

**Board of Health
Tuesday, December 2, 2025
Hybrid Meeting / Penn Room**

Members Attending: J. Dethoff, J. Schwartz, B. Hospidor, K. Wang, J. Henning - virtually

Others Attending: S. Smith – in person; J. Stoudt, R. Placido, S. Herbert - virtually

Dr. Dethoff called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Hospidor, seconded by Dr. Wang, to approve the October 7, 2025 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

- Health Inspections

Ms. Herbert reported that 112 health inspections have occurred since the Board's last meeting. She stated that she is working closely with the ARL on an animal hoarding property in the 600 block of Mulberry St. She stated that she is working with the City's Law office to obtain a search warrant to enter the home. She stated that she observed 18 cats and nine dogs in the property and had to quickly exit due to the flea infestation.

Dr. Dethoff questioned how the City learned about this property. Ms. Herbert stated that several complaints were received by ARL. She stated that the landlord is being cooperative.

- Lead Abatement Program

Dr. Dethoff stated that Mr. Melendez was unable to attend today's meeting but that he recently gave a presentation on the program to City Council. He stated that this presentation was shared with the group. He expressed the belief that this was a great overall update.

Dr. Wang stated that the pediatricians at BCHC are grateful for this program. She stated that the work done has been impressive and children are being helped. She agreed that this is a great program.

Dr. Dethoff questioned whether pediatricians check all children's lead levels and questioned current practices. Dr. Wang stated that pediatricians follow testing guidelines. She stated that it has been great having a program to refer families as needed. She expressed the belief that most children's lead levels fall within the standard of care and appropriate screenings are performed.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he understands the children who routinely mouth items are tested and questioned if older children can also be at risk. Dr. Wang stated that it is customary to test children 9 – 12 months and again at age two. She stated that if levels are high, they are routinely screened.

She stated that children of all ages with autism are also routinely screened. She stated that every child is not tested but that when there seem to be neurological issues developing, they are screened. She stated that some adults are also at risk due to the high risk of their places of employment.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if chelation was still the most common treatment for high lead levels. Dr. Wang stated that this is done only if the lead level is very high and the probable exposure factors have been removed. She expressed the belief that it has been heartwarming to see the results of the City's lead removal program. She stated that BCHC refers families to the program and are able to see the results firsthand.

- EMS

Dr. Dethoff stated that Dep. Chief Sninsky is not available today and stated that his report was provided via email.

Chief Stoudt stated that two of the four medics in training have failed out of the program. He noted his hope that additional EMTs would be hired in 2026.

Dr. Dethoff questioned what part of the program was problematic. Chief Stoudt stated that they had problems with the written portion. He stated that the program is administered by Tower Health.

Chief Stoudt explained that all Firefighters are trained to be EMTs but there are no positions that are EMT only. He stated that changing job positions would require union negotiations but that it should be discussed. He announced his retirement in February 2026.

OLD BUSINESS

- County Health Department

Dr. Dethoff stated that the County study was distributed and stated that it is a very long document including a large amount of information. He stated that the data is very interesting and noted the need for a County Health Department. He questioned the current status of the recommendation.

Dr. Wang stated that she was not involved in the study process but noted her understanding that the Commissioners have not moved forward due to funding constraints. She expressed the belief that there is no plan to establish a Health Department in Berks County and stated that physicians work with Harrisburg as needed.

Dr. Dethoff explained that the Charter Review Commission is considering adding a Department of Health requirement to the Reading Home Rule Charter. He stated that if the electorate approves the change, establishing a Department of Health in Reading would be mandatory. He noted his hope that the Charter Review Commission would have a representative in attendance today for further discussion. He stated that he would advise that this should be a County function, noting the high cost.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the facility on Walnut St was a County organization. Ms. Smith stated that this is the Co-County Wellness Center. Mr. Henning stated that this is a private, non-profit organization. Dr. Wang stated that the local PA Department of Health office is on Cherry St.

Dr. Wang agreed that the County received an extensive report. She described the Chester County Department of Health.

Dr. Dethoff expressed the belief that establishing a Department of Health in Reading would be financially difficult. He noted his hope that the Charter Review Commission would engage this Board in discussions.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 4 pm hybridly via Zoom and in the Penn Room.

Dr. Dethoff thanked all for attending and wished happy holidays to all.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk