

**NYS Department of Health
Public Health and Health Planning Council
Deputy Commissioner Executive Report
June 18, 2025**

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for Community Health

Loss of Federal Tobacco Funding

New York State's tobacco control work has been long supported by a federal grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office on Smoking and Health totaling \$2.9 million annually, which funds key components of the program's infrastructure. New York and other states did not receive continuation funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the next year of this grant; in addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking and Health, which previously oversaw this funding at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was eliminated.

The federal funds fully or partially supported more than 20 Health Research Inc. staff who work at the State Health Department. This team is responsible for implementing the state's tobacco control program by overseeing local grantees, managing surveillance efforts, executing mass media campaigns, supporting cessation programs and advancing health equity initiatives. Due to the loss of funding, Health Research, Inc., issued layoff notices on April 30, 2025, to several staff, with the last day of employment of June 4, 2025.

This loss of funding represents a significant disruption to the program's infrastructure. The affected staff members are part of a small, dedicated team that oversees a \$39 million state-funded tobacco control program. As outlined by the State Budget, almost all of the state funding is aid to localities and is used for contracts. While the state-funded portion of the program will continue, as feasible, this abrupt loss of federal partnership undermines the reach and sustainability of a nationally recognized model for tobacco control.

The consequences of these cuts extend far beyond the immediate loss of staff. Without the necessary resources to support local programs, the state's ability to combat tobacco use, particularly in vulnerable and underserved communities, will be severely diminished. This setback risks reversing years of progress, leading to increased smoking rates, higher healthcare costs, more premature deaths, and deepened health disparities.

Office of Science and Technology

1. In time for Asthma Awareness Month, a publication ([AsthmaSnapshots2025.pdf](#)) was released by the California Regional Asthma Management Program (RAMP) and the National Center for Healthy Housing that features NYS asthma self-management education and home environmental trigger remediation work with Office of Health Insurance Programs and New York State Energy Research and Development. The work in NYS has been led by the NYS Asthma Control Program, whose leadership consists of senior staff from the Bureau of Community Chronic Disease Prevention and the Center for Population Health Science within the Office of Science. The snapshot describes the history and background of years of work done to achieve Medicaid support and coverage of remediation of home-based environmental triggers, particularly among children with poorly controlled asthma.
2. The Opioid Data Surveillance team in the Center for Population Health Science - Office of Science worked with partners across programs in DOH and Office of Addiction Services and Supports to successfully update of the key indicator slide deck ([Substance Use in NY State: Streamlined Set of Key Tracking Indicators, May 2025](#)) demonstrating significant progress on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts related to substance use and overdose prevention.
3. Staff from the Center for Population Health Science - Office of Science worked with the Center for Environmental Health on the development of a new Heat Surveillance Dashboard ([New York State Heat Surveillance Dashboard](#)). This dashboard provides weekly updates on temperatures and heat-related health illnesses with data availability at state and county level.
4. Staff from the Center for Population Health Science – Office of Science have collaborated with staff from the Division of Family Health and the Office of Mental Health to develop and publish a Datapoint [publication](#) in Psychiatric Services using Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring data to examine disparities in postpartum depression.
5. Office of Science worked with the Division of Vaccine Excellence on the development of a Measles module within the Symptom Monitoring system, an application developed by Office of Science for conducting follow-up on persons with health exposures. This module will allow for local health departments and DOH programs to monitor symptoms of individuals or families exposed to measles for an exposure period. As measles grows as a public health threat, this tool will assist NYS DOH and county Local Health Department's abilities to respond.

