

Moore County Board of Health
October 9, 2017

Members Present: Severt Jacobson, MD, Chair
Betty J. Goodridge, MHA, CMA, Vice Chair
Louis Gregory
Michele Keel, OD
Warren Lewis
William Mang, PharmD
Kamron Monroe, DDS
Max Muse, RN, ME
Robert R. Wittmann, MPH, Secretary to the Board


Members Absent: Tim Boyte, DVM; Sharon Odom, RT (R)

Chair Severt Jacobson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Introductions/Recognitions:

Board members and staff introduced themselves. Health Department staff present were: Lynne Ezzell, Environmental Health Specialist; Teresa Forrest, Administrative Officer I; Torrie Furr, Social Work Supervisor; Crystal Hodges, Environmental Health Program Specialist; and Kim Kimrey, Nursing Director. Also present was Moore County Deputy County Attorney, Brenda White. Robert Wittmann stated that Torrie Furr recently received the North Carolina Public Health Association Social Worker of the Year Award, which was presented at the annual conference, held in Asheville in September. Members were shown a picture of Torrie receiving her award, with her staff in attendance. The next picture shown was Richard Tompkins, Health Educator. Robert Wittmann noted that Rich had shepherded the Department through its first accreditation and was doing an outstanding job coordinating the Department's re-accreditation process. There will be an update on the process at the December or January Board meeting. The accreditation review team will be on-site in February. Finally, Board members were shown a picture of the clinical staff. All nursing positions are filled.

Kim Kimrey gave a clinical update, see attached. Warren Lewis asked if there were any issues of which the Board should be aware. Kim Kimrey replied that there was a corrective action plan requested by the State in March for CD/TB, due to limited staff. Plans are in place to address that now. Kamron Monroe stated that the Board appreciated the review and were excited with the progress made.


Robert R. Wittmann, MPH
Secretary
Moore County Board of Health

OCT 9 2017

Oath of Office:

Two reappointed Board members, Michele Keel and Warren Lewis, were sworn in by Carolyn Steed, Deputy Registrar of Vital Records.

Invocation:

Robert Wittmann gave the invocation.

Conflict of Interest:

Robert Wittmann read the following statement: *Does any Board Member have a conflict of interest concerning agenda items the Board will address in this meeting?* None were stated.

Approval of Agenda:

Severt Jacobson asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Robert Wittmann stated that he had received a call from Misty Randall, County Attorney, asking that Brenda White be given time to discuss items that were sent to the Board of Health. Kamron Monroe made a motion to add the item to the agenda, seconded by Max Muse. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Presentations - Diamond "A" Restaurant Awards/County Food Safety:

The Healthy Dining Awards have been given each year since 2009. There are three categories. First, the Golden A award is given to restaurants that earn an inspection score of 97 or above for the fiscal year. There were 109 of these for fiscal year 2017. The second category is the Platinum A Award, with 25 awards this year. In addition to maintaining an inspection score of 97 or above, the establishment must have no smoking on the premises. The highest achievement is the Diamond A Award, with two recipients in fiscal year 2017. The restaurant must have an inspection score of 97 or higher for the fiscal year; provide an entirely smoke-free premises; and provide clearly marked menu items which are healthy food choices. Severt Jacobson presented the award to Warren Lewis, of Chef Warren's. The other recipient, who was not present, was Marian Caso of Lady Bedford's Tea Parlour and Gift Shoppe. Environmental Health staff will present the award to Marian Caso, as well as the certificates for the recipients of the Platinum A and Golden A Awards. Award recipients will be posted on the Health Department website and a news release will be issued. Warren Lewis asked about enforcement of operations with food produced in a private home. Crystal Hodges stated that Environmental Health does not permit food produced in private homes, although the Department of Agriculture permits home-produced baked goods. No catering from a private home would be permitted. Crystal Hodges stated that, when this is brought to the attention of Environmental Health, they educate the person, inform them of consequences if they continue and give them options. Warren Lewis stated that people often advertise in local businesses and it was possible to compile a list. Robert



