



# Washtenaw County Board of Health

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## Minutes

April 26, 2024, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
Washtenaw County Health Department  
555 Towner St, Ypsilanti, MI 48198  
Room 2102B

**Present:** Shadin Atiyeh, Gina Dahlem, Chris Frank, Justin Hodge, Joan Kellenberg, Carla Pretto, Sade Richardson

**Absent:** Guadalupe Cervantes, Katie Scott, Elisabeth Vanderpool, Dan Yordanich

**Staff:** Jimena Loveluck, Ruth Kraut, Charlyn VanDeventer, Russell O'Brien

**Guests:** Charles Peterson, Nicolas Casey, Jennifer DeLisle

### 1. Call to Order

Gina Dahlem called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

### 2. Public Comment

None.

### 3. Board Member Response to Public Comment

None.

### 4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

*Motion by C. Pretto, seconded by C. Frank, to approve the agenda.*

*Motion approved unanimously.*

### 5. Approval of March 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Action)

*Motion by C. Pretto, seconded by J. Kellenberg, to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2024 meeting.*

*Motion approved unanimously.*

### 6. Executive Committee Minutes from March 15, 2024

Board members received the Executive Committee minutes.

Gina Dahlem said they received updates on COVID-19/Flu/RSV, Community Health Assessment, Maintenance of Effort/CAP, and Public Health Nursing.

### 7. Community Voices Report

Charles Peterson gave an update from the last Community Voices (CV) meeting. They started with welcomes and appreciations followed by discussion about the Hometown Hero Award. CV also discussed the Youth Resource Center (YRC) that has several county organizations and stakeholders working to deter youth from the court/juvenile system. Adam Paberzs provided an update from Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) leadership in response to CV's request to extend the current compensation model through the end of the fiscal year. Members checked-in on CV projects, received an update on the Board of Health (BOH) from Charles, and discussed teambuilding. Charles suggested to CV members that they attend the BOH meetings in-person or on Zoom so that they get all the information.



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### 8. Future Direction of Health Equity Work – Charlyn VanDeventer, Health Equity Manager

Charlyn VanDeventer presented to the board on the future direction of health equity at WCHD. She discussed the 2020 Resolution Naming Racism as a Public Health Crisis, reviewed the key history of health equity within WCHD, talked about the Health Equity Manager role, and plans for the future of health equity.

The equity timeline pre-Covid was discussed with key points highlighted. The health equity lens was used for the robust COVID response. The equity timeline since 2020 was shared, highlighting the BOH/Board of Commissioners (BOC) naming Racism as a Public Health Crisis in June 2020 and Community Health Assessment/Community Health Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP) work in 2023. Some challenges to health equity work include shifting priorities, staff turnover/exhaustion/trauma, and providing ongoing education around health equity. Charlyn discussed WCHD's Principles for Health Equity, commitments from the BOH resolution, and how health equity is incorporated into the Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

Charlyn's role as Health Equity Manager encompasses developing health equity plans/practices/evaluations, facilitate collaboration to support health equity initiatives, and support a diverse/inclusive/equitable health department. Current health equity projects were discussed including the continuation of Anti-Racist Cities and Communities Partnership (ARCC) and the Health Equity Council. Charlyn went over the future of health equity. This includes hire/strengthen/support/retain a diverse/equitable workforce, embed a health equity/antiracist lens across the department, and support/strengthen community relationships/partnerships. Further discussion from board members on expectations around WCHD health equity work and where progress will be in 2 years.

### 9. Medical Debt Presentation – Alex Vita, MD, Raymond Tjhia, MD, Dr. Juan Marquez, Medical Director

Dr. Juan Marquez introduced Leadership in Public Health medical student Alex Vita, MD. Alex presented to the board on medical debt in low-income residents of Washtenaw County. She discussed how medical debt negatively impacts quality of life, how Washtenaw County compares to national medical debt, Financial Assistance Policies (FAP), survey content/distribution/results, and potential future steps.

Alex discussed demographics of survey participants and shared that half of low-income residents surveyed have medical debt. The 2 largest county health systems represent the most common sources of medical debt in survey participants. The top sources of medical debt in Washtenaw County closely follow national trends. Among residents who were FAP eligible, 93% did not use FAP. Around 75% were not offered or told about FAP and even when they were told, most did not successfully use FAP. Median debt among low-income residents of Washtenaw County was similar to the national mean. Alex listed and discussed the conclusions from the survey and went over potential future steps.

Board members discussed the FAP process and the difficulties navigating the system. It is not an easy process and people don't get much help. There is a long list of documents that must be provided, and the average person would find it challenging. Justin Hodge said he heard recently that Wayne County started a process for people to have medical debt paid for by the county.

If funding is available moving forward, they would like to support focus groups with people that are using FAP to understand the challenges and then share results with the hospitals. They would also like to spread the survey to a broader representation of the county.



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### 10. BOC Liaison Report

Justin Hodge said the main thing they have been working on is millages. There will be 3 in August and 2 in November, possibly 3. These are all renewals. There is a potential 7<sup>th</sup> millage related to seniors that would be on the November ballot if approved. Justin also mentioned the creation of permanent positions for Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC) and continued negotiations for labor contracts.

### 11. New Business

- **MALPH Day at the Capitol**

Jimena Loveluck talked about MALPH Day at the Capitol and showed a picture of Community Voices receiving the 2024 Jean Chabot Health Policy Champion Award. It is the day that counties get to talk about public health with elected officials. Funding priorities were also discussed.

- **Community Violence Intervention Summit 4/29/24**

Jimena shared information with board members on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Violence Intervention Summit on April 29<sup>th</sup> at Washtenaw Community College. Dr. Marquez will be presenting, sharing local data, and providing an update on work with the Community Violence Intervention Grant.

- **Health Department Budget Presentations**

There is a meeting scheduled with the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator for the beginning of May to discuss investment in public health and funding for the Health Department. They will talk about addressing the issue of maintenance of effort, the required funding the County provides the Health Department in order to receive State funding. The funding level hasn't significantly changed since 1992. They will also discuss the cost allocation plan, which is for central services that the Health Department pays the County. The draft budget presentation for the BOH will take place at the May meeting. Jennifer Brassow will return at the July meeting so the BOH can vote to recommend the budget for approval by the BOC.

### 12. Old Business

- **State Accreditation**

Jimena gave an update on State Accreditation. The Environmental Health accreditation will be May 8-10 for the food service program. The week of May 20, MDHHS will be at the Health Department to review all of the mandated services and the administrative component.

### 13. Adjournment

*Motion by C. Pretto, seconded by J. Hodge, to adjourn the meeting.*

*Motion approved unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 10:43 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien