
ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 2026

DIRECTOR - LINDA BEERS, MPH



Department Highlights –



BABY SHOWER

The Essex County Health Department (ECHD) celebrated local families at its second annual Community Baby Shower on Thursday, August 6, 2026, at Edgemont Barns in Port Henry. The "Locally Grown" themed event was designed to support expecting parents, caregivers, and families with infants under one year old by bringing essential health education, local vendor resources, and community networks together under one roof.

The event, timed to align with National Breastfeeding Month, highlighted the wide array of maternal and child health resources available across Essex County while offering attendees a welcoming space to celebrate new beginnings.

"Looking out across the room, my heart was just full," said Linda Beers, Public Health Director for the Essex County Health Department (ECHD). "Whether someone is expecting their very first baby, navigating life with a newborn, or supporting a growing family, this celebration was for them. The event brought our community together to ensure families know they never have to navigate early parenthood alone."

The event also featured ECHD's Baby Steps to Bright Futures program. Launched in August 2023, this voluntary program has walked alongside more than 160 families during the early weeks of parenthood. The initiative provides home visits from health educators who offer personalized support right where families feel most comfortable, including baby weight checks, infant feeding support, baby-proofing and safe sleep guidance, and direct connections to community resources like WIC.

An event like this takes a village, and we are fortunate to have an incredible one here in Essex County," said Jessica Darney Buehler, Deputy Director, Director of Health Planning and Promotion for ECHD. "I heard from several expecting parents who weren't aware of the wonderful community resources available right here in our county. Moments like that are exactly why we hold this event—so families feel supported, informed, and connected as they prepare to welcome their newborns home. We also extend our deepest gratitude to the local vendors and community partners whose generous contributions make a healthier, stronger community possible."

SCHOOL NURSE IN-SERVICE

Annual School Nurse Inservice was conducted August 26th where 11 School nurses representing 9 county public and private schools attended.

Speakers from Upstate NY Poison Center, Essex County Mental Health, the Prevention Team, the Department of Homeland Security and a nationally-known cancer survivor presented on topics including Poison Center 101, Child Mental Health and Substance Use, Vaping, Zyn, and In-School Support, HPV Cancers and HPV prevention through vaccination, Prevention of Online Child Exploitation, a Spot the Vape activity, and Immunization updates for School Nurses from our team discussed dates for the NYS school immunization surveys to be in and how we can assist. Nurses helped plan how to launch another success year of virtual Stetho-scoop calls in the school year.

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK



Our Department joins the nation in working with local partners to coordinate activities around Child Passenger Safety Week which is the 3rd week of September: Sept. 20-26. Seat checks will be offered with WIC, Day Care Providers and Early Head Start partners throughout the county.

ECHE Program Data – AUGUST (unless otherwise noted)

Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Improvement Planning (CHIP)

CHA/ARHN/Data Meetings – 0

CHA/CHIP Partner Meetings/Communication – 0

CHA Training/Webinars – 0

NYSACHO CHA/CHIP Workgroup – 1 (minutes reviewed)

Save-the-Date and agenda sent to CHA/CHIP partners.

Preliminary Agenda

12p - 1p: Lunch, chat, review goals of coalition

1p-2p: Partner highlights & updates, CHIP Progress, and Grant Announcements

2p-3p: Revisioning & plan adjustments

This gathering is intended to be a chance to reconvene partners, share progress on our proposed health and social needs interventions, highlight new initiatives, identify any roadblocks, and make thoughtful adjustments to our plans. *Just as importantly, it's an opportunity to celebrate our collective efforts, strengthen existing partnerships, and spark new ones.*



Communicable Disease

Communicable Disease Surveillance/Epidemiological Investigations

Respiratory Illness investigations (Flu, COVID, RSV, TB) - 12

GI Illness (Water/Foodborne) Illness Investigations - 2

STI/Hepatitis & HIV Investigations – 4 STI; 3 Hepatitis

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

Food Safety/Outbreak Investigations – 0

Other investigations – 1

*Highlights, campaigns, trainings –

Back-to School Round-up Saranac Lake CSD K-12- promote school readiness and HPV anti-cancer vaccines information and education to parents, staff, and school nurses

Immunization Program

Clinics in the community - 0

Individuals immunized – 4

Healthcare provider-12 phone and 8 email interactions regarding immunizations

School Nurses: Direct in-person 11, and phone interaction with 7 school nurses regarding immunizations.

