

Public Health Advisory Committee Report

September 2025

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Community Health Assessment & Improvement Planning



COMMUNITY HEALTH PLANNING SESSION

Community Planning Session from 11AM – 2PM at the hospital board room. There were **23** individuals in attendance representing over **17** agencies/organizations that serve Essex County. The session focused on fostering collaboration among various organizations involved in community health initiatives, with participants sharing their roles and the importance of working together to address community health needs. Key discussions highlighted the challenges of operating in silos and the enthusiasm for re-establishing connections. Participants emphasized the integration of social needs with healthcare as a crucial factor in improving community well-being, while also acknowledging the need for effective communication and partnership among stakeholders.

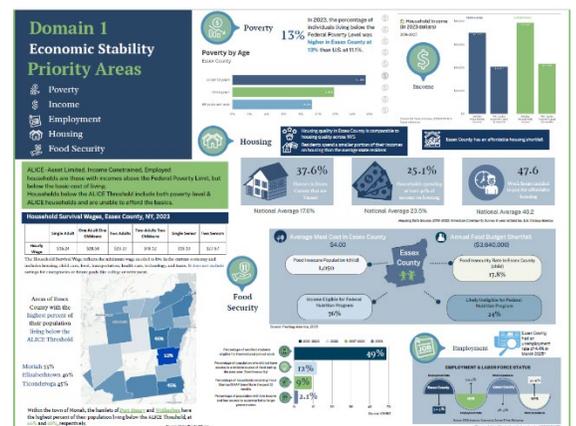
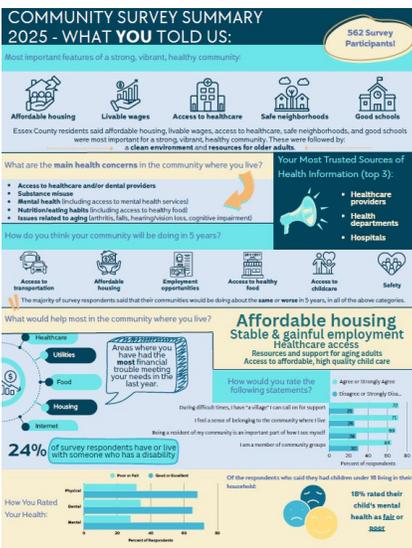
The agenda included an overview of the 2025-2030 New York State Prevention Agenda, which emphasizes broader social determinants of

health. A timeline was established for completing the Community Health Assessment by the end of the year, with a focus on local data to meet specific county needs. Preliminary CHA data was shared, broken out by Prevention Agenda Domain Area (see photo right). Evidence-based interventions and the inclusion of diverse populations in health initiatives were also underscored.

Conducted June 23rd 11 AM – 2 PM and second session conducted September 8th 1-2 PM. Meetings to be quarterly.

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS are in – Attached

PRELIMINARY DATA is BEING ANALYZED



Emergency Preparedness & Response

Staff resignation due to concern about federal funding.
County hiring freeze so the position is not being posted. Duties are being re-assigned internally with existing staff.



Communicable Disease

Summer Camp Summary

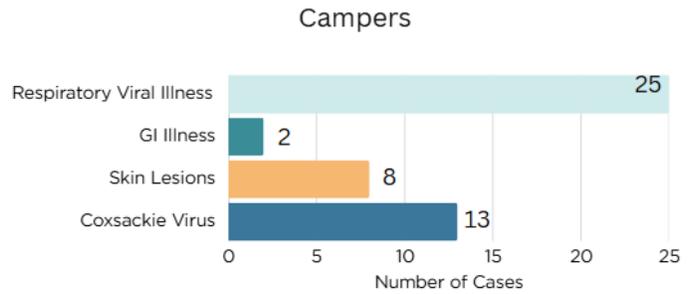


With the permitting Environmental District Office, Public Health is reaching out to all summer camps as we work together to ensure health & safety for youth regarding communicable diseases and rabies during the summers in Essex County.

There are **13 overnight camps**; **13 days camps** planned in 2025.



Communicable Disease Incidents



Investigations included 5 of the 13 camps

TB Prevention Program

No updates.



