Catawba County Board of Health
Minutes
November 8, 2021

The Catawba County Board of Health met on Monday, November 8, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom and at Catawba County Public Health, 3070 11th Ave Dr. SE, Hickory, NC 28602.

Members Present:  
Mr. John H. Dollar, Chair*  
Mr. William Pitts, Vice-Chair*  
Mr. Austin Allran, County Commissioner  
Dr. Bruce Carlton*  
Ms. Gloria Costin*  
Dr. Gale Hamilton-Brandon*  
Ms. Susan Knowles*  
Mr. Brian Potocki*

Members Absent:  
Dr. Matthew Davis  
Dr. Dana H. Greene

Staff present:  
Ms. Jennifer McCracken, Health Director  
Mr. Jason Williams, Assistant Health Director*  
Ms. Julie Byrd, Women and Children’s Health Administrator*  
Ms. Emily Killian, Community Engagement Specialist/PIO  
Ms. Chantae Lail, Medical Lab Manager/Preparedness Coordinator*  
Ms. Jennifer Lindsay, School Health Nursing Supervisor*  
Ms. Megan McBride, Environmental Health Administrator*  
Ms. Sarah Rhodes, Clinical Services Nurse Supervisor*  
Mr. Jeremy Stockton, WIC Director*  
Ms. Debra A. Young, Administrative Assistant II

Guests:  
Ms. Jodi Stewart, County Attorney*

*Attended via Zoom meeting

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
Mr. John Dollar, Chair, called the Catawba County Public Health Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He welcomed Board members, Public Health managers, staff, and guests. Mr. Dollar instructed the Board Members on the virtual meeting roll call and voting process. There were no questions regarding roll call or the voting process instructions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES
Mr. John Dollar, Chair, stated that Board members had received the current meeting Agenda and the Board Minutes for October 11, 2021. Mr. Dollar asked if there were any changes to the Agenda or corrections to the prior meeting Minutes. There being none, a motion was made to accept the Agenda and previous meeting Minutes by Dr. Bruce Carlton and seconded by Mr. Austin Allran. The Agenda and minutes were unanimously approved via an in-person and virtual roll call vote of the board members present.
PUBLIC COMMENTS
Mr. Dollar asked if anyone presented to speak before the Board. Ms. Debra Young, Administrative Assistant II, stated that no one presented to speak to the Board this evening.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS
Mr. Austin Allran, County Commissioner, stated he had no comments this month.

MEDICAID TRANSFORMATION UPDATE
Mr. Jason Williams, Assistant Health Director, updated the Board on Medicaid Transformation in North Carolina.

Medicaid and NC Health Choice transitioned from fee-for-service to a managed care model. This was initially to 'go live' in early 2020 but was suspended and reinstated for July 2021. There are two types of plans – NC Medicaid Managed Care and NC Medicaid Direct. Mr. Williams stated that only a small number of people would remain on NC Medicaid Direct. He stated that Care Management also transitioned to Managed Care and that this transition has caused payments to go from one payor source to six payor sources. Cost settlements are not permitted with this new model as there is now a separate direct cycle process.

Mr. Williams concluded the presentation with updates regarding the impact seen thus far at Public Health from the transition. Most of the system issues have been at the State level but are affecting the local levels. The State is diligently working on resolutions of the known systematic problems.

The Medicaid Transformation Update presentation is attached to the Minutes.

VACCINE UPDATE
Ms. Sarah Rhodes, Clinical Services Nurse Supervisor, provided the Board with a vaccine update.

Ms. Rhodes stated that seasonal influenza (flu) season is upon us and that Public Health is currently offering flu shots to the general public by appointment. Seasonal Influenza typically begins circulating in higher numbers from October to May, and although it is a common illness in the fall and winter months, the flu can cause serious health complications, including death.

Additional presentation highlights:
- Public Health has given 80 flu shots as of the end of October.
- Influenza and COVID-19 symptoms are mostly the same, so it is difficult to determine one from the other without testing for both flu and COVID-19.
- Most adults are now eligible for COVID-19 boosters. Adults may also choose which vaccine manufacturer they want to use when receiving their second/third dose.
- Pediatric doses for ages 5-11 were recently approved. They are 1/3 of the adult dose and are available at Public Health, local pediatrician offices, and some retail pharmacies. Catawba County Public Health began giving pediatric doses on November 5th.
- About 38% of 12-17 year-olds have been vaccinated in Catawba County thus far.
The Infographic and PowerPoint presentation are attached to the Minutes.

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING SCHEDULE – MEMO**

Mr. John Dollar, Chair, reviewed the Memorandum with the Board again regarding the current annual meeting dates and a proposal for a schedule change to either bi-monthly or quarterly meetings. He reiterated the reason behind the schedule change request, proposed meeting schedule options, and asked if there was any further discussion necessary.

There being no further discussions, Mr. John Dollar asked for a motion to approve the bi-monthly (even months) Board of Health Meeting Schedule for the second half of the calendar year 2021-2022. Mr. William Pitts so moved, and Dr. Bruce Carlson seconded the motion. The Board of Health Meeting Schedule change request was unanimously passed via an in-person and virtual roll call vote of the board members present. The revised meeting calendar schedule will be emailed to all Board Members, posted on the website, and in the front lobby at Public Health.

Ms. McCracken stated that she would continue to send out the biweekly updates to the Board of Health members.

**HEALTH DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Ms. Jennifer McCracken, Health Director, stated she had a few brief updates. She stated that as of November 8th, 25,614 laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Catawba County residents, 436 people have died, and 35 Catawba County residents are hospitalized with the disease. Overall, there has been a decrease in new cases and hospitalizations over the past six weeks. Catawba County’s positivity rate is now 7.68%, and there are currently 146.03 cases per 100,000 population.

Additional updates:
- Catawba County’s vaccination rate is slightly lower than the state average for 64-74 year-olds but is significantly higher for the 75+ population.
- More than 80% of long-term care facility residents have been fully vaccinated in NC.
- The majority of exposures in school-age children is from outside of school. Of the exposures in school, many are from lunchtime when students are not wearing masks.
- Currently, the vaccination rate for 12-17 year-olds is significantly lower than the state rate. Catawba County is at 38%, and the State is at 46%.
- Catawba County Public Health has given more than 63,200 doses of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Catawba County is still an area of high transmission (coded as red on the CDC data tracker).
- The State’s StrongSchools Toolkit has been updated with recommendations for masking of students depending on the transmission zone (color) for the County.
- There have been 48 School Health Assistants hired through a state grant to the school systems.
- Catawba County Public Health is a regional hub for vaccine distribution. The ultra-low temperature freezer that was purchased early on has enabled public health to be an essential part of the State’s vaccination rollout. Public Health has been able to receive vaccine, store it, and then transfer it out to other entities as needed. This has allowed for quick, efficient use of
the available vaccine supply. Nearly 50,000 doses of vaccine have been transferred out to 14 western counties.
- Catawba County Public Health was recognized as one of 10 winners of the Local Government Federal Credit Union Innovation Award, which celebrates solutions that improve services delivered to county citizens.

Ms. McCracken reminded the Board that the monthly infographics were included in the Board packet.

The Health Director's presentation slides are attached to the Minutes.

OTHER BUSINESS
None

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business, Mr. John Dollar asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. William Pitts so moved, and Dr. Bruce Carlton seconded the motion. Accordingly, Mr. Dollar adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer F. McCracken
Secretary to the Board of Health
Health Director

JFM: day

Approved by Board of Health: December 13, 2021