Robert R. Wittmann, MPH
Secretary
Moore County Board of Health

OCT 9 2017

Wittmann asked that the list be sent to Crystal Hodges so she and her staff could investigate.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Board of Health Education/Staff Reports:

- **Immunization Report:** Kim Kimrey stated that the Health Department received an award for achieving excellence in immunizations, exceeding the 2016 goal of 87%, with greater than 90% children immunized appropriately.
- **Child Fatality Prevention Team Annual Report:** Robert Wittmann reviewed the report with the Board.
- **Annual Financial Report for Care Management Programs:** Torrie Furr reviewed the report with the Board. She noted that there are spending restrictions for the carryover balance that the Programs have been building. There is not enough available to add a full-time social worker position to the Program, since there are no County funds budgeted. She stated that there is a possibility that the State could take the carryover balance funds and distribute them to the network. Robert Wittmann noted that the Programs manage the care of higher-risk patients, helping to keep them out of the emergency department for services. He stated that he plans to meet with the County Manager to work on a request to reclassify our current resource social worker to part-time. Torrie Furr stated that there is a certain amount allotted for each Medicaid patient, within Program guidelines, whether they are served by the Program or not. Board members discussed the restrictions of the carryover balance and the possibility that the State could claim it.
- **Department's First Quarter Activity Report:** Robert Wittmann reviewed the report. He noted that the emailed file has tabs with data available for previous fiscal years. Regarding foreign travel vaccines, Robert Wittmann noted that vaccines are offered at cost, plus an administrative fee. The Department does not lose money by not providing the service.
- **Department's Performance Measures:** Robert Wittmann reviewed the report. He noted that low staffing levels in Environmental Health affected performance. He stated that, in the past, two positions were lost due to the economic downturn. However, now, he plans to ask for Board support to reinstate those positions.
- **FY 2017 Budget First Quarter Report:** Currently County money has been spent less than the amount budgeted. Robert Wittmann stated that Environmental Health needs an additional part-time or resource administrative employee, which he plans to request in next year's budget.
- **Health Director's Report:**
 - The Nursing Director and all full-time nursing positions have been filled with the exception of the Physician Extender. That position is currently filled by one resource nurse practitioner, Marva Price, with Deborah Barrett as her backup. This is funded by projected lapsed salary in the fiscal year 18 budget. The advertising and interviewing process for the Physician Extender position is ongoing.



Robert R. Wittmann, MPH
Secretary
Harris County Board of Health

OCT 9 2017

- Donna Blue, retired nursing director and former CD/TB nurse, continues to work as a resource nurse to assist the CD/TB program.
- In the Environmental Health section, Iris Davis, Terry Purvis and Charlie Riggs all recently retired with approximately 30 years of service each. Two of these positions were filled in-house, leaving two vacant environmental health specialist positions and one vacant soil scientist position. All three of the retirees are currently working as resource staff. The current wait time for an on-site permit is averaging approximately four weeks. We have interviewed for the vacant positions and have promising applicants.
- Robert Wittmann reviewed the minutes of the last Epi Team quarterly meeting in the Department. Teresa Forrest will email the minutes to the Board.
- Kim Kimrey gave a current CD report to the Board. There were no outbreaks in September. There were 49 confirmed cases, 30 of which were chlamydia. There are 3 active TB preventative cases and 1 active TB case, which will stop treatment in 12-2017.
- Robert Wittmann stated that the community opinion survey is currently being distributed. Matt Garner will send the link to the survey to the Board.
- Robert Wittmann noted that he is available to staff even when on leave or out of the office, via cell phone. However, if needed, the chain of command is as follows: Health Director: Health Educator/Deputy Health Director; Administrative Officer II: Administrative Officer I: Nursing Director: management team members by seniority. When the Nursing Director has had more time in her role, she will be moved to the second slot.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Before discussing the minutes, Board members talked about the possibility of developing a local inspection form for the schools, which was discussed at the previous meeting. Robert Wittmann noted that the Environmental Health inspection covered school cafeterias, water and sewage and preschool. Any other areas are beyond their scope of practice. However, both the State and local Board of Education have responsibilities for school inspections. Crystal Hodges stated that, in the course of an Environmental Health inspection, if mold or lead is suspected, then a call is placed to the State to get the appropriate inspectors on site to evaluate the problem. This situation just occurred with Carthage Elementary and results are pending. No child has tested positive for unsafe blood lead levels. Board members discussed the need for thorough school inspections. Robert Wittmann stated the Health Department is not responsible beyond our scope of practice. Louis Gregory asked if there was a health-related emergency in the schools. Robert Wittmann replied that, to his knowledge, there is no health-related emergency at this time. Kamron Monroe stated that the purpose of the Board Committee to review this was unclear since it appears to be beyond our scope. BJ Goodridge stated that, at the County level, it needed to be clarified who was responsible for building inspections.



