



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 18th, 2025

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 (Virtual)
Laura Fil, MD (Virtual)
John Fallon, NP
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
Jenean M. Williams-Green

PRESENTATION: Melesha Brissett, American Lung Association

ABSENT: Jeanean Aming, Psych. NP
Alexander Cohen, MD
Doug McHoul, Legislative Rep.

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Nelson-Perron called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM – A quorum was declared.

MINUTES: The minutes for August 21, 2025, were approved with no corrections. The motion was made by John Fallon, seconded by David McNary and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Presentation by American Lung Association, Melesha Brissett, MPA

Melesha Brissett, MPA, American Lung Association was invited to the Board of Health meeting to present on pediatric asthma in Dutchess County. The presentation focused on highlighting the prevalence of asthma among children, identifying gaps in care and education, and emphasizing the critical role that schools, healthcare providers, and community partners can play in addressing this public health issue. Melesha will email the presentation and other links to share with BOH Members.

During the presentation, the following questions and discussion points were raised:

- A question was asked about the higher asthma density on the western side of the county. The presenter explained that this likely relates to social determinants of health, particularly income levels and access to care. Asthma rates are generally higher in lower-income ZIP codes.
- A comment was made regarding a slide displaying assets versus areas with suppressed data. The presenter clarified that some ZIP codes were missing data due to an insufficient number of visits recorded, which prevents reporting for those areas.
- A question was raised about the source of hospitalization data—specifically whether it referred to local health systems or broader sources. The presenter noted that the data comes from sources such as Medicaid and insurance claims and is not limited to local systems.
- Air quality as a barrier to asthma control was discussed. While overall air quality in Dutchess County is rated fairly well, the presenter mentioned a concern near the 12601 ZIP code, where a sanitation site still burns garbage. More detailed air quality data will be provided in follow-up materials.
- The measurement of quality data by ZIP code versus county level was also addressed. The presenter confirmed that quality data is reported at the county level, not by individual ZIP codes shown on the map.
- A question was raised about the use of asthma action plans—specifically whether providers are distributing them, as students often do not bring them to school. The presenter explained that many electronic medical record (EMR) systems do not have asthma action plans integrated, making it harder for providers to generate and share them. The need for greater education and outreach around this issue was emphasized.
- When asked about top strategies to prevent asthma, the presenter clarified that while asthma may not be fully preventable, it can be effectively managed. The most impactful tool identified was the Asthma Action Plan, which helps manage symptoms and avoid emergency care by outlining steps for different severity zones (green, yellow, and red).
- A question was raised regarding partnerships with academic institutions, including Marist College's PA program. The presenter shared that efforts to expand academic partnerships are underway, and connecting with Marist is a planned next step.
- A question was asked about collaboration with family medicine residents in the county. The presenter expressed interest in engaging with local residency programs and highlighted the American Lung Association's Project BREATHE, which offers asthma guideline training and supports EMR integration. A connection with the Nuvance Family Medicine Residency was offered during the meeting.
- The decline in the use of peak flow meters was noted, despite their historical role in helping patients monitor asthma. The presenter acknowledged their continued value and shared that the ALA still distributes them, along with other tools such as spacers and educational materials. Advancements such as digital inhalers were also discussed.
- A question was posed about whether the ALA works with counties that have lower asthma rates and what strategies they use. The presenter described a successful partnership in Nassau County, where nursing students at Molloy University receive asthma education training and engage in community outreach. Additionally, local health systems are working to integrate Asthma Action Plans into EMRs, using visuals to support families with low literacy.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: No report.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Nelson-Perron asked BOH members to please make sure to respond to Jenean's emails regarding attendance—or send a quick WhatsApp message. The sooner we hear from everyone, the easier it is to confirm if a quorum can be declared.

Dr. Nelson-Perron mentioned two recent community events over Monday and Tuesday: a local mass casualty incident and an exposure to an unknown substance at Fishkill Correctional Facility. The substance exposure caused several correctional officers and inmates to need emergency medical evaluation, with many patients treated at Vassar, Newburgh, and other nearby hospitals. Was wondering if there was any issues with EMS and response with that.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Anthony Ruggiero reported that Bill Beale was officially appointed as Commissioner as of September 8, 2025.

Dr. Rachana Tyagi gave a brief update on the two resolutions:

- **Virtual attendance for quorum:** She contacted MSSNY and found that some counties allow virtual presence to count toward quorum.
- **Volunteer physician coverage for immunizations:** In counties like Westchester, insurance coverage for volunteer physicians is provided through county support. Further discussion will take place when Dr. Santiago is present.

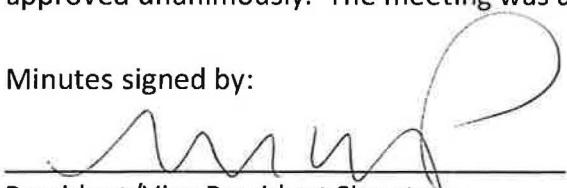
Dr. Cocina asked about communications for the CHIP Forum; an email was shared with Board members to distribute. Anthony Ruggiero added that the forum will be held on September 30th at the Henry Wallace Center. Also, the Mobile Health Unit (MHU) will be present at the CHIP Forum and will also be partnering with local colleges for upcoming health events.

Also, the *Beyond the Sheets* forum will be held at Locust Grove on Friday, September 19th.

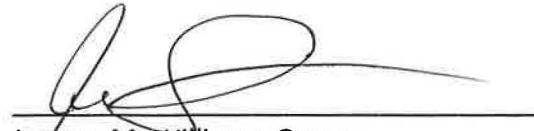
NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: The next meeting will be on **Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 4:00 pm**

A motion was made by David McNary to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Rachana Tyagi, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm.

Minutes signed by:



President/Vice President Signature



Jenean M. Williams-Green
Recording Secretary Signature

2025 EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH

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

