

Harnett County Board of Health
Minutes of Regular Meeting
July 17, 2025

The Harnett County Board of Health met in regular session on Thursday, July 17, 2025 in the Health Department Board Room, Harnett County Governmental Complex, 307 W. Cornelius Harnett Blvd., Lillington, North Carolina.

Members present: Dr. Laura Smith, OD, Chairwoman, Dr. Amanda Langdon, DVM, Dr. Brandon Washington, DDS, Dr. Lori Langdon, M.D., Vice Chairwoman, Ms. Amy Brown, Dr. Catherine Evans, DDS, Commissioner Barbara McKoy, Ms. Kandi Tudor, Dr. Kim Fowler, PhD and Ainsley Johnson, Health Director.

Others present: Mary Jane Sauls, Belinda Rayner, Oliver Tolksdorf, Melissa McLamb and Gail Hobbs.

Chairwoman Smith called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Announcements – Ms. Johnson announced Dr. Catherine Evans, DDS, would be providing an American Dental Association (ADA) research brief for the board members on State-Level Costs of Removing Fluoride from Community Water Systems.

Consent Agenda – Minutes - Motion made by Dr. Kim Fowler, PhD, for the May 15, 2025 agenda and minutes to be approved and seconded by Dr. Brandon Washington, DDS, Motion Carried.

Consider additions and deletions to the published agenda – Chairwoman Smith called for additions and deletions to the published agenda. Chairwoman Smith asked to move line item 5 Public Comment to line item 9 after new business. **Motion by Dr. Kim Fowler, PhD to approve the modification to the agenda as presented and seconded by Dr. Lori Langdon, M.D., Vice Chairwoman, Motion Carried.**

Debt Setoff – Gail Hobbs reported that since the last meeting, the Debt Setoff program has collected \$591.66. So far for the calendar year, \$3,815.67 has been collected.

Health Director's Report and Program Reports – Ainsley Johnson

Business Plan – Ms. Johnson presented a power point presentation of the updated business plan for the Harnett County Health Department. She reviewed the 2025 outcomes and 2026 goals for the upcoming business plan. A copy of the presentation was available on the table for review and emailed to the members. No changes or recommendations by the board members were made.

FY 2025-26 - Ms. Johnson reported the FY 2025-26 County Budget was approved last month with no changes. A copy of the budget is available online and a printed version has been placed on the table for board members to review. As part of the new budget, all county employees received a 3% cost-of-living adjustment and a 1% increase in the 401(k) match. Since the last board meeting, there has been one change in federal funding. The Division on Aging was notified of a \$10,953 reduction in the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG), which supports both the In-Home Aide Program and the Elderly Nutrition Program. Ms. Johnson and Mary Jane Sauls, Local Public Health Administrator, assessed the impact of this reduction. Due to rising meal costs for the Elderly Nutrition Program (which increased by \$20,186.28 as of June 2025) they decided to apply the funding cut to the In-Home Aide Program. This reduction will result in a loss of 547 hours of care—enough to serve two clients annually at 288 hours each (2 days per week, 3 hours per day). Currently, there are 115 individuals on the waiting list for this program. The County Manager has been informed, and Ms. Johnson is scheduled to meet with him next week to discuss further. Ms. Johnson also provided an update on recent legislative developments. The “One Big Beautiful Bill,” a federal budget reconciliation bill (not the full federal budget), was passed on July 4, 2025. This bill introduces changes that will influence the upcoming state budget, specifically regarding Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Key changes include:

- **Medicaid:** Reverification and new work requirements will take effect on December 31, 2026.
- **SNAP:** The state’s cost-share responsibilities for SNAP benefits will begin in federal FY 2027–28.

As of now, Harnett County has 50,408 Medicaid recipients: Medicaid for Adults: 10,606 Family and Children’s Medicaid: 38,802. This reflects a significant increase from 2021, when there were 32,476 recipients—an increase of 18,000 over four years. With a county population of 146,096, approximately 34.5% of residents are currently enrolled in Medicaid.

The State House and Senate are scheduled to reconvene on July 29 and 30, with additional sessions planned in August, September, and October. The goal is to finalize the state budget by September. These developments may affect county revenue in the next fiscal year, and planning will begin accordingly.

Staffing updates – Ms. Johnson announced the Health Department is close to being fully staffed; with one current vacancy in Environmental Health. We have an Onsite Wastewater Environmental Health Specialist position available and two new staff members in Women Infants and Children (WIC) will be starting in August 2025.

