



# CATTARAUGUS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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

*Joseph Bohan, MD, President*

*Giles Hamlin, MD, Vice-President*

*Zahid Chohan, MD*

*Kelly J. Andreano, Legislator*

*Sondra Fox, RN, MSN, C.S.*

*Theresa Raftis*

*David L. Smith, Mayor*

*Kathryn Cooney Thrush, NP, MSN*

*Donna Vickman, LPN*

## MINUTES September 7, 2022

The 907<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health (BOH) was held at the Old Library Restaurant on September 7, 2022.

The following members were present:

Joseph Bohan, MD

Zahid Chohan, MD

Giles Hamlin, MD (Virtual)

Legislator Kelly Andreano (Virtual)

Kathryn Cooney-Thrush, NP, MSN

Theresa Raftis (Virtual)

Mayor David Smith

Donna Vickman, LPN

Also present were:

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

Ashley Smith, County Attorney (Virtual)

Legislator Richard Helmich

Legislator Ginger Schroeder (Virtual)

Legislator Rick Smith

Ray Jordan, Senior Public Health Sanitarian

Debra Lacher, Secretary to the Public Health Director

Collette Lulay-Pound, Administrative Officer

Rick Miller, Olean Times Herald Reporter (Virtual)

Barb Parish, Director of Nursing

Dave Porter, Hearing Officer

Bob Ring, Environmental Health Director

Matt Tyssee, Health Educator

Traci Wind, Health Educator Assistant

Legislator Chairman, Howard VanRensselaer

Gilbert Witte, MD, Medical Director

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Bohan. The roll was called and a quorum was present. Dr. Bohan asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 3, 2022. A motion to approve the Board of Health (BOH) meeting minutes from August 3, 2022 was made by Mrs. Vickman, seconded by Dr. Chohan, and unanimously approved.

Dr. Bohan offered congratulations to Mrs. Fox, a long time board member who has recently established a scholarship to the Cattaraugus Regional Community Foundation for the support of students pursuing a career in mental health. In addition, he congratulated the Women, Infant and Children's (WIC) team of the health department on their recent WIC Breastfeeding Gold Award of Excellence.

An appeal was discussed for docket #22-015, Theresa Dechow whose case was heard at the August BOH meeting. The respondent had (3) dogs which were involved in a biting incident. When the department began their investigation to determine if the dogs were vaccinated against rabies, the dogs suddenly disappeared. The health department was told that the dogs were destroyed and buried in an unknown location. With no proof that the dogs had any inoculation against rabies, and with no dogs to test, the individual who was bitten was advised to undergo the whole series of rabies vaccinations which were quite costly. Legislator Andreano asked if there was proof of delivery for the notice of hearing and the Board of Health order that was mailed to Ms. Dechow. Mrs. Lacher confirmed that yes, both the notice of hearing and the Board of Health order were sent by certified mail and both items were signed for. After a lengthy discussion amongst the board members, a motion by Mayor Smith to deny the appeal was made, the motion was seconded by Dr. Chohan and unanimously approved.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:** Dr. Watkins shared information regarding a new positive case of paralytic polio that was identified in Rockland County, NY. He stated that polio is a virus that's a member of enterovirus genus, and belongs to the family of picornaviridae. Enteroviruses are transient inhabitants of the gastrointestinal tract and are stable at acidic pH. Polio virus enters the body through the mouth usually from hands contaminated with the stool of an infected person. Respiratory and oral to oral transmission through saliva can also occur. Approximately (75%) of the people who get infected with poliovirus will not have any physical signs and (25%) will have flu-like symptoms that can include sore throat, fever, fatigue, nausea, headache and stomach pain. These symptoms usually last (2 to 5) days. A smaller proportion of people with poliovirus infection will develop other, more serious, symptoms that affect the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis occurs in about (1-5) out of (100) people and paralysis or weakness in the arms, legs, or both occurs in (1) out of (200) people or (1) in (2,000) people, depending on the virus type. Paralysis is the most severe symptom associated with poliovirus because it can lead to permanent disability and death.

In the 1950's, the United States experienced a large outbreak of polio, there were over (20,000) cases in the country at that time. Both an inactivated and a live polio vaccine was developed in 1955 and 1961 respectively. Since 1979, no cases of polio were reported in the US, other than through the occasional spreading of the virus through international travel. On July 21, 2022 the New York State Department of Health and Rockland County reported the first case of paralytic polio in a young male who was not vaccinated against polio. He had recently traveled to Israel but there was no genetic link between the type of polio he contracted and his international travel. On August 4<sup>th</sup> the Department of Health started to test wastewater samples that were previously collected to test for COVID-19, and found several samples positive for polio virus, genetically linked to the Rockland County resident diagnosed with polio. There were (260) wastewater samples taken from Rockland and Orange counties with (21) samples or (8%) of the samples yielding positive poliovirus test results. When looking at the vaccination rates of children younger than (24) months of age the vaccination rate in Rockland County was (67%) in July of 2020 but it dropped to (60.3%) in August of 2022. The conclusion is that the polio virus is actively circulating in the community. Unvaccinated and immunocompromised persons are at risk. The polio vaccine is actually recommended at (2) months, (4) months, a third dose between (6-18) months of age and a final dose between 4-6 years of age.

