



CATTARAUGUS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect
Cattaraugus County
Health Department
Established 1923

Mayor David L. Smith, President

Giles Hamlin, MD, Vice-President

Joseph Bohan, MD

Zahid Chohan, MD

Legislator Kelly J. Andreano

Kathryn Cooney Thrush, NP, MSN

Shane Pancio

Theresa Raftis

Legislator Ginger D. Schroder

MINUTES

May 1, 2024

The 922nd meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health (BOH) was held at the Old Library Restaurant on May 1, 2024.

The following members were present:

Joseph Bohan, MD

Zahid Chohan, MD

Giles Hamlin, MD

Leg. Kelly Andreano

Kathryn Cooney-Thrush

Shane Pancio

Theresa Raftis

Mayor David L. Smith

Also present were:

Kevin D. Watkins, MD, MPH, Public Health Director

Ashley Smith, County Attorney

Bob Clarke, Olean Times Herald

Ray Jordan, Senior Public Health Sanitarian (Virtual)

Debra Lacher, Secretary to the Public Health Director

James Lawrence, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director

Colette Lulay-Pound, Administrative Officer

Rick Miller, Catt Co News & Photos

Dave Porter, Hearing Officer

Robert Ring, Environmental Health Director

Brooke Schnell, Supervising Community Health Nurse

Matt Tyssee, Public Health Educator

Mayor Smith welcomed everyone to the Board of Health (BOH) meeting, roll was called, and a quorum was noted.

Mayor Smith called for approval of the April 3, 2024 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Dr. Hamlin to approve the minutes as presented, the motion was seconded by Ms. Raftis, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Smith called for approval of the January 17, 2024 professional advisory minutes. A motion was made by Dr. Bohan, seconded by Dr. Hamlin, and unanimously approved.



DIRECTORS REPORT: Dr. Watkins shared information on tick surveillance for 2023. He stated that ticks frequently bite humans and are able to transmit pathogens during blood feeding. There are (3) specific species that are concerning to New York State (NYS). Those species include: *Ixodes scapularis*, *Amblyomma americanum* and *Dermacentor variabilis*.

Ixodes scapularis species is often referred to as the blacklegged deer tick, which is widespread in the eastern part of the US, but is starting to move out west. All stages of the tick can be collected by dragging or flagging and these ticks will feed on a variety of birds, mammals, and reptile hosts. Adult ticks are typically active from mid-October until temperatures are consistently below freezing. They are also present in late winter and early spring, from March through June, and the nymphal ticks are active from mid-May through July.

Transmission of pathogen to a person from the blacklegged deer tick is often dependent upon the number of hours or days an infected tick has been attached to a person. It normally takes (36-48) hours for the transmission of the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* (which causes Lyme disease) and *Borrelia miyamotoi* (which causes relapsing fever). It takes (12-24) hours for the transmission of the bacterium *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, (which causes anaplasmosis) and (24-36) hours for the transmission of the bacterium *Babesia microti* (which causes babesiosis).

Dr. Watkins shared a report that revealed the types of pathogens detected in ticks that were collected by NYSDOH in Cattaraugus County in 2023; He stated that the collection sites included: Deer Lick Conservation, Pfeiffer Nature Center, Gargoyle Park, Zoar Valley, Eden Heights, and Allegany State Park. Data was shared at length for all of these areas. He highlighted that the most common pathogen detected from the tick collections in 2023 was *Borrelia burgdorferi* the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.

Dr. Watkins explained that the typical symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, fatigue and a characteristic skin rash call erythema migrans. Treatment for Lyme disease is recommended within (72) hours of tick removal. Treatment with a tetracycline (doxycycline) is the gold standard. However, individuals with chronic Lyme disease, or those with neurological manifestations may have to be admitted to the hospital for treatment with intravenous antibiotics. Lyme disease can affect the heart, and it can cause arthritis but doxycycline along with other therapeutics may be needed for therapy. There are vaccines being developed for Lyme disease and it appears that the pharmaceutical companies will submit requests for approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as early as 2025.

