



# Washtenaw County Board of Health

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## Minutes

May 28, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
555 Towner St., Room 2102B, Ypsilanti, MI 48198  
Zoom Meeting

**Present:** James Carty, Gina Dahlem, Neel Hajra, Justin Hodge, Carrie Rheingans, Katie Scott, Kathleen Stroud  
**Absent:** Morghan Boydston, Leon Golson, Elisabeth Vanderpool  
**Staff:** Jimena Loveluck, Kristen Schweighoefer, Juan Marquez, Ruth Kraut, Alize Asberry-Payne, Crystal Campbell, Charles Wilson, Beth Ann Hamilton, Kim Collom, Russell O'Brien  
**Guests:** Jo Ann McCollum, Maria Militzer, Rachel Kaplan, Alex Thomas

### 1. Call to Order

Justin Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

Roll-call check-in.

### 2. Public Comment

None.

### 3. Board Member Response to Public Comment

None

### 4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

*Motion by G. Dahlem, seconded by N. Hajra, to approve the agenda.  
Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.*

### 5. Approval of April 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Action)

*Motion by J. Carty, seconded by G. Dahlem, to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2021 meeting with the clarification of Community Voices deciding what their role should be on Page 2 Paragraph 2.  
Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.*

### 6. Executive Committee Report from April 15, 2021

Board members received the Executive Committee minutes.  
No discussion about the report.

### 7. Community Voices and Health for All Report

Jo Ann McCollum and Maria Militzer presented for Community Voices. They would like to know what their role could be on the Board of Health (BOH). If they have a member on the BOH, they want to be able to make decisions, vote on what is going on, suggest agenda items, provide input from community members, and not just give a report.

Justin Hodge provided some context. Any changes to the BOH makeup would require a change to the by-laws and approval from the Board of Commissioners (BOC). James Carty said that the BOH only makes one decision for the Health Department (HD), approval and recommendation of the budget to the BOC, but it has an advisory role. Maria stated that Community Voices wants to be part of the BOH so that they can express the concerns of community members. It may only be an advisory role, but that carries weight with the HD and BOC. Kathy Stroud said that she



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is open to better communication and more input. Neel Hajra asked about how Community Voices members are chosen or appointed. Charles Wilson responded Community Voices members are representatives of groups in specific areas where health outcomes are a lot lower. There is a process for members to suggest people to the group that they feel would be a good fit and are in an area that Community Voices does not currently cover. Gina Dahlem said she is all for having a Community Voices member representative on the BOH for the valuable, on the ground knowledge that will back up the data. It would be helpful to know when this would move forward and how to get the process moving. Carrie Rheingans said she thinks it is for the better to have Community Voices involved as a voting member of the BOH and involved in setting the agenda, either as a member of the Executive Committee or as a participant. She is willing to help do the work to make the necessary changes to have a member of Community Voices join the BOH. Maria Militzer responded that Community Voices wants to be part of the BOH because their members live and work in the area and they understand what it means to be part of a group that faces barriers. Jo Ann McCollum added that there is some mistrust between the HD and the community, and the relationship with the BOH would help with the trust factor.

### 8. COVID-19 Vaccine and Strategy Update – Ruth Kraut and Charles Wilson

Ruth Kraut gave an update on COVID-19 vaccine over the last few months. She discussed the overall vaccination rates, rates by age, and provider totals for Washtenaw County (WC). To date, 372,347 first doses have been administered in WC, with 93,522 doses coming directly from the Health Department (HD). A detailed map of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Census Tracts was shared highlighting areas that went from under 50% vaccination rates to over 50% from the beginning to end of May as well as those that remain under 50%. Washtenaw County is doing well with more than 75% of people over 50 vaccinated with at least one dose and it is the number one county for vaccination among 12-15 years. Progress can be made with people under 40, the four corners of the county, student areas, and men. Ruth highlighted the EMU/Chelsea mass vaccination sites, pop-up vaccination, clinics and acknowledged all the hard work staff and volunteers have done. Part of the strategy was to make it convenient to get a vaccine and have vaccination events coincide with other activities. The pop-up clinics and Vax Teams were built on partnerships with the Latinx community, faith leaders in the Black Community, the Racial Equity Office, schools, businesses, and senior housing. The goals for the vaccination effort include being data driven (over 70% for every census tract), develop and strengthen relationships, work in partnership, make it convenient, and move people from “not yet” to “yes”.

Charles Wilson discussed the outreach strategy which includes Vaccine Ambassadors, Community Health Workers (CHW), and the equity/outreach team. Vaccine Ambassadors will be county residents that want to help as many people get vaccinated as possible. They live and have connections where vaccine uptake is lower. The 15 ambassadors were finalized yesterday, and the timeline is to have them trained and ready to go mid-June. Three CHWs were hired to assist the outreach team at pop-up clinics, by providing translation/interpreter services, and help with community education. The equity/outreach team consists of 4 full-time employees that oversee the entire outreach effort.

Questions and comments:

Gina Dahlem asked if there would be considerations to provide other health screenings or preventative measures through the mobile health van? Ruth replied yes, that is the plan, but those conversations have just started. The focus is for COVID-19 vaccines right now, but the goal is to provide other services with the mobile van.

