



# TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

## MEETING MINUTES November 21, 2024

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

W. Simmons, Vice President  
J. Raftis, DO, FACEP  
T. Nytch, DVM  
T. Leary, FNP

### **ABSENT:**

T. Hills, DVM, President  
W. Standinger III, Legislator  
R. Kapur-Pado, DO

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

H. Vroman, Public Health Director  
A. Reigelman, Secretary  
P. DeWind, Tioga County Attorney  
J. Bailey, Tioga County Administrator  
S. Medina, Deputy Director of Public Health  
D. McCann, Director of Administrative Services  
M. Miller, Director of Patient Services  
D. Scherrer, Director of Environmental Health  
N. Whitmore, Director of Dental Health Services

**CALL TO ORDER:** at 7:30 a.m. by Mr. Simmons.

**PRESENTATION:** Senior management gave program highlights and provided a few challenges seen in 2024. Program highlights were provided to Board members in hardcopy as well.

Mr. Scherrer:

Highlights-

- Mr. Albert Knapp, Public Health Sanitarian, will be retiring at the end of the year. Mr. Alex Knapp, Public Health Technician, will be taking over the septic program and feel there will be no hiccups in transition.
- All larger water supplies did their EPA required lead service line inventory this quarter. The lead service line inventory will be updated annually for all unknown service line connection types.
- The new EH fees are set to start on January 1, 2025. Letters have been mailed already to our existing owners/operators to inform them of fee changes.
- Risk types assigned to our food service establishments will be reviewed in early January with our State Department of Health field coordinator to adjust inspection frequency.
- Mr. Stephen Mastro, Public Health Sanitarian, is currently being trained to inspect food service establishments.

Challenges-

- Critical need to have new staff, however training for new employees is time consuming.
- New lead and copper rule revisions (as of 10/16/24) has been challenging for water operators with submitting plans.

Additional Comment- One new Indian restaurant due to open within the next year in Apalachin.

Ms. Medina:

Highlights-





## TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

- Growth and development in Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Internal improvement with creating processes, updating forms, and staff training. Externally, have met with community partners (Village of Waverly Mayor and health care providers) to provide education. Coordinated and hosted a Lead Renovate, repair and Paint certification training for local contractors and today we are hosting a separate educational training for code enforcement officers.
- With becoming lead agency for the Drug-Free Communities Grant and coordinating ASAP Coalition, we have hired a Program Coordinator and strengthened relationships with community partners. Have done a lot with outreach and media campaigns.
- Coordination of Quality Assurance/Improvement Activities has resulted in a more structured approach to our record auditing process. Have had more programs signed on to do audits, which is great for an in depth look at our programs/services and look at process updates.

### Challenges-

- Working within constraints of some of our grants. We are nearing the end of one of our grants and have had to jump through some extra hoops, staff having to take on extra work that we were not made aware of at the beginning of this grant. We have been able to meet requirements though. (discussion of the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Grant).

### Ms. Miller:

#### Highlights-

- Held Immunization Clinic hours in the fall to prevent children from being excluded from school.
- Held flu clinic for employees.
- Have become more independent with our communicable disease cases (i.e.. Hepatitis). We were recognized by the State for one larger case, please with how it was completed.
- Public Health Nurse did outreach to emergency rooms for Rabies Post Exposure Treatment protocols.
- Now have access to EPIC with UHS and Guthrie hospital systems, which has been very beneficial.
- Trying to build up our Medical Reserve Corps. Our program coordinator and Public Health Nurse is now an American Red cross CPR instructor.

#### Challenges-

- Early Intervention Program now has new online documentation system rolled out by New York State. Staff have been training with the new system, but challenges are being felt state-wide with the functionality of the system, issues with billing.
- Communicable Disease- New York State Department of Health is putting more responsibility on local health departments to follow up with syphilis cases, but they have been very supportive with training efforts.

### Ms. Whitmore:

#### Highlights-

- Have new electronic enrollment form. Post cards contain QR code to be able to scan to access the online enrollment form. We can also email the link to the form to parents and schools have been posting the link to their websites and social media. Not completely paperless, but goal for the future.
- Trying to increase classroom education to talk about the importance of homecare. Have only had one willing class (which will be in December).

