



# CATTARAUGUS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH



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

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*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  
August 7, 2024

The 924<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health (BOH) was held at the Old Library Restaurant on August 7, 2024.

*The following members were present:*

Joseph Bohan, MD

Zahid Chohan, MD

Legislator Kelly Andreano

Kathryn Cooney-Thrush

Shane Pancio

Legislator Ginger Schroder

Mayor David L. Smith

*Also present were:*

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

Ashley Smith, County Attorney

Kevin Eberth, SBU Public Health Intern

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

Dave Porter, Hearing Officer

Robert Ring, Environmental Health Director

Brooke Schnell, Supervising Clinic Nurse

Matt Tyssee, Health Educator

Gil Witte, MD, Medical Director

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

Mayor Smith shared that on July 13, 2024 Dr. Giles Hamlin passed away, and he asked the Board and everyone in attendance to join him in a moment of silence to remember Dr. Hamlin. He then reflected on Dr. Hamlin accomplishments, stating that Dr. Hamlin was appointed to the Board in 2009, and served as Vice President of the Board for the last eight years and nine months. Dr. Bohan shared that he knew Dr. Hamlin for fifty years and he was small in stature but he was a surgical giant. His excellent medical training made him a wonderful physician but more importantly he was just an all-round great guy. Mayor Smith formally dedicated the August 7, 2024 Board meeting to Dr. Giles Hamlin.



Mayor Smith called for approval of the July 11, 2024 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Dr. Bohan to approve the meeting minutes as presented, the motion was seconded by Mr. Pancio, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Smith stated that voting on the revision to the Board of Health By-laws, which was next on the agenda, and which was prepared by the County attorney, would be moved to the new business portion of the agenda.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:** Dr. Watkins presented an action item for the Board to approve, adding three new vaccines to the Clinic immunization formulary and to adopt the suggested fee associated with administering the vaccines. A copy of the new immunization vaccine fee schedule was distributed to each Board member and those in attendance. Dr. Watkins discussed the three new vaccines (Capvaxive-PCV21 a pneumococcal vaccine; Heplisav-B, a Hepatitis B vaccine; and Comirmaty, a COVID-19 vaccine).

Legislator Schroeder asked if approval was only for the suggested fees. Dr. Watkins replied, and to add the three new vaccines to the list of vaccines offered by the department.

Mr. Pancio asked how much vaccine is on hand at any one time, and how often do the department order. Mrs. Schnell replied that the amount on hand for each vaccine is different but usually most vaccines can be ordered by as few as (1) box which usually contain about ten doses, and certain vaccines that are not used, can be returned.

Legislator Andreano asked why the homeless and Alaska natives were 100-300 times more likely to develop invasive pneumococcal disease due to serotype 4. Dr. Watkins stated he was uncertain and would have to get that answer to her at the next meeting.

Legislator Schroeder, asked how many vaccines are required for children to attend school, she believed she had heard (27) were required. Dr. Watkins stated he believed there are ten required vaccines that children must have before entering school. He added that some vaccines may have multiple doses required to give full immunization.

Dr. Bohan asked if the Paxlovid works on the new variant of COVID. Dr. Watkins responded that Paxlovid will reduce the risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization, and reduces viral replication but does not believe its efficacy is on any one particular variant.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cooney-Thrush to accept the changes to the immunization fee schedule as presented, the motion was seconded by Dr. Bohan, and unanimously approved.

Dr. Watkins shared that the department received several notices about the recall of Boar's Head brand of deli meats due to the listeria outbreak and a request to local health departments to assist (NYSDOH and Agriculture and Market) in getting the word out about the recall was solicited. He stated that the outbreak was first reported at the end of July, the Food and Drug Administration confirmed that there were (34) people who were sickened across (13) states, and (33) of the (34) sickened required hospitalization, and as of date, one death was reported in Illinois and one death was reported in New Jersey. He added that of the 34 people sickened with listeria, 12 were from NYS, none from Cattaraugus County.

When tests revealed listeria in an unopened package of Boar's Head liverwurst, the company, recalled almost (7) million pounds of deli meats in addition to the initial (200,000) pounds that were already recalled.

Listeriosis is a foodborne illness most often contracted by eating improperly processed deli meats, and spreads very easily among deli equipment, surfaces, hands and food. It is caused by a facultative anaerobe, called listeria monocytogenes that is capable of surviving with or without oxygen. Under the microscope, listeria appears as small rods, or short chains. The anaerobe won't grow on regular agar media, it needs (7) amino acids, [leucine, isoleucine, valine, methionine, arginine, cysteine, and glutamine] and (4) additional vitamins [riboflavin, thiamine, biotin, and lipoic acid] to grow. Listeria monocytogenes can be found in soil, water, decaying vegetation and animals. It can survive and even grow under refrigeration and other food preservation measures. Outbreaks in the US have been linked to unpasteurized milk, cheese, ice cream, processed vegetables, fruits, undercooked poultry, sausage, deli meats, seafood, and raw pet food.

