

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
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 Jake Dalton, Vice-Chairman
 Emmett Casciato
 Larry Chapman
 Teresa McCall



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Transylvania County Board of Health

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

February 13, 2024 – Regular Meeting
Community Services Building First Floor Large Meeting Room
 6:00 pm

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Quorum was reached with eight members present.
 Dr. Lamm called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Members Present	Dr. Ben Lamm, Dawn Kauffman, PJ Boatwright, DVM, Christina Mahoney, Elizabeth Privette, Sandra McNeill, Teesie Stanton, Teresa McCall
Members Absent	Wiley Sim Cozart, III
Staff Members Present	Elaine Russell, Health Director / Secretary to the Board Laura Petit, Business Officer Jim Boyer, Environmental Health Supervisor Tara Rybka, Community Health Coordinator & PIO Sabrina Griffin, Clinical Planner/Evaluator Laura Rinehart, WIC Director Heather Bradley, Personal Health Director Alisa Corn, Administrative Services Supervisor Cheyanne Gilbert, Preparedness & Accreditation Coordinator Jermois Morris, CARE Coalition
Others Present	

Welcome, Announcements, and Public Comment/Public Hearing

II. Agenda Modifications

None.

III. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Agenda
- B. Minutes – December 12, 2023

The agenda and minutes from December 12, 2023, were approved with a motion from Teresa McCall and second by Sandra McNeill. Approval was unanimous.

IV. Administrative or Committee Reports

A. Annual Election of BOH Chair and Vice Chair

The Transylvania County Board of Health Operating Procedures call for the nomination and election of a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the calendar year. The current Chair is Dr. Lamm, and the Vice Chair is Commissioner McCall. The BOH Operating Procedures do not contain any language limiting the number of terms served in either position.

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. Boatwright for the current officers to remain in their positions; Ben Lamm to remain as Chair and Teresa McCall as Vice Chair. There was a second from Teresa McCall with unanimous approval.

B. Health Director's Report

1. The Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) grant, administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is nearing final draft for submission on February 21, 2024. If awarded, the grant will be for 5 years with an annual award of \$375,000, for a total grant award of \$1,875,000. It is a highly competitive grant with an estimated 45 awards made nationwide. The funding would complement some of the activities identified as priorities for the Opiate Settlement Funds. The Leverage Fund has been working with CARE Coalition staff to write the grant.
2. Laura Rinehart, WIC Director, announced her retirement effective March 28, 2024. The position of WIC Director was posted internally and there is an interested and qualified applicant among current Health Department staff. The agency will move quickly to minimize interruption in staffing coverage and support.
3. The agency was awarded a Delta Dental grant of \$2,800 to purchase supplies and materials to support The Healthy Smiles Project operated by Dental Hygienist Lori Clark.

V. Old Business

None

VI. 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 \$165.50 for the time period 01/01/2023 to 06/30/2023.

Account balances less than \$50 (Bad Debt): \$165.50

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.

Recommended Action: The BOH approves the Bad Debt write-off as presented and directs the Health Director to submit it to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

Sandra McNeill made a motion to approve the Bad Debt write-off to be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval. There was a second from Dr. Boatwright with unanimous approval.

B. Accreditation Site Visit

Transylvania Public Health received their accreditation site visit January 30, 2023 – February 1, 2023. The initial two days of the site visit entail a review of the evidence status in the accreditation portal. Evidence is either accepted, flagged for further review/clarification, or a physical item requiring in-person review. The agency had 47 items that required review/clarification or in-person review.

The agency ultimately had 3 activities deemed unmet:

14.3-Since the previous site visit, evidence of agency evaluation, with the BOH, of the need for additional rules/ordinances or amendment of current rules/ordinances

34.4-Since the previous site visit, evidence of implementation of rules/ordinance adoption or amendment OR since the previous site visit, BOH minutes indicating that the BOH has done an evaluation and feels no new or amended rules or ordinances are needed

36.3-Dated evidence of all BOH members' participation in ongoing training activities related to authorities and responsibilities of BOH since the previous site visit

Historically, correspondence from the BOH Chair regarding no identified need for local rules has sufficed. That was not accepted for 14.3 and 34.4 for this accreditation cycle. With regard to 36.3 the inclusion of Debra Bechtel's legal training PowerPoint in the minutes was not accepted, as there was no "proof" absent BOH members had opened and read the email containing the minutes and PowerPoint.

The agency passed accreditation and the status will be officially conferred at the May meeting of the NC Public Health Accreditation Board.

Ms. Russell also shared the unexpected discovery of an OSHA inspector by the lead site visitor of the accreditation team. It was initially thought the person might have been a First Amendment Auditor. Although, the visitor presented a letter and credentials to confirm her affiliation with OSHA. Ms. Russell immediately contacted the county's Operations Director, Chad Owenby and turned the situation over to Chad and Sheila Cozart, the county Human Resources Director. The OSHA representative was kind, and the inquiry was resolved by the next day without further distress. Any department employee who encounters a representative from OSHA should decline to answer any questions and direct them to a member of the leadership team.

