

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
February 27, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors was held on February 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., 315 North Broadway, Genecov Room, Tyler, Texas with the following present:

Board Members: Laura Newsome, Chair
Jessica Bowen, MSN, R.N.
Kent Boozer, D.D.S., Sec.
Jeremy Butler absent
Cynthia Ball, D.O.
Scott Williams
Nancy Rangel
Pam Cunningham

Chief Executive Officer: George T. Roberts, Jr.
Smith County Health Authority: Valerie Smith, M.D.
Chief Financial Officer: Lawanda Owens
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director: Russell Hopkins
Immunizations/TB Program Director: Sylvia Warren, R.N.
Environmental Health Director: Ginger Points, R.S. absent
Community Outreach Director: Terrence Ates
Vital Statistics Director: Rosie Meza absent
Human Resources Director: Dawn Strickland absent
Interim Laboratory Director: Amanda Catlin
WIC Director: Tecora Smith
Legal: Sharon Roberts
Recorder: Janie Jolly
Guests: Dr. Alaa Riha absent
Dr. Catherine Goetz
Dr. Liz Villalobos absent
Dr. Srishti Goel absent
Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah absent
Alex de Ravel
Jason Rhodes
Tiffany Murray
Arnetta Garner
Meshia Warren
Raquel Villatoro, Tyler Morning Telegraph

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:02 p.m.

INVOCATION-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the invocation was given by George Roberts.

HEALTH AUTHORITY REPORT

Dr. Valerie Smith gave the Health Authority Report to the Board. The report focused on the outbreak of Measles in Texas and New Mexico. Measles is highly contagious; if unvaccinated and in a room with someone who has measles, there's a 90% chance of contracting it. Measles is a respiratory virus spread through respiratory droplets and can remain in the air for up to two hours after a person infected with the measles has been in the room.

The initial symptoms (3-4 days) of measles resemble other respiratory viruses (coughing, congestion). Other symptoms include spots inside the mouth and pink eye. Later a rash appears, starting on the head and moving down the body. A person is contagious with measles four days before the rash appears and four days after the rash appears. Incubation period is 10 to 21 days, requiring a three-week quarantine after exposure if the exposed person is unvaccinated.

Common complications from measles include pneumonia, which can be fatal and neurologic complications such as encephalitis which can also be fatal or cause deafness and long-term intellectual disabilities. The younger a patient is when they contract measles, the more likely they are to develop neurologic complications. Approximately 20% of people with measles are hospitalized in the United States and about one in 1,000 will die from complications.

The best prevention for measles is the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. The first dose (12-15 months) is about 93% effective. The second dose (4 years) is 97-98% effective. The MMR can be given as early as six months in case of exposure or outbreak. If unvaccinated and exposed, receiving the vaccine within 72 hours can help prevent measles due to the long incubation period.

For Smith County, the goal is to have 95% of people in a community vaccinated to prevent the virus from spreading.

As of Tuesday, February 25, 2025, the West Texas measles outbreak has 124 identified cases, 18 hospitalizations and one death of a school-age child.

Dr. Smith concluded her report by updating the Respiratory Virus Trends. The region experienced the worst flu season in 15 years but has seen a precipitous drop in respiratory illness in recent weeks. ER visits and hospitalizations related to influenza have decreased significantly.

COVID hospitalizations remain stable, possibly due to longer hospital stays. Respiratory viral death trends are expected to mirror other curves but with a delay of three to four weeks.

The Board thanked Dr. Smith for her report.

MINUTES

Motion made by Cynthia Ball to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2025, regular meeting; seconded by Pam Cunningham motion carried; approved as presented.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

For the month of January 2025, we had revenues of \$1,306,812 which was \$20,435 under budget. Expenses were \$1,273,922 which was \$8,475 over budget. Our net income for the month of January 2025 was \$68,890 which was \$28,910 under budget.

For FY2025, we have revenues of \$4,954,239 which was \$170,411 over budget. Expenses were \$4,730,788 which was \$163,138 over budget. Our net income for the first 4 months of FY2025 was \$223,451, which was \$7,273 over budget.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the January 2025 financial report; seconded by Scott Williams motion carried; approved as presented.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER

The Nominating Committee of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board recommends that Mike McCrady, M.D., be appointed to the NET Health Board to serve in the Smith County Medical Society position vacated by Suman Sinha, M.D. The Smith County Medical Society recommended Dr. McCrady for this position.

Motion by Cynthia Ball to approve the appointment of Mike McCrady, M.D. to the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board for the term period February 27, 2025, through September 30, 2025, seconded by Pam Cunningham motion carried; approved as presented.

PRESENTATION: THE DREAM PROGRAM, “DELIVERING RESOURCES EMPOWERING ALL MOTHERS”, Tecora Smith, Director, WIC and the Dream Team.

Tecora Smith, Director of WIC and the DREAM Team, consisting of Jason Rhodes, Tiffany Murray, Arnetta Garner, and Meshia Warren gave a presentation to the Board entitled, “Delivering Resources Empowering All Mothers”. DREAM is a high-risk care coordination program for pregnant and postpartum moms. The program’s goal is to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality in Smith County and close gaps in care.

As background, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) provided a grant for our DREAM program. The program trains community health workers to be maternal health community health workers.

The DREAM program provides group facilitation to prepare moms and dads for the arrival of their baby. A wide range of information is covered including nutrition, breastfeeding counseling and lactation support. Social support is provided which includes text messaging, affirmation cards, phone calls, and quarterly mom circles to keep moms engaged.

Jason Rhodes discussed the Ready for Baby childbirth education series, which enrolls families around the 20-week mark of gestation. The series covers labor support, medical decisions, self-care, baby care, and breastfeeding. These topics are geared towards Dads who also learn comfort techniques to support moms during labor. Additional program components include monthly education sessions, car seat safety and safe sleep classes.

The biggest need for DREAM moms this year is community assistance, connecting them to community partners in Smith and Cherokee counties. Community assistance is the main reason moms seek support from the program. Board members were asked to contact the DREAM Team with any referrals.

The Board thanked Tecora and the DREAM Team for their presentation.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board. He began by thanking Dr. Smith, Tecora Smith, and the Dream Team for their excellent presentations. Mr. Roberts stated that the training requested at the January 30th Board meeting for the Leadership Team and the CEO was conducted and completed on Tuesday, February 25th, led by Sharon Roberts. Mr. Roberts stated that he will be heading to Austin, TX., for the East Texas Chamber, leaving Sunday, March 2nd and returning Tuesday, March 4th. He stated that he will be meeting with Representative Gary VanDeaver, the new House Public Health Chair.

Mr. Roberts informed the Board of the upcoming wedding of his daughter on March 15th! He concluded his report by informing the Board to mark their calendars for the annual Public Health Luncheon which will be held on Friday, April 4th, where our NET Health employees are recognized. Lunch will be provided by Stanley's BBQ and the theme is 80's and 90's!

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:21 pm.

THE NEXT NET HEALTH BOARD MEETING IS THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025.



Janie Jolly, Recorder



Kent Boozer, Secretary
NET Health Board of Directors