

**Madison County Board of Health Meeting  
Thursday, March 24, 2022, 6:00 pm**

**Members**

Dr. Robert Adams DDS, Chair  
Dr. Suzanne Sheldon, DVM  
Andrew Thomas, Public  
Crystal Webb, Public  
Larry Peek, Engineer  
Cheryl Conway, PhD, RN

Rachel Smith, RN and Vice Chair  
Matthew Wechtel, Commissioner  
Shannon Dowler, MD.  
Diana Rogers, RN, Public  
Hanna Hardin, Pharmacist  
Dr. Melissa Robinson MD. Ex Officio

**Absent**

Dr. Robert Adams DDS, Chair, Shannon Dowler, MD, Dianna Rogers, RN Public

**Regular Meeting**       **Special Meeting**

**AGENDA**

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

**The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair, Rachel Smith**

**II. Consent Agenda - Approval of**

Vice Chair, Smith

a. **Agenda**

Vice Chair Smith asked for motion to approve the agenda. Crystal Webb made a motion to approve the agenda and Andrew Thomas 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Board unanimously approved the motion.

b. **Board of Health Minutes, January 27, 2022**

Vice Chair Smith asked for motion to approve the January 27, 2022, minutes. Dr. Sheldon made a motion to approve the minutes and Larry Peek seconded the motion. The numbering on the minutes is out of order and will be corrected for the approved minutes. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

**III. Public Input Session**

Community

**There were no community members present.**

**IV. Case Study -**

Dr. Robinson

Dr. Robinson presented the following case to the Board members:

CASE STUDIES – Use of Resources; comparison of two Patients, one who uses community resources and one who does not. The first patient is a male in his late 50s, uninsured with malignant hypertension and hyperlipidemia

- Refuses all assistance programs
  - Sees various providers, only once a year (inadequate)
- The second patient is in her the mid-30s, uninsured with diabetes, history of blood clots.
- Sees primary care provider every 3 months and as needed at HSHP through MAP (state-sponsored sliding fee scale)
  - Pharmaceutical manufacturer patient assistance programs
  - Hot Springs Health program \$30 list
  - Publix free meds
  - YMCA Healthy Foods
  - Health Dept for preventive (mammo, pap)
  - Dr. Robinson also provided handouts for community resources.

**V. Announcements**

Larry Peek reported that Madison County Habitat for Humanity has merged with the Buncombe Greater Area Habitat for Humanity. This was done 12/21. Asheville area and Madison County will receive 5 million dollars to help with building homes in the county. They are looking for land around the county.

Dr. Sheldon discussed reversal drug for xylazine overdose and reviewed handouts.

**VI. New Business**

**Agreement Addendums**

Tammy discussed the Agreement Addendums (AA) with the BOH. We must review each AA, sign, and send back to the state. These are restricted funds, for example child health funds can only be used in the child health fund and for specific things. Some AAs can be used for salary and fringe, and we do utilize that as much as possible. Tammy brought the normal MCHD AAs to the meeting in hard copy format. The hard copies are signed and kept for review and audits. The AAs were available to for BOH members to review and discussion. Copies can be given to BOH members in electronic format or hardcopy. Tammy also brought copies of the new AAs that were presented to us as a result of COVID-19. Just as with the other AAs, COVID AAs have clearly outlined purposes and steps that can be approved to support the objective.

There are a couple groups that are discussing and have attempted to sue local Health Directors and Superintendents of schools concerning one of the AA's for COVID. The groups are declaring one of the AAs should not have been sent to the local health departments and they are taking legal actions over the use of the funds in public health. The charges are not clear but resemble embezzlement. Given the topic of embezzlement, Tammy wished to discuss the topic with the BOH. Tammy shared that the MCHD undergoes routine financial audits. Tammy discussed that it would be very hard for someone to embezzle money at the health department. Health Dept money flows through the County Finance Office. We only keep a small amount of petty cash at the MCHD and that is reconciled daily. Johnnie draws down money each month from the state electronic system, Aid to county database. This money is distributed to the county finance office. For us to get checks written, we submit documentation to the county finance office with line numbers from our accounts to debit for the charge.

Tammy provided an example of a current COVID/school AA that contains a lot of money. To date, we have only spent about \$7,000 of it. Several of the clearly approved things are not needed for Madison County. We have asked our state consultant if we could use the money to purchase first aid kits for each school, and AEDs for the schools, as these are clear needs for us. This request was denied; a phone discussion was established as a follow up, but it was still felt the request was outside the purpose of the designated funds. Crystal asked what happens if money is not all spent in the allotted time. The AA can be extended, however if we do not get an extension the funds would expire and be returned. A discussion followed concerning payment for the school nurses.