Prevention from Lyme disease include wearing light colored clothing when out in grassy areas, checking for ticks by looking around the hairline, ears, under the arms, in the belly button, around the waist, between the legs, on the back, and behind the knees when returning from outdoors. Additionally, it is important to check pets when they return from outdoors as well. Prevention also includes spraying outdoor clothing, shoes, tent or other camping gear with a repellent that has (0.5%) permethrin. Finally, the use of an insect repellent registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on any exposed skin, except the face when heading outdoors in grassy areas is another level of protections against tick bites.

Dr. Watkins provided the board with a quarterly update on the opioid crisis in Cattaraugus County. He stated that fentanyl continues to be the cause of the majority of overdose deaths in Cattaraugus County. In the year 2020, there were (12) opioid deaths, in 2021 there were (13) opioid deaths, 2022 there were (27) opioid deaths, and in 2023 there were (28) opioid deaths.

In 2023, of the 28 opioid deaths, 26 were due to fentanyl. Surprisingly, in 2024, the opioid death report indicates a downward trend compared to previous years. As of date, in 2024, the department has only (2) confirmed opioid deaths. Comparatively, in 2023 there were (14) opioid deaths by this time period.

In 2024, there were no opioid deaths in January or February, in March there were (2) and in April the department is still waiting on (3) pending toxicology reports. Legislator Andreano asked where the statistical data comes from, and if the family has a choice to not pursue an autopsy or toxicology report. Dr. Watkins explained that when the coroner is on the scene, if they see drug paraphernalia on site, they automatically do a toxicology screening on the individual, and if the individual is not followed by a physician an autopsy and toxicology screening is usually conducted if the person is under 60 years of age.

Dr. Watkins explained that the reported opioid death statistics come from the actual death certificates. He added that although there is no evidentiary proof, it is speculated that the harm reduction measures that are being used in the community are actually working. The harm reduction measures include the distribution of naloxone (Narcan) nasal spray, and fentanyl and xylazine test strips. A new harm reduction measure in the form of an opioid antagonist, called Nalmefene (Opvee), is now available on the market. Opvee has a longer lasting half-life than naloxone, but it may present with a longer period of side effects (i.e., vomiting, headaches, blurred vision and other withdrawal symptoms) to those who receive the product.

Dr. Watkins went on to discuss bird flu. He stated that bird flu was initially identified in birds but now it has been identified in cats, dogs, foxes, seals, leopards, mammals, and now humans. Bird flu (H5N1) is an influenza type A virus that came about due to variants of the influenza virus, and evolution into distinct genetic lineages. The first bird flu, (H2N2) pandemic occurred in 1957, a second variant (H5N1) was reported in 1997, and in 2013 a third variant of bird flu, (H7N9) was identified. Currently, (H5N1) has been on the rise and can be found in many species, presently, it is being identified more frequently in birds and cattle. Since 2022, there has been a wide geographic spread of a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)A (H5N1) virus in wild birds and poultry worldwide. (HPAI)A (H5N1) is carried by wild birds in their intestinal tract, the virus can be shed by these birds through various means, such as saliva, feces, and nasal secretions. Ducks can be infected with the virus without any signs of illness. It causes a highly infectious severe respiratory disease amongst birds (poultry). Animals will eat these wild birds and then catch the disease themselves. Human cases of H5N1 avian influenza occur occasionally, but it is difficult to transmit the infection from person to person. On March 27, 2024 a farm worker on a commercial dairy farm in Texas developed conjunctivitis and no other symptoms. He subsequently tested positive for (HPAI)A (H5N1) virus infection.

People should avoid unprotected (not using respiratory or eye protection) exposures to sick or dead animals including wild birds, poultry, other domesticated birds, and other wild or domesticated animals, as well as with animal feces, litter, or materials contaminated by birds.

