

# Columbus County Board of Health

## Minutes

Regular Meeting     Special Meeting

December 14, 2022 6:00 P.M.

Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC

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

**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 Dr. Randy Kirby.

### III. Approval of Agenda

Regarding the Financial Report, November's report was added. Under Nursing, section C, will include an update on Cholera. Instead of Jamika Lynch giving the update on Health Education, it will be given by Kimberly Smith, and on item IX. B, add Board of Health Assessment. A motion to accept was made by Dr. Randy Kirby seconded by Shane Cartrette and carried by the board.

### IV. Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

## V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept was made by Patty Hobbs, seconded by Dr. Amy Sessions, 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>• We still have a Nutritionist position open. I am currently looking into re-writing that job description, to where a nurse could fulfill the duties of this position. We would not be the only ones who would be doing this. Other Health Departments have had to do this to fill their positions. We may be able to find a nurse easier than a nutritionist.</li> <li>• In response to COVID-19, our waivers are still in effect. They are looking to pull some of those benefits back. Right now, individuals are able to get larger sizes of items, and different percentages of fat, as to where it was not available before. Now they are looking to going back to the normal benefits. They allowed parents to get different kinds of baby formula due to the shortage. I've explained to the state that this might not work so well, for the smaller counties like us, due to supply and demand. The state is discussing pulling this back around the end of January 2023. The larger corporate stores are able to get in a variety, as opposed to the locally owned stores. If you live in a rural area without transportation, some families may not be able to drive from one end of the county to another, to pick up formula. I have explained this to the state. We are trying our hardest to get a formula that is the most appropriate for their child.</li> <li>• Last year, around this time, our caseload was a little over 1,600 a month. We are currently seeing 213 more individuals. This is about a 12% increase. Myself and the other nutritionist are seeing 1,737 participants. There has also been an increase in the cash value benefits. Although we have more people on, they have not been using their vouchers as much. There was a 9% increase in the redemption rate. In Columbus County, our participants redeemed over \$1.2 million dollars last year.</li> <li>• The Breastfeeding Peer Counselors are currently working with around 114 women. This is typically on par, but we are always trying to increase this</li> </ul>
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	<p>number. If we do get to hire a nurse for the Nutritionist position, this would allow us to have someone here all the time; which would give more access for mothers to get questions answered or be supplied with a pump, while they are already here.</p>
<p><b>VII. Financial Update</b></p>	<p>Charlene Bush, Budget Director stated the following:</p> <p><b>A. Financial Statement for September, October and November</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, October and November. I wasn't able to complete November's, until all items had cleared the other day. Are there any questions for the expenditures and revenue?</li> <li>• You should have also received a Year to Date Review. It is thru the end of November. As you can see, we're at 46% of our budgeted revenue for State funding, insurance and self-pay. At 28% of county appropriated funds and 37% of our expenses. Does anyone have any questions regarding these?</li> </ul> <p>Motion to accept Financial Statement for October and November was made by Dr. Randy Kirby, 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>• Women, Infants and Children receive a total of \$346,010.00. Every month, 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: \$186,845.00</li> <li>○ Nutrition Education: \$ 96,883.00</li> <li>○ General Administration: \$ 13,840.00</li> <li>○ Breastfeeding: \$48,442.00</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The bottom item, Peer Counselor Breastfeeding is \$27,990.00. This is for the two ladies we have contracted with, to work directly with breastfeeding mothers.</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 we are up in Adult &amp; Children Flu. Our COVID numbers are up. We have COVID vaccine clinics on Tuesdays and Fridays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VIII. Quality Assurance</b></p>	<p>Daniel Buck, QA Specialist, gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. Patient Satisfaction Survey Results</b> <i>(Benchmark 9, Activity 9.5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Today you received a zip file with the Clinic and STD Clinic surveys. These went back to December</li> </ul>

