

TETON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

June 18, 2025

Present: Randy Morris, Lora Wier, Carmen Staigmiller, Gary Dale, Ken Bassmann, Sam Carlson, Melissa Moyer, and Austin Moyer

Absent: Barb Shaffer

Guests: Breanna Lindgren (TCHD), Katie Adams (TCHD), Claire Hodgskiss (TCHD), and Melody Martinson (Choteau Acantha)

The meeting was called to order by Melissa Moyer at 8:00 AM in the Teton County Courthouse Annex Conference Room. The meeting was recorded as required.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present or offered comments.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March meeting were reviewed. Austin Moyer was thanked for preparing the minutes. No adjustments or corrections were proposed. **Motion:** Ken Bassmann made a motion to approve the March minutes. **Second:** The motion was seconded by Sam Carlson. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. **Outcome:** Minutes approved. Lora Wier, as the new secretary, was designated to sign off on the minutes.

Old Business: None

New Business: Board Business:

- **Legislative Update (Presenter: Lora Wier)**
 - Lora Wier provided an update on the recent legislative session as it pertains to public health, highlighting the enhanced legislative presence and coordination of three Montana public health associations under "Confluence."
 - Summary documents of legislative activities were distributed.
 - **Specific Policy Achievements Discussed:**
 - House Bill 853: Revising fees for public health licenses (further discussion by Austin Moyer later in the meeting).
 - Immunization Protections: Discussion included changes allowing some childcare facilities to accept religious and medical exemptions, potentially putting infants at risk. A past pertussis outbreak in Teton County and its severe impact (including a baby's death) was recounted to emphasize the importance of immunization requirements.

- Montana Clean Indoor Air Act (Presenter: Breanna Lindgren): Senate Bill 390 passed, including vapes and e-cigarettes, effective May 15. The state is preparing for implementation, including information, signage, and press releases for public and business owner education. The bill allowing cigar bars did not pass.
- Hospital Bill 658: Revising local boards of health sanitation power and rules (did not pass). This bill would have removed local counties' ability to adopt more stringent on-site wastewater treatment rules than those set by DEQ; it does not significantly affect Teton County as current practices align.
- General Legislative Context: An increase in public health-related legislation post-pandemic was noted, including both wins and "attacks on public health authority."

Health Department Updates:

- **Near Term Initiative Grant (Presenter: Claire Hodgskiss)**
 - Teton County was awarded a \$250,000 "Future Generations" (Near Term Initiative) grant over two years for behavioral health, pursuing a coalition-based approach.
 - This funding provides a significant opportunity to advance behavioral health work by the Teton County CARES Coalition (active since 2017).
 - Behavioral health, mental health, and substance use disorders remain top priorities in community health assessments.
 - Funding includes technical assistance from the Montana Public Health Institute.
 - **Next Steps:** Jennifer McCulley from the Montana Public Health Institute will meet with the CARES group on June 26th (1-3 PM). Strategic plan update meetings are anticipated in August/September to guide the use of funds and identify focus areas. Efforts will be made to increase coalition representation (e.g., religious leaders).
- **Crisis Coalition (Presenter: Claire Hodgskiss)**
 - Update on the North Central Crisis Coalition (an eight-county and two-tribal region) focused on crisis diversion.

- A strategic plan has been completed, focusing on resources, regional trainings, 988 rollout, data collection (with law enforcement/hospitals), and inter-governmental collaboration.
- Ongoing work includes updating the 211 online resource list for Teton County. This is funded by a three-year grant from the Montana Healthcare Foundation.
- **Chronic Disease (Presenter: Breanna Lindgren)**
 - Update on the "Healthy Tracks" Diabetes Prevention Program, which began in March with a core group of repeat participants showing continued success.
- **Funding Changes (Presenter: Melissa Moyer)**
 - Loss of prevention specialist grant funding (subcontract from Alliance for Youth) after September, though the Near Term Initiative grant ensures continuity for Claire's work.
 - Significant impact in the chronic disease area due to federal funding cuts: Connect referral system funding will not continue statewide. State lost all federal tobacco money, though state funding from tobacco settlement and a legislative increase will keep tobacco funding level for next year. Uncertainty for diabetes, cancer, arthritis prevention, and falls prevention programs; state plans to issue partial contracts.
- **Communicable Disease and Immunizations (Presenter: Katie Adams)**
 - Flu and COVID seasons have largely concluded. COVID vaccine supply is winding down, and fewer people are vaccinating.
 - Relatively mild season for flu and COVID illness; early COVID outbreaks in long-term care facilities resolved.
 - **Measles Update:** No cases in Teton County (as of meeting date); approx. 20 cases statewide across four counties. Preparedness actions are in place, including conversations with healthcare providers about testing capacity. Standing orders for accelerated MMR vaccination schedules (6-11 months, 28 days after first dose for second dose) signed by Dr. Gary Dale are an *option* for concerned families.
 - **Immunization Recommendations:** COVID vaccine is no longer routinely recommended for pregnant women and healthy children; it is now a "Schedule B" recommendation (conversation with provider). Meningococcal B for college students also a "Schedule B" recommendation.

- **Immunization Rates:** Montana no longer reports aggregate congregate immunization rates to the federal level, making population-level data difficult to ascertain. Registry data is available but does not capture all vaccinations in the county.
- **Financial Report (Presenter: Katie Adams - Vaccine Reimbursement)**
 - Report on current fiscal year vaccine billing and reimbursement shows a positive balance of \$10,000 (Payments: \$185,000; Expenses: \$175,000).
 - Vaccine reimbursement is down significantly from last year (\$232,840), mainly due to lower flu and COVID vaccination rates. The new EHR system allows for detailed tracking. Previous year's report to be emailed to board members.
- **Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PEP) Plans (Presenter: Katie Adams)**
 - Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention Plan and Pandemic Influenza Plan delivered to board members for signature (Sam Carlson and Gary Dale).
 - Links in the plans require updating due to legislative changes; dates at the bottom of the documents also need to be updated. Katie Adams will make these updates.
- **Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) (Presenter: Katie Adams)**
 - CHIP has been published on the county website (link to be emailed).
 - **Two Priority Areas:** Behavioral health and family & social supports.
 - **Strategic Directions:** Generating support/connection and increasing professional capacity.
- **201c Initiative (Presenter: Katie Adams)**
 - Discussion of "201c Montana" (21st Century Public Health Learning Collaborative), a national Public Health Accreditation Board initiative to transform the public health system.
 - Montana surveyed counties/tribes on foundational public health services. Teton County's results show areas where formal policies are lacking, but work is often being done. The Pathways Program (public health accreditation) is expected to improve many areas.

Sanitarian Updates:

- **HB 853 License Fee Increases (Presenter: Austin Moyer):** New categories for restaurants (small, medium, large); significant increases for some licenses (e.g., Airbnb from \$40 to \$101). Effective October 1. Revenue goes to the county general fund.
- **Septic System Regulations:** New rules for "mixing zones" (100-foot pollution buffer) require them to stay on property for new subdivisions. Grandfathering applies to lots created before 2011.
- **Local Food Choice Act:** Increased interest. Allows sale of homemade non-meat products to informed consumers at traditional community events.
- **Junk Vehicle Complaint (Penrod):** Owner of former "Sheila's Wrecking Yard" is slowly removing junk vehicles. DEQ involvement will be considered if progress halts.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 AM by Melissa Moyer. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be September 17, 2025 at 8am.

Ken Bassmann, Chairman

Lora Wier, Secretary