

**Tompkins County Board of Health**  
**January 28, 2025**  
**12:00 Noon**  
**Rice Conference Room and via Zoom**

**MINUTES APPROVED**  
**February 25, 2025**

**Present:** Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President; Melissa Dhundale, MD, Vice-President; Edward Koppel, MD; Shawn Black; and Frank Cantone

**Staff:** Frank Kruppa, Commissioner; Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health Services; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Deputy Public Health Director; Jeremy Porter, Fiscal Administrator; Dr. William Klepack, Medical Director; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; Skip Parr, Senior Environmental Health Specialist; Adriel Shea, Senior Environmental Health Specialist; Rachel Buckwalter, Director of Community Health; Jessica Clark Mandeville, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; and Zoe Lincoln, Whole Health Planner; Sagarika Vemprala, Public Health Contractor; Allyson Castellani, Environmental Health Contractor; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant.

**Excused:** Dr. Andreia de Lima; Samara Touchton; Ravinder Kingra; and Elizabeth Cameron, Director of Environmental Health

**Guests:** Bill Heumann, and Glenn Thornton of Hanshaw Village Cook Properties

**Call to Order:** Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at noon. Introductions were made and the agenda was adjusted to move up the enforcement action discussion for a vote.

New County Administrator, Korsah Akumfi – Mr. Akumfi introduced himself to the BOH. He is very impressed with the achievements of Tompkins County Whole Health and looks forward to working with the department.

12:10 Dr. Dhundale moved to go into executive session to discuss the Public Health Director's position with Mr. Akumfi, seconded by Ms. Black; all were in favor.

12:45 Ms. Black moved to go out of executive session, seconded by Dr. Koppel; all were in favor.

**Privilege of the Floor:** Cook Properties CEO Bill Heumann discussed the stipulation agreement with the Board of Health, assuring them that all concerns are being addressed. Glenn Thornton from Thornton Engineering explained that he works on various projects for Cook Properties and that all items detailed in the resolution will be addressed in the feasibility study, which will be submitted by the deadline. The BOH thanked them for their time and patience.

**Approval of December 3, 2024, BOH Minutes:** Dr. Dhundale moved to approve the minutes from December 3, 2024, and Ms. Black seconded the motion. All were in favor as written, with Mr. Cantone abstaining, the motion carried.

**Financial Summary:** Mr. Porter reported that they are in the process of building out the books from last year with no significant budget overages. The full year-end financials will be available in the next couple of months once the County has closed its books.

**Medical Director's Report and Discussion:** Dr. Klepack referred to his report included in the packet and noted that influenza is on the rise and COVID-19 is still prevalent.

With the federal government moving to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO) he emphasized the importance of public health agencies and is concerned about the impact on public health surveillance and response. There are major concerns about the spread of avian influenza (bird flu) becoming a pandemic. Without WHO participation, our ability to monitor and respond to such threats is significantly impaired. WHO is a key agency which monitors and responds to global health threats

Dr. Klepack also highlighted WHO's efforts to eliminate polio and its past success and eliminating smallpox. Crippling WHO at this time, cripples the effort to eradicate polio.

At the time of this report, the federal government has prevented public releases including public health releases from agencies, including the FDA and CDC. It is important to know that although our community is not receiving any health advisory reports from any national agency, NYS will not stop its sharing of important public health information.

**Administration Report:** Mr. Kruppa announced that this will be his last Board of Health (BOH) meeting as Public Health Director after 14 years in the position. He expressed his gratitude for the support he received from both the Board and the community. Although he is not leaving the community, he will be moving on to another organization with similar goals. Many Board members took the opportunity to express their appreciation and support for his work during his tenure.

Opioid Data Doubling – Dr. Moylan asked about data that shows opioid data doubling. Mr. Kruppa is not sure but believes it could be due to better reporting or more emergency response calls related to the opioid crisis. It could also be more people in need are receiving life-saving interventions.

Status of unhoused individuals – Dr. Moylan asked about the status of the unhoused. Mr. Kruppa said of the 40 unhoused individuals from the encampment, all are housed due to the housing service that occurred with supports. He noted that there are still people in the encampments, and Environmental Health are in conversations moving with the City around the plan to clean up the next phase.

**Children with Special Care Needs (CSCN) Report:** Ms. Clark Manderville reported that they are onboarding a second special education teacher who will provide instruction to children in the early intervention program, creating an opportunity to reduce the waitlist to zero.

**Division for Community Health (DCH) Report:** Ms. Buckwalter reported that the health department is working to proactively coordinate with healthcare providers, farms, and the public to prepare and plan for potential avian influenza cases in the community. They are having conversations with local healthcare providers to ensure appropriate screening and testing processes are in place. They have also reached out to Cornell Cooperative Extension to start communication with local farms, as there have been cases of positive birds on farms in other counties. This is important because the department would be tasked with monitoring any exposed farm workers.

**Health Promotion Program Report:** Ms. Hillson reported that they have free Radon Test kits available at the health department for the Healthy Neighborhoods program. Radon test kits are also available from the State and big box stores. The Community Health Survey was launched last week. Flyers are available and there is a direct link to the survey on the webpage.

**Environmental Health (EH) Report:** Mr. Parr reported on Ms. Cameron's behalf. He had nothing to add to the written report included in the packet.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

### **Enforcement Actions:**

- 1. Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-24-0019 – Hanshaw Village MHP, Violations of Board of Health Orders and Subpart 5-1 & 17 of the New York State Sanitary Code (PWS/Mobile Home Parks) (5 min)** Dr. Koppel moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Dhundale.

Mr. Parr explained that the resolution was amended from the initial proposal for better clarification of what was needed and is detailed in Exhibit B in the packet. The deadline was extended to February 17, 2025, and the final feasibility study is due by April 4, 2025.

Discussion: Previous fines were paid, and no additional fines were applied.

All were in favor; the vote to approve the resolution as written was unanimous.

### **Administrative Actions (EH) (5 MINS)**

- 1. The Oral Health Status and Recommendations Concerning the Children of Tompkins County.**

Ms. Vemprala presented findings from a survey on the oral health status of children in Tompkins County.

- Access to Dental Care: The survey found significant challenges for families in accessing dental care providers, especially pediatric dentists, and dentists who accept Medicaid
- Importance of Fluoride: The survey highlighted the need to educate the community on the importance of topical fluoride applications and fluoride supplements at home and address communication around fluoride in the water supply.
- Equity Concerns: The access issues were found to impact lower socioeconomic groups disproportionately, but also extended to families with jobs and insurance who still struggled to find appropriate dental care.

The health department is proposing a board resolution to raise awareness of these oral health challenges and inequities, to spark collaboration and action to address the identified problems. The board discussed the potential next steps, including reviewing a draft resolution at the next meeting.

Following next steps regarding the oral health issues for children in Tompkins County:

1. The health department will work on drafting a resolution that highlights the key findings from the oral health survey, the implications for equity, and the importance of addressing the problems.

2. The draft resolution will be shared with board members before the next meeting, so they can provide feedback and input on the content.
3. The discussion on the draft resolution will be put on the agenda for the next board meeting when more board members will be present to provide their perspectives.
4. The board expressed interest in reviewing the draft resolution but also wanted to ensure there was a clear plan in place to address the issues, rather than just issuing a statement.

The overall goal is to use the resolution as a way to raise awareness of the status of school children's oral health, emphasize causative areas, and stimulate community engagement.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ noon.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm