

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – November 14, 2023

Classroom of the Henderson County Department of Public Health
1200 Spartanburg Highway Hendersonville, NC 28792

I. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Health meeting was called to order by Dr. Maggie Hayes, Chairperson, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present	Kathleen Baluha, Registered Nurse Maggie Hayes, Physician – Chairperson Jennifer Hensley, General Public Member Bill Lapsley, County Commissioner Scott Prechter, General Public Member Alison Reid, Dentist Jeffrey Young, Professional Engineer
Members Not Present	John Bryant, General Public Member Leslie Leidecker, Veterinarian Kenesha Smith, Pharmacist – Vice Chairperson *Optometrist Member Position Vacant
Staff Leadership Present	Steve Smith, Health Director Camden Stewart, Administrative Officer Amy McCall, WIC/Nutrition Director Crystal O’Dell, Director of Nursing Seth Swift, Environmental Health Director Stacy Taylor, Community Health Director

Quorum Present

II. Approval of the Meeting Agenda

Dr. Hayes requested approval of the meeting agenda if no changes were needed.

Motion: Ms. Kathy Baluha made a motion for the agenda to be approved and it was seconded by Dr. Scott Prechter. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

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III. Approval of the October 10, 2023 Minutes

Dr. Hayes asked board members to review the October 10, 2023 meeting minutes.

Motion: Mr. Jeff Young made a motion for the minutes to be approved and it was seconded by Ms. Baluha. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Public Comments

None.

V. Presentations

None.

VI. Reports

Health Director's Monthly Report

Mr. Steve Smith shared that an optometrist candidate for the board had been identified and that their application would be forwarded to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners for consideration.

Mr. Smith also introduced Mrs. Jo Anne Ballard as a long serving public health employee that would be retiring in December and that the department owed her a tremendous amount of gratitude for her service. Mr. Smith added that Mrs. Ballard's current duties included logistical support for the Child Fatality Prevention Team and serving as the Deputy Registrar for Vital Records. Dr. Maggie Hayes recognized Mrs. Ballard and asked if she wanted to share any comments. Mrs. Ballard stated that it had been a fascinating career within public health and that she had enjoyed the work and the relationships with co-workers. Mrs. Ballard emphasized that her entire career had been with the Department of Public Health. Board members applauded Mrs. Ballard for her service.

VII. Old Business

None.

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VIII. New Business

Preliminary FY 2024-2025 Budget Considerations

Mr. Smith reminded board members that the budget development process would begin early in January and that department budget submissions would be due February 14, 2024.

Mr. Smith shared the 4-year budget plans previously developed by the board and indicated the primary funding request would be sustaining 5 school nurse positions currently funded by Henderson County Public Schools with their Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Dr. Hayes indicated that staff would provide additional detail for major budget considerations at the January meeting.

Advocacy Opportunities for Tobacco/Vaping Policy

Dr. Hayes started by thanking those in attendance for supporting the discussion and continuing the effort to advance tobacco use prevention policy in Henderson County.

Mr. Smith introduced Dr. Michelle Geiser representing the HOPE Coalition and Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer of Henderson County Public Schools, as guests that have been involved with recent discussions about tobacco use and vaping concerns linked to youth in Henderson County.

Dr. Geiser began by sharing the same data and trends recently presented to the Henderson County Board of Public Education. She started by defining that 9 out of 10 people today with substance use disorder (SUD) started using before the age of 18. Statewide statistics for high school aged youth indicate that 32% vape, 28% use alcohol and 20% use cannabis. Those percentages would mean that roughly 1,760 of the 5,500 high school students in Henderson County have tried vaping. In part, the effectiveness of targeted e-cigarette advertising is elevating this trend with estimates that approximately 70% of middle and high school students have been exposed to some type of advertising. An additional emerging concern among youth is that approximately 1/3 of them report using their vape for recreational marijuana. Dr. Geiser added that multiple other illicit substances including opioids, methamphetamine and ketamine can be acquired to use within a vape.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Carl Taylor of Henderson County Public Schools (HCPS) if he would like to add any context given recent discussions within the school system. Mr. Taylor shared that vaping had been a priority concern for some time and that it was challenging to monitor and identify when occurring on school grounds since it could be readily concealed. He stated that current policy required disciplinary action when a student was found to be vaping which typically required suspension for a period of time. Dr. Jennifer Hensley commented that this likely wasn't an effective practice and ultimately might provide more opportunity for the

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student to vape and become disconnected from the academic environment. Mr. Taylor responded that there was ongoing discussion about protocols, but that a violation of current policy warranted some type of disciplinary action. Mr. Taylor added that the school was very focused on engaging with the student and their family while providing wrap around services including additional education and support that might limit or even prevent future vape use. Mr. Taylor commended the school nurse staff for being an integral part of that approach and that the school system wanted to do their part to responsibly effect positive change.

Dr. Geiser shared that best practices included tobacco education classes, anonymous reporting systems and providing access to smoking/vaping cessation programs. Mr. Smith then shared a resolution template generated by the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch of the NC Department of Health and Human Services which advocated for several policy changes at the state level including an increase in the age for legally buying tobacco products to 21 and requiring tobacco retailers to obtain a license or permit. It was noted that North Carolina's tobacco sales age was 18 while 41 other states have increased their tobacco sales age to 21. North Carolina is also one of only 10 states that does not require a permit or license for tobacco retailers.

Mr. Smith asked the board to consider adopting the resolution at a future board meeting if the policy recommendations were consistent with their intent and that it might also be appropriate to share with the Henderson County Board of Public Education for their consideration given the shared concerns about vaping trends. Dr. Hayes asked for input from the board and members asked for additional time to review the resolution language. Dr. Hayes emphasized that there are likely a number of additional steps that can be taken but signaling a need for policy change to the state legislature seemed like a positive step forward. Dr. Hayes noted that many boards of health and boards of education throughout the State had already adopted similar resolutions.

December 12, 2023 Board of Health Meeting

Dr. Hayes informed the board that staff had indicated no pressing business for December and that the Search Committee wouldn't likely have any preliminary information to share until the January meeting. **Motion:** Mr. Bill Lapsley made a motion to cancel the December meeting and it was seconded by Dr. Hensley. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Closed Session – Personnel

Motion: Dr. Hensley made a motion to enter closed session for personnel matters pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6) to "...consider the qualifications, competence,

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performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee...". Dr. Alison Reid seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Dr. Hayes stated for the record that upon exiting the closed session, there would be no further discussion or action by the board other than adjournment. All those present were then excused from the meeting room with the exception of board members, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Camden Stewart.

Motion: Dr. Hensley made a motion to exit the closed session and it was seconded by Dr. Reid. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

IX. Discussion

None.

X. Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Lapsley made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Dr. Hensley.

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted:



Secretary to the Board/Health Director

1/23/2024

Date

Approved by the Henderson County Board of Health at the January 23, 2024 meeting.