



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 20, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Dutchess County Board of Health was held virtually on Microsoft Teams and at the Dutchess County Department of Health (DOH), 85 Civic Center Plaza – Suite 106, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 on the above date.

PRESENT: Jeanean Aming, Psych. NP
Amy Cocina, MD
Alexander Cohen, MD
Laura Fil, MD (Virtual)
John Fallon, NP (Virtual)
David McNary, Vice President
Melissa Nelson-Perron, MD, President
Rachana Tyagi, MD

DOH STAFF: Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, MPH, FACEP, DOH Commissioner
Anthony Ruggiero, MPA, Assistant Commissioner
Jennifer Frevele, Director of Fiscal Services
Jennifer Conflitti, Epidemiologist
Jenean M. Williams-Green (Virtual)

ABSENT: Doug McHoul, Legislative Rep.

Guest: Frank Costello, President of Chamber of Commerce
Brian Tiernan, Nuvance

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Melissa Nelson-Perron called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM – A quorum was declared.

MINUTES: The minutes for December 18, 2025, were approved with no corrections. The motion was made by David McNary, seconded by Dr. Alex Cohen and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion w/ Frank Costello, President of Chamber of Commerce: Dr. Amy Cocina explained why the Chamber of Commerce President was invited. The Board of Health doesn't make laws but wants to improve the county's health. Many people in the county have prediabetes, diabetes, or obesity, which can lead to serious problems. The Board brainstormed ideas to promote healthy choices without making rules. One idea was to have restaurants use a small icon on menus to show healthy options, similar to symbols for spicy or gluten-free foods. Another idea was to create incentives, like awards for "Healthiest Restaurant" or events where people vote for the best healthy dish.

David McNary added that employers could also benefit from healthy programs. Since businesses negotiate health insurance every year and share costs with employees, programs that encourage healthy habits might help lower those costs. He suggested finding out if local employers would support this.

Frank Costello, Chamber of Commerce President, noted that the biggest challenge in engaging small businesses is their limited time and resources. Many owners work long hours and handle paperwork after hours, making it difficult to participate in new programs. While some businesses are willing, it requires significant effort to explain programs individually. He shared an example of the state's 2019 sexual harassment prevention training requirement—many businesses remain unaware or noncompliant because no one has explained it to them. The Chamber has offered support programs, but making initiatives simple, accessible, and ideally voluntary will encourage greater participation.

Dr. Santiago shared her idea for a restaurant incentive program in Dutchess County. Restaurants could earn gold, silver, or bronze awards for adding healthier menu options. The goal is not to take away foods people enjoy, but to reward restaurants that offer more nutritious choices. This idea is similar to "Shape Up Somerville" in Somerville, Massachusetts, which focused on improving youth nutrition and physical activity. The Fit Dutchess program is also focused on youth nutrition, physical activity and want to add the restaurant incentive as a part of the nutrition portion.

Restaurants that earn an award could display a sticker showing their Gold, Silver, or Bronze status. This would recognize their efforts and give them positive advertising. Could also partner with Dutchess Tourism to promote Dutchess County as a healthy place to visit, with activities like biking in Beacon and dining in Poughkeepsie. Overall, the program would benefit restaurants, residents, and visitors by encouraging healthier options while supporting local businesses.

Dr. Tyagi asked if there is a restaurant association in Dutchess County. Frank Costello explained that there is not one in Dutchess County, but there is a statewide association.

With regard to Dr. Santiago's idea for a restaurant incentive program in Dutchess County, Frank Costello commented that a similar program exists, such as ranking places for accessibility and giving incentives to make improvements. He also mentioned that County Legislator Lisa Kaul had discussed creating a law to stop businesses from automatically putting condiments, utensils, and napkins in takeout bags. Instead of making it a regulation, he suggested a "Please Ask" campaign to educate people.

He believes the restaurant incentive program could work if it is simple and easy for businesses to follow. One challenge may be that different cultures and individuals have different ideas about what is considered "healthy."

Dr. Nelson-Perron asked about the role of the Chamber of Commerce and how much influence or flexibility it has. Frank Costello explained that the Chamber is a membership-based organization. Businesses pay dues based on the number of employees they have, and most of the Chamber's revenue comes from memberships and event sponsorship. One of its main roles is advocacy—supporting or speaking out on legislation that affects businesses.

He suggested that if the restaurant incentive program moves forward, restaurants should be involved in input. A committee made up of different types of restaurants—from fast food to larger groups like Cosimo's Restaurant Group—could help shape how it works and decide if they want to participate. He noted that smaller restaurants, such as Alex's Restaurant, might have a harder time participating due to limited time and staff, but their input would still be important.

Frank Costello explained that a major part of the Chamber's work is economic development. They help attract new businesses to Dutchess County and receive many calls each week from people interested in moving or opening businesses in Dutchess. The Chamber is part of the Think Dutchess Alliance for Business, created during Marc Molinaro's administration to improve coordination in economic development. The Chamber also hosts about 165 events each year, including recognition programs like 40 Under 40 awards and large events such as a balloon festival that draws thousands of visitors.

