

CALHOUN COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
190 East Michigan Avenue, Suite A-100, Battle Creek, MI 49014
November 17, 2003

MINUTES

PRESENT

Board of Health

Larry Anderson
Jean Cook-Hughes
Pat West
Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell
Byron McDonald
Ben Miller

Health Department

Kathy Ferguson
Dr. Harrington
Ted Havens
Heidi Oberlin
Brigitte Reichenbaugh

Calhoun County

Jim Latham
Nancy Mullett
Greg Purcell

Guests

Rev. Franky Johnson
Dr. Phil Ptacin

I CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Larry Anderson called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. beginning with introductions.

II APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Larry motioned for approval of the agenda. Jean Cook-Hughes moved to approve. Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell seconded.

III PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry asked Dr. Phil Ptacin and Rev. Franky Johnson if they had any comments regarding the Nursing Clinic of Battle Creek (NCBC).

Franky apologized for missing the last BOH meeting and summarized the October 16, 2003 NCBC board meeting. At the October NCBC board meeting, Dr. Collins and Dr. Ptacin presented and approved a resolution for the NCBC governing board to assist in the decision making for the NCBC. Franky indicated that the NCBC governance board is looking again to the BOH to obtain approval and support of this resolution. The NCBC board feels that the resolution can provide support to the NCBC's operations. They also feel that the NCBC is viewed as just another program of the Health Department. The NCBC board would like to have operational responsibilities for the NCBC.

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protecting health, and preventing disease...*

Dr. Ptacin asked if the BOH would like any clarification about this request.

Larry added that he has since addressed a letter to the NCBC board in response to their request stating that the BOH would not discuss until the Federal Audit (PCER) was complete and we had written results. The PCER will determine where we are and need to be in regards to NCBC operations. The week before the PCER, Heidi and Larry met briefly with Drs. Ptacin and Collins, Chris Christ, and Lena Hackett, consultant. Following that meeting, Franky and Larry sent a letter to the opinion column at the Battle Creek Enquirer that was published Sunday, November 16th as a response to the letters to the editors that were previously published. Larry stated that we sent the letter to set the record straight and reinforce the NCBC staff that things are moving in the right direction.

Dr. Ptacin clarified that the NCBC created a governing board over a year ago. They are asking the Health Department to recognize the governing board and give them authority to work under the Health Department but for more power to make decisions regarding the NCBC operations.

Franky indicated that there is clearly a need for the Clinic. If the Clinic was not there, there would be an overload at the ER in local hospitals. There seems to be a philanthropic attitude here in Calhoun County. The letter that Franky and Larry sent was addressed to dispel that negative publicity within the county regarding the NCBC. Franky also mentioned that there was a major contender for the NCBC Medical Director position, however, since the articles were published, that person withdrew their application. If we are not allowing the NCBC board to make an impact, they cannot do what they do best, govern.

Byron McDonald (Mac) thanked Drs. Ptacin and Collins for what they started and have done with the NCBC. He agrees that there were negative articles in the Enquirer that should have not have been published. The NCBC is the jewel of the county. Mac thinks that it's time the governing board take control and that the BOH should give them control. Mac stated "Since this is my next to last meeting, this is my opinion. We need to look very seriously at someone else running the Clinic."

Heidi indicated that we were not advocating giving the Clinic away to anyone that wanted it. We are looking at keeping it in line with federal regulations. I was always very clear that the Health Department was not abandoning the Clinic. At this time, the Health Department does not have the written federal review, however, the auditors indicated that they will write a statement that they strongly support the Clinic remaining under the Health Department. They interviewed Drs. Ptacin, and Collins, and Franky. They are producing written recommendations but they did acknowledge the negative press. There will be suggestions regarding delegating the NCBC board authority and items that the BOH can not give away.

Larry added that we examined several options including the Family Health Center and BCHS with Franky, Dr. Ptacin, Heidi, and others in the community. It was decided that the Health Department would oversee the Clinic. Heidi was correct in stating that we were not advocating giving it away but advocating that we were looking at what was best for the community regarding the Clinic.

Dr. Ptacin addressed Mac's comments. Dr. Ptacin stated that his perception was if it had not been for the Health Department and Heidi's help, the Federal Government would have discontinued funding the NCBC. Over the years, the Clinic has been rather primitive. The medical directors were pretty laissez-faire, and when the Federal Government came in they asked, "What is going on here?" The Health Department provided help in assisting the Clinic pass this review. The Health Officer was getting

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more and more involved in what was going on at the Clinic. The governing board was to get community members involved. We have all seen what can be improved and there is a lot of optimism. The review board spoke to Drs. Collins and Ptacin, and Franky about other Clinics and how the NCBC can be improved.

Greg Purcell added that there is some cause for optimism. The county will become more formally involved due to the billing issues, etc. Why wasn't there some kind of formal structure for the NCBC to have some role in the governance process? It's been ad-hoc – the NCBC brings volunteer physicians, etc., however, the Health Department brings telephones, federal money, etc. We need to formalize who is responsible for what. We have never discussed how the county can dissolve the Clinic. Discussion has been how can we improve the program and be seen as a positive program. The BOH will need to approve along with the BOC. There will need to be a formalized structure stating who will do what and who is accountable for what. Greg Purcell hasn't talked to anyone that is not in support of the Clinic. The direction recommended by the consultant was not a recommended structure that everyone could not support.

Ben Miller stated that the most obvious model is how the BOH operates in relation to the BOC. Ultimately the NCBC governing board does not want to deal with union contracts, benefits, etc. Possibly a BOH member should also be on the NCBC board as a BOH representative. The consultants and federal consultants were suggesting that if we were to have a governing board working under the BOH/BOC, one of the legal structures includes the Health Department naming the governing board members.

Nancy Mullett suggested that when looking at collaborative boards, the BOC does not suggest members for the BOH, however, they do look at what the BOH is doing. Health Board should be the top tier of the decision making, then the BOH will present to the BOC. Part of the biggest problem is who's in charge and getting too many approvals. Take a look at the mission and goals of the governing board. There are probably many things that could be pulled out.

Franky is interested in treating the homeless, uninsured, working poor, all the other issues are not what the NCBC board is concerned with.

Mac stated that before the governing board was addressed, Barbara Barnum got the money from St. Phillips Catholic Church. This BOH had no input into the programming of the NCBC. We don't have a program committee that meets regarding the NCBC. To sit here and think that this Board will be involved in what has been going on over there. No one got a call about what was going on at the NCBC.

Larry, I disagree on the communication.

Jeff asked when we would have a final report from the Feds.

Heidi stated that the timing is unknown but that we have to formally respond to the letter. The Nursing Clinic is truly a unique program within the Health Department because of its volunteers, community involvement, and the comprehensive primary health care provided.

Franky stated that we have 22 volunteer physicians that come monthly, we have 12 volunteer fund raisers and 11 people who stated that they wanted to be part of the governing board. Help these people do what they do best.

Dr. Ptacin stated they are all very optimistic and is much better than it was a year ago.

8:40 Dr. Ptacin and Franky exited.

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IV CONSENT AGENDA

- October 20 Meeting Minutes
Jean moved to support. Jeff seconded.

V FINANCE REPORT

- Kathy Ferguson, Finance Officer
 - ♦ October Financial Summary and Narrative

It always appears that there will be a loss in October. However, many revenues are not in at this time.

VI OTHER BUSINESS

Medical Director Report

Greg Harrington, DO stated that we have not seen him much due to a course he has been taking regarding MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). This bacteria, *Staph aureus* is quite resistant; six cases are associated with the county jail. This is a relatively new phenomenon. Several people in CA have died to the disease because it was not recognized as a possibility in the community setting. Dr. Harrington talked to the jail physician and asked him to institute the same standards as the Battle Creek Health System regarding the disease. He brought this issue to the Director of Medical Services at the jail. His concern is the limited resources that they have available to them. We are, by no means, unique here -- there are other jails within the State with the same problems.

Heidi has spoken with Al Byam, Calhoun county Sheriff, regarding this issue prior to Dr. Harrington's visit and since his visit. This disease is a skin infection.

Larry has seen the article in the paper regarding soccer and football teams. Spreading the disease that never came from the hospital. However, the infections in the jail system were not very susceptible to treatment.

We do not have any formal communication with the contracted medical services at the jail and do not know what is "going on over there." However, when there is a large epidemic, the Health Department will step in. Dr. Harrington asked if he has authority at the jail.

Greg Purcell suggested that Dr. Harrington make suggestions and if the jail staff are not considering his comments and recommendations, county administration would like to know.

Dr. Harrington will recontact the physician and suggest that they follow the universal precautions. If they do not follow, he will contact administration. The concern is not only the inmates but also the staff, and then the staff infects their family, etc.

Heidi asked Dr. Harrington if he has any reason to believe they are not taking his feedback seriously.

Dr. Harrington said no, but he would like to follow up at the jail due to his concerns and that they took into consideration his comments and suggestions. Dr. Harrington talked to the physician at the site.

Greg stated that there should be some training/education to the staff at community corrections.

