

# Panhandle Health District

## *Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

### District One Board of Health Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2025 | 3:30 p.m. | Kootenai Conference Room or Virtual Via Teams

#### 1. Call to Order -

- a. Panhandle Health District Board Chairman Dr. Thomas Fletcher called the March 3, 2025, Board of Health (BOH) meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in the Kootenai conference room of the Hayden Panhandle Health District (PHD) Office, located at 8500 North Atlas Road, Hayden, Idaho.

#### 2. Attendance -

##### a. BOH Board Members Present:

|                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chairman .....                       | Dr. Thomas Fletcher                 |
| Vice Chairman .....                  | Dr. Jessica Jameson (virtual)       |
| Kootenai County Representative ..... | Dr. Duke Johnson                    |
| Bonner County Representative .....   | Glen Bailey (virtual)               |
| Benewah County Representative .....  | Peggy Cuvala (virtual)              |
| Boundary County Representative ..... | Commissioner Tim Bertling (virtual) |

##### b. PHD Staff Present:

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| District Director .....                     | Erik Ketner  |
| Environmental & Health Protection DA .....  | Jason Peppin |
| Communication & Health Promotion Manager .. | Kate Hoyer   |
| Senior Desktop Support Analyst .....        | Robert Keig  |
| Management Assistant .....                  | Jess Eastin  |

##### c. Guest Attendance:

Several members of the public attended, though not all names were provided.

#### 3. Pledge of Allegiance -

- a. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

#### 4. Foundation of a committee to review vaccine information provided by Panhandle Health District to their client –

- a. Panhandle Health District Board Chairman Dr. Thomas Fletcher introduced the main agenda item: the potential establishment of a subcommittee to evaluate vaccine information provided to clients. He acknowledged Benewah County Representative Peggy Cuvala's question from the prior meeting: *Why are we doing this?* He emphasized that this discussion stemmed from broader societal changes in public health trust, referencing ongoing debates at the federal level about vaccine policies, recent FDA actions, and concerns regarding transparency in medical decision-making.
- b. Kootenai County Representative Dr. Duke Johnson provided a detailed account of his motivation, citing his experience administering vaccines and a personal story about his daughter's reaction to a childhood vaccine. He underscored that the intent was not to eliminate vaccines but to improve trust in public health by ensuring parents receive comprehensive information.
- c. Legal and Procedural Concerns:
  - i. Board Vice Chair and Kootenai County Representative Dr. Jessica Jameson and Bonner County Representative Commissioner Tim Bertling raised concerns regarding the legal implications of BOH approved vaccine information. They

referenced an advisory opinion from legal counsel, cautioning against proceeding without further clarification. Their primary concerns included:

1. Liability Risks: Potential legal exposure for Panhandle Health District if a subcommittee were to establish information perceived as contradictory to federal guidelines.
  2. Process and Compliance: The need for clear guidelines and federal compliance in disseminating vaccine information.
  3. Federal Statutes: Whether Panhandle Health District has the legal authority to create independent vaccine information beyond CDC and FDA guidelines.
- ii. Panhandle Health District Board Chairman Dr. Thomas Fletcher countered that vaccine information should be viewed as an ethical obligation rather than a liability risk and noted that no healthcare provider has ever been sued for providing *too much* information. However, he acknowledged that additional clarification from legal counsel would be prudent.

#### **Board Vote on Subcommittee Formation**

A motion was made by Kootenai County Representative Dr. Duke Johnson to form a vaccine information review subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Bonner County Representative Glen Bailey. After further discussion, the board proceeded with a roll call vote:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chairman Dr. Thomas Fletcher .....                             | AYE |
| Vice Chairman Dr. Jessica Jameson .....                        | NAY |
| Kootenai County Representative Dr. Duke Johnson .....          | AYE |
| Bonner County Representative Glen Bailey .....                 | NAY |
| Benewah County Representative Peggy Cuvala .....               | NAY |
| Boundary County Representative Commissioner Tim Bertling ..... | NAY |

With two votes in favor and four against, the motion failed.

#### **5. Public Comment -**

- a. Following the board vote, the floor was opened to public comment. Several individuals expressed strong opinions both in favor of and against the decision, including:
- i. Support for Vaccine Information Expansion: Some attendees argued that Panhandle Health District should provide a more detailed risk-benefit analysis of vaccines, independent of federal agencies, to restore public trust.
  - ii. Concerns About Transparency and Meeting Access: Multiple individuals noted frustration over the short notice and lack of a virtual meeting link, limiting public accessibility.
  - iii. Defending the Status Quo: Others clarified that Panhandle Health District already provides CDC vaccine information and has an informed consent process in place, and the discussion was about modifying, not removing, current procedures.

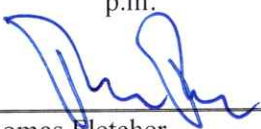
#### **6. Meeting adjournment -**

- a. With no further business to discuss, Panhandle Health District Board Chairman Dr. Thomas Fletcher called for a motion to adjourn the meeting on March 3, 2025, at 4:57 p.m. PST.

**MOTION**: Bonner County Representative Glen Bailey moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Benewah County Representative Peggy Cuvala.

**VOTE**: With all in favor and none opposed, the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously.

- b. The next regular scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 2: 00 p.m.

 3/20/25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Thomas Fletcher  
Chairman

Date

 3/21/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Erik Ketner  
District Director & BOH Secretary

Date