Dr. Nelson-Perron inquired if the Chamber could help connect interested businesses with educational resources and support. She noted that some smaller restaurants may not realize they already offer healthy options or may not know how to slightly adjust their menus. She asked whether, given the Chamber's supportive role in it could link businesses to classes, nutrition experts, or other guidance.

Frank Costello mentioned that business interest depends on what's timely. Past topics like "going green" drew crowds, but interest faded. Now, things like AI get attention. Health topics alone may not attract many, since employers want clear, immediate benefits like cost savings.

Dr. Santiago asked about the importance of involving restaurants in the incentive program discussion.

Bryan Tiernan from Nuvance suggested that representatives from the Board of Health could attend a Chamber of Commerce meeting to meet restaurant owners and other attendees, allowing for direct engagement.

David McNary proposed starting with a list of 10–12 restaurants, using the Chamber's experience to identify and recommend participants, and then arranging a meeting with them.

Frank Costello noted potential language barriers and suggested a Monday morning in-person meeting. He added that the meeting could be hosted either at the Health Department or at the Chamber of Commerce (1 Civic Center Plaza).

Dr. Santiago invited the Chamber President to attend the Fit Dutchess Stakeholders meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20th at 9:30 am.

Next Steps: Anthony Ruggiero and Dr. Santiago will look at identifying potential restaurants to invite.

Jennifer Conflitti, Epidemiologist was invited to present on some ideas about the restaurant incentive program. Will table for now.

Jennifer Frevele, Director of Fiscal Services: Updates to the Private & Travel Vaccine Pricing Schedule. See attached signed memorandum.

There was a brief discussion about recent influenza trends in New York. Cases peaked around late December/early January—the highest ever reported in a single week—but dropped by over 71% in the past three weeks. Hospitalizations and ED visits for flu have also decreased sharply. Some noted decreased testing may partly explain the drop. There was concern about a possible second peak, potentially driven by returning college students or an upcoming influenza B surge, and hospitals had been operating at full capacity during the peak.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT: No report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: 2026 Public Health Partnership Awards: Board members received the instructions for selecting the 2026 Public Health Partnership Awardee as well as the nomination form. Briefly discussed means of getting the word out (i.e.: the website, listservs like School Superintendents, public relations contacts for Mid-Hudson Regional and Nuvance, Dutchess Delivery etc.)

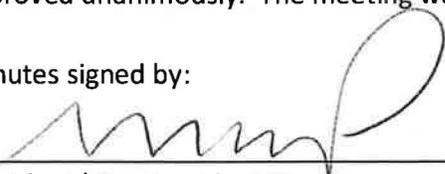
LEGISLATIVE REPORT: No report at this time.

Vote for 2026 President and Vice President of BOH: A vote was held to retain or select a new President and Vice President of the Board of Health. Motion was made by Dr. Rachana Tyagi to retain Dr. Melissa Nelson-Perron as President and David McNary as Vice President, seconded by Dr. Alex Cohen and approved unanimously.

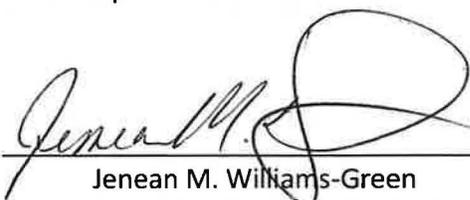
NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: The next meeting will be on **Thursday, February 19th, 2026, at 4:00 pm.**

A motion was made by Dr. Nelson-Perron to adjourn the meeting, seconded by David McNary, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 pm.

Minutes signed by:



President/Vice President Signature



Jenean M. Williams-Green
Recording Secretary Signature

2026 EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Dr. Melissa Nelson-Perron – President
David McNary – Vice President



DUTCHESS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dutchess County Board of Health
FROM: Jennifer R. Frevele, DOH Director of Fiscal Services
DATE: January 15th, 2026
RE: Updates to the Private & Travel Vaccine Pricing Schedule

After meeting with our nursing staff, we have recently reviewed the ordering costs for our private and travel vaccines. At this time, we would like to make the following fee adjustments for 2026. We are submitting for your review and approval an increase in the Vaccine Fees in accordance with Section 2.3(D) of the Dutchess County Sanitary Code.

The chart below highlights these increases:

<u>Vaccine Name</u>	<u>Current Fee</u>	<u>Increased By</u>	<u>2026 Proposal</u>
Rabies Pre-Exposure	\$420	\$80	\$500
Typhoid	\$125	\$50	\$175
Yellow Fever	\$215	\$85	\$300
Hep B	\$60	\$15	\$75
MMR	\$95	\$20	\$115
Meningitis	\$155	\$20	\$175
Varicella	\$145	\$55	\$200
Influenza	\$18	\$57	\$75
Polio	\$60	\$15	\$75

Please note that we continue to offer a sliding scale fee for those in need, and the administration fee is waived if the individual is unable to pay the cost.

Submitted by: Jennifer R. Frevele
Jennifer R. Frevele
DOH Director of Fiscal Services

1/15/26
Date

Approved by the Dutchess County Board of Health vote at the meeting held on _____

Approved by: Melissa Nelson-Perron
Melissa Nelson-Perron, MD
President, D.C. Board of Health

1/15/26
Date