

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

March 2, 2016

Present: William Youngblood, Vice Chair  
Karen Hacker, MD, Secretary  
Edith Shapira, MD  
Anthony Ferraro (via telephone)  
Joylette Portlock, PhD  
Caroline Mitchell  
Ellen Stewart, MD

Absent: Lee Harrison, MD, Chair  
Donald Burke, MD  
Kotayya Kondaveeti, MD

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was held at the ACHD Administrative Office, 542 Fourth Avenue. Mr. Youngblood called the meeting to order and welcomed Dr. Potter and students from the University of Pittsburgh to the meeting. Mr. Youngblood thanked County Executive Fitzgerald, and County Council members Palmiere, Means, and Kirk for attending the meeting.

2. **Remarks by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald**

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that it was good to be joined by members of Council. He thanked the Board for improving health in Allegheny County and drew attention to the work with diet, exercise, and environmental issues. He stated that the Board is doing terrific work and that he receives positive feedback about it in communities across the County. Mr. Fitzgerald thanked the members of the Board for giving up their time to serve as unpaid members of the Board and encouraged them to keep up their good work. Mr. Youngblood stated that the Board also appreciates the support of the Executive and thanked Mr. Fitzgerald on behalf of the Board.

3. **Approval of Minutes from January 13, 2016**

Mr. Youngblood welcomed County Council member Klein to the meeting. Dr. Portlock noted that there should be a reference in the January minutes to a monitoring report in six months.

**Action:** Dr. Shapiro moved to approve the minutes with Dr. Portlock's addition, Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

4. **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

**A. Thaddeus Popovich – CMU Air Pollution Modeling Project**

Mr. Popovich stated that his remarks are positive in nature this time. He stated that he has been a resident of Ben Avon for eight years and lives one-half mile from Shenango. He also stated that he is a co-founder of ACCAN. He lent his support to the CMU Modeling Project and applauded the efforts of ACHD, particularly Jayme Graham, to improve health. Mr. Popovich presented a certificate to ACHD to thank them for their work.

**B. Angelo Taranto – CMU Air Pollution Modeling Project**

Mr. Taranto, a resident of Ross Township and a member of ACCAN, asked the Board to approve the Clean Air Fund request for the CMU Air Pollution Modeling Project. Mr. Taranto stated that the request is consistent with the purpose of the Clean Air Fund and will contribute to understanding the state of air quality in downwind communities, which deserve immediate relief. He urged the Board to support funding the CMU project.

5. **Old Business**

**A. Update on Accreditation – Culture of Quality**

Dr. Hacker reported that much work has been done by ACHD with performance standards and procedures, and that performance improvements are now being adopted. She stated that the need for performance improvements are self-explanatory, as it is an accreditation requirement and also a result of the funding reality. She stated that, nation-wide, funding for public health has decreased, while expectations have increased. Dr. Hacker assured the Board that ACHD is focused on being responsive to the community's needs and to a continuous and ongoing culture of quality that will improve the community's health and achieve equity. Dr. Hacker also confirmed to the Board that ACHD continues to be on track with the timeline of accreditation.

**B. Update on Plan for a Healthier Allegheny**

Dr. Hacker stated that this initiative is continuing to move forward, and that all work groups have met at least twice. She reported that the Dental Access Task Force, comprised of a variety of partners, has met. Dr. Hacker stated that overall, there has been a lot of community partner engagement, which underscores the fact that the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny is truly a community action plan and not a plan for just ACHD.

**C. Update on Live Well Allegheny**

Dr. Hacker informed the Board that the Live Well Allegheny initiative continues to gain traction. She stated that ten restaurants have joined Live Well since the end of January, and that she would like to see more join. In addition to restaurants joining Live Well, twelve high school students have also joined. The students will be working on communications with the goal of getting messages to their own age group. Dr. Hacker stated that young people are critical to the

success of Live Well. Live Well has submitted grants to the Hillman Foundation and the Richard King Mellon Foundation in addition to having recently received a grant from the Jefferson Foundation to fund work specifically targeting the Mon Valley. Dr. Hacker informed the Board that Live Well continues to work with a variety of partners on projects such as increasing the number of farmers markets. She stated that she will continue to report Live Well's progress to the Board. Mr. Youngblood thanked her for this information.

