

TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES May 15, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Attended In Person):

T. Nytech, DVM, President
W. Simmons, Vice President
T. Leary, FNP
W. Standinger III, Legislator
R. Kapur-Pado, DO
T. Hills, DVM

ABSENT:

J. Raftis, DO, FACEP

OTHER(S) PRESENT:

H. Vroman, Public Health Director
S. Medina, Deputy Public Health Director
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. Nytech. All members expressed their sympathy for Dr. Raftis.

PRESENTATION:

Mr. McCann shared:

Highlights:

- Final 2024 State Aid claim submitted
- Funding update: A couple impacts on NYS and Federal funding, yet no large impacts at this time. The Well Head Replacement program (pilot) was placed on hold on 4/28/2025. Also some warnings of one of our three grants for the ASAP Coalition in jeopardy.
- Coverage of Abby Reigelman's role during her leave is a complete team approach with some tasks assigned and others just handled as they arise.

Challenges:

- Delays with Information Technology (IT) related issues. Although Public Health has strong technology skills among the team, there are items that we cannot handle due to access/authority or beyond scope of our skills. IT department is extremely busy handling both Tioga County issues as well as support for many Municipalities as well.

Ms. Medina shared:

Highlights:

- Lead Free program, grant we received from the Floyd Hooker Foundation that is intended to assist the lead abatement in homes of children with high levels of lead. We do not conduct the work, we provide paint vouchers to encapsulate the lead paint, cleaning supplies, sealing materials and a HEPA filter vacuum that we lend out. In the past we provided info on how to abate, but the cost is often a barrier to it being completed. This grant, although it requires a lot of effort, is well worth it.
- ASAP Coalition: This is Advocacy, Support and Prevention, a grant funded program we took over in 2024 when the prior agency abruptly stopped. To keep the great work going we took on the program and have two team members communicating and education. We have a funding-required Evaluator assess the program, and they appreciated in particular the billboards, Narcan training, and the Waverly vending machine (with free items, i.e. Narcan).

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- Creating Healthy Schools and Communities is a grant in its fourth year and is a joint venture with Broome County Health Department. This program allows us the opportunity to assist schools and municipalities develop healthy policies and implement real changes in their communities. Recent recipients that we have worked with include Newark Valley and Berkshire. Also, solving a food pantry issue of people not getting frozen veggies by purchasing a see-through freezer so the clients can see the healthier options in the freezer.

Challenges:

- Community Health Assessment, this New York State Department of Health requirement every five years is upon us in 2025. It is an extensive and all-encompassing project. We are trying to manage workloads, maintain our current project, and complete all the necessary work for the assessment. Fortunately, we have staff familiar with completing the assessment, but it's still challenging for everyone to dedicate time to it. We hope in the future to have a staff dedicated to the CHA and CHIP who will be routinely involved in it and measuring activities, so that this isn't such a burden every 5 years.

Mr. Scherrer shared:

Highlights:

- Presentations on Rabies were conducted at Apalachin Fire Department and the Tioga County Office of Emergency Services. Both well received with participants engaged. PowerPoint slideshow developed by Health Education was well done and used during presentation.
- April Rabies vaccination clinic in Newark Valley was second most animals vaccinated on record (256).
- Water Quality meeting was held which Dan Scherrer and Stephen Mastro of TCPH participated as members. The committee works on stream cleanups, free rainwater barrel distribution program, discounted compost barrels, and tire, paint and electronic collections.
- Village of Nichols PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl Substances) reduction plant completed and ended up at a cost of around \$3.5 million.

Challenges:

- Well Head Replacement grant program placed on hold while some projects were in process. This program helps replace well head caps that have broken seals or cracked caps.
- Champion Speedway site soil/water contamination, unclear of source so testing to identify. Champion Speedway owners are working well with us in providing potable water and signage around speedway.

Ms. Leary asked about available bat abatement resources, as she is aware of the difficulty finding someone to provide this service. Mr. Scherrer shared that we have no funds to assist with bat abatement but we do share a list of abatement providers that we are aware of.

Ms. Miller shared:

Highlights:

- Measles, although none reported in Tioga County yet, we are tracking and planning. We continue to communicate and conduct outreach to the Amish communities regarding measles, infant bloodwork and related family risks.
- Medical reserve Corps (MRC): this is a group of volunteers of medical and non-medical that work with us. We are currently building up the base of members. The MRC was instrumental during COVID.
- Community Events have been attended by our Early Intervention team. Our sensory bins have been a hit getting people to our table to be educated about our programs and other resources.
- "EI Hub" is the New York State electronic application for the Early Intervention program (Ages birth to 3rd birthday). It started in October 2024 amid controversy and issues, and these continue. The challenge of using only adds to the significant shortage of therapy providers across the state and in Tioga. We have children with diagnosed needs but not enough providers to treat them.

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Ms. Whitmore shared:

Challenges

- Lack of Dental providers for kids to refer to. We cannot provide all the necessary services identified in the check-ups and cannot refer them all either. Mostly due to lack of providers accepting the clients Medicaid or no insurance. Many parents don't follow-up anyways.
- Shared summary of recent school numbers, and decay and extractions are at alarming rates.

