

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Jason Chappell, Chair  
Jake Dalton, Vice-Chairman  
Larry Chapman  
W. David Guice  
Teresa McCall

**COUNTY MANAGER**

Jaime Laughter  
828-884-3100  
Fax 828-884-3119

101 South Broad Street  
Brevard, NC 28712

## Transylvania County Board of Health

*To improve and protect the health of all people in Transylvania County*

**February 14, 2023 – Regular Meeting**  
**Community Services 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Large Meeting Room**  
**6:00 pm**

### MINUTES

#### Call to Order

#### I. Welcome and Announcements

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

<b>Members Present</b>	Dr. Ben Lamm, Dawn Kauffman, Teesie Stanton, W.S. Cozart, III, Teresa McCall
<b>Members Absent</b>	Sandra McNeill
<b>Staff Members Present</b>	Elaine Russell, Health Director / Secretary to the Board Laura Petit, Business Officer Jim Boyer, Environmental Health Alisa Corn, Administrative Services Supervisor Tara Rybka, Health Educator Sabrina Griffin, RN, BSN Laura Rinehart, WIC Program Director Heather Bradley RN, BSN Kathy Kelley, RN Haley Putnam, MPH, Preparedness/Accreditation Coord.
<b>Others Present</b>	

Quorum was present. Dr. Lamm called the meeting to order.

Teresa McCall was sworn in as a new member of Board of Health representing the Board of Commissioners.

## **II. Agenda Modifications**

None

## **III. Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Minutes – December 13, 2022.

There was approval of agenda and minutes from December 13, 2022 with a motion from Dr. Cozart and seconded by Ms. Kauffman with unanimous approval.

## **IV. Public Comment or Public Hearing**

None

## **IV. Administrative or Committee Reports**

### **A. Health Director's Report**

1. The national public health emergency for COVID will end May 11, 2023. The COVID vaccines will move into the open market. The agency is routinely asking our pharmaceutical sales reps for details on cost and dosage packaging. That information will be critical for how the agency plans to make the vaccine available moving forward, which must be considered in annual budget planning. The State is working to identify safety net mechanisms for adults and children that do not have insurance. The agency will also scale back the weekly COVID update to a monthly update, with the COVID update communication ending in May.
2. The NC Legislature has started their long session. The North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors (NCALHD) has chosen to put their full focus and effort on House Bill 108 (Local Communicable Disease Program Funds). The bill was introduced February 13, 2023, and seeks to support the long-standing duties of local health departments in the treatment and prevention of communicable disease. The bill seeks a total of \$25 million, recurring, for fiscal year 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.
3. During the February 13, 2023, BOC meeting, a 6.5% COLA (based on CPI) was approved for all full and part-time employees not in a probationary period. The BOC is also in the process of completing a pay plan study, which will be reviewed for recommendations in the months ahead. The BOC and County Manager have expressed their commitment to supporting employees, which is greatly appreciated.
4. The agency will provide the Annual Summer Camp Training on March 14, 2023. The intent of the annual training is to help summer camps connect with the variety of technical assistance and inspection guidance provided by the agency. Summer camps bring a broad national and international cohort of campers and camp staff to the community each year.

## **B. Annual Election of BOH Chair and Vice Chair**

Ms. Russell turned this portion of the meeting over to the Board of Health members to elect a Board Chairperson and Vice Chair.

A motion was made by Dr. Cozart and seconded by Ms. Kauffman, nominating Benn Lamm to remain as Chairman, with unanimous approval. Teresa McCall nominated Sandra McNeill for Vice Chair. Dr. Cozart nominated Teresa McCall for Vice Chair. There were no seconds or votes for Vice Chair. Dr. Lamm stated that the election of a Vice Chair would be postponed until the April meeting when additional members had been selected for the BOH.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. Health Space Update**

- Teague Campbell reviewed the HealthSpace contract in early January to determine exit strategies. After review, their recommendation was to issue a notice to the company advising the agency would not pursue renewal on the upcoming April 1, 2023, annual renewal date. The contract required a 60-day notice for non-renewal.
- The guidance from Teague Campbell was reviewed with Ms. Laughter and she was supportive of their recommendation. A letter advising of non-renewal was sent by Teague Campbell on January 12, 2023.
- The DPH has approved use of the one-time Communicable Disease funding (\$240,000) for alternate software, as the investment would contribute to infrastructure that supports communicable disease prevention.