Hot Topic – Immunizations & 2025-2026 COVID Vaccine



Recent Federal actions limited eligibility for COVID vaccine to those ages 65 and older. NYS issued Health Advisories with supporting data for children, Pregnant People and Adults recommending the COVID vaccine receive the COVID vaccine.

To increase accessibility, Commissioner Dr. MacDonald issued Non-Patient Specific Standing Orders for People ages 3 and older allowing Pharmacists to administer the COVID vaccine to those 6 months – 64 years with at least 1 underlying health condition as self-attested without documentation and those 65 and older.

This Executive Order stands until October 5, 2025. Governor Hochul will partner with Legislature on Long Term Solution To Protect Immunization Access in New York. Additionally, New York is also working in coordination with — and helping to lead — a regional multi-state public health collaboration among Northeast states, which brings together public health leaders across the region to develop evidence-based recommendations and approaches on vaccination, disease surveillance, and emergency preparedness. The collaborative also supports state public health laboratories in sharing resources and expertise to strengthen regional readiness.

Vaccine Program

- * Back-up freezer at the Public Safety Building now also needs replacement & the Department is looking into replacing that freezer.
- * Nurses have fielded call from people with English as a second language requesting vaccines & used VFA program to serve.

School Nurse In-Service Success- August 28th



Nurses gathered for an in-person School-Nurse In-Service on August 28, 2025. The agenda was packed with Epilepsy Training, School Wellness Committee information, NYS Center for School Health Resources, Immunization Schedules and Requirements, Online Grooming & Human Trafficking Awareness, and Introduction to the Prevention Team Programs and Services. Nurses expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet and mingle, to learn and share experiences.

To keep the connection going the Department will continue with its monthly remote Stetho-Scoop Office Hours - an opportunity to cover a hot topic of school-aged health and continued conversations. Because most of our nurses are the only nurse in their district, offering these opportunities to connect and build relationships with each other is a valuable connecting role our Department plays in the community.

Nurses are working with schools to check immunization records and set up school co-located clinics for school-required immunizations.

To resume in September





Tick-borne Disease Outreach

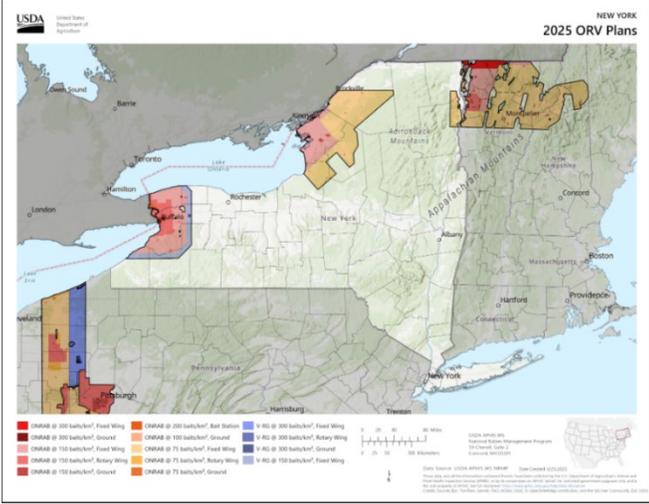
GreatRange
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Some fun behind the scenes images from our shoot today with **Essex County, NY Health** for an upcoming PSA on tick borne disease prevention.



Linda Beers presented at a community forum at the Keene Valley Community Library on August 4, 2025 to an engaged audience of over 20 people.

The Department is also working on a public service announcement (PSA) with retired public health nurse, Alana Forcier, her daughter and grandchildren. Alana (Lonnie) falls into the population of those greater than 60 years of age who are diagnosed with Lyme Disease. Lonnie shared her story in the video shoot and the intent of the PSA is to alert our residents to be aware of tick-borne disease risk in this population. The key message is increased risk for adults and extended tick seasons. We want people to continue to enjoy being outside while covering up and checking up – themselves and their furry friends.

Rabies Prevention Program



Oral Rabies Vaccine Bait Drop Program – Aug 6-12,- 2025

Following a spring rabies bait drop campaign from May 5 - 10 that covered a similar geographical area, the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services announced additional bait drops planned for the week of Aug 6 – 12.

Wildlife Services in cooperation with multiple states will distribute the **ONRAB bait-drop** vaccine in the Champlain Valley of Essex County as part of an ongoing field evaluation of the its effectiveness to control rabies in raccoons and skunks.

This year’s field assessment is part of a multi-year study addressing operational questions related to bait density, flight line spacing, and effectiveness. The first U.S. field trial with ONRAB took place in West Virginia during 2011 and was expanded between 2012-2020 to include strategic areas in Ohio, New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

- Oral rabies vaccination has been conducted in New York since 1995.
- **Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) baiting** occurs in three geographic regions of New York – the Saint Lawrence Valley Region in the northern part of the state; the Champlain Valley in northeastern New York; and the Buffalo-Niagara Region of Western New York.
- From approximately August 6-12, 867,600 ONRAB baits will be distributed across the Champlain Valley in northeastern New York, northern Vermont and northern New Hampshire by fixed wing aircraft, **including 37,000 baits in Clinton and Essex Counties, NY (Figure above).**



Environmental Health

Air, Water and Food Health & Safety

Air Safety/Quality Alerts - 6

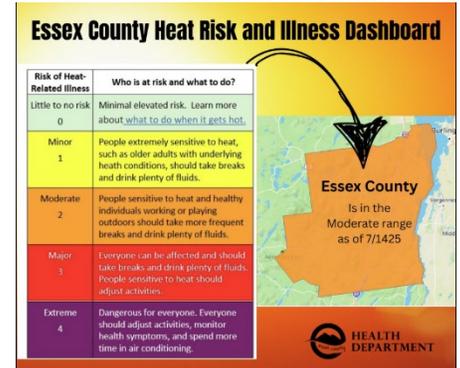
Public Water Notices - 1

Blue-Green Algae Notices -5

Climate and Health

Initiatives – Year 13 NYSDOH Performance Incentive focuses on Climate and Health

- **Tracking Measure 1**
 - Identify a Climate Champion & ensure training
- **Tracking Measure 2**
 - Know local resources & risks (flood zones in your county)
- **Tracking Measure 4**
 - Identify CBOs with whom we can partner for safety messaging for at-risk populations
- **Tracking Measure 5**
 - Update our website to connect climate change/extreme weather impacts health.
 - Requirements for the webpage include
 - Information on how people can protect their health.
 - Links to state or county programs/initiatives/projects supporting climate and health adaptation (e.g. DEC Climate Smart Communities, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance HEAP Cooling Benefit, NYSEERDA Clean Energy Programs).
- **Tracking Measure 6**
 - Conduct Social Media Campaigns around Climate and Health
- **Tracking measure 7**
 - Update Cooling Center Maps Online & Share for accessibility : <https://arcg.is/0DfzOv1>
- **Tracking Measure 8 (OPTIONAL)**
 - Develop & Submit a Communications Timeline and Plan



Sun safety messaging began for the summer months.



Initiatives –

- Sunscreen was provided free of charge to attendees at the Essex County Fair, and provided the opportunity for discussion and education about skin cancer.
- A reminder about Essex County Cooling Centers was posted to social media on August 12, 2025.
- Attended an ACORN sponsored conference at the Wild Center in Tupper Lake entitled “Fire in the Adirondacks: It has happened before – Can it happen again?”

Essex County, NY Health
August 12 at 9:20 AM

It is important to stay cool when temperatures are high, especially during several hot days in a row. Spending a few hours a day in air conditioning during extreme heat... See more

Beat THE HEAT

Essex County cooling centers

Crown Point, Keene, Saranac Lake, Westport
Essex, Moriah, Schroon, Willsboro
Jay, North Elba, Ticonderoga, Wilmington



Family Health



Community Baby Shower - August 4th, 2025

- Pregnant Women & those with babies up to 1 year
- Health Education
- Community Resources & Referrals
- Fun Activities
- Photo Station
- Car Seat Checks
- Preparing to Breastfeed Info
- Nurses to Discuss Immunizations

GOALS: Increase participation in the Baby Steps to Bright Futures Program & WIC; Build Trust

41

Certified Lactation Consultant Certifications - 3

Little Feeders Circle of Support are scheduled for Wednesdays throughout the summer. Lack of attendance will re-examine for 2026.

