



North Carolina

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ACCREDITATION

Accreditation Board Meeting

May 8, 2020

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Zoom

Guests - Health Department Directors and Staff

Board Members Present

Anna Schenck
Barbara Beatty
Dr. Barbara Ann Hughes
Benjamin Tillet
Bertadean Baker
Calvert Jeffers
Chris Dobbins
Dr. Connette McMahon
David Stanley
Jerry Parks
Kevin Austin
Larry Michael
Rebecca McLeod
Dr. Susan Little
Teresa Ellen
Virginia Niehaus

NCIPH Staff Present

Amy Belflower Thomas
Lori Rhew
Lydie Costes

Site Visitors Present

Ann Absher
Bill Smith
Deborah Herring
Leeanne Whisnant
Dr. Tommy Jarrell

Board Members Absent

Jacqueline Newton

Clay County Health Department

Stephanie Johnson
Alex Gilpin

Wilson County Health Department

Teresa Ellen
Narshira Vann

Haywood County Health and Human Services Public Health Division

Amy L. Stevens

Franklin County Health Department

Scott S. LaVigne

Lincoln County Health Department

Lena Jones

Lee County Health Department

William Heath Cain
Lauren Stens

Rowan County Health Department

Charles Drake

Scotland County Health Department

Kristen Patterson

Stokes County Health Department

Tammy Martin

Person County Health Department

Janet Clayton
LeighAnn Creso

Welcome

Chris Dobbins, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He acknowledged the work of the accreditation program staff and then welcomed the new Board members. The new Board members introduced themselves: Kevin Austin, County Commissioner of Yadkin County; Dr. Calvert Jeffers, Veterinarian and member of the Forsyth County Health and Human Services Board; Dr. Susan Little, Chief Public Health Nurse at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; and Dr. Connette McMahon, OBGYN Doctor in Cumberland County and Chair of the Cumberland Board of Health.

Chair Dobbins introduced the minutes from the November Board Meeting and Board Member Virginia Niehaus suggested a wording change. Administrator Amy Belflower Thomas read out the suggested change, which consisted of replacing the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 14 with, "Board Member Virginia Niehaus added that in legislation, there is only accredited, conditionally accredited, and unaccredited."

Board Member Jerry Parks made a motion to approve the minutes; Board Member David Stanley seconded the motion. All members approved the motion, the minutes were approved.

Chair Dobbins introduced the minutes from the April Emergency Board Meeting. Administrator Thomas described two minor changes: fixing a spelling error and replacing "legal advice" with "legal technical assistance."

Board Vice Chair Teresa Ellen made a motion to approve the minutes; Board Member Connette McMahon seconded the motion. All members approved the motion, the minutes were approved.

Accreditation Adjudication Process

Administrator Thomas reminded the Board that in accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, all Board Members must declare any conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from voting when a conflict exists. She reviewed the virtual process for voting and asked new members who had not yet signed the Board Operational Guidelines to give their verbal approval. Members gave their approval.

SITE VISIT REPORTS

After technical difficulties with Lead Site Visitor Dr. Tommy Jarrell's connection, Chair Dobbins started with Clay County's adjudication.

Clay County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Ann Absher gave summary of the Site Visit Team report. Clay County had recently experienced a major turnover in staff, including losing their entire management team, due to consolidation with the county's Department of Social Services. It was acknowledged the new management team did a good job of pulling the accreditation information together. The Site Visit Team designated 136 of 147 activities as met. The activities not met were 2.4, 15.1, 24.3, 27.1, 27.2, 30.2, 30.8, 30.9, 36.2, 37.3 and 38.1. The Site Visit Team recommended the Clay County Health Department for Reaccreditation.

Health Director Stephanie Johnson thanked the Site Visit Team for their kindness and patience with Clay County's new staff learning the ropes of accreditation. Chair Dobbins congratulated Ms. Johnson and the AAC Ms. Alex Gilpin for stepping up during a challenging transition period. There were no questions from the Board. Chair Dobbins entertained a motion to approve reaccreditation for Clay County Health Department.

Board Member David Stanley made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team's recommendation of Reaccreditation; it was seconded by Board Member Bertadean Baker. The motion was passed, and Clay County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation.

Wilson County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Absher provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. Wilson County has added two school-based health centers and a portable dental program since their previous site visit. The Site Visit Team designated 145 out of 147 activities as met. The activities not met were 24.3 and 33.5. Their policy update log was recognized as a best practice. The Site Visit Team recommended Wilson County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Health Director Teresa Ellen thanked her AAC, Narshira Vann, for an excellent job and the Site Visit Team for a pleasant visit. She added on behalf of Ms. Vann that the new dashboard made the process significantly easier. Chair Dobbins congratulated Ms. Ellen and Ms. Vann on their hard work and asked if the board had any questions. There were none. Chair Dobbins entertained a motion to approve reaccreditation for Wilson County Health Department.

Vice Chair Teresa Ellen recused herself from voting.

Board Member Connette McMahon made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team's recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors; Board Member Rebecca McLeod seconded the motion. The motion was passed, and Wilson County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors.

Haywood County Health and Human Services Public Health Division

Lead Site Visitor Ann Absher provide an overview of the Site Visit Team report. She noted that Haywood County has implemented successful programs to tackle substance abuse. The Site Team designated 144 of 147 activities as met. The activities not met were 30.6, 31.4, 31.5. A best practice identified was their EpiGram shared across the county. The Site Visit Team recommended Haywood County Health and Human Services Public Health Division for Reaccreditation.

AAC Amy Stevens noted that Health Director Patrick Johnson was unable to attend the Board Meeting due to COVID-19 activities. She expressed that her team felt confident they could resolve the activities they missed and were proud of the positive changes they were undergoing as a result of the accreditation process. Chair Dobbins thanked Ms. Stevens for stepping in and asked if the Board had any questions. Finding none, Chair Dobbins entertained a motion to approve reaccreditation for Haywood County Health and Human Services Public Health Division for Reaccreditation.

Board Member Larry Michael made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team's recommendation of Reaccreditation; Vice Chair Teresa Ellen seconded the motion. The motion was passed, and Haywood County Health and Human Services Public Health Division was awarded Reaccreditation.

Franklin County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Dr. Tommy Jarrell provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. The Site Visit Team designated 147 of 147 activities as met. He noted that multiple good practices were observed, but in particular the Site Visit Team identified the health department's training policies for cleanings were extremely thorough and recognized as a best practice. The Site Visit Team recommended Franklin County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Health Director Scott LaVigne expressed gratitude for his management team's collaboration and expressed that the new dashboard helped the process go smoothly. He also thanked his AACs Antrel Branch and Becky Leonard. Chair Dobbins thanked Mr. LaVigne and entertained a motion to approve the Site Visit Team's recommendation.

Board Member Barbara Beatty made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team's recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors; Board Member Dr. Susan Little seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Franklin County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors.

Lincoln County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Dr. Jarrell provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. He mentioned that the county is rapidly growing and has a particularly nice facility. The Site Visit Team designated 147

of 147 activities as met. The Site Visit Team recommended Lincoln County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Deputy Health Director Lena Jones thanked her staff and particularly AAC Krista Phillips for a fabulous job. She mentioned that the new facility allowed the county to meet some benchmarks that were previously not possible, and that having the new dashboard also eased the process. Chair Dobbins congratulated Ms. Jones and entertained a motion to approve the Site Visit Team's recommendation.

Board Member Bertadean Baker made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team's recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors, and Board Member Dr. Connette McMahon seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Lincoln County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors.

Lee County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Dr. Tommy Jarrell provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. He mentioned that the county has one of the best animal shelters and animal control operations in the state. The Site Visit Team designated 147 of 147 activities as met. The Site Visit Team recommended Lee County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Health Director William Heath Cain thanked the Site Visit Team and his staff. He acknowledged their AAC Laura Stern. He emphasized that making accreditation more a part of the culture within his department would be a priority moving forward. Chair Dobbins congratulated Mr. Cain and entertained a motion to approve the Site Visit Team's recommendation.

Vice Chair Teresa Ellen made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team's recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors; Board Member Barbara Beatty seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Lee County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors.

Rowan County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Leeanne Whisnant provided an overview of the Site Visit Team report, noting that they are yet another county that has undergone many management and supervisory changes recently due to retirement and relocation. The Site Visit Team designated 146 of 147 activities as met. Activity 24.3 was not met. She noted that the health department is very collaborative in working with their community and the Site Visit Team recognized two best practices 1) they have an active post overdose response team or PORT and 2) their WIC program has a APSEED program which distributes tablets with educational apps to WIC children. The Site Visit Team recommended Rowan County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Assistant Health Director Charles Drake expressed gratitude to the Site Visit Team for facilitating a great visit and confirmed that the county had undergone some turnover, requiring extra effort to get personnel up to speed. He also thanked AACs Vera Avery and Amy Smith for their hard work.

Board Member Bertadean Baker made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team’s recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors; Board Member Kevin Austin seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Rowan County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors.

Scotland County Health Department

Site Visitor Deborah Herring, presented for Lead Site Visitor, Andy Smith, who was not able to attend the meeting. Ms. Herring reported that Scotland county is a very small rural county in eastern North Carolina, with a population of 35,000. One of the things that really stood out was that Scotland counties percentage of population living in poverty was 29.8% percent which is more than two times greater than North Carolina. The Scotland County Health Department has 39 employees, and in the past four years, the department hired a new health director, director of nursing, two new mid-level providers as well as many of the new staff in multiple departments. The Site Visit Team was able to designate 146 activities, out of 147 met. The activity missed was 18.4. Two best practices identified were 1) Activity 21.1, the health and wellness resource guide for 2018 – 2019 was a very customer-friendly, comprehensive resource guide that promoted an understanding of services, availability and it reached throughout Scotland County and 2) Activity 30.3, the use of white noise machines in the patient rooms, where are used as sound masking solutions to ensure that patient information is protected, and as a mechanism to promote relaxation. The Site Visit team recommended the Scotland County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Health Director Kristen Patterson thanked the Site Visit Team. She also thanked AAC Savannah Simpson and Donna Pay, Assistant AAC.

Board Member David Stanley inquired about whether the resource guides are available in digital version, how is it publicized. Ms. Patterson explained they received a grant. The guides are printed and distributed throughout the county. It should also be available on the website.

Board Member David Stanley made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team’s recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors; Board Member Barbara Beatty seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Scotland County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors.

Stokes County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Bill Smith provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. He explained that the health department has all the traditional services including primary care for children and adults and its prenatal program is in affiliation with Wake Forest Baptist Hospital. Best practices identified

were Activity 18.2, for their enforcement activities and Activity 21.1 for the availability of a very comprehensive brochure for crisis support. The Site Visit Team designated 144 of 147 activities as met. Three activities missed were 32.4, 38.1, and 38.4. The Site Visit Team recommended Stokes County Health Department for Reaccreditation.

Due to technical difficulties, Stokes County was invited to make comments in the chat box. No comments were added.

Vice Chair Teresa Ellen made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team’s recommendation of Reaccreditation; Board Member Dr. Connette McMahon seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Stokes County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation.

Person County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Bill Smith provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. The Site Visit Team designated 146 of 147 activities as met. The activity missed was 30.8. The Site Visit Team recommended Person County Health Department for Reaccreditation with Honors.

Health Director Janet Clayton shared that she had LeeAnn Creson with her, who is their AAC. She thanked the Site Visit Team. They thought the visit went well. They did like the dashboard format and submitting the information. Ms. Clayton thanked her peers in other counties for their support through the years.

Board Member Ben Tillett declared a conflict of interest due to being on the Person County Board of Health and recused from voting.

Board Member David Stanley made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team’s recommendation of Reaccreditation with Honors; Board Member Jerry Parks seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Person County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation with Honors

Duplin County Health Department

Lead Site Visitor Bill Smith provided a summary of the Site Visit Team report. He noted that Duplin County’s communications systems were completely hacked six to eight weeks prior to the site visit. The site visit was pushed back and then ended up running into COVID. Administrator Thomas noted we tried to make as short of a visit to them as possible – waived the exit conference for instance; as Administrator she appreciated the flexibility from the county and site visit team alike. The best practice noted was for activity 20.3 and their work with ECU for telepsychiatry. The Site Visit Team designated 144 out of 147 activities as being met. The activities not met were 9.5, 14.4, 24.3. The Site Visit Team recommended Duplin County Health Department for Reaccreditation.

No representative from Duplin County Health Department was present at the meeting.

Vice Chair Bertadean Baker made a motion to accept the Site Visit Team’s recommendation of Reaccreditation; Board Member Barbara Beatty seconded that motion. The motion was passed, and Duplin County Health Department was awarded Reaccreditation.

Subcommittee Reports

Appeals Committee

Ms. Lori Rhew, Training and Accreditation Coordinator, reported that the Appeals Committee did not meet. However, Susan Elmore, who had served as the committee chair resigned her position and Jerry Parks has agreed to step into the role and is now serving as the Appeals Committee Chair.

Policy and Procedure Committee

The Policy and Procedures Committee was not able to meet in between the Operational Guidelines being modified and this meeting. So, they reviewed changes via email. The Operational Guidelines did need to be updated as a result of the 12-month accreditation extension voted on by the Board at the April meeting. There were two main ways that guidelines were impacted. First, the guidelines state that changes are only made on January 1 each year, which does not provide the flexibility that is needed for extenuation circumstances, such as those caused by COVID-19. Secondly, the guidelines need to align with open meeting guidelines for remote meetings.

Ms. Rhew noted that updated changes regarding remote meetings were sent to the Board after the initial Board packet was sent because our program received additional guidance after the initial packet was sent.

Policy and Procedure Committee Chair Rebecca McLeod provided an overview of the changes that were proposed electronically. The two new changes related to remote meetings were noted. She opened the floor for discussion on the proposed changes.

Board Member Jerry Parks mentioned that according to former rules, a Board Member attending a portion of the meeting and then leaving would be considered part of the quorum and would be considered to vote in the affirmative for every motion brought.

Ms. Rhew noted the change was a result of the new guidelines that we received. Board Member Virginia Niehaus stated that there are new provisions about public bodies meeting during declared states of emergency such as requiring roll call votes and what happens when a member joins or leaves a remote meeting. Chair Dobbins asked for additional clarification. Board Member Niehaus read the guidelines around the remote meeting access.

Board Member Niehaus noted that if a Board Member does not respond to vote they are not counted. Administrator Thomas asked if they would still be considered part of the quorum. Board Member Niehaus stated that to be simultaneous connected you must hear and be heard by others.

Board Member Kevin Austin stated that at the county level they are interpreting this new legislation and as he reads it when someone is disconnected from the meeting, they no longer count towards the quorum.

Board Member David Stanley commented that there is a choice, if someone is still connected and walks away that is a choice to not vote, whereas someone losing connectivity is not a choice to not vote.

Administrator Thomas reminded everyone that this legislation is specific to when the state is in a state of emergency. Board Member Virginia Niehaus confirmed that yes, it applies during gubernatorial or legislative state of emergency.

Administrator Thomas suggested that if the Board has virtual meetings normally, then Robert's rules are followed. However, if there is specific legislation regarding states of emergency, then that legislation will be followed.

Board member Virginia Niehaus responded there is some provisions in open meeting law for remote meetings, however, she does not think they are as extensive as what was recently adopted.

Board member Virginia Niehaus suggested that we could just make a statement that we would comply with all state law.

Board Member Jerry Parks suggested that we word it "state law, rule, or regulation." Board Member Niehaus suggested that it should say, "state law and rules."

Board Member Niehaus suggested some edits to the text put on the cover of the operational guidelines.

In summary the changes proposed being made to the Board Operational Guidelines are 1) statement that we will follow and comply with all state laws and rules related to open meetings, 2) statement that we can have emergency meetings, 3) any meeting can be virtual, and 4) add cover language about authority being sub-delegated and subsequent, applicable executive orders.

Committee Chair Rebecca McLeod made a motion to accept the changes summarized above; Board Member Jerry Parks seconded the motion. The motion passed and the changes were accepted.

In the Process Operational Guidelines, the change was made to allow the program to make changes outside of the January 1 timeline and then we would make the same changes to the cover page that were just suggested for the Board Operational Guidelines.

Board Member Virginia Niehaus asked if the change in timeline would also impact rules changes. The text on page 7 under "Standards, Benchmarks, and Activities," will be adjusted to read,

“Circumstances may arise that require immediate revisions Benchmarks, Activities and HDSAI Interpretations.” After review, the Board decided to keep the language as initially proposed electronically.

There was no additional discussion.

All voted in favor. The changes to the NCLDHA Process Guidelines were accepted.

Standards and Evidence Committee Report

Ms. Rhew shared that all Board Members received the HDSAI interpretation document with track changes as well as a summary of changes document in their E-packet. She shared the NCLDA Program staff conducted an initial review and made suggested edits to the HDSAI Interpretation document in light of the 12-month accreditation extension. These changes were then reviewed the Accreditation Standards workgroup, which will be discussed later in the agenda.

Ms. Rhew explained the other issue that the Standards and Evidence committee discussed was the creation of new evidence. Prior to the use of the NCLHDA Dashboard, health departments did not receive questions until they Site Visitors were on-site. However, with the dashboard they receive questions two days prior to the Site Visit Team arriving on-site. This new timeframe increased the likelihood that new evidence could be created. The committee decided that it comes down to a quality improvement issue. If it was minor omission, such as a revision to existing policy, it was acceptable, however, if it was a major change such as writing a new policy or holding an emergency board meeting, it was not permissible. The committee decided that Administrator Thomas should work with Site Visitors and local health departments on what is considered a major or a minor change.

Chair Dobbins, who serves as the Chair of the Standards and Evidence committee was not able to attend the committee meeting, so Vice Chair Teresa Ellen reported on his behalf. She shared that the committee approved the changes to the HDSAI Interpretation document and the recommendation for making minor and not major changes to evidence. She said the recommendation from the committee was to approve the recommended changes.

Board Member Kevin asked when this information would be shared statewide. Administrator Thomas responded that as soon as the changes discussed were incorporated and clear communication could be drafted, the information would be sent out. Additionally, a webinar will be held in June to review all the changes.

The changes were unanimously approved.

SEI and Ethics Training

Administrator Thomas thanked everyone for completing their ethics training and SEI.

Winter 2020 Cycle Report

This is a report that compares the data from this cycle to previous cycles. During the previous cycle a majority of the health departments were reaccredited with honors and there was a lot of discussion about this. This cycle show more balance among the designations received by health departments.

New Site Visitor Recruitment

Administrator Thomas shared that we recruited new site visitors through the spring and now have quite a few new site visitors. We still struggle with getting Board of Health Site Visitors. The plan was to have an orientation in May in Chapel Hill, which has been postponed. Additionally, since there will be changes made to the HSDAI Interpretation Document, we will wait until next year to train new site visitors.

We were also planning to hold the Annual Site Visit Team Training this May for current Site Visitors. However, given the 12-month accreditation extension and the fact that revisions will be made to the HDSAI Interpretation document, we are not holding the training this year. Instead we will have a 2-3-hour Zoom meeting.

Board Member Dr. Susan Little asked a question about the third bullet of Site Visitor qualifications: have retired within the past five years, if still active in some manner. She asked Administrator Thomas to provide some clarification what “in some manner” means. Administrator Thomas noted that as long as they have some current connection to public health, for example, contact work with the health department, working with NCPHA groups, the nursing board, etc. They still have some current knowledge about local public health.

Pamlico Conditional Accreditation Status

Administrator Thomas reported that Pamlico County Health Department is conditionally accredited, and their accreditation is up this November. They are not a part of the 12-month extension because they are not currently accredited. They still need to have a site visit in the fall. She is giving them extra leeway; she is allowing them to pick any date in September through mid-October. They will have the same Site Visit Team as they had a year-and-a-half ago. They will be assessed on just the activities they missed. Conditional Accreditation is not punitive, it is about quality improvement. They have been working for the past year and a half and we continue to support them to get ready for their visit.

Accreditation Standards Workgroup

Administrator Thomas provided a general update on the Accreditation Standards Workgroup reporting that they held their first meeting and it was very effective and productive. Their feedback was helpful in making the revisions to the HDSAI Interpretation document, even though reviewing this document was initially not part of the scope of this workgroup.

Proposed Budget for FY 21

Administrator Thomas noted that we have not previously brought our budget before the Board. Technically, the North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) contracts with the NC Association of Local Health Directors, which is likely why this not been done in the past. However, Administrator Thomas noted it was important for the Board to see the budget. She provided overview of the budget one-pager that was in the E-packet that was sent to all Board members. Administrator Thomas explained that if we are not doing site visits next year, we will have a surplus of approximately \$79,000 due to not having the cost for travel and Site Visitors. She proposed two options to the Board for their feedback. The first option is to suggest that the Health Directors Association reduce their fees for one year, this would require a change in fees for only one year. The second option is to use the funding for strategic initiatives in the next year. She explained that the accreditation program is run on a shoestring budget and the NCIPH does subsidize approximately \$10,000 - \$20,000 in personnel hours each year. The strategic projects include the work of the Accreditation Standards Workgroup, updating the website and documents, developing a data dashboard in Tableau to put on the website, engaging the Board in formal strategic planning, gathering stories about the importance of accreditation and why it matters – creating a communications campaign and provide monthly webinars, and to purchase needed supplies.

Chair Dobbins stated that as a health director, changing what he considers to be required cost of accreditation from year to year could be a challenge. He felt that all the strategic projects explained were valid and important projects. He suggested that Administrator Thomas work with the executive committee of the NCALHD for approval of the budget. Board Member Kevin Austin agreed with Chair Dobbins that the projects presented were important projects to be undertaken. Board Member Jerry Parks stated that the work has changed for accreditation staff, but the amount of work has not been reduced. He also suggested working with leadership to approve the budget. Vice Chair Ellen agreed and noted that there would be a membership meeting on May 21 and Administrator Thomas could be on the agenda. She further noted that if Administrator Thomas could explain that the strategic work is taking place in large part because of the work of the Standards Workgroup that would be helpful.

Board Member David Stanley noted that there may be a need for some of these projects to continue beyond the year. Administrator Thomas noted that we have an opportunity in the budget moving forward with Site Visits being one day. In the past, because we have different numbers of health departments being reviewed each year, it was sometimes possible to do some strategic projects. However, given how it is based on the number of health departments, and not consistent, it hard to conduct strategic projects.

Administrator Thomas will share the budget proposal with Ms. Janet Clayton at the NCALHD and will work with Chair Dobbins and Vice Chair Ellen to get the information prepared for the meeting.

The next meeting is November 20, 2020. We will only have Pamlico County to discuss. We will plan to meet in February instead of May, if the strategic planning budget is approved by the NCALHD.

Next Meeting: November 20, 2020 via Zoom.