



MINUTES
November 22, 2022

Members Present:			
Dr. Jordan Singleton, Chair	X	Ryan Schooley	X
Carl Hanson, Vice-chair	X	Shane Farnsworth	X Phone
Gaye Ray	excused	Ann Anderson	excused
Dr. Mark Donaldson	X	Dr. Michael Kennedy	X
Amelia Powers Gardner	X	Julie Fullmer	X Phone
Dr. Jeffrey Ogden	X		

Others present:

Eric Edwards, MPA, MCHES UCHD Executive Director
Julie Dey UCHD Secretary

Number of people in attendance 11

1. Welcome by Jordan Singleton, Board of Health Chair
2. Approval of the minutes from September 26, 2022

MOTION: Dr. Michael Kennedy made the motion to approve the minutes from September 26, 2022, which was seconded by Carl Hanson and passed unanimously.

3. WIC Grand Opening – Saratoga Springs

Eric Edwards reported to the board. WIC has moved into their new location in Saratoga Springs. We would like to invite our board members to attend an Open House on Tuesday, December 6th from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm. The Utah County Commissioners were able to fast-track what we needed to secure the lease as quickly as possible. This improved location will serve WIC clients in the northwest portion of the county and will also save funds annually on building rent.

The new Saratoga Springs clinic had a 'soft' opening and is currently seeing clients. The clinic has needed to increase staffing in Saratoga Springs to accommodate the number of clients that are coming, which is more than they had expected. They are off to a great start.

4. Executive Staff Strategy Meeting

Eric Edwards explained, twice a year the Health Department's Executive Staff meets to talk about significant things such as operations, goals, vision, and mission statement. This provides the opportunity to update and modernize them and make sure we are ultimately meeting our mission of serving the public. At our most recent meeting, we discussed an employee engagement survey that provides us with excellent data. Our Human Resource department compiles this for all Utah County Employees to determine how engaged they are. If employees are not engaged, productivity suffers. If productivity suffers, we are not serving our Utah County clients as we should be. We keep tabs on this and strive to listen to employee input as to what their needs are. For example: Do they have the resources they need? Do they have the training they need? Do they have a work environment in which they feel safe?

The survey highlighted that the Health Department employees want to be recognized for their outstanding work. In January of 2022, the Health Department started an Employee Recognition Committee that is made up of peer employees (not department leadership). The committee is led by Julie Dey, Administrative Associate. We are already starting to see wonderful results from that. Between Tyler Plewe and I, we have attended the staff meetings within the divisions and bureaus and have presented 60+ peer-to-peer recognition awards. We are encouraging employees to nominate their peers. These new recognitions don't use funding, it is just something 'extra' that we can do to look at the Employee Engagement Survey and provide real world improvements with practical action items.

We are taking what we learn from the survey on a yearly basis and implementing incremental improvement in what the employees are telling us. We are trying to meet their needs in better ways.

5. New HR Business Partner and Customer Service Workshop Development

Eric Edwards explained, the Health Department was recently approached by the Utah County Human Resource Department to pilot a new Human Resource Business Partner concept. This person works more closely with us on a daily basis to meet the needs of our large organization. Eric introduced Karen Allen, our HR representative from Human Resources. Karen helps us to more actively hire and recruit. She helps us fill holes in our staffing plans that we would not have otherwise. We now use electronic recruitment such as Indeed.com and other websites.

We also have a need to improve customer service for the public, and how we treat each other as employees. We all need a safe working environment. The better we treat each other, the more productive we are, and the better we are at serving the public. One of the first 'asks' for Karen was to develop a Customer Service Workshop development training

that will be required of all our staff. We want to give credit to Karen for her hard work. We would not have had the bandwidth without this HR Business Partnership.

We will report back to the board on how the customer service workshop training improves our services.

Carl Hanson asked if the standards within accreditation is something that the Health Department will ever consider.

Eric explained that accreditation is quite the process. One of the things we want to do is to 'do all of the accreditation standards anyway.' For example, we have been walking through the Community Assessment process, quality improvement, strategic planning and other best practice steps too. We have not yet done it to the degree that is required in the accreditation process. Customer service is built into accreditation.

Four years ago, we started a process called 'Project Public Health Ready' which is a huge voluntary accreditation process for Emergency Preparedness. We achieved that certification in January of 2020 – the month that COVID hit. Many of the standards that are required in the Health Department accreditation are also completed by also going through 'Project Public Health Ready,' which is thousands of pages of planning documents.

We have the attitude that we should be doing all of it anyway. We look at the key components of what is required by PHAB (Public Health Accreditation Board) and we try to work on those. For instance, we worked on standardization of record keeping. It is a good thing, and we haven't fully accomplished it to that level yet.