#### Challenges-

- Discussion of issues with trying to recruit a part time dentist. Ms. Vroman stated that an alternative solution is in the works to have current dentist work more hours, conversations being had with County representatives on granting additional benefits.
  - Additional discussion of dentist shortage and toothbrushes being offered.
- Spent three weeks at Waverly Middle School. 48 out of 96 students seen at the dental van had active decay, 14 out of those 48 were considered urgent need (5 or more cavities or abscesses), extracted 15 teeth.





## TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

- Dental provider shortage within Tioga County. There are six providers, and only one (along with the dental van) takes Medicaid. Having to refer children to Dinosaur Dental or facility in Rochester, but both locations have long waitlists.
  - Discussion of fluorinated water in Tioga County, stigmas of fluoride, opportunities for outreach.

Mr. McCann:

### Highlights-

- Successfully completed first electronic payment, and since this document was put together have had payments in almost all program service areas. This was not an easy undertaking and attribute success to Mr. Jason Davis, Assistant Director of Administrative Services.
- 2025 Budget request was submitted, and it has met all County requirement. All assessed needs are still included. Due to be approved in December.
- An Office of Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) review found five Medicaid payments for clients with other insurance. We were able to respond proving that only one did, and that client had only provided us with their Medicaid coverage. Our systems do work!

### Challenges-

- Billing software issues in three of our programs (Dental, Early Intervention and Preschool), all of which are New York State Medicaid issues, are delaying revenue. Providers are not getting paid. Because of Ms. Whitmore's additional efforts, we are in a good place with Dental revenue.
- New York State delays in responding to fiscal/administrative calls is holding up some of our work and has caused delays in some of our submittals.
- County Attorney is extremely busy and pulled in many directions, delaying responses and/or reviews of contracts.

### NEW BUSINESS:

- Third Quarter 2024- Quality Assurance Record Audit: Ms. Medina provided summary of the third quarter record audit review. 132 program records were reviewed with the Public Health Director and Medical Consultant, Dr. Zevan. Recommendations made to conduct record spot checks, revisit record-keeping processes, complete staff education on record completion/process and update clinic forms to be more streamlined. Each quarter, satisfaction surveys are mailed to those that record audits are completed for. This quarter, 26 surveys were returned, all highly rated, with some recommendations for the Dental Program and Rabies Post Exposure Treatment Program. Ms. Medina noted some highlighted comments. Quality Improvement Projects ongoing for Animal bite investigations, Environmental Health electronic forms and Dental Van security efforts. No patient complaints were received and no sharps injuries occurred within the third quarter. Next record audit will be completed in January.

### OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting Minutes (October): Motion to approve prior minutes made by Ms. Leary; seconded by Dr. Raftis, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Brief discussion of McDonalds violations.

### ADDITIONAL NEW BUSINESS:

- Proposed 2025 Board of Health Calendar was sent electronically and hardcopies distributed. Ms. Vroman noted that agenda items are similar to last year with the inclusion of By-Law review, Quality Assurance Summaries, Management and Fiscal updates. No meetings to be held in August and December. Ms. Vroman inquired if there should be anything added.
  - Dr. Raftis stated that a presentation on how Tioga compares to other counties with Public Health programs/services. Those present discussed who would be best to reach out to for this topic. Ms. Vroman offered possibly inviting New York State Department of Health representatives for each division to discuss program expectations. The Board was agreeable to this suggestion. Dr. Raftis commended Ms. Vroman for the work completed



## TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

during her time as Director, but inquired what this department can expand upon (Ms. Vroman noted that she will touch on this topic while speaking on 2025 goals).

- Mr. Simmons added that he would like to have a discussion surrounding expectations/ roles of the Board of Health members. Ms. Vroman stated that would be a good topic to include, important for the direction of the department and to help prevent what happened under previous administration.

