



# TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

## MEETING MINUTES February 20, 2025

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Attended In Person):**

T. Nytych, DVM, President  
W. Simmons, Vice President  
T. Hills, DVM  
T. Leary, FNP  
W. Standinger III, Legislator  
R. Kapur-Pado, DO

### **ABSENT:**

J. Raftis, DO, FACEP

### **OTHER(S) PRESENT:**

S. Medina, Deputy Public Health Director  
D. McCann; Director of Administrative Services  
A. Reigelman, Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER:** at 7:32 a.m. by Dr. Nytych.

**PRESENTATION:** Ms. Medina presented on community partnerships and collaborations (shared PowerPoint presentation with members). She broke partners into three areas including children's health, environmental health and community health and briefly discussed each partner's role/how they provide assistance.

Children's health partners include: Pivotal Early Intervention/Early Childhood, Head Start Health Advisory, Child Fatality Review Team and Region Five Child Passenger Safety.

- Brief discussion of promotion of Early Intervention program/Car seat program and vaccine hesitancy within the community.

Environmental health partners include: American Water Works Association, Tioga County Water Quality Committee, and Candor Water Improvement Project.

- Discussed coordination of Tioga County Water Quality Committee.

Community Health partners include: NYS Immunization Coalition, Tioga County Long Term Care Council and Tioga County Threat Assessment Management Team.

- Ms. Medina gave detail on the Threat Assessment Management Team; how and why it was initiated, what it looks to address and involved agencies. Legislator Standinger also serves on this committee and explained that the goal is to identify potential risks, then look at mechanisms to mitigate risk.

Ms. Medina shared additional partnerships /collaborations:

- New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) Workgroups: Each workgroup is associated with different areas of public health and various public health staff members have been assigned to each workgroup. Helps to keep counties up to date on current legislation and related topics.
- Tioga County ASAP Coalition and Tioga County Suicide Coalition-Public Health facilitates.
- Rural Health Network (Ms. Vroman serves on board)
- Tioga County Youth Bureau (Ms. Holochak serves on board)
- Tioga Opportunities, Inc. (Ms. Medina serves on board)
  - Discussion of Tioga County Youth Bureau and school district involvement and Rural Health Network funding distribution/counties it serves.



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## OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting Minutes (January 2025): Motion to approve prior minutes made by Dr. Kapur-Pado; seconded by Mr. Simmons, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Dr. Nytych followed up on several old business items from January meeting:
  - Status of contact link between Pro Dairy and Public Health-Mr. Simmons stated that he provided Ms. Vroman with the contact and a link was made (inquiring about flu shots for local farmworkers). Ms. Medina added that Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) had reached out letting Public Health know that there was no interest at this time. Public Health expressed to CCE that if the need arises, flu shots (for traditional flu) are available.
  - Dog Control and Stray Haven Update- Mr. Simmons stated that at local board meeting recently, there has been no change/updates. Stray Haven is no longer taking stray dogs due to strict State regulations. Currently no where to house stray dogs in Tioga County. Legislator Standinger stated that this will be an agenda item at tonight's Council of Governments meeting.
    - Ms. Leary inquired if there were any updates on the owner that was killed by their dog. Ms. Medina shared that all proper protocols were followed. The animal was tested for rabies and results were negative.
  - Status of veterinarians working rabies clinics- Dr. Hills explained situation, just one clinic involved due to the veterinarian wanting Public Health to supply pre-exposure rabies series to staff of practice, which they are unable to do. Ms. Medina stated that all clinics for the 2025 calendar have a confirmed veterinarian who will be vaccinating. Dr. Hills gave brief history on past practices of veterinarians covering free clinics in their practice areas (but is no longer the case).
  - Status of merger of coalitions-Mr. McCann to provide update in Director's Report.
- Enforcements: Dr. Hills inquired of water stipulation with Deep Well Motel. Ms. Medina stated that it was due to water sample not being provided. Also inquired about a couple high priced food violations, which Ms. Medina explained was due to the establishments having multiple red violations. Hoping that with the food course now being offered for free, that establishments will have more of their staff trained which will assist in avoiding these types of violations.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Mr. McCann summarized the written report provided by Ms. Vroman prior to the meeting. Copies of the report were distributed to members during the meeting.

## Public Health Information-

- Governor's budget has no impact on Public Health. On the Federal side, also do not foresee any programs/grants being affected.

## Staffing-

- Currently Public Health Emergency Coordinator position vacant.

Ms. Vroman encourages members to read the Agency Report that Ms. Reigelman sends via email each month.

- Legislator Standinger noted that to Public Health's credit, they are the only department that provides this type of report, and it is a good thing. Mr. McCann stated that when it comes time for the Annual Report, each monthly Agency Report helps to capture details throughout the year. Ms. Medina also noted that it is good for staff to read too.

## Accomplished Activities-

- The County Administrator visited for a two-day orientation to learn about each program. Mr. McCann noted that Ms. Vroman had reached out to the County Administrator to see if interested. He felt it was very beneficial to hear from directors of each program/additional staff members.
- Staff had de-escalation training from an external trainer, and felt it was very helpful. Currently looking at other training programs they offer.
- Held first rabies clinic of the year at Candor Fire Department. It was very successfully, 167 animals vaccinated for rabies and 61 vaccinated for parvo/distemper. Several changes were

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made in procedure (after issue that occurred at a Broome County clinic) including having an animal control officer present for added safety, having rule in place for only one dog per owner at a time and having aggressive animals wait in their vehicles until ready for vaccination. Staff were also trained on safety measures and expectations of their roles during the clinic. Felt the public was very understanding of the new procedures in place.

