

# ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MARCH 2025

DIRECTOR - LINDA BEERS, MPH



## Director's Updates

ORAL TESTIMONY OF LINDA BEERS, PRESIDENT, NYSACHO AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, ESSEX COUNTY TO THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE 2025 JOINT BUDGET HEARING - FEBRUARY 11, 2025



Chairs Krueger, Pretlow, Rivera, Paulin and members of the Joint Health Budget Committee, thank you for this opportunity to deliver testimony regarding the Governor's proposed 2024 – 2025 state budget. My name is Linda Beers. I serve as the Director of Public Health for Essex County, but I am here today in my role as President of NYSACHO, which represents local health departments across New York State.

NYSACHO's mission is to support, advocate for, and empower local health departments' workforce to promote health and wellness, protect communities, and prevent disease, disability, and injury throughout New York State.

We have submitted our formal written testimony articulating the priorities of the public health community, and the NYSACHO team is prepared to address any questions or concerns you or your staff may have relative to that submission.

Many of our priorities have not changed. They range from workforce shortages, Article 6 funding, lead poisoning prevention, and clean drinking water, to tick-borne disease prevention, maternal and child health, and the Early Intervention program, among many others.

Among these priorities, I'd like to specifically emphasize sections of our written testimony related to the well-documented Early Intervention system crisis, and the emergence of HPAI, also known as avian influenza or bird flu. HPAI is present in New York today. NYSACHO members in the metropolitan region counties are directly involved in deploying measures to respond to and mitigate the spread of HPAI—activities that are directly supported by Article 6 funding, reminding us of the essential nature of your support for Article 6.

What has changed, however, is the context of our efforts. As you know, with every change in administration, whether in Washington or Albany, uncertainty follows. That sense of uncertainty has rarely been more profound than it is today. So we look to you, to our state leaders and partners, to be a reliable, steady hand that ensures our public health infrastructure is supported and sustainable.

You no doubt will face this same uncertainty in many other areas of state policy and spending. What we ask of you first and foremost is that you maintain sharp focus on public health, even as so much change and uncertainty confronts us. The communities NYSACHO members serve are the same communities you represent and serve, and they are relying on all of us to protect them.

We are at your disposal to provide any information or assistance you may need.  
Thank You for the opportunity to testify.

## 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.*

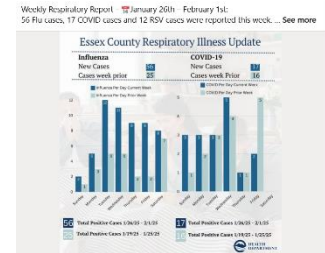
We use social media, reports, 1-pagers, and are now working on the launch of a newsletter to advance engagement with an even broader audience. What do we know? Using eye-catching images, humor and simple language are all important ways to connect with our local audience. That is what we do!



Engagement-Community Survey



Awareness – Health Topic



Trust – Local Information

## Department Highlights



The NY Food for NY Families grant administered through the Essex Food Hub will end on 3/10/25. An additional \$12,899 was distributed to WIC families in January and approximately \$9,000 in February through this program. **Over the course of the grant, Essex County families have received an estimated \$123,962 in healthy foods!!** Here is some additional feedback about the impact:

*-I was blown away by this program and left with an overflowing feeling of gratitude for the amazing meats and yogurts, oats, maple syrup, apples, veggies...all of it. It's the quality of food I dream about being able to provide for my family. Thank you, thank you thank you for this generous offering. It's been such a blessing, and I'm sad it's coming to an end. Logistically, the bi-weekly evening pickup on a mid-week day worked out wonderfully for me.-KM*

*-This food has been a blessing for my family. We are struggling financially as most are now and it always ends up affecting the quality of food we eat. With this food, I've been able to feed my family fresh, healthy meals, and anything left, I froze or canned for using another day. I am so grateful for the support and food that this program provided. Thank you for allowing my family to benefit and eat healthier.-KG*



### Home Health Spotlight

Home health care is a wide range of health care services that are provided in your home for an illness or injury. Our goal is to prevent hospitalizations, ER visits and allow patients to stay in their homes. We work with you, your family and your doctors to provide a hands-on care plan and personal assistance. We provide physical, occupational, speech therapy, and medical supplies and equipment. We can refer you to other community services and caregiver support.

Did you know we have been providing services to the people of Essex County since 1969? Most of our experienced and knowledgeable staff live in the communities of the patients they help!

## ECHD Program Data – February (unless otherwise noted)

### Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning

CHA/ARHN/Data Meetings – 2

CHA/CHIP Partner Meetings - 1

CHA/CHIP Progress Updates & Special Reports

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):

#### Well-Being & Substance Use & Mental Health Disorders

Focus Area	Intervention	Lead	Partner(s)	Status
	Evidence-based home visiting programs	ECHD	Media	<div><div></div></div>
Promote Well-Being	Promote inclusion, integration, and competence	UVMHN-ECH		<div><div></div></div>
	Thoughtful messaging on mental illness & substance use	ECHD	Media	<div><div></div></div>
	School-based prevention	The Prevention Team	K-12 Schools	<div><div></div></div>
	SBIRT	UVMHN-ECH		<div><div></div></div>
	Trauma informed approaches in prevention programs	ECMH	CBOs	<div><div></div></div>

### Communicable Disease

#### Communicable Disease Surveillance/Epidemiology Investigations

Respiratory Illness investigations (Flu, COVID, RSV, TB) - 273

GI Illness (Water/Foodborne) Illness Investigations - 1

STI/Hepatitis & HIV Investigations - 5

Arthropod-borne (Mosquitos and Ticks) Disease Investigations - 8

Food Safety/Outbreak Investigations - 0

Other investigations – 2

#### Immunization Program

Clinics in the community - 0

Individuals immunized - 3

Healthcare provider, school nurse, day care provider or other public health detailing activities – see Stetho-Scoop meeting update under Family Health section.

