

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

May 6, 2015

Present: Lee Harrison, MD, Chair  
William Youngblood, Vice Chair  
Karen Hacker, MD, Secretary  
Edith Shapira, MD  
Kotayya Kondaveeti, MD  
Ellen Stewart, MD  
Anthony Ferraro  
Caroline Mitchell  
Donald Burke, MD  
Joylette Portlock, PhD

Absent: None

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was held at the ACHD Administrative Office, 542 Fourth Avenue. Dr. Harrison called the meeting to order and announced that an executive session had been held to discuss personnel matters. Dr. Harrison noted the presence of County Council member John Palmiere and thanked him for his attendance.

2. **Approval of Minutes from May 6, 2015**

Dr. Harrison asked if there were any comments on the minutes. There were none. Dr. Harrison then asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

**Action:** Dr. Shapira moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Youngblood seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments no agenda items.

4. **Old Business**

**A. Status of Community Health Improvement Plan**

Dr. Hacker stated that ACHD has identified five priority areas for the CHIP. ACHD is working with its advisory group to identify activities and appropriate outcome measures.

Dr. Hacker believed that ACHD was on pace to complete the CHIP by mid-May and informed the Board of a press conference with County Executive Fitzgerald to be tentatively held on May 26<sup>th</sup> to release the CHIP to the public.

## **B. Heroin overdoses**

Dr. Hacker stated that heroin was a difficult problem in the United States, concentrated mostly in the Northeast. She reported that the State has released a standing order allowing first responders, fire and police officers, to be able to use Naloxone to be used as a remedy for heroin, and other opioid, overdoses. At a local level, ACHD is addressing this as an issue under its Mental Health & Substance Abuse priority of the CHIP.

Dr. LuAnn Brink, Chief Epidemiologist, informed the Board that there were 100 fatal overdoses in Allegheny County in 2000. This number increased to 299 in 2014. The proportion of heroin in these overdoses went from 28% in 2000 to over 50% in 2014. She reported that the number of emergency room visits with a chief complaint of overdose was increasing, as was the number of doses of Naloxone administered by EMS.

Mr. Youngblood asked if all EMS agencies in the County were using Naloxone. Dr. Hacker stated that it is ACHD's understanding that all EMS agencies in the County were carrying Naloxone. The only police department in the County carrying Naloxone is the Pitcairn Police Department.

Dr. Burke stated that this needs to be a high priority for ACHD. Dr. Hacker assured him that it was a priority for ACHD in the CHIP. She informed the Board that ACHD was working with the Department of Human Services, was increasing epidemiological surveillance, and was examining prevention in schools. She also informed the Board that there was a national effort to encourage physicians not to prescribe large quantities of opioids to their patients.

Dr. Harrison asked about the availability of Naloxone. Dr. Hacker stated that ACHD was investigating issuing a standing order to pharmacies to enable family members, and addicts themselves, to get Naloxone.

## **C. Status of food facility grading system in County Council**

Dr. Harrison thanked Council Member Palmiere for his support of the food facility grading system and asked if he would like to make any comments about it. Mr. Palmiere stated that in the future, this effort should take advantage of social media for public outreach. He stated that there was a perception that this system was meant to punish people. However, the system was not for punishment but was to help alert the public to potential dangers. He stated that his barber shop was inspected once or twice per year by the State, and he felt that inspections are necessary for the public's safety. He further stated that he is a supporter of jobs, and was not trying to hurt any businesses by supporting this system. He informed the Board that he would be happy to champion this cause again. Dr. Harrison thanked Mr. Palmiere.

Dr. Hacker stated that there were only a few food facilities that required an enormous amount of work from ACHD. Dr. Harrison stated he thought it would be worthwhile to reconvene a group to strengthen the food safety program.

**Action:** Mr. Ferraro moved to reconvene the Food Safety Advisory Group. Dr. Kondaveeti seconded the motion. Donna Scharding stated that reconvening this group was in the Food Safety Program Plan.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

At this time, Dr. Hacker introduced ACHD's newest Deputy Director, Abby Wilson, to the Board. Ms. Wilson is ACHD's Deputy Director of Public Policy and Community Relations. Ms. Wilson previously served in the White House. Dr. Hacker also introduced to the Board ACHD's new Public Health Information Officer, Melissa Wade. Ms. Wade was previously employed by KDKA.

## 5. **New Business**

### **A. Air Quality**

#### **1. Program Summary and Reporting Document**

Jayne Graham presented the Board with a draft of the Air Quality program's new reporting document. She stated that the Air Quality program monitors the air quality, develops plans and regulations to manage the air quality, issues permits, inspects and enforces, encourages voluntary actions, and provides education and outreach. The reporting document informs the Board of all of the program's activities within these areas.

Mr. Youngblood asked if there was anything in litigation. Ms. Graham stated that there was nothing yet in litigation, an action had been appealed but was not in court at the present time. Mr. Youngblood suggested that the program's report inform the Board where monetary penalties were collected from.

Dr. Portlock asked if the program was behind with its permitting process. Ms. Graham stated that the program was a little behind. She stated that the program was developing a manual of standardized documentation to assist with writing permits. Jim Thompson stated that permitting is a two way street with compliance issues and required tests. He said that its hard to summarize each individual case. Dr. Harrison asked about the backlog. Mr. Thompson stated that the program will never be at 0%, and estimated that the present backlog was at 10-15%, which he stated was typical for air agencies.

