

**North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors  
Association Business Meeting  
December 19, 2024 – 9:30 am  
5605 Six Forks Road – Cardinal Room**

**Meeting Called to Order – Quintana Stewart**

President Quintana Stewart (Orange Co.) opened the meeting at 9:30am and thanked everyone for attending in person and online. President Stewart asked everyone in the room to please use the microphone when speaking so that people online can hear.

**Approval of Minutes – Wes Gray**

Minutes were distributed with the packet via email. President Stewart asked for a motion for approval of the minutes.

**Motion:** Motion to approve was made by Janet Clayton (Person Co.) and seconded by Krissy Hoover (Onslow Co.). No objections – minutes were approved by consensus.

**Treasurer’s Report – Wes Gray**

The Treasurer’s Report was distributed with the packet via email. President Stewart asked for a motion for approval of the Treasurer’s Report.

**Motion:** Motion to approve was made by Ashley Stoop (ARHS) and seconded by Dr. Marilyn Pearson (Johnston Co.). No objections – Treasurer’s Report was approved by consensus.

**Medicaid Update - Jay Ludlum**

Good morning - I hope you are having or preparing to have a fantastic holiday and enjoying the good weather. I am going to give some brief updates on Medicaid expansion and the 1115 waiver. About a week ago NC Medicaid received approval from CMS on our 1115 demonstration waiver. In 2018 we received approval to do the waiver to authorize us to do three core things. One was the tribal option with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to address health issues. The second was for the managed care authority and the third was the Healthy Opportunity Pilots.

This is really important especially for the Healthy Opportunities Pilots. If we get the budget from the General Assembly, then we will get to spend money on the program statewide. As we work with the General Assembly, we would not be rolling this out immediately. This will take a lot of time and planning. Another item we are working with the legislature on is our justice initiative. We are a national pioneer in things like HOP. The justice initiative is a project that we are working on for assisting with release and coordinating with counties and the Department of Corrections.

Jay discussed reauthorizations for adults and children and how Medicaid is trying to make that smoother with the E14 waiver. We are a little over one year into expansion. Last week, we finally crossed that 600,000 threshold. Again, this was our 2-year goal and we did it in a little over a year. As of this morning, we are at 605,599.

Jessica Wall (Yadkin Co.) asked if there was any advice on how the counties that did not meet the care management benchmarks could go forward and how that may affect us in negotiations with the PHPs. Jay will talk to his staff to determine if any conversations from the PHPs have taken place regarding care management. Josh Kennedy (Polk Co.) said they had some issues with staffing that affected out benchmarks this year. We have been meeting them historically but I hope that can be a part of the conversation. Jennifer Green (Cumberland) asked if the counties that did not meet benchmarks could have a conversation with leadership to discuss some of the potential reasons why they were not met. Jay said he would circle back with the team and get more information from us on that and recognized the sense of urgency we have in relation to care management. Josh Swift (Forsyth Co.) said that Patrick could help with organizing that meeting. Lillian Koontz (Davidson Co.) said that the agencies that did meet benchmarks also want to look forward over the next twelve months to ensure that the program remains at health departments so that it will help counties encourage staff to stay and maintain trust in the community.

President Stewart thanked Jay for his update.

### **President's Report – Quintana Stewart**

President Stewart asked if there were any new health directors in the room or online?

Traci Colley with Union County. Not replacing, only following Dennis Joyner – an amazing person, great leader, and incredible mentor.

President Stewart asked if there were any retiring health directors?

President Stewart talked about Dennis Joyner and wished him well on his upcoming retirement. Dennis Joyner (Union Co.) rose and thanked Quintana and Traci for those kind words. I want to take a minute to say thank you to everyone here. It seems like yesterday I was sitting here as a new health director and thinking about how to do the job. And then time flies. After 38 years in the field and 20 years as health director time really does go by fast. Its been great to develop the friendships, many with people that have passed, or moved on or retired and many sitting here in this room. I am happy to move on to the next phase in life and other pursuits. I want to encourage you to remember that work is not everything and to enjoy things outside of the office.

