



**Erie County Health Department**  
*An Accredited Public Health Department*

**Erie County Community Health Center**  
*A Federally Qualified Health Center*

**Peter T. Schade, MPH, REHS**  
*Health Commissioner*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Erie County Community Health Center Board Highlights Commitment to Community Care and Regional Impact**

SANDUSKY, OH March 6, 2026—The Erie County Community Health Center (ECCHC) is proud to highlight the leadership and dedication of its Co-Applicant Board of Directors — a group of community members guiding the health center’s mission, growth, and commitment to high-quality, accessible care for the Erie County region. In the world of public health, the best care happens when the community has a seat at the table. At the ECCHC, that seat is occupied by the FQHC Co-Applicant Board—a group of local volunteers whose mission is to ensure that healthcare remains accessible, equitable, and deeply rooted in the needs of Erie County residents.

The Erie County Community Health Center operates as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). This special federal designation means the center must meet rigorous standards for quality and affordability. A key requirement of being an FQHC is that the center must be governed by a board where at least 51% of members are actual patients of the clinic.

This "Co-Applicant" board works hand-in-hand with the Erie County Board of Health to oversee clinical services, approve budgets, and ensure the health center is meeting its goals. Because they live, work, and receive care right here in the community, they provide a perspective that no textbook or data sheet could ever replace.

### **A Legacy of Local Service**

The board is currently led by President Dave Jenkins, Vice-President Regina Pool, Secretary Flora I. Irby, and Treasurer Robert Carter. Together with members Karen Balconi-Ghezzi, Mary Bohn Supina, Frankie Byrd, Janet Mesenburg, and Nestor Rave, they represent a wide cross-section of Erie County.

Some members, like Flora Irby, Robert Carter, and Frankie Byrd, have served for over a decade, providing a steady hand and a wealth of institutional knowledge. Their longevity is a testament to their unwavering commitment to the health of their neighbors.

“I joined the Board because I care about making sure everyone in our community can get healthcare when they need it,” Mesenburg said. “The Health Center is more than a place to see a doctor — it’s a trusted healthcare agency for families and a support system for the community.”

Jenkins added, “By bringing medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and public health services together, ECCHC strengthens families and improves long-term health outcomes in our region.”

Supina, who has worked with the health department for years, reflected on its growth: “I watched the Health Department expand from opening a detox to providing comprehensive services across the community. The leadership is progressive and focused on affordable care for all.”



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## **A “Gold” Standard of Care**

Recently recognized with a Gold Healthcare Award, ECCHC has been nationally recognized for clinical excellence, access, and innovative service delivery.

“This award isn’t just a trophy — it shows that our community health delivery model works,” said Board Member Jenkins. “We provide high-quality, patient-centered care that meets rigorous national standards, improves health outcomes, and reduces disparities by ensuring underserved populations can access care.”

Board members agree that the award reflects more than clinical outcomes. Board Member Supina noted, “The award reflects the superior services and care rendered at the Health Center. I am proud to be a board member of the Erie County Community Health Center and its very progressive leadership in looking out for the health of our community.”

The board highlighted key programs that exemplify this excellence:

- **School-Based Health Centers:** Jenkins explained, “By bringing services directly into schools like EHOVE, we remove barriers for families and young people, providing primary care, immunizations, chronic care management, mental health support, and dental services right where students spend their days.” Supina added that school-based centers also improve access for families and older adults.
- **Pharmacy Services:** Mesenburg emphasized that on-site pharmacy services help patients get medications immediately, reinforcing ECCHC as a one-stop patient-centered medical home.

Board Member Byrd summed up the impact: “The Health Center cares for everyone — from newborns to older adults — with compassion, skill, and a genuine commitment to making Erie County healthier.”

## **Strong Fiscal Stewardship and Integrated Care**

ECCHC maintains a stable and responsible financial position, enabling expansion of services while staying true to its mission of serving all community members.

“The Health Center is fiscally stable, responsibly managed, and well-positioned for continued growth,” Jenkins said. “Through strong oversight and diversified funding, we can reinvest in services while serving everyone, regardless of ability to pay.”

Board members also highlighted ECCHC’s integrated, whole-person care. Patients can access primary medical care, dental care, and mental/behavioral health services in one coordinated system. Mesenburg emphasized, “No one is turned away because of insurance or ability to pay. We see patients with Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, and those who pay out-of-pocket.”



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## **Accessible, Walk-In Care with Public Health Integration**

ECCHC's walk-in, low-barrier care model ensures patients receive timely access without unnecessary delays.

"We offer same-day and evening appointments, and patients don't always need a scheduled visit," Mesenburg said. "During a visit, patients may also get help with dental care, WIC services, pharmacy needs, and public health screenings like lead testing. If lead exposure is a concern, we connect families with the right resources, including lead abatement support."

Supina highlighted the welcoming environment: "The Health Center is accessible to all, with facility improvements such as a covered rear area for elders or those with mobility challenges. Staff educate patients about the full range of services available, helping them schedule recommended care."

## **Continuing the Mission**

Guided by a dedicated board and progressive leadership, the Erie County Community Health Center will continue expanding services, strengthening partnerships, and delivering integrated, community-centered care throughout Erie County and the surrounding region.

As the Erie County Health Department continues to grow, it does so with the confidence that it is being guided by people who truly care. To our FQHC Co-Applicant Board: Thank you for your service, your vision, and your heart.

## **About the Erie County Health Department**

The Erie County Health Department's mission is to promote and improve the health and safety of the communities and environment within Erie County while preventing disease through essential public health services. The Erie County Community Health Center is part of the Erie County Health Department and operates eight convenient locations across Erie, Huron, and Ottawa counties, ensuring accessible primary care, dental, and behavioral health services throughout the region.

For more information about Health Department or Health Center services, visit [www.ErieCoHealthOhio.com](http://www.ErieCoHealthOhio.com).

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