

Porter County Board of Health Meeting

Tuesday, March, 3, 2026
155 Indiana Avenue, Commissioner's Chambers
Valparaiso, Indiana
Abbreviated Minutes

In Attendance: Dr. Linda Boxum, Robyn Lane, Sylvia Graham, Michelle Cherry, Dr. Kimberly Brunt, Dr. Amanda Alaniz, Dr. Chris Osan, Attorney Dave Hollenbeck

Absent: Rodney Guimont Jr. M.D. , Colby Barkes

The meeting opened with Attorney Dave Hollenbeck asking attendees to introduce themselves and clarify roles followed by The Pledge of Allegiance led by Attorney Dave Hollenbeck. After members thanked Dr. Linda Boxum for her contributions as President of the Board, Attorney Dave Hollenbeck motioned to appoint Board of Health Chairpersons for the next year. Robyn Lane nominated Dr. Chris Osan for President. Voted by raised hands, four affirmative votes confirmed. Dr. Chris Osan assumed the chair, thanked outgoing chair, and requested vice chair nominations. He nominated Robyn Lane, Michelle Cherry seconded, all in favor unanimously voted by raising hands. Comments of thanks and appreciation were spoken by board members.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Chris Osan requested a motion to approve the “previous month’s” regular meeting minutes. Dr. Linda Boxum made the motion to approve, and Sylvia Graham seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Announcements

The next Porter County Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, **April 7th, 2026**, in the Commissioners’ Chambers of the Porter County Administration Building in Valparaiso.

New Business

Shannon Burhans, President & CEO for Portage Township YMCA, addressed the BOH with a Health Initiative Expansion Proposal requesting \$18,000. She outlined this with an overview establishing infrastructure for enhanced fitness, diabetes prevention program, blood pressure self-monitoring, and a launch date in April at Healthy Kids Day Portage YMCA. The program includes strategies, seminars, cooking & labeling education, healthy food purchases at Nutrition Kitchen, applying health goals to lifestyles, community and corporation outreach, market events, 3-D body scanning to access risk data, managing GLP-1 related muscle loss with strength building guidance, and aligning with monthly community events to include things like hands-only CPR and nutrition guidance. The board discussed funding and sustainability with possible partnerships with hospital systems and collaborations and referral pathways based on residence and work locations. Shannon discussed the ability for sustainability in the program including trainer retention, growth to three trainers, onboarding a nutrition counselor, and how that looks moving forward for the upcoming year. She explained the details on how they completed a case study partnering with the Portage

Fire Department. Of the funding requested, less than one-third will go for the trainer's budget. Corporate cost-sharing to reduce public subsidy over time, self-funded employers using wellness credits, and more discussions took place on the details for the program. The board voiced support with fiscal prudence due to changing funding. Dr. Chris Osan called for a motion to approve budget funding for the Portage YMCA. Michelle Cherry made the motion to approve, and Dr. Kimberly Brunt seconded. Dr. Linda Boxum abstained from the vote, the motion passed 6-0.

Old Business

None.

Reports of Board Attorney

None.

Claims & Receipts

Dr. Chris Osan requested a roll-call vote, unanimously approved 7-0.

Reports of Committees, Staff, and Health Officer

Jeff Dees gave a detailed Strategic Risk Assessment & PHEP update. The Emergency Preparedness Jurisdictional Risk Assessment Findings(JRA) using hazmat impact, service impact, and vulnerability scores methodology resulted in the top vulnerabilities being active shooter/mass violence, tornado, flooding, and chemical spill/toxic waste. Preparedness lowers the common weather risks. Chemical spill risks are notable due to transport and pipelines near Lake Michigan. Response resiliency reduces risk. Active shooter/mass violence ranked highest due to community and behavioral health impacts and hospital surge potential. Clarified metrics prioritized countywide service impact, prior mental health assessments, and preparedness for weather events that helped to determine risk and impact. Sharing risk assessment information with local leadership with emphasis on cross-system communication to help reduce future risk metrics. Plans for enhanced drills and training for realistic scenarios with community-wide participation are being prepared by Jeff with his upcoming administrative tabletop exercise planned for May to test for procurement, grant funds, and emergency hiring involving county administration, HR, auditors, EMA, Hazmat, and board members. ServeIN is now used as a backup communication method where county dispatch can notify administration of emergencies and initiate requests.

Health Department administrator Matt Paul discussed Porter County Find Help, and announced the Portage AED is now working.

Crystal Coffey discussed the Zac Mago heart screenings taking place at the Porter County Health Department on the first Thursday of every month from 4:30 – 7:30 pm. At the first clinic held, out of 16 participants, 3 abnormalities were detected(two aortic insufficiencies & one ventricular issue). The process includes intake, EKG, echo, and hands-only CPR for families. Each appointment only

takes twenty-five minutes and costs \$25 with fee waivers available. Appointments and walk-ins are available for each clinic held. At the June health fair, 48 screenings were completed. Discussions on including these screenings alongside student sports physicals and consideration for repeat screenings during growth spurts or family history. Ages served are generally 10-25 years but exceptions can be made, if needed.

Jamie Pauley discussed her school health education initiatives of CPR, dental health, and water safety education throughout the year. Her February was busy with 49 presentations reaching over 1,100 students. She had distributed toothbrush kits and educational materials.

Jessica Malher discussed her WIC diaper and wipes drive since WIC does not cover those items. She partnered with local retailers including, but not limited to, Target, Walmart, Strack & Van Til, Aldi, and Jewel for overflow donations. The Porter County Health Department will promote, store and distribute services needed. She will create Amazon, Walmart, and Target links for direct shipping, and post them online and via email. The items will be stored within the health department.

Miscellaneous

None.

Public Comment

None.

Meeting Adjourned