

**BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes for May 9, 2023**

**Members Present:**

James Curran, M.D., M.P.H., Chair  
Mitch Rodriguez, M.D., Secretary  
Kathryn Cheek, M.D., F.A.A.P.  
Cynthia A. Mercer, M.D.  
Mychal Walker Sr., C.L.T.C., F.R.C.  
Sangmin Ryan Shin, M.D., M.A., F.A.A.O.S.  
Tai Valliere-White, M.D., F.A.C.S.

**Members Absent:**

John Hauptert, F.A.C.H.E., Vice Chair  
Major General Thomas M. Carden, Jr.

The Board of Public Health held its monthly meeting on May 9, 2023. The meeting was virtual and led by Dr. James Curran. The list of attendees is attached hereto and made an official part of these minutes.

I. & II. Call to Order and Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Dr. Curran, following a roll call, in conformity the members absent were Mr. John Hauptert and Major General Carden.

III. Approval/Adoption of Minutes:

Dr. Curran presented the board meeting minutes of March 14, 2023 for discussion and approval. There was no discussion. The minutes passed unanimously.

IV. New Business:

A. Opening Remarks - Commissioner Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H. and Deputy Commissioner Chris Rustin

Dr. Toomey thanked everyone for their role in helping DPH get moved into the Twin Towers. As a result of the ongoing move, there will not be a Board meeting in June. She referenced changes in leadership at state and federal levels that will impact DPH – Caylee Noggle is leaving her role as commissioner of the Department of Community Health; we are awaiting word on her replacement. Additionally, Dr. Walensky has resigned her position as CDC director.

Dr. Rustin spoke about the end of the COVID Public Health Emergency and the implications of that moving forward. It does not mean COVID is gone.

- While cases are down sharply across the country, we still see around 250 deaths per day on average across the country.
- In Georgia we see anywhere from 10 to 30 deaths a week - most of these deaths are occurring in the elderly or immunocompromised individuals.
- Vaccines and testing are still available at health departments throughout the state. Additionally, testing kiosks are placed throughout the state, and are accessible 24/7.
- COVID treatments will still be available at no-cost for the foreseeable future.
- Some of the information on the COVID dashboards (national and state) will be going away. Hospitalization data and death records will be available and published using the National Death Reporting system report, which is a more accurate

reflection of what's going on. One metric that's ending is community COVID community levels.

- Negative COVID test results will no longer be reported, so percent positivity will no longer be available on the website.

Dr. Rustin said the bottom line is that the public will still be able to get services from DPH, both in terms of testing, at home tests, as well as vaccine. He asked if there were any questions – there were none.

B. Legislative update- Megan Andrews, J.D.

Ms. Andrews presented a wrap up on the legislative session. There were 74 bills that had a direct impact on DPH. Among those that passed:

House Bill 76 - Abolishment of Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council

- Repeals laws related to occupational regulation legislation review; and
- Provides for the filling of vacancies in certain executive branch positions that were appointed by the Governor.

House Bill 416 - Pharmacy Tech Vaccine Administration

- Authorizes qualified pharmacy technicians to administer certain vaccines to adults under the authority of a supervising pharmacist.

House Bill 437 -

- Abolishes the Georgia State Indemnification Commission and authorizes the commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services to assume the Commission's duties.

House Bill 440 - School Glucagon Prescriptions

- Permits public and private schools to stock a supply of undesignated ready-to-use glucagon.

House Bill 453 - Ambulance License Fee Repeal

- Repeals the requirement that every ambulance service pay an annual license fee.

House Bill 488 - House Rural Development Council

- Reauthorizes the House Rural Development Council.

Senate Bill 1 – Prohibition of COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates

- Removes the sunset on the prohibition on state and local governments from requiring proof of COVID vaccination for government services.

Senate Bill 45 – A.J.'s Law

- Provide for the care of students being treated for epilepsy or a seizure disorder.
- Provide for the completion, submission, and review of seizure action plan.

Senate Bill 46 - Prenatal Testing Requirements

- Requires that pregnant women receive HIV and syphilis tests at the first prenatal visit, 28-32 weeks gestation, and upon delivery.

Senate Bill 47 - Vaping Smokefree Air Act

- Updates the Smokefree Air Act to prohibit vaping in any location where traditional tobacco smoking is currently prohibited.

#### Senate Bill 61 - Sick Leave for Care of Immediate Family Member

- Repeals the sunset provision relating to use of sick leave for the care of an immediate family member.

#### Senate Bill 74 - Deposition Protective Orders

- Provides for protective orders for certain high-ranking members of a governmental body or public or private entity; and
- Provides for designees of state government entities for service of process for civil actions.

#### Senate Bill 93 – TikTok Prohibition

- Restricts the use of certain social media platforms on state equipment; and
- Provides for the establishment and maintenance of a list of prohibited social media platforms upon state equipment by the director of the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA).

#### Senate Bill 106 – Healthy Babies Act

- Provides for a pilot program for home visiting in at-risk and underserved rural communities during pregnancy and early childhood to improve birth outcomes; and
- Provides for a report on coverage for remote maternal health clinical services provided to Medicaid recipients who meet eligibility criteria.

#### Senate Bill 107 - Izzy's Law

- Provides for the development of a model aquatic safety plan by the Department of Public Health; and
- Provides that every private swim instructor in this state must have an aquatic safety plan before providing swim lessons to any individual.

