

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Board of Health Minutes
12/10/2025

Chairperson Leary called the meeting to order at the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department at 260 South Street, Lawrence, MI in the Conference Room at 3:00pm on Wednesday, December 10, 2025. Roll call taken.

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

Employees present: Danielle Persky, Lauren Jaramillo in-person and Kelly Adkins, Julie Beeching, Dr. Wile, Jennifer Zordan virtually

Others: Jerry Marchetti in-person and Karen Tan virtually

November meeting minutes were reviewed. Motioned by Leary and second by Peat to approve the meeting minutes as written. All voting yes, motion carried.

Board members provided positive feedback on communication of board documents and meetings.

Finance Director's Report

Persky provided financial updates on the disbursement report for October. The next meeting will have a financial packet to review. The financial audit is scheduled for January. Linderman asked about what is covered under Dr. Wile's malpractice liability insurance. Persky answered that the insurance covers nursing staff when doing their role through standing orders. Linderman asked if this is annual insurance. Persky confirmed yes. Dr. Wile added that, for example, if a patient passed out and nursing staff provided care, that is covered under the liability umbrella. Leary noted the low cost. Persky added that the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority (MMRMA) also provides insurance for the organization. Linderman asked if the dentists also have their own liability insurance. This is confirmed.

Linderman asked why some staff are paid out on mileage after company vehicles were purchased. Persky explained that all vehicles are utilized. Some staff do not have vehicles assigned to them, meaning they use their personal vehicles still. Linderman asked about when the November and December financial information could be available. Persky noted it could be ready mid to late January in advance of the February meeting. Linderman added a request to also review grants, which Persky responded that a status report can be made available.

Discussed and reviewed. Motioned by Marchetti, second by Jones to accept the October disbursement report. All voting yes, motion carried.

Expenditures Report

There were no updates at this time.

Administrator/Health Officer's Report

Persky began by discussing the application of Anne Wendling for the vacant Board of Health position. Persky met with her and Dr. Dommer several weeks ago to discuss the opportunity, and Wendling has since shared interest in joining the board. Persky highlighted Wendling's experience as the Chief Nursing Officer at Bronson along with her local roots. Linderman asked how she found out about the vacancy. Persky responded that the connection was sought out. There is also a benefit to having a health care

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professional with patient care and nursing experience. The Van Buren County Commissioners will be reviewing her application in January, then the selection will be brought to this board.

Linderman asked if there was concern for conflicts of interest. Persky responded no, that there are no concerns. There is a synergistic relationship between hospital systems and local health departments. Peat asked if there was more information on her background. Persky will review the county application for her resume. Persky asked the commissioners if background checks were completed for board applications. They are not per Van Buren and Cass County Commissioners. Leary and Peat offered upcoming dates for when the appointment will be reviewed and then approved by the county. The February Board of Health meeting will then tentatively be the final approval. Persky at this time also made note that we will be moving the chairperson role to a Cass County commissioner at the start of the year as per the board bylaws and the meeting series for the 2026 calendar year will go out soon. A consideration for 2026 is that the November meeting is presently on Veteran's Day.

Persky provided an update on the state budgeting meeting to discuss how the state dental coalition safety net funding will be dispersed. The aim for the disbursement is to not be burdensome for participating dental organizations. Linderman asked how much is funded through this safety net. The entire supplemental is four million dollars with a general estimation of \$300,000 to \$400,000 allocated to the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department dental clinics. Linderman asked if there are ever any roadblocks with Indiana patients not being accounted for in these patient numbers. Persky stated that no, the determination timeline for disbursement was by total patient numbers from July of 2024 to June of 2025.

Nursing and Medical Director Report

Nursing updates are discussed in the written report. Dr. Wile commented on the ideal situation of having a Bronson executive on board. The health department has worked with Bronson on community needs health assessments for several years, and the experience has been mutually beneficial.

Dr. Wile highlighted that the predominant strain of influenza is H3N2, which is presenting as a more severe influenza. Ahead of the holidays, it's important to note the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of sickness to loved ones. Dr. Wile noted the symptoms, heightened risk for those 65 and older, and the medications that can decrease the severity of influenza symptoms.

Marchetti asked for specific information on the more severe symptoms. Dr. Wile explained that it is generally more severe across all symptoms. Persky requested more information on the anti-viral recommendations. Dr. Wile recommended connecting with a provider as it can depend upon the situation if you are already sick or requesting in a preventative manner.

Linderman asked about Dr. Wile's experience with Bronson. Dr. Wile noted although he has not worked directly with Wendling, he remembers a discussion with the president of Bronson where there was real excitement around the experience she brings to the table. Persky noted her experience on the Bronson community health board and the communication capacity there is for local knowledge. Linderman discussed his difficulty with scheduling an appointment with Bronson in South Haven. Dr. Wile highlighted the importance of system improvements and support of expanding services into Van Buren County.

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Dental Report

Persky met with dental and financial leadership to brainstorm changes that can be made in addition to a dental fee increase. What came of this was a proposal to extend patient hours by asking Lawrence hygienists if they would be interested in adjusting their schedule to 7:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Thursday. This group of staff agreed to this adjustment as a pilot program to see if this would also potentially work in Dowagiac. Marchetti confirmed that it will just be hygienists. Persky responded yes, that the earlier appointments will be for cleanings and if a dentist is needed, they would be able to step in towards the end of the appointment. Friday is then dedicated to administrative tasks and front desk appointment scheduling. The dental team is focusing on scheduling to prevent no-show appointments. Discussed was the shortage of front desk staff, which leads to no time to refill the schedule. This shift will hopefully give more time to fill appointments and to keep the calendar moving.

Leary appreciated the schedule shift as many patients like to have early morning appointments. Persky agreed, and the other option of late afternoon appointments can be tough to fill. Linderman asked what the current waiting list looks like for Lawrence. Persky confirmed that there is a long patient wait list at close to 400. With Friday dedicated to rescheduling, it will hopefully bring this list lower. Linderman asked about Dowagiac, which Persky confirmed the demand outweighs the supply at this clinic as well. Although the clinics are generally fully staffed, there are still limitations. Persky gave appreciation to clinic staff as patients consistently want to come to the dental clinics. The reason that funding such as the dental coalition safety net is important is because patients often prefer comprehensive dental care clinics.

Linderman asked for an update on maintenance staffing. Logistics to plan for the changing business hours are being reviewed. Considerations include burglar alarms and door access hours. Persky will eventually bring the discussion of shifts in maintenance to the board. Linderman asked about snow removal as an example. Persky confirmed it has been going well with assistance from Van Buren Tech.

Persky then reviews the increased dental fee proposal on behalf of Dr. Malsbary. This is a proposal for a 2.25 percent increase across all dental services. This amount is still below many dental clinic fees. If the dental clinics fees were raised more in line with other clinics, it would be closer to four percent. This slight increase gives a significant enough bump while still being reasonable. Patients that will feel this the most are private pay, which accounts for ten percent of clients. This increase will provide full reimbursement by Medicaid and improve reimbursement by private insurers.

Alongside this plan, Persky also proposed a sliding fee scale. This will provide a discount for patients that complete a form with an income verification. This balances the need for increased fees to sustain operations but acknowledges that up to 250 percent of federal poverty can benefit from a sliding scale. Linderman asked if there is a projected income from these cost increases. Persky stated not at this time. Gatties provided positive feedback on the fee structure as it would capture the Medicaid reimbursement while still being under what is customary among private practices and standard Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

Linderman discussed his concern of those patients that have become regular patients and can't pay with these updated costs. Persky confirmed that existing fees will be honored for those currently in treatment. New patients will receive these costs up front with their dental plan. Linderman reviewed the potential need to increase costs across the board, which he could get behind if it was financially needed. Leary

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agreed it is good business practice. Persky agreed and noted the need to review dental fees more regularly to prevent the burden of large fee increases. Leary asked if a vote is requested at this time. Persky noted that the board can be brought this at a later time to vote, otherwise it is ready to be implemented on January 1st, 2026. The board reviewed local experiences that coincide with federal poverty rates.

Motioned by Linderman, second by Gatties to accept the new dental fee schedule and sliding fee scale. All voting yes, motion carried.

All other dental updates are discussed in the written report.

Environmental Health Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

Health Promotions Report

There were no updates at this time.

Public Comment

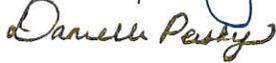
Tan agreed with the increase in dental costs as the true cost of medical and dental services not being taken into consideration doesn't serve anyone in the long run. Tan also noted if research has been done on vaccine-acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (VAIDS). Persky responded that the leadership and clinic team did discuss how to best be transparent about vaccine adverse reactions. The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is now added to this list of resources on the health department website.

There was no other business.

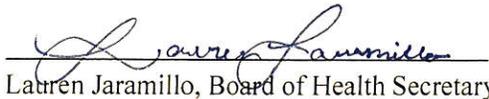
Motion to adjourn at 3:52pm by Jones, second by Peat. The next regular District Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 3:00pm at the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department at 260 South Street, Lawrence, MI in the Conference Room.



Tina Leary, Board of Health Chairperson



Danielle Persky, Health Officer



Lauren Jaramillo, Board of Health Secretary