



CATTARAUGUS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Cattaraugus County
Health Department
Established 1923

Joseph Bohan, MD, President

Giles Hamlin, MD, Vice-President

Zahid Chohan, MD

Kelly J. Andreano, Legislator

Sondra Fox, RN, MSN, C.S.

Theresa Raftis

David L. Smith, Mayor

Kathryn Cooney Thrush, NP, MSN

Donna Vickman, LPN

MINUTES

May 3, 2023

The 913th meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health (BOH) was held at the Old Library Restaurant on May 3, 2023.

The following members were present:

Joseph Bohan, MD

Giles Hamlin, MD

Legislator Kelly Andreano

Mayor David L. Smith

Kathryn Cooney-Thrush, NP, MSN

Donna Vickman, LPN

Also present were:

Kevin D. Watkins, MD, MPH, Public Health Director

Ashley Smith, County Attorney

John Rendall, PE, PMP Guest Speaker

Joseph Pillittere, Communications and External Affairs

Kelly Wooley, Deputy General Manager

Richard Helmich, Legislator

Ray Jordan, Senior Public Health Sanitarian

Debra Lacher, Secretary to the Public Health Director

James Lawrence, Emergency Preparedness Director

Collette Lulay-Pound, Administrative Officer

Rick Miller, Olean Times Herald Reporter

Robert Ring, Environmental Health Director

Brooke Schnell, Supervising Community Health Nurse

Matt Tyssee, Health Educator

Howard VanRensselaer, Legislator Chairman

Traci Wind, Health Educator

Gilbert Witte, MD, Medical Director

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Bohan. The roll was called and a quorum was present. Dr. Bohan asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 5, 2023. A motion to approve the Board of Health (BOH) meeting minutes from April 5, 2023 was made by Ms. Vickman, the motion was seconded by Mayor Smith, and unanimously approved.

Dr. Bohan introduced our guest speakers from CH2M Hill BXWT West Valley, LLC, John Rendall, PE, PMP, President and General Manager; Kelly Wooley Deputy General Manager; and Joseph Pillittere, Communications and External Affairs Manager. West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) handouts were provided to those in attendance.

Mr. Rendall stated that the last time they spoke with the BOH they were just getting ready to start the main plant demolition project. He expressed that he wanted to talk to the board about the history of West Valley. The West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) started as Nuclear Fuel Services back in the 60's, which came out of the peace initiative during the Eisenhower administration. Their idea was to harness nuclear energy and see if the private sector would step up and build a nuclear fuel recycling commercial facility, amazingly New York State placed a bid on it under Governor Rockefeller in the 1960's. The plan was to take nuclear spent fuel and reprocess it. They broke ground in the early 60's and operated from 1966-1972, it was eventually shut down, for modifications and never reopened.

The West Valley Demonstration Act was signed in 1980 and the work that is being done now is under this Act. The Department of Energy has decided to break the project into (2) major phases. The first phase is to address the above ground structures, and the second phase is to address the underground tanks where the nuclear fuel was brought in and processed. Liquid waste was also put into those tanks and disposed of in a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) State licensed disposal area. Previously the tanks were put in place and the liquid essentially evaporated and the sludge remained. The WVDP current contract is actually addressing the above ground structures which included over (45) structures. The WVDP has also shipped off site legacy waste. What remains in their contract is the disposition of the main plant processing building which has subsurface contamination. Similar to a water softener, an ion exchanger will be used to take Strontium 90 out of the groundwater.

Last year's goal was to complete deactivation activities in the Product Purification Cell, and complete disposition of the waste. The strategy that was used for taking down that plant was deactivation or decontaminating the building in advance of taking it down. That deactivation process lasted two decades. On September 21, 2022 the WVDP started the demolition of the main plant. Historically the WVDP have been trans-loading waste via truck to rail. Most of this waste is shipped to Utah, Texas and Nevada.

Mr. Rendall stated that their safety numbers are very good by industry standards, a total recordable case rate or dose equivalent was (0.60 millirem) per every (100) employees in their 12 month rolling average.

Dr Witte asked, during the deconstruction period, could WVDP measure how contaminated the structure is. Mr. Rendall replied yes, there was over 98% of contamination removed from the building prior to them starting the main plant deconstruction. When measurements are taken they find that they are non-existent or very low. He expressed that during the whole demolition project their models have shown that the actual emission of radioactive exposure was (0.08 millirem) [the average annual radiation dose per person in the U.S. is 620 millirem].

WVDP new scope of work includes the construction of a new guardhouse (that was completed in March) and tank sampling. For the tank sampling, a mock-up with the crew was completed and the work instruction package for sampling the liquid and shipping this sample and an archived sludge sample, was issued (this work will be scheduled when the weather turns warmer).

