Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health

Minutes of March 11, 2025, regular meeting

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on March 11, 2025, at 12:00pm in the City/County Building, 2nd Floor Courtroom, Wheeling West Virginia.

Board members present were Dr. John Holloway, Elisabeth Slater, Ty Thorngate, Tom Tuttle, and Erik Harris. The staff present included Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department, County Health Officer Dr. William S. Przybysz and WOCHD HOPE Program staff Dr. William Mercer.

The meeting was called to order by Board of Health Chairman Dr. John Holloway.

The Board of Health held a discussion on the Project HOPE Program. The Board has been provided with information regarding the separation of Project HOPE from the WOCHD.

Minutes of January 14, 2024, regular meeting were distributed to members prior to the meeting. Minutes were approved.

Dr. Przybysz gave an update on the current flu season and need to get vaccinated. Dr. Przybysz also discussed other reporting diseases and vaccination rates.

The administrator gave a report on department programs and services.

The administrator notified the Board that two members will have terms expiring in June of this year. If the members would like to continue to serve on the Board of Health, please let the administrator know by the May Board meeting so that the appointing bodies can be notified that the Board member would like to continue to serve. This should allow time for reappointment by the appointing bodies before the July annual meeting.

The health department worked with WVU Wheeling Hospital to support a drive through testing clinic for several respiratory diseases. The clinic was set up in the hospital's parking lot and was meant to pull patients away from the hospital's ER that are in need of Flu, COVID or RSV testing.

The Administrator gave a WV and Federal Legislative Update.

- Immunization bill SB460 is still pending in the House Health Committee. The bill has been added to the House Health Committee agenda today (3/11/25). The next phase of the process for SB460 will be amendment and voting by House Health committee members.
- Currently 9 vaccine bills (SB49, SB108, SB250, SB460, SB466, HB2203, HB2517, HB2729, HB2732). 4 in the House and 5 in the Senate. – some eliminate vaccine requirements, voluntary private school immunizations, permitting religious exemption for compulsory immunizations, no need to report to the state who has an exemption and who does not, among other things.

- Sewage system bills (HB2079, HB2181) – Limiting the PSDs ability to charge someone for the expansion of a public sewage line.
- Need Exchange Bills (SB203, HB2378, HB3159) – eliminating needle exchange programs. A committee substitute was passed on 3/10/25 to HB2378 that would allow exchanges to operate at an LHD or with an affiliation with an LHD.

The administrator updated the Board on the recent termination of an employee (employee accepted a position with the State Department of Human Services). As a result, the department is actively seeking a new employee for the environmental program. The position has been posted with the WVDOP for both internal and external applications.

The administrator gave a short update on the Video Conference project with DES from Pittsburgh. The project is funded by the state Infrastructure Grant.

The department is proposing a one-time non-base building pay differential for WIC staff. The differential will be for all permanent employes of the WOCHD WIC Program, to be effective April/May and July 2025 (50% each time). Funding for this will come from the WIC main grant budget for FY25. This will be for 14 WIC staff at $3,700.00. The proposal was approved.

The health department received a draft audited financial statement and a Board Letter for 2024 from Ferrari and Associates. At this time no findings were reported. A full report will be coming shortly and reported to the Federal Clearing House. The final report will be distributed at the May Board of Health meeting.

The health department received notification that PEIA will see a 16% increase on premiums and benefits for FY26. The proposal is effective July 1, 2025.

The Board was provided with the WOCHD Financial Review, which included the January and February 2025 financials. The financials were approved.

The Board of Health did have an Executive Session to discuss several legal issues. No decisions were made follow the short session.

With no other business before the Board, the Board moved for adjournment. The next regular Board of Health meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2025.

SUBMITTED BY

William S. Przybysz, MD, Health Officer
May 13, 2025

APPROVED BY

John D Holloway, MD, Board Chairman
May 13, 2025