Healthy people rarely become ill from listeria infection but it does disproportionately impact people older than (65) years of age, newborns, and pregnant women. People infected with listeria may have mild symptoms that include fever, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Severe symptoms may include: headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions. Depending on the severity, symptoms may last from days to several weeks. For the very young, elderly, and the immune compromised, listeriosis can even cause death. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), (87%) of those who become ill require hospitalization and one in six people die from the illness.

Listeriosis is diagnosed by taking a culture from a normally sterile sites, (example blood, urine, and or spinal fluid.) Treatment options varies depending on location of illness: for meningitis/brain abscess, treatment is with ampicillin and gentamycin for (3) weeks; for bacteremia, treatment is ampicillin and gentamycin for (2) weeks; for gastroenteritis, treatment is amoxicillin or TMP.SMX for (7) days. Prevention for high-risk groups include avoiding soft cheeses, Mexican style, feta, brie, Camembert, blue cheese. Leftover foods and ready to eat foods should only be served while steaming hot, and they may wish to avoid food from delicatessen counters. Local stores have been asked to remove any of the Boar Head brand products until further notice. It has been recommended that facilities clean and sanitize all food and non-food surfaces including refrigerators, discard any open meats, and cheeses to prevent the risk of cross-contamination.

Dr. Watkins stated that the department has been asked to reach out to local physicians to remind them to consider Legionnaire's disease in their differential diagnosis of community acquired pneumonia. Legionnaire's disease is a pneumonia associated with human-made water systems; (70%) of the cases are community acquired; (20%) are travel related; and (10%) of the cases are hospital acquired. It usually occurs between June and October during warm weather when commercial air conditioning systems are in operation.

The legionella bacteria (bacteria the causes Legionnaire's disease) are found naturally in the environment, water or soil. People contract legionella by inhaling aerosolized water droplets containing the bacteria, or they can aspirate it in contaminated drinking water as well.

Symptoms usually develop two to ten days after exposure. It begins with headache, and fever, that can rise as high as (104°F) or higher. By the second- or third-day symptoms include: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, gastrointestinal symptoms, and confusion or other mental changes.

X-rays look similar to other pneumonias. Legionella is traditionally cultured and requires the presence of cysteine and iron to grow. Many hospitals use legionella urinary antigen tests for initial detection which is very quick. Legionella can also be diagnosed with a blood test or even environmental PCR.

Treatment for Legionnaires' disease includes, quinolones (e.g., ciprofloxacin, or levofloxacin) or macrolides (e.g., azithromycin, or erythromycin). Risk factors include those over (50) years old, those who are male, those with a history of smoking, those with lung disease, diabetes, cancer, kidney problems, those on drugs or have an illness that weaken the immune system. Dr. Watkins stated that healthy and young person who breathe in legionella, are less likely than others to get Legionnaire's disease.

In 2019-2023, there were (4,359) legionellosis cases reported in NYS. In 2021, NYS reported more cases of legionellosis than any other state. In 2023, there were 18 community-acquired and 23 facility-related Legionnaires' disease clusters or outbreaks investigations conducted in NYS, including NYC. The statewide incidence rate was (4.1) cases per (100,000) population, with the highest burden in residents of WNY and NYC. Dr. Watkins stated that the department was notified of a case yesterday within Cattaraugus County. He reminded the Board that there were (6) cases reported in Cattaraugus County in 2023.

Currently there are (21) registered cooling towers in Cattaraugus County, (9) are in operation, (9) are decommissioned, and (3) are out of service. Eight (8) which operates year-round, and thirteen (13) which operates seasonally. The environmental health staff reviews the cooling tower registry on a monthly basis to determine operator's compliance with Subpart 4-1 and follows up as necessary.

For prevention, minimizing legionella growth in water systems is the key to prevent infection.

Dr. Watkins asked the board to convene as the informational and educational review committee to review and approve a video for the family planning clinic. The BOH can serve as this review committee since an Advisory Committee of at least 5 individuals must be established to ensure materials from the clinic reflect the educational, cultural, and diverse backgrounds of the intended population or community; this is a mandate by the Code of Federal Regulations 59.6 for all Title X agencies.

The video was presented in a slide format at the BOH meeting and the video will be utilized on the television monitor of the clinic waiting room. This video introduces staff who provide services, and covers what services are offered by the department's family planning clinic. A motion was made by Legislator Andreano to approve the video as presented, the motion was seconded by Dr. Chohan and unanimously approved.

