

The Cleveland County Public Health Board met on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Board members present: Chair Sara Karner, Ronnie Whetstine, Nancy Cline, Robert Miller, Marty Hamrick, Christina Alexander, and Heather Bridges Moore

Health Department staff present: Tiffany Hansen, Heather Voyles, Leslie McSwain, Nathan McNeilly, Anne Short, Chris Breese, Holly Thornburg, and Andrea Power

County Attorney present: Martha Thompson

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

Chair, Sara Karner called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and welcomed everyone.

Mr. Miller gave the invocation.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION:

No citizens requested to appear before the Board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 8, 2024, PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEETING:

Chair Karner presented the proposed agenda for the October 8, 2024, Public Health Board meeting for consideration of adoption.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Miller with a second by Ronnie Whetstine to adopt the agenda for the October 8, 2024, Public Health Board meeting as prepared. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2024, PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

Chair Karner presented the September 10, 2024, Public Health Board meeting minutes for consideration of approval.

Motion: Marty Hamrick moved that the minutes of the September 10, 2024, Public Health Board Meeting be approved, and Mr. Miller made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNUAL COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT:

Chair Karner introduced Holly Thornburg with the Annual Communicable Disease Report. Holly began by presenting the number of cases reported for communicable diseases and sexually transmitted diseases reported in calendar year 2023 for Cleveland County. In 2023 there was 1

case of Botulism reported, 7 cases of Campylobacter, 1 case of Carbapenem Resistant Enterobacteriaceae, 2 cases of Cryptosporidium, 1 case of Hemophilus Influenza, 1 case of Hepatitis A, 1 Influenza death, 1 case of Legionellosis, 3 cases of Pneumococcal meningitis, 6 cases of Salmonella, 16 cases of Streptococcal Infection, Grp A, invasive, 3 cases of Toxic Shock Syndrome, 2 cases of Tuberculosis, and 1 case of Vibrio. Sexually transmitted diseases report for calendar year 2023 are as follows. 600 cases of Chlamydia, 246 cases of Gonorrhea, 43 cases of Syphilis, and 13 cases of HIV disease. Holly reported that we were able to administer 123 Pneumococcal vaccines and 623 Influenza vaccines at the Health Department for Fiscal Year 23-24. Holly reported that Chlamydia cases for ages 10-19 years of age has increased from 173 cases in 2022 to 203 cases in 2023, 20-29 years of age decreased from 319 cases in 2022 to 301 cases in 2023, 30-39 years of age increased from 72 cases in 2022 to 79 cases in 2023, 40-49 years of age decreased from 12 cases in 2022 to 6 cases in 2023, and the age group of 50 and over increased from 6 cases in 2022 to 11 cases in 2023. Gonorrhea cases for the 10-19 year old age group decreased from 55 cases in 2022 to 42 cases in 2023, the 20-29 year old age group also decreased from 145 cases in 2022 to 112 cases in 2023, 30-39 years of age decreased from 63 cases in 2022 to 58 cases in 2023, 40-49 year of age increased from 19 cases in 2022 to 24 cases in 2023, and 50 years of age and older increased from 8 cases in 2022 to 10 cases in 2023. HIV cases for 10-19-year-olds increased from 0 cases in 2022 to 2 cases in 2023, 20-29 year olds decreased from 6 cases in 2022 to 3 cases in 2023, 30-39 years old increased from 4 cases in 2022 to 5 cases in 2023, 40-49 year olds decreased from 3 in 2022 to 1 in 2023 and the 50 year and over age group remained the same and 2 cases in 2022 and 2 cases in 2023. Syphilis cases for the 10-19 year old age group increased from having 2 cases in 2022 and 4 cases in 2023, 20-29 years decreased from 18 cases in 2022 to 14 cases in 2023, 30-39 years decreased from 18 cases in 2022 to 14 cases in 2023, 40-49 years increased from 1 case in 2022 to 8 cases in 2023, and 50 years and over decreased from 5 cases in 2022 to 3 cases in 2023. Cases for Chlamydia among the African American race has increased in all age groups except for the 40-49-year-old range from 2022 to 2023. The Gonorrhea rate for African Americans has decreased in all age groups from 2022 to 2023. HIV rates among African Americans decreased for all age groups except the 30-39-year-old range. Syphilis among African Americans has decreased in all age groups excluding the 40-49-year-old age group from 2022 to 2023. Holly explained that overall, the numbers for our communicable disease and sexually transmitted diseases does seem to be improving. We continuously work to improve these number which improves the overall health for Cleveland County residents.

