

Council candidates on a regional health bureau

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election May 16, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election* 

selections from Douglas Graves, “Bethlehem City Council candidates.” Bethlehem Press, May 14, 2021.

In light of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, why or why not would you support creating a regional health bureau with jurisdiction in both Lehigh County and Northampton County?

Kwiatek: I think the failed attempt to create a bi-county health bureau many years ago may have been ahead of its time. The Lehigh Valley is much more cohesive as a region now, and the time could be right to try again. While our city health bureaus have done incredible work during the pandemic, a bureau spanning both counties could potentially tackle public health issues that impact residents across the region. I believe it is worth investigating as we take a look at how we can better prepare for the next major public health crisis.

Leon: If the creation of a regional health bureau with overarching jurisdiction was met with support from the community, I would [support it].

Callahan: I would not support a Regional Health Bureau at this time. Our current City Health Bureau has done a remarkable job in handling this pandemic and the roll out of the vaccinations.

Crampsie Smith: Firstly, I have to commend Bethlehem’s Health Bureau for the countless hours and efforts they have put forth during this pandemic. This pandemic has certainly emphasized the vital role that Health Bureaus have in our communities. While I believe it is wise to consider collaboration and joining of resources at the city and county level as much as possible, I would need much more data, research, and input to determine the best course of action re: creating a regional health bureau. There are definite pros and cons to this issue. Local health bureaus can better tailor their services to the unique needs of their

citizens. However, there are areas not sufficiently served due the lack of local health bureaus and a regional one would better meet the needs of these individuals.

Wilhelm: Bethlehem is fortunate to have a Bureau of Health that is an extraordinary resource to our City; the way they have managed the pandemic-in particular the herculean task of administering vaccines-has made it abundantly clear. If a regional health bureau served as a means of additional and valuable support to our existing City bureau, I would support its creation and a cooperative relationship between the two