### **INFORMATIONAL:**

- Legislation is currently on the Governor's desk regarding expanding eligibility for Board of Health members to allow lower level practitioners to serve on the Board. Doesn't affect us now, but good for the future.
- Tioga Castings- Last meeting discussed summary from hearing officer. Had meeting with some members of the legislature, discussed pushing back on Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Also had email correspondence on this topic with County Attorney DeWind. The letter from the hearing officer has not gone to the DEC; not within Ms. Vroman's direction to do so.
  - County Attorney DeWind spoke to where the County is now; discussion of cleanup efforts and property ownership difficulties.
  - Further discussion of pushing back on the DEC of putting fence around full property, who to pushback on this (requires further outside discussion).
  - Ms. Vroman made the Board aware of a grant applied for by Economic Development and Planning to complete assessments on vacant/Brownfield sites.
- Awarded two grants-
  - Floyd Hooker Grant for Healthy Homes (\$25,000)
  - In collaboration with Broome County/Child Fatality Review Board for railroad/traffic safety (subcontract for \$20,000). Ms. Vroman explained yearly expectations of the three-year grant.
- Tuberculosis Services contract with UHS Hospitals Status- Contract is with Peter for his review. Discussion of TB in jail, communication between jail and Public Health.
- Strategic Plan- Ms. Vroman explained that Public Health's strategic plan is tied to the County's strategic plan, made up of four main areas. Started as a one-year plan then became a three-year plan. Distributed tracking tool to the Board. Most of the objectives listed are one-year goals. Each objective is being lead by one of our six Directors, then staff were assigned to assist. Ms. Vroman explained that this form is Mr. Bailey's template to show where we are at. Four goals are more than 75% complete, one goal complete fully complete. Ms. Vroman highlighted each objective, noting status/ results.
  - Taxpayer Value-Probably most difficult to capture, working on moving forward with it. Finalizing handout that captures what public health does to show taxpayers how their money supports what we do.
  - Community Needs Assessment- Identified primary needs in a survey that was sent to stakeholders. Needs included: Healthy Homes, healthy living education, substance use and oral health.
  - Leveraging Technology- Can now accept electronic payments which is a major highlight for the year. Administrative staff have worked very hard on implementation. Next step is getting a card reader on the Dental Van and at rabies clinics.
  - Training Needs Assessment- Staff survey results outlined a training plan which identified four main areas: technology, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, and Public Health programs (services each program offers, day-to-day operations, so staff know thoroughly), and miscellaneous training areas (i.e. De-Escalation-which we have a speaker scheduled for at the beginning of the year).
  - Community Partnership- This objective is complete. It was a big part of our 2023 theme of "Reset, Renew, Reimagine." We reached out to old partners and reconnected to provide the new face of Public health and discuss opportunities to keep partners engaged.
    - Mr. Bailey commended Ms. Vroman's efforts with Public Health's strategic plan.






## TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

- 2024/2025 Goals- Ms. Vroman provided handout of 2024 goal statuses and tentative 2025 goals. The overarching goals for 2024 were all completed:
    - Retain current workforce-Very successful; only had one full-time permanent employee resign; had four new hires and one seasonal employee; three current employees moved into new roles; two of which were promotional.
    - Complete assessment of services needed in the community and utilize new Public Health On the Go trailer-Survey provided insights to where we should focus needs. Public Health On the Go trailer is used for rabies clinics.
    - Provide Greater Access to public Health services by leveraging technology- Currently accepting credit card payments. Will also be working on putting permit applications on-line as well.
    - Quality Assurance/Improvement Program renewal/expansion-QIP efforts were stopped for five to six years. QA is critical for evaluation of programs and is a requirement for Article 28 services. All staff have buy-in into this program and we are seeing a difference internally and in the community. Proud to see how our staff feel about this.
- 2025 Tentative Goals: Ms. Vroman explained that these goals were just shared with Senior Management, so some goals may change depending on feedback.
- Expand and retain workforce-We are receiving new grant awards, taking on more work creating a need for additional staff. Also see how we can promote internally (senior titles, etc.).
  - Complete and implement a three-year strategic plan- Would like to bring in an outside consultant to help incorporate existing efforts and prioritize what we need to do.
  - Implement new and/or improved programs/services identified in the community needs survey.
    - Dr. Nytch inquired about working relationships with community partners. Ms. Vroman stated that there is lots of overlap and have good working relationships.
  - Focus on clinic and how to best utilize the CLIA (clinical Laboratory License) to serve the community-Discuss additional testing that can be offered within the scope of our nurses' licenses.
  - Complete the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan-New York State requirement for 2025.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** Discussion of employee salary reviews and adjustments within Tioga County. Mr. Bailey and Ms. Vroman explained process within the County. Ms. Vroman also noted that Public Health is in going into Year 3 of the Public Health Infrastructure Grant which allows for Public Health employee incentives. Appreciative of Tioga County Legislature and CSEA for being agreeable to this grant. Mr. Bailey also noted Tioga County's very good benefit plan.

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.

  
Thomas Nytch, DVM, President

  
Abigail Reigelman, Secretary

Minutes approved January 16, 2025

