

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
January 30, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors was held on January 30, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., 315 North Broadway, Genecov Room, Tyler, Texas with the following present:

Board Members:	Laura Newsome, Chair	
	Jessica Bowen, MSN, R.N.	
	Kent Boozer, D.D.S., Sec.	
	Jeremy Butler	
	Suman Sinha, M.D.	absent
	Cynthia Ball, D.O.	
	Scott Williams	
	Nancy Rangel	
	Pam Cunningham	
Chief Executive Officer:	George T. Roberts, Jr.	
Smith County Health Authority:	Valerie Smith, M.D.	
Chief Financial Officer:	Lawanda Owens	
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director:	Russell Hopkins	absent
Immunizations/TB Program Director:	Sylvia Warren, R.N.	
Environmental Health Director:	Ginger Points, R.S.	
Community Outreach Director:	Terrence Ates	
Vital Statistics Director:	Rosie Meza	absent
Human Resources Director:	Dawn Strickland	
Interim Laboratory Director:	Amanda Catlin	
WIC Director:	Tecora Smith	absent
Legal:	Sharon Roberts	
Recorder:	Janie Jolly	
Guests:	Dr. Alaa Riha	
	Dr. Catherine Goetz	
	Dr. Liz Villalobos	
	Dr. Srishti Goel	
	Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah	
	Alex de Ravel	
	Troy Points	

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:03 p.m.

INVOCATION

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the invocation was given by George Roberts.

PRESENTATION: WHAT'S IN YOUR WATER", By Valerie Smith, MD and Catherine Goetz, DO

Dr. Catherine Goetz and Dr. Valerie Smith gave a presentation to the Board entitled "What's in Your Water". Dr. Goetz began by defining tooth decay and how poor oral health impacts overall health. Oral infections can cause acute and chronic disabilities eating and speaking. The CDC also cited in 2024 that poor oral health can have a negative impact socially, psychologically, and have a barrier to career advancement. Research also links poor oral health to cardiovascular disease, atherosclerosis and stroke. Premature birth and low birth weight in newborns have been linked to gum disease. Dr. Goetz also stated that bacteria from the mouth due to poor oral health can contribute to the development of serious infections such as Endocarditis and Pneumonia.

Dr. Goetz talked about ways to prevent cavities.

1. Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages
2. Chew sugar free gum
3. Brush teeth twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste; floss daily
4. Attend routine dental visits and cleanings
5. Drink fluoridated tap water

Dr. Goetz gave the history of fluoridation of water stating it began in 1901 when dentists in the United States and Italy separately observed lower rates of dental decay in populations with distinctively stained teeth which led to the discovery of natural fluoride in the water. Fluoridated water began in 1945 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and by 1949 it was noted that children who started school in Grand Rapids, Newburgh, and Brantford had fewer cavities than in previous years. In 1954, the Air Force adopted water fluoridation and in 1962, the United States Public Health Service recommended adding fluoride to public water supplies.

It was stated that water fluoridation is considered to be one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, according to the CDC, 2024. Fluoridation has significantly reduced tooth decay rates in the United States, impacting all socioeconomic strata. Fluoridation of water saves \$6.5 billion in dental treatment costs per year with additional economic benefits of increased overall health and increased workplace productivity.

Dr. Goetz stated that there are always concerns about flouride and a few of these are:

1. Skeletal and dental fluorosis
2. Negative cognitive impact, dose dependent
3. Osteosarcoma, other cancers (no link to water fluoridation has been found)
4. Mitigation of theoretical risks includes:

- a. Follow guidelines for municipal water
- b. Test well water
- c. Avoid swallowing excessive toothpaste

The Board thanked both Dr. Goetz and Dr. Smith for the presentation.

MINUTES

Motion made by Scott Williams to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2024, regular meeting; seconded by Nancy Rangel motion carried; approved as presented.

RESIGNATION OF SUMAN SINHA, MD

Dr. Suman Sinha has relocated to Shreveport, LA to accept the position of Chief Medical Officer of Christus Health in Shreveport. Unfortunately, this move necessitates that he resigns from the Board of the Northeast Texas Public Health District.