There was discussion among the board as to how the department came to this decision and how the department plans to proceed with Environmental Health software. Ms. Russell noted that IT Director, Nathanael Carver, was instrumental in discerning how to move forward with the software. Environmental Health will renew the previously used software program while Nathanael Carver will be working with the building inspections department to achieve better communication with that department.

## **VII. New Business**

### **A. Bad Debt Write Off**

The Department of Public Health Bad Debt policy identifies the process for handling aging accounts with no payment activity greater than 180 days. Pursuant to this policy, it is my recommendation to write off bad debts totaling \$100.00 for the time period 01/01/2022 to 06/30/2022.

Account balances less than \$50 (Bad Debt): \$100.00  
Balances greater than \$50 (NC Debt Setoff): \$0.00

If this recommendation is approved by the Board of Health, it will be submitted to the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners for consideration and approval. If approved, eligible debts greater than \$50 will be forwarded to the North Carolina Tax Debt Setoff program.

A motion was made by Dr. Cozart to submit the bad debts to the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners for consideration and approval. The motion was seconded by Teresa McCall with unanimous approval.

### **B. NCDave Vital Records Update**

The NCALHD Letter is attached to the meeting minutes. (See Attachment 1)

Ms. Russell updated the board on the very serious problems that are occurring with the new NCDave vital records application. The NC Association of Local Health Directors have submitted the attached letter to Dr. Kansagra and Division of Public Health Leadership Team outlining the issues that have been identified with the application. Some of those being negatively affected include families with members having an out of county death, families of specific faiths that require burial within 24 to 48 hours of death, families with home burials.

### **C. Annual Communicable Disease Report 2022**

The CD Report 2022 is attached to the meeting minutes. (See Attachment 2)

Ms. Russell reviewed the report with the Board with input from Kathy Kelley, Communicable Disease nurse. She commended Kathy and the other nurses for the work they have done with communicable disease. Kathy added that C.D. has been busy and it is helpful to have good contacts and a good Infectious Disease physician at Mission Hospital. She noted that out of state cases prove to be more difficult to follow.

#### D. Epidemiology Update

The PowerPoint slide presentation for the BOH Epi Updates is attached to the meeting minutes. (See Attachment 3)

Ms. Russell spoke about the expiration of the national public health emergency on May 11, 2023. She highlighted the statistics on Covid-19, Mpox and the Ebola cases. Transylvania Public Health will begin generating Covid-19 data on a monthly basis starting with the February 15<sup>th</sup> update.

Dr. Cozart shared that action may be taken by March within the legislature on Medicaid Expansion. There was a presentation by the NAACP at the Jenkins Community Center in January. It is estimated that the expansion could affect approximately 6,000 residents in our county. He noted that Medicaid Expansion has been a goal of the Transylvania County NAACP for about 8 years.


#### VIII. Adjournment

Dr. Cozart made a motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Ms. Stanton. There was unanimous approval and the meeting concluded at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Elaine Russell  
Secretary, Board of Health

April 11, 2023  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Ben Lamm  
Chair, Board of Health

April 11, 2023  
Approved Date

Attachment 1. NCALHD Letter (Double-Click to see entire file.)



Dear Dr. Kansagra and Division of Public Health Leadership Team,

We are writing on behalf of the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors in regards to recent developments with the NC Office of Vital Records and the NC Database Application for Vital Events (NCDAVE). We are, as always, appreciative of the collaboration and partnership with Division staff and leadership and welcome further conversations on how we can continue to find improvements in the processes with this new system.

Thank you for your recent updates on efforts within these programs. We are encouraged to hear that a customer satisfaction survey is in the works. We offer our full support in ensuring strong response from Local Health Departments. We welcome further collaboration and conversation about the data that will be gleaned from these surveys, and on how we can work together to use this data to drive process improvements.

We are equally encouraged and appreciative of other mentioned efforts focused on records digitization and staffing support to expand the capabilities of Vital Records Staff.

While the aforementioned updates are encouraging, we did still think it important to share this letter, raising additional concerns and some requests for information and collaboration. Since implementation of the NCDAVE system within The Office of Vital Records, Deputy Registrars have faced significant challenges that have inhibited their ability to successfully serve their communities. We hosted a discussion with Local Health Department Vital Records staff on December 13, 2022. The purpose of the discussion was to identify current challenges faced by local staff. The common challenges identified by local staff can be categorized into five key areas:

1. Communications and Customer Service
2. Accountability and Performance System
3. Capabilities and Support Access to
4. Actionable Data
5. Equity Concerns

Included with page 2 of this letter we have included further detail on these issues.

