
ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 2026

DIRECTOR - LINDA BEERS, MPH



Department Highlights –

Director of Public Health, Linda Beers, and Director of Health Planning & Promotion, Jessica Darney Buehler, attended the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) December membership meeting at the state's capital. Directors benefited from a historic tour of the building while also getting an update on current legislative priorities being addressed through NYSACHO's lobbyist.

NYSACHO is a membership association of local health departments in New York State. They advocate for local public health professionals, seeking to keep health services a priority in New York State's budget decisions and supporting media outreach for public education. NYSACHO is incorporated as a not-for-profit, non-partisan charitable organization with 501(C) (3) tax exempt status. Along with committees and workgroups of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), maintaining membership, and active participation within these associations keeps Essex County actively engaged with statewide policy and funding issues.



ECHD Program Data – DECEMBER (unless otherwise noted)

Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning

CHA/ARHN/Data Meetings – 1

CHA/CHIP Partner Meetings – 3

CHA Training/Webinars – 0

NYSACHO CHA/CHIP Workgroup - 1

CHA/CHIP Progress Updates & Special Reports – *The Essex County Community Health Assessment 2025 and Community Health Improvement Plan 2026 – 2030* was submitted to the NYSDOH on 12/30/2025. This submission is the culmination of an 18 month cycle of data review & analysis; community, partner, and stakeholder engagement; prioritization of health and social needs; and development of a work plan that addresses those needs through targeted action. The assessment and improvement plan will be shared broadly in the coming days, with a plan to issue a joint press release of the Essex County Health Department and partner hospitals, along with other dissemination and outreach initiatives. Copies will also be distributed at the February Human Services Committee meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

Communicable Disease

Communicable Disease Surveillance/Epidemiology Investigations

Respiratory Illness investigations (Flu, COVID, RSV, TB) - 213

GI Illness (Water/Foodborne) Illness Investigations - 0

STI/Hepatitis & HIV Investigations – 8

Arthropod-borne (Mosquitos and Ticks) Disease Investigations – 14

Food Safety/Outbreak Investigations – 0

Other investigations – 1 (active TB rule out)

Immunization Program

Clinics in the community - 0

Individuals immunized – 7 (at ECHD Clinic)

Healthcare provider, school nurse, day care provider or other public health detailing activities:

*Highlights, campaigns, activities:

- Shot Talk Campaign continued in December
- Nurse gave presentation at NYS Eastern Counties Immunization Coalition meeting in Ballston Spa on bolstering community immunity through supporting school nurses.

Trainings: Measles and other topics related to VFC

Screening Services

HCV Screenings - 0

HIV Screenings - 0

TB Screening - 1

STI Screening Services –referrals and/or services rendered – 0

Rabies Prevention Program

Rabies Vaccine Clinics – 0

Pets Vaccinated – 0

Total Pets Vaccinated in 2025 - 713

Rabies investigations - 8

Specimens submitted for testing – 1 (negative)

Positive Specimens in 2025 – 9

People approved for rabies post exposure prophylaxis – 1

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises – 1 (Biological -Based Tabletop Exercise: Hepatitis A Outbreak)

Training/Continuing Education – 1 (What's New with the Flu)

Volunteer Coordination – 0

Plan Updates/Revisions – 2 (Outbreak Response Policy); (Health Commerce System Role Updates)

Meetings/Coalitions/Community Engagement– 2 (North Country Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition Meeting); (Local Emergency Planning Committee) for CEPA

*Highlights, campaigns, activities –

Chronic Disease

Public Health Detailing – 1

Vape Prevention Focus Group – surveyed students from three local middle/high schools for development of an anti-vape campaign. The winning campaign will be featured on the billboard in Moriah starting in January of 2026, and utilized for on-going anti-vape messaging.



Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings & Highlights:

Nutrition (Well Fed); - 0

Tobacco – TURN – 1

Chronic Disease & Older New Yorkers – 1

NY Coalition for Alcohol Policy (NY-CAP) - 1

Campaigns/Events – 2

- National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- #getfitessexcounty – Holiday Hustle



Training – 1

- 3rd Annual Forum on Hunger and Food Insecurity in New York State
-

Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (COOP)

Narcan Kits Distributed – 0

Groups Trained - 0

SUDOR Submissions/ODs – 1 Non-Fatal; 1 Fatal

2025 ODs Non-Fatal/Fatal* – 25 Non-Fatal/3 Fatal

**Data is preliminary and will likely change once reviews from all surveillance sources is complete.*

Environmental Health

Air, Water and Food Health & Safety

Air Safety/Quality/Excessive Heat Alerts - 0

Public Water Notices

Boil Water Orders – 0

Blue-Green Algae Notices – 0

Climate and Health

Initiatives –

Completed an application for the NYSACHO Climate Change and Health Adaptation Project mini grant, proposing \$3000.00 in funds to be used for extreme heat outreach and education in Essex County's aging population. The grant application was submitted on December 19, 2025.