Last week the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced restrictions on dairy cattle transportation between states, including that they be tested and mandatory reporting of cows that are infected with the virus. Dr. Watkins stated that based on recent reports, the milk supply is safe because of both the pasteurization process and the required diversion or destruction of milk from sick cows. He stated that tests are also being done on ground beef in states where dairy cows have been infected but as long as beef is properly prepared it is safe to eat.

People who are exposed should be monitored for signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illness, anything from fever, cough, congestion, chills, and conjunctivitis. Treatment with influenza antivirals (specifically Tamiflu) is the drug of choice.

ENFORCEMENT LIST: Mr. Porter shared that there were no new enforcement cases at this time.

NURSING DIVISION REPORT: Mrs. Schnell, Supervising Community Health Nurse, shared that the homecare census is (255). There were (79) admissions and (71) discharges in April.

Lead program update: in April there were (92) lead tests conducted with the highest blood lead level (BLL) tested being (16.6ug/dl) for two different children, [normal is ≤ 5 ug/dl]. Previously one of these children had been (33.3ug/dl) in December of 2023, and the second was (6.4ug/dl) in October 2023. There were (7) children with BLL's between (5 and 9.6ug/dl) and (83) children with BLL's below (5ug/dl). The total case load is (83) children.

There was a COVID-19 vaccination clinic held on April 12th between 1-4 PM, at the John Ash Community Center, and a total of (28) people were vaccinated.

HIV testing; there were (9) tests conducted in April between the three offices and all results were negative.

In April there were (2) rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis administered.

Communicable diseases: In April there was (1) case of group A streptococcal infection; (2) cases of streptococcus pneumoniae (invasive); (10) cases of probable Lyme, (1) case of haemophilus influenza; there were (24) cases of influenza A; and (37) cases of influenza B; there were (41) cases of COVID-19; and (3) cases of respiratory syncytia virus (RSV); there was (9) positive cases of chlamydia; and (2) cases of Syphilis; there were (2) chronic cases of Hepatitis C; and (1) case of hepatitis B.

In January 2024 there was an interesting case involving a nine-year-old female who presented with the following symptoms, nausea, diarrhea, fever, painful and frequent burning urination, and abdominal cramps, she tested positive for salmonella. After investigation it was found that she had a pet bearded dragon that she kissed and was affectionate with. On April 30th NYSDOH tested the enclosure of the dragon and found it to be positive for Salmonella Cotham. Education was provided to both the child and the family, human to human transmission is very rare therefore, no restrictions were placed.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT: Mr. Ring shared that all community and non-transient non-community water systems are required to submit a Lead Service Line Inventory (LSLI) by October 16, 2024. Community water systems include municipal water, and mobile home parks. Every resident in the county that is on public water and listed on the lead service line inventory as "unknown" or as "lead" will receive notification within 30 days of submitting the inventory. Public water systems will have to come up with a 10-year replacement plan to replace all the service lines listed as "lead" and they will have to identify all listed as "unknown".

Annual inspections related to seasonal campsites, children's camps, and temporary food events are all underway.

A rabies vaccine clinic is scheduled for Saturday, May 4th from 9:00AM-11:00AM in Little Valley. It is a free clinic for domestic animals (dogs, cats, and ferrets). This has been publicized widely via several media sources.

The mosquito program will start next week, and initial data should be available later in May.

At the last meeting there was a question about lead testing in soil, the department had a conversation with the city of Salamanca school district, given the efforts that schools are trying to make, growing their own vegetables. The department is looking at tying this into the lead grant as part of an educational tool, with public outreach.

Old/New Business: Mayor Smith asked if there was any other old or new business; there was none.

The next BOH meeting will be held on Thursday, July 11th.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Bohan, the motion was seconded by Legislator Andreano, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin D. Watkins, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary to the Board of Health