Robert R. Wittmann, MPH
 Secretary
 Moore County Board of Health

OCT 9 2017

Warren Lewis made a motion to approve the July 11, 2017 Board of Health minutes. This was seconded by BJ Goodridge. All other members were in favor and the motion passed.

Old Business:

There was no old business.

New Business:

- **Amend December BOH Meeting Date to December 14th:** Robert Wittmann asked the Board to change the December Board of Health meeting date. Max Muse made a motion to change the meeting date to Thursday, December 14, 2017. This was seconded by Warren Lewis. All were in favor and the motion carried.
- **Amateur Radio Emergency Service Resolution:** Robert Wittmann stated that the local amateur radio group MOCARS (Moore County Amateur Radio Society), with the ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) local representative, had passed a resolution requesting that they be allowed to utilize the Health Department's Training Room for meetings and activities. He presented a resolution for the Board of Health that would request approval from the Board of Commissioners for this, since it was not within the authority of the Board of Health. Brenda White, Deputy County Attorney, addressed the Board. She stated that the County Attorney's Office had requested in February that the group stop meeting at the Health Department. She noted that the building houses a great deal of confidential information and computer equipment. She stated that the group meets outside normal County operating hours and there would need to be a memorandum of understanding in place holding the County harmless. There is a prohibition in the County Facilities Policy against reservations for regular meetings, except for groups receiving sponsorship. The Facilities Policy includes a fee schedule when County facilities and grounds are used by the public. The Health Department is not included in that category. The fee ranges from \$20 to \$80 per hour. Use of the Agricultural Center, for a fee, was suggested to the Radio Society. If the Board of Health requests that the Board of Commissioners offer an exemption to the policy, then it would set a precedent. Brenda White asked that the Board of Health consider tabling the topic until the next meeting, to give an opportunity to look into the matter further. Board members discussed factors leading to the request. Robert Wittmann noted that the Radio Society participates in emergency response training, exercises and events for the Health Department and the County Emergency Operations Center, to include emergency shelter support. They have met in a County building for more than 32 years, including the Training Room. Robert Wittmann stated that, when he became aware that the meeting was considered a problem, he met with the County Manager. At that time, he was advised to wait due to the budget process. He noted that areas of the Health Department are locked and secured with specially coded fobs and there is restricted access for all confidential information. BJ Goodridge noted that there is room available in other County



Robert R. Wittmann, MPH

Secretary

Moore County Board of Health

OCT 9 2017

buildings, for a fee. Michele Keel suggested that the Board of Health request that the Board of Commissioners waive the fee. BJ Goodridge asked what would happen if another club requested use of the facility. Robert Wittmann stated that if there was a recognized service to County government then it should be given consideration. Brenda White suggested that the topic not be addressed further at that time. Kamron Monroe made a motion to table the topic, seconded by Michele Keel. All were in favor and the motion carried. Robert Wittmann asked that the Board task him to work with the County Attorney's Office to develop a plan to meet the needs of the organization that could be recommended to the Board of Health and the Board of Commissioners. The Radio Society will not meet in the building until the matter is settled.