Highlights:

- Impact of extra hours of our Dentist has been significant increase in treatment of clients.
- Quality Improvement (QI) Project, Dental Security is nearly completed. This includes panic buttons, intercom with camera, interior/exterior cameras, locked doors with key FOBs.
- NYS Audit conducted with only two minor findings. One resolved prior to audit (entering zeros in the report each month for the schools we are not at that month) the other about tracking referrals and whether parent/guardian or the provider have move forward.

Ms. Vroman commented that overall the audit was great, even better considering the last audit had a few findings. The auditors liked the QI project for Dental Security and outreach done by the team this time.

Question about providing services in Richford, Ms. Whitmore shared challenges from the last attempt (only three clients). Mr. Simmons stated the fire department's message board is available next time.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting Minutes (April 2025): Motion to approve prior minutes made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Hills, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Dr. Nytych asked about funding cuts. Ms. Vroman mentioned the previously discussed Well Head Replacement grant and shared that the AmeriCorps program has been cut nationwide. Our current AmeriCorps position has been vacant for months.
- Enforcements: Brief discussion of establishments noted, none of which were repeats this month.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Ms. Medina provided an update on the TCPH Audit Summary. Records were audited, then reviewed by the PH Director and presented to the Medical Consultant.
- Significant improvement in chart and record keeping.
- Noted that Lead audit was revamped.
- Satisfaction surveys: all but two had high scores, yet all had good comments.
- Dental Security: successful as reported earlier by Ms. Whitmore.
- Electronic forms: selected Temporary Food Permits in EH as initial online process and going well.
- Animal Bite Exposure: Training of team and reviews of the process.
- Complaints: none submitted.
- Exposure Plan: currently going through review process.

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

Public Health Information:

- Measles update is in the written Directors Report.
- Avian Flu, no cases in local area or NYS. Recent NYS/County call did not even mention it.
- Flu is no longer prevalent effective April 27th.
- Response to question from Ms. Leary last month, this year's Flu vaccine will be trivalent.
- Tick-borne illnesses increasing. Of 56 confirmed cases 49 were Lyme and there was one Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Discussion regarding PCP/hospitals ordering full tick-borne panel. Data shows that middle-aged males and men over 65 are the most common to get tick-borne illness.

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- Communicable Disease Annual Report was discussed. Ms. Vroman pointed out that Chlamydia was the 5th most common communicable disease. Per contract, Tioga Opportunities does the testing at their clinic, and we do the follow-up. Included in the follow-up we confirm individuals actually pick up their prescriptions from the pharmacy.
- First breakout of Pertussis in five years.

Staffing Updates:

- Currently interviewing for both vacant Public Health Educator and Sanitarian positions.
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator new hire (Mackenzie Squair) start June 2nd.
- Seasonal Public Health Educator candidate has been identified and will also start on June 2nd. Their focus will be on the Community Health Assessment surveys, data analysis and interviews.

Accomplished Activities:

- Site Visit from NYS Immunization went very well. We received a great report.
- Our online platform for Mental and Physical Wellness (CredibleMinds) went live two weeks ago. Following survey, software provides local agencies based upon identified needs. CredibleMinds is in collaboration with Mental Hygiene.
- Dental Van security project phase one to be completed this week. Phase two is the communication with school districts during onsite events/drills/lockdowns.
- Public Health Partners Annual Conference was held in Ithaca. This is held by the combined efforts of the NYS Association of County Health Officials, NYS Rural Health Association and NYS Public Health Association. Due to it's close proximity this year we offered attendance to all Public Health employees. A majority of staff attended (17 of 27). It was well received and beneficial. Our policy for attending trainings/conferences require a form to be filled out to share what was learned with other staff. For multi-day events, a PowerPoint is required and is to be presented to those it would benefit.


Other Information:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Health Survey has been developed. Desire is for electronic submittals but offer paper forms for those that prefer and then staff will enter into software.
- Developing PowerPoints with voice-overs recorded to share trainings with external partners and internal staff.
- Quality Assurance/Improvement: Ms. Vroman described committee make-up and projects of Electronic forms Policy & Procedures and workflow development/updates.
- Children's Camps are being prepared for with summer coming. Discussion about the requirements and impacts of the work involved for both camps and Environmental Health staff.
- Dr. Nytych asked about the Village of Owego well drilling. The village was approved by DEC to drill well near Village Public Works garage, which is adjacent to the Foundry site. Water was tested and clear, and PH will conduct follow-up testing every three years.
- June meeting ideas were discussed. Mentioned were updates on ASAP from Kylie and anything relevant regarding homeless encampments.
- Dr. Kapur-Pado asked about tick removal kits, and they were provided to all in attendance.

Adjournment of meeting called at 9:12 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Denis McCann


Thomas Nytych, DVM, President


Denis McCann; Acting Secretary

Minutes approved June 19, 2025