Clinical Report- Melissa McLamb

- **Clinical** - The Health Department recently closed out another fiscal year. Please refer to the activities summary on page 8 of your packet. Clinical services for the 2024-2025 fiscal year were lower compared to the previous year. The Quality Improvement (QI) team is actively analyzing the data to identify the underlying causes and to develop strategies that will optimize our capabilities moving forward. Currently, our Child Health department is operating with one fewer Enhanced Role Nurse; however, the nurse appointed to this role will begin her training in fall 2025. Clinical supervisors are staying abreast of all immunization guidance and preparing for the upcoming respiratory virus vaccine season. The health department will offer all ACIP recommended vaccines and follow guidance from the state immunization branch. We plan to offer Influenza, COVID and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccines during the respiratory virus season. A memo discussing the first confirmed measles case in North Carolina (NC) for 2025 was sent to county medical providers. The memo reviewed a timeline of the confirmed case and reviewed recommendations of when to consider measles and how to test. Any suspected measles cases should be reported to the Health Department or to the NC Communicable Disease Branch; testing for measles by the NC State Lab of Public Health must be approved by the Communicable Disease Branch. The NC Division of Public Health also released a memo making clinicians aware of an increase in cases of Legionnaires' disease during April 2025 and May 2025. The increase has not been linked to a single source or exposure at the time of the memo and the memo was sent to county medical providers.
- **Environmental Health** - Oliver Tolksdorf discussed the new Environmental Health QA policies released by the state. Those policies include onsite wastewater, childcare and school sanitation programs, childhood lead poisoning, public swimming pools and tattoos. The rolling release was July 1, 2025; the QA will run each calendar year with the first due date in January 2026.
- **Aging & Case Management** – Mary Jane Sauls reported on July 16, 2025 the Harnett County Governmental Complex hosted a successful pop-up farmers market, drawing over 200 community members. Attendees were able to access fresh, locally grown produce along with a variety of valuable health resources. The event was organized by the Fuquay Varina Growers Market and was made possible through a collaborative partnership with the Harnett County

Division on Aging, The Poe Center for Health Education, Manna Church Capital Area and Alliance Health. As part of the event 320 vouchers were distributed in \$5 increments and were redeemed by participants amounting to \$1,600 in value. Harnett County currently receives 150 voucher books to support community access to healthy food options. The next pop-up market will take place on Tuesday, August 20, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Harnett County Governmental Complex Commons Area. On June 19, 2025, the NC Med Assist event was held at the Harnett County Commons Area, providing critical support to the community through free over-the-counter medications and essential resources. A total of 1,034 individuals were served during the event, including 89 homebound clients and 945 on-site participants. As part of the event, participants were asked whether access to over-the-counter medications could have helped them avoid a visit to the emergency room in the past 12 months. Out of the 945 on-site participants surveyed, 102 individuals (10.8%) responded "yes," indicating a potential impact on reducing unnecessary emergency room visits. This reflects an estimated cost savings of \$153,000 in avoided emergency room visits. The Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina was present to distribute food, further supporting community wellness. Of the participants served, 17.46% reported being uninsured, highlighting the importance of continued access to no-cost health and nutrition services in the county.

In addition to the HCCBG cut Ms. Johnson reported on, the Elderly Nutrition Program is also facing service reductions in the 2025–2026 fiscal year due to a rise in meal costs. The cost increase, totaling \$20,186.28, will affect both congregate meals and home-delivered meals. Because of these rising expenses, the program will not be able to provide shelf-stable meals during the Christmas holidays, a service that has traditionally supported clients during periods when regular meal delivery is interrupted. These combined funding challenges, along with rising contract costs, present significant difficulties in maintaining current levels of service.

- **Health Education/WIC/Community Events** – Belinda Rayner reviewed for WIC that August is National Breastfeeding Awareness Month. WIC is planning a Breastfeeding Awareness Event on August 7, 2025 from 10:00am-12:00pm at Lillington River Park. The event will include breastfeeding support, activities for children, and resources. We are preparing to open a WIC satellite site in Dunn and the Dunn United Ministerial Alliance-DUMA building. This will increase accessibility for patients that live in the Dunn area. Currently approximately 15% of the WIC caseload live in Dunn. This clinic will be one day a week on Fridays. Belinda reported for Health Education, Fall into Fitness Move More Virtual Challenge will be starting on September 22, 2025. This is a 4-week program that promotes the importance of physical activity. Participants earn points for their physical activity. Everyone that completes the challenge will be

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entered into a drawing for prizes. Approximately 100 people participate in this program every year. Health Education has also started the planning process for Breast Cancer Awareness Month programs in October 2025. We usually offer community programs, faith-based, and provide activities for employees.

Closed Session – There was no need for closed session.

New Business – Chairwoman Smith opened the floor for New Business. Being none, Chairwoman Smith closed New Business.

Public Comment – Period of up to 30 minutes for informal comments allowing 3 minutes for each presentation – Chairwoman Smith opened the floor for informal comments by the public, allowing 3 minutes for each presentation up to 30 minutes. Seeing no one, Chairwoman Smith closed the informal comments.

Chairwoman Smith adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Ainsley Johnson
Health Director



Dr. Laura Smith, OD, Chairwoman