

LEWIS AND CLARK CITY-COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

Board of Health Meeting Minutes for March 27, 2025

Board Members Present

Chair, Brie MacLaurin <i>Representing a consumer of health services</i>	Dr. Mikael Bedell, Vice Chair <i>Representing practicing physician</i>	Melinda Reed <i>Representing the City Commission</i>	Tom Rolfe <i>Representing the County Commission</i>	Sherri Ohs-Mosley <i>Representing a resident living in the county</i>

Staff Present

Drenda Niemann	Beth Norberg	Rachel Jefferies	Julie Bir	Amber Johnson
Jay Plant	Jakob Miles			

Guests

Mike McGuire

Members Absent

Chanan Brown <i>Representing a resident living in the City of Helena</i>	Rex Weltz <i>Representing Helena Public Schools Superintendent</i>	Lisa Kaufman, Hearings Officer <i>Representing science, environmental health expertise</i>	Mayor Kelly Harris <i>Representing East Helena City Council</i>	
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Category	Agenda Item
Call to order	Chair Brie MacLaurin called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and a quorum was established.
Review of Agenda	No changes were made to the Agenda
Minutes	The Board approved the minutes from the February 27, 2025, meeting.
Action Items & Board Training	Agenda 3 – Drenda Niemann gave a brief overview of board training regarding Governance Functions before moving to the agenda's action item. Beth Norberg, Environmental Health Supervisor, reviewed the summary of changes for the proposed updates to the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Regulations. A brief overview of the public comments received regarding the proposed changes was provided. One comment questioned mixing zone regulations, which Beth explained what mixing zones are and reminded the board how the public was notified of the comment period. Following the discussion, Tom Rolfe made the motion to make the recommendation that the proposed changes be adopted and was seconded by Sheri Ohs-Mosely. The Chair called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

Category	Agenda Item
<p>Alignment with LCPH Strategic Initiatives-</p> <p><i>Behavioral Health</i></p>	<p>Agenda 4- Rachel Jefferies, LCPH Suicide Prevention Coordinator, provided an update on local and state suicide rates, emphasizing Montana’s suicide rate is twice the national average. She outlined risk factors such as age, gender, elevation, vitamin D deficiency, and ethnicity and introduced the Mental Health Awareness Training Grant, the primary funding source for a program designed to enhance awareness and literacy regarding suicide and mental health. Additionally, she discussed the Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) team and several training programs, such as QPR, ASIST, Mental Health First Aid, and Youth Mental Health First Aid.</p> <p>Jakob Miles, the Safer Communities Montana Coordinator, presented the program's focus on preventing access lethal means as a suicide prevention effort. These efforts include distributing free gun locks and drug deactivation kits, as well as collaborating with local firearm retailers to improve education. He also explained Sb423 which is working to provide funding for veteran suicide prevention efforts, including access to lethal means. During the discussion, Sheri Ohs-Mosley requested a demonstration on using gun locks, while Tom Rolfe inquired whether LCPH was conducting any campaigns to encourage swapping handguns for alternative forms of protection.</p>
<p>Alignment with LCPH Strategic Initiatives-</p> <p><i>Safe and Healthy Environment</i></p>	<p>Agenda 5- Jay Plant, LCPH Environmental Sanitarian, provided an air quality update, which was postponed from February’s meeting. He explained that the LCPH Environmental Division monitors air quality in the Helena Air Pollution Control District, focusing primarily on wood smoke and particulate matter from October through March. Jay discussed the health impacts of poor air quality, including respiratory issues and potential mental health effects. Drenda informed us that Jay is an actual certified smoke expert.</p>
<p>Alignment with LCPH Strategic Initiatives-</p> <p><i>Health Across the Lifespan</i></p>	<p>Agenda 6- Director of Public Health, Drenda Niemann, led a discussion on measles preparedness in Helena, beginning with an update on the 2025 case statistics. She then outlined the LCPH team’s response plan, with schools and childcare centers as the primary focus for educating families about the risks to unvaccinated and under-vaccinated children. Board members received a packet containing key facts about measles, along with details on testing procedures and strategies to prevent its spread. During the discussion, Sheri Ohs-Mosely raised questions about the safety and composition of the MMR vaccine. In response, LCPH Nursing Supervisor Shelly Maag joined the conversation to provide background on the vaccine and its associated risks. Additionally, Tom Rolfe voiced concerns about the financial burden of a 21-day quarantine for exposed or infected individuals.</p>
<p>Alignment with LCPH Strategic Initiatives-</p> <p><i>Improve Public Health</i></p>	<p>Agenda 7- Board Chair, Brie MacLaurin, opened the discussion regarding the need for members to be part of the Board of Finance Committee. Drenda explained the purpose of the committee. Brie offered to be on the committee, and Drenda mentioned reaching out to other members as several were absent at the meeting.</p> <p>Agenda 8 – Legislative updates were given by Drenda on the Licensed Establishment Fee Increase bill, which is on track with great support, and noted the Medicaid Expansion passed and is awaiting the Governor’s signature. She made mention of a few other bills still alive that are concerning and gaining traction. Two of which include a cigar bill, potentially</p>

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	exposing the public to secondhand smoke, and a vaccine bill allowing no vaccine requirements in school.
Announcements	Drenda informed the board that the Confluence Conference is approaching, and Sheri Ohs-Mosely will be attending as a board member. She also shared that the Community Health Improvement Plan is nearing completion and will soon be available for public comment on the county website. Additionally, the Chair noted that there will be upcoming board positions opening in June, including her position as the Chair.
Public Comment	No further public comment on items not listed on the agenda.
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.