Our association feels that it is imperative to improve upon these identified issues as quickly as possible. While we recognize progress in some areas will take time, we are committed to the partnership and offer our assistance in any way that we can.

Specifically, we stand ready to support the rollout of the upcoming survey to ensure that the above information is collected in a systematic and measurable manner. We are also more than happy to offer time in an upcoming NCALHD monthly in-person meeting to discuss these comments and the upcoming data more thoroughly. Lastly, should there be willingness to establish a small working group with local representation we would be glad to support the logistics of building local representation within that stakeholder group. We thank you, as always for your partnership and support as we strive for improvements to the Vital Records systems. We look forward to future collaborations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lillian Koontz".

Lillian Koontz, MPA, REHS  
President  
North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick Brown".

Patrick Brown, PharmD  
Executive Director  
North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors

220 N Person St. Suite 208  
Raleigh, NC 27601

919-828-6206



## Attachment 2. Annual Communicable Disease Report 2023 (Double-Click to see entire file.)



## 2022 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT

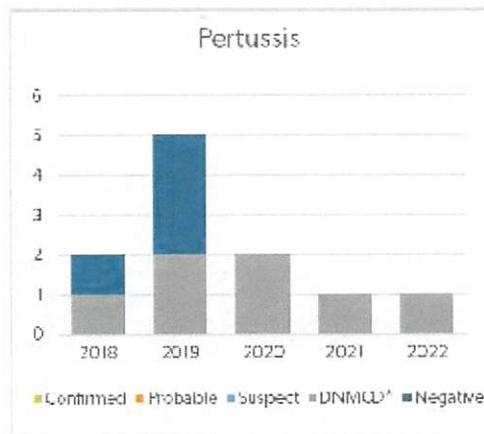
Each year, Transylvania Public Health produces an annual report of communicable diseases to be presented to the Board of Health and other interested community members. This report summarizes the communicable diseases investigated by and reported to the agency for calendar year 2022.

Some cases that were reported or investigated to local public health may not meet the criteria as defined in the Communicable Disease Manual issued by the NC Division of Public Health, based on guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Because those cases did not meet case definition, they are marked as DNMCD\* throughout this report.

### AIRBORNE DISEASE

Transylvania County had 1 case of Haemophilus influenza and 2 influenza deaths reported in 2022.

Public health employees investigated 1 case of pertussis, which did not meet case definition.



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Pertussis:</b>					
Confirmed	0	0	0	0	0
Probable	0	0	0	0	0
Suspect	0	0	0	0	0
DNMCD*	1	2	2	1	1
Tested Negative	1	3	0	0	0
<b>Haemophilus Influenza</b>	2	0	0	1	1
<b>Influenza Deaths:</b>					
Type A	3	0	0	0	2
Type B	0	2	0	0	0
Type A&B	0	0	0	0	0

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

Transylvania Public Health continued its response to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2022.

A total of 3,552 cases, 70 hospitalizations, and 20 deaths among Transylvania County residents were reported from January 1 to December 31, 2022.

Of these, 210 cases and 5 deaths were associated with 8 separate outbreaks at 5 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities and congregate living settings. Clusters of 5 or more cases were identified at 1 worksite, 1 college athletic team, 1 school athletic team, and 2 classrooms.

In early 2022, communicable disease staff continued work to track cases, conduct case investigations, perform contact tracing, keep an internal line list, and report to NCDHHS using the COVID-19 electronic surveillance system. The agency received assistance with contact tracing and case investigations through state CCTO contracts. Nurses continued to work with the county's 6 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities to prevent and mitigate outbreaks. School nurses and the agency's childcare consultant continued providing technical assistance and conducting case investigations and contact tracing for their populations. Staff also communicated guidance and provided technical assistance to the general public and to stakeholder groups including physicians, schools, churches, and businesses.

As the year progressed, the scale and scope of these efforts began to be reduced in response to lower COVID-19 case numbers and as normal health department services began to resume.

The agency continued offering COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters (along with flu vaccines) via in-office appointments. Transylvania Public Health provided a total of 1,281 COVID-19 vaccinations in 2022, including 187 first and second doses and 1,094 additional or booster doses.

**Attachment 3. Epidemiology Update (Double-Click to see entire file.)**



# Epi Updates

Presented to Transylvania County Board of Health

February 14, 2022