- 3 of our school RNs are funded through our state AA for \$150,000
- The school fully funds 1 RN position and all costs above the \$150,000 the state provides to us.
- This year we were able to hire a 5<sup>th</sup> school nurse with COVID funds.

Tammy reported that the MCHD Admin audit will be next week with Johnnie's team. Tammy stated that we are prepared for the audit. Tammy said she welcomes audits as a learning experience for departments and if there are better ways to do things we want to proceed in that direction.

### **Environmental Health Specialist**

Tammy discussed the struggles in hiring experienced Environmental Health Specialist. This challenge is not just in our county but statewide there is a significant shortage of authorized environmental health specialist. Tammy discussed the authorization process, which is expensive and time consuming. We currently have 2 positions vacant. Tammy has spoken to a previous county environmental health specialist, and she may be interested in coming back to work in the county. Our current salary is way below going rates. Tammy combined the salary of the 2 current vacancies to offer one position. Through lapsed salaries, Tammy will be able to make adjustments to our environmental health specialist salaries. At this time, we only have one full time EH Specialist. We are currently 3 months out with permits/inspections. We have Ken Castolle who retired from Buncombe County and is part time with MCHD. We have been fortunate enough to contract with two other retired EH specialist. We are still within our budget this year. There were several questions.

- Crystal-Next year we will still have the 2 positions? Yes, the budget adjustments will be made in May of this year from our lapsed salaries and the other adjustments are put in the upcoming budget. We cannot eliminate a full time EH specialist, with the economic development needs we are seeing.
- Rachel asked about the salary for the EH specialist and director.
- Andrew- how many people hiring own soil scientists? People are hiring soil scientists to avoid the delays
- Dr. Robinson asked if that will still leave a vacant position and yes, we will still have a vacant position.
- Matt- Discussed statewide shortage in Environmental Health and the pandemic impact on trainings

### **2022/2023 Budget Discussion**

Tammy stated that the budget process would be a little different this year. She and Johnnie prepared a couple of different budgets this year for the BOH to review. The BOH will need to vote on the budget they want Tammy to submit to the finance office and the County Commissioners. The first discussion and review will be on MCHD total revenue vs expenses, Johnnie will be pulling up several documents on the smartboard for review and for discussion. We can discuss as much and for as long as the BOH wants. Tammy stated she was happy to explain the process and details involved in the budget. The original template came from the county finance office. The later part of 2019, 2020, 2021 were abnormal years due to COVID. Tammy added 2018 into the history for a comparison. By adding in the 2018 budget info, it helps to form a more accurate reading of our Revenue and Expenses. The most expensive part of the budget is salaries for staff. Tammy's initial recommendation is 8% salary increase for all staff who makes less than 100,000 /yr. and a set amount for staff who make more than that. It was noted that inflation is around 9% so just to stay at the same rate as previous an adjustment is necessary.

Discussed what some of our RN's are currently making per hour. And what an 8% would be per hour.

- Crystal what is the bottom line- Why do the employees stay? Many of our employees are dedicated to their communities. They are treated as valued team members here. The employees do have some flexibility, some previous employees have used us as a training ground.
- Discussed traveling nurses and other health care providers are making about 150 per hour and up.
- Discussed the newest BSN - Discussed the state system of classification.
- Discussed very little difference between the Administrative Assistant, and RN hourly rate.
- Dr. Robinson asked if we considered a 10 % salary adjustment
- Tammy stated with the 8%, she did talk with the Superintendent to give the school nurses an 8 % increase.
- Looking at salaries and some restructuring that was needed:
  - Bradley worked for us as contract worker through a state contract. Bradley left the agency, and when we had an opening in the admin department, we were able to hire Bradley.
  - With restructuring Bradley will be moving into the Preparedness/Accreditation Coordinator position
  - We have gotten approval from the state to make Beth our permanent lab manager. She had been filling this role as interim and has done an outstanding job.

Larry Peek made a motion to adopt the Proposed budget. Crystal Webb second the motion.

Andrew asked, are benefits included. The health insurance is covered by the county. The next step will be the County for Commissioners to approve the budget.

#### **LHD Direct Payments/Lab Billing**

Robin discussed LHD Direct Payments/Lab Billing and gave a handout to the Board members to review. Under the Medicaid transformation cost settlements will no longer be happening so they had to come up with a different way of doing the cost settlement. Hence the LHD direct payment. We will get our federal share of the money but not state funding.

#### **COVID update**

Tammy reviewed handouts with the board concerning COVID. Dr. Robinson reported that Paxlovid has a lot of drug interactions, not used a lot, received late. Also reviewed mask guidance handout and discussion.

