

**Board of Health Meeting MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, February 3, 2021**  
**Via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Owen Robinson  
Ray Geyer, DO  
Terry Barber  
Matt Martin, DDS  
Tom Moore  
Amanda Ball

**Staff/Visitors Present:**

Trisha Gardner–Health Officer, Carey Ann Haight–County Attorney, Joe Briggs–County Commissioner, Melanie McKinzie Swartz–Office & Accreditation Coordinator, Albert Grobe, PhD–Environmental Health Division Manager, Sarah Cozino–PHEP & Communicable Disease Program Manager, Joey McDermand–Accountant, Jo-Viviane Jones–Family Health Services Division Manager, Rachel Doran–MT Connect Coordinator, Nicole Girten, Mark McKenna, Marsha Ballowe, Josh Trump, Sarah Dutro, Lyle Fogerty, Jenn Rowell, Kyler Baker, Megan Brunelle, Darcie Bullock, Sandy Johnson, Joanne Thompson, Gabriella Fair, Emilee Steinberg, Quinn Sutherland John Hayes, Christy Buttler Nelson

***Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. A quorum was present.***

***Agenda Item #4 was taken out of order.***

***Ms. Ball arrived at 11:37 a.m.***

***Dr. Martin arrived at 11:48 a.m.***

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

**1. Approve Minutes from January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, BOH Meeting: Mr. Robinson**

Dr. Geyer moved to approve the minutes from the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, meeting. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. With all board members voting in favor, the motion carried.

**2. Approve Minutes from January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, BOH Meeting: Mr. Robinson**

Mr. Robinson noted a couple errors had been corrected on the minutes. Dr. Geyer moved to approve the minutes from the January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, meeting. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. With all board members voting in favor, the motion was approved.

**3. Totem Beverages Litigation Update: Ms. Haight**

Ms. Haight advised there were no updates to report for Totem Beverages Litigation.

**4. Family Health Services Report: Jo-Viviane Jones**

Ms. Jones provided the Family Health Services Update.

- Home Visiting and WIC appointments continue remotely.
- The new Registered Dietitian started the end of November. She is transitioning to take on additional responsibilities including data review and staff training.
- On site appointments will start March 15, 2021, for high-risk babies/mothers for height, weight, and biometrics.
- WIC Nutrition Educator position will be posted in a few weeks.
- WIC State Monitoring

- State monitoring occurs every two years. The State reviews client files for meeting client eligibility requirements, accurate documentation, and referrals.
- WIC's State Monitoring occurred in January 2021.
- Agencies are ranked within 4 Tiers.
  - Previous monitoring resulted in an agency rating of Tier 2, 79% compliance, which required a Corrective Action Plan and self-monitoring of client files.
  - 2021 monitoring results showed score improvement from previous 79%/Tier 2 to 86%/ Tier 1 status. Tier 1 is 80% compliance and above. This increase was achieved even though WIC services were provided remotely last year during clinic closure due to COVID restrictions.
- Maternal Child Health Foster Program
  - The program is serving approximately 60 children a month with virtual home visits, records review, and/or medical records review.
- Circle of Security parenting classes re-started in February.
- Oral Health Program
  - Education materials, toothbrushes and toothpaste were provided to children in the school districts; however onsite education did not occur.
  - Ms. Tacke, Oral Health Educator, will report in the next BOH meeting.
- Healthy Montana Families – Parents as Teachers (PAT) and SafeCare
  - The five-year Request for Proposal (RFP) cycle is ending. The program must reapply for funding.
  - The PAT Program received the Blue Ribbon designation in 2017. The designation is granted for five years. The application process for the next 5-year cycle starts in fall. Criteria for designation include:
    - The agency must meet all 17 essential requirements (PAT Affiliate requirements).
    - The agency must meet 78% of the 100 program quality standards.
- MT CONNECT
  - A total of 63 agencies/providers are enrolled.
  - Ms. Doran is working with Opportunities Inc. to enroll them in the program.

**5. Environmental Health Report: Albert Grobe, PhD**

Dr. Grobe, provided the Environmental Health Report.

- The division continues business as usual with septic systems, Plan Reviews, and the Rabies Program.
- Sanitarian's work is being completed remotely and onsite. Next week all staff will be working onsite.
- Cooperative Agreement between Montana DPHHS and Board of Health
  - The annual agreement was forwarded to the Board for review.
  - The Board agreed to have Ms. Gardner, Public Health Officer, make a recommendation to the County Commissioners for approval.

**6. Superfund Site Report: Ms. Johnson**

Ms. Johnson was unable to provide the update as she was not added as a meeting panelist.