Neel Hajra asked for more information about the relationship with Feonix Mobility Rising, funded by Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, looking to get more homebound and immobile older adults vaccinated for COVID-19. Ruth



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replied that the HD reached out to AAATA about shuttling people to the mass vaccination clinics. Western-Washtenaw Area Value Express (WAVE) was brought in as well as Feonix Mobility Rising. Most of their services are only available to people aged 50+, but they are open to any age for vaccines. People can use their services to go to wherever they have an appointment for vaccination.

### 9. Gelman Update – Kristen Schweighoefer

Kristen Schweighoefer gave an update on dioxane in Washtenaw County. She gave an overview of 1,4-Dioxane contamination including the background, a timeline of events, recent events including court and EPA updates, and provided information on the HD's role. Board members received a copy of the presentation through email.

The consent judgement between Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and Gelman that dictates the monitoring and treatment of the contamination was enacted in 1992. There have been amendments and an enforcement order issued between 1992 and 2016. Negotiations with EGLE and Gelman by the intervenors, Washtenaw County, Scio Township, the City of Ann Arbor, and the Huron River Watershed Council began in 2017. A proposed 4<sup>th</sup> amendment to the consent judgement was made public in August 2020 but was rejected by the City of Ann Arbor, Scio Township, and Washtenaw County officials in October/November. The officials all voted to petition the Governor to seek EPA support to list the Gelman site on the National Priority List (NPL) in December 2020. In April 2021, the EGLE director sent a letter to EPA requesting to reinstate assessment of Gelman for the NPL process. The 4<sup>th</sup> Amended Consent Judgement was ordered to be enacted immediately during court hearings in May 2021.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Amended Consent Judgement changes the definition of 1,4-dioxane groundwater contamination from 85ppb to 7.2 ppb, expands the prohibition zone to cover additional area, changed the definition of soil contamination from 1700 ppb to 500 ppb, requires new monitoring wells/extraction wells, and requires more work to be done on Gelman source property.

Kristen went over details on Superfund steps and timeframes provided during the January 2020 meeting with EPA. A preliminary assessment was completed, and the next step would be addition to the NPL to become a superfund site. This is where the process is at currently. The next step would be remedial investigation and site characterization, which can take 2 years or decades for large complex sites. EPA said it would probably take less than 30 years. The process is slow and lengthy, but many members of the community want to pursue a superfund site.

Washtenaw County Health Department's role has been providing information to the community on the contamination/risks, answering individual questions regarding the plume with respect to well water and other concerns, partnering with EGLE to sample wells annually, attending the Coalition for Action on Remediation of Dioxane (CARD) meetings, updating/maintaining a map of the dioxane plume, and updating/maintaining the website with information.

### 10. BOC Liaison Report

Justin Hodge shared that the main thing the Board of Commissioners are looking at is how to engage the community for input and a strategy around using American Rescue Plan funds.



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## 11. Old Business

- **Governance in Action for Public Health Training**

Jimena Loveluck discussed the Governance in Action for Public Health Training. Jimena will send out the information so board members can register and be ready to go over the first 2 modules at the June BOH meeting. The additional modules will be covered at the July and September meetings.

*Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by J. Carty, to amend the meeting calendar to include a meeting on August 27<sup>th</sup> at 9am to focus on Governance in Action for Public Health Training.*

*Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.*

- **Title X**

The HD stepped in to ensure there would not be a gap in Title X services when Planned Parenthood stepped away from the funding when administrative rules changed. Because of COVID-19, the program never really had a chance to get started. Those rules are being reviewed and the anticipation is that the rules will revert to how they were before, allowing Planned Parenthood to come back into the program. There is internal discussion at the HD about what the role will be in providing Title X services until they get back to how they were before. The State is willing to support the HD if they decide to continue the program.

## 12. New Business

- **Mobile Clinic**

Jimena shared that the HD is very excited to have the new vehicle. It is an incredible tool to help reach populations that have limited access and are more remote. Board members received a handout with an overview of the vehicle. The initial plans are to focus on COVID-19 vaccination efforts. More services will be planned as the HD gets back to providing full services.

- **Legislation/Advocacy Updates**

1. Jimena shared information about a proposed legislation package that Michigan Association for Local Public Health (MALPH) has gone on record as opposing. The legislation would basically eliminate local health departments from collecting food license fees from May 2021 through April 2022. It would eliminate all fees and require health departments to refund collected fees. MALPH did a survey of health departments and this legislation would result in \$16 million in lost revenue.

*Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by C. Rheingans, to send a letter to state senators and representatives, from the BOH, saying that they support MALPH's position on the proposed legislation package.*

*Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.*

2. Jimena met with public affairs people from St Joe about joint advocacy with elected officials to talk about the congressional packages to support public health infrastructure. Joint advocacy between health systems and the HD could be very powerful.
3. Jimena joined the last working session of the BOC to talk about public health investment and how that would be applied should there be a public health millage.





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- **Carrie Rheingans**

Carrie would like to invite Up Together to present at a future BOH meeting. They are an organization that does direct investments in families under a certain income level. 72 local families received direct cash funding from them during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was discussion about whether that fits with public health. Carrie said it could be a joint activity between the HD and the Office of Community Economic Development. The board decided to have Jimena, Carrie, and Morghan meet with Up Together first before bringing them to the full meeting.

### **13. Adjournment**

*Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by N. Hajra, to adjourn the meeting.*

*Motion approved unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:07 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien

