

Wilkes County Board of Health Meeting Minutes

February 14th, 2022

The Wilkes County Board of Health held a regular business meeting Monday, February 14th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the Wilkes County Sherriff's Office Conference Room. Board of Health members in attendance were:

Ms. Susan Bachmeier
Ms. Teana Compeau
Ms. Adina Watkins
Dr. Gary Nash
Dr. Sarah Miller-Wyatt
Dr. Keaton Mash
Dr. Laura Hubbard
Mr. Chris Anderson

Ms. Rachel Willard, Mr. Chad Shore, Ms. Nancy Moretz, Ms. April Edwards, Ms. Lindsey Roberts, & Public Attendee, Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, 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 and sent via email.

Meeting Called to Order: Ms. Susan Bachmeier called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

****Mr. Chris Anderson & Dr. Laura Hubbard were sworn in by Ms. April Edwards to be member of the Board of Health.**

Adoption of Agenda: Dr. Gary Nash made the motion to adopt the agenda for the Board of Health meeting for February 14th, 2022; the motion was seconded by Dr. Keaton Mash, and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes for the December 13th, 2021, Meeting: Ms. Teana Compeau made the motion to approve the Minutes from December 13th, 2021 Meeting; the motion was seconded by Dr. Gary Nash; and unanimously approved.

Old Business:

- **CMARC Update:** Ms. Rachel Willard stated that we officially turned in our notice December 14th, 2021, about ending our CMARC services and have had lots of calls with the state since then. Burke County is interested in taking over all services just like we do for maternal health. We are waiting to hear back officially from Burke; it did have to go to their BOH for approval. Burke is looking to offer Julie McNeill a position; Julie is 50/50 on that, but she did accept an internal position with us so that's exciting for us.

Administrative Reports:

- **Quality Improvement Annual Report:** Ms. Lindsey Roberts presented a PowerPoint to the BOH which included the "Wilkes Health Communicable Disease Annual Report" & the "Wilkes Health Quality Improvement Annual Report".
"Wilkes Health Communicable Disease Annual Report": There were 396 cases of "Reportable Communicable Diseases for Wilkes County (280 STD's/116 other) and 52 cases of foodborne illness and one case of Vector borne illness. SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), Wilkes County had 7,994 positive cases, 2,013 tested, & 35,768 Vaccinated (1st Doses-17,134, 2nd Doses-15,504, Additional Doses-3,118 (immunocompromised), & 4th Doses-12). Primary categories of Communicable Diseases reflected Wilkes County had 70% STD's, 21% Foodborne illnesses, 6% Vaccine Preventable, & 3% Vector borne illnesses. In regards to Foodborne Illnesses there were 52 cases, 5 cases of E Coli, 30 cases of Campylobacter (cases increase slightly while the cases of Salmonella have dropped almost by half), 12 cases of Salmonella. Vaccine Preventable Diseases; there were 42 cases and 40 of those cases were Hepatitis A (significant increase). Rabies Update showed 39 investigations of potential humans were exposed to suspect or confirmed rabid animals, 21 of those exposures were significant enough to warrant post-exposure prophylaxis. **"Wilkes Health QI Annual Report":** Customer Satisfaction Surveys – 183 were completed; English: -

(154 surveys), New Patients: 28%, Returning Patients: 72%, Referred by a friend: 48%, Referred by another practice: 17%.

Our practice/services: 96%, The Quality of your visit: 96%, the care you received: 97%, Making your appointment today: 96%