#### **D. Food Safety Update**

Dr. Hacker informed the Board that the Food Safety program report was in their packets and asked if the Board had any questions for Barb Murray. Mr. Youngblood thanked the staff for producing a more organized report. He asked if there were any problems within Allegheny County related to Chipotle restaurants. Ms. Murray reported that there was one complaint regarding an alleged food-borne infection and that the Food Safety program worked with the Epidemiology bureau to investigate it. Dr. Hacker stated that this was the same strain of *E. Coli*, but that the person in question never ate at Chipotle and there was no connection to the restaurant. Mr. Youngblood thanked Ms. Murray and Dr. Hacker for this information.

### **6. New Business**

#### **A. Policy Committee Report**

Ms. Mitchell reported that the Board's Policy Committee met last week and discussed which projects could add to improving the general health of the County. She reported that the Committee discussed a mandate for HPV vaccination and reporting for high school students. The Committee also discussed lead. Though Allegheny County is not at risk of an emergency like happened in Flint, the Committee did discuss the feasibility of mandating lead testing for young children. E-cigarettes were also discussed. According to sources with Tobacco Free Allegheny, children can buy e-cigarettes and there is presently no regulations to forbid this. The Committee discussed if the Board should make any recommendations on this issue. The last item that the Committee discussed was the possibility of asking County Council to examine food offered in Allegheny County's recreational facilities and ensuring it comports with the idea of Healthier Allegheny. Mr. Youngblood thanked Ms. Mitchell for her report.

#### **B. Zika Virus**

Dr. Hacker stated that Zika is a virus carried by a certain type of mosquitos and is associated with microcephaly in babies. The CDC has issued a travel recommendation for pregnant women not to travel to areas effected by Zika. Dr. Hacker stated that Allegheny County is not home to the mosquitos effected by Zika and that the local concern would be with those who have travelled to effected areas. Dr. Kristen Mertz reported that Allegheny County is following CDC testing guidelines. Guidelines call for testing of those who develop two of the four major symptoms after travel to an effected area, pregnant women who have traveled to an effected area, and the infants of said mothers. Testing is done at the CDC, as the Pennsylvania Department of Health is not currently doing testing. Dr. Mertz stated that there is a delay in getting results. She reported that ACHD had approved 37 tests as of Monday, with no confirmed

cases. Dr. Hacker emphasized that the public risk in Allegheny County is very, very low. Mr. Youngblood thanked Dr. Hacker and Dr. Mertz for their report.

### **C. Lead Presentation**

Dr. LuAnn Brink stated that there is no safe level of lead exposure. Lead exposure causes neurological effects and adverse impacts learning and behavioral issues. Lead exposure can come from a variety of sources to include the air, soil, drinking water, home remedies and toy jewelry. A major exposure risk was from deteriorated lead paint in homes. Lead was banned from paint in 1978. However, 70% of homes in Pennsylvania were built prior to 1978, which is the fifth highest percentage in the United States. This percentage was even higher in Allegheny County, where 89% of homes were built before 1978. Homes built prior to 1950 presented the highest risk of lead exposure. In Allegheny County, 60% of homes were built prior to 1950. State-wide, 36% of homes were built prior to 1950. Older homes in Allegheny County are concentrated in the City of Pittsburgh and in the Mon Valley. Dr. Brink reported that 15-16% of Allegheny County children were tested for lead exposure by age 7. One percent of Allegheny County children tested in 2013-2014 had more than 10 micrograms of lead in their blood per deciliter, which is a concerning level.

Jeff O'Brien is the Program Manager of ACHD's Lead & Health Homes Program. His responsibilities cover 11 counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania. He reported that his program can perform Lead Risk Assessments, which are enforceable in rental properties, or Healthy Homes Assessments. These assessments identify lead hazards in homes and educate residents. Mr. O'Brien explained the thoroughness of the assessments, and noted that X-Ray Florescent Machines are used to help identify lead. Additionally, a one liter water sample is taken from a faucet in the home and is then analyzed by the Medical Examiner's Office. He stated that lead levels are rarely elevated in water, and elevations are caused mainly by paint. He reported that his program performed 24 Lead Risk Assessments in Allegheny County, and 11 in other counties, in 2015.