PHARMACY PRESENTATION:

Chair Karner introduced Chris Breese with the Pharmacy Presentation. Chris began his presentation by pointing out the location of the pharmacy within the Health Department and the location of the drive through for the pharmacy. The Health Department pharmacy consists of two Pharmacists, four Certified Pharmacy Technicians, and one MAP Coordinator. Chris spoke about the services that the pharmacy has available for clients. They serve the Health Department clinic patients which consists of communicable disease, family planning, primary care, adult health, child health, school health, dental and vaccine supply. The public that falls under the category of low-income, uninsured and underinsured has two cost saving options when visiting the pharmacy. The Access Meds Program can greatly decrease the cost of medicines for those that qualify and may at times receive their medicine at no cost. The MAP (Medication Assistance Program) provides free

medications for eligible low-income, primarily for those that are uninsured County residents through partnerships and drug manufacturer assistance programs. For Cleveland County employees that visit our pharmacy their medicine costs are based on a 5-tier formulary system, which also is used for their eligible family members. Chris spoke about the barriers that clients encounter when trying to get the medicines that they need. More than 1 in 5 new prescriptions go unfulfilled due to cost. 50% of people taking a chronic medication stop taking it the first year due to cost. At least 125,000 Americans die annually due to poor medication adherence because of cost. Poor medication adherence costs the US \$100 billion dollars per year in hospital admissions. Chris explained to everyone how the Access Meds program works. The Access Meds Program is for those that are uninsured or underinsured, low-income County residents. This program improves access to medications, primarily generic, cost effective, and affordable. The program works by first receiving a valid prescription for a patient. The patient will be asked to complete a basic screening form for eligibility. If the patient is eligible, prescriptions may be filled for \$5 per 30-day supply if on formulary (some may be free), or Medicaid copay (if applicable). If medication is not available or cost-effective, pharmacy staff will consider other economic options and may request prescriber approval to change to an alternative medication. The MAP (Medication Assistance Program) has patients work with the prescription assistance coordinator at the Health Department Pharmacy. The coordinator helps patients navigate free medication resources and apply for eligible programs. Free medications are offered through drug manufacturers that participate in the patient assistance programs or NC MedAssist Partnership. The medication assistance program coordinator and a pharmacist assess medication list for a patient and develop a medication access plan after determining eligibility. The coordinator assists with completing program applications, obtaining prescriber signatures, and submitting applications. Once approved, medications may be shipped to our pharmacy, doctor's office, or to the patient. The Medication Assistance Program served 100 patients in FY2024, 2800 prescriptions were dispensed, and a total healthcare cost avoidance was \$45,845,112.00. The value of medications dispensed was \$720,967.00. Of the medications dispensed 78 patients received a medication for hypertension, 36% of patients received a medication for asthma, 60 patients received a behavioral health medication, and 54% of patients received a medication for diabetes. Chris also explained that the Health Department Pharmacy supplies free Narcan with no prescription necessary, free tobacco cessation products for those that are 21 years of age and older, and free over-the-counter medications when available and while supplies last. There is also medication drop boxes located near the entrance of the reception area at the Health Department where unwanted or expired prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can be dropped off for proper disposal. This helps with reducing accumulation of medications in homes and subsequent risk of unintentional poisoning. Chris made everyone aware that NC MedAssist will be hosting a mobile free pharmacy program on Friday, December 6, from 9 AM until 2 PM at Palmer Grove Baptist Church in Kingstown, NC. They will provide free over-the-counter medicine items such as allergy, cough and cold, pain relief, vitamins, children's medicine, and more. No appointment or registrations is required, no income eligibility, no ID is required, however you must be 18 years or older to participate. Online ordering opens on November 6, 2024, and last until November 29, 2024.

HURRICAN HELENE TEMPORARY SHELTER:

Chair Karner introduced Tiffany Hansen with the Hurricane Helene Temporary Shelter. Tiffany began by speaking about Hurricane Helene and the effects it had on our community. As part of relief efforts for our citizens, the Cleveland County Health Department was able to provide a temporary shelter for those in need due to being displaced from their homes and needed power for life saving medical equipment to operate. The shelter was operated by health department staff around the clock until the patients were able to return to their homes. A news story was released about this effort and can be viewed on the below link, or on the WSOC TV news channel web page dated September 30, 2024.

<https://www.wsoctv.com/news/local/life-or-death-shelter-helps-victims-without-power-cleveland-county-after-tropical-storm/JYUJ5VCIFRGTLLB5LWRGZJGDNY/>

MISCELLANEOUS:

Chair Karner asked if there was any miscellaneous business to discuss. There was not any miscellaneous business that needed discussion.

ADJOURN: 7:00 PM

There being no further business, Chair Karner called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Mr. Miller moved, with a second by Marty Hamrick, that the Cleveland County Public Health Board meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Tiffany Hansen, Secretary
Cleveland County Public Health Board