Spanish: - (29 surveys), New Patients: 31%, Returning Patients: 69%, Referred by a friend: 79%, Referred by another practice: 21%. Our practice/services: 100%, The Quality of your visit: 94%, the care you received: 97%, Making your appointment today: 91%. Program Monitoring – TB Annual Assessment: Due to pandemic, not required to participate in annual audit process. Immunization Assessment: 2021 Assessment planned February, 2022. VFC Site Visit occurred on 11/16/21 (No issues found). WIC Program Review - Areas for improvement in documentation identified: Missing notifications, decrease no-show rates and incomplete documentation and assessments. Corrective Action Plan: submitted, implemented, and approved by state. Environmental Health Quality Assurance - Data from Food and Lodging: State has implemented new QA program with each field agent being evaluated twice each year and 3 file reviews each year. On-site Waste Water (15), Well Permits reviewed (5), Peer review visits by supervisor, Issues are addressed with individual and at staff meetings. Client Concerns – 3 Customer Service Concerns were reviewed and followed up by supervisor. Incident Report – 4 falls, 4 Medication, 2 Employee, 1 Death, 4 other, (all incidents were investigated & handled properly). Laboratory Quality Assurance – Lab Medical Director provides monthly review, Areas reviewed include: proficiency testing, quality control, maintenance, procedures/standing orders, and competency testing (annually). COLA Survey – Score 99% - 2020 (survey is completed every 2 years). Patient Centered Medical Home - Received recognition by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Patient Centered Medical Home again for 2022. Annual Reporting Date: November 2022.

2021 Communicable Disease Annual Report: Ms. Lindsey Roberts reviewed the annual report citing the most recent increase/decreases from the year 2021 (report included numbers from 2018-2021) for Communicable Diseases. There were 396 incidents of communicable disease that have been reported for Wilkes County in 2021, 280 STDs and 116 other reportable diseases excluding COVID-19. There were 52 cases of foodborne illness reported in 2021. There was only 1 case of vector borne illness reported. Outside of COVID-19 there were 42 cases of vaccine-preventable reportable diseases, primarily Hepatitis A. There was a significant rise in the cases of Hepatitis A, however, North Carolina has been in an outbreak of Hepatitis A since July 2021 and is still currently in this outbreak. Campylobacter cases increased slightly by 6 compared to 2020 while the cases of Salmonella have dropped by almost half. Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) cases were investigated in 2021. These investigations primarily focused on persons who may have been in hospitals and long-term care facilities to determine if appropriate measures are being taken to prevent spread of these organisms when patients have colonization of them in their GI tract. We investigated 6 cases of CRE this year with no evidence that persons sharing rooms with those individuals had become infected. Ongoing investigations continue with Hepatitis A, B and C cases. Hepatitis A cases showed an increase to 40 cases from the previous 2020 year where there were only 6 cases identified. Investigations of the Hepatitis A cases did not result in any local establishment for concern of the community. Our clinic staff continue to be vigilant in identifying through our STD clinic, those individuals who are at risk for being exposed to Hepatitis A, B, and C. Vaccines are then administered to those individuals who have not received, or finished the Hepatitis vaccine series for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. The pandemic that initiated in early 2020 with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 continues. In response to the pandemic, Wilkes Health continues to work diligently to test those in need and to vaccinate under the direction of state officials. Wilkes County had a total of 7,994 COVID cases and 117 COVID deaths reported in 2021. Wilkes Health tested 2,013 people at the local health department in 2021. There were 35,768 COVID vaccines administered by Wilkes Health in 2021. This number was comprised of 17,134 first doses, 15,504-second doses, 3,118 additional doses given to those immunocompromised or boosters, and 12 fourth doses. The fourth doses were boosters administered to immunocompromised individuals after receiving their additional dose. Wilkes Health continues to be diligent and dedicated in helping mitigate the spread of the virus. There was an increase in cases of gonorrhea in 2021 with 84 cases reported compared to 52 cases in 2020. The trend for Chlamydia stayed consistent with the past several years. WCHD continues to provide education to our area providers regarding guidelines for STD testing and treatment, as well as assisting with treatment when individuals cannot afford medications. **Enforcement Actions:** Wilkes County had no active tuberculosis cases during 2021. Hepatitis B patients are case managed until chronic carrier status is determined through additional testing. Hepatitis C patients who test positive for Hepatitis C RNA are