	<p>of 2021. This catches us up with those. The zip files are labeled by month and clinic. There are two I need to update, which are for the last six months; those are for Environmental Health and OB Case Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some notable trends included individuals saying they came here due to confidentiality. Others have stated their reason was due to their friends telling them about our services. 90% of patients stated they waited between six to fifteen minutes, before they were taken back. The ones who had a fifteen to thirty minute wait, always rated our services a little lower. Four to five of the STD clinic patients stated that they were a little agitated on how long it took to get an appointment. This has been discussed and resolved. We always have a few surveys that state how individuals would like for us to have some extended hours, and a drink machine in the lobby. We will continue to work with everyone to resolve any issues that we see.</li> <li>• We are going to have a trial run with clients completing the surveys on tablets, instead of paper, in the different clinic areas. Hopefully we will get more satisfaction surveys from the clinics.</li> </ul>
<p><b>IX. 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>• These are the current numbers that we know of; since folks are doing at home test. For the County, the numbers are as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 280 deaths</li> <li>○ 19,379 Recoveries</li> <li>○ 81 Isolation</li> <li>○ 162 Quarantine</li> <li>○ 111,006 completed tests (as of December 13, 2022)</li> <li>○ 19,460 total cases (1st case March 28, 2020)</li> <li>○ 22 Regional Hospital cases with 86% hospitals reporting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We are at a community level risk of low. All 100 North Carolina counties are at a low right now. Even Horry County in South Carolina is at low.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1st Dose 25,878 47%</li> <li>○ 2nd Dose (fully vaccinated) 24,210 45%</li> <li>○ New Booster 2,352 10%</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The bivalent booster is available now for children six months thru five years (taking them up until their</li> </ul>

sixth birthday). Kim ordered ten doses, but received 100. We have all of the available Moderna vaccines in house.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- Yesterday the state put out a notice, that they have funds, which is allowing them to set up an agreement with StarMed. For individuals who test positive, at home for COVID-19, there is a website you can visit to schedule a telehealth appointment. Through that appointment, they will assess you. If you qualify, they will send you the anti-viral pills for COVID-19, all at no cost to you. If you have insurance, they will bill your insurance. If you do not have insurance, they will not collect any money from anyone. They are hoping this will last through mid-March.

**B. MonkeyPox Update** (*Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1*)

- Since we last met, we had one new case. It has been worked, contacts had been found and all follow ups have been done.
- If you look at the map, that is online, it looks as though they've got us with three cases, according to the color of the map. The only thing I can think of, is where there was a college student who was at a university, but had a Columbus County address, but was living on campus. We have only had two cases here.

**C. Flu & Cholera Update** (*Benchmark 38, Activity 38.1*)

- Total number of flu deaths in Columbus County is none. Number for the state are as follows:
  - Total Deaths 60
  - Ages 5-17 years old = 1
  - Ages 25 and older = 59
- We are continuing to give flu vaccines. We cut back our order, due to Sanofi's rule on reimbursing what we haven't used. They will now reimburse you up to a percentage of what you've ordered. We have plenty of flu vaccine available.
- Cholera is the new topic. The CDC sent us this email on December 12<sup>th</sup> stating: The CDC has issued the attached Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity due to the unprecedented global increase of cholera infections, with large outbreaks currently occurring in Haiti, Malawi, and Syria. Currently, CDC considers 25 countries to have active cholera transmission. Thus far, 22

	<p>travelers with cholera have returned to the United States from Pakistan, Iraq, and Bangladesh. None are located in North Carolina.</p> <p><b>D. Staff Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We've had a Pediatric Nurse position open since April. I think we have us a nurse. She is fully trained, including Extended Role.</li> </ul> <p>Kim Smith added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She knows our electronic medical record system, because that is what she is using now, at another Health Department.</li> </ul> <p>Patti Nance continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I hope all works well. She will be here on January 17<sup>th</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>X. Health Education</b></p>	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following update:</p> <p><b>A. Community Health Improvement Plan Update</b> (Benchmark 22, Activity 22.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SOTCH is the State of the County Health Report. This is done in between the years of the Community Health Assessment. Jamika is participating in training how to manage the SOTCH report, which is now all electronic. She is also undergoing training on results based management. She is working with the Health Educators in the surrounding counties. Most of them are new Health Educators as well. They have formed a team, and are helping each other.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. "Making Proud Choices" Update</b> (Benchmark 38, Activity 39.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first semester ended with a success of students from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ South Columbus</li> <li>○ West Columbus</li> <li>○ East Columbus</li> <li>○ Whiteville High</li> </ul> </li> <li>• These students completed both the pre and post assessment surveys. She had a total of three students that opted out of the program. There was a total of 320 students, who completed the program this first semester.</li> <li>• We have re-applied for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Grant. I am glad to say that we have received that grant! We have also been given the opportunity to receive more money, for a total of \$100,000.00, each year for four years, starting next year. We have to provide \$33,000 to match it.</li> </ul>

