

**Allegheny County Board of Health**  
**January 14, 2026 at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

**Present:**

Joylette Portlock, PhD, Chair  
Elizabeth Cuevas, MD Vice Chair  
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

Absent: Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew, MD, Med, MPPM

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Joylette Portlock, Chair of the Board of Health, called the January 14, 2026, meeting of the Allegheny County Health Department Board of Health to order at 12:39 p.m.

Dr. Joylette Portlock announced that the Board of Health held an executive session prior to the meeting to discuss legal matters.

**2. Vote on 2026 Officers**

Dr. Portlock turned over the meeting to Dr. Vann for the election of 2026 officers. Dr. Vann began by asking the Board members for any nominations for the Chair for 2026. Dr. Michael Yonas nominated Dr. Joylette Portlock. No additional nominations were provided so a verbal vote was unanimously approved for Dr. Joylette Portlock to continue to serve as the chair of the Board of Health for 2026. Dr. Vann then proceeded with the vote for the Vice Chair for the 2026 Board of Health member. Dr. Portlock nominated Dr. Elizabeth Cuevas as Vice Chair. No additional nominations were presented so a verbal vote was unanimously approved for Dr. Elizabeth Cuevas to continue to serve as Vice Chair of the Board of Health for 2026. Dr. Vann congratulated both Dr. Joylette Portlock and Dr. Elizabeth Cuevas as Chair and Vice Chair.

### 3. **Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Joylette Portlock called for a vote to approve the minutes from November 19, 2025, meeting.

**Action:** Dr. Elizabeth Cuevas motioned to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2025, meeting and Lisa Scales seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### 4. **Public Comments:**

Dr. Joylette Portlock moved to the public comment section of the meeting. Ms. Kim Joyce stated there were two written comments on non-agenda items requesting that the board continue its work to discuss regulation of oil and gas.

### 5. **Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

- a. John Schultz- Air quality control - not present
- b. Adam Mastrandrea- Air quality - not present
- c. Steve Mazza- U.S. Steel - not present
- d. Brendan Wissinger- Fracking
- e. Jonathan Blanton – Fracking in Allegheny County
- f. Gaven Neill- Fracking

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS – VIA ZOOM

- a. MacKenzie MacFarland- Fracking
- b. Mark Dixon – Air quality
- c. Aarushi Pant – Air quality
- d. Patrick Campbell – Air Program Subcommittee Structure

### 6. **Committee Reports**

Policy and Procedures: Dr. Snyder provided no update.

Ideation Committee: Dr. Michael Yonas stated the committee is in the process of collecting and receiving information from the board. An announcement will be made within the next two weeks for a follow-up discussion, finalizing the internal document and next steps.

Fracking Committee: Ms. Laura Dagley stated the committee has investigated the studies where the most health impacts occurred during the production phase. The committee will be looking into amending Article 21 and will continue to gather as much health data and studies as possible before any formal recommendations are made.

## 7. Director's Report

Dr. Joylette Portlock passed the presentation to Dr. Iulia Vann for the Director's Report.

Dr. Iulia Vann began her presentation by providing the 2025 Year in Review-Federal Edition:

- **January 2025**- Executive Order to Withdraw from World Health Organization, Foreign Aid Freeze Begins and Dr. Susan Monarez Appointed Acting Center for Disease Control and Prevention Director.
- **March 2025** – U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Programs Officially Terminated and U.S. Measles Outbreaks Escalate.
- **Spring, 2025** – Bird Flu significant spread
- **June 2025** – Entire Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Membership Removed.
- **July 2025** – Dr. Susan Monarez confirmed as Center for Disease Control and Prevention Director.
- **August 2025** – Center for Disease Control and Prevention Director (CDC) Removed; Senior Official Resign.
- **Summer-Fall, 2025** – Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Workforce Reduction.
- **September 2025** – Tylenol-Autism Suggestion of Link
- **November 12, 2025** – Public Health Degrees Redefined
- **December 2025** – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Ends Universal Hepatitis B Birth Dose Recommendation and Measles Cases at all time high since 2000.
- **January 5, 2026** – Center for Disease Control and Prevention Director (CDC) Releases Revised Childhood Immunization Schedule.
- **January 7, 2026** – 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines Released.
- **January 12, 2026** – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Finalizes Rule Dropping Health Co-Benefits from Pollution Analysis.

Dr. Vann then stated that less than a day ago, approximately \$2 billion in cuts to substance abuse and mental health service lines were announced. The effects of this action are unknown at this time but will have a detrimental impact on services being provided along with the huge accomplishments made within the last three years.

Dr. Portlock thanked Dr. Vann for her in-depth presentation and suggested that she provide updates regarding environmental health and some of the EPA actions in the near future.

### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

Ms. Lisa Scales asked Dr. Vann what the impact of the New Health Pyramid will have on the list of food requirements for WIC along with the new work requirements for SNAP benefits.

Dr. Vann responded that updates should be available by the next meeting.

Dr. Michael Yonas asked Dr. Vann if there has been discussion with other health department directors about the impact of the public health workforce with respect to redesignation.

Dr Vann responded that monthly calls are conducted with the health directors in Pennsylvania for the other 11 jurisdictions. In addition, there have been conversations with colleagues in the Institutes of Higher Education.

Dr Khlood Salman thanked Dr. Vann for her thorough presentation and inquired about the new status in Allegheny County.

Dr. Vann responded that this information will be included in the respiratory update.

Dr. Dara Mendez thanked Dr. Vann for her comprehensive overview and commented on the following:

- Provision of immunizations and the implications for Allegheny County's immunization clinics.
- Changes to the Environmental Protection Association, Food and Drug Association and USAID.

- Impact of the drastic changes with respect to data and surveillance on the federal level, specifically maternal health and what that means to Allegheny County.

Ms. Laura Dagley commented on the vaccine schedule and the changes in guidelines.

Dr. Graham Snyder commented on the potential detrimental effects on health in Allegheny County because of the federal actions, and urged the Board of Health, and Allegheny County Health Department team throughout the year to remain focused on what actions can be done to mitigate the risks locally.

Dr. Vann then presented the Respiratory Report which included data on COVID, flu and RSV. Dr. Vann recommended that everyone should utilize the respiratory dashboard on the website.

Ms. Laura Dagley asked Dr. Graham Snyder about data for RSV cases. Dr. Snyder responded that recent studies have shown the RSV vaccine has a significant impact on pregnant women, children and older individuals.

Dr. Vann commented on recent conversations conducted with the county's environmental health advocate partners with respect to environmental health comments, specifically benzene and fence line monitoring and the plumbing code.

Dr. Vann then introduced Dr. Jillian Irvin as the integral Medical Director and Interim Deputy Director of Clinical Services.

#### Presentation for the Clean Air Fund

Mr. Ian Anderson, MPH, REHS/RS Environmental Health Administration II for the Bureau of Environmental Protection conducted a presentation on the clean air funds and plan for moving forward.

Dr. Joylette Portlock thanked Mr. Anderson for his presentation and asked which active awards were part of the Requests for Proposals Process (RFP)

Mr. Anderson responded that all awards were part of the Requests for Proposals Process (RFP)

Dr. Graham Snyder asked about the prudence of investing in solar panels for Allegheny County and the cost effectiveness due to the weather.

Dr. Michael Yonas added that solar panels do work and are cost effective.

Dr. Elizabeth Cuevas asked about the overall strategy for the development of more electrified vehicles and solar units.

Mr. Anderson responded that it is a very complicated process as an electric vehicle is much more expensive than a diesel vehicle.

Dr. Salman asked how the community is notified of opening the fund for applications.

Dr. Graham Snyder then commented moving to electric vehicles is good for the health of county, but voiced concerns over the source and cost of electricity.

Mr. Anderson responded during the period of open funding there are opportunities for municipalities to submit applications, and it is a competitive process. The Next Funding Round will consist of the following:

- Focus on the Mon Valley.
- Community outreach prior to opening the funding round.
- Allegheny County Health Department will provide assistance to those municipalities interested in completing applications.

Dr. Vann asked how much money is encumbered currently and how much money is remaining in the Clean Air Funds.

Mr. Anderson responded the current total balance is \$9,519,112.00, but out of that amount \$4,993,000.00 is obligated to other open grants and there is a balance of \$4,500,000.00. The funding request will be between \$1,000,000.00- \$2,000,000.00.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Environmental Health Fund -Vector Control Supplies-** Mr. Otis Pitts, Deputy Director Bureau of Environmental Health requested a \$40,700.00 to supplement the state grant to conduct integrated pest management during the spring and summer. **Action:** Dr. Graham Snyder motioned to approve the

request and Dr. Elizabeth Cuevas seconded. **The Board approved the motion unanimously.**

**Food Safety Fund – Plans Examiner Monitors-** Mr. Otis Pitts, Deputy Director Bureau of Environmental Health requested \$12,000.00 for the program to use towards an IT purchase. **Action:** Ms. Lisa Scales motioned to approve the request and Ms. Laura Dagley seconded. **The Board approved the motion unanimously.**

Adjournment

**Action:** Dr. Joylette Portlock entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Lisa Scales motioned to approve. Ms. Laura Dagley seconded the motion. The board approved the motion unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.