Amelia Powers Gardner suggested that we put the accreditation on a strategic planning document for long-term planning. By increasing employee engagement, you can increase discretionary effort by up to 20% which is like adding one employee for every five you already have. If accreditation is something we as a board want to pursue, we can put that into a strategic planning document. In the planning document, we would put in things like 'we would like to have a north campus to serve our citizens in the northwest as population grows.' If we have a strategic document, we can put tentative numbers and dollars to those things to see how much it would cost. This would allow us to enhance budgeting into the future. Utah County traditionally has been a very reactive county and not a proactive county, so we don't actually have a strategic planning document. We have a general planning document that is required by law, but it doesn't really take into account population growth to the level we are seeing. It doesn't have goals for the future.

Eric said the Health Department has a strategic plan that we build off of our Community Health Assessment. This is where we go to the public and ask them, "What are your greatest public health concerns? What is great about Utah County? Where are we lacking?". We then make goals and objectives based on our service delivery; but going even further and adding the detail and components of a strategic plan.

Carl Hanson asked Amelia Powers-Gardner, "What is the County Commissioners' attitude about accreditation generally for any county division or office? Is it positive?"

Amelia responded with her opinion that, "If the parameters of that accreditation are reasonable and reward things like efficiency, then I would very much look forward to that. Many of these certifications come with skills and if the skills add value, then I see value in it. For an accredited health department, I would want to go through and evaluate, "Is this an accreditation that I feel adds value?"

Dr. Michael Kennedy asked, "How much would it cost to get the accreditation? And what is the value that would be associated with the accreditation?"

Eric said that he will send out the link to PHAB (Public Health Accreditation Board) for the board members to review and then ask questions about the value that could be added with the accreditation. Eric also said that accreditation needs to be renewed every five years and there is a yearly fee paid to PHAB.

Dr. Jeffery Ogden spoke to accreditation and said, "If there is no requirement by law for a local health department to be accredited, it seems like there is not an upside of being accredited except looking at the standards for ourselves and saying, 'Is that something we like?' 'Is that something that is important to us?' 'What is the upside?'"

Eric explained there is no requirement for the health department to become accredited. Perhaps that will change in the future, and only accredited health departments will be able to receive funding. The biggest upside is that we would be eligible for significant funding in areas of greatest community need.

Eric said, "If we were to go through the steps of accreditation, it undoubtedly would improve us and make us better. It would be worth doing, but it is complex, expensive, and resource intensive."

6. Independent Contractor – Pandemic 'Hotwash'

Eric reported on the Pandemic 'hotwash' that was held in October 2022 with the Health Department's executive staff members. A 'hotwash' is an emergency preparedness term that is similar to a 'debrief' after an operational mission in the military. An independent company has been hired to review the pandemic response. A prior emergency preparedness professional that worked for local public health serves as the contractor. He is very respected and knows his science. The state is following the same process and has also hired an independent contractor.

During the pandemic, Utah County Health Department did a lot of good things, but we also have many things that need to be improved. The executive staff was interviewed

extensively regarding our response to the pandemic. The 'hotwash' gave us a chance to recognize what was accomplished, what we missed, what we achieved, what we could have done better.

We will share the report from the 'hotwash' with the board. We will use the report to update our Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) document which is the voluntary accreditation standard that we completed as of January 2020. It will allow our emergency preparedness planner to update our pandemic/flu response using the lessons learned from the pandemic. COVID taught us a lot of lessons. We want to gain as much value from the last two years of stress so we can be better prepared for the next epidemic or pandemic that may arise.

We will send the board the report once it is finalized.

Dr. Jordan Singleton said that he is in favor of having a presentation to the board. This will allow questions to be asked and answered.

7. Public Health Notification System Update

The Public Health Notification System at the Health Department is how we release emergency or other important information to physicians in Utah County. Dr. Michael Kennedy brought up the need to improve this system during our July 2022 board meeting.

The Health Department was challenged by the board to examine and revamp our notification system. An assignment was given to Sarah Smart to update the entire thing. Every physician's office in the county is now on her updated list with 637 different contacts. She methodically went through city by city and organized the notification process by finding out the preferred method of notification (texts, emails or faxes).

The old system only reached around 20% of physician offices. A test of the updated system improved successful physician notification rates to approximately 81%.

Dr. Michael Kennedy said that Utah Division of Professional Licensing (DOPL) has an accurate list of physicians' email addresses on their state database. He explained that physicians need to renew their licenses each year on the DOPL website. The DOPL website has updated contact information accordingly. Dr. Kennedy said he would be willing to work with DOPL to encourage them to provide this updated list. He shared contact information with the Health Officer. Once achieved, this will help all other health departments throughout the state. The health department will report progress made at a future Board of Health meeting.

8. 2022 Respiratory Illness Report

The CDC has released a health advisory stating that viral illnesses such as RSV, Flu, and COVID rates are up all over the United States. The viral illnesses are affecting children and

not just the elderly. We are seeing more cases of these viral illnesses now (November) than we typically do. Colton Fox, UCHD, Public Health Informaticist, compiled and distributed a Respiratory Illness Report to board of health members. The report is included in the minutes of the meeting.

Eric said UCHD will send out an alert through the physician notification system throughout Utah County so physicians will know what to look for.

