

# **ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING**

## **November 18, 2025**

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, in the Large Conference Room, Human Services Center, Canton, New York 13617.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dr. Andrew Williams, Dr. Kathleen Terrence, Rita Curran, Nancy Potter

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dr. Gregory Healey, Mark Deavers, Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Erin Streiff, Public Health Director

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:14 pm.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon motion by Nancy Potter and seconded by Dr. Terrence, the minutes from the October 21, 2025 meeting were approved.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

### **OTHER ITEMS AND QUESTIONS**

Erin Streiff presented the Sanitarian Report – reporting that inquiries for the period were routine and similar in nature to those typically received by the Sanitarian, with many matters requiring referral to appropriate partner agencies. No formal nuisance complaints were filed. The Director informed members that a meeting would be held in January with municipal code enforcement officers to review the sanitary code and to ensure a consistent understanding of roles and responsibilities. She also noted her intention to attend each municipal board meeting at least once in 2026 as part of a broader effort to improve community-level awareness of health department operations and the sanitary code.

Erin next provided an update on the department's accreditation process. Following the departure of the former accreditation coordinator to a permanent internal role, the department engaged Ascendient, a consulting group, to assist in completing the required work. Ascendient completed an initial review of the department's accreditation documentation and determined that St. Lawrence County is approximately three months ahead of the anticipated timeline. The consultants will continue to support the department as it prepares its readiness assessment in December. Members discussed the Board's interest in strengthening its involvement in accreditation-related strategic planning, and the Director noted that the consultants were exploring whether in-person support for the Board could be accommodated within the current contract.

Members then discussed the ongoing challenges associated with establishing a quarterly reporting schedule for program data. Erin explained that because program areas have historically used different methods and systems for tracking performance, the department is undertaking a year-long effort to reorganize and automate data collection across all units. In the meantime, members were asked to identify the types of program information that would be most meaningful on a month-to-month basis. Members agreed that routine monthly updates were not necessary unless a specific program presented an unusual trend or concern. They expressed a preference for receiving broader trend summaries quarterly or

annually. Erin will provide the Board with a list of program areas by email so that members may identify priorities for the January meeting.

Erin reported that the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) is offering free one-year memberships to rural counties through funding secured by NYSACHO. She explained that the membership would provide Board members with professional development resources, governance support, and educational materials. The Board expressed support for accepting the complimentary membership, and no objections were raised.

Members discussed food insecurity within the county, noting recent delays in the issuance of SNAP/EBT benefits, which placed strain on local food pantries and meal programs. Discussion included concerns about infrastructure capacity, geographic barriers faced by residents, and the limited coordination among different food distribution sites. Members expressed interest in revisiting the concept of a county-led food bank, which could centralize storage and eligibility processes and maximize federal food resources. Members also discussed the value of cooking and nutrition education for families and the possibility of improved partnerships with local colleges and community organizations. Members further discussed the Home Energy Assistance Program, which is still unfunded at this time. Erin stated she would follow up with Emergency Preparedness staff regarding the availability and publication of warming center locations.

The Board next addressed the status of the Public Health Medical Consultant position. Erin informed members that Dr. Mashaw would not continue in the role beyond March 2026. She emphasized that recruitment must begin promptly due to the time required for advertising, interviewing, legislative approval, and review by the New York State Office of Public Health Practice. Erin explained that Human Resources requires all postings to use the countywide generic medical consultant job description, though the description encompasses duties for multiple departments and does not fully reflect public health responsibilities. To provide clarity, she prepared a more accurate internal summary of the public health-specific duties and will provide this to the Board. Members discussed necessary qualifications and noted that while HR advised that board certification cannot be listed as a requirement, state regulations under Part 750 mandate that public health medical directors be board-certified. Members also discussed which specialties would be best suited for the role's scope.

Compensation was discussed at length. The current stipend is \$10,000 annually with benefits, whereas other counties offer monthly stipends generally ranging from \$700 to \$1,200 monthly without benefits. Members explored whether the role could be assigned to a current county physician, whether the benefits structure must remain attached, and whether contractual arrangements would alter liability coverage. Erin will consult with Human Resources and the County Attorney to clarify these issues and will move forward with posting the position.

Erin then reviewed a recent vaccine temperature excursion caused by a weather-related power outage. She explained that vaccines were exposed to temperatures slightly outside the recommended range during transport, but there was no evidence of freezing. While vaccine manufacturers provided verbal assurance that the doses were likely safe, they declined to issue written confirmation. The Vaccine for Children (VFC) Program conducted a full review of temperature data and issued clear directives identifying which doses remained viable and which required disposal. After discussion, the Board agreed that the department should follow VFC guidance for all vaccine inventory—including privately purchased vaccines—to ensure consistency and reduce liability. Erin noted that the department is implementing additional safeguards to prevent future excursions.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding emergency preparedness staffing and the County's broader EMS challenges. The Director explained that the former Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Coordinator resigned for a state position, and due to funding uncertainties, the department abolished the title and created a Public Health Program Coordinator position, with approximately half of the role now devoted to emergency preparedness. Although the title changed, the FTE remains within the Health Department.

Members discussed the possibility of re-envisioning this FTE to support a countywide emergency preparedness and EMS coordination function, noting potential collaboration with Emergency Management and possible funding support from the Sheriff's Office. Significant concerns were raised about delayed ambulance response times and the strain on the county's EMS system, which members identified as a pressing public health issue. Additional discussion included the potential for a community paramedicine program and opportunities for collaboration with local hospital systems. The Director expressed willingness for the position to reside within Public Health if appropriate and to work with other departments as needed. No action was requested at this time as further conversations with additional stakeholders are anticipated.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No executive session was held.

#### **ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING**

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm. Next meeting will take place on December 16, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

#### **ACTION ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP**

N/A