Stetho-scoop monthly meeting: (On hold for summer)

Public Health Nurses manually added immunization records of approximately 6 children from local school districts/private schools, and 0 adults to NYS vaccine registry.

Immunization trainings/meetings/coalitions attended - 2

Monthly Sensaphone Drills – 0

Screening Services

HCV Screenings - 0

HIV Screenings – 0

TB Screening - 0

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

Rabies Prevention Program

Rabies Vaccine Clinics – 1 (Schroon Lake)

Pets Vaccinated – 51

Rabies investigations - 113

Specimens submitted for testing – 34 (all negative)

People approved for rabies post exposure prophylaxis – 42

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises – 0

Training/Continuing Education – 1

Volunteer Coordination – 0

Plan Updates/Revisions – 1 in progress (Essex County Emergency Operations Plan)

Meetings/Coalitions/Community Engagement– 1 (Capital District PHEP Coordinators Monthly Meeting)

*Highlights, campaigns, activities –

PHEP staff conducted site visits at three designated Point-of-Dispensing (POD) locations in the county in August.

These sites include the Ticonderoga Elementary School, the Horse Show Grounds in Lake Placid, and the Community Center in Jay. The site visits helped us evaluate each location to ensure it is suitable for large scale, community-wide distribution of medical countermeasures (medications/vaccines) during a public health emergency. We appreciate the time and expertise from our Town Supervisors and school partners in facilitating these tours!

Chronic Disease

July 31, 2026 – September 1, 2026 Reporting Period

Public Health Detailing - # 0

Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings & Highlights

- Coalitions Coordinated by ECHD
 - Well Fed Essex County Collaborative - # 0
 - TURN (Tobacco Use Reduction Network of Essex County)- #3
- AFSN (Adirondack Food Systems Network) - #1
- Long Term Care Committee - #1

Trainings and Webinars - #3

- NYS Quitline: Addressing Vape Product Use on College Campuses, Part 2
- NY Health Foundation: From Eligibility to Enrollment - Advancing SNAP Access in NY

Campaigns & Awareness - #2

- #getfitessexcounty – August kicked off the first ever prizes for participation in the monthly fitness challenges. Two lucky winners each month will have their choice of a smart scale or pickle ball set to support continued health and fitness. The NYS DOH reports that “Evidence shows a strong relationship between increased physical activity and reductions in the risk for health problems including: obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, many forms of cancer, depression, anxiety, and dementia. Recommendations for physical activity include participating in some form of aerobic activity including walking, running, or cycling, along with muscle-strengthening exercises that target major-muscle groups to maintain overall health.”
- Summer Sun Safety Month – Partnered with local food pantries to raise awareness for sunscreen use.



Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (COOP)

Narcan Kits Distributed – **22** including those distributed from Community Care Kiosks

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

2026 ODs Non-Fatal/Fatal* – **10 (8 Non-Fatal/2 Fatal); 18 pending non-fatal hospital ED visits**

Community Care Kiosks – Three (3) Community Care Kiosk Locations remain in place in Port Henry (MLS Consignment Shop), Elizabethtown (DMV), and Lewis (Public Safety Building).