Motion made by Scott Williams to approve the resignation of Suman Sinha, MD, seconded by Jessica Bowen motion carried; approved as presented.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

For the month of November 2024, we had revenues of \$1,228,476 which was \$76,436 over budget. Expenses were \$1,229,826, which was \$81,392 over budget. Our net income for the month of November 2024 was (\$1,350) which was \$4,956 under budget.

For the month of December 2024, we had revenues of \$1,147,209 which was \$97,962 over budget. Expenses were \$1,102,249 which was \$52,742 over budget. Our net income for the month of December 2024 was \$44,960 which was \$45,220 over budget.

For FY2025, we have revenues of \$3,647,427 which was \$190,846 over budget. Expenses were \$3,492,866 which was \$154,663 over budget. Our net income for the first 3 months of FY2025 was \$154,561 which was \$36,183 under budget.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the November 2024 and December 2024 financial report; seconded by Scott Williams motion carried; approved as presented.

HEALTH AUTHORITY REPORT

Dr. Valerie Smith gave the Health Authority report to the Board. She cited the DSHS Respiratory Dashboard Overview which shows emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths from Covid-19, Influenza, and RSV. The dashboard showed that Covid-19 and RSV emergency department visits and hospitalizations are down, however, Influenza is on the rise at

this time. Dr. Smith stated that Influenza and RSV in Region 4/5N is on the rise, Covid-19 is trending down. Hospitalizations due to respiratory illnesses in Region 4/5 are primarily due to Influenza.

There have been 2 cases of Measles in Harris County, Texas which were associated with international travel. These cases were in adults living in the same household and both unvaccinated.

There are also new reports of measles in the Lubbock area. Dr. Smith reported on H5N1, stating that there are a total of 67 confirmed cases in the US. There has been one reported death in Louisiana. Dr. Smith also reminded everyone that there is no human-to-human transmission with H5N1.

Dr. Smith spoke about the Federal Public Health Communications Pause. She stated that on Tuesday, January 22, President Trump imposed a pause on all federal health communications until at least February 1. There will be no communication from all advisories, scientific reports, social media, & websites. No scientific advisory council can meet and all communications including scientific reports will require review by presidential appointee.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board by announcing that Amanda Catlin is the new full-time Director of the Regional Laboratory. Amanda has been the Interim Directory since August of 2024, and we are pleased to make this announcement. Mr. Roberts mentioned that Health Insurance for employees has gone up 10% instead of the budgeted 15% and this will begin March 1, 2025. He stated that dental, vision, and life insurance remained flat for 2025.

Mr. Roberts stated that we are still awaiting approval from the CDC in regards to the Academic Health Partnership Grant and will update as soon as we get final approval. He also mentioned that NET Health will be receiving \$375,000 extra from the Epidemiological Lab Capacity Grant.

Mr. Roberts ended his report with an update and pictures taken at the Fit City Tyler Health & Wellness Expo which was held on January 16, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

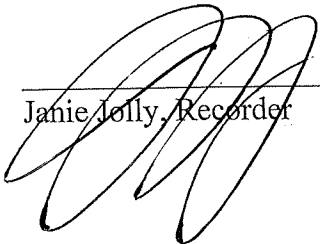
The regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors adjourned at 6:04 pm, and Laura Newsome, Chair, stated the Board would immediately convene in Executive Session. Any vote or action taken will be done when the Board returns to open session.

The Board reconvened in open session at 7:16 pm, and Ms. Newsome stated that no action was taken.

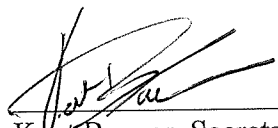
Motion by Nancy Rangel to direct Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team to undergo Sexual Harassment Training annually and to direct Human Resources to identify and address any gaps in training, and to address any changes in the law for the Board of NET Health. Seconded by Jessica Bowen; motion carried; approved as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18.

THE NEXT NET HEALTH BOARD MEETING IS THURSDAY, February 27, 2025.



Janie Lolly, Recorder



Kent Boozer, Secretary
NET Health Board of Directors