	<p>Charlene and I have sat down, and come up with \$29,000. I have an appointment tomorrow with our new County Finance Director, to see if we can't find a way to come up with that \$4,000.</p>
<p><b>XI. Chairman's Forum</b></p>	<p>Pat Ray, Vice-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>• This is the time of year we do our evaluations on the Health Director. I'm pleased to say they were excellent. I'll just read a few of the comments:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kim you continue to do an awesome job for public health in Columbus County.</li> <li>○ Good job. I've enjoyed working with her. She keeps us well informed.</li> <li>○ Kim is wonderful, we are lucky to have her.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Your evaluation was excellent. The county manager also completed an assessment on you, although that is our responsibility as the Board of Health. There were five categories that you were scored on, based on a scale from 0 to 60. Kim scored in the very top category as "clearly outstanding," with a 56. I just wanted to share that with you.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Board of Health Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After completing and reviewing these two assessments, I thought to myself, how are we doing as Board Members. There is some guidance we can use to assess ourselves every year. I propose that we work on that starting in 2023. Kim has already started by getting in touch with the North Carolina Institute for Public Health, out of UNC.</li> </ul> <p>Kim Smith stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We had someone come before, to do in person training; I'm trying to do that now. I'm waiting on a representative to give me a call.</li> </ul> <p>Pat Ray continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will have the opportunity to be trained here. We will not have to go to Chapel Hill or Raleigh. We'll have that to look forward to in the New Year.</li> </ul> <p>Motion to accept the Health Director's Performance Review was made by Shane Cartrette, seconded Dr. Randy Kirby and carried by the board.</p>
<p><b>XII. 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>• Thank you for my evaluation.</li> <li>• The Annual Report for the last fiscal year (2021-</li> </ul>

2022), is as follows:

- Active TB cases, we have one.
- Latent TB cases 12
- The TB cases are the same as the previous year.
  - HIV cases have increased by five.
  - Syphilis cases were up by 23.
  - Hepatitis B went down by two.
  - Gonorrhea went down by 94.
  - We had no Rocky Mountain Spotted fever.
  - Chlamydia went down by 77 cases.
  - NGU went up by eight.
  - With salmonella, we went down by 14.
- We had one case of pertussis, one case of varicella, and one case of legionellosis. These are unusual for us to have around here. The last case of pertussis was around three years ago.
- In Vital Records:
  - Births have decreased by 51, for a total of 298.
  - Deaths have increased by 117, for a total of 831 (116 were COVID deaths).
- We average anywhere from double to triple deaths, than we do births.
- Environmental Health completed their inspections on all restaurants, for a total of 475 restaurant inspections completed.
- The number of home burials was five. This was three less than the previous year.
- We did provide services to 293 individuals, from 20 different counties, not including Columbus. The languages were Arabic, Polish, Spanish and English.
- I think you heard everything from Sandy on WIC. She told you about the \$1.2 million that the WIC program has brought into the county. That was an increase of \$108,616.70 from the previous year.
- In our lab, we processed an increase of 93 test.
- In Health Education, there were a few Health Fairs they attended. Mostly it was our “Making Proud Choices / Teen Pregnancy Prevention” program, was the largest event Health Education did; besides putting out all of the promotions for different events, and information, on our social media.
- Dr. Breanna Benbow (Dr. BB) and the dental staff have worked hard to upgrade to the digital dental x-rays. They’ve also taken a big interest in our electronic medical records. They were able to take

the new-to-us dental bus, out to the different schools. They also helped Daniel write the Duke Endowment Grant, which we did receive a total of \$400,000, for three years. We will be using it in updating our dental clinic, with new equipment. We are thrilled to have that grant.

- Under our Animal Bites, which we coordinate with Animal Control, we had the following:
  - Total Reported was 15 animal bites. We went down by 29.
- We had an issue where Animal Services was not reporting animal bites to us. Making that number of 15, more than likely closer to last year's number. We had five individuals who needed to receive rabies vaccination treatment.
- The total budget for 2021/2022 was \$5,220,209.00. This budget was increased a little over \$600,000 from the previous fiscal year, with a lot of that being COVID funds.
  - Total Revenues for Health Dept. Clinics: \$2,411,288.03
  - Total County Appropriation Health Dept. Clinics: \$1,819,911.85
  - Total Expenses for Health Dept. Clinics: \$4,231,200.84
- The issues we had during the year, included:
  - COVID-19
  - Chemours
  - Staff burnout
  - Hiring qualified staff
  - The pay for qualified staff
  - Medicaid Transformation – reimbursement from Medicaid
- Our concerns include the following:
  - COVID-19, getting all of our citizens vaccinated. Stopping the spread.
  - Educating our citizens on the health effects of the chemicals that Chemours has dumped into the Cape Fear River.
  - Recruiting the needed licensed staff.
  - Competitive pay for all staff.
  - Decreasing funds from State and Federal sources while requirements for funds are more rigorous.
  - Medicaid Transformation reimbursement (payment issues) for Public Health.