Center for Environmental Health

New York State Heat Risk and Illness Dashboard

The New York State Department of Health is continuing its efforts to assist in the adaptation to the impacts of climate change by launching an interactive New York State Heat Risk and Illness Dashboard (https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/environmental/heat_dashboard/). This Dashboard, which uses real-time data from the National Weather Service, New York State Mesonet (via the New York State Weather Risk Communications Center) and the New York State Department of Health, will allow the public and county health care officials to determine the forecasted level of heat-related health risks in their area and raise awareness about the dangers of heat exposure. Health measures come from electronic syndromic surveillance system reports of heat-related emergency department visits and emergency medical services calls for heat-related illnesses. The Dashboard provides a snapshot of the current heat outlook and recent patterns in heat-related illness across the state that are presented along with recent useful historical data. The Dashboard also embeds the Heat Risk forecast, developed by the National Weather Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which uses a 5-level color-coded scale to illustrate the potential risks of heat-related impacts for up to seven days in advance. Each level corresponds to a different level of heat risk, helping to identify areas forecasted to have greater health risks from heat exposure and providing risk guidance for decision-makers and heat-vulnerable populations. The release of the dashboard coincided with findings recently published in a [CDC MMWR study](#) led by Department of Health staff.

Children's Camp Guidance - Updates for Measles 2025

With 1046 total confirmed measles cases in the United States as of 5/23/25 representing 14 different outbreaks, 3 deaths and with 97% of cases in unvaccinated and under-vaccinated people, it was especially important to provide a timely update to the guidance for children's camp operators and for Local Health Departments who inspect children's camps and investigate outbreaks.

Medical Directors in the Center for Environmental Health and in the Division of Vaccine Excellence worked collaboratively along with the assistance of the Bureau of Community Environmental Health & Food Protection to provide current, updated information prior to the 2025 children's camp season. This included measles awareness, education, and preparation information in the event of a case of measles in a children's camp. Additionally, the collection and review of immunization records, initial health screening, prevention and control of measles were specifically addressed.

Wadsworth Center

Cannabis Reference Laboratory Program Accredited

The Cannabis Reference Laboratory Program (CRLP) within the Wadsworth Center's Division of Environmental Health Sciences (DEHS) is engaged in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New York State Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) to provide testing services and scientific expertise in support of Office of Cannabis' medical and adult-use cannabis programs. Per the Memorandum of Understanding, the Cannabis Reference Laboratory Program was required to obtain accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories to test cannabis products submitted by the Office of Cannabis Management. From January 2-3, 2025, the Cannabis Reference Laboratory Program underwent an external assessment conducted by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) for compliance to this international standard. On February 18, 2025, the Cannabis Reference Laboratory Program was successfully awarded an ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Scope of Accreditation by A2LA for testing services that include potency, cannabinoid profile, moisture content, water activity, metals, pesticides, and numerous microbiological contaminants. The laboratory is now fully operational to support the Office of Cannabis Management.

Wadsworth Center Named Sole U.S. Influenza Surveillance Site for Summer 2025

The Wadsworth Center's Virology Laboratory has been selected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as the sole national site for influenza surveillance during the summer of 2025. Beginning May 20, 2025, all influenza surveillance specimens previously routed to multiple National Influenza Reference Centers (NIRCs) will now be sent exclusively to the Wadsworth Center.

This selection follows Wadsworth's top ranking in the recent five-year renewal process for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Influenza Reference Center proposals, reflecting the laboratory's excellence in diagnostic capacity, scientific expertise, and operational readiness. Surveillance will be conducted through the National Influenza Reference Center Laboratory, part of the Laboratory of Viral Diseases. The 2024–2025 influenza season has been one of the most severe in recent years, and the Virology Laboratory continues to process high volumes of specimens. With the upcoming national transition, the lab is preparing for surge testing through late spring, as influenza activity gradually subsides.

Wadsworth's designation underscores its critical role in national infectious disease surveillance and reinforces New York State's leadership in public health laboratory science.

Wadsworth Center Selected as National HIV Nucleic Acid Testing Reference Center

The Wadsworth Center's Bloodborne Virus Laboratory (BVL) has been selected by the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) as the National HIV Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) Reference Center for HIV-1 and HIV-2 RNA testing. This year, the Association of Public Health Laboratories designated only one national HIV reference center – recognizing Wadsworth for its technical excellence, capacity, and long-standing leadership in molecular diagnostics. Historically, two reference centers were selected (NYS and Florida), making this year's sole designation for New York a notable distinction. The Hepatitis C Virus Nucleic Acid Testing Reference Center designation was awarded to the Michigan Public Health Laboratory. Due to their shared capabilities, Wadsworth Bloodborne Virus Laboratory and Michigan Public Health Laboratories will serve as reciprocal backup laboratories, ensuring continuity and resilience for national HCV and HIV RNA testing services. The reference center role is fully funded by the federal government, with an estimated 600 specimens per year expected for testing. This selection reflects the national confidence in Wadsworth's scientific rigor, quality assurance, and continued commitment to high-impact public health laboratory services.

