



JOHNSON CO. HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Environmental Health &
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The Johnson County Board of Health met on April 23, 2025 at 7:30am in the Health Department conference room. Those in attendance were Dr. James Pease (Chairperson), Dr. Michael Pauszeck, Dr. Chele Heid, Amanda Stevenson-Holmes, Ruth Freese, Susie Baker and Dr. Steven Stropes. Those in attendance from the Health Department were, Dr. Qualls, Betsy Swearingen, Bob Smith, Lisa Brown and Cheryl Snider.

The meeting came to order at 7:30 am. A motion was made by Dr. Pauszeck to approve the minutes of the February meeting and a second was made by Dr. Cheli Heid. The motion carried.

Health Officer's report:

Dr. Qualls passed did a "deep dive" on the annual report. The hand out showed some of the figures for the last five years of some cause of death statistics and Nursing. In 2020, the statistics involved COVID-19. Many of the COVID deaths were older people who frail to begin with. Overdose related deaths are down slightly. Suicide deaths fluctuates and is something we need to work on. Lung cancer is still the number one killer in the cancer field. Child deaths range from care accidents to asthma. Dr. Qualls feels Alzheimer's deaths are bit distorted. Alzheimer's deaths which peaked in 2022 reflects an aging population. We have two of the largest nursing facilities in the state. The county's population has slowly gone up from approximately 100,000 to 167,000. This is hard to calculate as there are so many undocumented people in Johnson County.

The nursing department has been busy in the last five years. The TB cases have exploded. These numbers reflect immigrants moving into the county. The nurses have done a good job in locating, diagnosing and treating these patients.

Vaccines are getting back to a base line number since COVID. Vaccine hesitancy has risen over the last couple of years. We are again talking about Measles vaccinations. Our vaccine rate for K-12 is about 95%. This is where it needs to be to reach herd immunity.

Nursing Report:

Kiley currently has 37 in latent TB cases. 30 are receiving Treatment through the Health Department and 7 are being treated by their provider. Kiley is doing case management for all of them. There are 59 open cases. Kiley had 14 just for the month of April. Kiley has 14 B1 immigrants requiring follow up within 90 days of arrival. These individuals have either had a positive QFT or abnormal CXR. The treatment regimen has shortened from before. Now, instead of 6-9 months of medicine, the length of time for medicine is less. The nurses are encouraging patients to Take their medication as prescribed their medicines so latent does not develop into active disease..

Lead cases are increasing. Since the IDOH has lowered the number from 10 to 5, the Health Department is having more cases requiring case management. Johnson Co. has 11 cases with a level of 5 or higher. There are 21 with a level of greater than 3.5 currently in different stages. Annie is reaching out to families and waiting on retesting.

There are still 6 cases in Allen County at this point. We found out later that day there are 8 cases. The nurses are encouraging everyone to make sure they are up to date on their measles vaccinations. If someone has

suspected exposers, they should be monitored for 21 days. If symptomatic, they should call their healthcare provider or immediate care prior to arriving for instruction on protocol for that facility.

Environmental Report:

The new food code revision emphasizes food born illnesses in food establishments. Some codes have been changed from non-critical & critical to new terms. The priority would be to focus on food practices that contribute to a food borne illness. An example would be, if a problem is written down, he would address it with the manager/owner right there and figure out how to fix said problems.

There are 40 new buildings and remodels & 65 Mobiles licensed. The summer activities are beginning. Food markets and fairs will be starting in the near future. The IODH would like to go to a state wide license this would enable a food truck from Bartholomew County to set up in Johnson County. Betsy mentioned this is a little worrisome as it will be harder to keep track of some of our more problematic food trucks. If a mobile who is licensed in Bartholomew County, should they come to Johnson, we will still inspect them to make sure they are up to code. We have one food truck is on notice currently. He has been given 10 days to comply with orders from the Health Department to deep clean his truck for a rodent infestation. They called to have an inspection but when they came they did not bring the truck. The biggest issue is they do not have a commissary which means they clean all the food out of their truck at night, clean the truck and put new food in it the next day. We also have another truck that has a permanent ban for Johnson County.

Pool program will be starting in about a month. We have approximately 60 outdoor pools licensed. Some places have more than one pool. Some have the main pool, wading pools, and shooting water fountains. We have one pool in Bargersville that was inspected in October but did not open until spring of the following year.

