

# WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

**August 2021**

The Wilson County Board of Health held a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 10th, 2021, in the Conference Room at Wilson County Health Department. Members present were:

Scott Dixon, D.D.S.	Ariel Fulghum, D.V.M.
Shannon Drohan, M.D.	Dr. Matthew Aldrich
Catherine Melin, FNP	Dr. Ronald Stahl
Rosario Ochoa	Ijeoma Uwakwe
Bill Blackman	

Others present:

Teresa Ellen, Cinnamon Narron, Jordan Jernigan

## **Welcome**

Dr. Scott Dixon, called the meeting to order at 6:07pm and welcomed all in attendance.

## **Approval of Minutes of June 2021 Meeting**

The minutes from the June 2021 meeting were accepted without corrections, additions, or deletions.

Review and approval of the minutes shall be construed as review/discussion/approval/of all items distributed prior to the meeting for consideration and shall be so reflected in the minutes.

## **Administration**

Ms. Cinnamon Narron discussed the closeout for the 2021 fiscal year. The Health Department looks good financially despite Covid-19. The Health Department received the total Medicaid cost settlement and Medicaid Max with the total at \$636,000 dollars. Earlier this year the HD received some funds from the 10% hold back. With Covid live X there has been enhanced Medicaid payments, and enhanced case management fees. The dental program is in the red, and the HD is still working on getting the program fully launched. The Dental program has over \$51,000 dollars in unpaid claims. The Dental program is fully staffed and includes a full time Dentist, Dental Assistant, and Office Assistant. Dental work was performed during summer school, and the staff have been going to different schools, and speaking with Principals, and Parents. When the school's open up for fall, the dental program will start seeing patients at Vick Elementary for as long as possible, and then move on to Elm Elementary. An Office Manager was recently hired for the Dental Program, and she will be responsible for handling the dental back billing, and money owed. Dr. Scott Dixon asked if the HD anticipates receiving additional Federal funding for next years budget?

Ms. Ellen planned on discussing in her presentation and explained that she plans on receiving additional federal dollars. At the beginning of the current fiscal year the HD received \$655,000 dollars that is designated for Covid Related services. The Health Department plans on using most of the additional funds for contract staff. The HD had 3 contract Nurses and 1 Interpreter. One contract Nurse moved on to pursue a different career path. The two other contract Nurses are working full time. One is working at the SBHC the and the other works at the HD in the Clinical area. The HD plans on Hiring three new contract nurses and one additional Interpreter. The Funds can be used for Contract services, costs, supplies, equipment, etc, needed or related with handling the Covid-19 pandemic. \$91,000 dollars was also received for immunizations which doesn't include the ARPA funds which have not yet been received and are still being held due to legislature rules. BOH member Ms. Uwakwe asked if the Maternal Health Clinic at the HD has an Ultrasound Machine. The HD currently does not have an Ultrasound machine

because the oversight Physician does not want the Nurse Practitioner's to perform ultrasounds onsite. Ms. Ellen agrees it would be nice to perform Ultrasounds at the HD, and if the time comes when Nurse Practitioners can practice independently the HD will look into purchasing an Ultrasound Machine.

### **Personal Health**

Ms. Valerie Bulluck, Director of Nursing was not present.

### **Environmental Health**

Jordan Jernigan, Environmental Health Supervisor reported that the onsite wastewater program is four to six weeks out for new lot evaluations. He would like to add a new position in the future for the program. Crab de Jour, and Barton College's secondary café located on campus will be permitted to open this week. The EH is tracking 100% compliance on required inspections. One employee has resigned and EH will be seeking a new hire soon. EH is working with Wilson County public schools to obtain remediation compliance for lead hazards. All the licensed Childcare centers are in compliance with the required lead in water testing.

### **Health Director's Report**

Ms. Teresa Ellen, Health Director reported that since the start of the pandemic Wilson County has recorded 10,343 positive cases. The 7day average has continued to rise. In June it was 3-5 cases per day and currently the county is at 17 positive cases per day. The percent of positive is 7.3% in Wilson and the state level is 14%. 1,025 covid tests were taken last week, and the week before 1,300 tests were taken. In June the average was a little over 500 tests a week. Currently there are 22 Covid patients being hospitalized at Wilson Medical Center. Since last week there have been 5 new deaths. June 1<sup>st</sup> was the last death prior. All 5 of the new deaths were unvaccinated and had underlying health conditions. Almost all the hospitalization's are people who have not been vaccinated. 38% of the positive Covid cases are between the ages of 25-49. 22% between 50-64. From Jan 1st till the end of July 12% of the cases which is 554 out of 4500 were school age children between 5-18. Of those that have been vaccinated 36% is African American, 57% White, 18% Latin X. However, some Latin X are also counted in the white demographic. Wilson County has worked very hard and will continue to get more of the African American population vaccinated. Board member Ms. Uwakwe has also helped along with Wilson Community Health Center.

The Health Department along with WCHC has also worked together to make sure farm workers have access to the vaccine. Wilson has a large influx of H2A worker. Some were vaccinated before coming to the state and some were unable to get the vaccine due to various reasons. The Wilson Community Health Center has an outreach team for the farm workers which they receive specific federal dollars, so they have taken that task for the county. Currently 39% of the County is fully vaccinated and 32% has received the first dose. The Delta Variant is twice as contagious than the original virus, which is why there has been such a steep spike in positive cases. It has affected those that are fully vaccinated, but the cases tend to be mild to moderate. According to the CDC 99.9% of the breakthrough cases do not result in serious illnesses, hospitalizations, or deaths. Dr. Stahl agreed that there has been a very slight uptick in hospitalizations for vaccinated patients. Of the breakthrough cases, 7% were in July, and at 18% in August. Due to the Delta variant the CDC has changed their mask guidance and recommend unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals to wear masks indoors.

