

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

June 17, 2025

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, in the Large Conference Room, Human Services Center, Canton, New York 13617.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Andrew Williams, Rita Curran, Dr. Gregory Healey, Nancy Potter,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Kathleen Terrence, Mark Deavers, Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Erin Streiff, SLCPHD Director; Lara Martin, SLCPHD Sanitarian;

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by Nancy Potter, and seconded by Dr. Healey, the minutes from the May 20, 2025 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

OTHER ITEMS AND QUESTIONS EXECUTIVE SESSION

Sanitarian Report: Lara Martin reviewed the monthly report for environmental health inquiries, which totaled 28. Specific concerns included: Garbage complaints, including unclean trash receptacles; General sanitation related to debris from a fire-damaged property; and Mold complaints, including one from a landlord seeking legal guidance (referred to a code officer); Sewage and septic system inquiries (7), primarily for record requests; Water quality (7), including daycare and well water testing; Additional issues (7), including abandoned mobile homes, maintenance concerns, bed bugs (including in a workplace), insects, water leaks, rodents, and restaurant septic system functionality. Lara noted that two formal nuisance complaints were filed: A complaint alleging sewage runoff and suspected poisoning of livestock from a neighbor's property. The case is under investigation, and a site visit is scheduled; a complaint regarding persistent odors, no violations were observed, and the case was closed after referral to the odor hotline.

Members discussed safety during site visits and confirmed that staff do not enter private property and always bring a second person for safety. Staff have been advised on appropriate interaction protocols.

Members acknowledged that the Public Health Department continues to act as a referral resource for a broad range of concerns beyond its direct jurisdiction.

Children's Programming Updates: Members discussed updates on Early Intervention (EI) and children's services. Notable items included: The State has decreased reimbursement for teletherapy by 10% while proposing a 5% increase for in-person visits, with an anticipated additional 4% modifier for St.

Lawrence County due to its rural, impoverished status. This increase would be retroactive to April 1, 2025. Most EI services have returned to in-person visits post-COVID, though teletherapy remains a valuable tool due to the county's rural nature.

A one-time grant of approximately \$37,000 from the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs program will support accessible recreation and gathering spaces for families. Members suggested ideas such as: Supporting accessibility improvements at the local children's museum; Funding wheelchair-accessible swings or ramps; Creating quiet sensory spaces; Engaging parents of children with special needs for feedback and ideas; Distributing micro-grants for targeted accessibility improvements.

Members noted an increase in self-referrals to the MCH program following the distribution of a flyer featuring the public health nurse's photo and contact information. While the program is receiving greater engagement, staffing shortages require cross-training staff for communicable disease investigations, limiting MCH capacity. Members discussed long-term staffing challenges and the competitive nursing job market. Suggestions included creating a supervisory-level position for highly qualified staff to support retention and developing grant-supported hiring incentives. Members also discussed opportunities to improve prenatal care access in rural and Amish communities, including: Expanding partnerships with local health centers; Supporting certified nurse midwives and other qualified providers; Collecting data on unassisted or home births; Applying for Title V MCH block grants to fund expanded services.

Department Updates: Members discussed SLCPHD's LHCSA license. Although no patients are currently served under this license, it allows for future expansion of a robust maternal and child health home visiting program. Members discussed the recent state audit, which cited the department for not utilizing the LHCSA license and for minor issues, including: incomplete two-step tuberculosis testing for new hires and lack of emergency evacuation plans for home care patients (though none exist currently).

Erin informed members of staffing updates, including the recent resignation of the Emergency Preparedness coordinator, internal transfer of the Accreditation Coordinator to a Senior Account Clerk role, and the recent offer to a Communicable Disease Specialist candidate. The Early Intervention program's vacant Service Coordinator position will remain vacant pending civil service test results for a contingent position.

Health and Human Services Provider Communication Planning: The department is launching a quality improvement project focused on enhancing compliance with Article 6 public health core services. This includes regular reporting to health and human service providers. A quarterly data report (including maternal-child health, communicable diseases, etc.) is in development for distribution to providers, legislators, and the Board.

Tick-borne Disease: Members discussed significant concerns regarding the underdiagnosis and undertreatment of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses, especially in children. Local providers appear to have inconsistent practices around prophylactic doxycycline. Suggestions included: Improving provider education and adherence to CDC guidelines; Exploring local studies on prevalence and treatment efficacy; and Possibly incorporating Lyme testing into routine venipuncture for children when feasible.

Upcoming Tabletop Exercise: A measles response tabletop exercise is scheduled for Wednesday, July 10, 5:30–6:30 PM. Focus will include evaluating and strengthening the planning section of the incident command structure. Forest Rangers with ICS experience will assist in the session. Staff and relevant community partners (e.g., Emergency Services) will be invited.

Seasonal Updates: Tick activity is rising, consistent with seasonal trends. Mosquito surveillance has begun, involving seven student interns.

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

Regular session adjourned at 6:56 pm. Next meeting will take place on September 16, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

ACTION ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

N/A