Dr. Watkins shared a slide with the polio vaccination rates by zip code for the municipalities in Cattaraugus County. Communities where the Amish live show lower rates of vaccination against polio. Unvaccinated people remain at risk for paralytic poliomyelitis if exposed to wild or vaccine derived poliovirus. Dr. Watkins gave the opportunity for Mr. Jordan to share his experience with polio.

Mr. Jordan shared that he caught polio prior to the vaccine being available to the public. He stated he could not imagine what his parents must have gone through. As a toddler he was able to climb everything, but as of October 1952, he could no longer walk. He shared that he was transferred to children's hospital and stayed there until the spring of 1953. He emphasized that no one should have to go through the severe pain he suffered, especially when it can be easily prevented with a vaccine. He went on to explain that when he returned home from the hospital his mother had to spend a considerable amount of time assisting him with physical therapy. There were four children in his community of Limestone that contracted polio and he was "crippled" at the age of four from the virus. He concluded by stating he has been blessed and considers himself lucky but stressed that parents should get their children vaccinated to avoid this situation happening to them.

Dr. Watkins went on to discuss fentanyl mortality. Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths in the US. Dr. Watkins shared slides he obtained from the Office of Addiction Services and Support (OASAS), showing that fentanyl is involved in the majority of opioid deaths. Looking at opioid overdose deaths by race/ethnicity in New York; between the years of 2018-2019, African Americans death rates were (12.7%, and 15.1% respectively), during the same period, Hispanics experienced death rates of (14.4% and 15.1%). When fentanyl became home grown (2020-2021) the death rates of those two demographics dramatically increased, but the death rates for the white population seemed to plateau during (2020-2021).

In 2021 Cattaraugus County identified (13) deaths due to fentanyl overdoses; for 2022, as of date, there has already been (14) deaths with (2) more potentials deaths pending toxicology reports, due to fentanyl overdoses. In 2021, the fentanyl deaths occurred in Olean, Salamanca, and Gowanda, and in 2022, most of the deaths occurred in Olean. Most funding from OASAS go to treatment, prevention and recovery programs. What is alarming is the disparity of virtually no programs in parts of Western New York (WNY). There are several programs in Erie County, but non-existent in Cattaraugus County. Dr. Watkins stated he asked the OASAS Commissioner why there is such a disparity in WNY. Her answer was that they have offered these programs to communities like Cattaraugus County but the RFA's either go unanswered or agencies who are awarded the grant are unable to hire appropriate staffing and eventually have to refuse the funding after qualifying for the grant. The department will be working with the Council on Addiction Recovery Services (CAREs) now Councils on Alcohol and Substance Abuse (CASA) Trinity, to find out why they cannot locate staff for these needed programs in the community.

Opioid settlement funding that has arrived in Cattaraugus County could potentially be use for harm reduction supplies such as fentanyl test strips, naloxone training kits, medication lock boxes, and naloxone vending machines. Reimbursement funds for transportation cost to recovery centers in Erie County can be made until a recovery center is established in Cattaraugus County.

Monkeypox update - Monkeypox is a rare disease, caused by orthopox virus, and is spread through close personal contact, skin-to-skin contact is the most common mode of transmission. The positive case numbers in NYS are starting to plateau and on a trajectory to trending downward. In August there were one or two states that had no cases, but as of date, every state in the US has at least one case. Symptoms include rash, fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle aches and backaches, headaches and respiratory symptoms.

Recently (31) children have tested positive in the US for monkeypox. Eleven states in the US have identified children with orthopox, with (3) pediatric cases in New York State. Erie county now has (13) cases, and Niagara county has (2) cases. A trial vaccine is available called "JYNNEOS", which can now be administered intradermally to increase the number of people who can receive the vaccine.

COVID-19 update – Dr. Watkins updated the Board on COVID-19 in Cattaraugus County. As of date, there has been (22,147) positive COVID-19 cases identified within Cattaraugus County and (21,699) cases that have recovered. The age group 19 and under continues to be the group with the highest number of positive cases. In August, there was a slight spike in the number of positive cases (802), and deaths (6). The current number of patients in the hospital is (19). Fifty seven percent of Cattaraugus County residents are vaccinated and a new bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine has been recently authorized for those 12 years of age and older. This booster is authorized for anyone who has had their primary series of COVID-19 vaccine and two months have passed since the last administration of the primary series or the last monovalent booster.

Dr. Bohan asked Mayor Smith and Legislator Andreano if anything extra was being done in the schools to warn kids about the dangers of fentanyl being mixed into other drugs at this time. Mayor Smith replied that in Gowanda there is a required drug and alcohol informational meeting that every parent of an incoming student entering either the middle school or high school must attend otherwise the student cannot participate in any extracurricular activities including sports, clubs, dances, musicals or any other school functions. Dr. Bohan asked if other schools were also doing this, and the Mayor replied some but not many. Dr. Witte asked Legislator Andreano what the Olean school district were doing. She replied that she was not at liberty to state the specifics but they have a contract with community action to provide training beginning in kindergarten up to the high school ages to identify good choices, drug prevention, and alcohol prevention. Dr. Watkins added that the health department does go into the schools and provides health education and maybe their programs could be expanded to include discussing some of the adverse effects of using these drugs. Dr. Chohan added that there was a study done that those who are using marijuana regularly have a higher incidence of cardiac arrhythmias, and cardiac disease.

