

Columbus County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting Special Meeting

October 23, 2024 6:00 P.M.

Columbus County Health Department, 304 Jefferson Street, Whiteville NC

Members Present	Pat Ray Dr. Randy Kirby Shane Cartrette Scott Floyd Dr. Brent Lawson Dr. Nicole Martin Dr. Amy Sessions
Members Absent	Drew Cox, Patty Hobbs, Frankye Boone-Newkirk, Dr. Christy Perdue
Staff Members Present	Kimberly L. Smith, Yvonne Armstrong, Daniel Buck, Charlene Bush, Jamika Lynch
Guests	Nicole Hopkins

Quorum was present.

I. Call to Order

Pat Ray called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. Welcome/Invocation

Pat Ray welcomed everyone to the meeting. Invocation was given by Pat Ray.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion to accept the agenda, as presented, was made by Dr. Amy Sessions, seconded by Shane Cartrette and carried by the board.

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes, as presented, was made by Dr. Randy Kirby seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, and carried by the board.

<p>VI. Opioid Task Force Update</p>	<p>Nicole Hopkins, LCMHC, gave the following update: (Benchmark 41, Activity 41.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A little bit of what we have had going on, since I was last here in July, our October numbers are still rolling in. Our most popular times for folks to call in is between 12pm to 6pm. Many of the calls coming in are consistent. • I am excited about our new marketing agenda that we have. This will help to promote items on Facebook and on billboards. We have a new look and we are excited to get those things out and rolling. • The number of calls resulting in referrals to the Healing Place were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ July = 4 ○ August = 4 ○ September = 2 • There is some activity. We are keeping the lines of communication open with the Healing Place. This way we know their admission process, since things are constantly evolving and changing. If we have an individual with a history of seizures, they have other facilities to help with that. • Substance use reported by callers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alcohol = 2 ○ Cocaine = 4 ○ Crack Cocaine = 1 ○ Fentanyl = 2 ○ Marijuana = 2 ○ Opioids = 2 • It's kind of scattered with cocaine being the biggest substance use reported. • When we look at the summary classification of substances used, we have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stimulants = 7 ○ Opiates and Opioids = 5 ○ Hallucinogens = 3 • We had a 30-year-old heroin overdose in Nakina. What that said to me is that we need to do more marketing throughout the communities, especially through the churches. If anyone has the ear of the Sheriff and if there is any way, I can get in with their staff, I would really love to do that. I think it is a liability issue, I am willing to take that chance, I'm not afraid. We need to hit the streets and meet
--	--

them in their places. Especially with our young people. Mr. Johnny Edge has really brought a lot to our awareness, from a community standpoint and in the school systems. We are working diligently with them.

- Whiteville has the most callers to the hotline; second being Tabor City, next Chadbourn and last is Cerro Gordo.
- We are still seeing an increase in the homeless population. I had a caller last week. The individual was at the hospital; their mother lived in Bladen County and they had just been dropped off here. They were seeking treatment. Unfortunately, they were discharged before we could get them anywhere, and the Healing Place could not accept them, due to their history of seizures. This individual did not want to go anywhere else but Wilmington. We do lose some that way. This is just part of the business. Since doing this job, we consistently see this.
- Transportation has not been a problem. We are thankful for the Healing Place. We rely on them heavily to transport people. We have Healing Heart to transport people as well; they fill in those gaps for us. They have been extremely good. Even if I call on the weekends or holidays. They are educated in what to do and how to respond if there is an adverse reaction.
- My activity report shows in July we had our Settlement Committee meeting. I attended a meeting with Mr. Madden, Judge Ussery and Cynthia Whiteford regarding our plans for drug court. Cynthia is trying to write grants that will fund such a venture, since it is complex. We have talked with some folks in Wake County; the program they have is wonderful. In Wake County I went to a training seminar in May, at Central University, I was able to speak with the Judge who is over the drug court in Wake County. She invited me to her court to get a first-hand look at how they carry out the process. She stated she wants to make it a comfortable setting, where it does not seem like we are judging them, but looking at resources and ways to meet their needs and get them the help they need. This is kind of the spirit of what drug court is in Wake County. This is kind of what Judge Ussery

and others want to tap into; we just need to get the pieces in place.

