The meeting was called to order by J. Bashura at 6:05 p.m.

J. Bashura proposed March’s minutes for approval. March’s minutes accepted.

A. Nixon shared that there was a meeting regarding Access to Care with HCHD.

Horizon foundation is asking community organizations to partner with them for a health coalition. They requested that the BOH be one of the priority partners of the coalition. The campaign prioritizes the premise of a healthy Howard County by way of healthy food, healthy eating, etc. In addition, it will provide an opportunity to discuss priorities for upcoming campaigns. The details of the coalition are aligned with the principles of the Horizon foundation’s initiative. It is the committee’s recommendation that the Board partner with Horizon’s coalition.

Motion to accept March’s minutes by E. Martin, 2nd by P. Nagy.

J. Bashura requested that A. Nixon preside over the remainder of the meeting.

Horizon’s coalition is up for further discussion during May’s meeting.
Mental Health- E. Martin discussed the synergy between access to care and mental health. It was suggested that the health department be consulted about their needs & objectives. Dr. Rossman met with Erica & some employees of the health department’s Bureau of Behavioral Health to discuss a number of initiatives. The committee wants to explore the historic lack of communication with the school systems, the lack of release of records and data, which would potentially be very useful. There are a number of referral systems that are out there to meet to address issues such as mental health, substance abuse & suicide. The objective is to catch the problem, be more proactive & become part of the solution. Dr. Rossman shared that the County Executive held a press conference announcing he’s proposing 2.1 Million dollars to fund school based mental health services. This would expand school based mental health services to all of the schools & allow children access to services that they may not otherwise have the means to acquire. E. Greenberger suggested that having someone in the schools whose sole job it is to provide that face to face direct service would be a better way to spend the money than data collection at this point, because there is such a lack of services and resources for the kids. E. Martin suggested possibly partnering with The Local Behavioral Health Advisory. They have committees that meet monthly & bi-weekly, and one of them is the strategic planning & program committee.

Workforce and Infrastructure Committee- J. Bashura suggested that the committee would like to offer up opportunities for lunch and learns, which would be in line with goal 1 within the strategic plan. Interested Board members are invited to contribute.
Old Business

Data Committee- P. Nagy shared several points. Data is critical for a board to understand what things need to be improved & to determine what's important. Data provides an opportunity in public health to be able to use the analytics to promote data driven policies, share it with the public and leverage that data to create better policy systems. It is recommended that the Board starts looking about how to use data and how to promote metrics throughout the community. There are some challenges as it relates to data. Funding is often project-based and doesn’t support infrastructure. Also, data often doesn’t have common elements to integrate in holistic perspectives. IT support is not specialized for healthcare, as it comes in from the Howard County Government. There is no central data governance. Data collection, quality, analysis & updating as well as the process of turning it into actionable information is costly. Dr. Rossman added that the Chesapeake Regional Information System for Patients has become more user friendly and integrates patient level data with other data sources. There is also a challenge regarding security issues and multiple databases that cannot be accessed at this point due to a breach in December.

Cronobacter sakazakki- In the last several months, there's been a wide recall of specific brands of infant formula. There have been several instances of death due to Cronobacter sakazakki. J. Bashura requested for the board to consider submitting a letter to Secretary of Health to add Cronobacter sakazakki to the reportable disease list in Maryland. Motion made by A. Wisniewski, 2nd by P. Nagy. Vote- E. Greenberger-yes; M. Kantsiper-no; A. Wisniewski-yes; J. Chernoff-yes; P. Leon-yes; E. Martin-no; P. Nagy- yes; A. Nixon; J. Bashura-yes.

New Business

Nominations for the Board Chair and Vice Chair- Elections for the board chair and vice chair will be held in May. Board members are asked to submit their nominations to Dr. Rossman.

Casa Unit- E. Greenberger shared her experience with Howard County General. There is no child or adolescent psychiatric unit. Children are currently evaluated by a social worker & held in the Casa Unit until they can be transferred to another facility. The unit is ill-equipped to handle these cases. There was previously a contracted services with Humana who sent in psychiatrists & social workers to provide intermittent care for these patients. There is currently lack of services.

New Board Member- New member Paloma Leon introduced herself to the Board. She discussed her background in vaccine initiatives & her work with minority, particularly Latino populations in the community.

Consider funding sources when asking for new metrics to be tracked. Construct a data dictionary of all collected metrics, frequency of update, data quality, provenance, owner & purpose. Exchange ideas with other health departments. Leverage HoCoDash to build public awareness of metrics. Include some long-term activities to improve information metabolism regarding infrastructure and a workforce working group. P. Nagy will help organize students to analyze data.

Board will send letter to Secretary requesting Cronobacter sakazakki be added to the reportable disease list.

Elections for the board chair and vice chair will be held in May.
J. Bashura shared that he has struggled with communications with the Board. He is hopeful that resuming in-person meeting will bridge the communication gap. He recognized Public Health Week & thanked the Board for their contributions.

Dr. Rossman mentioned the County Executive’s new budget for school based mental health services. There are also addition funds submitted to support maternal and infant care for undocumented women to receive access to prenatal care. Currently persons who are undocumented are not eligible for Medicaid services. Legislation was passed, beginning July 1, 2022, women who would be eligible by income will be eligible to receive and enroll in medical assistance for prenatal care and care 1 year postpartum, including dental care, regardless of immigration status. Workforce development was also included in the Executive’s budget. Previously, the disparity between the state, county and private salaries was discussed and the Board of Health sent a letter of support. The County Executive put in 500,000 dollars to support the salaries of Health Department staff. Motion made by M. Kantsiper to send another letter of support for additional funds for wage adjustments in Health Department, 2nd by J. Chernoff. Vote was unanimous, minus P. Nagy who left the meeting.

The Board of Health Manual is being updated & will be distributed in the near future.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

Next meeting is May 24, 2022.