- **Staff Diverse Workforce and Training and Workforce Development Policies:** Robert Wittmann presented the policies to the Board for discussion. After Board discussion of the policies, Robert Wittmann stated that the Department's Management Team will be reviewing census data to compare to Department demographics. He noted that the County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against a job applicant or employee. He stated that it is difficult to recruit directly from universities as the professional positions usually require a year of job experience.
- **Food and Lodging Manpower Study 2017:** Crystal Hodges spoke to the Board about a letter received from the State, see attached, noting that the Environmental Health Office, Food and Lodging Section, required three more staff be added to adequately address their current workload. Robert Wittmann stated that he will be asking for action regarding this during the next budget process. Members discussed the difficulty of finding adequately trained staff for the Environmental Health Office. Robert Wittmann noted that the only place to find a registered Environmental Health Specialist is in another local health department and there are several health departments currently seeking applicants.
- **Senate Bill 257:** Robert Wittmann stated that he had communicated with the Board of Health, the Board of Commissioners, Clerk to the Board, the County Manager, and the State his support for the position of the NC State Board of REHS Examiners regarding the bill, see attached letter. The bill, in part, would remove the Environmental Health section from the Department of Health and Human Services and place it under the Department of Environmental Quality and would weaken the Board of Examiners. Michele Keel made a motion that the Board of Health support the letter, seconded by Warren Lewis. All were in favor and the motion carried.
- **Board of Health Chairs to speak to Health Department Staff at 11:00 am on November 3, 2017:** Robert Wittmann asked for a Board of Health consensus that the Chairs speak to the Health Department staff. The Board agreed. Past Chair, Kamron Monroe, also agreed to speak to the staff. All Board members are welcome to attend the November 3rd staff meeting.
- **State Report Data sent to Board:** Severt Jacobson stated that the Board was receiving a lot of data and asked for thoughts from the Board considering this.



OCT 9 2017

Robert R. Wittmann, MPH
Secretary
Lenoire County Board of Health

Brenda White stated that some information had been sent to the Board regarding employee information that should not have been shared with the Board. She asked that the Board shred the information relating to individual employees. Board members discussed the information received. Robert Wittmann suggested that the Board receive the financial report, Health Department activity reports and the performance measures currently received by the Board. Severt Jacobson stated that the Board would like to receive information on activities, including new activities. Robert Wittmann noted that he had been sending information such as communicable disease reports and information from the State and National Public Health Associations. He asked if the Board would like to continue to receive similar information. The consensus was yes, if the information was interesting and relevant. In addition, the consensus was to receive the financial information, activity reports and performance measures on a quarterly basis, at the end of each quarter, and not to wait until the next Board of Health meeting. Kim Kimrey asked if the Board would like to continue receiving information from her. Severt Jacobson asked that she give a report at each Board of Health meeting. Kamron Monroe stated that the Health Director Evaluation Committee will be setting up a meeting.

With no further action, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.



