

**Western U.P. Board of Health
Health Department Office
540 Depot Street Hancock, MI 49930
Monday, January 27, 2025**

Minutes

Opening

Health Officer Kate Beer opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m. (EST). Present were G. Anderson, R. Britz, J. Cane, B. Dakota, J. Keranen, R. Nousiainen, and D. Rajala. Absent was J. Cayer, R. DeMarois, and M. Yon. Also, in attendance were Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director; and Julie Heikkinen, Administrative/HR Assistant. There was 1 person present in attendance as audience.

Beer began the board reorganization process with a call for nominations for Chair.

It was moved by Nousiainen, seconded by Britz that Glenn Anderson be appointed Chair of the Western UP Board of Health. Beer called for other nominations, three times with no response. Beer then closed nominations and called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous approval.

Beer then sought nominations for the position of board Vice Chair.

It was moved by Britz, seconded by Keranen that Del Rajala be appointed Vice Chair of the Western UP Board of Health. Beer called for other nominations, three times with no response. Beer then closed nominations and called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous approval.

Secretary nominations took place next.

It was moved by Cane, seconded by Rajala that Brad Dakota be appointed Secretary of the Western UP Board of Health. Beer called for other nominations, three times with no response. Beer then closed nominations and called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous approval.

Next in the reorganization process, Beer asked board Chair Anderson to establish its Executive Committee for the 2025 year. One member from each county, including the board chair, make up the Executive Committee. Following a brief discussion, Anderson appointed these members to the Executive Committee: Nousiainen, Yon, Dakota, Rajala, and Anderson as Chair.

At this point, Chair Anderson assumed conduct of the meeting.

With reorganization complete, Chair Anderson requested action on the agenda. This action followed:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Cane to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Chair Anderson asked for public comment, no one spoke.

Minutes of the December 20, 2024 meeting were reviewed. This action followed:

Motion: Cane/second Dakota to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2024 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed expenditures for the period: 12/06/2024 to 01/16/2025, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Cane to approve the general expenditures for the period 12/06/2024 to 01/16/2025, voucher # 06, voucher # 07, and voucher # 08 in the amount of \$217,470.82. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

Reports:

Kate Beer, Health Officer:

Personnel/Programs

Recent hires include a laboratory technician and a part-time LMSW for Healthy Connections. The nurse covering the L'Anse office who also worked in Ontonagon has resigned as she will be moving out of state. We are looking at interim staffing and a plan for permanent staffing. The Harm Reduction nurse has posted into the PH RN position but will continue to work ½ day in harm reduction.

Several other positions remain open at the health department, a full-time clerk in Hancock, two part-time home visitors to serve all counties, SUD counselors, and one lab position. These are in addition to the Environmental Health Director and the search for a new Health Officer.

Healthy Connections staff have experienced reductions due to loss of volume. The Data Analyst has gone to 4 days/week and was assigned work in other departments. One Peer Recovery coach went down 1 day per week voluntarily.

Several infrastructure grants have become available recently. Unfortunately, the turnaround time is quite short. We have formed a committee and are looking at purchasing or building a garage for the mobile unit and two agency vehicles. Other building improvements are being looked into to see if we can get something completed by 09/30/2025.

Staff has expressed their thanks for the holiday grocery gift cards.

Financials:

Preliminary financials for the month ended December 31, 2024, show a year-to-date loss. This is normal at this time due to the slowdown in EH fieldwork.

Other:

The Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment program performed 207 oral health assessments during the first quarter. Six students were referred for urgent dental care, 66 for dental treatment, and 135 for routine care.

Representative Markkanen reached out to me regarding trash pick-up complaints in Ontonagon. We have not received any formal complaints. I questioned a few staff and commissioners about the issue and found that Waste Management has been experiencing staffing issues and equipment breakdowns. It appears that business pickup has been more steady and personal pickup is the issue. WM has contracts with individuals and not the village/township for trash pickup. This is a contract issue between WM and its customers and nothing that is actionable on our part. I will keep an eye on the problem and I encouraged Markkanen to have people register formal complaints so that we had a record and actionable items. I will look at drafting a letter to WM if the condition persists into the spring.

Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director:

With 2024 ending, it was time for me to review how contagious diseases acted in the previous year. Pertussis, which had an incidence that was 22 times lower during the COVID years, has made a comeback across the country, Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula. This is not surprising since we are now mixing more socially, not wearing masks, and vaccination rates are down. What surprised me is what is happening with the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs): chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV.

Over the span from 2012 through 2024, the incidence of chlamydia has been decreasing each year by 2.7% each year. Across the Upper Peninsula, we were seeing 210.02 cases per 100,000 person-years in 2012, it peaked at 281.50 in 2016, and in 2024 the incidence was 129.47 per 100,000 person-years. While this is good news, we have seen the opposite trend for the other STIs. Gonorrhea has seen a relative yearly increase of 4.9%. The incidence has increased from 6.41 cases per 100,000 person-years in 2012 to a peak of 20.90 cases per 100,000-person years in 2023. Syphilis has seen a 20.0% relative increase in incidence each year, with a 70.1% relative increase during the COVID pandemic. In 2012 the incidence was 0.67 per 100,000 person-years, while in 2023 it had increased to 8.43 cases per 100,000. Congenital syphilis has been on the rise in the Lower Peninsula, but so far, the Upper Peninsula has been spared this presentation of syphilis. Finally, with five new cases of HIV reported in the Upper Peninsula in 2024, HIV cases are also on the rise with 17.9% yearly increases in incidence.

The numbers tell us that while we have had success with chlamydia, we need continue vigilance regarding the other STIs.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

The board reviewed the Accident/Incident Summary Report for the 4th Quarter 2024 & the Annual Report 2024, leading to this action:

Motion: Dakota/second Rajala to approve the Accident/Incident Reports as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Organizational Chart & Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Dakota to approve the Organizational Chart & Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Other

The board reviewed the 2025 Board of Health meeting schedule, leading to this action:

Motion: Cane/second Britz to approve the Board of Health meeting schedule. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

With no other business, Chair Anderson set the next meeting for 6:00 pm (EST), February 24, 2025, in person at the health department office in Hancock and also available via Google Meet.


Chair Anderson then asked for public comment, no one spoke.

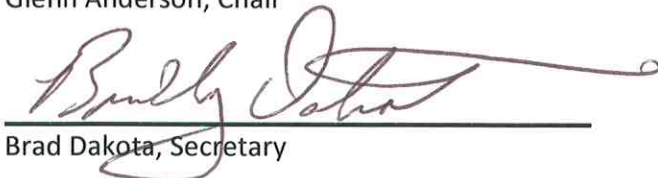
Adjourn

The final motion occurred at 6:42 p.m.

Motion: Cane/second Keranen to adjourn at 6:42 p.m. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,



Glenn Anderson, Chair

Brad Dakota, Secretary

Prepared by Kate Beer
KB/jh