Dr. Hacker thanked Dr. Brink and Mr. O'Brien for their information. She recognizes there are concerns after the situation in Flint and stated that there is not a problem in Allegheny County. However, she did express concern about housing with lead paint, particularly given that Pennsylvania has one of the oldest housing stocks in the country. She informed the Board that most funding related to lead comes from the Federal government, and that there has been a challenging shift in the funding stream. She informed the Board that ACHD has converted a secretarial position to the first County supported lead inspector position. She stated that she has talked with the Policy Committee about mandating lead testing for kids. She thinks such a mandate would be welcome by the pediatric community. She stated that her heart goes out to Flint, and if there is any silver lining from that situation it is that it is a reminder that lead is still present and needs to be addressed.

Mr. Youngblood asked if there were any questions. An unidentified resident asked for information on lead after explaining that they lived in a 100 year old house. Mr. O'Brien and Dr. Hacker informed the resident that there was information about lead, and lead remediation, on ACHD's website.

#### **D. Clean Air Fund Requests**

##### **1. CMU Air Pollution Monitoring Project**

Jayme Graham explained that this is the second study that the Air Quality program is conducting with Carnegie-Mellon University as a partner. The Shenango Camera was the first project. She presented the Board with a letter of recommendation from the head of the Air Quality Advisory Committee to move forward with this monitoring project.

Ms. Graham stated that air pollution controls are expensive and that some models used to help develop them may be uncertain. By partnering with CMU, a more precise model may be developed for our particular area. ACHD could then place monitors where the air flows. The study would first acquire meteorological data, then develop a mechanical model. Ms. Graham reported that previously distribution models were used. Then, tracer studies would be run and would be used as a calibration tool for the model.

Ms. Graham reported that this was a \$700,000 project with a 3 year timeframe. She informed the Board that the Advisory Committee was split 4-4 with one abstention in discussing the project.

Dr. Portlock asked when the model would be put into use. Ms. Graham stated that this will not be completed in time for the next SIP. She stated though that she has been working on this since she was hired in 1981, and will continue to work on this in the future. Dr. Portlock asked about a timeline for the project. Ms. Graham replied that this was a 3 year project and that the intent is to start doing monitoring in the fall.

Mr. Youngblood asked for a motion to approve this project with funding from Title V.

**Action:** Dr. Shapira moved to approve the agreement with Carnegie-Mellon University for the Air Pollution Monitoring Project services detailed in the contract with funding from Title V. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

##### **2. Solarize Allegheny**

Ms. Graham stated that was a request to fund the third year of community outreach and that this project has the intent to move people off of the electric grid. Mr.

Youngblood asked if this request went through the Committee. Ms. Graham stated that it did, and was supported unanimously. Mr. Youngblood observed that the request seemed to support contractors. Ms. Graham stated that it did, but that the Air Quality program wants people to do this and that people have been hesitant to jump into this unknown.

Mr. Youngblood asked if there were questions and recognized Allegheny County Council member Palmiere. Mr. Palmiere stated that the discussion at the Advisory Committee was back and forth. He stated that the CMU idea is wonderful and that the Solarize Allegheny idea is good as well. He also pointed out that we do indeed have sunshine in Allegheny County. Sharon Pillar, Vice President of SmartPower, stated that her company manages Solarize Allegheny. She stated that 500 people have requested solar technology price quotes and 30 installations have been conducted. She stated that this technology does work in Western Pennsylvania.

Dr. Portlock noted that the pollution reduction is in line with what the Board has done in the past.

**Action:** Dr. Stewart moved to approve funding for Solarize Allegheny, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

### **3. Fireplace to Natural Gas Conversion**

Ms. Graham stated that this request was for an internal project. She noted that there have been problems with burning in Allegheny County. She stated that the EPA has asked ACHD to apply for a small grant to convert outdoor fire pits to burn natural gas. She stated that the request is for \$50,000, which will fund approximately 35 conversions.

Dr. Portlock expressed concerns about encouraging more burning.

**Action:** Ms. Mitchell moved to approve funding for the Fireplace to Natural Gas Conversion Project, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

**Motion passed 5-1. Dr. Portlock voted against the motion.**

After the vote, Dr. Stewart suggested a public relations campaign to discourage open burning. Ms. Graham stated that the EPA grant covers education. She also said that there have been previous Clean Air Fund requests for public outreach and that the Air Quality program is continuing to work on that. Dr. Portlock asked if it would be possible to have an annual report regarding the Clean Air Fund. Ms. Graham said that she could provide this at the next Board meeting.