#### Senate Bill 121 - Private Well Installation and Maintenance on Private Property

- Prohibits local governments from precluding or denying the installation of a new water well on single-family residential properties situated on one acre of property or more.

#### Senate Bill 197 - Health Care Practitioners Truth and Transparency Act

- Prohibits deceptive or misleading terms by health care practitioners in advertisements and representations.

Dr. Curran asked if there were any question or comments – there were none.

### C. FY 2024 Appropriations Act and Bond Sale Resolution – William Bell, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Bell stated that Governor Kemp signed HB19, the FY 2024 Appropriations Act on May 5. DPH's total funding, including all sources (federal and state) is \$806.1M, approximately half of that is from state funds. He provided a summary of DPH's budget by program noting the changes for FY 2024. He also shared some of the highlights of the FY 2024 Appropriation including:

- \$13.7 million to provide a \$2,000 cost-of-living adjustment for all full-time, benefit-eligible state employees effective July 1, 2023, to address agency recruitment and retention.
- \$1.7 million for a pilot to provide home visiting in at-risk and underserved rural communities during pregnancy and early childhood to improve birth outcomes, reduce preterm deliveries, and decrease infant and maternal mortality.

Dr. Toomey interjected to provide some additional background on this budget item. Specifically, the overall goals of the home visiting program are to increase healthy pregnancies, improve parenting skills, improve child health and development, strengthen family connectedness to community supports and reduce childhood abuse and neglect. The pilot will provide a full spectrum of services to support families, including clinical services for pregnant women, clinical services for postpartum women, and links to resources and services.

- \$931,111 for the continued expansion of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services.
- \$975,000 in general obligation bonds to fund major maintenance, renovations, and repairs at the Georgia Public Health Labs in Decatur, DeKalb County, and Waycross, Ware County.

Dr. Curran thanked Mr. Bell for his clear presentation and asked if there were any questions from the board – there were none. Dr. Curran asked Mr. Bell to continue with the Bond Sale Resolution.

Bond Sale Resolution - Mr. Bell introduced the Bond Sale Resolution with background on the Decatur lab which was established in 1997 and represents the primary site for laboratory operations. The Waycross lab, established in 2007, supplements lab work, while also supporting certain lab functions in South Georgia. The Waycross lab also serves as a critical backup for continuity of operations in an emergency should the Decatur facility become inoperable.

HB 19 included \$975,000 in general obligation bonds, to fund major maintenance, renovations, and repairs at the GPHL facilities in Decatur and Waycross. The following projects will be funded with the FY 2024 bonds:

- \$975,000 in general obligation (G.O.) bonds to fund major maintenance, renovations, and repairs at the Georgia Public Health Labs in Decatur, DeKalb County and Waycross, Ware County.
- The following projects will be funded with FY 2024 G.O. Bonds: Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE) – Decatur; Carpet Replacement – Decatur; and Mechanical Upgrades – Waycross.
- The Bond Sale Resolution serves as DPH's formal request to the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission to include our bonds as part of the upcoming bond sale on June 21, 2023, and as our affirmation that we will utilize these bonds in a manner compliant with state policies and statutes.



Dr. Curran asked if there were any questions from the board – there were none. He then asked for a motion to vote on the resolution. It was moved and seconded. A verbal vote by members of the board approved the Bond Sale Resolution. Dr. Curran noted the importance of the bond funds and the competitive process to be awarded the matching funds from the federal government. He congratulated the team on the receipt of the funds for the enhancement of the laboratories, which the COVID pandemic showed how important it is to have the molecular capacity.

Dr. Toomey also recognized Dr. Parrott and Dr. Millman who carried the ball on this project and suggested we host an upcoming board meeting at the lab in the future.

Dr. Curran congratulated the state and acknowledged how important it was to get the cost of living increase for public health employees. He noted that it was in part due to the surplus in the state, but it was also due to the recognition during the COVID pandemic of how underpaid many public health employees were.

D. Closing Remarks - Commissioner Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Toomey recognized Will Bell for his work on the budget both last year and this year.

Dr. Toomey said one of the things that did bother her was that although the violence against health care workers was acknowledged for workers in hospitals and other health care facilities, the violence against public health workers was not recognized by the General Assembly. She hopes that it can be revisited next year because that's what DPH staff experienced during COVID, and it was very difficult.

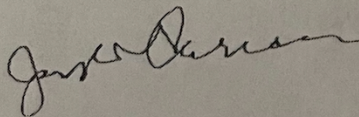
V. Board Comment

There are no more comments from the Board at this time.

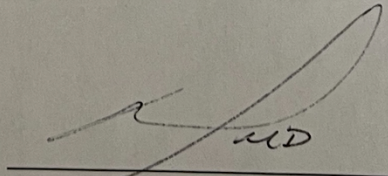
VI. Adjournment:

There being no further business to be brought before the board, Dr. Curran motioned for adjournment of the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Curran adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2023.

THESE MINUTES ARE HEREBY APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS THE 9<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 2023.



James Curran, M.D., M.P.H., Chair  
Chair



Mitch Rodriguez, M.D.  
Secretary

Official Attachments:

1. List of Attendees
2. Agenda



**May 9, 2023**  
**Board of Public Health Meeting Attendees**

**Board Members**

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**Attendees**

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Public virtual meeting.