



# Public Health Advisory Committee Report

December 2025

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## Community Health Assessment & Improvement Planning

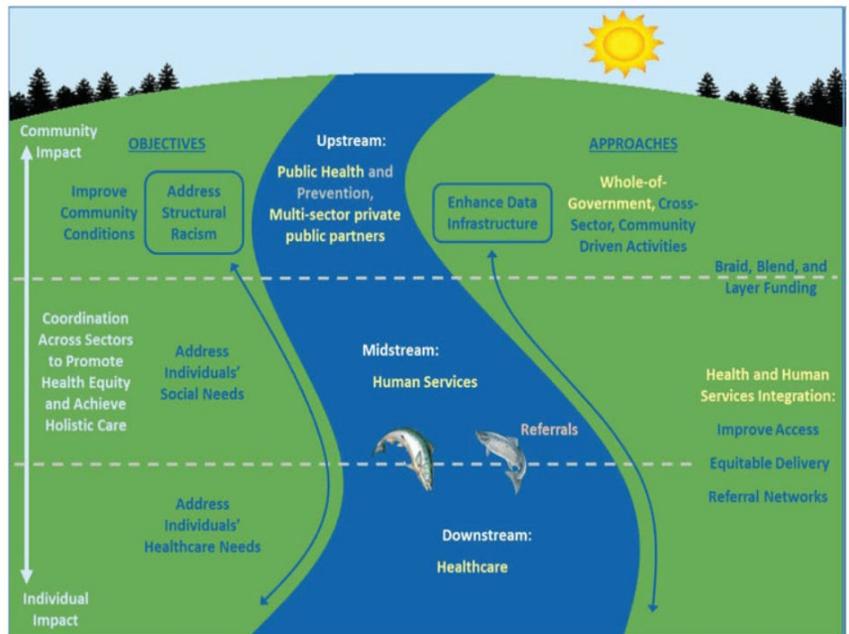
The 2025-2030 Prevention Agenda adopts a broader perspective, emphasizing factors that influence health beyond traditional health outcomes, prevention strategies, medical care, and public health systems. It aligns with Healthy People 2030.

There are **five** domains encompassing 24 key priorities to address health conditions, behaviors, and systemic issues such as poverty, education, housing, and access to quality health care. Addressing these issues is crucial for reducing health.

Many of these priority areas require us to consider less traditional partnerships and engage with sectors that have not operated through a lens of health before. As more and more factors are linked to negative health outcomes or are labeled a public health issue, public health and health care face ever-expanding roles and competing priorities. We are keeping these considerations in focus as we make strategic decisions during improvement planning. Ultimately, the goal will be to develop a manageable plan, which centers on moving toward a few quality upstream approaches for greater community impact, while continuing to operate with and within systems that address the down and mid-stream environments.

Local Prioritization involved collecting and analyzing data, using it to build consensus with stakeholders, partners and community members:

- \*Demographic data
- \*Health indicator data review for each domain
- \*Community Survey
- \*Community Stakeholder Survey
- \*Internal and external planning meetings to review preliminary findings and request prioritization following a matrix
- \*Presenting the prioritization matrix to stakeholders (PHAC, Essex County Board of Supervisors) hospital board, community members).



## 2026-2030 Priorities

### Domain

Economic Stability

### Priority Areas

- Poverty
- Housing stability and affordability
- Unemployment
- Nutrition security

Neighborhood & Built Environment

- Access to community services and support

Social & Community Context

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Tobacco/E-Cigarette use

## Next Steps...

# Improvement Planning



## Emergency Preparedness & Response

Duties are being assumed by existing staff & fluctuating.

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises – 2

- Event: Back-up freezer down; working on new order
- Exercise: Employee flu clinic = Medical Countermeasure (MCM) Exercise

Training/Continuing Education –

1. Building Bridges: Connecting Public health and County Leadership
2. Framing Public Health in Rural Settings
3. Voices of Experience: Communication Strategies from Seasoned Public Health Leaders
4. Public Health and the Law: Recent Changes and the Impact on State and Local Public Health Agencies
5. Building and Sustaining the Public Health Workforce
6. Scenario-Based Framing: Strengthening Leadership and Communication Through Everyday Challenges

Meetings/Coalitions/Community Engagement– 1

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition

Volunteer Coordination – 1 (Recovery Day at Hunter Way – 1 person engaged)

Plan Updates/Revisions – 2 (Outbreak Management Planning & ChemPack Planning)

Highlights, campaigns, activities –

- Participating in the Essex County Lockdown Committee led by the Safety Officer & Deputy County Manager to support emergency response at government center buildings.
- Highlighted September as National Preparedness Month, encouraging citizen preparedness & inviting people to join the MRC.
- Know Your Rights Campaign shared with Health Department program leads to ensure staff working with people in our communities can correctly connect to the appropriate resources provided through NYS Department of State Office for New Americans.