Where the rubber meets the road is in local communities, and that is hard work. Keep remembering why we do what we do and you will be fine. I also want to thank the leadership and those that serve as officers. It is a commitment and I want to thank Quintana for a successful year as president. Also, the staff at the Association who do a lot of work behind the scenes. Thanks to Karen and Joanne. Thanks everyone. *(applause all around – ed note)*

President Stewart recalled her time in Forsyth and how she kept seeing the name Dennis Joyner and how much help he gave me. Quintana opened the floor to comments and well wishes for Dennis. Jen Greene (App District) recalled how during COVID Dennis was such wise council and we are blessed to have the opportunity to work with you. Jennifer McCracken (Catawba Co.) said how Region 4 was lucky to have Dennis and how Doug Umland always told me to give Dennis a call if you needed anything or had a problem. Josh Swift talked about how “the real Dennis Joyner” was the contact in his phone and how much he has appreciated the advice and mentoring over the years. Angel Callicutt (Montgomery Co.)

talked about how much help Dennis offered in her job and how Dennis was a GOAT health director and a go-to person if you needed anything. *(lots of applause and congratulations for Dennis – ed note)* On PHPs, President Stewart mentioned the email that Patrick sent out about care management benchmarks. Thanks to Lillian for starting the discussion on this yesterday.

President Stewart offered to move to Dr. Tilson's report before we get started on the legislative priorities.

### **NC DHHS Chief Medical Officer / State Health Director Report – Betsey Tilson, MD**

Dr. Tilson echoed thanks and encouragement for Dennis and discussed his long service, and especially his work in ground zero during Covid. Thanks for your commitment to public health during really *really* hard times. Excited for your next phase and for your words about having things outside of work that make us stronger when we are at work and not making work you entire life.

I want to start out with some recognition and collective reflection on the end of the year and the end of this 8-year administration. I also want to keep everyone in the loop on the transition. Just a couple of thoughts on the past 8 years. Our Healthy NC 2030 really reconfigured our thinking about whole person health. We are also parlaying that into community health assessments and CHIPS. I am so proud of that work.

We also went headfirst into two unprecedented disasters. First with the pandemic and then to the recent environmental disaster with Hurricane Helene. Public Health was right there helping out neighbors. I am also excited to highlight the first year of Medicaid Expansion and all the work you did on expansion and upcoming medical debt relief. I am also excited about how we are working to tackle the behavioral health crisis. We tackled and pushed back on threats to sexual and gender identity health. We have worked on how to expand access to contraception. We are still dealing with syphilis and we have seen a good bend on the curve of congenital syphilis and that is a testament of all of our work.

Even nationwide with the mistrust in public health, trust has fared much better in NC and that is going to be important in the future as we see potential threats to vaccines and other public health priorities. There are many more things to tackle but I think that its always good to reflect. As of what comes next, I think Josh Stein is going to be a great governor. He gets our priorities including tobacco, opioids, etc. The First Lady also used to work with Public Health.

Dev Sangvai MD MBA JD is going to be the new DHHS Secretary replacing Kody Kinsley on January 13 – I have known him from my work with CCNC. He runs population health for Duke and also ran Duke Regional. President of the Medical Society and Medical board. He gets population health, hospital administration, and all the programs associated with that. He will come in with excitement and ideas and humility and is eager to come in and partner. Of all the candidates that threw their hat in the race he was my first choice and he will be terrific. That's what we know, but what we don't know are the details on when he will start. We will get him in front of key stakeholders including this group. We are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible, and I don't anticipate much turnover in the department.

Quintana thanked Dr. Tilson for her updates and appreciation for joining us this morning.

### **President's Report (continued)**

President Stewart resumed her report.

The last thing I want to discuss this morning are our legislative priorities. Ashley Perkinson is here in the room. Thanks to everyone who completed the surveys and to Patrick for doing some information sharing and brainstorming calls.

**Priority 1:** Seek legislation for \$25 million in recurring state funding for local public health foundational capabilities and essential services, such as communicable disease response.

Stacie mentioned that this is on top of the 11\$ million we already get for Aid to County. Lisa Macon Harrison (Granville Vance) asked Ashley if this is framed in a way that will be easy to understand for the legislators. Ashley said that she thinks the wording as is provides the flexibility to request and explain the need.

**Motion** – Motion to approve by Dr. Rod Jenkins (Durham Co.), second by Dr. Marilyn Pearson. Approved by consensus.

**Priority 2:** Support proposed legislation to amend North Carolina’s youth access law to protect children and youth from vaping and nicotine addiction.

**Motion:** Motion to approve by Jen Greene, second by Dr. Rod Jenkins. Approved by consensus.

**Priority 3:** Support legislation that restores state funding for accreditation for local health departments and to the Association of North Carolina Boards of Health for training activities required for accreditation.

Lillian Koontz asked Ashley if this ask for Accreditation would diminish or weaken the 25\$ million ask. Our top focus is getting that funding in place. Ashley said that both were distinct but when legislators ask us for our top funding priority we are focusing on Priority 1.

**Motion:** Motion to approve by Lisa Macon Harrison, seconded by Jen Greene. 5 oppose in the room. Ayes have it.

**Priority 4:** Seek legislation to direct \$2.5 million of the currently appropriated community health grant funding to support local health departments providing primary and maternity care for uninsured patients.

**Motion:** Motion to approve by Lisa Macon Harrison, second by Scott Harrelson (Craven Co.). Approved by consensus.

Lisa Macon Harrison asked if we could move the 2 priorities “seeking” money to the top (i.e. the \$25 million and the \$2.5 million) and the “support” priorities to the bottom.

President Stewart asked everyone to keep Gaston County and Steve and Brittain Kenney in your thoughts and a moment of silence was held for a staff member who unexpectedly passed away. Brittain mentioned how thankful they are for our thoughts and concern.

#### **NC DHHS Assistant Secretary for Public Health – Dr. Kelly Kimple**

I want to reiterate the fact that the State is here with you day in and day out to keep the system going. Dr. Kimple also thanked Dennis for his long career and highlighted his leadership during Covid. I am

looking forward to recognizing and giving the oaths for our state officers later in the meeting and I want to thank Quintana and all the officers for their work.

### **Deputy Director / Section Chief, Local and Community Support, DPH – Stacie Saunders**

I want to thank Dennis for his 38 years of incredible service. Dennis is the reason I found myself in leadership in the Association. Dennis has been a very calm and assuring voice. Jerry Parks, a colleague many of you will remember, said to me one time that a burden shared is a burden halved. Its easy to carry those burdens with a person like Dennis helping you along. The most recent community health needs assessment guidebook was dedicated to Dennis for all his work over the years on getting the data that communities need to do their work. I wish you well in your new free time diddling on the farm and enjoy your retirement.

I want to highlight some of the issues you may have had with MDPP funding and even though the MDPP payments are no longer with DPH we are still able to help and get involved to get those situations ironed out. She thanked Lisa for bringing those payment issues to our attention.

Beginning July 1, 2025, the right of refusal for Care Management will only apply to those health departments that were meeting the benchmarks. There are also some language changes that will need to be made in the consolidated agreement to change the blanket right of refusal.

AA 122 for the counties impacted by Hurricane Helene are going out to help restore essential functions. Expect those by the first week in January. Your supplemental performance management money notice of award recently came in and Doug Urland and his team are working on that – it will be called AA 123.

Jen Greene thanked Larry Michael for his work and asked about the Dept of Insurance and some of their changes. Our building depts are following DOI guides and I want to see if we can make revisions to the affidavit to align. Larry mentioned that conversations are happening with DOI and we should release a revision soon.

### **Action Items and Updates – from Work Groups**

#### ***Partner Updates:***

Kathy Dail gave an NCHIE update and we heard from CDC partners and also from the new Recovery Coordinator Sandy Bridges. Sally Herndon shared updated AA language with the group. Sally has asked us for a motion for a spending authorization.

***Motion:*** Motion by Jen Greene, second by Wes Gray (Pitt Co.). Approved by consensus.

#### ***PH Funding and Investments – Jen Greene***

Did not meet.

#### ***Workforce Recruitment and Retention – Janet Clayton***

Did not meet.

#### ***PH Data and Performance Measures – Wes Gray***

No action items. Amanda Blackwelder led us in a discussion of the upcoming Public Health Data Summit in spring 2025. We had good feedback on what types of sessions would be important to health departments and our staff. Amanda is also working on the finance template for 2023-2024. Finally, we held a discussion on performance measures, how often to measure, and draft benchmarks and targets for those measures.

Stacie gave a shout out to Amanda for her efforts in Helene response and collecting the data for sampling and how health departments are supporting each other. Thanks for all her effort.

#### ***Communications – Sheila Davies***

No action items but we did have a speaker present on mis- and disinformation in public health. Bethany also sent out a survey to help us focus on agenda items for 2025. Lisa Harrison mentioned how our comms people across the state were interested in frameworks and how they could apply locals. Thanks to everyone for encouraging your comms staff to attend.

#### ***Nominations and Bylaws – Lillian Koontz***

No report this month - Thankfully we are done with that.

#### ***Education and Awards – Helene Edwards***

On Tuesday Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, award nominations will go out and are due January 23.

#### **Region Reports**

No reports

#### **Partner Reports**

##### ***NCAPHA – Janet Clayton***

2 quick reminders. First is the strategic initiatives funding opportunity. There is \$500,000 in funding from the Alliance. The full association meeting will be held on Wake forest Road at the Hilton next month. That will start at 9am on January 16<sup>th</sup> with breakfast and a full Alliance meeting before the NCALHD meeting – both will be at the Hilton.

##### ***NCPHA – Dr. Rod Jenkins***

Everything's going ok – nothing to report.

##### ***NACCHO – Lisa Macon Harrison***

360 is in July and in Anaheim CA. Lisa also mentioned advocating in the legislature for district health departments and how they want to make sure that we are not going opposite directions from this Association and keeping similar priorities. Lisa asked if we could put District updates under regional reports.

**Motion:** Motion made by Lisa Macon Harrison, seconded by Jen Greene. Approved by consensus.

## **NCIPH – Margaret for Amy Joy Lanou**

Jan 28<sup>th</sup> is our annual accreditation update webinar.

Submitted NCIPH / UNC Gillings report from Amy Joy Lanou –

### **Advancing Practice**

- ❖ To improve the recruitment and retention of potential governmental public health employees, NCIPH (with the support of DPH) is developing and implementing a centralized application and matching system for fellowship, practicum, and internship opportunities in the state and local health departments. Through this survey linked below, the NCIPH team hopes to gather feedback from local health practitioners and academic partners to learn what would make a system like this helpful and successful. Please share the link with those in your department who may be interested in the centralized application system. We thank you in advance for your time and assistance, and please don't hesitate to reach out to our team with any questions or concerns.
  - Responses to the survey will be collected until 5pm on January 10
  - Link to Qualtrics: [https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3vMSdhiQvdtYAse](https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3vMSdhiQvdtYAse)

### **Community Assessment & Strategy**

- ❖ The NC Foundational Capabilities Task Force met in November to plan for the upcoming year's activities to improve the Foundational Capabilities in NC. See attached summary of the retreat for more information. Stay tuned in 2025 for how you and your staff can take advantage of the offerings which center around Policy Development, Communications, Accountability, and Organizational Administrative Competencies (primarily Leadership).
- ❖ The Annual Foundational Capabilities Assessment will launch in late February this year. In addition to a brief survey, NCIPH will conduct focus groups and interviews to understand the training needs and assets of the public health workforce to inform future professional and organizational development programs. Stay tuned for outreach materials from your regional workforce development director in early 2025.

### **Preparedness Center**

- ❖ The Region 4 Center for Public Health Preparedness and Response is coordinating with state health officers and state directors of public health preparedness and response across HHS Region 4 to identify aligned opportunities with ongoing PHEP Program initiatives in each state. Strengthening public health communications and reducing the impacts of misinformation is a focus of the year 1 activities for the Center and there are likely to be opportunities for local health department engagement around identifying and addressing misinformation following Hurricane Helene. More information about this initiative will be available in spring 2025.

### **Accreditation**

- ❖ Our NCLHDA Annual Update Webinar will take place on January 28 from 11-12:30. We encourage all health departments to have at least one representative in attendance to hear updates about the year ahead. You can find the [registration link](#) on our website or in this month's NCALHD or NCLHDA newsletters!

***ANCBH – Merle Greene***

Its been a great year and we have collaborated with the NCALHD and with your boards of Health. We have training programs allowing you to get certificates of participation appropriate for your Accreditation needs. This has brought good feedback from your boards that the time was well spent and relevant and timely. We have had Vaughn Upshaw, Dr. Tilson, and most recently a presenter on emergency preparedness. We have a place on our website called "Ask the Experts". Everything is anonymous and it lists the question and a response from our experts, including Kristen Leloudis. We also send out timely and relevant newsletters when there are topics we would like to get out. Thank you again for helping us put on a successful nurses conference. Our next conference for nurses will be in early may 2025. Lastly, several counties received awards so thank you for your hard work and submissions. We support Tobacco 21 as you have and as have many other counties and boards. Looking forward to a great year in 2025.

***NC – SOG – Kirsten Leloudis***

No report.

***NC SOPHE – Ashley Rawlinson***

No report.

Dr. Kimple asked the new officers to line up and read the oaths for the installation of officers.

President Stewart thanked everyone for a great year (*lots of appreciation and applause from the membership – ed note*) and Dr. Rod Jenkins gave a short preview of the year to come. President Stewart was presented with a gift from the membership recognizing her great leadership over the past year.

**Adjourn**

**Motion:** David Jenkins (Henderson Co.) made a motion to adjourn, second by Jennifer McCracken. No opposition. Meeting was adjourned at 11:12am.