'm available 24/7 to any of the staff at the schools. We had a booster clinic on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at South Columbus High School. Around 130 people were vaccinated.</li> <li>• Along with my duties as the COVID-19 Liaison, I am also working with the Tri-County collaborative with Bladen and Roberson counties, in regards to Medicaid managed care.</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Staff Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have hired Haleigh Milligan, RN. She started on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. She has replaced our Communicable Disease nurse who left for Brunswick County. Haleigh is currently enrolled to receive her BSN. She has around two years to get fully trained, and then she'll be able to do all of the Communicable Disease physicals. We are very lucky to have her and her experience.</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>• I usually give an annual update on the Community Health Improvement Plan; we are transitioning to a system called the SCORE Card, this is something that the state has mandated. The way it will track the Community Health Improvement Plan will be a little bit different, and hopefully provide a better look at</li> </ul>

	<p>progress. We are still working with them on that. I have no updates on the actual objective right now, just learning a whole new way of doing it.</p> <p><b>B. "Making Proud Choices" Update</b> (Benchmark 38, Activity 39.2)</p> <p>Jamika Lynch, Health Educator, gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomorrow is the end of the first semester. It has went very well. I am already excited about starting second semester. It was really good to be back in the classroom.</li> </ul>
<p><b>X. Chairman's Forum</b></p>	<p>Pat Ray, Vice-Chairman, gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. Health Director's Evaluation</b> (Benchmark 37, Activity 37.5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That brings us the Health Director's Evaluation. All the members of the board have submitted an evaluation form. This is done annually, and it is a pleasure to do this report on the evaluation. Kim, you have done an extraordinary job, which is an understatement. The evaluation was good, almost without exception, everything was excellent. I'll just read a few of the comments:</li> <li>• The ratings were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leadership: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Leadership of the Community: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li> <li>○ Sensitive to Diversity in the Community: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Motivation and Enthusiasm: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Strong Advocate for Public Health: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Delegates responsibility and authority, seeking staff input on critical decisions: 10 Excellent, 1 Good</li> <li>○ Keeps staff informed of Key Issues: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Promotes an environment in which employees are recognized and rewarded for achievement: 10 Excellent, 1 No Opinion</li> <li>○ Is willing to address difficult issues and, if necessary, make unpopular decisions: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Keeps Board of Health informed about all issues and conducts well organized meetings: 11 Excellent</li> <li>○ Establishes a realistic budget and manages it effectively: 11 Excellent</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is effective in obtaining money from grant proposals as well as seeking grant opportunities: 11 Excellent</li> <li>● Comments were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Excellent job keeping everyone informed during the outbreak.</li> <li>○ Did a great job, guiding COVID response to a very resistant county.</li> <li>○ A strong hand on the tiller during difficult times.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● We appreciate you and your commitment to the health and well being of our county. Thank you for all that you've done.</li> </ul> <p>Motion to accept the Health Director's Performance Review was made by Charles McDowell, seconded Frankye Boone-Newkirk and carried by the board. Charles McDowell thanked Kim for what she does. Kim Smith thanked everyone.</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>● Before I get into the Annual Report, I wanted to mention that in the state budget, that was passed recently, they have earmarked \$36 million for local Health Departments for the next two years. This is for expansion of the local Communicable Disease program. We are expected to get around \$136,000 over two years. I hope that what we cannot spend this year will roll over to the next year.</li> <li>● The Annual Report for the last fiscal year, I am 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 one, which is down by five.</li> <li>○ HIV cases went down, we only had four.</li> <li>○ Syphilis cases were up by one.</li> <li>○ Hepatitis B went up by two</li> <li>○ Gonorrhea was up by 136 cases for a total of 262.</li> <li>○ We had no Rocky Mountain Spotted fever.</li> <li>○ Chlamydia went up by 72 cases; for a total of 406.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Last year we were involved in a flu outbreak, in two of our Long Term Care facilities. However, we had no deaths.</li> <li>● In Vital Records:</li> </ul>

- Births have increased by 24, for a total of 349.
- Deaths have increased by 38, for a total of 714 (124 were COVID deaths).
- Environmental Health had a little more building going on in the county. We were up by encounters, as well as revenue.
- The number of home burials was eight. This was five less than the previous year.
- Between patient visits and the number of patients, we were down. That is mostly due to COVID. Even though we remained open, and were still providing our services, they were down. We did provide services to 372 individuals, from 15 different counties, not including Columbus.
- I think you heard everything from Sandy on WIC.
- In our lab, we did a total of 617 Pregnancy test and 663 HIV test. We did 83 Blood Lead test and 317 Outpatient Courtesy labs. These are individuals who have insurance that the hospital does not take; they'll come here, we'll send it out to LabCorp and LabCorp bills as well.
- In Health Education, you heard Jamika give her update on Making Proud Choices. Last year she did everything by ZOOM, and I think we all know the history there. I don't think I've saw anyone so happy to get back into the classroom as she was. Daniel applied for several grants. We did get awarded some to help purchase more dental equipment.
- Dr. Ladner left in March of 2021. Dr. Breanna Benbow (Dr. BB) started on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Dental has hit the ground running. We can look at the numbers and see that.
- Under our Animal Bites, which we coordinate with Animal Control, we had the following:
  - Total Reported was 44 animal bites.
  - Of the 44, we had to treat 2 individuals
- The total budget for 2020/2021 was \$4,600,882.00
  - Total Revenues for Health Dept. Clinics: \$2,713,836.75
  - Total County Appropriation Health Dept. Clinics: \$1,813,206.54
  - Total Expenses for Health Dept. Clinics: \$4,245,459.26
- We did remain under budget.
- The issues we had during the year, included:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ COVID-19</li> <li>○ Hiring qualified staff</li> <li>○ Paying qualified staff</li> <li>○ Medicaid Transformation</li> <li>● Our concerns include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ COVID-19 Getting all of our citizens vaccinated. Stopping the spread.</li> <li>○ Recruiting the needed licensed staff.</li> <li>○ Competitive pay for all staff.</li> <li>○ Decreasing funds from State and Federal sources while requirements for funds are more rigorous.</li> <li>○ Medicaid Transformation, effective July 1, 2021 and what the requirements will be on Public Health.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Each year I try to include an inspirational quote at the end of my report, and this year it was "Commit yourself to constant self-improvement" from Life's Little Instruction Book.</li> </ul> <p>Any questions about the Annual Report?</p>
<b>Comments-Board of Health</b>	<p>Pat Ray asked if any Board Members had any comments. Charles McDowell wished everyone a Safe and Merry Christmas.</p> <p>Motion to adjourn was made by Patty Hobbs, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, and carried by the board. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.</p>

**Next Meeting Date**

February 23, 2022 at 6:00 pm

**Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully submitted:

Signature

*Kimberly Smith*

Secretary

Date

*02/23/22*