## Communicable Disease

### Immunization Program Updates

Clinics in the community – 3

- 2 Schools – school immunization catch-up clinics
- 1 Flu Clinic for County employees

Individuals immunized – 139

Healthcare provider engagement – 12 phone; 3 e-mail; 1 in-person

\*Highlights, campaigns, activities – Shared the NYSDOH reiteration of Dr. McDonald's Statement regarding immunizations and autism.

School Nurse supports:

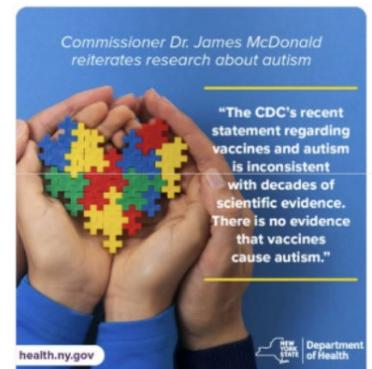
2 schools audited by NYSDOH & attended by ECHD staff

\*1 accepted soft-audit & performed very well on state audit

\*1 did not engage on soft audit offer & had 13 students identified for exclusion

\* 3 schools accepted offers for immunization “soft audits”; 2 public & 1 private

8; updated NYS vaccine records in NYSIIS for 22 children from local school district; multiple immunization trainings completed by public health nurses, including VFC and IQIP; Immunization Action Coalition Meeting for Essex, Clinton and Franklin Counties.





**Hot Topic – Immunizations & 2025-2026 COVID Vaccine**

As a local health department of NYSDOH, we continue to serve as a safety net provider for vaccines. A change in federal guidance for COVID vaccines is leading to a reduced uptake of vaccine across NYS. NYSDOH put out its own guidance in support of vaccination by sub-populations: adults, children and pregnant women in an effort to improve public messaging about guidance.

The Department conducted an assessment of where people of all ages would be able to access COVID vaccines through pharmacies and providers and ordered private, and public (government-funded) vaccine for children and vaccine for adults vaccine) to have in stock to ensure accessibility and has been serving as that safety net provider for people in and around Essex county. Through shared decision making,

In November, the Department launched a 3-week campaign of immunization Shot-Talk: The Vaccine Line is Open! Opening the lines of discussion for Influenza, RSV & COVID-19.

**Shot Talk: The Vaccine Line is Open!**  
Call 518-873-3500 and ask for Laurel or Susanna

ECHD Nurses host **SHOT TALK** to answer your respiratory vaccine questions!  
This week, our focus is on the **COVID vaccine**.

What are the options?	Who is eligible?	How well do they work?	When should I get it?
<b>COVID-19</b> Updated vaccine formula targeting JN.1 or LP.8.1 – Omicron subvariants Options: Moderna and Pfizer (mRNA) or Novavax (protein)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6-23 months: All</li> <li>2-17 years: risk factors or parents desire vaccination</li> <li>Pregnancy: All</li> <li>Adults: pending</li> </ul>	If you received a booster in the past 30-60% additional protection against illness & severe disease	Protection against <b>severe disease: Get now</b> Protection against <b>infection: Best before a wave, which can be challenging to time</b> <b>Recently infected? Wait at least 6 months</b>

**Shot Talk: The Vaccine Line is Open!**  
Call 518-873-3500 and ask for Laurel or Susanna

ECHD Nurses host **SHOT TALK** to answer your respiratory vaccine questions!  
This week, our focus is about the **RSV for Older Adults Vaccine**.

What are the options?	Who is eligible?	How well do they work?	When should I get it?
<b>RSV (OLDER ADULTS)</b> CSK and Pfizer (protein) or Moderna (mRNA)	All 75+ and adults 50-74 with risk factors. Should get one lifetime dose	Reduces risk of severe disease by 82-86%	Now: Protection is durable

Recommended by CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

**Shot Talk: The Vaccine Line is Open!**  
Call 518-873-3500 and ask for Laurel or Susanna

ECHD Nurses launch **SHOT TALK** to answer your respiratory vaccine questions!  
This week, our focus begins with the **Influenza (Flu) Vaccine**.

