

TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES October 16, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Attended In Person):

T. Nytych, DVM, President
W. Simmons, Vice President
T. Hills, DVM
R. Kapur-Pado, DO
W. Standinger III, Legislator
J. Raftis, DO, FACEP
T. Leary, FNP

ABSENT:

None

OTHER(S) PRESENT:

H. Vroman, Public Health Director
A. Reigelman, Secretary
P. DeWind, Esq., Tioga County Attorney
D. McCann, Director of Administrative Services
M. Miller, Director of Patient Services
D. Scherrer, Director of Environmental Health
N. Whitmore, Director of Dental Services

CALL TO ORDER: at 7:30 a.m. by Dr. Nytych.

PRESENTATION: The Tioga County Public Health Management Team provided program highlights and challenges. Ms. Vroman noted that Ms. Medina is currently on vacation and she will be sharing her updates.

D. McCann-

Highlights

- 2026 budget was submitted meeting all guidelines, which included wish list items of all program areas. As of yesterday, we were told that everything that we included still remains within the County budget.
- 2025 revenue fees for service in every category is up and some are up significantly.
- Able to upgrade all staff laptops proactively; only have one staff member that we are working with to confirm appropriate technology upgrade.
- Annual County Fiscal Audit was due by the end of September. The County did well, minimal findings and Public Health had no findings.

Challenges:

- Post-Exposure rabies cases are up. Have current issue with provider billing for rabies series. We try to work as best we can with providers, but they face frequent turnover in their positions.
 - Ms. Vroman added that the department is trying to improve this process. Will be setting up meeting to look at other possible alternatives as this has been challenging fiscally.
 - Dr. Raftis noted that you do not want to make it hard on the patient or create barriers to the patient getting treatment.
 - Ms. Vroman stated that we do currently have a rabies flyer that is given to each patient that lets them know expectations of receiving the rabies series; a step-by-step guide to break down any barriers to treatment. (Flyer was provided as printouts to Board Members later in their meeting).

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- Dr. Hills inquired about the current number of people requiring the series and if any declined the series. Ms. Vroman stated that the numbers of those requiring the rabies series do appear in the monthly highlights report that is emailed with the agenda packet prior to the meeting. Ms. Miller stated that she believes the current caseload is approximately 17 and none declined.
- Dr. Raftis inquired if we are seeing cases attributed to a certain type of animal. Mr. Scherrer stated that we are seeing it in all types of animals (bats, foxes, kittens, etc.).
- Mr. McCann added that he believes Tioga County Public Health will be able to cover bills using internal funds.
- Ms. Vroman stated that she believes the large uptick in cases can be attributed to the amount of education/outreach we do. Nursing has helped in educating as "rabies exposure" and not just "animal bite."
- Another challenge faced is complicated crossover of New York State guidance (i.e. change of program rules, but billing side can't fix). Provided an example currently seeing within the Preschool Program.

D. Scherrer-

Highlights

- The rabies post-exposure "What to Expect" flyer is emailed to 99% of cases and we bring the flyer out to those who decline that we send via email. We've found that it has been very successful.
- The new Tractor Supply in Owego (by Johnson's Pools and Spas) is tentatively opening in November but may not open until March of 2026 due to finalizing their water supply. Discussed issue they are facing in full.
- Taco Bell in Owego is due to open this month. Did walk-through and only had minor corrections needed. Should be issuing permit after final walk-through by end of week.
- Mobile home park was worried about a tree in a certain location of the park [falling onto mobile home]. Involved Soil & Water to determine if the tree would be fine to stay or if it should be removed. They said it looked healthy and did not need to be removed. The mobile homeowner called with follow-up information stating that a lot of saw dust was around the tree. The tree was reevaluated and determined it needed to be removed. Found after removal that it was hollowed out and it could have potentially fallen. Felt good to assist in a good outcome.