given Hepatitis C Control Measures as well as continuing to coordinate self-referrals for treatment to High Country Community Health & Fairgrove Primary Care for patients who are uninsured. We are currently investigating having Hepatitis C treatment available onsite through our clinics; this would prevent residents from having to travel outside of our county for treatment. This is essential to completion of treatment for those individuals with limited funds for transportation. **COVID-19** positive cases are identified and contacted for tracing of the individual. Positive cases, as well as contacts identified, are given isolation/quarantine information to follow to help mitigate the spread of infection. Testing is completed at Wilkes Health as a drive thru clinic on Tuesday and Friday of every week. Vaccinations are taking place at Wilkes Health and can be administered any day of the week. **Rabies:** Our number of positive rabies cases in Wilkes County continue to be low during 2021. There were 3 cases of rabies identified in Wilkes County thorough testing at the State Lab facility. However, we continue to have a significant number of human rabies exposure investigations, with 39 required this year. Of those 39 investigations, 21 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 who are high-risk for having rabies.

****Ms. Rachel Willard stated that there had been a rise in Childhood Lead Cases in Wilkes County. We have had the highest numbers reported in the last 10-15 years. There has been a collaboration to investigate and try to pinpoint the reason for this rise, also, Pediatricians, Daycares, & Schools have been put on alert to check and take notice.**

- **Six Month Financial Review: Ms. Nancy Moretz**

Revenue - Our General Revenue Fund is at \$229,790, over revenue amount is due to received COVID Revenue. Programs & State Grants Revenue is currently at \$2,538,233, Federal Grants Revenue is at \$412,848, COVID Revenue is \$340,462 (Revised Budgeted Revenue \$1,557,191) Permits & Fees Revenue is currently \$327,450. Total Revenue FY2022 is \$3,848,783. **Expenses** – General Salaried & Benefits is currently at \$675,357, General Operating Expenses is \$236,394, Capital Outlay/Vehicles is \$21,334 (bought a new vehicle for Environmental Health), and Capital Outlay & Other Improvements is at \$6,058. Total General Expenses is \$939,144. Program Salaries & Benefits is \$891,460, Program Operating Expenses is at \$1,186,411, COVID Expenses is \$308,901, Federal Grant Salaries & Benefits is \$312,842, & Federal Grant Operating Expenses is \$30,448, Total Program Expenses \$2,730,062. Total Expenses is \$3,669,206.

Approval of Six Month Financial Review: Dr. Gary Nash made the motion to approve the **Six Month Financial Review**; the motion was seconded by Dr. Sarah Miller-Wyatt; and unanimously approved.

- **Bad Debt Write Off: Mr. Chad Shore**

Write off request is in the amount of \$7,153.35 which is about \$600 more than the last request. Mr. Chad Shore stated that as it is in our Fee Policy, we give a patient every opportunity to pay/enter into a written payment agreement. If the account has no activity for six months, then it goes on the “write off” list and if a patient wishes to return for services, then they will be required to pay 25% of the write-off balance (CD, Immunizations, & Family Planning services cannot be denied to any patient).

****Dr. Keaton Mash asked if the patients show back up. Ms. Nancy Moretz stated that 4 of the patients from the previous write-off had returned and had already paid about @\$200.**

Approval of Bad Debt Write off: Dr. Keaton Mash made the motion to approve the **Bad Debt Write Off**; the motion was seconded by Ms. Teana Compeau; and unanimously approved.

- **Delegation of Authority: Ms. Rachel Willard**

The “Delegation of Authority” ensures that there is someone to assume my duties in the event I were incapacitated/unable to perform my duties. Due to the recent retirement of Ms. Debbie Nicholson, who was listed as one of those three individuals, the “Delegation of Authority” needs to be updated to reflect the following:

- A. Benjamin "Chad" Shore, Chief Operating Officer
- B. Lindsey Roberts, Director of Nursing and Compliance
- C. Nancy Moretz, Administrative Officer

Approval of Delegation of Authority: Ms. Adina Watkins made the motion to approve the **Delegation of Authority**; the motion was seconded by Dr. Gary Nash; and unanimously approved.