- I cannot guarantee that the patient counts, gender and race are all correct on your attached reports.
- If there are no questions on the Annual Update, I will move on to Chemours.

**B. Chemours Update** (*Benchmark 37, Activity 37.6*)

- I was thrilled at the turnout for the meeting that was held. We had around fifty citizens that came out, for the meeting in Riegelwood. There were at least three individuals who were not from Columbus County. The state team was wonderful. They had around eight to nine people. I had asked Kristie Priest, Jamika Lynch and Daniel Buck to come with me. The map that is on the bulletin board over there, shows wells throughout the county. This was current as of October.
- They were very thorough in stating that the water that comes out of the Cape Fear River, along with anything that is in that water, is contaminated. If you water your fruits and vegetables, with water from the Cape Fear River, then anything you consume, that has had contact with that water, has GenX and PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) in it. This includes animals as well.
- The state epidemiologist Dr. Zach Moore came. He was very descriptive in what diseases PFOS and GenX cause, and also stated that there is still a lot of research that needs to be conducted. I was thrilled to say that there were about 20 individuals that spoke up with questions and concerns.
- The Public Utilities Department is currently waiting on the piece of pipe they removed from the water system, in that area, which has fed the citizens down there with water out of the Cape Fear. They sent the pipe off to be tested. They found out that the wells that had tested positive for GenX and PFOS, were shallow wells. The deep wells, 100 feet or more, have not tested positive for these two chemicals.
- Kristie Priest, our Environmental Health Supervisor, leaned over to me and stated that there are a lot of people that have a shallow well. This is understandable because if you drill down, hit water, and the water is fine, why would I pay the well digger to go further, if I've got what I need at 50 feet, instead of 100 feet.
- The state said they would be glad to come back. We had our Sheriff's Deputies there. The state thanked

me for reaching out and getting them down here.

- The next thing I'm looking into is maybe someone who wants to do a grant, if we can find a funding source, to test blood in the individuals who live in that area. I'm sure of people who are interested in participating in this.

Shane Cartrette asked if there was another way to test, like a swab sample. Kim Smith replied the only way to test was through blood testing, and the test was very expensive. To get your water tested, for these chemicals, is expensive. When Environmental Health goes out and test water, that's one thing they don't test for is PFOS or GenX. One of the attendees stated, "well maybe you need to mandate that these chemicals are tested for". The cost for these test are around \$260 to \$300. Shane Cartrette added, you could probably have a well digger go down another 50 feet with that amount.

### **C. Grant Updates**

- Again we received the Duke Endowment Grant. It is \$400,000, for a total of three years.
- We've also received the Pregnancy Prevention Grant. We thought it was going to be \$75,000 for each year for four years. We have an opportunity to receive the \$100,000 grant.
- Other grants we have applied for, but have not heard back from are:
  - Family Planning
  - Bright Ideas (Preparedness)
- The Bright Ideas grant is where we have a tablet that is used primarily for language interpretation, including sign language. You can see your interpreter live, or for those who prefer to just hear them, this option is available as well. We've put in for this grant. It's just over \$9,000 to get four more of these tablets. If we have to open a shelter, then we could have these ready to deploy along with staff.
- The Region 8 ARPA Grant consist of Federal funds that our region of Health Department's received. They decided to do mini grants of \$50,000. I put in for this to be used towards sign on bonuses, for positions that are hard to get, along with some retention bonuses for the staff. We have yet to distribute this.
- Again thank you very much on my evaluation. I wish you all a very safe and Merry Christmas.

**Comments-Board of Health**

Pat Ray stated the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On behalf of the Board of Health, we want to thank you and the staff, for meeting challenges and persevering during challenging times. We do appreciate all of your efforts.</li></ul>
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**Next Meeting Date**

**February 22, 2023 at 6:00 pm**

**Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully submitted: Kimberly Smith Secretary 022223  
Signature Date