What are the options?	Who is eligible?	How well do they work?	When should I get it?
<b>INFLUENZA</b> A shot that targets 3 strains of seasonal flu	6 months+	Reduces the risk of going to the doctor by 30-60%	October is ideal, as vaccine protection wanes over a season

Recommended by CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

**ECHD & Nurses Office Hours**  
**MONTHLY STETHO SCOOP**

**October:** Respiratory Illness Update: Laurel Rule, RN, BSN

**November:** Valerie Stanley, a pediatric nurse practitioner specializing in neurology, from the *Epilepsy Foundation*, presented an educational session on epilepsy classification, seizure types, and treatment options to school nurses. The

session covered various aspects of epilepsy management, including diagnostic methods, treatment approaches, and rescue medications, while addressing the challenges of drug resistance and surgical considerations. Valerie also discussed the importance of proper medication storage and handling in schools, and mentioned the availability of continuing education credits through pre and post-test assessments.

**December:** Emergency Transport Policy Discussion-NYSED Resources, NYS Center for School Health Resources, Plan Sharing

## TB Prevention Program

Annual report of TB activities due to NYSDOH; will be training staff on this requirement.

## Hep C Focus Group

NYSDOH facilitated a local focus group based on seemingly high Hep C rates in Essex County. Our Diseases Specialist reviewed local data in preparation to discussion about existing knowledge, assets, challenges related to **TESTING, TREATMENT & CURE** based on [NYSDOH Cure Hep C goals](#):

YEAR	ACUTE	CHRONIC	
PERINATAL			
2023	2	27	0
2024	1	28	0
2025	2	21	1

### OUTCOMES:

1. Staff Training: Inmate and/or Jail Setting must be selected if/as appropriate or upon query those individuals appear as community residents and not within the jail setting.
2. Planned Parenthood Contracts for 2026 will be updated to include recommended practice of opt-out testing for everyone accessing services through our contract with them. In 2025 10 people accepted testing through that contract to date):
  - 1 person born in 1980s; 7 in 1990s; 2 in 2000s.

## New York State Requirements for Universal Hepatitis C Testing

### Why does New York State require universal hepatitis C testing?

- New cases of hepatitis C are on the rise, particularly among reproductive age adults. Most new infections occur among adults 20-39 years of age. Hepatitis C among pregnant people has increased over the last decade.
- Most people with hepatitis C have no symptoms. Almost half of people with hepatitis C are unaware of their infection. If left untreated, hepatitis C can lead to serious liver disease.
- Hepatitis C is curable. More than 90 percent of people with hepatitis C can be treated and cured with 8–12 weeks of oral therapy.
- Testing is the first step to getting curative treatment and eliminating hepatitis C in New York State.

### What are New York State requirements for universal hepatitis C testing?

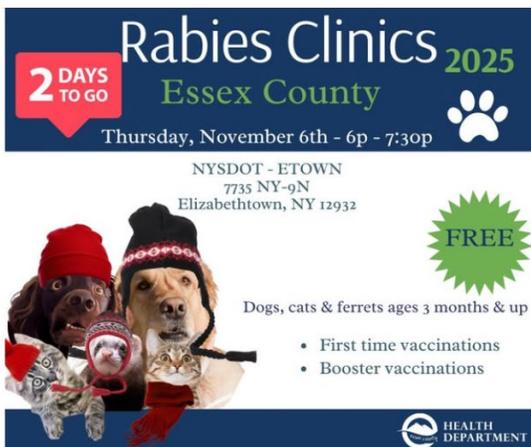
Effective May 3, 2024, New York State requires a hepatitis C screening test be provided to:

- Every person 18 years and older.
- People younger than 18 if there is indication of risk.
- All pregnant people during each pregnancy. Screening test results must be recorded in the pregnant person's medical record at or before the time of hospital admission for delivery.

If the screening test is reactive, a hepatitis C RNA test must be performed on the same specimen or a second specimen collected at the same time as the initial test, to confirm diagnosis of current hepatitis C infection.

If the hepatitis C RNA test is detectable, the health care provider must either offer the person follow-up hepatitis C health care and treatment, or refer the person to a health care provider who can.