Location: DMV/ MLS Consignment/Public Safety	August
Tubby Tester	0
Personal Hygiene kits	27
Sunblock	31
Emergency plan	0
First Aid Kits	0
Forehead thermometer	20
CAP packs	22
Narcan kits	15
Fentanyl test kit	6
Xylazine test kit	2
Medetomidine test kit	4
Tick kits	0
Deterra bags	21
Nail kits	32
Gun locks	18
Shoe Deodorizer	9
Gloves	0
Resistance bands	0
Deet wipes	17
Handwarmers	0

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

Activities – Attended the “When Waters Rise: ADK Flooding, Risk, Response, and Resilience Conference” at the Wild Center in Tupper Lake to learn about risks and mitigation strategies for local flooding.

Family Health

Baby Steps to Bright Futures

Babies born & families offered the Program – **16 (3 pending)**
Families enrolled in the program – **8 (1 born in a previous month)**
DSS Collaboration Visits – **0**
Families sent a packet; unable to reach/declined the program – **5**
Referrals out to programs and services – **3**

Did you know that Essex County Health Department reaches out to the family of every new baby in Essex County and offers free, universal, breastfeeding support by Certified Lactation Counselors through our Baby Steps to Bright Futures Program? In observance of National Breastfeeding Month, we shared some of the most common questions we get asked from parents during visits.

Most Common Breastfeeding Questions Answered!
By Our Certified Lactation Counselors!

Liz Terry, CLC

How do I know if my baby is getting enough breast milk?

ANSWER

Wet & Dirty diapers: Baby has 6 or more wet diapers every 24 hours and 3 to 4 soft, yellow stools a day after the first week.

Feeding frequency: Newborns breast feed 8 to 12 times every 24 hours (every 2 to 3 hours), responding to early hunger cues like rooting or sucking on hands.

Contentment: Baby releases the breast on their own and appears relaxed and satisfied.

Weight Gain: Babies lose some weight after birth but should regain their birth weight by 10 to 14 days.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Most Common Breastfeeding Questions Answered!
By Our Certified Lactation Counselors!

Hillary Drake, CLC

How do I avoid nipple confusion when introducing bottle feeding?

ANSWER

Wait for a strong latch: Wait until breastfeeding is fully established (normally around 4 weeks) before introducing a bottle. Introducing too early may lead to a refusal of the breast because feeding with a bottle is less work for baby.

Use slow flow: Pick a premie or level 0-1 slow-flow nipple so the milk does not spill out too fast.

Keep Breastfeeding: Continue breastfeeding on demand when possible, and if bottle feeding is needed or chosen, pump during those times to maintain your milk supply.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Most Common Breastfeeding Questions Answered!
By Our Certified Lactation Counselors!

Emily French, CLC

What is the main difference between formula & breastmilk?

ANSWER

The main difference comes down to how babies adapt:

Breastmilk changes continuously: It naturally shifts its ingredients as the baby grows—starting high in water and sugars for early hydration and energy, then becoming richer in fat and protein to support growth.

Formula is steady and consistent: It is crafted with fixed amounts of essential fats, proteins, and nutrients to satisfy the baby and support steady growth.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Lead Cases open (elevated lead levels in pregnant women or children) & ensure appropriate follow-up care:
Active Children – **14**
Pending confirmatory testing – **4**
Released with confirmatory testing stating capillary testing was falsely elevated – **2**
Released due to not following up on venous confirmatory testing – **0**

Car Seat Program

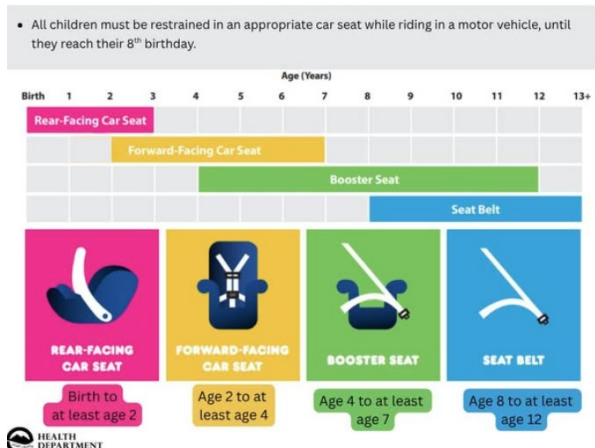
Car seat check clinics – **5**
Car seats checked – **6**
Car seats issued as new & installed – **4**

