

**MINUTES OF THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
January 22, 2026**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Brad Erney, DMD, President  
Keith Davis, MD, President-Elect  
Renee Mallory, RN, Secretary of Health  
Kay Chandler, MD, Surgeon General  
Robert Bonner, DVM  
Darlene Byrd, DNP  
Chris Cathey, DC  
Lane Crider, PE  
Darren Flamik, MD  
Phillip Gilmore, PhD  
Tina Ipe, MD  
Laura Moore, MD  
Donald Ragland  
Jim Terry  
Clay Waliski  
Loy Bailey, RS  
Dwayne Daniels, MD  
Justin Franks, OD PA  
Blake Torres, PharmD  
James Zini, DO

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

David Kiessling, 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  
Linda Wooten, ADH, Manager, 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  
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, Director  
Family Health  
Kelli Kersey, ADH, Section Chief  
Cosmetology, Message Therapy  
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, Branch Chief  
Environmental Epidemiology  
Mitzi Fritschen, ADH, Manager, Division  
of Health Advancement  
Cassandra Brown, APRN, ADH,  
Nurse Practitioner  
Sherian Kwanisai, ADH, Director,  
Division of Local Public Health  
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, January 22, 2026, in the Dr. Joseph H. Bates Professional Education Auditorium located at 4815 West Markham Street in Little Rock, Arkansas.

#### CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Darren Flamik, 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.

#### MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA

Before passing the gavel to President-Elect, Dr. Brad Erney, Dr. Flamik requested a motion to add two supplemental rule changes to the January 22, 2026, agenda: a rule revision for lead-based paint and a rule revision for breath alcohol ignition interlock devices. Dr. Phillip Gilmore motioned to accept the items to the agenda, and Dr. Darlene Byrd seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD OF HEALTH PRESIDENT

Dr. Flamik introduced Dr. Brad Erney who will serve as the 2026 President of the State Board of Health. Dr. Flamik expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve over the past year and thanked the Administration for their steadfast support. Dr. Flamik then passed the gavel to Dr. Erney and asked the Board members to welcome him as President.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lane Crider moved, and Donald Ragland seconded, that the Minutes of the October 23, 2025 Quarterly Meeting be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Dr. Darren Flamik presented to the Board the nomination from the December 8, 2025, committee meeting. Dr. Flamik stated all members present had been emailed the nominee's professional resume, and after brief discussion, unanimously chose to recommend Dr. Richard "Keith" Davis to be President of the Board in

2027. Dr. Byrd moved to accept the recommendation of the committee, and Dr. Robert Bonner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### RESOLUTION FOR EXPENSE AND TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Chief Legal Counsel Reginald Rogers presented the expense and travel resolution. He informed the law allows expenses and travel to be reimbursed upon request up to the allowable amount provided. Mr. Ragland moved, and Lane Crider seconded, that the Resolution for Expense and Travel Reimbursement be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Chief Legal Counsel Reginald Rogers also presented the stipend resolution. The resolution provides that Board of Health members are allotted a stipend of \$85 per meeting, examination, evaluation, or inspection attended. Dr. Zini moved, and Dr. Keith Davis seconded, that the Resolution for Stipend Reimbursement be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL INTEREST

Chief Legal Counsel Reginald Rogers reminded Board members to turn in the required Statement of Financial Interest by January 31<sup>st</sup>. The original request and forms had been sent in an email in December. He added paper copies are available if needed. The form requires a notarized signature and must be filed with the Secretary of State by the end of this month.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Naveen Patil, Deputy State Health Officer, presented nominations for two county health officers. Dr. Patil presented Dr. Douglas Buckley, a reappointment from Logan County. Dr. Erney called for a motion on the nomination of Dr. Buckley. Jim Terry motioned to accept the reappointment, and Dr. Zini seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Dr. Patil presented Dr. James Arrington, a reappointment from Lafayette County. Dr. Erney called for a motion on the nomination of Dr. Arrington. Dr. Davis moved and Dr. Byrd seconded, for approval. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

##### MASSAGE THERAPY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Kelli Kersey, Section Chief of Cosmetology, Body Art, and Massage Therapy, presented Christabelle Carpenter of Harrison for consideration by the Board to fulfill the remaining term of the district three representative which expires in 2027. Renee Mallory motioned to accept the appointment as presented, and Dr. Bonner seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

##### ARKANSAS KIDNEY DISEASE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Charles Bedell, Personal Care Services, Branch Chief presented to the Board the five applicants being recommended for appointment to the State Kidney Disease Advisory Council. Dr. Bedell stated seven applications were received, and out of those seven applications, five were chosen. The

recommended applicants are Dr. Alex Stanley David, Dr. Robert R. Camferdam, Dr. Manisha Singh, Lela Ann Smith, RN, and Taryn Larae Hehl, MS.

