



# 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*

*Theresa Raftis*

*David L. Smith, Mayor*

*Kathryn Cooney Thrush, NP, MSN*

*Donna Vickman, LPN*

## MINUTES

November 1, 2023

The 917<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health (BOH) was held at the Old Library Restaurant on November 1, 2023.

*The following members were present:*

Joseph Bohan, MD

Zahid Chohan, MD

Giles Hamlin, MD

Legislator Kelly Andreano

Kathryn Cooney-Thrush, NP, MSN

Theresa Raftis

Mayor David Smith

Donna Vickman, LPN

*Also present were:*

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

Brendon Riley, Assistant County Attorney

Melissa Chamberlain, Community Health Nurse

Bill Fox, Special Guest

Ray Jordan, Senior Public Health Sanitarian (Virtual)

Debra Lacher, Secretary to the Public Health Director

James Lawrence, Emergency Preparedness Director

Collette Lulay-Pound, Administrative Officer

Rick Miller, Olean Times Herald

Lynne Moore, Director of Nursing

Dave Porter, Hearing Officer

Robert Ring, Environmental Health Director

Tony Sowers, Resource Specialist

Matt Tyssee, Health Educator

Erin Washburn, Assistant Health Educator

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 called for the approval of the October meeting minutes. Mayor Smith made a motion to approve the minutes for the October 11, 2023 meeting, the motion was seconded by Ms. Raftis, and unanimously approved.

Dr. Bohan shared that last month, with sincere regrets, the board accepted the resignation of Sondra Fox. He stated that Mrs. Fox served on the Board for more than (26) years with great distinction. She contributed in so many ways and her opinions on a host of issues were always well thought out. He concluded by saying that Mrs. Fox always had the health of the county and its residents in her thoughts. Her son, Bill Fox, who was present at the meeting, accepted a plaque in her honor. Mr. Fox thanked everyone on behalf of his mother stating that she enjoyed the work, and the meetings of the Board of Health.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:** Dr. Watkins shared a quarterly report on opioid mortalities in Cattaraugus County. He stated that fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common cause of drug overdoses that are seen in Cattaraugus County. The number of opioid mortalities have doubled to what was reported in 2020 which was (12) deaths, as of date, there has been (24) confirmed opioid deaths. Of the (24) deaths in 2023, (22) were due to fentanyl, (1) was due to buprenorphine, and (1) was due to oxycodone. Buprenorphine is a drug used in medication assisted therapy for those who have an opioid addiction. Looking at the positive cases by month, March 2023 had the highest number of opioid deaths, followed by January, and then July. Legislator Andreano indicated that she recently witnessed a death that she suspects was due to a drug overdose. Dr. Watkins showed a map of where the deaths were concentrated and stated that most of the deaths were occurring in private residences in Olean, followed by the City of Salamanca. The ages range from (16-67), of which, (7) were females. Dr. Watkins went on to say that there are harm reduction measures that can be used to prevent opioid overdose mortalities, including naloxone safety kits which contains (2) Narcan nasal sprays, gloves, a mask, and instructions for use. The department also provides fentanyl test strips, which allows a person to test their drugs for fentanyl before using, xylazine test strips which allows a person to test their drugs for xylazine before using, and the department also have deterra bags which is for residents who have unused medications and would like to safely dispose of them. Dr. Bohan asked if we are seeing any of the xylazine wounds in the wound center of the hospital. Dr. Chohan replied that they haven't seen wounds specific to xylazine injection (i.e. tissue necrosis), but they do see patients with addictions.

Dr. Watkins reported that the county administrator and his team had gone over the department's 2024 budget, and they made a few suggestions. Based on their suggestions the department will submit a 2024 budget to the county legislators projecting that the department's revenues will total (\$11,003,837.00) which is about a (0.4%) increase from last year's budget of (\$10,959,459.00) and projecting expenses will total (\$14,923,696.00) which is a (3.03%) increase from last year's budget of (\$14,484,246.00). The increases in revenue is due to several new grants that the department has acquired including three first time awarded grants; a grant for a refrigerated truck for the veggie wheel program, a lead capacity planning grant, and a workforce infrastructure grant. All of the revenue from the grants cancel themselves out with equal expenses. The increase in the budget expenses are due to wage and fringe benefits increases. No new positions have been requested.

Dr. Watkins updated the board on the October vaccine campaign. He stated that vaccines administered by CCHD in October included (914) influenza vaccines, (504) COVID-19 vaccines, and (9) Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccines. He added that there are a few more vaccine clinics scheduled for this month.

Dr. Watkins discussed several new projects for the department in 2024. He stated that the veggie wheels program, which was started in 2015, is a program in the department whose sustainability comes from community volunteers and grants. The volunteers assist staff in distributing fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income individuals and their families. This program purchases its produce from local area farmers such as Wilson's Farm Market, Miller's Farm Market and the Great Valley Berry Patch. This program currently runs for three months out of the summer. Matt Tyssee shared that the veggie wheels program was awarded a (\$250,000.00) grant that will allow the department to purchase a refrigerated truck which will expand the program outside of the summer months, and also allow the program to reach localities in the northern part of the county.