Septic system program is in full swing. There were several soil scientist reports that came over the winter. Now that the septic season has begun, these septic systems can put their systems in the ground. Part of the new ordinance for Johnson County is that septic installers need to register to put in systems. Installers have to pass a test which cost \$25.00. These tests show each installer at least have basic knowledge of how to install septic systems and the basic rules.

We have condemned a couple of homes lately. One property that Liz went to had several dead snakes, lizards and reptiles. There was one in Franklin which had a search warrant. This was a drug house, this house also had 35 animals which were seized by Animal Control.

Bob had a meeting with Dr. Clendening and Dr. Edsel, this conversation covered the vaping issues at the schools. Empower Johnson County (Youth Smoking Prevention Coalition) and Bob would like to have a diversion program. We had that through Partnership for a Healthier Johnson County. Under that grant there was funding for facilitator training. It is a court order or school mandate. We have in school and out of school suspension. They also have a monitoring device. However, there is no education for these kids to find out what exactly is in these devices. It is not always just nicotine or tobacco, sometimes other things are added. Doug Cox (Resource Officer) for Franklin High School had written 150 citations for vaping and 0 (zero) for smoking. Michelle from Empower, stated that the percentage of vaping is at 70% which may be low. The issue is, the education is not starting young enough. The thought was that smoking and vaping typically starts in junior or senior high school when in reality it starts more like fifth or sixth grade.

Mia is in charge of our intern program. She goes through an interviewing process with candidates. She has 10-12 candidates who are graduating, some from Franklin College. Mila who already works with us was hired through this program and will be staying in our employ. Another young man will be starting in May and will be taking the certified pool class to help us this summer. We 2 or 3 high school kids who will be doing their senior project with us this summer.

Emergency Preparedness:

Greenwood High School is our northern POD site and we will be setting up in their field house in a practice set up. This will take place on May 19th and will probably mirror a measles clinic as that is the most recent issue going on.

Command training will be before the POD set up. We have several new employees that have not had that training.

We made our Q3 deliverable with no problem. We are currently updating our field operations guide and we are always updating our mass fatality plan.

Betsy will be sitting in on an active killer drill planning meeting which the Clark Pleasant school police are working on. This drill will be held in June at some point. We have not actively participated in a drill in the last two years. The long term care group would like to do a county wide drill with hostile employee spouse situation.

We are in the process of taking request for things the EMS taskforce need. We have set aside money to help purchase equipment and supplies. There was a error in funding, there was no line for equipment so a new line was created for equipment and supplies. It was thought we would have to add a contractual line item for Greenwood HASMAT training, but not all the monies for GELATA is spent so some was taken and used for the Greenwood HASMAT

Vital Records:

- Deaths for January through March totaled 373
- Cancer related deaths for January and February totaled 40
- Communicable disease for January and February totaled 5
- Drug related deaths totaled 4
- Suicide deaths were 2
- Tobacco related deaths were 18
- Births January through March totaled 112
- 1 Home birth in March
- 5 Genealogy searches January through March
- 2 Paternity Affidavits

Three of us will be going to a spring conference on May 8th. This a concentrated class on procedures and laws of Vital Records. They will also be going to the fall conference where test will be taken for certification. These are only administered at the fall conferences. Each year will feature a different topic.

One of the situations that came up in the past few weeks was a 22yr old came in to get a birth certificate for a job. We explained our information did not match what he was giving us. Through our conversation, he deduced who his biological mother was and found out he was adopted. He had never been told by his adoptive parents. He called his parents on the phone, in minutes they were calling vital records. They were so mad they were going to call a lawyer and sue us for telling him. They came to the office, had a few choice words for us and left. A few days later a lawyer called and was not concerned and asked how to fix the issue. Betsy call the county legal office and they stated no laws had been broken.

Breast Cancer Awareness

There is no report at this time. JoEllen has been out of the office on family business and has not worked on the grant.

Community Health

We have been using Ruth our Community Health worker to help with a barrage of clinics such as immunization clinics, Fast Track clinic, Convoy of Care, and anything left by our school liaison position and immunization grant. These prior engagements and will need to be filled as they were left by Shannon who is no longer with us. Bob and Jaycie will be covering Carrere day at Custer Baker.