**ENFORCEMENT LIST:** Mr. Porter, Hearing Administrator Officer reported on the administrative hearing held August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**DOCKET #22-019:**

**Respondent: Malachi Cleveland, 308 West Green Street, Olean, NY, 14760.**

**Violation: Subsection 24.2.5 of the sanitary code of CCHD. Failure to provide proof of a current rabies vaccination certification following a biting incident.**

**Recommendation:** The respondent, Malachi Cleveland, the civil compromise of \$75.00 be changed to a \$75.00 fine and then doubled to a \$150.00 fine for a no show after being properly served. The fine, completion of the animal confinement form, and proof of rabies vaccination be provided to the CCHD by 9-30-22. Failure to comply will result in an additional \$10.00 per day per diem until in compliance.

A motion was made by Dr. Chohan to accept Mr. Porter's recommendation, seconded by Mayor Smith and unanimously approved. Dr. Bohan asked what the policy of the health department was when notified of a bite and how quickly does a sanitarian respond. Dr. Watkins replied that typically they respond the day of the notification of the bite or at least the very next day to make sure that the dog is confined. The sanitarian then returns on day five, and day ten (when possible).

**NURSING DIVISION REPORT:** Mrs. Parish, shared that the current homecare census is (275), for the month of August, there were (88) admissions and (94) discharges.

In the lead program there were (99) children tested in the month of August, (89) children had levels (5ug/dl). The highest blood lead level tested in August was (9ug/dl) and the remainder were from (5.2ug/dl - 8ug/dl). The total case load for the lead program is (116) children. The highest lead level, currently being followed, is (27.2ug/dl) but this was a child who is much improved over a previous level of (44ug/dl) earlier in the year.

The clinic, the family planning program currently participated in a virtual Island Peer Review Organization (IPRO) survey and all information has been submitted as of September 2<sup>nd</sup>, now the department is waiting to hear back from them with the survey results. In two to three weeks the department should receive a potential statement of deficiencies and will respond with a plan of corrections regarding family planning services.

The flu vaccine clinic schedule was distributed to everyone in attendance and a copy has also been posted to the county website, and will be distributed to the various media outlets. The first clinic will be in Limestone, and is scheduled for the last week in September.

Today the department received the COVID-19 bivalent booster vaccine, and will be offering it at the next COVID-19 vaccine clinic.

HIV testing, for the month of August, there were (7) tests conducted in Salamanca, (9) in Olean and (1) in Machias. All tests conducted were negative.

Communicable diseases in August, there were (14) confirmed cases of chlamydia; (4) cases of gonorrhea; (1) case of Giardia with the likely source being river water (the individual was spending time doing aquatic surveys in the Allegany River); (5) confirmed cases of Hepatitis C; (1) influenza A confirmed; and there were no confirmed cases of Lyme disease. The State has taken over investigation of all Lyme cases for the local health departments in NYS. There were (3) confirmed cases of syphilis.

There was (9) rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis vaccination series given in August (many of the veterinarian school techs require all students entering their program to receive this vaccine); (4) rabies post exposure prophylaxis vaccination series administered in the month of August for bat exposures, and (1) related to a raccoon bite.

Dr. Witte asked if the State reports back any positive Lyme cases. Mrs. Parish replied that all those reports can be accessed through the electronic clinical laboratory reporting system (ECLRS) but the department is no longer required to complete the investigations.

Dr. Bohan stated that he read that Australia has had an increased level of influenza three times the normal rate this year. Dr. Witte suggested that the COVID vaccine clinics should also provide the influenza vaccine too. Mrs. Parish said that was certainly an option.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT:** Mr. Ring shared that there would be (3) free rabies clinics available within the county starting tomorrow, Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> in Dayton, Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> in Machias, and Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup> in Allegany. Individuals can get their dogs, cats, or ferrets vaccinated.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) successfully completed their oral rabies bait drop program, in the northern parts of Cattaraugus County.

Mr. Ring provided an update on the capital improvement project for local municipalities.

Through NYS and Homes and Community Renewal the department applied for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to replace water well, and septic systems for low and moderate income individuals; this is a (\$400,000.00) grant.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program and drinking water programs are both federal-state partnerships that provides communities low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects; many municipalities are applying for funding, and going through environmental quality review. Projects that are in construction include Franklinville, South Dayton, Olean, and Ellicottville. Projects that need reviews include Portville, Salamanca, Randolph, Machias, Little Valley, and Yorkshire.

**Old/New Business:** No other business noted.

A motion to adjourn was made Ms. Cooney-Thrush, seconded by Ms. Vickman and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



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