C. FY24-25 Budget Preparations

The agency has started the FY24-25 budget preparation process. The initial draft of the budget will be due to County Finance end of February/start of March. The agency will receive the NC Division of Public Health Agreement Addendum for program funds by early March. The FY24-25 budget will be presented to the Board of Health at the April meeting. Points of consideration and research for the FY24-25 budget:

1. Analysis of potential fee increases for Environmental Health.
2. Analysis of potential fee increases for Clinical services.
3. Reclassification of a current position to an Assistant Health Director for succession planning purposes.
4. Reclassification of Environmental Health support position to align with scope of duties and like positions in the county pay plan.

D. Epidemiology Update

The PowerPoint slide presentation for the Epi Updates is attached to the meeting minutes. (See Attachment #1)

In discussion of measles as a disease of concern, Ms. Russell noted that neighboring Buncombe County is one of the most vaccine non-compliant counties in the state. The result could impact our county.

E. 2023 Communicable Disease Report

The PowerPoint slide presentation for the 2023 Communicable Disease Report is attached to the meeting minutes. (See Attachment #2)

Ms. Russell reviewed the report. She noted that the Accreditation Team complimented our CD reports.

VII. Public Comment or Public Hearing

None

VIII. Adjournment

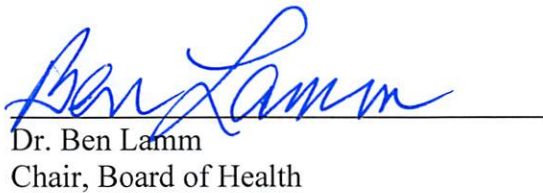
Dr. Boatwright made a motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Dr. Lamm. There was unanimous approval and the meeting concluded at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



J. Elaine Russell
Secretary, Board of Health

April 9, 2024
Date



Dr. Ben Lamm
Chair, Board of Health

April 9, 2024
Approved Date

Attachment 1. Epi Updates (Double-Click to see entire file.)



Epi Updates

Presented to Transylvania County Board of Health

February 14, 2024



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



2023 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT

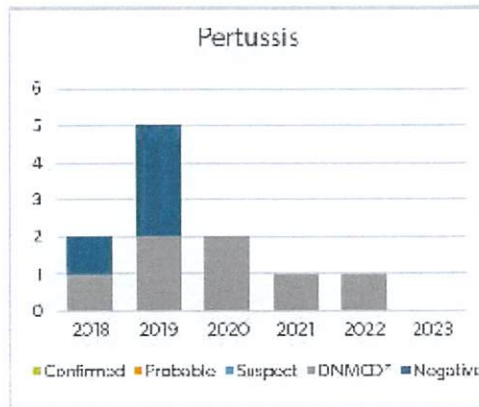
Each year, Transylvania Public Health produces an annual report of communicable diseases to be presented to the Board of Health and other interested community members. This report summarizes the nearly 350 cases of communicable diseases investigated by and reported to the agency for calendar year 2023.

Some cases that were reported to or investigated by local public health staff may not meet the case criteria defined in the Communicable Disease Manual issued by the NC Division of Public Health and 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

There were no cases of pertussis reported to public health for the first time in a decade.

Transylvania County had 2 cases of Haemophilus influenza and 2 influenza deaths reported in 2023.



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Pertussis:					
Confirmed	0	0	0	0	0
Probable	0	0	0	0	0
Suspect	0	0	0	0	0
DNMCD*	2	2	1	1	0
Tested Negative	3	0	0	0	0
Haemophilus influenza	0	0	1	1	2
Influenza Deaths:					
Type A	0	0	0	2	2
Type B	2	0	0	0	0
Type A&B	0	0	0	0	0

COVID-19 RESPONSE

With the end of the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration on May 11, 2023, Transylvania Public Health transitioned its COVID response into a routine part of public health activities.

Since the start of the pandemic, a total of 8,8621 cases, 278 hospitalizations, and 89 deaths have been reported among Transylvania County residents.

This includes 474 reported cases, 18 known hospitalizations, and 2 known deaths through May 2023. The end of the emergency declaration also ended mandatory reporting of COVID-19 cases to local public health by labs and healthcare providers. Therefore, TPH ended its regular reports of local data and trends. NCDHHS and CDC also changed their reporting of COVID information. Statewide surveillance of wastewater data has continued, and data on visits to emergency departments was incorporated into a dashboard with information on all respiratory illness (such as flu and RSV).

From early 2023 until these reporting changes occurred, 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 also worked with the county's 6 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities to prevent and mitigate outbreaks. Communications about local data transitioned to monthly updates and then ended in May 2023, while information remains available on symptoms, testing, treatment, and vaccine options.

The agency continued offering COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters via in-office appointments in early 2023 with minimal uptake. TPH did not offer the 2023 single-strain booster due to distribution and sourcing requirements. COVID-19 vaccination records were incorporated into North Carolina's regular vaccine registration system.