#### **Resolution Public Health Week**

Robin read the resolution. Tammy asked the board to adopt the resolution. Crystal Webb made a motion to adopt the resolution as written, Andrew Thomas 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Discussion about life expectancy decreased due to COVID. Matt suggested to reword that line and suggested to say, historically has increase life expectancy. Motion was made to restated as amended. Crystal Webb made a motion to accept the resolution as amended. Andrew Thomas 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the board. Vice Chair stated that if she needed to sign the motion Chair needs to be changed to Vice Chair. Vice Chair Smith will come by the Health Department to sign the resolution.

#### **Reoccurring Communicable Disease Funding AA546**

Tammy discussed that we have a new AA and funding for this AA will be 109,000 per year for two years. Tammy recommends that we use this money to revisit the expansion project at the health department. The board reviewed and discussed several proposed floor plans. We had the county architect draw up the plans previously and posted for contractors but did receive any interest. Tammy asked to move forward with this plan and to repost for a contractor again. We still have some money from an AA that will help to fund this project. Matt suggested to draw up plans for future expansions, as we need guidance and clear direction. Looking at the current plan, Dr. Sheldon asks to consider moving entrance to office to separate WIC and Infectious Disease. This seemed like a very good suggestion.

#### **2022/2023 Budget Approval**

Budget for 2022/20223 has been approved by the BOH, in previous agenda item

### **VII. Administrative Reports**

#### **a. Medical Director's Report**

##### **Covid:**

- Current local situation - good
- Hong Kong – special case due to low elderly vax rate
- Variant BA.2, so-called “Stealth” variant
- Vax

1. Primary series (usually 2 shots, 3 if immunocompromised) + booster
2. 59% of eligible and 89% of seniors (65) + finished primary series in Madison County
3. 31% of eligible and 59% of seniors are boosted

Dr. Robinson will be making transition over summer from HSHP to ETSU as rural/community medical director for the medical school. She plans on staying on ½ day for the health department as medical director. Tammy is working with CEO at the HSHP on the transition and contract. HSHP program contract to be revised to continue for sharps disposal and pharmacy oversight

**b. Health Director Report**

Staffing Report:

- Hired: restructured clinic, moved Bradley Hodges into Preparedness/Reaccreditation, Moving a staff into billing specialist position.
- Vacancies: EH Specialist, School COVID worker, Medical Provider for expansion of MAT clinic,
- Continued work on COVID AAs budget and report systems
- Recommendations for county employees
- DPI and DHS meetings
- Routine meetings with School
- Cannon Foundation, Dental Grant received Henry Schein working on installation plan now
- Applying for a grant to expand our MAT program (please see attachment)
- Continue to provide health education throughout the community
- Downstairs EH workspace, has insulation and sheet rock, ceiling work in progress. Still need electrical work.
- Renovations complete for the new EH space at the admin office
- Unplanned expenses (HVAC, equipment for dental)
- Medicaid Transformation
- Reaccreditation work occurring
- COVID-19 After-Action Reports
- Preparedness and EM working on radiation emergency scenarios State and local health departments have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of the populations they serve following a radiological event. In addition, jurisdictions may be asked to monitor, decontaminate, and shelter displaced populations that evacuate to their region from impacted areas in the event of a large-scale radiological event.

Please complete your BOH trainings, link to be resent reviewed handout. There was discussion about the handout on the opioid epidemic handout. The board members also discussed harm reduction. Tammy also discussed some issues with interpreter services

**c. Financial Reports**

Tammy discussed the financial handout. As of March 24, 2022, Expenditures are at 51.85% of our budget. Last year we were at 57.60% of our overall budget.

We are at 68.60 % of our revenue compared to 76.68% last year. These numbers are skewed due to some new state agreement addendums that have come in, but we have not been able to draw on them.

Due to COVID and the significant increase in clinic needs we seen substantial growth in the revenue that corresponds with this. Examples, Medicaid immunizations were expected to generate \$8,500 instead as of March 24, 2022, we have collected \$42,381. Communicable Disease insurance was expected to generate \$15,000 and as of today we have collected \$130,516. For communicable disease self-pay we had anticipated generating \$7,500 and as of today have collected \$16,121. For adult health Medicaid we were expecting \$8,000 and have now collected \$15,121.

Overall, financially the health department is well ahead of projections for this year’s budget.

**VIII. Other Business**

**X. Adjournment**

Vice Chair Smith asked for motion to be made to adjourn, Crystal Webb made a motion to adjourn, Andrew Thomas second the motion. The board voted unanimously to adjourn.

**Next Meeting: May 26, 2022**