

Barton County Board of Health Agenda Meeting Minutes

Recorded audio is available on compact disk upon KORA request to the Barton County Clerk's Office, 1400 Main – Room 202, Great Bend, Kansas 67530.

Phone (620) 793-1835 \ Fax (620) 793-1990 \ Email clerk@bartoncounty.org

Meetings Live Streamed through **Microsoft Teams**® at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3ZOBGq7>

April 1, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 1st day of April, 2025, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4th District, Chairman
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5th District
Chris Saenz, Deputy County Clerk
Matt Patzner, County Administrator
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Schlessiger called the meeting to order at 9:36 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2022, Regular Meeting.
Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE ON MEASLES:

-Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, will present a departmental update.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, said she wanted to update the commissioners on the measles situation as of now. Winkelman said measles was a disease that has been known about for years, and we have a vaccine that was 97% effective. Winkelman said she wanted to provide information, be transparent, tell them what to look for and let them know what we are seeing.

Winkelman introduced Lindsey Ensley, Deputy Health Officer, to assist with the presentation.

Winkelman said on March 13th, they were notified of the first measles case in a Kansas resident, in Stevens County. This was the first measles case in Kansas since 2018. A lot of work was being done in public health to not have any cases for that many years. On March 21st, they received a Han Alert from KDHE, that there was an increase of cases, 10 cases in Grant, Morton and Stevens Counties. The vaccine was not recommended until a child reached the age of one year with a second dose typically at age four. In situations where there were potential outbreaks, they may change the recommendations to provide coverage for the younger children. The updated MMR vaccination recommendations were that any adjacent county to a county with a case of measles, children from six months through eleven months old should be vaccinated. However, this vaccine would not county towards their completion of the MMR series. The children in this age range may still have some immunities from their mothers and it may interfere somewhat with the vaccine, we want to be sure they were fully covered appropriately.

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Winkelman said the current situation as of Friday, there had been 483 confirmed cases in the United States since January 1st. There were 20 states involved with 2 deaths. One of those was confirmed and the other was still under investigation. Of the confirmed cases, the largest number was between 5 and 19 years of age. The unvaccinated or unknown was 97%. In Kansas, as of last Wednesday, there had been 23 confirmed cases in 6 counties with the largest number in the 5 – 17 age group. Of those 23 cases, 20 were not vaccinated. The 6 counties were Grant, Gray, Haskell, Kiowa, Morton and Stevens. The total number of cases reported in the United States in 2024 was 285 by 33 states.

Ensley said measles were one of the most contagious diseases known. It is airborne and can also be through contact with an individual. Ensley said they say if a person with measles were in a room and left, someone passing through the room even 2 hours later could be exposed. It lives for a long time without a host. Symptoms usually start with a high fever, cough, runny nose and conjunctivitis. After a few days, the person can get small white spots inside their mouth. Days 3 – 5, the rash starts at the head and moves down the body. Individuals are typically contagious about 4 days before the rash appears until 4 days after the rash appears.

Winkelman said the first vaccine for measles was licensed in 1963. In 1967, the mumps vaccine was introduced. Rubella vaccine was introduced in 1969. It became a combined vaccine in 1971. Some people may have only received a measles vaccination or mumps vaccination. Winkelman said they were focusing on the MMR, measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. It was first recommended as a single dose but in 1989, it was changed to have a second dose for higher protection. Winkelman said it was vital for those who review immunization records to know this information. There was a time frame between 1963 and 1967, where a small amount of the vaccine used was inactivated. The MMR was a live vaccine, but during that time, a small percentage had been inactivated, and those people may not have gotten as good a response to it. There must be 28 days between doses. Winkelman said when they look at presumptive evidence of immunity, they can look at immunization records or a blood test can be done to determine immunity. Also presumptive is if the person was born before 1957. Health care workers did not really look at the birth before 1957 because they were working with high-risk individuals and recommended receiving two doses. Winkelman said reporting was vital. If a case of measles were suspected, it must be reported to KDHE by phone within four hours of suspicion. The providers typically report it to Winkelman as well. They do not wait for the lab results because they have to start acting. They stayed in close contact with physicians. Winkelman explained the disease investigation procedures. Winkelman said they were focusing on being proactive because as we know, it can spread easily. It is a disease we know and there is a vaccine, that is our best defense for protection. Winkelman said they had an MMR vaccine clinic this Saturday, April 5th, from 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. at the Health Department on a walk-in basis for children 12 months and older currently, unless an adjacent county with a case prior to Saturday. When the first case came out, she and the nurses met to decide what they could do proactively. They started saturating the media with educational information and encouraged callers to come in and have records reviewed and talk about the options. They also had a school nurse meeting and got contact information. They will be meeting with the college staff tomorrow. Winkelman had conversations with their medical advisor and read a letter from him, Dr. Jonathan Pike.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Winkelman what percent of the population over one year old was vaccinated. Winkelman apologized that she did not have that report today and could not answer that right now. She said they had a kindergarten retrospective study; those seem to be the most complete records, and they used those as a baseline. They could only see those in Barton County that were vaccinated at the Health Department and what providers had notified them of. Winkelman said the MMR coverage in a couple of small schools was 100%.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked if it was required to go to public school. Winkelman said it was but there were exemptions such as religious reasons.

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Commissioner Hutchinson asked Winkelman what she said the immunity effective rate was. Winkelman said 93% with one dose and 97% fully vaccinated.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked how long immunity was once a person was fully vaccinated. Winkelman said for life.

Winkelman shared information from a historical ledger about measles cases in 1953 in Barton County. There were 18 pages in a row listing numerous people who contracted measles in a matter of days. There were no vaccines available at that time. You could see how the disease went through a household and the schools.

Commissioner Zimmerman said there was also a book in the County Clerk office of death records prior to 1911 and some of those were contagious diseases.

Winkelman said they were always in communication with KDHE and reached out at all hours if needed and they had been very responsive.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Winkelman about the border counties of counties with confirmed cases, recommendation was for 6 – 11-month-old children to be vaccinated with a second vaccine at the age of 4 years. She asked if they were looking at receiving the second vaccine earlier or leaving it at the 4-year mark. Winkelman said it could be done sooner. The 4-year mark was typically because of starting school and the required vaccinations before entering school.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

V. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to adjourn at 10:05 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Chris Saenz
Deputy Barton County Clerk



Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman