

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH
SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 7, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Deanna D’Amore, Director of Health, Anthony Santella, DrPH, Ken Lalime, RPh, Norman Weinberger, MD, Joan McNeil, DNP, Janet Karpiak, MD

OTHERS: Pam Bates, Immunization Grant Coordinator, Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator, Sarah Foristel, Outreach Worker, Darleen Hoffler, Clinical Supervisor, Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology and Informatics

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D’Amore called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. D’Amore called the roll.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: July 24, 2025

DR. WEINBERGER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED. DR. MCNEIL SECONDED. THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public, Diane Lauricella, spoke. Ms. Laurella noted her professional background in environmental health, hazardous materials, waste management, and good governance. She addressed agenda items concerning epidemiology and immunization and expressed appreciation that board members had discussed strategies to communicate the department’s work to the public. She encouraged the Director and staff to find ways to increase public safety awareness and suggested adding a monthly agenda section dedicated to public outreach for emerging health concerns. She also suggested that the Board occasionally or regularly hold evening meetings to facilitate public attendance. Public participation was then closed.

V. IMMUNIZATION ACTION PLAN (IAP) PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Pam Bates and Sarah Foristel, from the Immunization Action Plan (IAP) program, along with Darleen Hoffler, presented an overview of the program’s history, infrastructure, and outcomes.

Ms. Bates explained that CT Wiz, Connecticut’s Immunization Information System, recently marked its seventh anniversary. The statewide immunization registry system was created in response to the measles outbreaks of 1989–1991, evolving from early paper record reporting to the web-based CT Wiz launched in 2018. CT Wiz now supports vaccine inventory management, reporting, and reminder and recall functions, and it played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic by enabling real-time vaccination tracking. The system currently contains data for approximately four million patients and more than 9.7 million doses administered statewide.

Ms. Bates reported that Norwalk achieved the highest immunization rates in Connecticut for the 2022 birth cohort, maintaining that ranking alongside the Danbury IAP area since 2020. The Norwalk Health Department continues to oversee the Danbury IAP area after that department declined the program contract. Connecticut also ranked first in the nation for the two-dose measles vaccination rate among kindergarteners, at 98.3 percent for the 2024–2025 school year, exceeding the 95-percent threshold for herd immunity. She described ongoing IAP activities, including provider outreach, monthly reminder and recall reports, MMR follow-ups for children due for vaccines, and outreach for those lost to follow-up through calls, WIC Program coordination, and home visits. Staff also ensure accurate reporting in CT Wiz and encourage provider participation in the CDC’s IQIIP program.

Updates from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) were reviewed, noting continued recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines for individuals six months and older, new guidance for universal Hepatitis B screening during pregnancy, and an age adjustment for the MMRV (ProQuad) vaccine to be administered only to children over four years old. During discussion, Dr. Santella encouraged the Department of Public Health to consider differences in professional recommendations, such as those issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics, when evaluating data and policy alignment. Dr. Weinberger supported this recommendation.

VI. EPIDEMIOLOGY UPDATES

Mr. Weeks presented the latest updates on local and national public health trends. He reported that emergency department visits for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV remained low, and wastewater monitoring indicated minimal viral presence across all three illnesses. Although overall seasonal virus levels continued to decline, a slight uptick in SARS-CoV-2 activity was observed.

He noted that the United States had reached a milestone of 1,309 measles cases in 2025, a cause for concern that underscores the importance of continued vaccine education and outreach. Regarding vector-borne diseases, no human cases of West Nile Virus had been reported locally, but mosquitoes testing positive for the virus were found in surrounding areas, including

Stamford, Easton, and especially Bridgeport. During discussion, Mr. Weeks clarified that West Nile Virus activity is typically associated with birds and standing water, particularly in coastal areas such as Fairfield County, and not with properly maintained swimming pools.

Mr. Weeks also addressed current environmental conditions, noting that while drought was not a concern at this time, Fairfield County was experiencing abnormally dry weather. A minor heat risk alert had been issued for the county, expected to increase to a moderate level by the end of the week.

VII. FLU CLINICS

Ms. D'Amore reported that the department successfully held its first flu clinic the week prior to the meeting. Additional clinics were scheduled for later that week and on October 16, both running from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., with plans to continue offering Thursday afternoon sessions while vaccine supplies remain available. The public was encouraged to register for appointments in advance to ensure a faster experience, though walk-ins were accepted at the last session for individuals who saw signage and wished to be vaccinated. A press release and social media campaign were issued to promote the clinics.

Ms. D'Amore thanked Board member Dr. Joan McNeil for volunteering at the clinics and expressed appreciation to Board members Dr. Anthony Santella and Mr. Ken Lalime for attending and assisting with promotion efforts. She also acknowledged the support of local and state officials, including the Mayor, Senator Duff, Representative Johnson, and Council Member Jalin Sead. The department approached the organization of the clinics through a quality improvement lens, using the Incident Command System (ICS) framework to assign roles and responsibilities within the operation. Staff reported that this approach worked very well and represented a significant improvement from previous years. Dr. Santella provided positive feedback, noting that as a participant, the clinic was “really nicely organized” and “seamless”.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Director's Report

Ms. D'Amore provided updates on several departmental matters, including staffing, funding, and program development. Ms. D'Amore thanked Governor Lamont and Commissioner Juthani for their support in maintaining funding for the WIC program, which the department administers in partnership with Optimus Health Care. She also reported that the state had confirmed receipt of all federal preparedness funds for the remainder of the fiscal year, ensuring that local preparedness work would continue without interruption. The highly successful Suicide Prevention Grant with United Way was extended for another year, and a new subcontract will be

created to continue the program. Finally, Ms. D'Amore noted that the department has expanded internship and fellowship opportunities for students, establishing a streamlined online application process and formal agreements with universities, including Fairfield University, to support placements and hands-on learning experiences.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned at 8:48a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jada Caballero.