Wadsworth Center Parasitology Laboratory Assisting in National Chagas Disease Testing

With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention pausing molecular testing for *Trypanosoma cruzi*, the Wadsworth Center Parasitology Laboratory has continued to provide real-time PCR testing for this bloodborne parasite, which causes Chagas disease. Utilizing a laboratory-developed assay, the laboratory has tested 95 specimens between mid-December and mid-March. Specimens have been submitted from across the country, with the majority coming from California, along with samples from Massachusetts, South Carolina, Illinois, Florida, Michigan, Washington, Arkansas, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Most patients tested are transplant recipients who either reactivated a chronic infection or received an organ from a donor with a chronic infection. Patients at risk of reactivation are monitored through a structured testing schedule at weekly, bi-weekly, and then monthly intervals for 6 months to one year. Of the 95 specimens tested, 24 were positive, representing six out-of-state patients. This critical testing has been made possible through funding from the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), ensuring continued diagnostic support for vulnerable patients across the U.S.

Collaboration on Regulated Medical Waste Management Related to Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers

In July 2024, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) was contacted by Northwell Health regarding a regulated medical waste concern raised by the Great Neck Water Pollution Control District (GNWPCD). The issue involved the discharge of medical waste into the sewer system from North Shore University Hospital isolation rooms housing patients suspected of or confirmed to have Ebola or other viral hemorrhagic fevers (VHFs).

In response, the Wadsworth Center and the Division of Legal Affairs held discussions with Northwell's legal team. They clarified that under current NYSDOH regulations, it is permissible to discharge liquid or semi-liquid medical waste from isolation rooms into a sanitary sewerage system connected to a secondary treatment facility, unless such discharge is specifically prohibited by the Commissioner of Health or local ordinance.

Subsequently, in May 2025, the Wadsworth Center received a letter from Andrea Restifo of North Shore University Hospital requesting formal authorization to share deidentified VHF test results with Great Neck Water Pollution Control District. The proposed information would include only the date of the positive result and the type of viral hemorrhagic illness, without any patient identifiers. As noted in the letter, this enhanced communication is intended to enable Great Neck Water Pollution Control District, in collaboration with public health authorities, to better anticipate and manage potential public health risks associated with wastewater exposure.

This case highlights the importance of coordinated communication among hospitals, local utilities, and public health agencies to ensure regulatory compliance while maintaining community health safeguards.

Launch of PHAGES Summer Research Training Program – A Wadsworth Center-APHL-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Collaboration

On May 19, 2025, the Wadsworth Center welcomed the first cohort of PHAGES (Public Health Academy and Genomics Exploration Study) Summer Research Training Program interns, marking the launch of an innovative partnership with the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This 12-week immersive program provides undergraduate students with a unique opportunity to explore public health careers through hands-on training in microbiology, genomics, and protein biochemistry. During the first six weeks of the program, the Association of Public Health Laboratories-selected interns will participate in laboratory-based research focused on the discovery of bacteriophages – viruses that infect and kill bacteria using advanced molecular and genomic techniques. The research is specifically geared toward isolating phages that target multi-drug resistant bacteria endemic to New York State.

A central component of this research involves leveraging the New York State Wastewater Surveillance Program, an untapped reservoir for identifying phages. Because bacteriophages coexist with their bacterial hosts, wastewater offers a rich source for discovering novel viruses that may serve as tools to combat antibiotic resistance. In the second half of the program, interns will be placed in participating public health laboratories, where they will apply their newly acquired skills to real-world public health initiatives.