Robert R. Wittmann, MPH
Secretary
Worcester County Board of Health

OCT 9 2017

BOH Meeting – 10/9/2017

1. Immunization Report
 - a. Award –Achieving Excellence
 - i. 2016 goal was 87%
 - b. Benchmark Report - 8/16 to date Sum of 620 immunizations given
2. CD Report – September
 - a. Outbreaks Investigated: 0 No outbreaks
 - b. Confirmed: 49 (Chlamydia = 30, Gonorrhea = 5, various = 14: Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Campylobacter
 - c. Not Meet Case Definition: 7 per state definition
 - d. Suspect/Probable: 2 but not conclusive by state definition
 - e. TB preventative: 3 (active)
 - f. TB cases: 1 (one case stopped 8/17 and the other stops 12/17)
 - g. TB Suspect: 0
3. Fully staffed
 - a. Allison Brown – Adult Health, Adult Day/Health Care (Preceptor)
 - b. Crystal Spivey – CDTB (Adult Health backup)
 - c. Melisa Tolar – Maternity (Family Planning backup)
 - d. Lorin Vaughan – Family Planning (Maternity backup)
 - e. Jordan Moon – Immunization/Employee Health (CDTB backup)
 - f. Becky DeRose – Resource nurse/Float
 - g. Connie Lowe – Immunization backup/Float
 - h. Betsey Bailey – transitioning back to FT hours here, gradually, 11/6/17
 - i. Donna Blue – resource
 - i. CDTB backup until Jordan gets trained
 - ii. Providing weekly hours as needed
 - j. Marva Price – resource Nurse Practitioner
 - k. Debra Barrett – resource Nurse Practitioner
 - l. Local Health Department state directory has been updated with all new staff
4. Cross Training
 - a. Team building
 - b. All clinical staff in one office
 - c. Two teams – Smarties and Lifesavers
 - i. Helps manage time off and weekly staffing patterns
 - d. All nurses should be able to work in any clinic
 - i. Goal-not to reduce or close clinic based on Program Coordinator’s work schedule
 - e. Weekly clinic schedule – Crystal maintains
 - i. Identified staffing minimums
 - ii. Ensures Program Coordinators have adequate administrative time
 - iii. Keeps extra staff in nursing office to be called as needed

- f. Orientation continues for Jordan. Other nurses formal orientation over, but not complete for 12 months. All still have required classes to attend.
 - g. Routine clinical staff meetings, including Management Support staff now
 - h. E/M coding class 9/14/17 – for all clinical staff and physicians and physician extenders
 - i. NC state consultant, Carolyn Hemric, completed a STD patient record review prior to class and found that MCHD in compliance with documentation and coding
5. Two applicants for Physician Extender
- a. Interviews being scheduled – one 10/24/17 at 5pm
 - b. Advertising via Indeed.com
6. Clinic changes
- a. Increased TB and Pregnancy clinics – increased from alternating once a week to 2 clinics every week
 - b. Taking walk-ins for PT and immunization and TB as needed
 - c. Added temporary FP annual clinics to catch up with demand – 2 days in Aug
 - d. Added moderately high risk pregnancy patients to maternity clinic; i.e. P17
 - i. With SPWH approval and guidance
 - e. Added permanent annual schedules to handle demand - 5 total/week
 - i. Will be adding Nurse Clinics in November – combination of any service that nurses can work without provider present
 - 1. All day Monday and Thursday
 - 2. Add Friday am when needed
 - f. New service – Adult Day Health Specialist
 - i. Last one was Kinder in 2002 and St. Joseph’s 2000
 - ii. Training from state on 9/14/17 by Glenda Artis
 - iii. Adult Day Care Coordinators Denyse Leake/April Black from DSS attended
 - iv. Reviewing first application now, open date TBD
 - g. Starting to look at clinic numbers
 - i. Number of appointments kept have increased from 190 in April to 321 in August
 - ii. Since April most appointment types have either doubled or more
7. Updated shelter procedures and bags
- a. Updated the policy and decision tree, in draft now
 - b. Updated the health form, in draft now
 - c. Kim completed just in time training for EOC
 - d. Clinical staff completed just in time training for shelters prior to hurricane Harvey and formal training 9/29/17 provided by Emily from ON Target Preparedness
 - e. Updated shelter opening bags
 - i. Check lists/standardization
 - ii. New equipment
 - f. Updated shelter manual – provided to all clinical staff
8. CDTB Corrective Action Plan – All areas noted on CAP have been addressed
9. Kim added to Human Trafficking committee



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH
SECRETARY

DANIEL STALEY
DIRECTOR

August 11, 2017

Robert Wittmann, MPH
Health Director
P.O. Box 279, Carthage, NC 28327
Moore County Public Health Department

Dear Mr. Wittmann,

The Food Protection Program of the North Carolina Environmental Health Services Section has recently conducted a manpower study for the Food, Lodging and Institutional Program of the Environmental Health Division in Moore County. This study tabulates the ratio to program responsibilities to available resources and manpower.