Child Passenger Safety Week
September 21-27



- Monday - Ticonderoga - co-locate at WIC Clinic 10-2
- Tuesday - Regular Tech Check Tuesday at Health Dept 10-2
- Wednesday - MAYBE - LP, Ray Brook, SL - 10-2
- Thursday - Keeseville - co-locate at WIC Clinic 10-2



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Unit

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. Working with 1 cross-care case – Lead Program Staff, DSS, County Manager.

Sexual & Reproductive Health

Staff out on Maternity Leave

2 RNs trained in HIC & HCV Testing & Counseling; STI Surveillance

Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (COOP)

Community Care Kiosks

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

ECHO and Overdose Fatality Review



Through the work of the ECHO Coalition, Essex County hosted an **Overdose Fatality Review TableTop Exercise** on June 5, 2025.

The exercise was facilitated by Lisa Warden, a NYS Public Health Analyst, of the CDC Foundation. Lisa is part of the New York Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) Team. The team developed a **Mock Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Toolkit** to help communities prepare for real-life OFRs. Essex Co was just 1 of 3 communities to pilot the toolkit.

Grounded in national OFR standards and informed by emergency preparedness principles, the toolkit guided the local group through a fictional—yet realistic—simulation of an overdose fatality case review.

There was amazing engagement & participation from local agencies.

Ultimately, OFRs help communities figure out how to improve community systems to prevent future overdoses.

Quote from Public Health Director, Linda Beers:

"The Mock Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Toolkit developed and piloted by the ORS Team has been an invaluable resource for Essex County. As a small rural community with a deeply collaborative spirit, we were thrilled to have a structured guide that walked us through best practices in establishing our own OFR team. The partnership with ORS—especially Lisa and Jim—was thoughtful, thorough, and incredibly responsive. Their ability to customize the toolkit to our needs made the tabletop exercise feel real, impactful, and actionable. Thanks to their leadership and openness to improvement, Essex County is moving forward with confidence as we prepare for our first official OFR this October, fully equipped with the tools and structure needed to make a difference."

Linda is speaking on a panel during the NYSDOH Substance Use Disorder Summit September 11-12, 2025.



Chronic Disease Prevention

Active Transportation Engagement

We continue to serve as a catalyst for engagement with local towns, county DPW & NYSDOT 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.

Willsboro – Seven data collection points determined for traffic studies.

JUUL Settlement \$

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.

- *The Essex County Health Department developed a 1-page public health detailing report (attached) about Tobacco Use and Accessibility in Essex County.*

Polyp Palace Featured at the Essex County Fair



Warren County Public Health lent us their “Colon Cave” to ECHD for display at the Essex County Fair this year from August 13-17.

The 10-foot tall, 20-foot long walk through inflatable replica of the human colon comes equipped with examples of the maladies that can afflict the colon. Visitors passed through it to learn more about the progression from polyps to the different stages of colon cancer, as well as diverticulitis and more.

This endeavor dovetails nicely with ECHD’s “45 is the New 50” campaign where we have promoted awareness around the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendation that Colon Cancer screening now begin at age 45 for those with average risk.

Campaign Highlights

- Essex County has New York State’s second highest density of alcohol outlets, both on- and off-premise, according to a recently released from NYS DOH, “Alcohol Outlet Density in New York State.”
- *The Essex County Health Department developed a 1-page public health detailing report (attached) about alcohol use and retailer density in Essex County.*

Distributed 7 cases of “See our trails, not our jails – have a sober plan” pint glasses, 2,900 napkins, and 9 stacks of campaign coasters to five local establishments serving alcohol

Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings

Nutrition (Well Fed)

Tobacco - TURN

Social media posts,

- Get Fit Essex County Challenge –monthly challenge #getfitessexcounty



STAFFING UPDATE

1 Outreach Coordinator to go out on Maternity leave in July – will return on October

1 Outreach Coordinator resigned – county is at a hiring freeze – position is not to be posted – duties to be re-assigned

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 Strong

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 29th - 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 through Adirondack Foundation and Safe Kids Adirondack support:

- Baby Steps to Bright Futures Program.