

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

SARA INNAMORATO  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Allegheny County Board of Health  
Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank  
March 18, 2026 at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes**

**Present:**

Joylette Portlock, PhD, Chair  
Elizabeth Cuevas, MD Vice Chair  
Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew, MD, Med, MPPM  
Ms. Laura Dagley, BSN, RN  
Khlood Salman, DrPH, RN  
Ms. Lisa Scales, JD  
Michael Yonas, DrPH, MPH  
Graham Snyder, MD MS  
Iulia Vann, MD MPH, Secretary  
Dara Mendez, PhD, MPH

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Joylette Portlock called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. and announced an executive session was conducted prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Joylette Portlock called for a vote to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2026, meeting.

**Action:** Ms. Lisa Scales motioned to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2026, meeting and Dr. Khlood Salman seconded the motion. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**3. Public Comments on Agenda Items:**

Ms. Kim Joyce stated there were twelve written comments submitted around fracking and three additional written comments submitted around air quality and H<sub>2</sub>S particularly in the Mon Valley.

Public Speakers – VIA ZOOM

- a. Aarushi Pant – Air quality in the Neville Island airshed
- b. Elizabeth Amato – Hydrogen sulfide or H<sub>2</sub>S exceedances



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#### 4. Committee Updates

**Fracking Committee:** Ms. Laura Dagley provided an update which included documentation regarding the concerns around health impacts and oil and gas development:

- a) COBRA Analysis which is a risk and benefit mapping tool from the EPA
- b) List of public commenters with fracking concerns over the past two years
- c) Compilation of research fact sheets for community and mental health impacts from oil and gas and general health impacts
- d) Air pollution health impacts, research comparison
- e) Health research studies of residents living near fracking sites

#### **QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Dara Mendez asked about the next course of action.

Dr. Joylette Portlock stated the committee would make recommendations to the board and then the board would evaluate the recommendations.

Dr. Portlock asked Ms. Dagley how many different pollutants were included in the study.

Ms. Dagley responded that several pollutants exist, but the data focuses on five.

Dr. Michael Yonas asked about the environmental exposures in terms of traffic and noise.

Ms. Dagley responded environmental exposures would be categorized as community and mental health impacts.

Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew asked about the collection of data on the economic cost of fracking and effects on communities and healthcare systems, adding that it should be considered by the Board when making recommendations.

Ms. Dagley responded the COBRA mapping tool would be a good resource for information.

Dr. Graham Snyder added that preliminary air quality findings would provide the strongest data.

**Ideation Committee:** Dr. Michael Yonas provided an update for the Ideation Committee:

- 1) Public health areas and priorities most important for Allegheny County residents:

- Behavioral Health
- Environmental Health and Climate Resilience
- Health Equity, Disparities and Social Determinants
- Maternal and Child Health
- Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness
- Public Health Communications
- Public Health Challenges in Allegheny County
- Next meeting scheduled for May 2026

**Strategic Plan Discussion**

Dr. Iulia Vann presented the Strategic Plan Discussion on the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan which included the following:

- Survey tool for the next community health assessment
- Public Health Objectives
- Highlighted Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis (SWOT)

Five Strategic Priorities:

- 1) Advance Public Health and Health Equity
- 2) Deepen and Expand Partnerships
- 3) Reinvigorate Our Workforce
- 4) Enhance Operational Performance
- 5) Cultivate Communication and Transparency

**QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Graham Snyder thanked Dr. Vann for her presentation and asked about the anticipated goal of the Health Symposium.

Dr. Vann responded that the goal is to bring together and network with cross-sectional partners, community members, advocates and professionals.

Ms. Lisa Scales commended Dr. Vann on the terrific plan and asked about recruitment opportunities.

Dr. Vann responded that the Allegheny County Health Department filled more positions in the last 12 months than in the last 4 years, adding each new team member has been provided with everything necessary to achieve success in their new positions, additionally employee retention has remained steady.

**Committee Creation and Appointments**

Dr. Portlock moved to committee board appointments:

**Leadership Oversight Committee:**

Dr. Michael Yonas

Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew  
Dr. Khlood Salman  
Dr. Joylette Portlock- Chair

Dr. Portlock noted the Leadership Oversight Committee meeting dates will be posted but not open to the public.

Fracking Committee  
Dr. Michael Yonas

Dr. Portlock then directed the meeting to Dr. Graham Snyder to provide an update on Policy and Procedures Committee.

Dr. Graham Snyder reported the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting focused on understanding the board's relationship with the various committees based on how they're established in law and what oversight the board has, adding the next meeting is scheduled for April 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **5 Director's Report**

Dr. Joylette Portlock passed the meeting on to Mr. John Cummins, the co-chair of the Plumbing Advisory Board. Mr. Cummins provided information on the role Plumbing Advisory Board (PAB) provides for the Allegheny County Health Department, adding the (PAB's) responsibilities are to provide professional insight and industry expertise so that plumbing regulations remain practical, safe and up to date with modern technology.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Larkins-Pettigrew asked Mr. Cummins to provide examples of the biggest challenges in his current and how the Board of Health can assist.

Mr. Cummins responded the Board of Health had always been very responsive.

Dr. Dara Mendez asked Mr. Cummins to expand on the importance of having veteran plumbers in the field and to provide insight into the next generation of plumbers.

Mr. Cummins responded the Plumbing Advisory Board devised the solution to "Retire a License" which allows the retiree to keep his or her number additionally the NASSCO Platform allows architects, engineers and plumbers to engage through effective communication.

Dr. Graham Snyder asked Mr. Cummins what the Board of Health can do to make sure that the constituency of the Plumbing Advisory Board meets code?

Mr. Cummins responded that members of the Plumbing Advisory Board understood term limits were previously lifted and individuals interested in applying for positions would be given consideration.

Dr. Portlock then passed the meeting to Mr. Steve Musciano and Mr. Matt Anselmo, the Chair and Co-Chair of the Food Advisory Committee. Messrs. Musciano and Anselmo presented an overview which highlighted the purpose, recent accomplishments and succession planning of the Food Advisory Committee, additionally Mr. Musciano recognized the exceptional leadership of Mr. Otis Pitts and Ms. Amanda Mator of the Allegheny County Health Department Food Safety Program.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Graham Snyder spoke on behalf of the Policies and Procedures Committee and asked the Committee to submit suggestions on how the Board of Health can make changes to statute to ensure committees have resources for future workers.

Dr. Larkins Pettigrew asked about the succession plan.

Mr. Musciano responded it was his intention to continue in his current position for three months.

Mr. Musciano stated the date for the next Food Advisory Meeting is May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Portlock then turned over the meeting to Dr. Iulia for the Director's Report.

Dr. Iulia Vann presented the Allegheny County Health Department Values Statement including Public Health Objectives and Updates:

- Regulation updates- Housing and Air Quality
- Comprehensive Immunization Plan for the County
- Exploring vaccine attitudes
- Finalizing CHA/PHA Direct data collection tool
- NFL preparations
- Posting of Academic Health Department Coordinator position
- Submitting proposals for Mobile Unit for Vaccinations
- Implementation of Food Safety plan reviews
- Renovation project in McKeesport location
- Submitted Allegheny County Health Department's proposals for the next allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds
- Reopened Deputy Director of Environmental Protection position
- Final interviews for the Deputy Director of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- All-Staff Meeting
- Allegheny County HR reorganization

- Continuing work on data transparency project with UPMC and AHN
- Cross sector exercise for a potential Measles outbreak

### **QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Dara Mendez presented the following questions and comments to Dr. Vann:

- 1) Is there existing data regarding vaccine attitudes?
- 2) Will qualitative work be included in Community Health Improvement Plan (CHP) survey?
- 3) What resources are being provided by NFL or the City of Pittsburgh to meet the increased need of the Health Department during the draft?
- 4) Mobile unit funding- possibly UPMC.
- 5) Additional information about the cross-sectional exercise around potential measles or other communicable infectious outbreaks.