## Rabies Prevention Program



**Rabies Clinics 2025**  
Essex County  
Thursday, November 6th - 6p - 7:30p

2 DAYS TO GO

NYSDOT - ETOWN  
7735 NY-9N  
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

**FREE**

Dogs, cats & ferrets ages 3 months & up

- First time vaccinations
- Booster vaccinations

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

We had a successful last clinic of 2025, vaccinating 82 pets!

This year, we got the closest to that goal than we have in the past few years!

2022 - 440 pets vaccinated  
2023 - 696 pets vaccinated  
2024 - 583 pets vaccinated

2025 - 713 pets vaccinated!! 🐾🐾🐾

Our goal for this year and last was to vaccinate 900 pets.

9 cases of rabies thus far in Essex County —8 in terrestrial animals and 1 in a bat.

Elizabethtown: 1 skunk and 1 raccoon  
Essex: 1 raccoon  
Jay: 1 grey fox

Westport: 1 raccoon and one bat  
Ticonderoga: 1 woodchuck and one raccoon  
Willsboro: 1 skunk



**Environmental Health**

**Air, Water and Food Health & Safety**

Air Safety/Quality/Excessive Heat Alerts - 0

Public Water Notices

Boil Water Orders – 1

Blue-Green Algae Notices – 0

**Climate and Health**

Initiatives –

- DEET wipes were handed out at the Essex County Health Department Rabies Clinic in Schroon Lake to raise awareness and prevent tick borne illnesses.

**Family Health**

**Baby Steps to Bright Futures**

Babies born & families offered the Program – 10-20/month

Families enrolled in the program – 2 – 7

Families that sent a packet as unable to reach or declined the program – all (unless refusal)

Referrals out to programs and services – 1-5

**\*Initiated a DSS go-with visit. Baby Steps staff will go with DSS visits for anyone who is currently or will be eligible for the baby steps program to encourage participation.**

*Certified Lactation Consultant Certifications - 3*

Little Feeders Circle of Support

Lack of attendance will re-examine for 2026.



**Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**

Lead Cases open (elevated lead levels in pregnant women or children) & ensure appropriate follow-up care:

Active Children – 8-18

Pending confirmatory testing - 9

Released with confirmatory testing stating capillary testing was falsely elevated – 0-2

\*2 closed as refusal of care coordinator services. 1 closed due to moving out of county.

**\*Goal is to initiate a pediatric-friendly lab tech or point of contact or clinic hours at locations throughout the county.**

Experienced or fear of trauma to infants and parents is identified as a reason that venous blood draws do not occur or parents do not return for confirmatory testing. Goal is to model after UVM program on a much smaller scale.

**Car Seat Program**

Car seat check clinics – 14

Car seats checked - 15

Car seats issued as new & installed – 13

**Sexual & Reproductive Health**

Schools/Camps/Groups – 4 Schools (Northwood, Keene, Minerva, Moriah)

Classes/Students – 208 students

CAP Pack Distribution – 92

**Car Seat Checks by our Techs!**

**FREE!**

During the WIC Clinic in Lake Placid  
 Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> 10am - 2pm  
 Lake Placid Beach House

**Hillary Drake**  
 Has a specialty in special needs transportation, ensuring children with unique medical needs are secure in their seats.

**Liz Terry**  
 She's an expert on the latest car seat models and has been a key organizer for our community's free car seat check events.

**Emily French**  
 Has a passion for helping other parents navigate the sometimes confusing world of car seat laws and recalls.



# HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Unit

## Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (COOP)

Narcan Kits Distributed – 73

Groups Trained - 1

SUDOR Submissions/ODs – 3

YTD ODs Non-Fatal/Fatal – **23 Non-Fatal/2 Fatal**

### Community Care Kiosks

Narcan requests through website down to very few however access through vending machine up.

Examining the possibility of another location in Lake Placid.

### ECHO Overdose Fatality Review

Second annual Recovery Day was successfully enjoyed by all in attendance; approximately 60.



Essex County Heroin Opioid/Other (ECHO Coalition conducted its first official Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) October 16, 2025.



All agencies engage with the purpose of identifying:

- \* key factors that contributed to the overdose
- \* community-level prevention and intervention strategies
- \* opportunities to improve system-level operations, policies, programs and services that will ultimately prevent future overdoses.