Challenges:

- A retailer in Owego received two separate violations in August and September (one for selling tobacco products to underage individuals and the other for selling vape products to underage individuals). Waiting on the retailer to submit their second stipulation notice. When received, we will submit to New York State who may suspend the retailer's license.
- Received referral from Tioga County Code Officer on a rodent issue in a home. Provided traps and bags and currently working with the landlord to clean the outside. We have also partnered with Department of Social Services to help with funding clean up. We are actively trying to help where we can. Ms. Vroman added that collaboration with other county agencies is critical in what we do.

M. Miller-

Highlights

- It is vaccine season. Our flu vaccine came in later this year. Completed employee vaccinations last week and some Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers. We did a mini Tdap vaccine clinic during the Newark Valley flood over the summer and provided cleaning supplies; vaccinated eight residents. We have vaccinated ten children so far (total of 22 vaccines) to children who were facing exclusion. Only one child was excluded from school.

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- Our Public Health Nurse went to a communicable disease conference and learned that when someone has a communicable GI illness the local health department should be asking more direct questions, as well as issues faced in testing for GI illnesses.
- Completed Fit testing with N95 masks for all Public Health staff.
- Public Health Nurse and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator are trying to build up our MRC. Hosted a get together last week to learn about training. Our Public Health Nurse can now instruct CPR courses which is great.
- Our Senior Early Intervention Service Coordinator went to a training in Baltimore and felt it was beneficial.
- Had an audit of the Early Intervention program in August, completed by Acentra, and had only one deficiency (delayed service due to a provider that the parents had selected).
- We had an Early Intervention Service Coordinator resign in July and are completing interviews now to fill the position.

Challenges

- In Communicable Disease we are working with our Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to learn the steps for backup in this program. It is a very involved process.
- Early Intervention program still has a provider shortage. We have a Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) that can help in certain therapy areas we are lacking in. We also have a waitlist for children within our county to get services.
- The EI Hub has gotten better. But we are still having issues with the program.

N. Whitmore

Highlights

- For the first time in many years New York State is giving the dental program \$250,000 to use over the next five years, starting in January. It can be used for anything school-based (and only for children), such as program related expenses, payment for services for those who do not have insurance or for staffing. Mr. McCann provided premise.
- Dr. Sarnicola started working two extra days at the beginning of the year. As of the end of September he did 200 more exams, 70 more fillings and 29 more extractions than previous years.

Challenges

- We will be the only dental office to accept Medicaid come the new year. Dr. Cook's office will no longer take state funded insurance as of January. Owego Dental Office is also dismissing a lot of clients and do not know why; have received calls for patients trying to get seen. There is an issue with Medicaid rates (provided example). Discussed mobile units in other counties who are unable to find dentists to work. Currently we are only able to refer clients to Rochester.
 - Mr. McCann stated that we have 22 years of the dental program and have had the same dentist the entire time. He is very loyal and committed to the program. We try to take care of him too, which the Legislature has helped with.

H. Vroman (on behalf of S. Medina)

Highlights

- In Community Health/Health Education we had a successful summer of events and tabling.
- Our Seasonal Public Health Educator was instrumental in collecting 800 Community Health Assessment surveys from the community, tabling at various events and at Tioga County food pantries.
- ASAP Coalition partnered with Tioga Theater to be able to provide free family friendly movie days funded through the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant.

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Challenges

- Staff are plugging along with the Community Health Assessment. It is difficult for the Health Educator's because they are dedicating time to the Community Health Assessment but still have to complete their own day-to-day work.
 - Ms. Vroman added that there was a large conference we attended to discuss Community Health Assessment data collection; process changes will take place in the future.
 - Our new Public Health Educator started in June and her primary role will be the Community Health Assessment and Health Improvement Plan. She will also be coordinating/delegating agencies to assist in the improvement plan and leading traffic safety.

