

**Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health**  
Minutes of September 11, 2018 regular meeting

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on September 11, 2018 at noon in the City/County Building, City Council Chambers, Wheeling West Virginia.

Board members present were Terry Sterling, Tom Tuttle and Chad Thalman. Board Chairman John Holloway, MD was not present and Chad Thalman conducted the meeting as acting Chair. Staff present included Dr. William Mercer, Health Officer/Secretary and Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department (WOCHD or department). Others present were the media and a representative from the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, Chuck McConnell.

The meeting was called to order. Minutes from the July 10, 2018 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting in the Board members meeting packet. Minutes were approved.

Board of Health Chairman Dr. John Holloway did not have a report.

Dr. Mercer gave the Health Officer's Report. Dr. Mercer discussed recent updates and activities with Project HOPE, the department's on going Snoopy/Joe Too Cool To Smoke Program and a new program involving the health department, the Joe Too Cool To Smoke Program and the Wheeling Nailers. Dr. Mercer will also be attending a conference in Atlanta GA concerning influenza vaccinations and long term care facilities.

The administrator's report was given by Howard Gamble. The health department and other county health departments in WV have been monitoring a recent decision by the WV Personnel Board concerning a sanitarian pay increase to Jefferson County Health Department. Local health departments were notified in late August that the State Personnel Board rolled back a sanitarian salary increase, except in Jefferson County. Division of Personnel employees will continue to study the sanitarian salary disparity. Board members took this action at an Aug. 31 special meeting. Deputy Personnel Division Director Wendy Elswick explained Jefferson County Health Department officials originally requested a variance to increase the annual starting salary of a Sanitarian 1 to \$40,000. The Personnel Board bumped up the salary for all state-system sanitarians. Local health departments and the Department of Health and Human Resources, principal employers of state sanitarians, protested their budgets would not accommodate the salary increases. After reviewing the proposal, Elswick said DOP found the salary increase would push many just-hired sanitarians ahead of their supervisors as well as making beginning sanitarian pay higher than equally-difficult-to-recruit registered nurses.

The department was notified around July 10th that a cluster of HIV cases had been detected in Ohio County. Currently the cases of newly diagnosed HIV cases in Ohio County continues to grow. Not considered an outbreak. Case counts for past years are 2015 - 2, 2016 - 3, 2017 - 0, 2018 - to date 6 with cases linked to State of Ohio. Other notable issues are the 2015 HIV outbreak in Scott County Indiana and the 2016 outbreak in southern West

Virginia. There are some links between the cases in Ohio County, including IV drug use and prostitution. The department has hosted one special testing clinic and has another "offsite" clinic scheduled for Thursday, September 27, 2018 from 2-7pm at Wheeling Clinic 1st floor. We are still holding our needle exchange and have increased awareness among our partners in the area.

#### Threat Preparedness

After a meeting with the Federal MRC Program Office the MRC units from Wetzel-Tyler, Marshall, Ohio, Brooke, and Hancock have decided to merge into one unit under the name of The Northern Panhandle MRC Unit. This MRC unit will be based out of Ohio County and the Unit Coordinator will be Wayland Harris and the assistant Coordinator will be Karen Cain. A steering committee will also be formed with one representative from each county that will meet several times a year. This decision was made due to reductions in volunteer numbers, staffing at other local health departments, and the close geographical area of the Northern Panhandle of WV.

#### WIC

The department was notified by the State Health Department that we have been recommended to continue to act as the area's WIC Program agency for FY 19. Total grant award is anticipated to be \$768,379.00.

There was no Unfinished Business for the Board.

In New Business, prior to the Board of Health meeting, members were presented with the July and August financials including Bills, Payroll, Aged Receivables and Year to Date Financials. The Board reviewed and approved the financial report.

The Board did not go into executive session. The Board set the next regular meeting for November 13, 2018 at 1:00pm. The Board adjourned.

#### **SUBMITTED BY**

William C. Mercer, MD, Health Officer  
November 13, 2018

#### **APPROVED BY**

Chad Thalman, Board Chairman Pro Temp  
November 13, 2018