

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
June 26, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors was held on May 29, 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  
                          Cynthia Ball, D.O.  
                          Scott Williams  
                          Nancy Rangel  
                          Pam Cunningham  
                          Mike McCrady

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  
Immunizations/TB Program Director: Sylvia Warren, R.N.   absent  
Environmental Health Director: Ginger Points, R.S.  
Community Outreach Director: Terrence Ates  
Vital Statistics Director: Rosie Meza           absent  
Human Resources Director: Dawn Strickland   absent  
Interim Laboratory Director: Amanda Catlin   absent  
WIC Director: Tecora Smith           absent  
Legal: Sharon Roberts  
Recorder: Janie Jolly  
Guests: Dr. Alaa Riha  
          Dr. Catherine Goetz  
          Dr. Liz Villalobos   absent  
          Dr. Srishti Goel   absent  
          Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah  
          Alex de Ravel  
          Jason Phung, MD  
          Gold Uzochukwu, MD  
          Kharl Wright, MD

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:00 p.m.

## **INVOCATION- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

## **HEALTH AUTHORITY REPORT**

Dr. Smith gave the Health Authority report to the Board. Dr. Smith began her report with a measles update, stating that the measles outbreak has improved in West Texas. Accordingly, the State has reduced updates to Tuesdays only. At this time, the total cases are 750 with approximately 21 new cases reported in the last month. There continues to be active cases of Measles in Gaines and Lamar counties. Overall, there have been 97 hospitalizations, and two deaths reported during this outbreak.

Dr. Smith reported on the Respiratory Virus Data, stating that the respiratory virus data looks good due to it not being respiratory virus season. Overall respiratory virus ER visits are low, with a slight bump in COVID-19 hospitalizations. If it follows the trend since 2020, the COVID-19 case load will increase in late July and August.

Dr. Smith concluded her report with the current Texas Legislative Session Recap:

- **HB15:** Makes it easier to get vaccine exemptions for school entry.
- Blank PDF form will be available on the state website.
- Concerns: Easier access may decrease vaccination rates.
- **HB 4076:** Prevents hospitals/physicians from excluding someone from transplant list solely based on vaccine refusal.
- **HB 4535:** State will create its own informed consent for COVID vaccination.
- Requires providing the Texas consent form in addition to the national one.
- Content of the Texas form is currently unknown.
- Several bills that would have removed vaccine requirements for schools or shifted the decision-making power from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to the legislature did not pass.
- **Senate Bill 370**
- Prohibits the purchase of sweetened beverages and candy for people using SNAP benefits. This is technically against federal law, so Texas will need to apply for a waiver.
- Candy and sweet beverages are not on the WIC package of food benefits.

- **Senate Bill 25**

- Requires food labeling for 44 different additives prohibited in Europe, starting in 2027.
- Requires public schools (including charter schools) to have physical education and recess.
- Prevents schools from removing recess or physical activity as a punishment.
- Requires continuing education on nutrition for health professionals (physicians, dentists, nurses, physical therapists, etc.).
- Creates a Texas Nutrition Task Force to provide recommendations for the next Legislative session.

- **House Bill 26**

- Creates a pilot program within Medicaid to offer pregnant moms nutrition counseling and medically tailored meals.
- The goal is to address pregnancy complications like hypertension and gestational diabetes through dietary intervention.
- The nutrition counseling will be condition-specific (e.g., diabetes or hypertension education) rather than general nutrition education.

- **Senate Bill 646**

- Broadens the groups eligible for the loan repayment program to include school counselors, marriage family therapists, and other behavioral health professionals.
- Participants must participate in Texas Medicaid or serve an underserved population.

- **House Bill 5324**

- Creates a trust fund for the suicide prevention hotline.
- The trust fund was not initially funded but is intended to attract donations, grants, and federal funds.

- **Senate Bill 5**

- Creates the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.
- This will be on the ballot in November for voters to approve.

- **Senate Bill 3**

- The lieutenant governor's priority bill on THC, passed the House and Senate.
- It aimed to outlaw hemp-derived THC products in Texas.

- Governor vetoed the bill due to pressure from the industry, favoring regulation over a ban.
- A special session is called for July 21st to address this issue, among other things.
- The governor wants regulation of the market, including licensing and age restrictions.
- The vetoed bill means starting from scratch, but there's broad support for youth access regulation.

The Board thanked Dr. Smith for her presentation.

## **MINUTES**

Motion made by Scott Williams to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2025, regular meeting; seconded by Jeremy Butler motion carried; approved as presented.

## **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

For the month of May 2025, we had revenues of \$1,060,482 which was \$21,487 over budget. Expenses were \$1,069,938 which was \$35,417 over budget. Our net income for the month of May 2025 was (\$9,4456), which was (\$13,930) under budget.

For FY 2025, we have revenues of \$9,329,693 which was \$101,910 over budget. Expenses were \$9,060,308 which was \$35,417 over budget. Our net income for the first 8 months of FY2025 was \$269,385, which was \$12,808 under budget.

Motion by Scott Williams to approve the May 2025 financial report; seconded by Nancy Rangel motion carried; approved as presented.

## **REAPPOINTMENT OF NET HEALTH BOARD MEMBERS**

Laura Newsome, Board Chair, stated that the Northeast Texas Public Health District is governed by a nine-member Board which consists of 2 members nominated by the Tyler City Council; 2 members nominated by the Smith County Commissioners Court; 2 physicians nominated by the Smith County Medical Society; 1 dentist nominated by the Smith County Dental Society; and 2 members nominated by the NET Health Board.

Board appointments are made for two-year terms and these terms are staggered. Board members may be appointed to three successive two-year terms. Members appointed to fill vacant positions will serve any unexpired term period and then can be considered for a full two-year term. Board members currently serving terms that expire September 30, 2025, are Scott Williams, (City) Mike McCrady, MD, (Medical Society), Nancy Rangel, (County), and Jessica Bowen, (NET Health). The NET Health Nominating Committee has recommended that each of

these individuals be re-appointed for a two-year term, and each of these individuals have agreed to serve.

Motion by Jeremy Butler, to approve the reappointment of Scott Williams, Mike McCrady, Nancy Rangel, and Jessica Bowen to the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board for the term period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2027, seconded by Cynthia Ball; approved as presented.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT**

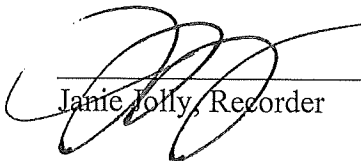
Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board. Mr. Roberts stated that the Doc Ballard Award presentation would be moved to the July 31<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. Next, he recognized three new UT Tyler Preventive Medicine residents, Dr. Kharl Wright, Dr. Jason Phung, and Dr. Gold Uzochukwu.

Finally, he gave a presentation on the recent Legislative Session. He discussed the impact of the new laws and the funding reductions that are underway.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

**THE NEXT NET HEALTH BOARD MEETING IS TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2025.**

  
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Janie Jolly, Recorder

  
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Kent Boozer, Secretary  
NET Health Board of Directors