



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 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:

Amy Cocina, MD
John Fallon, NP (Virtual)
Lisa Kaul, Legislative Rep.
David McNary, Vice President
Melissa Nelson-Perron, MD, President (Virtual)

ABSENT:

Jeanean Aming, Psych. NP
Alexander Cohen, MD

DOH STAFF:

Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, MPH, FACEP, Commissioner (Virtual)
Anthony Ruggiero, MPA, Assistant Commissioner
Jenean M. Williams-Green

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM – A quorum was declared.

MINUTES: The minutes for June 18, 2026, were approved with no corrections. The motion was made by David McNary, seconded by John Fallon and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

City of Poughkeepsie representation on the BOH: Joseph Donat, City of Poughkeepsie Administrator was recommended to the County Legislature to serve on the Dutchess County Board of Health. The appointment was noted to be discussed at the September Legislative meeting. Will update as soon as information is available.

Board Member Resignation: Dr. Laura Fil has submitted her resignation from the Board via email. She is unable to attend meetings due to increased work responsibilities. Will need to begin actively recruiting to fill the seat. Keep in mind the following:

- Must be a physician
- Must be a Dutchess County resident
- Also consider the day and time of meetings...

Board of Health Members will ask around to gather interested candidates.

Upcoming Presentations:

The September meeting presentation is confirmed, with Fallon Meneses presenting on Laryngeal Cleft Awareness.

For future presentation topics, Rural Health was suggested. Dr. Amy Cocina suggested a presentation from the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet (PCC). Dr. Santiago, who serves on the PCC Board, explained that PCC uses multiple grants to support about 5,000 children in Poughkeepsie through coordinated efforts in education, health, housing, and community partnerships, following a model similar to the Harlem Children's Zone. She also talked about a recent Dutchess BOCES Convening on expanding this county-level approach statewide. Dr. Santiago will reach out to Jill Gomez, Executive Director of PCC, who could share data, dashboards, and program outcomes. Will aim for a November presentation.

Legislator Lisa Kaul suggested domestic violence as a growing concern in Poughkeepsie and encouraged addressing it as a public health issue, particularly in communities of color. She noted that most intimate partner violence services are approached through the criminal justice system, and broader prevention and education efforts are needed across racial, religious, and cultural lines. The Board discussed gaps in awareness and response to intimate partner violence and sexual assault, noting limited understanding of emotional abuse, cultural barriers to seeking care, and health impacts during pregnancy. Members agreed the Board could contribute through education and awareness and suggested narrowing the focus to one specific area of domestic violence. Dr. Santiago will reach out to Whitney Humpfrey, VP of Community Programs at Family Services for a possible presentation to the Board.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Dr. Santiago shared the following updates:

Community Baby Shower – September 29, 2026, from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm at the Family Partnership Center Gym. The event will feature guest speakers from Boston Children's Health Physicians and provide education on prenatal and postnatal care. Dr. Santiago has prepared scenario-based activity games for attendees. We are partnering with community organizations to offer giveaways such as a car seat for raffles, diapers, and food will be available. Donations are coming in from Dr. Browns (baby bottles) and the PICHC Program.

The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet will support outreach through their housing-area ambassadors, and WIC will participate as well. More details to come.

Beyond the Sheets Sexual Health Forum – Scheduled for November 6, 2026, from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm at the FDR Wallace Center. This year's focus is adolescent and sexual health. Dr. Santiago and Commissioner Niebuhr met with Dr. Elizabeth Gordon, who is interested in providing training.

Dutchess County Fair – The Dutchess County Fair week runs from August 25-30, 2026. The Mobile Health Unit will be at the Fair the entire week. Public Health Education Coordinators will be there as well as Environmental Health staff who will be conducting inspections of food service operations, water and sewer etc.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Legislature Lisa Kaul reported on the following:

Legislator Kaul thanked everyone for their input and noted that the Kratom Law passed, focusing specifically on synthetic products. Received a lot of letters from the public opposing a full ban. Dr. Santiago added that the federal government has moved to temporarily classify the synthetic compound 7-OH-hydroxymitragynine as a Schedule I substance, making it highly regulated for at least two years, with a possible extension.

Legislation was also passed to increase Preschool Special Education compensation in Dutchess County, which had been significantly lower than Ulster County. Dr. Santiago and Legislator Emma Arnoff reviewed how services are organized and found substantial variability across school districts, which operate with full autonomy. They discussed possibly setting clearer expectations and exploring best practices to improve consistency. More information to come.

Brief discussion regarding E-bike safety as a future discussion. Dr. Nelson-Perron added there have been many traumas this summer that were e-bike related. Briefly talked about NYS E-bike rules and helmet requirements. Dr. Santiago talked about the idea of offering helmets but noted the department cannot purchase them, so an external funding source would be needed along with suitable distribution locations. The group discussed possible ways to obtain and distribute helmets, including partnering with local libraries etc.

Dr. Nelson-Perron announced Vassar's Health Fair at the Family Partnership Center on September 26, 2026, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. They do helmet fittings as well as give aways.

Lisa Kaul asked whether it would be acceptable, when necessary, to forward items needing Board attention or input directly to the Board, and whether Board members could speak at the Legislature when issues arise. Dr. Nelson-Perron confirmed that if the issue is within the

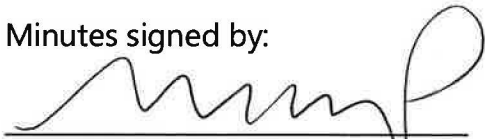
Board's scope, it is fine to bring it to the Board and to identify a member who is willing to speak. Normally, such matters are discussed and voted on during a Board meeting, followed by the drafting of a formal letter. When a quicker response is needed, the Board can discuss the matter and submit anonymous input to Jenean, allowing a formal Board response or letter to be prepared if appropriate.

OLD BUSINESS: No report...

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: The next meeting will be on **Thursday, September 17th, 2026, at 4:00 pm.**

A motion was made by Dr. Amy Cocina to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Legislator Lisa Kaul, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 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