Family Health

Baby Steps to Bright Futures

Babies born & families offered the Program – 26 (9 pending)

Families enrolled in the program – 8

DSS Collaboration Families - 2

Families that sent a packet as unable to reach or declined the program - 9

Referrals out to programs and services – 5



Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

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

Active Children - 19

Pending confirmatory testing - 9

Released with confirmatory testing stating capillary testing was falsely elevated – 1

Car Seat Program

Car seat check clinics – 0

Car seats checked - 1

Car seats issued as new & installed – 0

School Nurse Stetho-Scoop Monthly Meeting - December Stetho-Scoop newsletter sent out to all Essex County school nurses

School Nurse Supports

- 29 direct in-person and phone/e-mail interaction with school nurses regarding immunizations

Sexual/Reproductive/Relationship Health Program

Schools/Camps/Groups – 0

Classes/Students – 0

CAP Pack Distribution – 15

Children's Services

Early Intervention

Referral received in to the program - **21**
Children found eligible & enrolled (have a plan) - **4**
Children awaiting evaluation - **2**
Speech Therapy - **10** receiving; **9** waiting
Occupational Therapy - **3** receiving; **0** waiting
Physical Therapy - **1** receiving; **3** waiting
Special Instructional Services - **11** receiving; **0** waiting

Preschool Program

Children in process of evaluation, referrals - **20**
Children enrolled - **67**
Children waiting for services
Counseling - **1**
Occupational Therapy - **2**
Physical Therapy - **1**
Speech Therapy - **7**
Special Education/Itinerant Teacher - **5**
Children Attending Center Based Classrooms
In County - **19**
Out of County - **4**

Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (CYSHN)

Children enrolled – **40**

WIC

Target Enrollment – **600**
Enrolled - **521**
Women enrolled - **112**
Infants (0-1) enrolled - **64**
Children (1-5) enrolled - **297**
High Risk Families - **33**
Nutrition Education sessions – **196**
 In person - **125**
 Remote - **13**
Referrals made to other programs/services - **66**
Breastfeeding Initiation Rate – **88%**

Krista's leadership consistently demonstrated that WIC is far more than a nutrition program—it is a catalyst for stability, dignity, and long-term community health. Through her vision, nutrition became a lifeline for families, a support system for local farmers, and a cornerstone of a healthier Essex County. Over a distinguished 23-year career, she worked tirelessly—often behind the scenes—to secure critical resources by authoring numerous targeted grants that ensured WIC families were prioritized and supported, resulting in measurable, lasting impact. Her expertise and dedication earned statewide and national recognition, including being regarded as “the pinnacle of the NY WIC establishment” and representing New York State in Washington, D.C. As Krista retires after more than two decades of service, we honor not only her professional achievements, but also her unwavering compassion, collaborative spirit, and selfless commitment to the wellbeing of the community. Her legacy is deeply woven into the fabric of Essex County, and the programs, partnerships, and people she has influenced will continue to benefit families for generations to come.

WIC had 125 families come through the doors to pick out presents for Christmas from. Roughly, 280 Essex County Kids benefited from this program. The WICMAS program is offered to all Essex County families whether they have graduated from the program or if they need an extra hand during the Christmas season.



Home Health Care

Referrals in accepted - **47**

Patients receiving services - **63**

Nursing Services - **40**

Physical Therapy - **35**

Occupational Therapy - **16**

Speech Therapy - **2**

Highlights – **Per Medicare Care Compare: Updated November 20, 2025:**

Patients rate the overall care from out home health agency at **97%**, which is better than our competition, National average and NY average of **82%**.

This past reporting period our patients who were re-admitted to the hospital after discharge from home health was **3.7%**, which was better than NY State, the national average and our competition at **5.2%**.

This past reporting period our patients who would recommend the home health agency to friends and family was **92%**, which is better than our competition, NY State and the national average of **75%**.