- I have provided marketing to Coastal Horizons regarding the referral hotline. I have met with Tessa and Megan with the Healing Place. Since things had changed, we wanted to make sure we understood the process.
- We were looking for an alternate site for AA (Alcoholics Anonymous). Thankfully, we still have our AA site here. We were at first afraid that might have fell through, but it did not. The meetings are held at the old Juvenile Justice offices.
- I've provided marketing with Columbus County jail. Went out and met with the nurse and Tony Rowland. They were very receptive. They're doing a lot of things to improve the jail. They're able to reach out to more of the local places. The Opioid Referral line, we are required to follow certain licensure guidelines, to refer people too, in order to spend that money. Through the referral line, we are not able to refer people as frequently as we like, to some of the local places.
- In August, we did a meeting with the Healing Place that included Kim (Smith), Mr. Madden and myself. I attended a Coastal Horizon integrated council meeting. Marketed the Opioid Referral Hotline to Dr. Chambers, over at the hospital. He has been a big supporter of what we are trying to do. I've actually met with him several times; he's very receptive. Training to the Trillium staff. This was a conference call with about 25 people in attendance.
- In September attended an inter-governmental opioid meeting on the fourth floor at County Administration. Attended the Columbus County Collaborative meeting that Trillium hosts. This was a very informative meeting. Substance Use Trans Educational Seminar I attended.
- The most wonderful thing I did was go to the Healing Place for a celebration night. This was for those who had made their way through the whole program, and graduated. They were giving their testimonies. It was extremely wonderful because I did not realize how spiritual things were there. That same spirit and sentiment I feel here, is at the Healing Place. One of our first callers actually

	<p>graduated and spoke. This individual spoke about how Wilmington and the Healing Place was their safe place, they did not want to relocate back to Columbus County. It was so beautiful to see everything in full completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to always be mindful of how we approach the stigma behind individuals with substance abuse disorder. I would love to come to your organizations and talk to your staff. We have a budget now where we can host a breakfast or lunch while we host an education session.
<p>VII. Financial Update</p>	<p>Charlene Bush, Budget Director stated the following:</p> <p>A. Financial Statement July & August Annual <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6) (Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your packet, you received July and August Financial Report. Are there any questions? • Next, you will see the Year to Date review. We are at 12% of total revenue received. We have used 12% of what was budgeted of local appropriations, as well as our expenditures being at 12%. <p>Motion to accept Financial Statement for July and August was made by Dr. Randy Kirby, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.</p> <p>B. Patient Counts July & August <i>(Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can see that we have an increase in patients, in our Dental clinic; since we have a Dentist now. Getting back into the school, we are seeing an increase of parents who are making sure to get their kids in here to get their mandatory vaccinations so they do not get kicked out for not having them. <p>C. Service Cost Update <i>(Benchmark 39, Activity 39.2) (Benchmark 33, Activity 33.6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hep B was \$90 and it has decreased to \$75. • We have Pfizer vaccines for COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For 6 months to 4 years is \$80 ○ For 5 years old to 11 years old is \$98 ○ For 12 years old and up is \$156 <p>Dr. Nicole Martin stated that many places were not carrying the COVID-19 vaccine for children, and she was glad to know that we were. You would think you would hear of more parents taking advantage of that.</p> <p>Kim Smith stated that we have not had that many takers. It could be due to there now being a new variant.</p> <p>Charlene Bush asked if there were any other questions.</p>
<p>VIII. Health Education</p>	<p>Jamika Lynch, Health Educator stated the following:</p>

	<p>A. Community Health Improvement Plan (<i>Benchmark 38, Activity 38.2</i>)</p> <p>Jamika Lynch provided a Power Point Presentation of the snapshot of our CHIP (Community Health Improvement Plan). A copy of this presentation was presented at all Board of Health members seats, upon arrival.</p> <p>Jamika mentioned the Breathe Easy Tobacco and Vaping Cessation program, that the school systems (Columbus County and Whiteville City) have asked to implement to their students. Jamika added that Ernest Watts, our Region 8 Tobacco Cessation advisor has helped us find the curriculum that is evidence based. Jamika added that she has already been trained on the curriculum.</p> <p>Kim Smith reiterated that the schools are the ones that requested this training.</p> <p>Kim Smith added that the last time we met, we did not vote on accepting the Community Health Assessment (CHA). Motion to accept the Community Health Assessment (CHA) was made by Shane Cartrette, seconded by Dr. Amy Sessions, carried by the board.</p> <p>Motion to accept the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was made by Dr. Amy Sessions, seconded by Dr. Nicole Martin, carried by the board.</p>
<p>IX. Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Daniel Buck, QA Specialist I, gave the following updates:</p> <p>A. Updated Policies (<i>Benchmark 15, Activity 15.2</i>)</p> <p>Daniel Buck submitted a list of Policy Updates for the Health Department from April 16, 2024 to October 6, 2024.</p> <p>Kim Smith stated if there is a particular policy you would like to review, please let us know we can print you a copy or email it to you.</p> <p>Kim Smith asked Daniel Buck to give an update on Accreditation.</p> <p>Daniel Buck stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've been pretty much working around the clock for the past couple of weeks. Overall, we're making that last push. We need to be past the first phase by the end of next week, and continue to work. <p>Kim Smith stated that the date for the site visit is March 5th, 2025. They want to have at least three Board of Health members to speak with them. Whoever volunteers, they would like you to be here for that interview between 12:30 pm and 1 pm.</p> <p>The following Board of Health Members volunteered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pat Ray • Dr. Nicole Martin

