

## **Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health**

### **Minutes of September 12, 2023, regular meeting**

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on September 12, 2023, at 12:00pm in the City/County Building, Ohio County Commission office, Wheeling West Virginia.

Board members present were Dr. John Holloway, Elisabeth Slater, Tom Tuttle, Dr. Mathew Wood, Chad Thalman and Erik Harris. Staff present included Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department and County Health Officer Dr. William S. Przybysz.

The meeting was called to order by Board of Health Chairman Dr. John Holloway. Minutes of the July 11, 2023, Board of Health meeting was distributed to members prior to the meeting. Minutes were approved.

A group from Dr. Lee Jones Miracles Happen Center was present and presented to the board regarding smoking at the facility. Several documents were passed out during the meeting from this facility regarding the group's presentation.

Dr. Przybysz gave a Health Officer's report. Dr. Przybysz updated the board on the activities of Project HOPE, which continues to conduct weekly rounds and services. He also gave a short update on disease occurrences in the county.

The administrator gave a report on department programs and services.

#### **COVID Updates**

1. Policies and procedures regarding COVID in WV might become a little confusing as cases begin to increase and new vaccines roll out.
2. The department follows state and CDC guidelines. An example is the WVDE/WVBPH guidelines for schools.
3. New Outbreak guidance has also been provided to public health departments in WV.
4. Vaccines may also become problematic in the coming weeks.

#### **Office Updates**

Two office/facilities updates, several months ago the department lost the Hancock County WIC office due to an ice storm and flooding then the building was sold for a future development. The department was able to secure office space in the new Hancock County Health Department in New Cumberland. Office hours will start this month and future office schedules will be determined based on use. The WOCHD main office had water damage to the back-office area. The rug and wall will be repaired/replaced by the county.

#### **Legal Updates**

- Three legal issues were reviewed by the Board that the health department has been involved in.
- The board was provided with an update on a lawsuit regarding the state immunization rules. The department (through the WVALHD) submitted an amicus brief with other state organizations

and programs. The Judge (federal) ruled in favor of the State Health Officer/Commissioner of the Bureau of Public Health, but only insofar as he decided that, in light of the state's new religious freedom act, the state court is the appropriate place to decide this issue. As such, he granted the State Health Officer's motion for summary judgment and dismissed the Plaintiffs' case without prejudice. This is consistent with one of the State Health Officer's arguments for denying the relief requested by the Plaintiffs. The Plaintiffs filed an appeal to the United States Court of Appeals within the fourth circuit.

### **Needle Testing & Harm Reduction**

- Two flyers for upcoming needle exchange and harm reduction programs were provided in Board member's packets. The Department is participating in both of these programs.
- The August 22, 2023, needle testing report was also provided. Of concern is the number of syringes containing "fentanyl/analogs", "any opioid", "cocaine/metabolite", "Xylazine" and "other/adulterant" were higher compared to the cumulative percentage of all syringes tested from your center so far. During this period, all syringes tested from the latest batch contained five or more substances, which is higher compared to the cumulative percentage of all syringes tested from your center so far.
- An update was given on the 9/12/23 report. The report identified that the number of syringes containing "fentanyl/analogs", "any opioid", "methamphetamine", and "cocaine/metabolite" were higher compared to the cumulative percentage of all syringes tested from the WOCHD location so far.

### **Standards for Local Boards of Health**

New "Standards for Local Boards of Health" were distributed to Board members. These were updated in 2023. The department is planning to have a staff meeting this month to review and see where the department needs to focus, in order to meet the standards.

### **Program Plan**

The department was asked to develop a program plan that will be submitted, this year, to the WV Association of Local Health Departments. A signature page needs to be signed by the Board Chair and Health Office for submission.

### **Computers**

New computers have been installed at the health department office. The department anticipates the WVOT to move the server to a storage room location the weekend of September 22, 2023.

### **Financial**

- Staff members have raised interest in having a deferred compensation program. The department had a program, but those that were members retired. The department contacted the WV State Treasurer's Office regarding a program through that agency called WV Retirement Plus Deferred Compensation Plan. A Board resolution is needed to join this program. The Board approved the resolution.

In New Business, the Board was presented with July and August 2023 financials. The financial review included a year-to-date General Ledger Trial Balance and account payables and payroll reports. The report was approved by the Board.

With no other business before the Board, the Board moved for adjournment. The next regular Board of Health meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2023.

**SUBMITTED BY**

William S. Przybysz, MD, Health Officer  
November 14, 2023

**APPROVED BY**

John D Holloway, MD, Board Chairman  
November 14, 2023