**7. Prevention Services Report: Ms. Gardner**

Ms. Gardner provided the Prevention Services Report.

- Business continues as normal with STD/HIV testing and immunizations scheduled by appointment.
- Communicable Disease Report
  - 2020 Report
    - Increases in gonorrhea during 2020 is a concern. Mr. Trystianson and Ms. Gardner are discussing strategies for education, increased testing, and public awareness in the County.
    - Syphilis numbers decreased significantly from 2019.

- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and Norovirus cases are lower this year.
  - 2021 Report
    - Includes the first 4-weeks of 2021.
    - On track with the exception of gonorrhoea cases.
- CCHD is wrapping up administration of Phase 1A 2<sup>nd</sup> dose COVID-19 vaccines.
- Staffing
  - Deputy Health Officer Position – filled by Bowen Trystianson. He worked as the Communicable Disease Communicable Disease Nurse in the past and left CCHD to pursue a Doctorate in Nursing. Mr. Trystianson is familiar with all Prevention Services Programs.
  - Public Health Emergency Planner – several applicants have applied. Interviews will be set for next week.
  - Public Health Nurse – Communicable Disease position remains open.
  - Temporary Contact Tracers
    - Three Contact Tracers resigned during the holidays.
    - Several Contact Tracers were reassigned to data entry and assistance with COVID-19 Clinics.
    - Staffing reduction and the reassignments work well, as COVID-19 cases are decreasing while vaccinations are ramping up.
- The Montana Chronic Disease Program (MCDP)
  - The program includes the Montana Cancer Control, Worksite Wellness, and Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Programs.
  - The program received accolades from DPHHS on their December report for Advanced Systems Change in Behavioral Health Settings for the Tobacco Use Prevention Program.
  - MCDP staff have been innovative in education, holding online education and zoom meetings/classes, during the pandemic.
  - Blood Pressure and Chronic Disease Program classes are held in person at The Department of Emergency Services.
- CCHD is scheduled to meet with their vaccine vendor to reserve doses for next year's Flu Season.

### **Administration Report**

Ms. Gardner provided the Administration Report.

- Finance
  - All immunization revenues have been added to the financial report.
    - Contractual adjustments appear high but are in line with past years.
    - The agency is able to bill at a slighter higher rate with the new billing vendor.
    - Medicare reimbursement rates are not as high since we are no longer a Medicare preferred provider.
  - Environmental Health revenue is low due to pandemic impact and inability to conduct in person classes and trainings that would normally bring in revenue.
  - Cares Act Funds were fully expensed. The final report has been submitted to the State.
  - Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Health Department funds were reserved and help continue temporary employee staffing.
  - An additional \$27,000.00 will be received for the Immunization Program to help with COVID-19 immunizations.
  - HIV Prevention is behind on billing but will be submitted by the end of the week.
- Lizzie Whittemore, Registered Sanitarian, received a scholarship to the University of Montana Certificate Program for Public Health Management.
- An Arbinger Trainer has been identified and will be sent to training.

- Alluvion approached Cascade County to discuss leasing clinical space at CCHD.
  - Contracts and business arrangements are being reviewed.
  - Programs that compliment CCHD services would be moved onsite - Pediatrics, Family Planning, and Prevention Services.
  - Alluvion still plans to move into the Rocky Mountain Building in the future.

#### 2020 Strategic Action Plan

- Ms. Gardner reviewed the final 2020 Strategic Action Plan Report with the Board. Highlights included:
  - COVID-19 impacted most 2020 Strategic Action Plan measures. Several measures will continue in the 2021 Strategic Action Plan.
  - The agency maintained 90% Staff trained in Arbinger and weekly Arbinger emails to all staff.
  - 90% for E5/E6 deliverables measure were impacted due to COVID and will continue in 2021.
  - Increasing Chlamydia/Gonorrhea/Syphilis testing goals were not met due to limited walk-in services during the pandemic.
  - Rebranding strategy placed on hold due to the pandemic and will continue into next year.

#### 2020-2021 Quality Improvement Projects

- 2020 Quality Improvement Projects were disrupted by COVID-19 and will continue in 2021.

### 8. **COVID-19**

Ms. Gardner provided the COVID-19 Report.