7. **Director's Report**

Dr. Hacker had nothing additional to report for the Director's Report.

8. **Announcements**

Mr. Youngblood read in an announcement on behalf of Pat Waag that "the WIC staff will be recognizing March as National Nutrition Month during their March 2<sup>nd</sup> staff in-service training."

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

**A. Maggie Brooks – Air Quality Permit for McConway & Torley**

Ms. Brooks stated that she is the Pittsburgh Field Canvass Director for Clean Water Action, and that she is also a resident of Lawrenceville. Ms. Brooks stated that she was appearing before the Board not just as a representative, but as a concerned citizen. She reported that many other residents of Lawrenceville were upset by the amount of benzene and manganese released into the air by McConway & Torley. These concerns were shared by both new, and long-term residents. Ms. Brooks pointed out that Lawrenceville is home to many families, and to Children's Hospital. Ms. Brooks stated that McConway & Torley's emissions were placing a health burden on all of the area's residents. Ms. Brooks called for ACHD to prioritize residents' health by reducing manganese and benzene emissions and by continuing and expanding air monitoring. Ms. Brooks thanked the Board for their time.

**B. Zaheen Hussain, Millvale Sustainability Coordinator  
– Air Quality Permit for McConway & Torley**

Mr. Hussain applauded ACHD for their dedication to public health. He stated that as Pittsburgh is flourishing in a new age of growth and innovation, Millvale is as well. He stated that Millvale had a community meeting in January with more than 100 attendees and that Air Quality concerns were one of five topics that the attendees wished to address to improve their community's quality of life. He stated that air quality was not an issue of young versus old, or of hipsters versus blue collar residents. He stated that Millvale as a community has suffered from the results of unsustainable development, and that much of the inequity in his community is as a result of this. He asked ACHD and McConway & Torley to work together alongside the community to ensure the community is free of the negative health impacts from air pollution generated by the McConway & Torley facility.

**C. Stephen Riccardi, Penn Environment - Air Quality Permit for McConway & Torley**

Mr. Riccardi stated that he is the Western PA Field Associate for the PennEnvironment Research and Policy Center. He also stated that he was a Pittsburgh resident. Over the past several months, PennEnvironment has paid special attention to residents of Lawrenceville and their concerns about pollution from McConway & Torley. Mr. Riccardi stated that McConway & Torley ranks among the ten most toxic point source

polluters in Allegheny County. It is also the only one of the ten situation in such a dense residential area, with 147,000 residents living within a three mile radius. Mr. Riccardi stated that the company is continuing to do well while emissions have decreased. He urged ACHD to make the protections permanent in the new permit. He presented a petition from supporters who share that goal.

**D. JoAnne Buchanan - Air Quality Permit for McConway & Torley**

Ms. Buchanan stated that she is a resident of Lawrenceville and lives downwind from the facility. She moved to 4935 Hatfield Street, which is a half block from McConway & Torley's baghouse, seven years ago. She was unaware a foundry was so close. She complained of being woken up at night, with burning eyes and a dry throat, by emissions. She reported these emissions occurred approximately once per week, between approximately 2-5:30AM. She stated that the only air monitor is upwind from the baghouses, and asked why a monitor was not downwind. She gave permission for one to be installed on the roof of her house. She stated that she has COPD and asthma, is a lung cancer survivor, and would appreciate any help.

Ms. Mitchell stated that these comments were tremendously helpful and asked for commenters' names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Dr. Portlock asked about the status of McConway & Torley's permit. Ms. Graham stated that the plant is unusual in that it has equipment inside the plant and baghouses on the roof. She stated that from a draft permit two years ago, tests were conducted which showed no emissions leaving open doors. ACHD is working on testing the baghouses by putting together test protocols. Mike Parker stated that ACHD is having difficulty in finding a testing company, and that meetings were held last week about this issue. Dr. Portlock asked if ambient community monitoring will be done. Ms. Graham replied that yes, it will be considered.

9. **Adjournment**

Dr. Portlock moved to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.