

**WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH  
MEETING MINUTES**

February 13, 2017

The Wilkes County Board of Health held a regular business meeting Monday, February 13, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Wilkes County Health Department Conference Room; Board of Health members attending were:

Dr. Joe Fesperman, Chair  
Ms. Deborah Britton  
Ms. Teana Compeau  
Mr. David Gambill, Jr.  
Dr. Robbins Miller  
Dr. Robert Ricketts  
Ms. Sylvia Robinson

Ms. Ann Absher, Ms. April Edwards, Ms. Nancy Moretz, Ms. Debbie Nichols, and Mr. Junior Simmons, Animal Control were also in attendance. (Prior to the February meeting, packets containing the materials to be discussed were mailed to each Wilkes County Board of Health member for review.)

**Adoption of Agenda:**

Dr. Joe Fesperman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. The first item was the adoption of the agenda. Ms. Teana Compeau made the motion to adopt the agenda and Ms. Deborah Britton seconded; members unanimously approved.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Ms. Sylvia Robinson to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2016 meeting; seconded by Ms. Deborah Britton; members unanimously approved.

**Public Concerns – Dr. Joe Fesperman:** There were no public concerns. No citizens signed up to speak from the 10 day notice for the Rabies Compendium local rule adoption. The notice was up for the required 10 days and also documentation was sent to surrounding veterinarians in regards to the 2016 Adoption of Rabies Compendium for post exposure management of rabies in dogs and cats. Ms. Absher stated that Mr. Junior Simmons requested a week to inform his employees at the Wilkes County Animal Shelter before posting. Ms. Absher had included in the “rule” that the effective date would be February 20, 2017. Mr. Junior Simmons, from the Wilkes County Animal, control wanted to verify that the board was only adopting the section of the compendium for post exposure to dogs and cats; Ms. Absher verified that was only part of the compendium adopted as a local board of health rule at this time.

**Adoption of BOH rule from 2016 Rabies Compendium for post exposure management of Dogs and Cats - which states:** “This rule for rabies postexposure management of dogs and cats implements and particularizes the authority given to the local health director in G.S. 130A-197 to effectively and efficiently protect the public’s health utilizing the most current science. Accordingly, the Wilkes County Board of Health adopts the recommendations and guidelines for rabies postexposure management of dogs

and cats specified by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians in the 2016 edition of the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control (Part I.B.5: Postexposure Management). These provisions of the Compendium shall be the required control measures pursuant to G.S. 130A-197. These rules shall become effective on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 upon adoption by the Wilkes County Board of Health”.

Dr. Miller made the motion to approve the adoption of the local board of health rule, Ms. Teana Compeau seconded; members unanimously approved.

**Unfinished Business:**

**Dr. Todd Jordan named to the Wilkes Public Health Dental Board:** Dr. Joe Fesperman referred to one other item under “Unfinished Business” which was the Dental Board Appointee, Dr. Todd Jordan, has responded with a “yes” after being contacted by Carl Page on behalf of the board and discussing his responsibilities with Deana Billings, Executive Director.

**Administrative Report: Ms. Absher**

**Public Health Prevention Funds:** Ms. Absher stated that a letter from James J. Bruckner, President, NCALHD, on behalf of the association, was sent in regards to public health funding which stands to lose more funding if the ACA is repealed. Federal funds were moved under the ACA which were promised to assist with state and local public health programs, but never occurred. The association is requesting that the “Prevention and Public Health” funds be carved from the ACA repeal, if that happens. The NCALHD is encouraging local boards of health to also send similar letters to our legislators on the federal level. Ms. Absher informed the BOH that she could craft a similar letter to send on behalf of the board, if they so-minded to do so. Ms. Absher explained to the BOH that if these funds are cut, it would affect our state labs for rabies testing, communicable disease testing, immunizations, lead poisoning, a lot of our epidemiology, Zika, etc.; core public health problems. Ms. Absher informed the board that it could be a loss of about \$29 million dollars for our state and if this occurs, the costs would fall on the state/local government because we would still have to meet the same mandates.

Dr. Robert Ricketts stated that he felt the board should support Ms. Absher in doing the letter on behalf of the board and send to the necessary recipients. Dr. Joe Fesperman agreed with Dr. Robert Ricketts and asked board members if anyone was opposed of this action, but all members agreed to send the letter. Ms. Absher stated she would write the letter and bring it before the board to review and/or approve.

**2017 NCALHD Legislative Agenda**

A copy of the 2017 Legislative Agenda was included in BOH packets. Ms. Ann Absher stated that this year, the state health directors, for the legislative long session, have decided to break this into “tiers”.

- **Tier 1- Lead**

Oppose any bill that weakens the ability of the local health departments to protect & promote the public’s health. Update current control of rabies’ laws. Increase funding for rapid, emerging infectious diseases. Tobacco “21” - push on the, public level, to increase the smoking age to 21. The tobacco tax and the age that a person starts smoking can be proportionally reduced when the age to obtain is more difficult between the ages of 18 to 21.