- Case Rate – 21 per 100,000
- Positivity Rate – 6.4%
  - Down from 12.4%, 2-weeks ago.
  - Once positivity rate hits 5%, Long-Term Care Facilities can shift from twice a week to weekly surveillance testing.
- Cascade County is doing well in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases.
  - The agency is up-to-date on contact tracing.
  - Temporary staff have been reassigned to data entry and COVID-19 Clinics.
  - Only one nursing home in Cascade County is in an outbreak status. This is a change from previous months with a number of nursing homes in outbreak status.
- COVID-19 Immunizations
  - The majority of residents in Long-Term-Care Facilities have received vaccinations.
    - Big Sky Managed Care, CVS Pharmacy, and Walgreens Pharmacy are coordinating nursing home vaccinations.
    - These agencies reallocated 19,000 unused doses (a week's worth of vaccine) of COVID-19 vaccine back to the State.
- CCHD, Alluvion, Benefis and Great Falls Clinic are holding COVID-19 Vaccinations Clinics as a joint effort with an equitable split for staffing and supplies.
  - Great Falls Emergency Services, Great Falls Fire and Rescue, and the Montana National Guard are volunteering their assistance in different capacities.
  - Community frustration has been expressed regarding all three processes: online, phone, and email registrations.
    - CCHD received over 8,000 calls on Thursday morning which incapacitated phones.
    - The phone line is open 24-7.
    - Online scheduling is the most efficient method.
  - Enough individuals have been added to the COVID-19 Vaccination list to fill a clinic week.
  - A scheduling mishap at last Wednesday's clinic resulted in individuals waiting outside and long wait lines. The glitch has been corrected.

- Clinics (with the exception above) are running smoothly with no lines and minimal wait times.
- Online registration will open again tomorrow. Appointments will be backfilled from the COVID-19 Vaccination List. The list is also being used for no-shows to allocate all doses.
- Immunization data entry is occurring within 24 hours of vaccination.
- Individuals are scheduled for their 2<sup>nd</sup> dose appointment on the date when the 1<sup>st</sup> dose is administered.
- Clinics will add afternoon slots for 2<sup>nd</sup> COVID-19 vaccine doses. This will start week after next.
- Other agencies providing vaccinations include:
  - Veteran’s Affairs - anyone that qualifies for VA services can sign up with their provider. Clinics are scheduled as they receive enough referrals.
  - Walgreens and CVS Pharmacies
    - No vaccines for the general public at this time.
    - Anticipate receiving small shipments in the next few weeks for the general public.
- Montana State is faring better with the percentage of fully vaccinated individuals compared to other states.
- Death toll reporting can fluctuate due to data clean-up and individual deaths being reported up to a month later.

## 9. **Public Comments**

Mr. Robinson opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

## 10. **Member Comments**

Mr. Moore provided member comment. Highlights are included below:

- Mr. Moore complimented Ms. Gardner and her team for continuing to manage the COVID-19 situation.
- Infection/quarantine rates in the school district are on a downward trend since the Christmas Holiday.
  - School cases are at an all-time low since October.
  - 11 – positive cases yesterday in the school district.
- Protocols, safety and health standards currently in place are working.
- The AA School Districts and Montana High School Association are discussing post-season sporting competitions and tournaments in consultation with local health officials.
  - Great Falls School District will be hosting the State Swim Meet and State AA Basketball Tournament.
  - Mr. Moore and Mike Henneberg, GFPS Director of Athletics, have been consulting with Ms. Gardner.
  - Even though schools are not under the same guidelines/restrictions as businesses, they have tried to maintain those guidelines for events and activities. When those guidelines cannot be maintained, they have worked closely with Ms. Gardner to decide how events can be held following health and safety standards.
    - Mr. Moore received a petition from Great Falls’ citizens to consider opening up high school gymnasiums to larger spectator groups.
    - Current capacity has been maintained at 250 individuals, or approximately 7% of capacity.
    - Discussions amongst the AA School Districts are looking to increase that number to 25% capacity (approximately 4 spectators per participant).
      - Parameters will be set for events.
      - The State AA Basketball Tournament will be held in the Four Seasons Arena.

- Health and safety standards/protocols for physical distancing, health checks, check-in, and masks will be required.
- All plans are contingent on the community spread of COVID-19. If there is a spike in cases, plans will be cancelled.
- Mr. Moore asked for feedback from the Board.
  - Mr. Robinson indicated he thought the level of care and consideration managing the events was good. He shared that people in the community (including himself) miss attending high school sporting events.
  - Dr. Geyer supported the school district’s plans based on the active case rate in the community.

Mr. Barber congratulated Mr. Moore on his evaluation. Mr. Moore responded it has been a “challenging couple years”, but he is honored and privileged to serve as the Superintendent.

**Adjournment**

*Mr. Robinson called for a motion for adjournment. Mr. Barber moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at **12:36 p.m.***

Respectfully Submitted,



03/03/2021

---

Owen Robinson – Chair

---

Date