77 Main Street North, Suite 205
Southbury, CT 06488
Regular Meeting
Wednesday 09/02/2026, 5:30PM

Voting Members in Attendance
Larry Ellis (Oxford) (Chairperson)
Deb Fuller (Woodbury) (Vice Chairperson)
Michael Crespan (New Milford)
Scott Halstead (Oxford)
Casey Flanagan (Sharon)
John Michaels (Southbury)
Jack Kelly (Southbury)
Sarah Fatibene (Southbury)
Dean Sarjeant (Washington)

Non Voting in Attendance
Amy Bethge, MPH (Director of Health)
Tigan De Carli (Community Health Administrator/Community Health Worker)

Voting Members Not Present
Chris Cosgrove (New Milford)
Jeremy Levin (New Milford)

MEETING MINUTES -REVISED

Meeting called to order: Larry Ellis 5:30pm

Ms. Fuller made a motion to amend the meeting from a Regular Board Meeting to the Annual Board Meeting
Second: Mr. Ellis
All in favor

Ms. Fuller made a motion to add the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman to New Business on the agenda
Second: Mr. Halstead
All in favor

Mr. Halstead made a motion to move item 8C on the agenda to before item 2 on the agenda
Second: Ms. Fuller
All in favor

Community Health Needs Assessment Presentation

Ms. Bethge welcomed Tigan De Carli and introduced her to the Board. She shared that Ms. De Carli has worked with HVHD for about a year and a half and praised her work ethic and drive during that time period. Although Ms. De Carli started as a temporary employee, she was transitioned to part-time because of her many strong contributions to HVHD. Her current role is Community Health Administrator, but she has begun to learn the role of Community Health Worker.

Ms. Bethge shared that over the past several months Ms. De Carli has spent much of her time working on HVHD's Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). She shared that the purpose of the CHNA is to identify, analyze, and prioritize the health needs and assets of the residents served by HVHD through available data collected at the federal, state, and local level. The goal is for HVHD to use the CHNA as a roadmap for public health planning and decision making.

Ms. De Carli introduced herself and shared that in addition to the CHNA, she spends her time working on HVHD's social media messaging and monthly newsletters. She also supports HVHD's Community Health Team.

Ms. De Carli shared that a more in-depth look at the CHNA would be completed at the next Board meeting, but for now, she would provide a general overview of key findings. She shared that the data indicated that the priority areas of focus within HVHD's communities include mental health and substance use, aging and injury prevention, chronic disease prevention, healthy housing, and the built environment. Ms. De Carli provided an overview of each of these core areas for the Board.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to enter into Executive Session
Second: Ms. Fatibene
All in favor

Enter into Executive Session – 5:52

Executive Session End – 5:57

Mr. Halstead made a motion to approve the July 8th 2026 meeting minutes
Second: Ms. Fuller
All in favor

Mr. Michaels made a motion to add the approval of the meeting minutes from the Special Meeting on August 24th 2026 to the agenda
Second: Mr. Halstead
All in favor

Mr. Halstead made a motion to approve the August 24th 2026 Special Meeting Minutes
Second: Mr. Michaels
All in favor

Finance Committee Report

Mr. Michaels shared that the Finance Committee has continued to receive timely, accurate financial statements. He additionally shared that the Committee was pleased with the EOY financial statements for FY 25/26 and that all was slated for submission to the auditor with no concerns.

Ms. Bethge shared that CT DPH had recently sent a letter to all Board Chairs (for Districts) and CEOs (for Departments) regarding their concerns around unspent funds associated with the Workforce Development grant. DPH noted that it was important for local health to spend down these funds as it would impact the likelihood of future federal fund allocations. Ms. Bethge shared that she was pleased

to report that HVHD had used over 65% of its allocated funds by the end of Year 4, and was on track to fully expend the grant by the end of Year 5, as requested by CT DPH.

Ms. Bethge noted that HVHD had used these funds to create a pipeline training and promotion structure for environmental health professionals within the District. She stated that in 2023, HVHD had only 1 registered sanitarian, 1 health inspector, and 1 part time food inspector on staff. She highlighted that now, in 2026, the District has 4 registered sanitarians (three of whom are food certified), 1 health inspector, and 1 Food Inspection Training Officer (FITO). This growth was supported by Workforce Development funding, but also structured into the annual per capita to ensure sustainability beyond the life of the grant.

Director's Report

Respiratory Virus Season and Fall Vaccination

September marks the beginning of annual preparation for increased respiratory virus activity during the fall and winter months. These illnesses historically increase during the fall and winter and can have a particularly significant impact on older adults, young children, people with chronic medical conditions, and immunocompromised individuals.

New Connecticut Adult Influenza Vaccine Access Initiative

This season, CT DPH is in the process of launching of a new Adult Influenza Vaccine Pilot Program. Effective September 1, CT DPH is making influenza vaccine available through participating Connecticut Vaccines for Adults providers for eligible uninsured and underinsured adults. The initiative, funded through Public Act 26-3, is intended to reduce financial barriers to influenza vaccination. Participating providers receive vaccine doses at no cost and may charge eligible patients an administration fee of up to $21.

