

Metropolitan Board of Health of Nashville and Davidson County

March 28, 2025, Annual Retreat Meeting Minutes

The Annual Retreat meeting of the Metropolitan Board of Health of Nashville and Davidson County was called to order by Chair Tené Franklin at 8:45 a.m. in the Lentz Public Health Center Centennial A and B Rooms, 2500 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209.

Present

Tené H. Franklin, MS, Chair
Marie Griffin, MD, Vice-Chair
Lloyda Williamson, MD, Member
Carol Ziegler, DNP, Member
Rebecca Whitehead, MBA, Member
Morgan McDonald, MD, Member
Sanmi Areola, Ph.D., Director of Health
Melva Black, EdD, Deputy Director
Jim Diamond, MBA, Finance and Administration Bureau Director
John Finke, PE, Environmental Health Bureau Director
Rachel Franklin, MBA, CD-PHEP Bureau Director
Fonda Harris, PhD, Population Health Bureau Director
Wyntress Patterson, JD, People and Culture Bureau Director
Matthew Peters, Public Information Officer
Tom Sharp, Director of Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs
Joanna Shaw-KaiKai, MD, Medical Services Director
Laura Varnier, DNP, Clinical Services Bureau Director
Ann Melville-Chester, Ph.D., Behavioral Health and Wellness Division Director
Derrick Smith, JD, Metropolitan Department of Law

MPHD Budget

Mr. Diamond referred to the improvement requests the department made for FY26 that was sent previously to the board members via email. He indicated this year's submission is like last year's submission. Included in the requests are several positions to become local dollars vs. grant funded.

This week, we received messages from our partners at the state and federal level that our Epidemiology and Lab Capacity (ELC) grant, our Community Health Worker (CHW) grant, and our COVID Immunization grant have all been rescinded. For each of these, work had to stop immediately. Typically, when grants end, we have 90 days to get everything closed out and with these we have 30 days to close out. We were able to move two of the CHW staff members to Public Health Infrastructure. Metro Public Schools is going to absorb the costs for the Strike Team, so we can keep those employees, one full-time and five contract employees. The five staff members on the ELC grant will receive two-weeks' severance pay, and HR will notify them of any openings in Metro Government.

Sources of funding for Public Health include federal, state, local, and grants from private entities/not-for-profit organizations. Increasing local funding percentage is critical for more stable funding stream and for supplementing federal and state grants.

Proposed Department Reorganization for Efficiency and Impact

Dr. Areola presented to the board his plan for reorganization of the department. The proposed plan intends to more efficiently distribute and align programs. He stated that the last organizational chart was done in March 2022. Mr. Smith reported that the current organizational chart was never approved by Metro Council. There was an in-depth discussion regarding the proposed changes. Chair Franklin asked that more information be provided as to the why for changes to be made.

The Role of Behavioral Health in MPHD

Dr. Melville-Chester distributed to each board member a binder: From Strategy to Impact: A Five-Year Roadmap for Behavioral Health and Wellness.

The Music City Behavioral Health and Wellness Summit is scheduled for Monday, April 14, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As of today, 467 have registered. Last year, 325 attended. They can take up to 650.

Break

Board of Health Process for Developing Goals for the Director of Health

Chair Franklin stated that the FY starts July 1st and the board should have goals for Dr. Areola in place by then. She asked Ms. Whitehead to take the lead with this discussion. Ms. Whitehead also recommended doing the 360-Method for the leadership team. After a lengthy discussion, Ms. Whitehead will work with Dr. Areola to start this process. Dr. Areola will submit goals to Chair Franklin. Dr. Areola will submit on paper the responsibilities and why he chooses to make changes to the organizational chart. The 360-Method will be done in the next few weeks.

Our Role as the Board of Health

This agenda item was deferred.

Closing and Adjournment

Chair Franklin thanked everyone for their participation. Chair Franklin adjourned the retreat at 2:02 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Health will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at the Lentz Public Health Center Board Room, 2500 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209.

Tené H. Franklin
Chair