<p>X. Chairman's Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Amy Sessions <p>Pat Ray, Chairman gave the following update:</p> <p>A. Health Director's Evaluation (<i>Benchmark 37, Activity 37.5</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, I wanted to ask if anyone was able to catch this wonderful article in the News Reporters latest edition of Flourish. Dr. Kirby you are in here too! Nicole Hopkins daughter, Isabella, did this article on Kim. This is a delightful overview. Congratulations on this wonderful highlight of an outstanding job. This is a great tribute to Kim and to Public Health. I am going to send this to the Nursing Board as well. • The other thing is I believe everyone received the Health Director's Performance Review. I am going to set a date of November 15th, to get these back in. You can mail it back in, drop it off here to Yvonne (Armstrong), or if you see me, you can give it to me.
<p>XI. Director's Forum</p>	<p>Kim Smith, Health Director gave the following updates:</p> <p>A. Limiting Vape Shops (<i>Benchmark 9, Activity 9.1</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Couple of meetings ago, we had talked about vaping. Ernest Watts our Regional Tobacco Cessation Coordinator has been helping me reach out to Whiteville, regarding their vape shops. We are helping Whiteville write their plans on vape shops here in town. We cannot do anything about the ones that are already established, but we can put limits on future ones being close to schools, hospitals, or daycares. With that, we were able to get that in to the zoning ordinance for Whiteville City. • We have a meeting with the Tabor City Planning Board next Tuesday, October 29th. Then we will be on their agenda for their Town Council meeting, a couple of weeks after that. Ernest and I are currently trying to get something together for the town of Chadbourn. Our next stop will probably be Lake Waccamaw. • Robert Lewis, Whiteville City Planner said that since the day Ernest and I sat down with him, to work on this, he had been approached by two vape shops to try and set up business. • This is supposed to be on the November 4th, County Commissioners meeting. They are going to try and

do something out in the county as well. I think what we are trying to do in the cities, and what the county wants to do, we might be able to hold off a lot of these vape shops. I understand from Ernest, that some commissioners and the County Manager from Bladen County is going to come over to the commissioners meeting on November 4th. This is a work in progress; but I hope to have all of the towns on board.

- It is interesting to hear Ernest talk, and he came and spoke here a few years back, but it has gotten worse.
- Josh Ward, who is the new town manager for Tabor City, has been very easy to work with. They had an issue a couple of years ago with a vape shop down in Tabor City. Some kids had got something from a vape shop down that way, and they ended up in the hospital. I think it is well worth the effort to speak with the Planning Board and then go back to speak with the Town Council. This is an eye opener for everyone.

B. Chemours Update (*Benchmark 9, Activity 9.1*)

- The great state of North Carolina, New Jersey and New Mexico have petitioned the EPA for several of the PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), to be claimed as hazardous air pollutants. Secretary Biser said to add these forever chemicals to the list of regulated pollutants, addresses a gap in the regulatory authority. The EPA is listening. I just received in my email Monday that they will be holding some public hearings on this. The closest one to us will be in Wilmington on December 2nd, at the Union Station building at Cape Fear Community College. The room will be packed. Whenever I have gone down with anything regarding Chemours, PFAS or GenX, people from New Hanover county show up. I am hoping I will be able to make it, and listen. I hope that this will be done quickly and taken care of.
- Before I move, on to Staff Update, let me say that the Association of North Carolina Boards of Health will have another Zoom meeting on November 18th. The topic of this one is “Public Health’s Preparedness Responsibilities During Manmade or Natural Emergency’s”. It will be from 7pm to 8pm in the evening. When they send out another email

to register for this, I will send this out to everyone.

- We have five individuals here at the Health Department, who are certified to check car seats. On November 8th from 9am to 12pm, we will hold a car seat check event here. Please hang this flyer up in your offices. Encourage individuals to come out and get their car seats checked. Each technician needs to have five seat checks, for the five different car seat styles; so 25 car seats per person. We have sent the flyer out to DSS to share with their clients as well. We have coordinated with the crowd out of Raleigh, and they are bringing a van full of dummies and car seats, so if we do not have enough people, they can practice on the dummies.

C. Staff Update (*Benchmark 37, Activity 37.6*)

- As far as staff update, we have eight postings. Unfortunately, only one is due to retirement. People are leaving because of money; they are able to receive more money in neighboring counties. Tonight was Jamika's last night. She is going to New Hanover for more money, and I can't blame her. I have open here:
 - Processing Assistant III – Billing
 - Public Health Educator II
 - Nutritionist I
 - Nutritionist II
 - Public Health Nurse Director
 - Dental Assistant
 - Medical Lab Technician
- We have not started the hiring process for the lab position yet, that is sort of on the back burner for a little while. Right now we are contracting with Nutrition Plus for the Nutritionist I & II positions, but I'd much rather have a person here. Right now, we gather their weight and finger sticks, and then call Nutrition Plus to conduct their consult with the Nutritionist. We pay them \$50 an hour. With that:

Kim Smith started reading her letter of intent to retire.