WVDP rely on the local community for services like fire, and medical support for the WVDP. Therefore we provide donations to a variety of local facilities like the West Valley Fire District, Bertrand Chaffee Hospital, and Mercy Flight.

In addition the WVDP staff has always been active in providing for the annual food drive that benefits food pantries within the area, United Way and the Toys for Tots program.

WVDP goals for this coming year are to perform all work safely and compliantly; complete processing; packaging and disposal of degraded containers; disposal of (2) high integrity containers; continue rail shipments from WVDP; and demo and dispose of (9,000) tons of main plant waste.

Dr. Bohan asked what went wrong, was the facility poorly designed/constructed, was the geology wrong or all of the above. Mr. Rendall replied, the issue is beyond the plant itself, is that Strontium 90 leaked into the groundwater and that came from below the main plant. The leakage into groundwater points to critical problems with the design or construction of the building itself.

Legislator Helmich asked how the water that is used to make things wet is collected after use. Mr. Rendall replied that the contamination area that they are working on, the water is collected and put into tanks that are sampled and then treated. Dr. Bohan asked how many more years would be needed to complete the process of the cleanup. Mr. Rendall replied that the earliest would be the spring of 2025.

DIRECTORS REPORT: Dr. Watkins stated that last month he talked about Babesiosis, a tick borne disease that is on the rise in the northeastern part of the States, caused by a parasite from infected ticks, which grow and reproduce in red blood cells, leading to rupture of the RBC and causing increase pain and hemolytic anemia. He went on to say that recently he received a tick surveillance report from NYSDOH that showed ticks were present throughout several locations in the county and many of the ones that were tested actually tested positive for a number of tick borne diseases. He stated that overall, most of the ticks that were tested, tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi* the bacterial species that causes Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (deer ticks). Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans.

Adult blacklegged ticks are usually active from October until June, and the nymphs are active from mid-May through July. The duration of time generally required for a blacklegged tick to feed and transmit pathogens depends on the pathogen:

- 1.) 36 to 48 hours for *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease) and *Borrelia miyamotoi* (tickborne relapsing fever).
- 2.) 12 to 24 hours for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* (granulocytic anaplasmosis).
- 3.) 24 to 36 hours for *Babesia microti* (babesiosis).
- 4.) 15 minutes for the two lineages of Powassan virus.

The tick surveillance report focused on (7) areas within Cattaraugus County (see chart below). Dr. Watkins went over a the various pathogens identified in both nymphs and adult ticks tested in the seven areas that was surveyed and concluded that of all the pathogens identified, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterial species that causes Lyme disease, was most commonly identified. There are no FDA approved vaccines for Lyme disease at this time, however, a vaccine called VLA15, is currently in phase 3 human trials and Valneva and Pfizer pharmaceutical companies are schedule to apply for FDA approval in 2025.

In April, Moderna pharmaceutical company announced two new development candidates for mRNA vaccines against Lyme disease, they are also on schedule to apply for FDA approval in 2025. Antibiotics are used to treat Lyme disease. The treatment usually lasts 10 to 14 days. In most cases, recovery will be quicker and more complete the sooner treatment begins.

Cattaraugus County Collection Sites	Nymphs Collected /Tested	Borrelia burgdorferi	Anaplasma phagocytophilum	Adults Collected /Tested	Borrelia burgdorferi	Anaplasma phagocytophilum	Borrelia miyamotoi	Babesia microti
Allegheny State Park	170/50	34%	18%	163/50	52%			
Deer Lick Conservation	75/50	48%		126/50	44%	2%	2%	
Pfeiffer Nature Center, Lillibridge	61/50	28%	2%	104/50	74%	16%		
Pfeiffer Nature Center, Eshelman	58/50	26%	12%	62/50	68%	26%		4%
Gargoyle Park	194/50	34%	6%	265/50	50%	14%		6%
Zoar Valley	13/13	42%		57/50	48%		2%	
Eden Heights	56/50	8%	14%	123/50	58%	22%		18%

Dr. Watkins stated that there are ticks all over Cattaraugus County so be prepared to protect yourself and reduce exposure to ticks. Consider wearing light colored clothing when walking in grassy areas. Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, check in and around your hair, under the arm pits, belly button, around the waist, between the legs, the back of the knees, and the ankles.

Dr. Watkins informed the board that Monroe County Health Department sent out a notification that there was a rabid fox in their community that bit five or six people and their Health Department was holding a rabies vaccine clinic for the community. He shared a video of a rabid fox attack. He expressed that rabies prevention includes not touching or feeding stray animals, make sure your animals are up to date on their vaccinations, and teach children not to touch any animal they do not know. He added that contact with infected bats is the leading cause of rabies deaths in people in the U.S., followed by exposure to rabid dogs while traveling internationally. He informed the board that there were (5) fatal human cases of rabies in the United States in 2021.