In preparation for this review the Health Department worked diligently to ensure a secured file sharing location for OFR member agencies to share information about the case and a policy for safety of information storage. Agencies also met to ensure they freshly understood their role in contributing information, building the timeline and identifying recommendations for partner agencies to move forward with as a result of the OFR.

Agencies marked this first OFR as successful and will continue this valuable collaborative work.



**Chronic Disease Prevention**



Using the existing backbone of the Well Fed Essex County Collaborative, of which the Health department chairs, the county as a whole has been able to mount a speedy response to the lack of funding for the federal program called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The SNAP program has been in place in various ways since 1939, permanently funded as a program since 1964 and re-named SNAP in 2008.

This is the first time in history the SNAP program has been left without federal funding, even through federal shutdowns such as the one leading to the current lack of funding. County data shows that more than 2,900 residents currently use SNAP benefits. Of these recipients, 30% are age 61 or older, and 27% are under age 18. This demographic breakdown is relevant as the County's percentage of residents age 65+ is 24.9%, meaning nearly a quarter of the County's total population is aging adults—the highest rate in the region.

Knowing residents would be turning to food pantries and food assistance programs, the Well Fed Collaborative was identified as a natural place to direct people seeking help themselves and those wanting to help their friends and neighbors. The Health Department worked diligently on updating the information on local food pantries and the map available on the Well Fed website. On the Well Fed website people can also find food programs such as low and no-cost meals, and food and nutrition support programs for which people may be eligible. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County mobilized a way to accept funds for those wanting to donate through a few clicks. And at the Regular Meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors on November 3rd, the Board appropriated \$20,000 for food pantries serving the county.

Having been in existence for over 7 years the Well Fed Collaborative led to an amazing capacity to be quickly responsive to this harsh reality through well established relationships and an existing web platform: <https://wellfedessexcounty.org/>

**Active Transportation Engagement**

We continue to serve as a catalyst for engagement with local towns, county DPW & NYS DOT for Active Transportation.

Keene - request stands for \$100,000 Active Transportation & Management study for NYS Route 73 at Roostercomb Trailhead Parking and NYS Route 73 and 9N intersection.

- Lewis – Speed limit reduced in town to 40 mph. Three data collection points determined for traffic studies.
- The community survey for the multi-modal traffic study on US Route 9 in the Town of Lewis went live and is being promoted through local online platforms. **If you ever drive on US Route 9 in Lewis, we would love your feedback!**

Willsboro – Seven data collection points determined for traffic studies.

**US ROUTE 9 SAFETY STUDY**

**COMMUNITY SURVEY NOW OPEN**  
You live here. We want to know what you think.

We invite members of the community to share their experiences and insights by completing a short survey about travel conditions along US Route 9 in the Hamlet of Lewis. Your feedback on driving, walking, and biking is essential in helping us identify current challenges and opportunities for improvement. By participating, you'll play an important role in shaping future transportation planning and safety enhancements in our community. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and help us create a safer, more accessible US Route 9 for everyone.

The Town of Lewis, along with Essex County and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT), is working on a safety study along US Route 9 within the Hamlet of Lewis. The Town's Comprehensive Plan outlines a vision to transform US Route 9 into a vibrant "Main Street" with improved sight distances, traffic calming measures, sidewalks, crosswalks, public parking, and landscaping. This study will help identify specific improvements to bring this vision to life.

By evaluating existing conditions, identifying challenges, and exploring opportunities for improvements, the study will provide a roadmap for future projects that support economic strength, public health, and community connectivity. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to creating a safer, more welcoming, and more resilient transportation system for the Town of Lewis.

All comments, questions, and concerns can be sent to [US9SafetyStudy@njteam.com](mailto:US9SafetyStudy@njteam.com).

