

**THE FIVE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FOURTH REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF HEALTH OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
FRIDAY MARCH 22, 2024**

The Five Hundred Seventy-fourth meeting of the Baltimore County Board of Health was held March 22 at 9:30 a.m. via WebEx.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Adelsberger, Dr. Samuel Havrilak, Katie McElroy, and Winona Matthews

MEMBERS ABSENT: Judy Kistner, Camille Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Della Leister; Interim Health Officer and Secretary to the Board, Dr. Sohail Qarni; Acting Deputy Health Officer, Renee Youngfellow; Chief, Quality Improvement, Samantha Allen; Accreditation Coordinator, Quality Improvement, Lawrence Richardson; Deputy Director, HHS Finance and Administration and Kathy Wynn, Executive Secretary.

Ms. Leister informed the Board that after this meeting, Elisabeth Sachs; Deputy Administrative Officer of Community Outreach will join the Board for a closed session to discuss a personnel matter. Board members were in agreement to move to a closed session after this meeting.

I. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

To approve the minutes of February 23, 2024

Motion: Ms. Matthews
Second: Ms. McElroy
Decision: Unanimous approval.

II. BUDGET

Lawrence Richardson, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration presented the FY25 operating budget via Power Point.

Leadership reviewed with the County Executive our successes for the prior year:

- Implementation of Quick Response Team (QRT) in conjunction with Fire/EMS
- Implementation of Community Pet Scanning Station (in process)
- Procurement and implementation of Mobile Outreach (MO) Unit

Health's general fund does not include our various grant funds (we are about 80% grant funded). For the County's purpose, Mr. Richardson reviewed the actual county general fund contribution. As done in the past, we are requesting the Board send a letter in support of the budget to the County Executive.

The department has 700 positions which include our grant funded positions. Our vacancy rate is 14.7%. We had some difficulty to fill positions including physicians and nurses that make up the majority of the vacancies.

Mr. Richardson provided an updated status of ARPA approved projects.

The FY25 general fund budget request for the department decreased from \$28,406,126 from the FY24 budget to 28,405,111, a (\$1,015) or (0.003%) decrease. The decrease is due to shifting some of the funds out of the general fund into our local shares (grant side) to help the County not have as much debt against the spending affordability cap. Although it is a decrease, our budget essentially remained flat from FY24 going into FY25.

Dr. Havrilak inquired when the letter to the County Council should be sent. Ms. Leister stated some years we try to have two letters from the Board, one which goes to the County Executive, the second to the County Council after the County Executive has submitted his budget.

III. PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION

Ms. Youngfellow reported the PHAB accreditation report has been submitted. We are waiting on a response from the accreditation board.

The Office of Quality Improvement is seeking further information on becoming an academic health department partnership member. Joining this partnership will allow us to do more training for our future health care professionals and enhance education and training research opportunities. The partnership is somewhat similar to partnerships hospitals and medical schools have. We've submitted a request to receive more information about the application process and how we can become a member. Ms. Youngfellow will continue to keep the Board informed as we get more information.

The Office of Quality Improvement has a new epidemiologist to support all of Health and Human Services. Bernadette Amhere started on March 18.

IV. DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION BY THE SECRETARY

Program Updates

Ms. Leister is being appointed the Interim Health Officer. By state statute, the health officer or the deputy must be a physician. To fill the current administrative void, Dr. Qarni, on deployment from the Maryland Department of Health, will serve as the Acting Deputy Health Officer. Dr. Qarni will be handling some of the medical decision making and signatures required by the department. He is helping Ms. Leister oversee the Bureau of Animal Services, Disease Control and Environmental Health Services as the bureau director position is currently vacant.

Ms. Leister informed the Board of two major initiatives:

Completion of our 2023 annual report. Ms. Leister briefly shared the report with the Board. The report will primarily be an electronic document. We wanted to move the report in a different direction than the single page version we had before. The report has the ten essential health functions and is broken down into bureaus. The report also includes a number of pictures. We have already started working on plans for the 2024 annual report.

The next major accomplishment was the completion of the Baltimore County Community Health Needs Assessment which is just off the press Tuesday of this week. Both the annual report and

needs assessment will be posted. The county's website is upgrading to a different platform, we're very limited in what we can post. As soon as that transition is completed, the documents will be posted. We will redo this process in about three years.

Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Health Rankings:

RWJ publishes health rankings each year. They rank each local county according to a set of elements that they feel drive the picture of health in that community. In previous years, they have done rankings, this year they did not. Baltimore County historically and continues to be in the middle of the 24 jurisdictions in the state of Maryland as far as our health. Ms. Leister has a staff member reviewing to see what we can take from the report and what we need to work on.

Program Updates:

- Our Babies Born Healthy program is holding virtual workshops. Participants receive a free Pack 'N Play when they attend six out of ten sessions. We work with our maternal child health population to ensure healthy outcomes and get children safely through infancy.
- Behavioral Health continues to offer naloxone training both in person and virtual. We are working very hard toward having all employees trained in naloxone and to be able to be a trainer on naloxone.
- The department, in partnership with Iglesia de Dios Hispana, will host a food box giveaway and wellness fair on March 23 at their facility in Owings Mills. This is targeted primarily to non-English speaking residents and we have primarily bi-lingual staff at this event.
- We are working on a major public campaign for parents to get children updated on measles vaccinations. Threshold for our community is that 95 % of our children are vaccinated. We do have data access for youth in public schools. We don't have the same data for our private schools but we are working on collecting that data. We are willing to help private schools that need assistance with getting children vaccinated. We are administering measles vaccine in our health centers for those who are insured or uninsured.

Dr. Havrilak inquired if the department thinks that the rise in cases of measles is because of parents not vaccinating children or are immigrants that are coming partially a cause also? Dr. Qarni responded it's partly both, there is some reluctance to either not vaccinate or hold off vaccination. It is a combination of both contributing to this increased number of measles cases.

Personnel:

- Our privacy officer, Jonny Akchin has resigned. He is an attorney and is returning to private practice. Mr. Richardson is looking to fill that position since that falls under the Operations unit.
- Ms. Leister has two positions that she has been able to fill. One is the Population Health Nurse Administrator; Rosemary Burrell who will join these meetings. She is also helping to plan 100th anniversary celebration activities The second position is our Chief of Nursing

for Public Health Services who is due to start in two weeks. She comes to us with extensive administrative and supervision skills in several settings primarily hospital and outpatient settings.

We continue to attend the County Executive's budget town hall meetings. One more remains which is in Councilman Young's district. These are on YouTube.

We are working on a decision memo to go to the County Executive regarding the JUUL settlement. Baltimore County will be looking to receive an estimated \$1M to start. Much of the funding will go to education. We have met with the school system and will continue to do so. We will also engage the community and offer community grants so communities can educate their children. Funds will also be put towards enforcement.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Havrilak stated the Board had discussed at the last meeting the Exxon property in Phoenix and if there was any information as to homes that are still receiving water. Are they still taking oil out of the ground water? Ms. Leister stated we are waiting to hear from our partners regarding this inquiry.

Dr. Havrilak also inquired about a new board member. Ms. Leister stated we had interviewed one individual. We will check on the status.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Leister reminded board members the April meeting will be the first in person meeting we have had in a while though we will be hybrid for those who are unable to attend in person. She hopes members are able to attend in person for that meeting.


VII. REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN

The Board will stay on for the executive session meeting with Ms. Sachs.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 10:21AM.

Motion: Mrs. Kistner
Second: Ms. McElroy
Decision: Unanimous Approval



Della J. Leister, RN