Pat Ray finished reading the letter for her.

Board of Health members thanked Kim Smith for all of her diligence and hard work over the course of her career as Health Director, and commended her on her accolades and accomplishments.

Pat Ray stated the following:

- This means that we as a board have a job to do. We will not be able to replace Kim, but we have the

responsibility of hiring a new Health Director. As your chair, I will be on the committee and we need at least two other people to work, and be really focused and committed to this. How many want to volunteer?

Dr. Randy Kirby volunteered.

Dr. Nicole Martin asked what the process for hiring a new Health Director was.

Pat Ray responded:

- There are individuals at the state level that we can contact for assistance.
- We will meet and talk about our approaches and then we will start looking for possibilities.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- What you need to do is, in your handbook, there is a copy of the Health Director's job description. Look that over and see if there is anything in there, you would like to change. Then the county, the public health association and a couple of other places will post the open position. Then you will provide an end date. Once the applications have come in, then we can sit, go through them, see which ones you like, and then we would have to send them to the state to see if they are approved by the state.

Pat Ray added that the candidate would have to have certain credentials that has to be met.

Kim Smith continued:

- We have a Personnel Consultant, Sylvia Johnson, who Marian Duncan had on retainer. When I started, I knew nothing about the State Office of Personnel, so I decided to keep her on retainer as well. She said whatever she needed to do; she would help you all do. If she needed to come down and talk with you all or help with questions, she would be more than willing to do that.

Pat Ray stated the following:

- It is our responsibility by State Law that the Board of Health, hires, fires and disciplines the Health Director. This is our responsibility to do this.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- There is no rule on how many sits on the committee, and what they do. You just need committee members that you trust, and who are going to bring back to you, qualified candidates.

Pat Ray stated the following:

- The committee would do the legwork, and make sure that the people we are considering meet the qualifications. That is what Sylvia will help us with. We will have some guidelines in what we are looking for in a leader.
- As Kim stated we need to look at the job description. If we see changes that need to be made or added, then we need to do so.

Kim Smith stated the following:

- As a group, you all can change the job description or the posting that goes out. You will need to approve all of that.

Pat Ray added that the group does not make the final decision and that the board members can make suggestions.

Scott Floyd asked who would make the final decision. Kim Smith responded the board.

Kim Smith added the following:

- Now with that, you all hire, fire, and discipline the Health Director, but the county pays the salary. Once you have a candidate that you want to hire, you will have to go before the County Commissioners and present that individual.
- When I was hired, they agreed to the amount I had requested. Keep in mind the county has different salary grades and that there are certain educational requirements needed to fill this position.

Dr. Nicole Martin asked if there was anyone who currently works at the Health Department that is qualified for the position.

Kim Smith responded:

- I know that there are two individuals, in house, who have voiced to me that they will apply. One is fully qualified and the other will shortly be. Again, when I started, I had my thesis I had to write, but I was hired and given a deadline. I met that deadline by two months.
- You all tell me what you want me to do. I'll be glad to help in any way I can. I've given you a six month notice, and I understand all of the holidays are included in there as well.
- If you would like me to get in touch with Sylvia, I can have her give me some dates to meet with you all.

Pat Ray stated that would be the best thing to do.

Kim Smith continued:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I realize that Patty Hobbs, Frankye Boone-Newkirk, Dr. Christy Perdue and Drew Cox are not here. <p>Pat Ray asked if there could be a Called Meeting of the entire board. Kim Smith responded if that is what you would like to do.</p> <p>Kim Smith added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have not told my staff yet. I will tell them tomorrow. I also have to be over at County Administration tomorrow and I will see Mr. Madden, that way I can inform him. He might want to put something out to the Board of Commissioners. • So you want an email to go out to all board members to fill the third position for the hiring committee? <p>Board of Health members stated yes.</p> <p>Dr. Randy Kirby stated if that did not work, then we would have to draft someone. He added that we also need to go ahead and get a date for the Special Called meeting.</p> <p>Kim Smith stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you want me to get some dates from Sylvia Johnson? <p>Board members unanimously agreed, and asked for her (Sylvia) to give them at least three days that she is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pat Ray, Dr. Nicole Martin and Dr. Amy Sessions, please do not forget the Accreditation date of March 5th, from 12:30pm to 1pm.
Comments-Board of Health	

Next Meeting Date

December 11, 2024 at 6:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted: Kimberly R. Smith Secretary 12/11/24
 Signature Date