#### Screening Services

HCV Screenings - 1

HIV Screenings - 1

TB Screening - 1

STI Screening Services –referrals and/or services rendered – 1

## Rabies Prevention Program

Rabies Vaccine Clinics - 0

Pets Vaccinated - 0

Rabies investigations - 10

Specimens submitted for testing – 3 (3 negative)

People approved for rabies post exposure prophylaxis – 0

An effort was undertaken to offer at least 1 rabies clinic on a Saturday 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, 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 important these clinics are to our residents and furry friends, and we look forward to seeing everyone at our eight scheduled clinics this year. A 2025 schedule is now available for posting in Town Halls & sharing widely.



### What's NEW??

**\*Clinic Times 6p-7:30p**

**\*Check your location day of week**

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## Emergency Preparedness & Response

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises – 1 Drill (ServNY Credentialing and Notification Drill)

Training/Continuing Education – 6

Community Engagement/Collaborative Planning Meetings – 5; one being FEMA Mitigation Planning Meeting with OES

Volunteer Coordination – Completed the annual Technical Assistance Assessment for the MRC

Plan Updates/Revisions – COVID-19 Plan reviewed; Public Health Asset Distribution Plan review/updates continue

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## Environmental Health

### Air, Water and Food Health & Safety

Air Safety/Quality Alerts - 0

Public Water Notices

Boil Water Orders – 1 issued 02/23/25 and lifted 02/25/25

Blue-Green Algae Notices - 0

### Climate and Health

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

Activities – Developed plan to meet all eight tracking measures (seven required tracking measures, and one bonus) of the incentive program by their required due dates.

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## Chronic Disease

Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings & Highlights

Nutrition (Well Fed) - 2

Tobacco - TURN - 2

Public Health Detailing Screenings & Disease Concordant Care Promotion – 0

Campaigns/Events – 3

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

## Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program

Narcan Kits Distributed - 27

Groups Trained - 0

SUDOR Submissions/ODs – 2 Non-Fatal; 1 Fatal

Total ODs Year-to-date – 14 (12 Non-Fatal; 2 Fatal)

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## Family Health

### Baby Steps to Bright Futures

Babies born & families offered the Program – **12** (5 pending)

Families enrolled in the program - **4**

Families that were sent a packet as unable to reach or declined the program - **3**

Referrals out to programs and services - **2**

### Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

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

**8** active; **9** pending confirmatory testing;

**0** released with confirmatory testing stating capillary testing was falsely elevated

Lead levels screenings performed by our Department - **0**

Home visits/environmental assessments completed this month for children with confirmed elevated lead levels - **1**

### Car Seat Program

Car seat check clinics - **0**

Car seats checked - **1**

Car seats issued as new & installed – **1**

### School Nurse Stetho-Scoop Monthly Meeting

Topics Covered: School health screenings: medical waste and medication management, and respiratory illness update.

Attendance: **3** School nurses and **2** student nurses reached with Stetho-scoop zoom meeting; Recording sent to all.

### Sexual/Reproductive Health Program

Schools/Camps/Groups - **2**

Classes/Students – **3** classes; approximately **60** students

CAP Pack Distribution – **33** (UVMHN-ECH Emergency Department and NCCC Campus)

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.





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## Children's Services

### Early Intervention

Referral received in to the program - **2**  
Children found eligible & enrolled (have a plan) - **24**  
Children awaiting evaluation - **4**  
Speech Therapy - **9** receiving; **9** waiting  
Occupational Therapy - **1** receiving; **0** waiting  
Physical Therapy - **5** receiving; **2** waiting  
Special Instructional Services - **12** receiving; **1** waiting

### Preschool Program

Children in process of evaluation, referrals - **20**  
Children enrolled - **79**  
Children waiting for services  
    Counseling - **5**  
    Occupational Therapy - **8**  
    Physical Therapy - **6**  
    Speech Therapy - **14**  
    Special Education/Itinerant Teacher - **17**  
Children Attending Center Based Classrooms  
    In County - **9**  
    Out of County - **8**

### Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs

Children enrolled – **33**

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## WIC

Target Enrollment - **600**  
Women enrolled - **516**  
Infants (0-1) enrolled - **104**  
Children (1-5) enrolled - **299**  
High Risk Families - **43**  
Nutrition Education sessions – **187**  
    In person - **52**  
    Remote - **135**  
Referrals made to other programs/services - **94**  
  
Breastfeeding Initiation Rate – **87%**  
Money redeemed through the WIC program in 2024 - **\$341,970**  
Money redeemed (spent) through the WIC program - **\$32,197 (January)**

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## Home Health Care

New Patients Admitted into ECHD Home Care – **42**  
Patients Safely Discharged from Program – **22**  
Home Visits Made (01/26/25-02/26/25) – **975**  
Miles Driven by Staff (January) – **4,240**  
Diagnoses of Admitted Patients – Diabetes, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Cancer, Strokes, Heart Failure, Pneumonia, Sepsis, Surgical Recovery, IV Medication for Infection, Joint Replacement, Fractures, Wounds, Repeated Falls, Malnutrition

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