



# CATTARAUGUS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Cattaraugus County  
Health Department  
Established 1923

*Mayor David L. Smith, President*

*Legislator Kelly Andreano, Vice-President*

*Joseph Bohan, MD  
Zahid Chohan, MD  
Thomas Spigel, MD  
Kathryn Cooney Thrush, NP, MSN  
Shane Pancio  
Theresa Rafits  
Legislator Ginger D. Schroder, Esq.*

## MINUTES May 7, 2025

The 932<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health (BOH) was held at the Old Library Restaurant on May 7, 2025.

### *The following members were present:*

Joseph Bohan, MD  
Zahid Chohan, MD  
Thomas Spigel, MD

Ginger Schroder, Legislator  
David Smith, Mayor  
Kathryn Thrush, NP, MSN

### *Also present were:*

Kevin D. Watkins, MD, MPH, Public Health Director  
Haley Germain, Asst. County Attorney  
Richard Helmich, Legislator  
Derian Braxton, MD, Public  
Ray Jordan, Senior Public Health Sanitarian (Virtual)  
Debra Lacher, Secretary to the Public Health Director  
James Lawrence, Emergency Preparedness Director  
Rick Miller, Catt Co. News Photos/Olean Star  
Lynne Moore, Director of Nursing  
Dave Porter, Hearing Officer  
Kellen Quigley, Olean Times Herald  
Robert Ring, Environmental Health Director  
Cecelia Spigel, Guest  
Gilbert Witte, MD, Medical Director

Mayor Smith welcomed everyone to the Board of Health (BOH) meeting, he recognized attendees Legislator Richard Helmich, Dr. Derian Braxton one of the original NYS Public Health fellows from St. Bonaventure University, and Dr. Spigel's wife, Cecelia. The roll was called, and a quorum was noted.

Mayor Smith asked for a motion to approve the April 2, 2025 BOH meeting minutes. A motion was made by Dr. Spigel to approve the meeting minutes as presented, the motion was seconded by Mrs. Thrush, and unanimously approved.



**ENFORCEMENT REPORT:** Mr. Porter reported that there was one enforcement case, Docket # 25-007, the administrative hearing was held on 4/30/25 at 1:00PM via phone.

**Respondent:** Colin Walsh, 720 Asbury Way, Apartment B0720, Boynton Beach, Florida, 33426. Walsh Vape, Inc. 95 W. Main Street, Allegany, NY 14706/DBA Rab Vapes.

**Violations:** (1) NYS PHL Article 13-F Section 1399-cc(3). Selling vapor device containing nicotine to a person under 21 years of age. (2) NYS PHL, Article 13F Section 1399-MM-1 selling *flavored* vapor device containing nicotine the *flavored* vapor device was sold to an underage youth.

**Recommendation:** The \$1,100.00 civil compromise offered be changed to a \$1,100.00 fine.  
\$300.00 Fine  
\$250.00 Surcharge  
\$550.00 Total Fine/Violation x 2 Violations=\$1,100.00. Respondent must pay the \$1,100.00 on or before 5-30-25. In addition, a \$10.00 per day per diem will be levied for every day not in compliance.

A motion was made by Mrs. Thrush to accept Mr. Porter's recommendation; the motion was seconded by Legislator Schroder and unanimously approved.

Mr. Porter stated that a business will be given points for the sale of restricted products to anyone under age 21 by NYS Department of Taxation and Finance (NYSDTF). This violation by Mr. Walsh's business will receive (2) points. One point is given to a business for selling products to anyone under age 21, when the seller has a valid certificate of tobacco sale training at the time of the sale. Two points is given to a business for selling products to anyone under age 21, when the seller lacks a valid certificate of tobacco sale training at the time of sale. The clerk who made the sale at this business did not have a certificate of tobacco sale training and therefore the business was assessed a (2) point violation by NYSDTF. Legislator Schroder asked what is the significance of points. Mr. Porter replied that a business with three points will have their registration(s) to sell tobacco and vape products and lottery license (if applicable) suspended for one year.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:** Dr. Watkins stated that May is Tick and Lyme disease awareness month. Ticks are capable of acquiring human pathogens during blood feeding on zoonotic hosts, maintaining infection between life stages, and transmitting pathogens to humans during blood feeding on human hosts. Three species that are most prevalent in Western New York are the Ixodes Scapularis (Blacklegged tick) which transmits the bacterium Borrellia Burgdorferi (Lyme disease), Dermacentor Variabilis (American dog tick) which transmits the bacterium Rickettsia rickettsia (Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever), and the Amblyomma Americanum (Lone Star Tick) which transmits the bacterium Ehrlichia (Ehrlichiosis). Dr. Watkins shared a table from the 2024 annual report indicating the number vector-borne disease cases for Cattaraugus County in 2024. There were (6) cases of anaplasmosis, (5) cases of babesiosis, (1) case of ehrlichiosis, and (159) cases of Lyme disease. Although an infected tick bites a human, sometimes the infection will go away on its own and other times they lead to complications. Ticks are small and can be unnoticeable until they become engorged. Adult blacklegged ticks are typically active from mid-October until temperatures are consistently below freezing. They are also present late winter and early spring from March-June. Nymphal ticks are active from mid-May to July.