Jim Terry moved to accept the recommended appointments to the Arkansas Kidney Disease Advisory Council, and Lane Crider seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### MIDWIFERY ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Jomeka Edwards, Section Chief Public Health, presented the recommended appointments to the Midwifery Advisory Board. Katie Opris, as successor to Halee Burchfield, and Meagan Ballinger, as successor to Alexis Johnson, both consumer representative positions. Ms. Edwards advised if approved their terms would begin February 1, 2026, and continue through February 1, 2030.

Dr. Cathey moved to accept the recommended appointments to the Midwifery Advisory Board, and Dr. Bonner seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### LOCAL GRANT TRUST FUND COMMITTEE EXTENSION REQUEST

James Joiner, Facilities Manager, requested an extension in time of the grant funds allocated to the City of North Little Rock. Mr. Joiner advised funding from a private source that had been secured is no longer available, and the City of North Little Rock is in the process of securing a bond. In order to do that, they need to request an extension on this grant until December 31, 2027.

Lane Crider moved to accept the extension as requested, and Dr. Davis seconded. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### RULE REVISION- RULES PERTAINING TO LEAD-BASED PAINT

Rebecca Davis, Environmental Epidemiology Branch Chief, Division of Public Health Practice, requested approval by the Board of proposed amendments to the Rules Pertaining to Lead-Based Paint Activities. Dr. Flamik moved to accept the proposed amendments as written, and Mr. Crider seconded the motion. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### RULE REVISION- RULES FOR BREATH ALCOHOL IGNITION INTERLOCK DEVICES

Laura Bailey, Environmental and Chemistry Branch Chief, Public Health Laboratory, requested approval by the Board of proposed amendments to the Rules for Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices. Dr. Gilmore moved to accept the proposed amendments, and Mr. Ragland seconded the motion. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

## OTHER BUSINESS

### ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Dr. Bala Simon, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, presented on the Dr. Joseph H. Bates Preventive Medicine Residency Program. Dr. Simon spoke on the need for a preventative medicine residency program in Arkansas, as well as its mission, goals, and educational benefits.

Dr. Simon stated both the programs mission and its aim are to prepare doctors with public health knowledge to promote disease prevention and improve health for Arkansans at individual and societal levels, to meet eligibility for American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) board certification in the specialty of Public Health and General Preventive Medicine (PHGPM), and after completion of the 24-month residency training, connect the trainees in fields of relevant practice.

Dr. Simon thanked the Board for their continued support in advancing public health and preventive medicine in Arkansas. Noting by early to mid-April, the program's accreditation status will be announced, followed by interviews with qualified applicants this Fall, and the first cohort of two residents starting July 2027.

### DIVISION/ OFFICE UPDATES

Dr. William Greenfield presented on the maternal mortality crisis in Arkansas. Dr. Greenfield advised the Board that Arkansas has the highest maternal mortality rate in the United States with 38 deaths per 100,000 live births. Contributing factors to these preventable deaths of "moms" in Arkansas include lack of access to maternity care in rural areas of the state, loss of Medicaid coverage two month after giving birth, and prolific socioeconomic disparities affecting Black or non-Hispanic women. Dr. Greenfield said the mission of the Arkansas Maternal Mortality Review Committee is working to improve outcomes for mothers and preventing future deaths. He advised current data driven initiatives include telemedicine to bridge gaps in post-partum care, parental education, and awareness of warning signs to encourage dialog and timely medical intervention. Concluding his presentation, Dr. Greenfield praised Dr. Bala Simon for his decade-long effort in bringing preventative medicine to the forefront in Arkansas.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In his first President's report, Dr. Brad Erney referenced George Washington's farewell address on March 4, 1797. Dr. Erney stated President George Washington left office after two terms. Everybody, historians, were under the assumption that he delivered a farewell address speech. He did not. He wrote out his farewell address. He submitted it to the newspapers, and it wasn't published for weeks later. This was because he had ill-fitting, lead-based dentures. They hurt, they didn't fit, and he couldn't talk with them. Dentistry is consequential.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Renee Mallory began by recognizing Dr. Flamik for his dedication to the health and well-being of Arkansans, both in his profession as an Emergency Room physician, and as President of Board of Health. Secretary Mallory thanked Dr. Flamik for his leadership and his participation on subcommittees of the Board.

Concluding her remarks, Secretary Mallory congratulated Dr. Chris Cathey and Jim Terry on their recent reappointments to the Board of Health and thanked the members whose terms have expired and they continue to serve.

Dr. Gilmore moved, and Dr. Davis seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

  
Dr. Brad Erney, President  
Arkansas State Board of Health