- **Tier 2 – Support others in their efforts.**

Needle Exchange Program – There was a law passed that it could be done; however, public- funding could not be used for the needles and the supplies. Support others in the ability to charge well-water testing in migrant housing camps, childcare centers, as part of the permitting & inspection process. Currently, NC Law does not allow BOH's to impose fees for services other than waste water systems, public swimming pools, & tattooing. Restore all funding for women and children's health block grant

- ***Tier 3 – Encourage***

Safety Net Advocacy Day in Raleigh on March 7<sup>th</sup>; Ms. Absher and Denise Monahan will be attending to speak to legislators about Primary Care and share information.

***FY 2015 Medicaid Cost Settlement:***

Stephen Garner, who does this process for us, has provided the “preliminary” amount which is approximately \$440,000; this will go through a desk audit before we will know the final amount. The Dental Clinic will receive approximately half of the amount and the health department the remainder. The state is behind on finalizing cost settlements.

***Child Fatality Team's Annual Report 2016:***

A copy was provided in BOH packets. 6 deaths were reviewed; however, they may not have actually occurred in 2015(depends on availability of autopsy report). 5 of the deaths occurred at 6 months or less, 2 were due to extreme difficulties due to prematurity, 1 was due to a birth syndrome, 1 was due to SIDS, 1 was due to a lung disorder, and 1 was due to a neoplasm (over the age of 1 yr.). Ms. Absher stated that no trends or patterns were identified. Ms. Absher stated a small amount of money is received for doing the reviews; we already receive an “Infant Mortality Grant” which has been used to buy “pack-n-plays” and given to parents who go thru the educational class.

***Annual Quality Improvement Report:*** Ms. Nicholson, Director of Nursing, presented the annual QI Report (This information was given to board members at the meeting; they were not available to include in mailed packets). A Quality Improvement Project led by Leslie Arledge, FNP based on the FISH Philosophy, which consisted of a Pre and Post Survey among employees – positive increases were noted in all domains assessed. The Practice Management Team focused on Patagonia Electronic Medical Record (Patient Portal) & Provider Productivity (Phrase Express & Lab Order Entry). No Show Rates (based only on scheduled patients) have varied, although Management Support staff is filling cancelled appointments if patient cancels in advance. The No Show Policy was updated in December 2016, to address no show rates. The “Employee Recognition & Customer Satisfaction Team” continues the “Ray ward” Program for excellent customer service. The team reported that 55 Ray wards were issued in 2016. Monthly drawings are held at staff meetings to reward staff with a parking space or a small gift card. This team is measuring patient satisfaction on an ongoing basis. Results are reported at team meetings and the Quality Council every quarter.

***Annual Communicable Disease Report:*** Ms. Debbie Nicholson, Director of Nursing, presented this annual report. The annual communicable disease report on the incidence and occurrence of communicable diseases shows there were 259 incidents of communicable disease reported for Wilkes County in 2016, 188 STD's, 71 other reportable diseases and for the first year since our initial pertussis outbreak in 2012, there were no reportable cases in 2016. There were 17 investigations of persons being tested for Lyme disease, but only 5 of these cases met the criteria for being reported. There were 31 cases of foodborne

illness in 2016. Our Epi Team conducted and confirmed 3 outbreaks of Norovirus during 2016; occurring in local nursing homes and assisted living facilities. In 2016, Hepatitis B continues to be our primary vaccine-preventable reportable disease, with 3 acute cases and 13 chronic cases reported. In conjunction with the CDC recommendations, NC Communicable Disease Branch revised its criteria for reporting acute Hepatitis C in 2016. This has resulted in a slight increase in our number of acute Hepatitis C cases. Our CD Nurse investigated 82 cases of individuals being reported to WCHD as being Hepatitis C virus antibody positive. However, as part of our CD Branch's Hepatitis C Test/Link/Cure initiative, Wilkes County has been identified as a high-risk county for Hepatitis C. This has enabled WCHD to offer free Hepatitis C testing for antibodies and RNA through our State Public Health Lab. This can be offered to "Baby Boomers" born between 1945-1965, and both current IV drug users as well as those with a history of IV drug use. Since this testing was started in October, 15 individuals have been tested, with 7 of those 15 (46%) showing potentially active Hepatitis C virus, requiring referrals for consideration for treatment. Our Epi Team also designated key staff members to participate on our Zika Team. This team was assigned to develop a process for (1) providing education related to Zika virus to staff and the public, (2) developing a screening tool to be used by WCHD clinic staff to identify those who may be at risk for having been exposed to the Zika virus, and (3) working with our state CD Branch to test appropriate individuals who may have the Zika virus. 5 persons were tested through our State Public Health Lab, with no reported cases for our county.