Ticks search for their host basically by attaching to the tip of low-growing vegetation, they sense body chemicals and other cues from potential hosts, and climb onto a person or animal as they brush by. Ticks do not fall from trees, jump, fly or see their host.

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has conducted *Ixodes scapularis* (Blacklegged Tick) monitoring across NYS since 2008. Those results are then shared with local health departments, state agencies, and the general public. The tick surveillance data of black-legged deer ticks for Cattaraugus County in 2024 was from both the nymphs and adult collections. The nymphs were collected between June 4<sup>th</sup> to July 19<sup>th</sup>, and the adult ticks were collected between October 17<sup>th</sup> to October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Collections occurred at six locations: 1.) Deer Lick Conservation, were (65) nymphs were collected, (50) were tested, (40%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. At the same location (104) adults were collected, (50) were tested and (52%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. 2.) Pfeiffer Nature Center, Lillibridge, (33) nymphs were collected, all (33) were tested, of the (33) tested (36%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. At the same location (53) adults were collected (50) were tested and (52%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. 3.) Pfeiffer Nature Center, Eshelman, (64) nymphs were collected, (50) were tested and (38%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. At the same location (4) adults were collected, all were tested and (75%) were positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. 4.) Gargoyle Park (69) nymphs were collected (50) were tested, (24%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. At the same location (176) adults were collected, (50) were tested and (68%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. 5.) Allegany State Park (22) nymphs were collected, all (22) were tested with (23%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. At the same location, (67) adults were collected, (50) were tested and (72%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. 6) Zoar Valley, where only Adults were collected, (50) of (56) adults were tested, and (58%) tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. This data shows that over (50%) of the ticks collected during that time period carried the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, therefore it's important to be careful and take preventive measures to avoid ticks.

Symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans, which looks similar to a bulls-eye target. The duration of time generally required for a tick to feed and transmit the pathogen *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, is (36-48) hours. There is a two-step serologic testing process to determine whether a person has Lyme disease. The first test is an enzyme immunoassay, if this test is positive then a secondary test called a western blot test is done as a confirmatory test. If the enzyme immunoassay test is negative, one can assume it is not Lyme disease. Prophylaxis treatment for Lyme disease is doxycycline. There are no vaccines for Lyme disease at this time; however, clinical trials are ongoing.

Recommendations for going out in any grassy areas include wearing long-sleeved shirts, and long pants. Tuck pants into socks or shoes. Light color clothing to easily spot ticks. Use a tick repellent on clothes, especially pants, and socks. Spray clothing with a repellent that has 0.5% permethrin, but not on the skin. Use an insect repellent registered with the Environmental Protection Agency that contains (i.e., DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus) on any exposed skin.

Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths. Cattaraugus County opioid mortalities included (12) deaths in 2020, (13) in 2021, (27) in 2022, (28) in 2023, (9) in 2024, and (2) deaths so far in 2025.

The decreasing number of deaths may be due to drug enforcement officers collecting more illegal drugs coming into the state or more importantly due to harm reduction efforts being implemented throughout the county. Mayor Smith stated that from the school's perspective it is the availability of Narcan, and the fact that users no longer use alone. Of the (9) opioid related deaths in 2024, (7) were due to fentanyl and (2) were due to methadone. In 2025 there have been (2) opioid related deaths, both were due to Fentanyl and a death in April is still pending a toxicology report. Harm reduction measures seems to work as Naloxone (Narcan) is being distributed throughout the County.

In addition, fentanyl test strips are also being distributed which allows the individual to test their drug before using it. Dr. Spiegel asked how the test strips works. Dr. Watkins replied that the user would place a small amount of their drug and a little water in a cap and dip the test strip into the mixture. Let the strip absorb the water for 15 seconds. Take the strip out of the water and place it on a flat surface for two minutes. Read the results. Finally, xylazine test strips, which is not for opioids, are also being distributed to residents. Mayor Smith shared that what drug dealers are doing is trying to maximize their profit by cutting the drug and putting in harmful products that provide a high but use less of the product that they are selling. Fentanyl is a cutting agent that will kill a person with just a couple of drops. Dr. Chohan shared that he recently took care of a patient who was injecting xylazine and developed necrotic skin disease as it is a constrictor. This person came very close to needing to amputate both their legs due to their use of this drug.

The Veggie Wheel truck has finally arrived, and pictures were shared. There are (4) refrigerators within the truck and the department is hoping to move from just fruits and vegetables to include, cheese, dairy and eggs products. Legislator Helmich asked how many counties have a truck like this. Dr. Watkins replied that Erie County has one but he was not sure of others counties who had a farmer's truck. This truck was purchased through a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield grant that the department received in 2023. Dr. Spiegel asked how farms are incorporated within this venture. Dr. Watkins stated that currently there are (4) farmers that the department is currently working with, but we are looking to expand. If there is a local farmer in the area, we reach out to see if we can purchase their products and distribute the produce to the community. Mayor Smith congratulated these new efforts and asked if there are any income requirements for the recipients to receive these products. Dr. Watkins replied that there is not, but the area where the veggie wheel program typically has gone, are to buildings that house seniors. Now with this farmer's truck, the department will be able to expand to other food insecure areas.

