

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Tompkins County Board of Health
March 24, 2026
12:00 Noon
Rice Conference Room**

Present: Melissa Dhundale, MD, Vice-President; Edward Koppel, MD; Dr. Andreia de Lima; Samara Touchton; and Christy Bianconi

Staff: Jennie Sutcliffe, Commissioner; Skip Parr, Director of Environmental Health; Rachel Buckwalter, Director of Community Health; Jessica Clark Mandeville, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Holly Mosher, Deputy County Attorney; Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health Services; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; Shannon Alvord, Public Health Communications Coordinator; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

Excused: Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President; Frank Cantone; Dr. William Klepack, Medical Director; and Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Deputy Public Health Director

Guests: None

Call to Order: Dr. Dhundale called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at noon.

Privilege of the Floor:

Welcoming new BOH member **Christy Bianconi** - A legislator for District 14 covering Ithaca, West Hill, and South Hill. With 19 years in health and human services, she is an LCSW-R, has worked for four years in Whole Health's mental health department, and is the director of care systems and clinical quality at a behavioral telehealth firm in the Capital District. She was appointed vice chair of Health and Human Services and is eager to learn and contribute to the Board of Health.

Introductions were made.

Approval of the January 27 and February 24, 2026, BOH Minutes: Ms. Bianconi moved to approve the January 27 and February 24, 2026, BOH minutes, and Ms. Touchton seconded the motion. All were in favor of approving the January 27 and February 24, 2026, minutes as written; the motion passed unanimously.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (EH)

Enforcement Actions:

1. **Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-25-0028 – Elm Tree Inn, Violations of Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food Service) (5 mins.)** Ms. Bianconi moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Koppel.
 - Mr. Parr reports that Elm Tree owners have informed him that they may close their doors in April 2026, after 27 years in business, when their liquor license expires. They may request an extension of their liquor license until June, when their food permit expires. EH recommends changing the \$200 penalty date from April 15 to May 15, 2026. EH is not opposed to waiving the \$200 penalty.
 - An amendment to the resolution was made to waive the \$200 penalty if the establishment closes in April; otherwise, the \$200 penalty will be due, with the carryover penalty date adjusted to May 15. Dr. De Lima moved to approve the amendment; seconded by Dr. Koppel.
 - All were in favor; the vote to approve the amended resolution was unanimous.
2. **Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-25-0030 – Ithaca Beer Company, Violations of Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food Service) (5 mins.)** Ms. Touchton moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Koppel.

No discussion.

- All were in favor; the vote to approve the resolution as written was unanimous.
3. **Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-25-0031 – The Lotus, Violations of Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food Service) (5 mins.)** Ms. Touchton moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Koppel.

Mr. Parr explained that EH proposes a \$200 penalty for cold storage violations, with a penalty due date adjusted to May 15, 2026.

- All were in favor; the vote to approve the resolution as written was unanimous.
4. **Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-26-001 – John Joseph Inn, Violations of Subpart 7-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Temporary Residence) (5 mins.)** Ms. Touchton moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Ms. Bianconi.

Mr. Parr explains that this is a violation of operating without a permit. The penalty breakdown is \$500 for operating without a permit and \$200 for non-compliance with water/sample reporting. The resolution includes a carryover penalty date adjusted to May 15.

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

5. **Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-26-003 – Fridas Mexican Grill, Violations of Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food Service) (5 mins.)** Ms. Touchton moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. De Lima.

No discussion.

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

6. **Draft Resolution # EH-ENF-26-004 – La Tourelle, Violations of Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food Service) (5 mins.)** Dr. Koppel moved to accept the revised resolution as written; seconded by Ms. Touchton.

No discussion

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

FOCUS TOPIC

Community Health Assessment 2025-2030 Presentation and Discussion Continued: Ms. Hillson's presentation is a follow-up after a review of data sent to the Board for discussion and suggested interventions. The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) review of findings focused on housing stability and affordability, nutrition security, substance misuse and overdose prevention, including primary prevention, prenatal care and access, and chronic disease prevention, including cardiovascular disease and cancer screening and prevention.

Maternal Health Services Improvement Discussion: The discussion focused on perinatal care interventions and improvements at Cayuga Medical Center (CMC), highlighting existing programs such as the Healthy Infants Partnership and Moms Plus, and plans to strengthen referrals for mental health and social care needs. Existing partnerships with Guthrie need to be improved and expanded, including better resources for healthcare providers and public health details, as well as website resources. They explored the possibility of expanding the provider pool at CMC over a 5-year period to accommodate more deliveries, though this would require addressing current coverage and privilege structures. Also addressed were perinatal mental health support needs, including implementing baseline acuity assessments and tracking symptom reduction over time to improve treatment capacity, efficiency, and patient outcomes.

CHALLENGES

- Fragmented connection between hospitals and local programs - If Tompkins County residents deliver outside CMC, referrals back to local programs are not automatic; they only get records if they already know the patient and reach out themselves
- Limited visibility of available supports for pregnant and postpartum people
- OBGYNs not affiliated with the local hospital (CMC) cause structural barriers to diversifying delivery options at CMC – privileges must be approved by the department when doctors want privileges at CMC; providers with privileges must take calls for everyone's patients, not just their own.

SOLUTIONS

Existing Whole Health Programs

- Healthy Infants Partnership: community health workers support pregnant/postpartum people with health-related social needs (housing, food, transport, etc.)
- Moms Plus: nursing home-visiting program providing prenatal and postpartum visits
- Enhanced Navigation via Medicaid Waiver – the 1115 Waiver Team Services can provide enhanced navigation and support for Medicaid-eligible pregnant people
- Better outreach and communication with community providers
- Suggestions include:
 - Public health “detailing” to PCPs and prenatal providers so they understand and regularly refer to maternal/infant programs
 - Up-to-date information on the website instead of relying only on pamphlets, with initial pamphlet distribution just to raise awareness
 - Brochure drop-offs and staff visits to practices to explain programs
- CHIP planning for perinatal mental health - The CHIP explicitly identifies perinatal care (prenatal + postpartum) and mental health/social needs screening as a priority:
 - Intervention: screen pregnant and postpartum clients for mental health and social needs and strengthen referrals across Whole Health and other agencies
- Partner survey and subject-matter expert conversations will help refine short- and long-term goals and specific interventions.

Breast Cancer Screening Intervention and Health Disparities – There are plans for a pilot program allowing direct scheduling of mammograms without requiring a primary care visit first. It was identified that only 53% of Medicaid-eligible women aged 40-74 received mammograms during the studied period, highlighting a significant disparity that could be addressed through partnerships with payers and improved navigation services.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Klepack was not present at the meeting

Commissioner's Report: Ms. Sutcliffe had nothing to add to her written report included in the packet.

Division for Community Health Services (CHS) Report: Ms. Buckwalter reports:

- Staffing: one staff nurse position open
- Community Baby Shower on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at GIAC

Health Promotion Program (HPP) Report: Ms. Hillson shares:

- Senator Lea Webb will host Community Office Hours on Tuesday, April 14, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm at Tompkins County Whole Health, 55 Brown Road, Ithaca, NY, to assist with unemployment, housing, healthcare, and utility bills. The event will showcase the health department's programs.

Children with Special Care Needs (CSCN) Report: Ms. Clark Manderville had nothing to add to her written report included in the packet:

Environmental Health (EH) Report: Mr. Parr had nothing to add to his written report included in the packet.

12:50 pm Executive Session to discuss Asteri: Ms. Bianconi moved to go into executive session; seconded by Ms. Touchton.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at noon.