Mac suggested that Dr. Harrington write a letter to Greg P. regarding the issues. He feels that Greg P. has more say than Dr. Harrington.

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Jean Cook-Hughes feels that we might err on the side of interfering later. If we had to apologize later the BOH will help him and we will do.

County Administrator Report

- Finance Update – please see enclosed document

Jim Latham summarized his report. Jim stated that they have been working on reducing a county deficit of 8.8M. Greg and Jim are presenting a recommended budget to the BOC this Thursday. As part of that, the county is asking for \$150,000 back from the Health Fund. Whenever there is a deficit in a fund, the state requires the county give the fund the money to zero out. It appears that for operations for the current year, there will be a surplus. This will decrease the fund balance. The fund balance in part exists because the county provides in-kind services to all county departments. They provide HR, purchasing, insurance, and liability insurance, for example. These costs are always accounted for in the indirect cost plan. The indirect cost plan is required and can be charged to state and federal grants. The Health Department was able to be reimbursed for a portion of those costs. This the major reason for the surplus. We are required to cover deficits. We are asking for a portion, \$150K, of that money back that we received from the MDCH for those indirect costs.

Mac asked where it comes from.

Jim answered that the county acquires costs as part of their responsibility for operating the Health Department. The money that is coming out of the fund balance (the fund balance is the excess funds).

Larry stated that the governor will be announcing her budget this week.

Greg Purcell stated that a rally will be held today at the Justice Center for all local jurisdictions within the community regarding revenue sharing and budget cuts. What we are proposing today is that the Health Department has a fund balance of \$307,000 and the county technically can come in and take the entire \$307,000 which leaves us in a positive position, however, they are only taking \$150K. The best case scenario is a 3% cut, but there is no guarantee – the state can also cut the county 8%.

Ben asked if the \$307K includes the \$923K HCAP money.

Heidi answered no, that money is going forward. There is some money for administrative overhead and project management, but part of what we had to do was not move forward as quickly as we would like. We have to get federal approval for any changes.

Ben: there was nothing in the grant that states that we need a program director.

Heidi responded yes, we do need a program director or this program/grant will not fly.

Larry asked if the board would like to take any position on the “donation” regarding the state rally today.

Kathy commented: The fund balance does not come easily. We took our lumps and made hard decisions. Knowing that the state would cut back, having to lay people off due to state cutbacks, then at least we have the fund balance so we can go look for additional money. When you lose fund balance, you lose that opportunity to have time to make the decision.

Greg Purcell. We have not cut the Health Department in two years and he feels that the county is being generous about only taking \$150,000. Greg feels that the county is still allowing us to keep the remainder. The county has pushed down to the minimal.

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Jim: We are not picking on the Health Department; we have had very lengthy discussions with department heads and elected officials. This has been a difficult decision. Jim understands Kathy's thoughts on the financial matter of this.

Larry asked again if the Board would like to any position on the transfer of the fund balance having heard the discussion.

Jean stated that yes we are upset with the cut, however, we do understand. If some need to be laid off, then we need to layoff staff.

Health Officer Report

- Oaklawn Lease Update – We are officially out of our lease with Oaklawn Hospital. We will move out by the end of the year, however, we will pay Oaklawn through March. We are moving the office to the county Administration building at a greatly reduced cost. County will cover the cost to get us into the space and build the fees into the lease. However, the monthly lease cost will be greatly reduced.
- Nursing Clinic of Battle Creek – Federal Review Update. Very positive review. They were very impressed with the staff and the items that have been changed. They provided technical assistance regarding billing, and joining the Michigan Primary Care Association, for example. The report will be provided to the BOH when it's received.

Larry added that Drs. Ptacin and Collins received a lot of education and have changed their outlook and attitude very significantly as to the running of the NCBC.

In regards to WIC, Heidi wanted to ensure that everyone knew the business impact of the program to Calhoun County. Over \$2M spent in Calhoun county groceries with WIC coupons.

Board Business

Larry summarized Heidi's performance review. He also stated that the Board will have a specific approach on the process of the NCBC governing board. Part of her evaluation in future years will be to obtain feedback from officials – a 360 degree review.

Greg: We talked about increasing communication with the BOH members by having a report to the Board about every two weeks so you don't have to read it in the Enquirer. The BOC does this 360 degree review on Greg on an annual basis. You obtain feedback from people below you, at your level, above you, and opinions from around the community.

Jeff asked about receiving feedback more than once a year. He feels our five labels need improving.

Ted shared with the BOH a thank you he received from a Church in Tekonsha for reducing the non-profit fees.

VII ADJOURNMENT

Jeff motioned for support. Jean seconded. 10:05 a.m.

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