- **Departmental Update:** Ms. Rachel Willard stated that Wilkes Health has four new employees, Candice Joines (Purchasing), Noemi Duran (Scheduling), Traci Pierce (Pharmacist), & Mikki Wiles (Adult Health Nurse). We currently have 9 openings which include: Environmental Health Specialist F&L, LPN, BCCCP Nurse, CD Nurse, PH Nutritionist II & III, 2 Interpreters (Alliance/Contracted), & P.A. III (scheduled to start 3-01-22). WIC participation is @ 102% for caseload. DPP is still meeting and will continue through December. Environmental Health's average wait time is 3-4 weeks in "Onsite", FQHC UDS Report has been submitted, & Clinic is working diligently to improve workflows to pull accurate numbers for grant reports.

COVID-19 Update: Ms. Rachel Willard provided an update to the board beginning with the total positive COVID-19 cases in the county which is 17,117. There have been 7 new hospitalizations, & 245 COVID related deaths, and the positivity rate is at 25.2%. As of today, there are 5 outbreaks which are all long term care facility related and 2 daycare clusters. Ms. Rachel Willard added that in January there were 4,050 new confirmed cases, which helps support that this variant is spreading at a much faster rate than any other variant. In January alone there were also 31 deaths with 9 of those being vaccinated. Ms. Willard also mentioned that both the guidance for general population and schools had changed. Ms. Willard stated the easiest way to understand the new guidance is to remember 5 days on 5 days with mask. Ms. Willard explained that if you were a confirmed case you would need to isolate away from others for 5 days, and then as long as you are fever free and improving in symptoms could you intermingle for the last 5 days (days 6-10) with a mask on. Ms. Willard also stated this guidance was the same for those who had been exposed to a positive case. Generally speaking a person who is not up to date on their vaccine would need to quarantine for 5 days, then wear a mask days 6-10. If a person is up to date on their vaccine they would not need to quarantine at this time. Ms. Willard explained that being up to date on your vaccine meant that you had completed your primary series, and if eligible for a booster you have received it. If you are eligible for a booster or additional dose and have not received it then you are not considered up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines. Ms. Willard asked if Mr. Shore or Ms. Roberts had anything to add. No additional comments were made. Ms. Willard then opened it up questions from the group.

****Ms. Teana Compeau** asked if the positive cases were vaccinated. Ms. Rachel Willard stated that she could get an approximation of how many were vaccinated and provide that information. Ms. Susan Bachmeier stated with Omicron, patients in general had not been as sick as they were with the Delta variant.

Ms. Teana Compeau asked if many people were getting the 4th vaccination. Ms. Rachel Willard stated that really 12 immunocompromised have received a booster from the health department. However, the guidance did just change from 5 months to 3 months.

Ms. Rachel Willard informed the board that the state guidance for schools will be changing effective February 21st. Based off current research and the changing landscape, schools will no longer have to contact trace and investigate positive cases. Schools will no longer have to exclude close contacts either. It was made clear to the board that only students who were a confirmed positive case, or were symptomatic would be excluded from school. Ms. Willard stated that this is a huge win, as we all know COVID is not going away and we need to be able to move forward. Ms. Willard informed the board this was another step to doing so. Ms. Willard informed the board the Board of Education

was meeting tomorrow, and would make a decision on how they would like to move forward locally. Ms. Willard stated that both Ms. Roberts and she would be in attendance. Ms. Willard asked Ms. Roberts if she had anything additional to add. No additional comments were made.

Committee Reports: None

New Business: None

Public Concerns: None

Adjournment: Dr. Gary Nash made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Adina Watkins seconded, unanimously approved.

Next Meeting Date: The next board of health meeting will be on April 11th, at 5:30 p.m. in the Wilkes County Sherriff's Office Conference Room.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

April Edwards, Administrative Assistant

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Bachmeier". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ms. Susan Bachmeier