



# 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*

*Sondra Fox, RN*

*Richard Haberer*

*Theresa Raftis*

*David L. Smith, Mayor*

*James Snyder, Legislator*

*Kathryn Cooney Thrush, NP*

## MINUTES December 12, 2017

The 861<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health was held at The Point Restaurant, 800 East State Street, Olean, New York on December 12, 2017.

The following members were present:

Dr. Joseph Bohan

Sondra Fox, RN

Richard Haberer

Dr. Giles Hamlin

Theresa Raftis

Mayor David Smith

Jim Snyder, Legislator

Also present were:

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

Eric Firkel, County Attorney

Paul Schwach, MD, Clinic Physician

Dr. Gil Witte, Medical Director

Dan Hale, Legislator

Barb Hastings, Legislator

Richard Helmich Jr., Legislator

Susan Labuhn, Legislator

Debra Nichols, Health Educator

Gina Parks, Resource Coordinator

Shomita Steiner, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coord.

Susan Andrews, Director of Nursing

Dave Porter, Hearing Officer

Raymond Jordan, Sr. Public Health Sanitarian

Debra Lacher, Secretary to Public Health Director

Thomas Leccadone, Administrative Officer

Patti Williams, Supervising Community Health Nurse

Eric Wohlers, Environmental Health Director

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Bohan. The roll was called and a quorum declared. Legislator Snyder made a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Health (BOH) meeting held on November 14, 2017, it was seconded by Ms. Raftis and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Bohan welcomed Legislator Dan Hale, to his first BOH meeting in a Legislator capacity. In the past, Legislator Hale served as a hearing officer for the BOH.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:** Dr. Watkins reported that during the week ending December 2, 2017, influenza activity level was categorized as geographically regional. This was the first week that regional activity has been reported. There were (395) laboratory confirmed influenza reports in New York State, which was an 86% increase over the previous week. Of the (25) specimens that were tested at Wadsworth Center, (5) were positive for influenza A (H3N2).

The number of patients that have been hospitalized with laboratory confirmed influenza in New York State (NYS) during the week ending December 2, 2017, was (124), which was a 49% increase over the previous week. There has been a total of (3) laboratory-confirmed influenza reports in Cattaraugus County, and all have been influenza A. There have been no influenza associated pediatric deaths in NYS this influenza season.

Reports from Australia have caused mounting concerns in the United States, as there were a record-high numbers of laboratory-confirmed influenza reports and outbreaks and higher-than-average numbers of hospitalizations and deaths in Australia. According to the Australian Government Department of Health, the number of Influenza A reports reached over 215,000 by mid-October, far exceeding the 59,000 cases reported during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic. Influenza A (H3N2) viruses predominated, and the preliminary estimate of vaccine effectiveness against influenza A (H3N2) was only 10%.

Interim reports suggest that the 10% vaccine effectiveness against influenza A (H3N2) viruses was not primarily attributable to antigenic mismatch between the vaccine strain and circulating viruses. Instead, it appears that Influenza A (H3N2) viruses continue to undergo changes in their receptor-binding specificity, during its growth in eggs. These genetic changes (referred to as egg-adapted changes) alter the antigenic properties of vaccine viruses as they are grown in eggs and potentially during the vaccine production process. This observation lends credibility to the hypothesis that egg-adapted changes contribute to poor influenza-vaccine effectiveness.

In the United States, the vaccine for this upcoming 2017-2018 season has the same composition as that used in Australia. Given that most of the U.S. influenza-vaccine supply is currently produced in eggs and the composition of the 2017–2018 Influenza vaccine is identical to that used in Australia, it is speculated that we will experience low vaccine effectiveness against influenza A (H3N2) viruses and have a relatively severe influenza season if the Influenza A (H3N2) predominates in the US.

Last year (2016-2017), the influenza vaccine overall effectiveness rate was 42% for both influenza A/B. However, during the same time period, the influenza vaccine overall effectiveness rate for influenza A (H3N2) was only 34%. It can only be speculated at this time, that the effectiveness of this year's (2017-2018) influenza vaccine against influenza A (H3N2), may have the same overall effectiveness rate (34%) since it was not changed in this year's influenza vaccine make-up.

Opioid abuse is a public health crisis for the nation and New York State. Between 2009 and 2015, the number of deaths across New York State resulting from prescription opioids alone nearly doubled. In 2015, prescription opioids factored into approximately half of all drug-related deaths and about two-thirds of all opioid-related deaths. The opioid epidemic is fueled by both lawful and illegally obtained opioids. Nearly 9 million opioid prescriptions were dispensed in New York State in 2015. Between 2011 and 2014, approximately 145,000 New Yorkers annually abused or were dependent on opioids.

