

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Minutes
07/09/2025

Chairperson Leary called the meeting to order at 3:00pm in the Commissioners' Chambers at the Cass County Administrative Building, on July 9, 2025. Roll call taken.

Board members present: Tina Leary, Roseann Marchetti, Priscilla Gatties, Don Hanson, Jeremiah Jones, Robert Linderman, Randall Peat in-person

Board members absent: Don Hanson

Employees present: Nancy Desai, Danielle Persky, Lauren Jaramillo in-person and Kelly Adkins, Alisha Bartlett, Larry Wile virtually

Others: Roger ~~Boyd~~ Boyer, Jerry Marchetti in-person and Karen Tan and Kim virtually

June's meeting minutes were reviewed. Motioned by Marchetti and second by Peat to approve the meeting minutes as written. All voting yes, motion carried.

Finance Director's Report

Desai discussed the summary of disbursement for the month of June. Linderman asked if the dental software maintenance expense was for both offices with Desai answering yes. Linderman asked about lines 16 and 18 to vendor Handled, LLC. Yes, it is split between a few parts answered Persky. This is being funded through the public health infrastructure grant. Linderman asked if the leadership training has taken place yet. Persky stated the first part of the training has with an all-day training set for July 18.

Discussed and reviewed. Motioned by Peat, second by Jones to accept the finance director's report. All voting yes, motion carried.

Expenditures Report

Desai reviewed the expenditures report for June. This report incorporated all the budget changes and budget amendments. With a quarter of the financial year left, the health department is in good shape with expenses and revenues both being slightly above.

Discussed and reviewed. Motioned by Gatties, second by Marchetti to accept the expenditures report. All voting yes, motion carried.

Administrator/Health Officer's Report

Persky started by noting next month's board meeting will be lengthier with next year's budget, and handbook being reviewed. Persky moved to the monthly report. The Senior Project Fresh mentioned in the health promotions update provides coupons for fresh produce to seniors. With this year's change to digital coupons via an app, the health department is hosting sign-up assistance days for area seniors in collaboration with community partners. Farmers and seniors can also call the health department for help.

Marchetti asked if this is available in Cass County. Current sign-up assistance days are set for Van Buren County and more will be set for Cass County residents. Marchetti asked if the health department is working with Council on Aging. Persky said yes, the health department is partnering with senior-serving organizations.

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Leary asked how many farmers are participating. Adkins answered that we have no farmers in Van Buren County signed up, but a few in Cass County registered. The health department is working with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and community partners to promote this program to both seniors and farmers. Adkins continued that if anyone has local farmer connections, please let her know. She is happy to speak with any recommended contacts.

Leary asked if the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has been utilized for farmer outreach. Adkins answered that MSU Extension is not a listed community resource for all counties. Resources have been focused on mass mailings to seniors and farmers. Leary continued that MSU Extension may be able to provide contact with the farming community as they work closely together. Adkins confirmed that MSU works closely with MDHHS but will have to double check if they are helping promote this program to the local area. Leary concluded the discussion by noting this is a great program, and farmer participation in Van Buren County is needed.

Persky moved to the next page of the board packet showing an all-staff memo that provided updates on what is being watched by leadership and what staff can do for public health advocacy. Discussion points are what's already been impacted, major grant losses, and updated program allocations. Hearing Screening, Vision Screening, and Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment screening are absent from Michigan's House of Representatives proposed budget. Conflicting information and understanding of the ramifications is a major concern as these programs are part of the public health code. Michigan has also provided information on the current state of Medicaid and what could be lost. The health department relies on \$1.2 million a year in Medicaid match dollars and Medicaid billing.

Federal Health and Human Services (HHS) dollars have seen a major cut from the prior fiscal year. The concern is what that will mean to the local level if the state places other programs as budgeting priorities. Persky finalized this memo with what staff can do through advocacy. After connecting with Human Resources at both Van Buren and Cass Counties, a staff legislative engagement policy is being drafted.

Leary commented that advocacy is education when ramifications aren't always understood. Persky agreed with education and the cost is understood. Marchetti agreed. Persky added that it is important staff feel they can stand up for themselves and advocate. With the health department being already bare bones, this places leadership between a rock and a hard place. County appropriations for next year are noted. Van Buren County has agreed to a three percent increase. Cass County has not given word, but leadership will continue to work to anticipate ahead of next month. The legislative alert after the memo highlights the above-mentioned concerns around the state budget.

Moving to two more items, Persky provided the opportunity for anyone in the counties to receive a free air purifier through the health department. Coordinate with Persky or Jaramillo if interested. Persky announced she gave an interview about the Van Buren Opioid Settlement Request for Proposals (RFP) with News Channel 3. The Van Buren County Opioid Settlement Grant Opportunity is hosted on our website; Cass County's Settlement RFP is also listed on our website.

Nursing and Medical Director Report

Dr. Wile brought three topics to the board for awareness. First, a study about the benefits and harmful effects of marijuana use since legalization occurred. The large study of over 2 million recreational marijuana users showed that there is increased risk of cardiovascular harm. In young adults 18-59 years of

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age there is a 29% increase in heart attacks and a 20% increase in strokes. The 12-year-old to 17-year-old age group is the most likely to start with marijuana usage, so Wile highlighted the importance of discouraging youth from marijuana use. Second, fluoride in water is reviewed through a report of 19 studies showing that naturally occurring, extremely high dosages of fluoride occur in the same locations as lower IQ and cognitive development. Wile emphasized that although municipalities are using much lower amounts than what is noted in the 19 studies, some cities are pulling fluoride. Dental associations are concerned about these sudden decisions as fluoride is important to dental cavity and decay prevention. Third, Michigan is looking at a new waiver to restrict Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) users from purchasing sugary products. This could potentially benefit dental health in rural communities.

Jones commented on the comparison of alcohol and marijuana use with more benefits connected to marijuana. Wile agreed as alcohol is toxic based on studies while deaths associated with marijuana are in conjunction with other pharmaceuticals. Jones continued by asking the exact details of fluoride as he has seen concern within his community. Wile answered that he spoke with Dr. Malsbary, health department dental director, after reviewing the article. The discussion focused on fluoride in water being one of the largest public health achievements. The concern lies with naturally occurring fluoride, which is double or more of the amount that U.S. municipalities put in their water. Linderman asked about the definition of high versus low levels of fluoride. Wile reviewed the recommendations and the much higher amount being connected to lower IQ levels. Persky added a reminder that in data and scientific studies, the control of all variables is not always possible, and correlation does not imply causation. It's important to take a beat when reading narratives on social media and consider the complexities of data and statistics.

Dental Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

Environmental Health Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

Health Promotions Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

There was no other business and no public comment. Motion to adjourn at 3:44pm by Jones, second by Peat. The next regular District Board of Health meeting is scheduled for August 13, 2025, at 3:00pm at the Van Buren Cass District Health Department, 260 South Street, Lawrence, MI.



Tina Leary, Board of Health Chairperson



Danielle Persky, Health Officer



Lauren Jaramillo, Board of Health Secretary