Dr. Kondaveeti stated that the Lung Association rated the regional air quality with an F grade and asked for Ms. Graham's thoughts. Ms. Graham stated that the County was lower on the Lung Association's scale than before and reminded the Board that the Lung Association's reports were a year behind. Dr. Hacker stated that the air quality had received an F grade, but did have great improvement. Continuing ACHD's

efforts will continue to drop the numbers in question. She also suggested to Ms. Graham that the air quality program's reporting document include the number of complaints that it receives. Ms. Graham stated that can be done.

## **2. Clean Air Fund Requests**

### **a. \$50,000 – Tree Pittsburgh**

Ms. Graham presented the Board with a request from Tree Pittsburgh for \$50,000 to plant 550 trees on six industrial properties in Lawrenceville, Chateau, and Neville Island. Ms. Graham stated that this request was recommended by the Advisory Committee and that there is an overall advantage to putting trees in low tree communities. The trees help get rid of urban heat and help with air movement.

Mr. Youngblood expressed concern that some types of trees can cause maintenance problems, such as their roots finding sewer and water pipes. He asked for details about the maintenance program of the trees. Ms. Graham stated that the organization ACHD is partnering with has several tree experts and offers tree tending classes.

Mr. Ferraro asked if ACHD had engaged in this partnership before. Ms. Graham stated that this was the first time. Dr. Burke asked if there were other groups planting trees. Ms. Graham stated that there were three or four other groups.

**Action:** Dr. Burke moved to authorize funding from the Clean Air Fund to support Tree Pittsburgh with \$50,000. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

### **b. \$225,000 – promotional and educational campaign on wood-burning health issues**

Ms. Graham requested the Board authorize an expenditure of \$225,000 to fund an outreach campaign in response to the revisions to Article XXI section 2105.50: Open Burning. The campaign will discourage open burning, educate on the health effects of wood smoke, and educate on the revisions to Article XXI section 2105.50: Open Burning. She reported that the campaigns will consist of billboards, ads in print media, and social media.

Dr. Portlock stated that she felt this campaign was critically important and essential.

Mr. Youngblood shared Dr. Portlock's support, but had fiscal concerns. He stated he would like to see numbers showing that ACHD would be purchasing x number of billboards for x number of dollars. He felt that the current proposal was too open-ended. Ms. Graham stated she could provide further details to the Board at its next meeting.

Dr. Burke stated he had received no sense for the expected impact and evaluation of the campaign. He would like to know how success would be measured. Dr. Harrison asked how outcomes would be measured. Mr. Thompson stated that ACHD receives approximately 1,000 air quality complaints, the vast majority of which were open burning complaints. He also stated that approximately 25% of PM2.5 measured at the Liberty monitoring station was from burning biomass.

Caroline Mitchell suggested using the assistance of local independent filmmakers. Mr. Youngblood suggested that Melissa Wade would also be of assistance to the campaign.

*At this time, Mr. Ferraro excused himself and left the meeting.*

Dr. Burke expressed that he would like to see better efforts to quantitate data to expend funds.

**Action:** Dr. Shapira moved to authorize \$225,000 from the Clean Air Fund to fund the promotional and educational campaign on wood-burning health issues. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

**The motion passed by a vote of 6-2. Dr. Harrison, Dr. Portlock, Dr. Shapira, Dr. Kondaveeti, Dr. Stewart, and Ms. Mitchell voted in favor. Dr. Burke and Mr. Youngblood voted against. Mr. Ferraro was not present at the time of the vote.**

**B. Community Needs Assessment Announcement – Allegheny Community Indicators (ACI) and Allegheny County Health Survey**

Dr. Hacker informed the Board that printed copies of the Community Health Assessment were available and that the document was available electronically on ACHD's website. She then demonstrated the use of the Allegheny Community Indicators on ACHD's website. The ACI is available to the public and enables health data of Allegheny County to be searched by municipalities.

**C. Strategic Planning Committee**

Dr. Hacker stated that the Strategic Plan was circulated among Board members. She reported that the Plan is being finalized. The Plan will be presented to the Board for final approval. Major areas that the Plan focuses on include organizational infrastructure, facilities, workforce development, and community engagement. Dr. Burke stated that there is a two-phase strategic planning process, with one phase focusing on the near term and the second phase focusing on larger issues.

**D. Appointment of Plumbing Advisory Board members**

Jim Thompson stated that under Article 15, the Board appoints a Plumbing Advisory Board. At present, all of the members on the Board have had their terms expire. Mr. Thompson stated that the Board needs to be filled immediately.

**Action:** Dr. Shapira moved to appoint the nominees to serve on the Plumbing Advisory Board. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**6. Director's Report**

Dr. Hacker had nothing additional to report.

**7. Announcements**

Dr. Harrison read in an announcement from Pat Waag: "May is being recognized by the Commonwealth as WIC Month. ACHD WIC has recently received a grant from USDA to begin a Peer Counseling Program. This program will enhance the ACHD WIC Program's efforts to improve the initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding mothers in Allegheny County".

**8. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

**A. Peter Kossarth – ALCOSAN and bugs**

Mr. Kossarth, of Brighton Heights, complained about midge bugs coming from the ALCOSAN treatment plant. He showed the Board a video of a large swarm of bugs flying around his home. Mr. Kossarth had been in touch with the Mayor's office, and with ACHD's Dave Namey and Bill Todaro. He requested assistance and direction from the Board for dealing with the midge bugs at his home from the ALCOSAN plant. Dr. Harrison stated that this issue needs to be discussed internally.

**9. Adjournment**

Mr. Youngblood moved to adjourn the meeting, and Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.