This program provides an important opportunity for local health departments like HVHD and community partners to increase influenza vaccination access among adults who may otherwise face financial or insurance barriers.

Updated COVID-19 Vaccines

Updated COVID-19 vaccines for the 2026-2027 season were recently approved by the FDA and are designed to target currently circulating variants. The availability of updated vaccines provides an opportunity for residents, particularly older adults and individuals at increased risk of severe illness, to discuss vaccination with their healthcare providers as the fall respiratory virus season approaches. Because COVID-19 vaccination recommendations and eligibility have undergone changes in recent years, clear communication from healthcare providers and public health agencies will be particularly important this fall to help residents understand current recommendations and access available vaccines.

RSV Prevention

September is also an important time for RSV prevention. CDC recommends RSV vaccination for all adults age 75 and older and for adults ages 50–74 who are at increased risk of severe RSV illness.

Late summer and early fall are considered an optimal time for eligible individuals to receive the vaccine before RSV activity increases. Unlike influenza vaccination, RSV vaccination is not currently recommended as an annual vaccine for individuals who have already completed the recommended dose. RSV prevention is especially important because the virus can cause serious illness among older adults and young children.

In preparation for this upcoming respiratory virus season, HVHD is:

- Promoting influenza, COVID-19, and RSV prevention and vaccination through HVHD clinics
    - Partnership with Beacon Pharmacy for COVID-19, RSV, shingles, etc vaccines
- Social media campaign
    - Social media posts featuring interviews with local leaders and community partners regarding why they get their annual flu shot
- Educational messaging
- Encouraging residents to stay home when sick and take steps to reduce the spread of respiratory illness
- Reinforcing the importance of protecting vulnerable populations
- Monitoring CT DPH surveillance data and public health alerts
- Preparing for potential increases in illness in schools, childcare settings, healthcare facilities, and long-term care facilities

Measles Surveillance and Vaccination Awareness

Measles continues to be an important national public health concern in 2026, with CT public health officials documenting and investigating several cases over the past year. Connecticut's high vaccination coverage provides important protection against widespread transmission. To date, there is currently no indication of sustained community transmission in the state. The state's kindergarten MMR vaccination rate remains among the highest in the nation, however, imported cases continue to present a risk, particularly as international travel increases. Maintaining high community vaccination coverage and ensuring that residents are appropriately vaccinated before international travel remain critical public health priorities.

Foodborne and Waterborne Disease: Cyclospora Outbreak

Connecticut and the nation have experienced increased cyclosporiasis activity during the 2026 summer season. Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite Cyclospora, which is transmitted through contaminated food or water. The most common symptom is frequent watery diarrhea, although individuals may also experience loss of appetite, weight loss, abdominal cramping, bloating, nausea, fatigue, and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Illness can persist for an extended period and may result in dehydration or other complications, particularly among young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

In July, the Connecticut Department of Public Health reported 35 confirmed cases of cyclosporiasis in the state, nearly double the number reported at the same point during the previous year. Connecticut's cases have been investigated as part of increased national surveillance, although DPH initially reported that it had not identified a Connecticut-specific food source.

At the national level, federal health officials are investigating a large multistate outbreak associated with processed iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico and recalled by Taylor Farms de Mexico. As of the FDA's August 27 update, the outbreak included 11,458 illnesses, 495 hospitalizations, and two deaths across 20 states. Although Connecticut was not listed among the states with confirmed outbreak- associated illnesses in that update, distribution of the recalled lettuce was confirmed in Connecticut. The FDA has stated that it remains confident that the recalled product is no longer on the market.

This outbreak demonstrates the importance of continued foodborne disease surveillance and rapid communication among local, state, and federal public health agencies. It also highlights the role of healthcare providers in recognizing and reporting unusual or persistent gastrointestinal illness. As the investigation and surveillance continue, HVHD will monitor updates from CT DPH, the FDA, and CDC and continue to provide information to the public and local food establishments as appropriate.

Monthly Newsletter

New Business

Ms. Fuller made a motion to adopt the BOD Meeting Schedule for the 2027 calendar year as proposed, and to move the last meeting of the 2026 calendar year from November 4th to October 28th.
Second: Mr. Halstead
All in favor

Mr. Halstead made a motion to approve HVHD's Holiday Schedule as proposed.
Second: Ms. Fuller
All in favor

Ms. Fuller made a motion to reappoint Larry Ellis as HVHD Chairperson for the 2027 calendar year
Second: Mr. Halstead
All in favor

Mr. Ellis made a motion to reappoint Deb Fuller as HVHD Vice Chairperson for the 2027 calendar year
Second: Mr. Halstead
All in favor

Motion to adjourn
Ms. Fuller made a motion to adjourn at 7:21pm
Second: Mr. Ellis
All in favor
Motion Carries

Recorded by:

Amy Bethge