With the heightened rates of viral illnesses, there is a shortage of antibiotics like Amoxicillin and Augmentin. A local doctor working at a private practice asked the health department to help pharmacies coordinate vaccine supply. His idea involved contacting all the pharmacies to find out if they have ample supply of the antibiotics. He felt this would help pharmacists and doctors to work together and coordinate supply.

Eric asked the physicians on the board of health if this concept would be helpful.

Dr. Jeffery Ogden said it would not be helpful to him.

Dr. Michael Kennedy did not feel that this would be an appropriate role for the health department. He explained that it would be difficult to keep an accurate list as day-to-day supplies can change constantly at the pharmacies. It should be up to the pharmacies to keep their supply antibiotics in stock.

Dr. Jordan Singleton agreed with Dr. Michael Kennedy and said, "It might be helpful if we were alerted that a certain medication may be in short supply and then other options can be considered, or we can give our patients a heads up that they may need to call around to pharmacies to find who has it in stock."

Eric said a better strategy would be for the Health Department to use the notification system to share information that medications are in short supply and let our physicians know.

Board of Health physicians agreed that their patients let them know when there are shortages.

Eric appreciated the feedback from the board and said the health department will follow their direction.

9. Employee Changes

Eric reviewed the employee changes with the board. Eric introduced Elisha Baker, UCHD's new Finance Manager. He reported there are open positions for four (4) Environmental Health Technicians/Scientists in our Environmental Health division. The positions have been challenging to fill due to the difficult labor market.

Carl Hanson asked, "Are the (Environmental Health Technicians/Scientist) positions requiring certification?"

Tyler Plewe, UCHD Deputy Director, explained the positions require a college degree with 30 credits of science. They also are required pass the Environmental Health Scientist licensure exam. The requirements for the positions come from state law. The individuals in these Environment Health positions also need conflict resolution skills, and the ability to diffuse tense situations. Our Environmental Health staff enforce Environmental Health regulations and laws. Enforcement is their primary daily responsibility. When we are interviewing for the positions, if we feel the candidates would not be able to enforce a rule or they cannot converse with someone and have a hard conversation, the candidates will not be hired.

Dr. Michael Kennedy asked if it is necessary for a college degree for the position?

Dr. Jeffrey Ogden asked, "What does the position pay?"

Tyler replied, "We have extended positions, but the candidates have turned down the offer due to the pay, and there are many other components as to why we are not able to hire."

Amelia Powers-Gardner said, "When we lose a job offer, many times we are losing it to Salt Lake County or to Juab County. We are literally poaching our own employee's county by county based on what we can pay. So, this is broader discussion than just Utah County."

Carl Hanson reported to Tyler, "BYU's Environmental faculty met with the association two weeks ago. They learned that their environmental health public health students coming out with a bachelor's degree will automatically be able to sit for the Environmental Health Scientist certification. This may provide more candidates for the UCHD vacant positions."

Eric said that UCHD is also working with Human Resources to see what we can do to find qualified people.

10. Other Items

The Board of Health schedule for 2023 was distributed to the board members. The Board of Health always meets the fourth Monday of every odd month.

Amelia Powers Gardner reported on the opioid settlements from the opioid lawsuit. Utah County is one of the counties who sued the opioid manufacturers and distributors. We still have pending lawsuits with several companies, but we have settled with approximately 3 of them. Over the next 18 years, Utah County will receive about \$20 million. A requirement of the settlement is that we must use the funding for prevention and treatment of opioid addiction. The vast majority of the money will most likely be spent with Wasatch Behavioral Health because they do a lot of the opioid and addiction treatment for our county. A portion of the funds will be used by the sheriff's department for things like continuity of

care when people with addictions are arrested and booked into jail. Their treatment costs will come out of our general fund. Because of the lack of funding in our general fund, often times addicted people will cease treatment due to the high cost. This often causes a relapse when they get out of jail because they weren't getting treatment while they were in jail; and so, this new funding will allow us to have a continuity of care when they are in the jail. It will also help them transition into society when they are released. It will help ensure they are able to be in treatment programs.

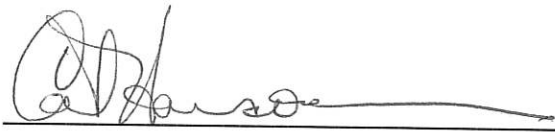
A portion of the funds will come to the Health Department for things like prevention. It will help with Naloxone kits and community prevention groups. The state is also receiving money for the lawsuits, and so Utah County may be receiving additional funds from the state.

Dr. Jordan Singleton explained the tragic loss of life he sees in the emergency room with individuals addicted to opioids. Opioid users have a high risk of dying. If emergency rooms had a sufficient supply of Naloxone kits to distribute to these patients, it would likely prevent deaths. "In the emergency room, we are seeing opioid related patients at least once a shift. It is a very common occurrence. We would like to have Naloxone kits in the Emergency Room."

MOTION: Dr. Mark Donaldson made the motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ryan Schooley and passed unanimously.



Eric Edwards, MPA, MCHES
Executive Director / Local Health Officer
Utah County Health Department



Dr. Jordan Singleton
Chair
Utah County Board of Health