School Nurse Stetho-Scoop Monthly Meeting – **0** (Summer break)

Sexual/Reproductive/Relationship Health Program

Schools/Camps/Groups – **0** (Summer break)
Classes/Students – **0**
CAP Pack Distribution (not including Kiosks) – **41** (ECHD Lobby and Champ Day)

NYS Car Seat Laws



Children's Services

Early Intervention

Referral received in to the program - **4**
Children found eligible & enrolled (have a plan) - **33**
Children awaiting evaluation - **5**
Speech Therapy - **7** receiving; **16** waiting
Occupational Therapy - **5** receiving; **4** waiting
Physical Therapy - **4** receiving; **0** waiting
Special Instructional Services - **9** receiving; **4** waiting

Preschool Program

Children in process of evaluation, referrals - **22**
Children enrolled – **51**
Children waiting for services
Counseling - **0**
Occupational Therapy - **4**
Physical Therapy - **0**
Speech Therapy - **7**
Special Education/Itinerant Teacher - **3**
Children Attending Center Based Classrooms
In County – **12**; Out of County - **3**

Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (CYSHN)

Number of families supported this month – **5** (examples of resources and referrals-Healthy Alliance, Families First, OPWDD, Project Lifesaver, EDUCATION Webinars)

WIC

Target Enrollment – **600**
Enrolled - **496**
Women enrolled - **93**
Infants (0-1) enrolled - **88**
Children (1-5) enrolled - **315**

High Risk Families - **30**
Nutrition Education sessions – **193**
Referrals made to other programs/services - **161**
Breastfeeding Initiation Rate – **71%**

Highlights:

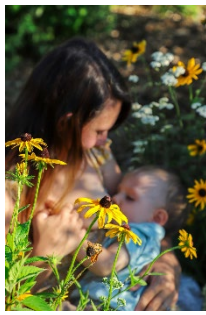
In August we celebrated National Breastfeeding Month and World Breastfeeding Week by honoring our breastfeeding moms and promoting the resources WIC has to offer to moms who choose to breastfeed. We held a special WIC n Pick at the Creative Kitchen Garden for breastfeeding moms in which they had a professional photo shoot in the flower garden with their babies and families. The Essex County Health Department's own, Shannon Bronson, volunteered her time and tools to make these very special photos happen. Families then got to harvest veggies, pick flowers, and have healthy snacks provided by the WIC team. We also gave moms a self-care kit to take home.

WIC attended the Essex County Health Department's Community Baby Shower. We brought our mobile kitchen, the Charlie Cart, and made smoothies for attendees. We also provided information on enrolling in WIC, a dozen eggs, and a year supply of prenatal vitamins to those who visited our table.

We did 2 additional WIC n Picks events in August, that were open to all WIC families.

The WIC crew, photographer Shannon, and the Creative Kitchen Garden Team at the World Breastfeeding Week WIC n Pick Event.





Photos taken by Shannon Bronson (Sam's Photography) at our World Breastfeeding Week WIC n Pick Event.



Kerry and Stephanie show off the eggs and prenatal vitamins ready to give away!

The WIC team at the Essex County Health Department Community Baby Shower...Ready to serve up fresh, berry banana smoothies on a hot day!



Digging for potatoes at WIC n Pick!

Home Health Care

July 25, 2026 – August 24, 2026 Reporting Period

Referrals admitted – 33

Patients receiving services – 134*

Nursing Services – 63

Physical Therapy - 66

Occupational Therapy – 232

Speech Therapy – 2

Home Health Aid – 6

*Includes Remote Patient Monitoring

Per Medicare Care Compare: Updated July 15, 2026

5 Star patient survey rating

Patients rate the overall care from out home health agency at 95% which is better than our competition, National average and NY average of 83%.

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 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 91% which is better than our competition, NY state and the national average of 75%.