Lead poisoning is a big concern in Cattaraugus County, it may harm young children by hindering their growth, delaying their puberty, causing behavior problems such as hyperactivity, and may lower their IQ's, additionally it can lead to anemia, kidney damage, and hearing loss as well. Most commonly found in lead paint, but can also be found in herbal remedies, medicines, toys, candy, stained glass, and ceramic ware. This week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was notified by the North Carolina Department of Health that they were investigating a family that had high blood lead levels. The investigation analyzed multiple lots of WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree, detecting extremely high concentrations of lead. After the investigation, the FDA issued a public health alert advising parents to not purchase WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puttee, due to extremely high concentrations of lead found in this product. This product has been removed from the shelves at local markets in Cattaraugus County. Warning to parents is, if your child has eaten this product and experiencing irritability, loss of appetite, weight loss, or vomiting take them to a pediatrician and have them tested for lead.

Homes built prior to 1978, the likelihood that there is lead paint in the home is very high. Today the department is following nearly (100) children with high blood lead levels, a high blood lead level is determined to be any blood lead level above (5ug/dl), [normal is  $\leq$  5ug/dl]. Staff, including one of our public health fellows, and Nurse Chamberlain have worked with Allegany County Health Department to submit a grant to Housing Urban Development (HUD) that resulted in a grant award of \$2.5 million dollars. The grant is to be used to build a lead infrastructure program in Cattaraugus County.

Chamberlain shared that this capacity building grant is specifically targeted to localities who have never received funding before. A handout was provided to those in attendance covering all the components of this program. Currently there are no courses in Cattaraugus County on remediation of lead, and therefore we have no local contractors versed in the process. This will be a goal of the program to build this infrastructure. Two years from now we would apply for a follow-up grant which would allow the department to fund homeowners who are looking for assistance in this remediation process.

Dr. Watkins stated that the department's final project is a community partnership with St. Bonaventure University (SBU) and the School of Health Professionals. SBU was awarded a (\$250,000.00) grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation. This grant went to the School of Public Health and will allow the hiring of (10) undergraduate interns who will be paid to assist the Health Department in the spring, winter and fall. The interns will look at the department's goals and objectives from the department's strategic plan and go out into the community and educate the public on several goals in the plan. Matt Tyssee and Tony Sowers will work with these interns who will be involved in this (2) year program. Their work will be community based focusing on seminars and town-hall like meetings with residents.

Dr. Watkins presented the revised BOH schedule for 2024, which is typically the first Wednesday of the month. There will be (3) meetings that will differ and they are the first Thursday of February, the second Thursday of July, and the Third Wednesday of December.

Mrs. Vickman congratulated the department on the recent grants received but commented that it still remains a problem of educating the community to take advantage of them.

**NURSING DIVISION REPORT:** Mrs. Moore shared that the homecare census is (260).

She announced that the department also received (\$10,000.00) for a virtual senior center program that hopefully will be up and established by the end of December. The largest hurdle is gaining reasonably priced internet access in the rural areas.

Lead program update: in October there were (71) lead tests conducted with the highest blood lead level (BLL) tested being (22.2ug/dl), [normal is  $\leq$  5ug/dl], this child was previously confirmed at a level of (36.7ug/dl) earlier in the year. There were (8) children between (5-8.7ug/dl) and the remainder were between (0-4.7ug/dl). The current lead case load is (94) children being followed.

Kerry Perese, Nurse Practitioner for the clinic, will be retiring in January therefore we are openly looking for a Nurse Practitioner.

The last scheduled influenza clinic is scheduled for November 6. The COVID vaccines which has been on back order, have finally arrived and the department is receiving supplies on a regular basis from McKesson, which is a pharmaceutical distribution company.

HIV Testing: In October; there were (7) tests conducted in Olean, (5) tests conducted in Salamanca and (1) test conducted in Machias; There were no positive results identified in any of the tests conducted.

Communicable diseases: In October, there were (2) cases of campylobacteriosis one was a probable case never confirmed and the second just came in on the thirtieth therefore the investigation is still in progress; in addition, there were (13) cases of chlamydia; (1) case of gonorrhea; (2) case of giardiasis, one of the cases has not returned any calls after multiple attempts, and the second was a child who frequents the grandparents farm, it is possibly the child could have hand, foot and mouth disease as the child is only (2) years old.

For the month of October there was (1) case of Hepatitis B; (3) chronic cases of Hepatitis C; (2) cases of influenza A; (2) cases of influenza B; and (179) confirm positive cases of COVID-19.

Dr. Bohan asked if every child in the county ages (2-4) was tested for lead. Mrs. Chamberlain replied that the requirement is ideally that all children should be tested at ages (1 and 2), and screenings continue yearly until age (6). Many times there are no visual symptoms until years later, so that's why yearly screenings are so important. Dr. Bohan asked what would be the approximate cost of professional lead abatement for a 2 bedroom home. Mr. Ring replied tens of thousands for real abatement.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT:** Mr. Ring shared that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) has (8) active projects for well and septic repair. The department has gone through the waiting list that was compiled over the last three or four years, the department has now moved into the marketing phase, looking for new applicants. The goal is to complete (30) projects.

Capital projects are wrapping up for the year, most construction is winding down, and there are several project reviews. This time of year the department is focusing on reviewing grant applications, and trying to assist municipalities with funding.

Annual inspections are based on the calendar year, therefore sanitarians are working hard to complete the inspections prior to December. All of the state's environmental core programs such as mobile home parks, campgrounds, food service establishments, pools, spas, spray-grounds, tattoo parlors, public water systems, and establishments with tobacco licenses must be inspected prior to the end of the year.

**Old/New Business:** Dr. Watkins shared that the next meeting will be held on December 13th, which is the second Wednesday of the month, and wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving. A formal photo will be taken of the Board at the December Board meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Legislator Andreano, 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