The data was provided from your office by Crystal Hodges by using BETTS and collected from the Inspection, Statistics and Fees Section of the Environmental Health Services Section. The results of the manpower study indicate that the Moore County Environmental Health Division is not sufficiently staffed in the programs of Food, Lodging, Institutions, Child Cares, Tattoo Establishments, Plan Reviews, and Swimming Pools. The study revealed that the Moore County Public Health Department needs an additional 3.1 non-supervisory environmental health specialists for this program. Data for unplanned mandated activities such as epi investigations, meth laboratory activities, emergency responses, and other events is from the fiscal year of 2016-2017.

The job descriptions provided for the manpower study indicate that the Moore County Environmental Health Division has 3 Full Time employees for the Food Lodging and Institution programs. An additional non-supervisory position is vacant at this time. Job descriptions were used to show workload percentages.

There is a direct correlation to types of establishments by category and the number of inspections/visits that can be conducted in a routine day. The standard number of days available to work in a fiscal year is 220. This estimation considers holidays, annual and sick leave days on average and weekends.

Using the data from the manpower study, we can conclude how many inspections on average should be completed daily. Moore County had 3970 mandated inspections at the time of the review of establishment information. There are 4 FLI employees (when outstanding position is filled). There are 220 days available to work in a fiscal year this creates (220 x4) 880 days for field work. 3970/880 days for work should yield 4.5 inspections per day to achieve 100% of mandated inspections. It is reasonable to expect 2 inspections (on average) per day will be completed.

WWW.NCDHHS.GOV

TEL 919-707-5854 • FAX 919-845-3972

LOCATION: 5605 SIX FORKS RD • RALEIGH, NC 27609

MAILING ADDRESS: 1632 MAIL SERVICE CENTER • RALEIGH, NC 27699-1632

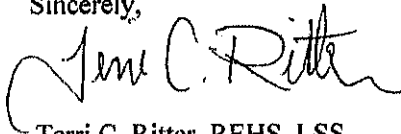
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

There are unplanned mandated requirements of the program. We recognize that you monitor the program and make scheduling adjustments with the current staff during peak demands in the F L & I program's workload. When unplanned events occur, then field staff must focus their attention on the crisis. It is mandated that the programs respond promptly to emergencies, food/water borne illness outbreaks and meth labs.

This study is done in averages since exact times cannot be predicted. Daily duties in Environmental Health change often. Staff must work on routine mandated work while also being available for emergencies.

I hope this information will be helpful to you in ensuring that the Food, Lodging and Institution Program is staffed adequately. Please feel free to contact me at 336-301-7187 if you have questions or need further explanation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terri C. Ritter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Terri C. Ritter, REHS, LSS
Regional Environmental Health Specialist

Cc: Cindy Callahan, REHS, Food Protection and Facilities Branch Head
Crystal Hodges, Environmental Health Supervisor
File

NC STATE BOARD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST EXAMINERS
PO Box 238, Efland, NC 27243

Executive Committee

Phil Thompson, REHS, Chair
Pools, Tattoos & State Institutions Program
Division of Public Health, Environmental Health
NC Department of Health and Human Services
P.O. Box 315
Burlington, NC 27216



Larry Michael, REHS, Vice-Chair
State Environmental Health Director
Division of Public Health, Environmental Health
NC Department of Health and Human Services
1632 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

Carl Kivett, REHS, Secretary/Treasurer
Chatham County Environmental Health
PO Box 130
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Members

Ann Absher, Wilkesboro, NC
Brian Byrd, Ph.D., Cullowhee, NC
Melanie Campen, REHS, Hampstead, NC
Caroline Daly, Raleigh, NC
Patricia Hawkins, REHS Transylvania, NC
Andrew Morgan, REHS, Cary, NC
Daniel Ortiz, REHS, Fayetteville, NC
Seth Swift, REHS, Hendersonville, NC
Jessica Silver, REHS Asheville, NC

