

Public Health Advisory Committee Report

March 2025

Jessica Darney Buehler, MPH Director of Health Planning & Promotion

Communications is Key

Communications is a cross-cutting strategy for all the Department's programs and services and an incredibly important way to: *engage with the community* * *raise awareness of important health topics, warning or emergencies* * *invite behavior change* * *share reliable & accurate information* * *build trust*.

We use social media, reports, 1-pagers, and are now working on the launch of a newsletter to advance engagement with an even broader audience. What do we know? Using eye-catching images, humor and simple language are all important ways to connect with our local audience. That's what we do!

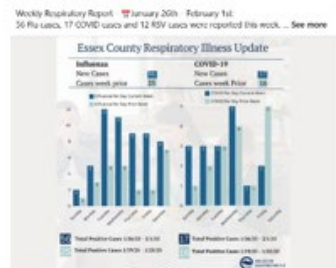
Your feedback = Our focus - fill out our 3 minute survey
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NG3L23G>



Engagement-Community Survey



Awareness – Health Topic



Trust – Local Information

Community Health Assessment & Improvement Planning

CHA Progress Updates & Special Reports



Our Community Survey is live and we have received 143 responses so far! Our goal is 1,000+ responses, so we encourage all Essex County residents to take the survey and share their thoughts about health and well-being in their communities. Residents can access our survey on the Essex County Health Department website (home page) or on Essex County's main landing page <https://essexcountyny.gov/>.

We also frequently share the survey link on our social media pages.

Town Supervisors and other leaders in education, business, health and human services, etc. will be receiving a link to complete a Stakeholder Survey. Please consider taking this survey! Your input will influence priority setting for the Essex County Health Partners (health department and healthcare) for the next several years.

On January 31, 2025, Essex County Health Partners (ECHD, UVMHN-ECH, and Adirondack Health) issued our final 2022-2024 CHIP update to the NYSDOH. This update covered the progress made on each CHIP intervention identified. ECHD staff are working on updating our Community Health Assessment webpage to reflect all of the work accomplished over the last 3 years (example below of what this looks like currently):



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Unit

Communicable Disease

Vaccine Program

SCHOOL VACCINE SUPPORT

Communications

NYSDOH School Immunization Requirements Handbook

Immunizations Requirements Slide Presentation

Promotion of Training on the School Nurse Survey

Specific Consultation provided

Public Schools: Keene, Minerva, Newcomb, Ausable Valley, Willsboro, Saranac Lake, Boquet Valley

Private Schools: Mountain Lake Academy, Northwood School, North Country School



January

- Introduction of our nurses to school nurses & school nurses to each other
- School Immunization Schedules, Tracking & Recent Local Audit Experiences
- Head lice management

February

- Medication Waste Management
- Respiratory Illness Update including Avian Influenza
- Health Screenings: Scoliosis, Vision, Hearing

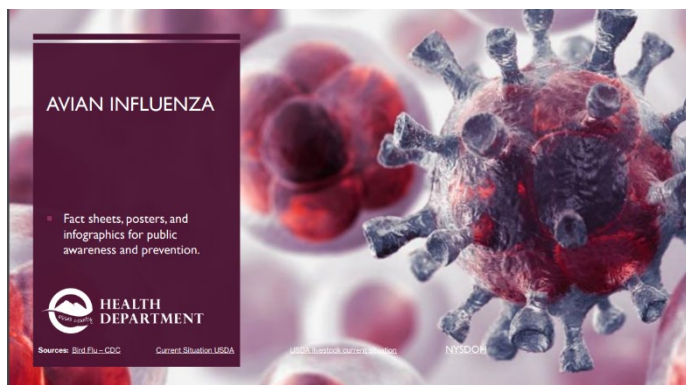
March

- Epinephrine

VFC/VFA

Nurses have continued to support students and families in getting vaccines.

We are seeing increase in calls and inquiries for people that are immigrants and new to living in Essex County.



HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI) A - H5N1

Continue to follow the developments around avian influenza around NYS and the US. We reached out with facts sharing early on as the press was ramping up coverage & we wanted to ensure staff knowledge across the Department. Ongoing planning includes readying with staff training for specimen shipping & handling, standing orders for specimen collection & review of POD locations.

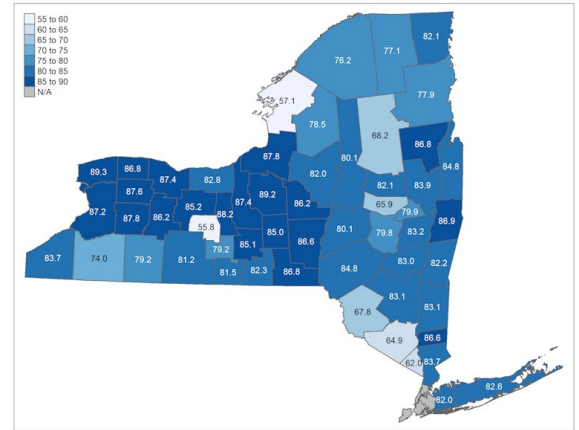


HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Unit

Measles Outbreak

CDC and NYS have both issue Health Alerts for Measles. This map shows measles vaccination rate across NY.



DATE: February 26, 2025

TO: Hospitals, Laboratories, Emergency Medicine, Critical Care, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Adolescent Medicine, Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, Infection Control Practitioners, Urgent Care, Primary Care Providers, Director of Nursing, Local Health Departments

FROM: New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Division of Vaccine Excellence and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH), Bureau of Immunization

HEALTH ADVISORY: Measles Activity in the United States and Canada

Summary

Measles activity is increasing in parts of the United States and Canada in 2025.

- The [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) is reporting an outbreak of measles in the South Plains Region of Texas, with 124 cases as of February 25, 2025. Only five of the persons were vaccinated, 18 patients have been hospitalized and there has been one death.
- The [New Mexico Department of Health](#) is reporting an outbreak of measles in Lea County, near Gaines County, Texas. As of February 25, 2025, 9 cases have been identified.
- The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) has reported 44 cases of measles in 2025, 31 cases in Ontario and 13 in Quebec. Thirty-three (33) persons were unvaccinated or had unknown vaccination status and four patients have been hospitalized.
- The [New Jersey Department of Health](#) has reported 3 cases of measles among unvaccinated Bergen County residents as of February 20, 2025.
- The NYCDOHMH has reported two unrelated cases of measles since the beginning of 2025. During this time, there have been no cases identified in New York State outside of New York City.
- "Immune amnesia," or the resetting of the immune system, can occur among persons who are infected with measles. This can cause increased susceptibility to other infectious diseases after a measles infection.
- The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, which includes two doses, is 97% effective at preventing measles. Communities develop herd immunity when at least 95% of residents are vaccinated.
- MMR vaccination rates by NYS county and zip code (excluding NYC) are available [here](#).

Rabies Cases:

An effort was undertaken to offer at least 1 rabies clinic on a with the goal of improving access to older residents who may not want to venture out for evening clinics and/or working adults who may be very busy with families and/or jobs during regular evening clinic hours. Unfortunately, for 2025 a Saturday clinic did not make it into the 2025 schedule due to Veterinary availability.

However, this Department continues to exceed the minimal requirement of offering clinics once every 4 months.

We know how importance these clinics are to our residents and furry friends and we look forward to seeing everyone at our 8 scheduled clinics this year. A 2025 schedule is now available for posting is Town Halls & sharing widely.



What's NEW??

*Clinic Times 6p-7:30p

*Check your location day of week



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Unit

Sexual & Reproductive Health



Staff tabled at NCCC Saranac Lake and Ticonderoga Campuses for **National Condom Week**.

CAP Educational Packs, Narcan and information about programs and services was provided.

HIV and HCV testing and counseling was offered, as well as other promotional items and resources.

Goal for 2025 remain to increase use of contracted services with Planned Parenthood to increase accessibility to services.

Reproductive Health Program

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education

We provide comprehensive reproductive education to community members through school classes, groups, camps and other platforms. Educators cover a range of topics, including:

- Puberty and Development: Understanding the physical and emotional changes during adolescence.
- Reproductive Health: Learning about the reproductive system, menstruation, and conception.
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): Information on how STIs are transmitted, prevention methods, and treatment options.
- Contraception: Education on various methods of birth control and their effectiveness.
- Healthy Relationships: Discussions about consent, boundaries, communication, and respect in relationships.
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Providing accurate and inclusive information about diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Decision-Making and Consent: Emphasizing the importance of informed consent and responsible decision-making regarding sexual activity.
- Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention: Educating students about recognizing and preventing sexual abuse and assault, and resources for support.

Condom Access Program

Our Condom Access Program (CAP) places education about sexual health, birth control options and more in easily-accessible locations throughout Essex County.

CAP packs are small bags with condoms, information on proper condom use, all birth control options and STD/HIV testing information.

CAP Packs are FREE and available at locations throughout Essex County

HIV & Hepatitis C Testing

HIV Counseling and testing is recommended for everyone ages 13-64. One in six (1/6) people with HIV do not know they are infected.

We provide testing for HIV and Hepatitis C. To schedule an appointment for HIV Counseling and Testing, or more information call 518-875-3500

Confidential STI Testing

STI Testing

We understand that getting tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is a personal matter. Everyone deserves affordable, compassionate, and confidential health care. That's why we offer testing options to ensure your privacy.

We contract with Planned Parenthood for STI testing services for our residents at the following office locations:

Saratoga Springs - 518-584-0041	Queensbury - 518-792-0994
Saranac Lake - 518-891-0046	Plattsburgh - 518-561-4450

You can also visit PlannedParenthood.org and enter your zip code for location information. *Unfortunately, we do not have a contract with offices in Vermont at this time.

How to get tested:

You can privately and easily book your appointment online for select services 24/7 with Planned Parenthood of the North Country or Planned Parenthood of Greater New York or you can call to book your appointment by location or ask further questions.

If you don't have insurance, or do not wish to use your insurance, Essex County Health Department will be billed and pay for costs of your STI testing. Please mention the Essex County Health Department when scheduling your appointment to receive free testing.

For more information on any of these topics, call 518-875-3500. Or scan the code.

SCAN ME

Family Health

Baby Steps to Bright Futures

Every 4.5 minutes, a baby is born with a condition that affects how their body works or looks. These conditions are called birth defects. They can vary greatly and include things like cleft lips and heart problems. While medical advances have improved health and survival rates, many of these conditions last a lifetime and need ongoing care.

Achieving the best possible health will look different for different people. No two people living with these conditions are exactly alike. Everyone's journey is unique, shaped by their specific condition, individual strengths, and the support system in place. However, a community of support can help people with these conditions no matter what health experiences they are navigating. Learn more here - <https://www.cdc.gov/birth.../awareness-month/index.html>

Have about 25-30% of families that accept the program.

Families do reach back out after receiving the declination packet to accept a home visit for breastfeeding support. So even if they don't accept the full program, they do accept some level of service & we build a connection.

Car Seat Program

3 Technicians continue to serve upon request.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

8-10 Active cases

We try to go out with Environmental Health for every visit.

We work to make a connection to assistance with Adirondack Roots & Pride of Ticonderoga for cases where significant home improvements & restoration is needed.

JANUARY IS NATIONAL BIRTH DEFECTS AWARENESS MONTH

Every Journey Matters

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

CDC

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises –


- 1 Tabletop Discussion exercise- Explosion at Essex County Fairgrounds
- 2 Real Word Event-
 - Boil Water Notice: Saranac Lake
 - Fridge Temp Excursion and Sensaphone notification error.

Chronic Disease Prevention

Campaigns

JANUARY: #getfitsexcounty – “Fresh Start, Healthy Hearts”

- January – “See our trails, not our jails” continued into January to raise awareness of drinking and driving. Coasters, napkins, and/or pint glasses with sober driving messaging have been delivered to **38** local businesses serving alcohol to Essex County residents.

FEBRUARY: #getfitsexcounty - Pump It Up for Heart Health 

- Heart Health Event attendance at 2 UVMHN-ECH Locations
- “Drink Less, Be Your Best” Older New Yorker Health Promotion

Well Fed Essex County Collaborative

- Is coordinating planning efforts to offer trauma informed response training to food shelf volunteers in Essex County.

TURN (Tobacco Use Reduction Network of Essex County)

- Is engaged in communication with Clinton Community College to improve its campus tobacco use policy to have only designated areas or tobacco free, as it currently only follows the NYS Clean Indoor Air Act.
- TURN has also developed a comprehensive plan for appropriate service allocation of JUUL settlement funds.

Year 12 Incentive – Chronic Disease Prevention

- The Essex County Health Department received a bonus point for work on the Year 12-NYS Performance Incentive, resulting in an award for the maximum available funding.
- Additional resources as a result of Year 12-NYS Performance Incentive work, active transportation, are continuing with six firms submitting interest in conducting traffic studies in the towns of Lewis and Willsboro.

Year 13 Incentive - Climate & Health

- The Year 13-NYS Performance Incentive is focused on climate health, and all relevant tracking measures for incentive funds are being worked on.





STAFFING UPDATE

1 Disease Specialist on Maternity Leave > ~4 months program covered by 3 different people; returning in March
1 Outreach Coordinator to go out on Maternity leave in July

FISCAL UPDATES

Grants management

Statewide Financial System supposed to go into operations January 16, 2024; partial launch. System for the following grants:

- 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
- MRC Sttrong

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

- Car Seat

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 through Adirondack Foundation and Safe Kids Adirondack support:

- Baby Steps to Bright Futures Program.