Dr. Watkins updated the Board on the number of opioid mortalities in the county. He stated that we are seeing an increase in the number of opioid deaths in our county due to fentanyl use. In 2022 the department reported its largest number of opioid deaths due to fentanyl use and in 2023 we are on track to surpass this number. In 2022 there were (27) deaths, (24) of them were due to fentanyl, (2) were heroin, and (1) was methadone. In 2023 all (9) deaths have been due to fentanyl, and an additional (4) are pending toxicology reports. He added that most of these deaths are occurring in Olean and Salamanca. Efforts to reduce the number of opioid deaths is being addressed by community stakeholders who are distributing harm reduction tools such as Narcan, and fentanyl test strips.

COVID-19 update; May 11th ends the federal emergency declaration. Out-of-pocket expenses will depend on a patient's insurance and will be similar to that for other prescription drugs.

Dr. Watkins reported to the board that a recent mandate from the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 59.6), requires all informational and educational (I&E) materials that Title X agencies (i.e. family planning clinics) disseminate, must be reviewed by an advisory committee made up of at least 5 individuals to ensure the materials reflect the educational, cultural, and diverse backgrounds of the intended population or community. He then asked the board to act as this committee going forward.

All family planning and reproductive health materials, print and electronic, made available to clients and potential clients, regardless of whether they were created in-house, by a company that creates health education materials, or by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or another government agency, must be reviewed by this committee. Materials intended for clinicians do not have to be reviewed by the committee.

A policy and procedure for the (I&E) review process was reviewed by the committee and a motion to adopt the policy was made by Mayor Smith, the motion was seconded by Mrs. Cooney-Thrush and unanimously approved. A new sexual health pamphlet and a flyer regarding cancer prevention with Gardasil vaccine, which was created for the family planning clinic, was reviewed by the committee. A motion to approve the brochure and the flyer for the general public was made by Mayor Smith, the motion was seconded by Ms. Vickman and unanimously approved.

The members suggested sharing the information with family care providers, pediatricians, emergency rooms, and school nurses.

ENFORCEMENT LIST: There are no enforcements to report this month.

NURSING DIVISION REPORT: Mrs. Schnell shared that the homecare census was (237) there were (66) admissions in April, (123) were re-admissions, and (76) discharges. The homecare division will start interviewing as there are (2) RN positions open at this time.

The lead program; in April there were (96) lead tests conducted with the highest blood lead level tested being (25.6ug/dl), [normal is \leq 5ug/dl].

HIV testing; in the month of April there were (10) tests conducted in Olean, (4) tests conducted in Salamanca and (2) tests conducted in Machias; all of which were negative.

Communicable diseases: for the month of April there was (1) case of campylobacteriosis, this person was unable to be contacted by phone and a letter was sent with no response; there were (10) confirmed cases of chlamydia; no cases of gonorrhea; (6) chronic cases of Hepatitis C; and (1) positive case of influenza A, and (3) positive cases of influenza B.

There were (11) probable cases of Lyme disease (none confirmed); (1) case of strep group A, (1) case of syphilis and (118) cases of COVID-19.

There was (4) post-exposure rabies series given in April for (3) dog bites, and (1) bat exposure while sleeping.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT: Mr. Ring reminded everyone that there will be a rabies clinic Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 9:00AM-11:00AM at the Department of Public Works garage in Little Valley. The clinic is hosted for dogs, cats and ferrets.

The mosquito surveillance program will begin shortly, the department is in the process of hiring (2) program aides that will start in June. They are both college students who will work between June and August.

Currently, there are (10) childrens camps in Cattaraugus County they are permitted by the department and regulated by the State Sanitary code. Most of the camps start in June, we do a pre-operational review that is quite extensive, reviewing their safety plans, staff, and activities. A second operational inspection is completed once the camp is operating and children are in attendance. Dr. Bohan asked if this was for overnight camps only, Mr. Ring replied both day and overnight camps.

Old/New Business: Ms. Vickman stated that she thought it would be nice if the BOH sent a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Fox as she has been sick for quite a few months.

Matt Tyssee shared that the Lead Smart Partnership Coalition Dinner will be held on May 16th, and Stanley Schaffer, MD from Rochester will be the guest speaker. Anyone in attendance is eligible to receive (1.5) Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits. There are about 25-30 RSVP's that includes family physician's, pediatricians, physician assistants, OBGYN's, and health department staff. The event will be held in Doyle Hall at St. Bonaventure University. Invitations for Board members will sent out today.

Dr. Watkins reminded everyone that there will not be a board meeting at the Old Library in June due to the 100th Year Anniversary Celebration that will take place in Ellicottville on June 15th from 1:00PM-4:30PM. We will be showcasing our President, Dr. Bohan, amongst other speakers. It should be an exciting event and we are looking forward to having all the Board members there to participate.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Hamlin, the motion was seconded by Mayor Smith and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin D. Watkins, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary to the Board of Health