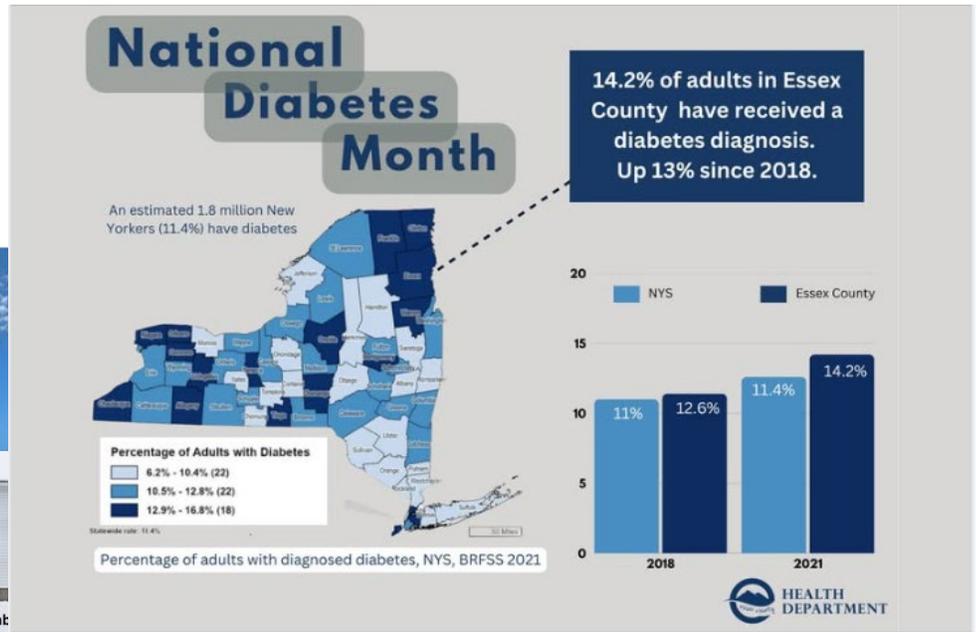


# HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Unit

## Campaign Highlights

- **Breast Cancer Awareness Month** – Approximately 700 pairs of gloves were distributed with the message “Get a grip. Get a mammogram”, to local health centers, high school sporting events, and senior centers. Double sided shower card were distributed with the gloves. One side illustrated how to do a breast self-exam and the other side illustrated a testicular self-exam.
- Through a partnership with Essex County STOP-DWI, billboard messaging was purchased to encourage people to **make a sober plan when driving** this holiday season with the “see our trails, not our jails” campaign.
- **November for Men’s Health Awareness** – Shower Cards demonstrating how to do testicular self-exams, and other items promoting men’s health concerns were distributed to 3 local gyms, the Essex County Health Department, and 2 hardware stores. One social media post was made.
- **Diabetes Awareness Month** – Cutting boards with healthy eating messaging and education were distributed at the Essex County Health Department. Two social media posts were made.



- **The Great American Smokeout, November 20th** – Go Purple to raise awareness for smoking cessation and to recognize the 25th anniversary of the NYS Quitline. The Health Department Building was illuminated at night in purple lights, employees wore purple to recognize the day, and two social media posts were made.
- The Essex County Health Department assisted with promotion of the **Regional Food Bank’s Thanksgiving Food Distribution** on November 22, 2025.
- #GetFitEssexCounty – Every Step Counts. Every Band Rep Matters
- Healthy Aging Month
- Hunger Action Month
- UVMHN-Elizabethtown Community Hospital “Fall into Health Fair” - 27 community members participated

## Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings

- Nutrition (Well Fed)
- Tobacco - TURN



# HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## Public Health Unit

### STAFFING UPDATE

1 Outreach Coordinator returned part-time in October

1 Outreach Coordinator resigned – county is not hiring – duties are being re-assigned internally

### FISCAL UPDATES

#### Grants management

Statewide Financial System:

- Lead
- WIC
- Children & Youth with Special Healthcare Needs
- Early Intervention

Bureau of Communicable Disease Control issues and manages through the Health Commerce System for just:

- Rabies

Bureau of Immunization Grants are managed under programs with email-only communication; including:

- Immunization Action Plan

Office of Health Emergency Preparedness manages grants through Health Research Institute (HRI); including:

- Emergency Preparedness & Response
- Public Health Infrastructure

NYS Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee operates their own e-Grants platform for the following:

- Car Seat – awarded \$4,700 for car seats, education & ongoing training of staff
- On July 29<sup>th</sup> - awarded \$2,800 for traffic safety campaigns and activities.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) award to Essex County supports:

- Baby Steps to Bright Futures Program; and
- Essex County Heroin and Other (ECHO) Coalition.

New York State Association of County & City Health Officials (NYSACHO) funds:

- None at this time

Private funds:

The Dept was awarded JUUL Settlement funds in an initial installment of \$104,472.93 for the first 3 years with a 5 years award to total \$278,594.49. Funds are being used to work with the Prevention Team on evidenced based education in schools, retailer compliance checks, media campaigns and community outreach.