Dr. Vann's responses were as follows:

- 1) Annual surveys are sent to all school districts to provide data collection around vaccination in schools for kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 2) Community members will be asked through a QR Code to join town halls, group conversations so their voices along with data can be included.
- 3) No additional resources have been provided by the city or the NFL. Mr. Otis Pitts added stated no additional resources have been provided and the team has done a great job of embracing this challenge.
- 4) During the May Board of Health meeting team members will present in the preparedness space then PHIO Ronnie Das will also provide information about the communications plan.

### **Women Infants and Children (WIC) Presentation – Ms. Lisa Matt**

Ms. Lisa Matt, WIC Program Manager presented a PowerPoint presentation titled “The WIC Program: Partnering Together” which included information about the recent food package changes.

Ms. Lisa Scales commented on the new USDA nutrition policy confirming with Ms. Matt any changes to take an Act of Congress to change the nutrition policy.

Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew asked about limiting the amount of formula for the first month.

Ms. Matt responded formula is only limited to breast feeding mothers to encourage breast feeding. Mothers choosing to use formula are not limited and receive the full formula food package.

Ms. Laura Dagley asked about breast feeding support during the first month.

Ms. Matt responded that many staff are Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC).

Dr. Larkins Pettigrew asked if the information provided to new mothers is intelligible.

Ms. Matt responded that various education tools are available within the WIC offices to simplify the process for mothers, including the WIC shopper app.

### **Epidemiology Updates**

Dr. Joylette Portlock introduced Dr. Stephen Strotmeyer.

Dr. Stephen Strotmeyer presented chronic disease updates from data sources concentrating on Self Report Surveys and Primary Data Collection Instruments, adding the Allegheny County Health Department has three primary data collection sources:

- County based Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)
- Healthy Allegheny Teen Survey (HATS)
- Plan for a Healthier Allegheny Survey (PHA-S)

### **QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Joylette Portlock asked Dr. Strotmeyer to provide copies of the teen survey data to the Board of Health once compiled.

Dr. Michael Yonas commented on community access to data.

Dr. Larkins Pettigrew asked if questions on reproductive health and sexual activity in teens were part of the HATS survey.

### **Infectious Disease Epidemiology**

Dr. Jillian Irwin's presentation provided information on Allegheny County Health Department Infectious Disease Epidemiology, along with Point of Dispensing (POD) and emergency preparedness exercises recently conducted:

- Measles
- Mpox
- Tickborne diseases
- HSN1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)
- Respiratory Viruses
- Opioid Syndemic/Hepatitis C

### **Overdose Surveillance**

Mr. Earl Hord provided a brief update on ACHD Overdose Surveillance, adding there was a reduction in deaths, however racial disparities continue to exist:

- Overdose Death Trends
- Overdose Surveillance Data Sources

- Innovative Substance Testing in Allegheny County
- Drug Supply Adulterants
- ACOME Fentanyl Testing
- UNC Opioid Data Lab Testing
- Program Goals and Future Direction

Ms. Laura Dagley asked about the increase in racial disparities through 2023, then declines significantly.

Mr. Hord responded that a lot of effort and work is being done in the black communities along with targeted outreach campaigns with ACHD.

#### 5. **New Business- Action Items**

Mr. Otis Pitts, Deputy Director of Environmental Health, requested \$25,000.00 for Nuisance Abatement.

**Action:** Dr. Khlood Salman motioned to approve the request and Dr. Dara Mendez seconded the motion. The board approved the motion unanimously.

#### **Adjournment**

**Action:** Dr. Joylette Portlock entertained a motion to adjourn. Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew motioned to approve, and Dr. Michael Yonas seconded the motion. The board approved the motion unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.