New OSHA guidelines have been added that also mandates to continue to wear a mask while indoors. Dr. Stahl said that at the hospital all unvaccinated staff must wear an N95 mask. They have all been fit tested according to OSHA respiratory guidelines. The Health Department has not mandated that all employees be vaccinated and have not required weekly testing. However, if there is a spike increase within the organization steps may be made. The City of Wilson is also participating in wastewater testing where they

are testing the level of Covid in the sewage. Wilson County Schools voted and mandated that K-12 students are required to wear a mask. If students are asymptomatic, they are not required to quarantine. Charter and public schools have chosen to keep the mask mandate and, Wilson Christian, and Community Christian have made masks optional. Dr. Dixon asked if WC and CC school had the same rule last year and if they had a higher incidence in positive tests. It's hard to compare due to the difference in size of student population. The HD Vaccinates weekly Tuesday through Friday, with Monday being a planning day. The HD is offering gift cards for vaccinations. The program started on August 3<sup>rd</sup> at \$25 dollars for the vaccine recipient and \$25 dollars for an eligible driver. On August 4<sup>th</sup> \$100 dollar gift cards were offered to vaccine recipients and \$25 dollars for eligible drivers per trip. North Carolina State has purchased and provided the gift cards for the vaccine program. There are a limited number of Health Departments that are participating in the Vaccine gift card program, and it plans to end at the end of August. Some HD staff members are participating in the National Night out event and offering vaccines. Barton College starts school on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the HD has a vaccine event planned on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Barton College guidelines are that they must test student athletes that are unvaccinated at least once a week if it's PCR and twice a week if they're using rapid tests. There is a vaccination event scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup> at Wilson Community College.

The HD also held a vaccination event for Wilson County Schools July 30<sup>th</sup> for staff and students and 67 people were vaccinated. Dr. Drohan asked if there was any info about possible Covid booster shots. The state has added to the CVMS system in case boosters are permitted. If boosters are permitted the HD expects to see a big demand in the 65 and older population. The City of Wilson has also suggested using the local airport for future mass vaccination dates. House Bill 61 did pass into the House Budget Bill. Ms. Ellen wants to thank representative and HD BOH member MS. Cooper- Suggs for her part. The bill will offer 36 million dollars in recurring funds for Health Department infrastructure during Covid and beyond. The HD has also been watching Senate Bill 530 which will expand Medicaid for pregnant women up to 12 months postpartum, currently its 6 moths. The HD has also received specific funding to hire a RN and the specific position would be to serve as a liaison between the public schools and the HD as it relates to contact tracing, case investigations, etc. Dr. Williams an Assistant Superintendent for Administration handled a lot of the Covid contact tracing which is very labor intensive.

The Quality Assurance Coordinator/ Accreditation Coordinator resigned and the new hire for that position will start Sept 1<sup>st</sup>. The position is helping a lot to keep up with the metrics. Some of the duties for the position include well child visits at various intervals of life, making phone calls, follow ups, and appointments. Any enhanced payments are based on how well the quality of metrics are recorded. Manage care is also in place for pregnant women and they have added some additional paperwork. Anytime a woman has a positive pregnancy test, the HD must send detailed information to each of the patients PHP notifying them of their pregnancy. The HD also does handles case management for high-risk pregnancies and at-risk children. The work is guaranteed for the HD to continue for all five PHP's for three years. Before the new requirement managed care was an opt-in decision. The HD receives referrals from local ob-gyn offices, and PHP offices. There are currently 3 case managers for high-risk children, 3 case managers for high-risk pregnancies, and 1 supervisor. The WASH program is gearing up for the new school year. They have been attending sports meeting, passing out packets, and making appointments for sports physicals.

The Health Education Department worked with students from the White Oak Academic Enrichment Program where they taught a program called, coordinated approach to child health. The HE has also been out at the local farmers market sharing healthy recipes and the many services the Health Department offers. Next week the HE Dept will be hosting a free community baby shower at the HD giving away free Diapers and Wipes, which were provided for free by the March of Dimes. HE is also partnering with the Wilson County Senior Center to start a new minority diabetes prevention program. The program is scheduled to start at the end of August and will end at the end of August 2022. HE has also partnered with DSS to help with the Eat Smart Move More program and initiating a new weight loss challenge. HE has also been working hard with the Wilson County Substance Prevention Coalition around opioid messaging. They have a drop off box at the Public Library, Wilson Value drugs, and Carolina Family Health Center. Health Education also had a virtual health fair in June. August is overdose awareness

month and overdose awareness day is August 31<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Stahl asked if there is anything the Health Department needs the Board to do because he understands the workload has been and would like to know how the Board can further support. Ms. Ellen said the board can continue to help by encouraging people to get vaccinated, and that the board has always provided support. The great thing about Wilson County is that no one does anything by themselves, there are lots of different organizations by our side.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

Dr. Scott Dixon sworn in two new board of health members. Dr. Fulghum gave her oath first, followed by Dr. Aldrich. The IT Department distributed the BOH members ipad's for Health Department business, and communication between members.

### **Member Comments**

None

### **Chairperson's Report**

None

### **Public Comments**

None

**Adjournment**- Meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa C. Ellen, Secretary  
Wilson County Board of Health

TCE/lmb