**NURSING DIVISION REPORT:** Mrs. Moore shared that the homecare census was currently (230). In April, there were (93) admissions, and (72) discharges.

Starting on May 6<sup>th</sup> the department will celebrate national nurse's week, with a daily celebration in their honor.

Lead program update: In the month of April, there were (92) lead tests conducted. There was (1) child with an elevated blood lead level (BLL) of (10.5ug/dl), this was a capillary test and a venous confirmatory test was done that same day with a result of (9.4ug/dl) [normal is < 5ug/dl], there were (4) children whose BLL ranged from (5-8.4ug/dl). The highest level at (8.4ug/dl), that child was actually a (10ug/dl) in August of 2024. Remaining BLL's includes (85) children who were all (<5ug/dl). The total lead caseload is (66) children.

The clinic has preordered and reserved doses of both flu and COVID vaccines for delivery in the fall of 2025-2026. (1,200) doses of Flaurix (influenza virus vaccine) were ordered; last year the department administered (940) doses of this particular influenza vaccine. Additionally, (620) doses of the Fluzone (influenza virus vaccine) High Dose were ordered for adults 65 years of age and older. Last year (460) doses of the Fluzone high dose were administered, and (10) doses of the Flubok (influenza virus vaccine), the eggless version, was ordered, of which (0) were administered last year.

The department have placed an order of (600) doses of COVID vaccines for those over (12) years of age, (20) doses for those between the ages of (5-11), and (30) doses for those between the ages of (6 months-4 years) of age. A total of (547) doses of COVID vaccines were administered last year.

In April, there were (25) HIV tests conducted in Olean, (19) in Salamanca, and (5) in Machias, all were negative.

For the month of April there were no pre-exposure rabies vaccine series administered, and there were (2) post-exposure rabies vaccine series given, both due to bat exposures.

Reportable diseases: in April, there were (5) cases of Chlamydia; (0) cases of Gonorrhea; (3) chronic cases of Hepatitis C; (1) case of Salmonellosis which was food borne: raw undercooked food; (2) cases of Strep Group B; (37) cases of influenza A; (44) cases of influenza B; (4) cases of pertussis, (3) from the same Amish family; (22) cases of RSV; (17) cases of COVID-19; and (1) case of Strep pneumoniae.

Dr. Spigel asked if the pertussis and RSV cases were immunized or unimmunized individuals. Three of the (4) were not immunized against the pertussis. Dr. Watkins interjected that the RSV vaccine is only for those that are (60) years of age or older, but can be given to those (50-59) years of age who are at increased risk of RSV-Lower Respiratory Tract Disease.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT:** Mr. Ring shared that a successful free animal rabies clinic was held on May 3, 2025. There was a total of (415) animals vaccinated, (102) dogs, (309) cats, and (4) ferrets. The department received (\$920.00) in donations from that clinic.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, to repair or replace well and septic systems, notified the department that they have released the funds for the program, meaning the department can officially begin marketing and accepting applications for the program. The grant targets low to moderate-income individuals living in single-family homes. For two people living in a house, the combined annual income must equal (\$65,000.00) or less to qualify. We estimate that we have replaced between (200-300) wells and septic systems over the last (10) years that this program has been offered for the county.

The lead capacity-building grant will also target low to moderate-income families. The department is planning on accepting applications this fall to assist families in the abatement of lead from their homes. Our priority will be to offer assistance to families we are currently working with that have an open lead case with the department. After that, we will prioritize families with children under the age of (6) years of age.

The health department does not usually have lots to do with water quality in the waterways, but we do get involve with blue green algae also known as harmful algae blooms in the area, as it can be harmful to humans. We test primarily the Allegany River, and Allegany State Park locations. Mrs. Thrush asked how long the algae could live on a kayak. Mr. Ring stated that was a good question and he would look into that for a definitive answer.

**Old/New Business:** Unfortunately, on March 25<sup>th</sup> the New York State Department of Health was notified by the Department of Health and Human Services of the immediate termination of millions of dollars in Federal grant funding to NYS. One of the several federal grants that was terminated was the Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant, which funds the NYS Fellowship program. Therefore, this program will terminate on May 30, 2025. The Public Consulting Group employs the fellows, so there is no direct financial impact on the department. However, there is operational impact to the department as they contribute greatly to the department's daily work. The (4) fellows who were assigned to the department, will truly be missed.

The next BOH meeting will be held at noon, on Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, and there will be no July meeting.

A motion was made by Dr. Chohan to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Dr. Spiegel and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin D. Watkins, M.D., M.P.H.

Secretary to the Board of Health