

ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MAY 2025

DIRECTOR - LINDA BEERS, MPH



Director's Updates

Director and Staff Recognized at Statewide Conference

Jessica Darney Buehler, Director of Health Planning and Promotion, and Elizabeth Terry, Senior Health Educator, recently received the Outstanding Contribution for Rural Local Health Department Services Award for their vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment to improving maternal and child health in Essex County. They received this recognition at the 2025 Public Health Partnership Conference. Their leadership and dedication to public health in Essex County has led to the development of Baby Steps to Bright Futures, a sustainable, light-touch universal newborn home visiting program designed to address the unique challenges of our rural community. This program is proactive and accessible ensuring that all families, regardless of income or risk level, receive the support they need during the critical postpartum period. Unlike many traditional home visiting models that focus solely on high-risk populations, their universal approach removes stigma, increases participation, and fosters trust within the community. This initiative is not just a program—it is a lifeline for families in one of New York's most rural regions. By ensuring newborns and their families receive early guidance, connections to resources, and support, Elizabeth and Jessica are strengthening the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. Their work is a model of innovation and sustainability, demonstrating how public health can bridge critical service gaps in rural communities and exemplifying what it means to make a lasting impact in public health.



Department Highlights



ECHD staff nurses have reached out to all Essex County schools (public and private) to offer immunization outreach at upcoming Pre-K and Kindergarten registration and screening events.

Several schools have already accepted this collaboration, helping to ensure that students arrive to school in the fall with all compulsory vaccinations on board. This initiative also helps school districts maintain their compliance with school health requirements, reducing the likelihood for audit findings or school exclusions for students who are behind on their immunizations. The nurses will also be offering information on various other topics, including tick bite prevention, dental health, and Family Health, Children's Services & WIC programs.

On-Call Service Collaboration & Efficiency Realized

The Department transitioned after-hours call services to the Office of Emergency Services in April. This transition has been incredibly smooth with the collaboration of the Departments of OES and IT and is saving the Department from expenses of private contract. This service ensures the Department meets its requirements to be available 24/7 for issues related to public health and home care.

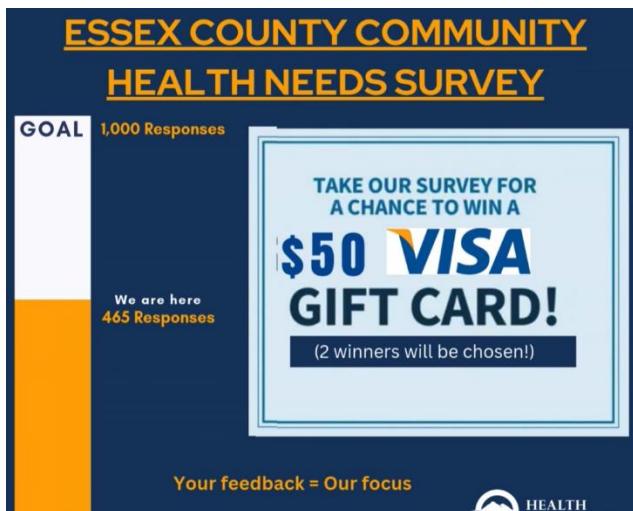
ECHD Program Data – APRIL (unless otherwise noted)

Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning

CHA/ARHN/Data Meetings – 0

CHA/CHIP Partner Meetings - 1

CHA/CHIP Progress Updates & Special Reports – Community Survey collection is ongoing through the month of May.



The survey is being promoted on the ECHD social media pages, website, and at health fairs and events around the county. A \$50 Visa gift card giveaway* has spurred additional interest in survey participation. Our second of three gift card drawings was held on April 30, with the winner announced on a FB Live Event that garnered almost 5,000 views!

*Gift cards purchased with donated funds.

Plans are underway for an All Partner Community Health Planning session in June. This session will feature an overview of the 2025-2030 Prevention Agenda and engage community based organizations, hospitals, health care, non-profits, policy makers, and various other stakeholders in priority setting and improvement planning for the 2025 CHA and 2025-2030 CHIP.

Communicable Disease

Communicable Disease Surveillance/Epidemiology Investigations

Respiratory Illness investigations (Flu, COVID, RSV, TB) - 123

GI Illness (Water/Foodborne) Illness Investigations - 0

STI/Hepatitis & HIV Investigations - 11

Arthropod-borne (Mosquitos and Ticks) Disease Investigations - 28

Food Safety/Outbreak Investigations - 0

Other investigations – 1

Immunization Program

Clinics in the community - 0

Individuals immunized - 0

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

- Direct phone interaction with two school nurses regarding school health topics.
- Culturally appropriate coloring books and crayons with measles disease and immunization information delivered directly to Amish families, and to two community members who frequently interact with Amish families, to handout at any opportunity.