- Additional discussion of veterinarians bringing their vet techs for assistance in handling animals. Mr. McCann noted that veterinarians, techs and the animal control officer are all compensated by Public Health.
- Dr. Hills noted the utilization of electronic payments at this rabies clinic and inquired if still just donation based. Mr. McCann stated that Public Health is required to state, "suggested donation of \$10.00." At this last clinic it was averaged that we received about \$5.00 per animal.

### In-Progress Tasks-

- Credible Mind Platform is due to launch. Ms. Medina explained the program-which is a website that offers assistance with mental health concerns. Online assessments can be completed and it will offer local resources/tools to assist. Partnered with Tioga County Mental Hygiene, who is completely on board. Will have the ability to control what is on the main page of the website (to include local resources). Will have link available on the Public Health website to access.
- Online Application for Environmental Health- very close to launching the permit application for Temporary Food. The public will be able to complete fully online.
- ASAP Coalition Coordinator met with Tioga County Sheriff's Lt. Delmage to outline a plan to conduct alcohol compliance checks for youth prevention efforts (Ms. Medina noted that it will be similar to how ATUPA checks are completed for the sale of tobacco products).
  - Members discussed that some school districts breathalyze children before attending school dances.
- Discussing merger between ASAP and Suicide Prevention Coalitions to streamline goals and objectives/membership.
  - Legislator Standinger noted that it may be an issue, receiving some pushback.

### Other Information-

- Continues to be a statewide provider shortage for Early Intervention and Preschool. Met with Tompkins County to see how they are handling it. Mr. McCann noted that Public Health has had a vacant part-time Speech Pathologist position posted for over two years now and have had no bites.
  - Inquiry was made of number of providers in our County in each therapy specialty. Mr. McCann stated that he did not know at the time, but that information could be shared after meeting.
- Keeping regular contact with Dr. Zevan (Medical Consultant) through monthly meetings and as topics arise (Pertussis cases, potential Tuberculosis.). Will be having open dialogue with him as we look at utilizing the CLIA license.
  - Inquiry made about Dr. Zevan's involvement with STI cases in the County. Ms. Medina explained that Public Health contracts with Tioga Opportunities for STI cases. Dr. Zevan does not have involvement.
- Ms. Leary inquired if Public Health is staying informed with the rise in measles in Texas. Mr. McCann stated that we are keeping an eye on this.

Ms. Vroman noted in her report that the next meeting will be March 20<sup>th</sup>. Please reach out if there is a topic you would like to know more about/have presentation on.

- Dr. Hills stated that a topic of interest would be on water quality/water issues- status on water aquifers in Tioga County.

### Member Questions on Data Sheet-

- Larger number reported in 2024 Infectious Diseases- Ms. Medina explained that the number was larger because RSV became a newly reportable disease, COVID is still reportable and flu cases increased at the end of 2024.

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- Discussion of monitoring TB.
- Welcome Baby Packets mailed, number increased from 2023 to 2024- Ms. Medina stated that 2024 was the first full year of packets being mailed (had reinstated program mid-2023). Still missing some data from Guthrie-Robert Packer due to State boundaries. Hopeful that we will have a report created soon to assist with this. Mr. McCann also noted that new administration has deemed this area a priority again.
  - Packet includes information on newborn care, development and services/resources. Currently have a health educator who calls all mothers deemed as having "high risk" births and follows up with them upon their request.
- Individuals Requiring Rabies Series (drastic jump from 2023 to 2024). Mr. McCann stated that we believe numbers were not accurately reported in 2023 and trying to fix reports currently. The online bite report has improved timeliness of receiving reports. As part of Quality Improvement will also be doing outreach to Emergency Services and Law Enforcement on proper reporting procedure.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Audit Summary-Quarter four of 2024: Audit summary report was shared with Board members and Ms. Medina summarized. 134 records were audited and reported to Dr. Zevan. Recommendations were made to have spot check record audits, additional staff training/education, outreach to partners on animal bites and online reporting form. Satisfaction surveys were mailed to all charts audited. Fourteen surveys had returned, all highly rated and Ms. Medina read through positive feedback that was received.

Currently have three ongoing Quality Improvement Projects:

- Animal Bite Investigations- have seen lots of improvement, but still ongoing.
- Dental Van Security- Mr. McCann and Ms. Whitmore are very active in this. Looking at ways to prevent people from being able to walk onto the van without permission first. Law enforcement had recommended signage (for no medication/no cash kept on van) and have implemented.
- Environmental Health online forms-Close to completing the Temporary Food Permit Application (Mr. Davis having main role in creating/revising form). Hope to have available before Strawberry Festival. Very proud to make this happen.

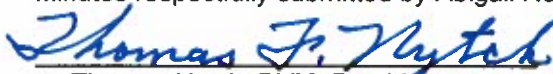
No patient complaints or sharps incidents were received/reported. Currently in process of updating Tioga County Public Health's Exposure Control Plan.

### **Additional Comments:**

- Dr. Hills inquired about Dr. Zevan, how he is doing in his role. Ms. Medina and Mr. McCann both stated he is doing very well. Appreciate that with his emergency department background that he understands the issues with rabies exposures and communicating to emergency departments.
- Legislator Standinger stated that Stu Bennett, County Coroner, has stepped down from his role. A new coroner has been appointed to serve the rest of Mr. Bennett's unexpired term (John Olsen). Noted that Tioga County has four elected coroners which includes Keith Lewis, Ryan Kline and Bob Williams.

Adjournment of meeting called at 9:14 a.m. Motion for adjournment made by Ms. Leary; seconded by Mr. Simmons, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.

  
Thomas Nytech, DVM, President

  
Abigail Reigelman, Secretary

Minutes approved March 20, 2025