Management Team departed meeting at 8:21 a.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Dr. Nytych requested an update on the Weights and Measures quality improvement project. Ms. Vroman stated that the QI team for this project is meeting monthly to look at current processes and streamline to try to assist the current part-time Director of Weights and Measures. Ms. Vroman also noted that we have a contact with St. Lawrence County Director of Weights and Measures to be able to ask for any assistance. This project is a work in progress.
- Meeting Minutes (September 2025): Motion to approve prior minutes made by Dr. Kapur-Pado; seconded by Ms. Leary, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Discussed the enforcement for McDonalds. Ms. Vroman noted that things seem to be getting better. Also noted the Owego Convenience Store violation listed was the first violation found in August.

NEW BUSINESS:

- None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Ms. Vroman distributed and shared her Director's Report for September

Public Health Information:

- Federal funding update- No impacts to local public health at this time. We are blessed in our county, as other health departments are having hiring freezes and layoffs. This is a testament to our county finances and great position in our leadership.
- As of 10/14/25 New York State Department of Health confirmed the first locally acquired case of Chikungunya since 2019; found in Long Island. Will be less of a problem in colder months. No other alarming cases noted in latest Communicable Disease calls but will be on alert.
- Still seeing decline in tick-borne illnesses. YTD have seen 429 confirmed cases, with Lyme accounting for 336; 15 hospitalizations YTD.
- Respiratory cases have seen a slow start to the season. Hearing that flu vaccine has been slow to receive state-wide.

Staffing Updates:

- We are only actively hiring for an Early Intervention Service Coordinator. Held interviews last week and looking at having second interviews.

Accomplished Activities:

- Senior Public Health Educator and two Health Educators participated in a virtual panel for Public Health students attending Mansfield, Lock Haven and Bloomsberg Universities to showcase careers in Public Health.
- ATUPA violation (that was discussed previously) is a waiting game. Retailor has to send back signed stipulation notice, then we will send on to New York State and they will proceed with determining if they are able to retain their licensure.

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- Public Health Educator hosted a meeting with Tioga County school nurses (about six nurses attended) to highlight the important dates related to school vaccine requirements, our point of contact and our role in ensuring children receive vaccines. We hope to host these meetings quarterly and to have conversations with superintendents to be able to tailor information to their needs.
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator is conducting a refresher training on Incident Command System (ICS) 200 for the Management Team. The training is being conducted in a group session with a structured training plan to be used as a trial before rolling out to rest of staff. She has also submitted application for Project Public Health Ready (accreditation for PHEP). She has been a great fit for the department!
 - Legislator Standinger noted that the PHEP Coordinator seems to be an energetic young lady, very passionate in what she does.

In Progress Activities:

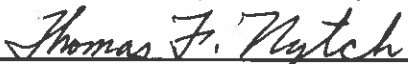
- Community Health Assessment is underway; initial review of written drafts has begun. Will need to submit report by December.
- Finalizing milestones in the current Public Health strategic plan. Hope to have completed by end of December.
- Exploring electronic dashboards for pulling data (can be used both internally and externally). Other public health departments are exploring as well. Some programs have AI elements which we still need to be careful with as the County currently does not have policies in place yet (but in process).
- PHD participated in NYSACHO Succession Planning Training-first in a series of training with goal of developing a formal plan.
- As part of our strategic plan goal for workforce development we will be conducting Stay Interviews with staff for them to provide honest feedback in their current roles on how to make their jobs better. We will be taking their feedback, reviewing and implementing.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Ms. Vroman provided the proposed 2026 Board of Health meeting calendar, noted that it is pretty much identical to the 2025 calendar and asked if there was anything members would like to add.
 - Dr. Hills requested information on county aquifers. County Attorney DeWind and Ms. Vroman both stated that this information is not kept by Public Health-possibly Soil & Water but will confirm with Mr. Scherrer follow up with Board members via email.
- Noted that next month's meeting is at 7:30, then at 8:30 we will have presentation with Public Health staff on the TAM-Team.

Motion to adjourn meeting by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Dr. Raftis, all in favor, none opposed, motion approved. Adjournment of meeting called 9:02 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman


Thomas Nytych, DVM, President


Abigail Reigelman, Secretary

Minutes approved November 20, 2025