Screening Services

HCV Screenings - 2

HIV Screenings - 2

TB Screening - 0

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

Rabies Prevention Program

Rabies Vaccine Clinics – 1 (Jay)

Pets Vaccinated - 77

Rabies investigations - 6

Specimens submitted for testing – 1 (negative)

People approved for rabies post exposure prophylaxis – 0

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises – **1** MRSE (Medical Response and Surge Exercise)

Training/Continuing Education – **8**

Community Engagement/Collaborative Planning Meetings – **4**

Volunteer Coordination – Updated MRC Unit Profile

Plan Updates/Revisions – updates to the Public Health Asset Distribution Plan (PHAD) are ongoing

Environmental Health

Air, Water and Food Health & Safety

Air Safety/Quality Alerts - **0**

Public Water Notices

Boil Water Orders – **1** (1 issued 04/13/2025 & lifted 04/16/2025; town of Newcomb)

Blue-Green Algae Notices - **0**

Climate and Health

Initiatives – Planning meeting for the NYSDOH Year-13 Performance Incentive collaborative and social media requirements

Activities – Attended a webinar offered by Yale and recommended by the NYSDOH, entitled Local Voices, Global Impact: Municipal Governments Leading Climate Conversations

Chronic Disease

Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings & Highlights

Nutrition (Well Fed) - **0**

Tobacco - TURN – **4**

Chronic Disease and Older New Yorkers - **1**

Public Health Detailing Screenings & Disease Concordant Care Promotion – **6** (Social media posts, fishing bobbers)

Campaigns/Events – **3**

- April Get Fit Essex County Challenge – 30 minutes/30 Days #getfitessexcounty
- April was Testicular Cancer Awareness Month - “Check your tackle” fishing bobbers were distributed to the community and planned for distribution at upcoming local fishing tournaments.
- Spring Into Health Fair at ECH – 30 people attended
- Essex County School Counselor Wellness Fair
- Selected the shortlist of firms and scheduled interviews for the active transportation studies in the towns of Lewis and Willsboro.
- Coordinated with the NYS DOT to finalize the plans for pedestrian count studies at three locations in the Town of Keene.
- Wrote and submitted a traffic safety grant to the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee to fund community outreach and education regarding pedestrian and young driver safety, speed, and impaired driving.

Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (COOP)

Narcan Kits Distributed - **38**

Groups Trained - **0**

SUDOR Submissions/ODs – **1** Non-Fatal; **0** Fatal

Total ODs Year-to-date – **15** (**13** Non-Fatal; **2** Fatal)

Family Health

Baby Steps to Bright Futures

Babies born & families offered the Program – **17** (3 pending)

Families enrolled in the program - **5**

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

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 – **9** active; **10** pending confirmatory testing; **0** released with confirmatory testing stating capillary testing was falsely elevated

Car Seat Program

Car seat check clinics - **0**

Car seats checked - **2**

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

School Nurse Stetho-Scoop Monthly Meeting

Stetho-scoop- School nurse monthly meeting reaching all county school nurses by email minutes, regarding measles and H5N1 avian flu updates, NYSDOH Measles travel advisory.

Sexual/Reproductive Health Program

Schools/Camps/Groups - **2**

Classes/Students – **5** classes; approximately **75** students

CAP Pack Distribution – **27** (Community Care Kiosks)

Outreach – School Counselor Summit; Health Fair UVMHN-ECH Ticonderoga; NCCC Saranac Lake Health Fair



Children's Services

Early Intervention

Referral received in to the program - **7**

Children found eligible & enrolled (have a plan) - **30**

Children awaiting evaluation - **1**

Speech Therapy - **10** receiving; **16** waiting

Occupational Therapy - **1** receiving; **1** waiting

Physical Therapy - **4** receiving; **2** waiting

Special Instructional Services - **10** receiving; **3** waiting

Preschool Program

Children in process of evaluation, referrals - **15**

Children enrolled - **88**

Children waiting for services

Counseling - **6**

Occupational Therapy - **8**

Physical Therapy - **1**

Speech Therapy - **14**

Special Education/Itinerant Teacher - **16**

Children Attending Center Based Classrooms

In County - **8**

Out of County - **10**

Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs

Children enrolled – **36**

CYSHN and Early Intervention staff attended the Early Intervention & Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Summit: 2025 Statewide Meeting in April. This was an opportunity to collaborate with other counties on priorities such as provider capacity issues and creative ways to use funding. The conference had presentations and tabling from other state programs that other accessibility to CYSHCN children's and their families. It also offered time for questions and answers from the Bureau of Early Intervention and CYSHCN staff to clarify recent changes in regulations, reimbursement and policies.

WIC

Target Enrollment – **600**

Enrolled - **512**

Women enrolled - **105**

Infants (0-1) enrolled - **104**

Children (1-5) enrolled - **303**

High Risk Families - **40**

Nutrition Education sessions – **234**

In person - **61**

Remote - **173**

Referrals made to other programs/services - **113**

Breastfeeding Initiation Rate – **89%**



WIC is collaborating with Adk Action on two initiatives. There is an identified gap when children age out of WIC at age five and start school at age six. This often means increased food insecurity. ADK Action is giving 10 WIC families that have children turning five, a PEX card. This card will be loaded with \$100 a month for families to use at vendors (selling local foods) around the county. This card will be active from June 2025 through June 2026.

Home Health Care

New Patients Admitted into ECHD Home Care – **36**

Patients Safely Discharged from Program – **44**

Home Visits Made – **782**

Miles Driven by Staff – **4,681**

Diagnoses of Admitted Patients – Sepsis due to MRSA; Cancer; Hip or Knee Joint Replacement; Wounds; Strokes; Pulmonary Embolism; IV medications for infection; Diabetes; Parkinson's disease; Repeated falls; Care after surgery on the circulatory system; Leg ulcers; Care after surgery on the digestive system; Kidney failure; Heart failure; Care after surgery of the neurological system; Polymyalgia rheumatic; Traumatic subdural hematoma; ALS; and COPD.