

MINUTES OF THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
QUARTERLY MEETING
April 23, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT

Brad Erney, DMD, President
Keith Davis, MD, President-Elect
Renee Mallory, RN, Secretary of Health
Kay Chandler, MD, Surgeon General
Loy Bailey, RS
Robert Bonner, DVM
Darlene Byrd, DNP
Chris Cathey, DC
Dewayne Daniels, MD
Darren Flamik, MD
Justin Franks, OD PA
Jim Terry
James Zini, DO

MEMBERS REMOTE

Phillip Gilmore, PhD
David Kiessling, MD
Blake Torres, PharmD

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tina Ipe, MD
Laura Moore, MD

GUESTS PRESENT

Jennifer Dillaha, MD, ADH, Director
Secretary of AR Board of Health
Cassie Cochran, ADH, Deputy
Director for Public Health Programs
Bala Simon, MD, DrPH, ADH, Deputy
Chief Medical Officer
Don Adams, ADH, Chief of Staff
Austin Porter III, DrPH, ADH,
Chief Science Officer and State
Epidemiologist
Reginald Rogers, ADH, Chief Legal
Counsel
Naveen Patil, MD, ADH, Deputy State
Health Officer
Sherian Kwanisai, ADH, Director,
Division of Local Public Health
Connie Melton, ADH, Director, Division
of Health Protection
Jeremy Courtney, ADH, Director,
Division of Public Health Practice
Charles Bedell, MD, ADH, Branch
Chief, Personal Care Services
Robert Arsenault, ADH, Chief
Information Officer
Matt Gilmore, ADH, Deputy Director
For Boards & Governmental Affairs
Savanna Ledford, DrPH, ADH, Deputy
Chief Science Officer
Linda Wooten, ADH, Manager, Division
of Local Public Health
Mitzi Fritschen, ADH, Health Center
Manager, Division of Health
Advancement
Lance Jones, ADH, Health Program
Administrator, Engineering
Terry Paul, ADH, Health Programs
Administrator, Environmental Health
Brian Nichols, ADH, Attorney
Deborah Reagan, ADH, Attorney
Charles Thompson, ADH, Attorney

S. Craig Smith, ADH, Attorney
Chuck Hardin, ADH, Attorney, Privacy
Officer
William Greenfield, MD, ADH, Medical
Director for Family Health Section
Kelli Kersey, ADH, Section Chief
Cosmetology, Message Therapy,
and Body Art
Jomeka Edwards, ADH, Section Chief
Public Health
James Joiner, ADH, Facilities Manager
Laura Bailey, ADH, Branch Chief
Environmental and Chemistry
Rebecca Davis, ADH, Environmental
Epidemiology Supervisor
Cassandra Brown, APRN, ADH,
Nurse Practitioner
Jessica Upchurch, ADH, Legal Support
Specialist
Karla Lock, ADH, Legal Support
Specialist
Tressa Williams, ADH, Legal Support
Specialist

The quarterly meeting of the Arkansas State Board of Health was held on Thursday, April 23, 2026, in Freeway Medical Tower located at 5800 West Tenth Street in Little Rock, Arkansas.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Brad Erney, President, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m., and asked for a roll call which was conducted by Chief Legal Counsel Reginald Rogers. Mr. Rogers reminded the Board that in accordance with the implementation of Act 505 of 2025, members who attend remotely will be asked at the beginning of meetings to state their name for the record and upon each occurrence of voting to ensure compliance with said Act. Chief Counsel Mr. Rogers advised members the recording of this meeting must be maintained for at least one year and is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Mr. Rogers advised President Erney that there was a quorum.

President Erney recognized Mr. Lane Crider, Mr. Donald Ragland, Mr. Clay Waliski, and Dr. Darren Flamik for their past service to the Board of Health.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. James Zini moved, and Dr. Justin Franks seconded, that the Minutes of the January 22, 2026, Quarterly Meeting be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

OLD BUSINESS

President Erney passed around the subcommittee signup sheet to the members.

NEW BUSINESS

COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

President Erney stated the Board would consider twenty-one (21) of the County Health Officers for appointment and Dr. Zini would afterwards recuse himself for consideration for the final appointment.

Dr. Naveen Patil, Deputy State Health Officer, presented the twenty-one County Health Officers for appointment. Dr. Darlene Byrd moved and Mr. Loy Bailey seconded the appointments. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

Dr. Patil presented Dr. Zini for reappointment. Dr. Gilmore moved and Dr. Chris Cathey seconded the reappointment. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

ARKANSAS DRINKING WATER ADVISORY AND OPERATOR LCENSING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Mr. Lance Jones, Branch Chief, Public Health Engineering, presented Paul Graham for appointment to the Committee. Mr. Bailey moved and Dr. Dwayne Davis seconded the appointment. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

ARKANSAS KIDNEY DISEASE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENT

Dr. Charle Bedell, Branch Chief, Personal Care Services, presented Dr. Gerren Hobby for appointment with the Council. Dr. Zini moved and Dr. Robert Bonner seconded the appointment. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

RULES GOVERNING MEDICAL MARIJUANA REGISTRATION, LABELING, AND TESTING IN ARKANSAS

Dr. Bedell presented revision of the rules for approval. A question was raised regarding electronic cards. Dr. Bonner moved and Dr. Davis seconded the approval. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

RULES FOR IN VITRO FERTILIZATION

Ms. Paula Day, Section Chief, Health Systems Licensing and Regulation, presented revision of the rules for approval. Mr. Bailey moved and Dr. Cathey seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

RULES PERTAINING TO GENERAL SANITATION

Mr. Terry Paul, Branch Chief, Environmental Health, presented revision to the rules for approval. Mr. Bailey moved and Dr. Gilmore seconded the approval. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER LICENSED LAY MIDWIFE DISCIPLINARY HEARING

Ms. Deborah Reagan, Attorney, presented the proposed findings of the disciplinary hearing regarding Jessica McGilvray for approval. Dr. Davis moved and Dr. Byrd seconded the findings. The motion carried by a unanimous vote, including those members present and those attending remotely.

OTHER BUSINESS

There were no Administrative nor Division/Office updates.

PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCE AND PROGRAM UPDATES

Dr. Austin Porter, III, DrPH, Chief Science Officer and State Epidemiologist, presented objectives on the Arkansas Trauma System.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Erney did not have anything to report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Renee Mallory reported on maternal health and prenatal care. The Department is sponsoring a block party event on May 5, 2026, across from the Health Department to highlight women's health.

Secretary Mallory recognized Dr. Joseph Henry Bates, Pulmonologist, Epidemiologist, Microbiologist and Public Health Official pioneered safe and effective treatment for tuberculosis elimination. Dr. Bala spearheaded a movement to try to get a preventative residency program in the name of Dr. Bates. The Department has received ACGME accreditation and will be interviewing two slots for resident physicians to start in July 2027. Dr. Bala has been instrumental in this matter.

Secretary Mallory recognized Lance Jones in his upcoming retirement.

Secretary Mallory reported that we have new members joining the Board and will be in attendance at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Zini moved, and Mr. Bailey seconded, for adjournment. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:53.


Dr. Brad Erney, President
Arkansas State Board of Health