Recent released data on the rate of opioid prescriptions written, per 100,000 population, in NYS counties revealed some alarming information for Western NY. A Snapshot look at the opioid prescribing trends by counties in New York State from 2010 to 2015, published by NYS Health's Foundation, was distributed to those in attendance. A list of the top ten New York State Counties with the Highest Per-Capita Opioid Prescribing providers revealed that Cattaraugus County was the third highest in Western NY, and the ninth in the state between (2006- 2015).

Demographics characteristics of those who are more likely to be prescribed high doses of opioids tend to have smaller and older populations (those over age 65 and on Medicare), a smaller proportion of racial and ethnic minority residents (Caucasians), and a higher rate of hospital utilization (those with disabilities and inpatient surgeries).

The substantial variation in opioid prescribing observed at the county-level suggests inconsistent practice patterns and a lack of consensus about appropriate opioid use and demonstrates the need for better application of guidance and standards around opioid prescribing practices. Health care providers can follow the CDC's Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain, which provides evidence-based recommendations about opioid prescribing for primary care clinicians treating adult patients with chronic pain, outside of active cancer treatment, palliative care, and end-of-life care.

In 2012 as part of New York's continuing effort to lead the way in programs to track, monitor and protect against prescription drug abuse, an improved electronic monitoring method called Internet System for Over-Prescribing Act (I-STOP) was passed. I-STOP allows providers to more easily access a patient's prescription history in order to prevent opioid abuse. In March 2016, the Electronic Prescribing Mandate went into effect, requiring physicians to send pharmacies prescription information electronically. This was intended to reduce the number of forged, stolen, or misused paper prescriptions, and provide an extra layer of physician accountability. In June 2016, a prescription-limiting bill was passed, which caps first-time opioid prescriptions at a 7-day supply.

A letter is being prepared to providers in Cattaraugus County to make them aware of these prescribing practices and to ask if they would consider writing for other analgesics first before writing for opioids knowing the addiction properties that opioids often present. Patients should also ask their providers to consider another analgesic if given an opioid product.

On November 21, 2017 the department was informed that the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) awarded the department national accreditation status. Cattaraugus County is one of five local health departments in New York State and the first in Western New York to have achieved this national accreditation status distinction. The department has showed a commitment to have its work reviewed against national standards. Undergoing accreditation has stimulated quality and performance improvement opportunities for the department and has increased the department's ability to qualify for national funding opportunities. This was an arduous process that took several years to complete. The team never loss focus, hope or determination. The team was led by our accreditation coordinator, Gina Parks, fielding the team was Dr. Shomita Steiner, Deb Nichols, and Kevin Watt. We want to thank them for all their work they have given to this process.

Ms. Parks shared a power point presentation highlighting the set of standards and measures the department had to demonstrate to meet the PHAB requirements to become an accredited health department. The standards and measures addressed the full range of public health activities, including environmental health, clinical services, health education and promotion, disease control and prevention, human resources, and IT. By following the PHAB's standards and measures, the department is insuring the public that it provides the same level of service that every other accredited health department provides.

The application process was completed in March of 2014. Three major documents were submitted which included the Community Health Assessment, Community Health Improvement Plan, and the Strategic Plan, which ends December 2017. Once the application was accepted, a required training had to be completed by staff, and a year was given to gather all the documents. The documentation was separated into twelve domains, ten were focused on essential public health programs identified by the PHAB, one on administration, and one on governance. In the end, this resulted in ninety seven total measures. Each measure could require as many as four or five documents to demonstrate the process. Once all documents were uploaded and accepted, the PHAB scheduled a site visit, where peers looked over multiple documents, interviewed staff, the governance body and community partners. At the end of the site visit, it was determined that the department needed a more robust performance management tool in order to be recommended for accreditation status.

Now that accreditation status has been given to the department, re-accreditation starts now and will require the department to identify and gather more documentation, but this time, the department must develop clear and concise descriptive narratives that tell the health department's "stories."

Ms. Nichols added that during this accreditation process the department learned that staff was performing the work, but was not always documenting the work. One thing the department have managed to improve is proper documentation.

Dr. Steiner stated that accreditation has helped with restructuring and tracking of the department's activities, and keeping accountability of completed task, which has been a good learning experience.

Dr. Bohan added his congratulations, and stated that this was a "big deal." He thanked Dr. Watkins for leading this team and bringing Cattaraugus County to the forefront. Legislator Hastings, stated the amount of work taken to achieve accreditation status was overwhelming and this was a great accomplishment. Cattaraugus County was the first Health Department established in New York State and now the department is the first accredited health department in Western New York.

Legislator Snyder asked Dr. Watkins for an update on the Weston Mills construction project that will add 21 more rehabilitation beds to the community. Dr. Watkins replied that ground breaking for the project has begun at the facility. Initially, a delay took place due to engineering planning. Once the Council on Addiction Recovery Services (CAREs) received the clearance for the new septic system they moved forward with the project.

CAReS is working with NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Systems (OASAS) who has released the funding for this capital project. Mr. Wohlers stated that originally he encouraged CAReS to look elsewhere to place the new septic tank as the spaced initially identified was a small defined area that did not have a public sewer system. The organization chose to build a second sewage system immediately adjacent to the one that is already there, in addition, the organization will drill a new well that the Health Department will manage as a public water system.

**NURSING DIVISION REPORT:** Mrs. Williams reported the homecare census is currently (306) patients. The preventative Maternal Child Health programs including the Medicaid Obstetric Maternal Services (MOMS) and lead programs have (63) patients. In November, the Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) program reported (17) cases of Chlamydia, (6) cases of Gonorrhea, and no new cases of Syphilis. In addition, there were (5) Hepatitis C cases, and (6) Lyme cases reported. Two cases of Campylobacter, (1) case of Cryptosporidiosis, and (1) case of group Strep B reported. Finally, there was treatment of (1) post exposure rabies prophylaxis administered to a 20 year old male who was walking and got bitten by a raccoon.

Mrs. Williams informed the Board that there is an abundant supply of the influenza vaccine, currently the department is taking walk-ins and appointments. Dr. Bohan asked if more people were receiving the vaccine this year as opposed to last year. Mrs. Williams answered that the department has given out about 2,000 doses in the community clinics which is on par from last year. Even though the publicity is saying the effectiveness of the vaccine is low, the department is seeing people coming in and requesting the vaccine.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION REPORT:** Mr. Wohlers shared that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) helps to replace septic systems and wells for low and moderate income families. Due to weather conditions, the department has agreed to suspend bidding on any additional septic system projects at this time. The goal is to achieve (60) projects within the two year grant period, and approximately half that number has already been completed this year.

The department was notified that under the new 2017 Clean Water Infrastructure Act legislation, that was recently passed by New York State, there is actually funds earmarked for septic system replacement. Only certain counties are eligible to participate in this program and Cattaraugus County was listed as one of the counties. The properties that will be eligible are those that are within 200 feet of the Allegheny River, and there are no restrictive income guidelines. Homeowners would be eligible to receive a 50% refund of the cost of putting in the system through this State program. The department will be applying to take part in this program.

The Department of Environmental Conservation identified impaired bodies of water, lakes, rivers and reservoirs that are experiencing harmful algae bloom problems every summer. The algae bloom toxins are starting to impact the drinking water, and was seen in both Chautauqua and Owasco Lakes.

There was a boil water advisory notice for Limestone last week due to a water main break. The standard procedures including flushing and disinfecting was conducted before authorization to lift the boil water notice was granted.

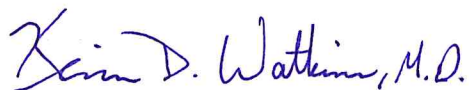
Crews finished the water main replacement project in Franklinville this fall. Several streets in Gowanda received replacement of water mains, and the new water treatment plant at the West Valley demonstration project, for their ground water drinking supply, was also completed. Work is ongoing at the new Randolph well house project, and work will begin in early 2018 on the Lime Lake sewer project. Mr. Haber asked for more of an explanation on the West Valley demonstration project. Mr. Wohlers replied that back when the original plant was operating they had a very elaborate surface water filtration process for their drinking water. When they made the decision to tear down the main plant to get to the contaminated ground water underneath, all their water filtration equipment was inside the building. The demonstration project was going to have to build a whole new expensive water filtration plant, so the department suggested that they not use the surface water supply but instead go to a ground water well which is much simpler to meet State and Federal drinking water standards. West Valley demonstration project decided to construct a new separate building just to provide disinfection and iron secretion for their ground water. Mr. Haberer asked what they are doing with the waste water lagoons. Mr. Wohlers answered that they are still planning on keeping them in service for now.

**ENFORCEMENT REPORT:** No enforcements to report this month.

Dr. Bohan thanked Deb Lacher for her 32 years of service, as she is retiring. She has done a great job, and I just want to congratulate her. Dr. Watkins also added that the Supervisor Community Health Nurse, Patti Williams has given 27 years to the department and she is also retiring. Both Lacher and Williams have been dedicated, committed employees, and I can't say thanks loud enough to these two individuals. They will be truly missed, and leave us with a huge void.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Haberer, and seconded by Mrs. Fox, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



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