Donna Coffey, Assistant to Board

May 22, 2017

Members of the North Carolina General Assembly House Appropriations Committee
Members of the North Carolina General Assembly House Appropriations, Health and Human Services Committee
Members of the North Carolina General Assembly Senate Appropriations Committee
Members of the North Carolina General Assembly Senate Appropriations, Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Committee Members:

The North Carolina State Board of Environmental Health Specialist Examiners (EHS Board) is a long-standing, self-supporting professional licensing board representing more than 1,040 Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) professionals employed by local, state and federal governments, schools, and industries throughout North Carolina.

On behalf of the profession and in the best interest of protecting public health, the EHS Board strongly opposes the transfer of the On-Site Water Protection (OSWP) Branch to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and opposes changes to the EHS Board membership and expiration of terms. These items are outlined in Senate Bill 257, Appropriations Act of 2017, and Sections 11E.10(b) through 10.11E.10(d) (SB257, page 135). Please consider the following as you deliberate and vote on the Bill:

On-Site Water Protection Transfer

- Environmental Health laws and rules represent the foundation of public health protection and responsibility of implementation and authority for enforcement should rest with a public health-oriented agency.
- All environmental public health programs (e.g., on-site wastewater, private wells, food protection, children's environmental health) are integral components to protecting the public's health, and they work together as a unit in both routine and emergency responses. Transfer of one of these three programs out of DHHS to DEQ will diminish the capacity of state and local agencies to protect the public's health.

- Transfer of on-site wastewater and private drinking water wells from DHHS would split environmental health specialists' State delegation of authority between two state agencies creating an unprecedented and confusing organizational structure.
- Public Health programs would report to two State agencies with separate and sometimes conflicting policies and procedures. The result would fragment fundamental local Public Health protection programs and cause delays in the resolution of problems, including response to public health emergencies and citizen requests.
- All regional staff from each of DHHS's Environmental Health Branches are assigned an area to assist counties during public health emergencies. Moving the OSWP program reduces, by one-third, the available regional-based staff to assist local health departments with response to hurricanes, flooding, public water contamination occurrences, and similar public health emergencies.
- There is no benefit to the agencies and no benefit to the public we serve by transferring the OSWP Branch.

Board Organization

- The current Board organization model that requires an environmental sanitation educator from an accredited college or university has worked well with respect to providing expertise to the Board for education, examination, and similar areas. Requiring the education representative to be a practicing REHS is unnecessary and significantly limits the availability of members to fill this position, as there are currently no individuals registered who fit these criteria, and it is highly unlikely that there would be someone who could become qualified for the seat by the August 1, 2017, proposed implementation date.
- Veteran board members bring a wealth of expertise to the profession and their board-related duties vary greatly. For example, they conduct investigations associated with complaints, administer examinations required for registration, and provide instruction. Having a new slate of Board members will create a significant loss of institutional knowledge, reduce Board effectiveness by halting duties (e.g., complaint investigations), and diminish the Board's business continuity.
- Decreasing the size of the board by 25 percent will compromise oversight of the profession, delay response to complaints and investigations, and increase the workload of appointees.
- The Board opposes removing the Secretary of Health and Human Services from the Board. Most environmental public health programs are under jurisdiction of DHHS; therefore, the Secretary of DHHS, or their delegated representative, should remain a Board member.

As Committee members can glean from this letter, the EHS Board is interested in the best organizational model for protecting the public from potential environmental health hazards. The EHS Board is a deeply devoted group of professionals and is passionate about ensuring that high professional standards for Environmental Health Specialists are not compromised.

Feel free to contact our office should you have additional questions regarding the NC Board of Environmental Health Specialist Examiners.

Sincerely,



Phil Thompson
Chair