**Enforcement Actions:** There were 2 individuals during 2016 that were placed on home isolation until TB testing could be conducted. Neither of these patients were active TB cases, with one testing positive for Mycobacterium other than TB. Hepatitis B Control Measures were issued for 9 individuals. Hepatitis B patients are case managed until chronic carrier status is determined through additional testing. Hepatitis C Control Measures were issued for 20 individuals, including those with both acute and chronic Hepatitis C. WCHD continues to provide outreach to our citizens testing positive for Hepatitis C through education regarding the virus, providing Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B vaccines to individuals who have not received them, and providing medical services through our Adult Health Clinic for those individuals seeking a primary care provider. This year, we have continued to coordinate referrals for treatment to High Country Clinic. Two infants are being case-managed as potential Hepatitis B perinatal cases, since their mothers were infected with Hepatitis B during the pregnancy.

**Rabies:** Our number of positive rabies cases in Wilkes County was low this year, with 10 animals testing positive through our State Lab facility (4 raccoons, 3 skunks, 2 foxes, and 1 dog). However, we continue to have a significant number of human rabies exposure investigations, with 53 required this year. Of those 53 investigations, 24 resulted in clients identified as potential exposures with rabies post-exposure prophylaxis recommended. Our Epi Team continues to work on public education and outreach, encouraging individuals to have animals vaccinated, and avoidance of animals that are high-risk for having rabies.

***Six Month Financial Review: Ms. Moretz and Ms. Absher:***

Report was discussed with the board. Ms. Moretz reports we seem to be in good shape, our collection has been at about 45% for the first 6 months of the year and our spending has been about the same. Ms. Absher explained that after taking out the Dental Clinic, our revenue is at about 52%. We are on a cash based system, some of our spending occurs before we actually see our revenue especially grants come in. Ms. Absher stated that Ms. Moretz, Administrative Finance Officer, is available to answer any questions from the board and also stated that funds from the FQHC Grant are not included in the budget review.

***Wilkes Community Health Center: Ms. Absher:***

The WCHC Board is required to meet monthly and those meetings started back in January, 2017. Ms. Ann Absher stated she will give and update to the BOH about the meetings when they regularly meet. The WCHC Board has worked on the required Implementation Plan/Strategic Plan, revised budget plan, and established required "sub-committees", bylaws, & co-applicant agreement.

**Committee Reports: Dr. Joe Fesperman**

***Health Director's Annual Performance Appraisal and Job Description Review:***

The subcommittee presented board members with a "Member Service Review" & suggested updated "Job Description" to include new duties in regards to the FQHC Grant. The "Member Service Review" summarizes appraisals which are done by the "WCHD" Management Team, whom directly report to and work with the Health Director on regular basis. Dr. Joe Fesperman provided a summary based the performance review and on letters of support, one from the "Wilkes County Manager", Mr. John Yates, and Mr. Don Manus, Chair of the BOH during the most recent year. Ms. Ann Absher scored an overall grade of 4.8 out of a possible 5.0; included in this appraisal were; Job Knowledge, Work Quality, Attendance/Punctuality, Initiative, Communication Customer Service, & Dependability/Getting Work Done. Dr. Fesperman, Chair presented the report and discussed the results with Ms. Absher prior to the meeting. Ideas were generated about how to improve communication with health department staff ongoing. Job description update included the additional duties of the CEO of the Community Health Center. Board members did not suggest other changes to the job description upon their review.

**New Business:**

***Bad Debt Write-off: Ms. Absher-***Reviewed the previous two Bad Debt Write-Offs (February-2016/\$4,119.35 & July-2016/\$5,157.60). The current Bad Debt Write-Off is \$4,205.48 for the current six month period. Motion to approve made by Mr. David Gambill, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Teana Compeau, unanimously approved.

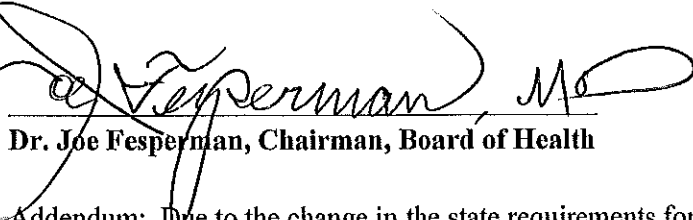
**Next Meeting Date:**

The next board of health meeting date will be on April 10, 2017 at 5:30 pm in the conference room.

Adjournment: No further business and the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Fesperman

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

*April O. Edwards*



**Dr. Joe Fesperman, Chairman, Board of Health**

Addendum: Due to the change in the state requirements for due dates of annual SOTCH and triennial Community Health Assessments, the Board of Health Schedule of Business will be changed to reflect this change thus moving the annual report to October and the CHA and SOTCH report to April.