**ENFORCEMENT LIST:** Mr. Porter stated there were no new enforcement cases at this time.

**NURSING DIVISION REPORT:** Mrs. Schnell shared that the answer to Legislator Schroeder's earlier question regarding required vaccines for children entering school, that there are (9) required vaccines for school age children and each series can range from (1-4) vaccines.

The homecare census is currently (246). In the month of July there were (72) admissions, (106) re-admissions, and (81) discharges.

Lead program update: in July there were (101) lead tests conducted, with the highest blood lead level (BLL) tested being (47ug/dl), [normal is  $\leq 5$ ug/dl], collected on June 27<sup>th</sup> with results posted on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The child was retested at Oishei Children's Hospital on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the BLL was (38ug/dl), a retest on July 24<sup>th</sup> indicated the BLL was down to (27ug/dl).

The second highest BLL was a child with a BLL of (36.8ug/dl) on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, who previously had a BLL of (31.4ug/dl) in June. One child had a BLL of (19.7ug/dl), another child had a BLL of (13.1ug/dl), and (5) children had BLL's between (6.1-8ug/dl). The remaining (91) children have BLL's that are (5ug/dl) or less. The total case load remains at (85) children. Legislator Andreano asked if the highest BLL and the second highest were in the same home. Mrs. Schnell responded that they were not. Legislator Andreano asked if elevated BLL's were automatically referred to Early Intervention. Mrs. Schnell responded that one child was above the age of three but had a sibling who was eligible.

HIV testing; In July, there were (3) tests conducted in Olean; (1) in Salamanca and none in Machias, all results were negative.

The department has scheduled the influenza/COVID vaccination clinics, there will be (21) community Clinics between September 30<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>.

In July, there were (5) rabies pre-exposure series given and (9) rabies post-exposure prophylaxis vaccines series given due to (4) exposure to raccoons, (2) cat bites and (3) bat exposures.

Communicable diseases: In July, there were (3) cases of campylobacteriosis (one person ate a bad burger in London, one person lives on a farm and the third had no source listed); (1) case of Salmonellosis (this person has traveled overseas, and (2) cases of giardiasis (one from a possible restaurant and the other had no source listed).

In addition, there were (3) cases of gonorrhea; (13) cases of chlamydia; (1) case of syphilis; (10) probable cases of Lyme; (1) chronic case of hepatitis C; (1) case of influenza A; and (24) cases of COVID-19.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT:** Mr. Ring shared an update on the well and septic grant funded project. In 2022 the department received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to repair and replace wells and septic systems, that expanded over two years and all of that funding has been spent, expecting to close the grant out prior to the end of the year. The department is applying for a new round of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of (\$500,000), to repair or replace wells and septic systems, the grant will cover fiscal year (2025-2026), and this is a (\$100,000) increase from the last grant.

For the Lead Capacity Building Grant, the department is moving into a training phase for contractors. Two trainings that occurred for renovations, repair and painting for landlords and homeowners were held at BOCES facilities. Upcoming are lead abatement classes that will be directed towards contractors. The grant will fund abatement for replacement of molding, doors, and friction surfaces in preparation for brick-and-mortar funding, the last year of the grant.

There are four dates scheduled in the September for the free domestic animals' rabies clinics. The clinics will be held in the towns of Dayton, Machias and Lyndon and the village of Little Valley.

It is bat season, just this week the department sent (9) bats to Wadsworth to test for rabies. Bats don't like hot humid weather, so they make their way out of hot attics into the cooler spaces of people's homes, and when people leave their windows open, bats can get in that way. One to three percent of bats collected are positive for rabies, which is much higher than any other species.

Two thirds of rabies cases in the US are due to a bat exposure.

The mosquito program aides are wrapping up next week and returning back to college, they will be submitting the last of the mosquito collection data to the department, upon which the department will report the information back to the board.

Mayor Smith acknowledged the presence of a St. Bonaventure University intern Kevin Eberth, who will be graduating in 2026. Mr. Eberth shared that he was from Portville, and is a Public Health major who was happy to be at the Board meeting.

**Old/New Business:** Mayor Smith stated under new business the Board must fill the vacancy of Dr. Giles Hamlin. The mayor asked the nominating committee to come forward with a recommendation for the Vice President at the September meeting.

The second action item of the meeting is approval of the revised BOH by-laws. A motion to approve the revised by-laws as stated was made by Legislator Andreano, seconded by Legislator Schroeder, and unanimously approved.

The next BOH meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned in the memory of and recognition of the outstanding service of Dr. Giles Hamlin to the County of Cattaraugus and the Board of Health.

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

Respectfully submitted,



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