Health First Indiana (HFI)

Betsy mentioned that in Dr. Quall's suicide report are under KPI or fatality or overdose. We are focused on with our key performance indicator for 2025. In 2026 the legislature is going to be removing preparedness, tobacco and vaping prevention from HFI. Betsy thinks she can put preparedness under the trauma and injury prevention grant and tobacco and vaping under chronic disease prevention. 2026 funds will probably not be as large as this year. We will hear numbers by the end of April and the budget is due June 1st. If funds are cut, Tiffany and Betsy think things will be ok. It will be figured out.

Budget

Betsy reached out to John Mullers our new liaison to please come meet the health department and see what we do. Betsy would like to reinvest our Tobacco Tust and Moble Health Maintenance fund. We have done it for years, a couple of years ago, the Commissioners wanted us to spend our fund down. State Board of Accounts does not like it when we have so many funds going through the Auditor's Office. So it was decided to reinvest those funds to make interest. As of today we will be investing in CDs at a 7month rate at about 4.25%.

Personnel

We did get some new personnel rules passed down from the Commissioners.

- Environmentalist are still on a flexible schedule. Many times EHSs need to go out on septic calls either late or early to get them covered up before rain, or restaurants may open late and the EHS cannot get in to inspect them. In our department the Environmentalist, Nursing, School liaison and some others do not work a typical 8-4:30. We will be cleaning up our language in our job descriptions and rewriting them.
- Everyone is better at taking their hour lunch. Dr. Qualls stated he wanted to present to the Council we have a special set of circumstances at the Health Department to keep Betsy in the roll she is serving. It saves the County money in keeping the two jobs together. In the future, the jobs may well be separated. Dr. Qualls will be asking for leniency in these rolls for Betsy. The question was asked if there was a way for the board to help with the Council meeting on May 12th presentation for Betsy. Michelle answered, the Board is always welcome to attend. There was some discussion about what happens when a restaurant doesn't open until later in the afternoon or evening. Bob explained we have several places that do not open until 4:00 pm or even 6:00 pm. For those restaurants, the EHS has to adjust his schedule to go when the doors are open. Also, for festivals, these typically happen on weekends and inspectors will have to work a Saturday. This is also a need for septic inspections. Sometimes they have to be inspected at the time the installer is available or even in case of rain. There was a discussion about overtime. There is a bit of overtime, Cheryl had ½ hour in the last pay period and Bob had 1 hour. We are trying to adhere to sporadic and infrequent overtime.
- Unemployment for employee was found in favor of the employee. It was found that she did not knowingly violate the nepotism policy. As right now Johnson County will pay out the policy
- There was discussion of communication with the County, are there any questions and concerns. Betsy has been working to see that communication is open to all concerned. An example was the CDs that were purchased. She made sure all offices that needed to be in the decision was included in the meeting (ie) Council, Auditor and Treasurer. Not so much for guidance but for transparency. Tiffany mentioned, the crackdown is not just the Health Department but county wide. The State is saying counties have been overspending and have too many line items and to pull the reins back in. There will be more HR meetings just to make sure everyone is on the same page. Michelle stated there will be more involvement of the Council. They are wanting to get more involved in the meetings and get to know faces and what departments actually do. Dr. Pease mentioned in the 30 years he has been on the board, this is the first time he has seen any involvement with the county.

Health Policies:

We are well prepared for the “measles scare”. There was what was thought to be a reaction to the measles vaccine. This unvaccinated adult had received the measles vaccine and had full blown rash. The ER doctor in Florida thought it was sun poisoning. So we aren’t quite sure what exactly it was.

New Business

- Dr. Qualls is up for re-appointment in June. The Board of Health rules on re-appointments have also changed.
The process is the Board will present Dr. Qualls to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Susie Baker to recommend Dr. Qualls to the Board of Commissioners for re-appointment as Health Officer of the Johnson County Health Department. The motion was second by Dr. Pauszeck. Motion carried.
- We got a budget for ASSIT for \$324,000.00 that was taken away with the COVID grant. After discussion with Commissioner Walls and Tiffany in the legal department, \$85,000 was found out of the HFI money to help them get going on their SANE exams. We will let them use our facility for the SANE exams.
- We are on hold with them taking our lease. We are looking at them incorporating with us at some point. They have also asked for a letter of support from Betsy for the Community Foundation grant.

There was no new business and the meeting was adjourned.

Dr. James Pease Chairperson

Date