

Health district moves ahead with replacement levy

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With dozens of programs in need of funding in the next couple of years, the Logan County Health District has voted to place a 10-year, 1.25-mill, operating levy on the November ballot.

The action came during a regular meeting Wednesday afternoon.

The levy replaces the current one-mill levy that expires next year. The increase is needed because of changes in the state's funding structure to local governments. Without the increase, the health district will lose about \$129,000 per year, said Health Commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott.

The new levy would generate \$780,000 — which comprises 33 percent of the health district's overall budget.

"We have more than 60 programs and many of them will not be funded (without the new levy)," the health commissioner said. "The biggest hit, if the levy didn't pass, would be to the nursing program — that includes infectious disease investigations and prevention — the immunizations, public health programs, visits to homes and schools, and other nursing programs, among others."

All of the programs rely on the levy in some way to fund a portion, Dr. Hoddinott said, including the district's environmental programs.

"(If the levy doesn't pass), some of the programs would have to go back to the state (for funding or to abolish them)," Dr. Hoddinott said.

"None of the health district's funding comes from the county's general fund."

Dr. Hoddinott said the amount of tax money the local department asks for from local taxpayers is lower than the national average for county health districts.

"The average among local health districts in the U.S. has 44 percent of budget coming from local taxes," Dr. Hoddinott said.

"We encourage everyone to get out and vote for this," the health commissioner said.

"This is very much needed. We need to pass this on the first try. It never passed on the first try and this time we're hoping to change that."

In routine administrative action, the board:

- confirmed the hiring of plumbing inspector John Clary;
- gave Lisa Engle, water testing lab supervisor, and clerical staff member Helen Brubaker positive probationary evaluations with standard increases;
- gave nurses Becky Simmons and Cindy Mabrey, and Logan County Vital Statistics Registrar Cheryl Burch positive annual evaluations and standard pay increases; and
- approved tuition reimbursement of \$1,195 for Darin Cozatt for the Ohio Medical College of Ohio.