

Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health

Minutes of July 21, 2015 regular meeting

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on July 21, 2015 in the Ohio County Commission room in the City/County Building.

Board members present were Dr. John Holloway, Tom Tuttle, Wilkes Kinney, Cheryl Wonderly and Michael Caruso. Staff present included Dr. William Mercer, Health Officer/Secretary and Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department (WOCHD or department), and several members of the public were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order. The minutes from the May 12, 2015 (Regular Board of Health meeting) were mailed to members prior to the meeting for review. Minutes were reviewed and accepted by the Board.

Board Chairman, Dr. Holloway gave a brief update on the status of the Clean Indoor Air Sub Committee. A meeting will be held at 4:00pm on July 21st with members of Wheeling City Council. The Chairman also briefly discussed the material that was distributed earlier to Board members on clean indoor air, regulations and other information.

Wheeling resident Mary Beth Emmerth spoke during the public comment period of the meeting concerning the Clean Indoor Air Regulation. Dr. Holloway thanked her for her presentation.

Dr. Mercer gave his Health Officer's report. Dr. Mercer updated the Board on his community duties that he performs as Health Officer. These include participation with Wheeling Health Right, TB Association of Ohio County, Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless, Ohio County Substance Abuse Coalition, Ohio County Schools, Smoke-Free Casino Task Force, WOCHD Travel Clinic, WJU, WLU, Joe Too To Smoke Campaign and Ohio Valley Trail Partners. This discuss was done so that Board members understood the groups and organizations the health officer is involved with in the area.

Howard Gamble presented the administrators report. The Board was presented prior to the meeting with a description of a proposed Needle Exchange Program with the WOCHD. The Administrator presented this program to the Board of Health for consideration. A draft Needle Exchange Regulation was presented to the Board for consideration. The regulation would allow and regulate the needle exchange.

Public health needle exchanges have been around for some time across the country. Currently these programs have gained national attention due to the HIV outbreak in southern Indiana. Unofficially the idea of distributing sterile syringes to the public was done in 1986 in the Boston, Mass area. In 1988 needle exchange programs were started in Tacoma Washington, San Francisco and New York. Programs currently operate in 32 states, with over 200 programs. Regionally, programs operate in Pittsburgh (Prevention Point Pittsburgh) and in three locations

in Ohio (Portsmouth, Cincinnati and Cleveland). In West Virginia two county health departments are in the planning stages, Ohio and Cabell.

The Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department's Needle Exchange Program will provide a way for those individuals who are an injecting drug user (IDUs) who continue to inject to safely dispose of used syringes and to obtain sterile syringes at no cost. The program addresses two issues with our growing intravenous drug problem.

- Assist in stopping the spread of infectious disease by getting dirty needles off the street
- Create an opportunity for health care workers to connect with addicts.

Overall goal of the program is to reduce and/or prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis through the use of dirty syringes. The Needle Exchange will offer a 1 for 1 exchange of syringes at a specific location.

The Board took the program and proposed regulation under advisement and will address it during the next monthly Board meeting.

In New Business the Board was presented, prior to the meeting, the May and June bills and payroll, Aged Receivables and Year to Date financials. The administrator stressed the concern of the outstanding receivables for WIC payments. The report was approved.

The Board did not go into executive session. The Board set the next regular meeting for September 15, 2015. The Board adjourned.

SUBMITTED BY

William C. Mercer, MD, Health Officer
September 15, 2015

APPROVED BY

John Holloway, MD, Board Chairman
September 15, 2015