The Public Health Academy and Genomics Exploration Study Program reflects the Wadsworth Center's commitment to developing the next generation of public health scientists and advancing strategic research to counter antibiotic resistance – a critical public health priority in New York State and beyond.

CLEP Expedites Permitting Process for SUNY Stony Brook's East Hampton Emergency Department

The Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program (CLEP) at the Wadsworth Center, part of the New York State Department of Health, ensures that all clinical laboratories in the state meet rigorous standards for quality and safety before beginning operations. While the standard timeline for Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program permit approval typically ranges from four to six months, the program demonstrated its responsiveness to urgent public health needs by expediting the permit application for SUNY Stony Brook's new Emergency Department in East Hampton. Submitted in spring 2025, the application included a request for approval of an on-site clinical laboratory essential to the functioning of the new emergency facility. With a targeted opening date only two months away, Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program prioritized the review, inspection, and proficiency testing process. By mid-May 2025, the permit was fully approved and issued – in time for the start of the summer season, when the East End of Long Island sees a significant increase in population and emergency service demands.

This successful acceleration of the permitting process highlights Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program's commitment to protecting public health while supporting healthcare system expansion in underserved or high-demand areas.

Dr. Patrick Parsons Receives 2025 APHL LRN-C Excellence in Public Service Award

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) has named Dr. Patrick Parsons of the Wadsworth Center as the 2025 recipient of the Excellence in Public Service Award for the Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats (LRN-C). This prestigious national award honors an individual who has demonstrated outstanding and innovative service throughout their career, with at least ten years of leadership within the Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats. The award highlights sustained excellence, a deep commitment to public health, and a record of advancing the mission of the Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats an effort supported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Parsons is a nationally recognized leader in chemical threat preparedness and response. His decades of service and expertise in toxic elements, proficiency testing administration, and quality assurance have helped shape the foundation and future of the Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats. He has led the development of essential policies and provided critical support that continues to benefit laboratories in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Association of Public Health Laboratories stated, "His vision, leadership, and commitment to public health are unmatched, and his contributions have left a lasting legacy not only at the Wadsworth Center but across the entire national laboratory response network."

Bureau of Vital Records

Implementation of Electronic Registration Systems

The New York State Vital Records actively uses the Database Application for Vital Events (DAVE) to actively register deaths across the state (excluding NYC). Vital Records is advancing a statewide initiative to implement a fully electronic birth and fetal death registration system. Hospitals will now enter birth data electronically, which will be immediately accessible to local registrars. This system will streamline the creation and delivery of birth certificates, reducing delays, and mailing costs, and allows parents to receive certified copies more quickly. The fetal death electronic registration system will allow physicians, coroners, and funeral directors the ability to compile and submit fetal death records electronically, ensuring compliance with state law requirements for registration. This will improve the accuracy, efficiency, and legal compliance for vital records, including timely physician signatures and proper handling of documentation for fetal deaths.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY CARE AND HEALTH SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Living Donor Support Act

The Transplant Council met on April 9, 2025 to, among other things, review the State's first-ever state regulations on Living Donor support. This new program will reimburse expenses for people who are generous enough to be a living organ donor. Those regulations, which are available on the Department's website, are now out for public comment. Any comments are due back to the Department no later than July 28, 2025.

Dear Administrator Letter 25-04

The Department published a Dear Administrator/Chief Executive Officer letter, DAL 25-04, dated April 15, 2025, which clarified the requirements regarding eye prophylaxis and Vitamin K administration for newborns. This new Dear Administrator Letter provides guidance regarding the provision of these medications in a manner supportive of breastfeeding and also clarifies the Office of Children and Family Service's stance on instances where administration does not take place as required.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services has determined that the refusal of preventative medical procedures, such as eye prophylaxis and Vitamin K, does not meet the definition of maltreatment of a child, and a report to the Statewide Central Registry will not be accepted in these circumstances. The State Central Registry will, however, accept a report when a parent who has a relevant pre-existing condition (e.g., Vitamin K deficiency, current gonorrhea infection or, current chlamydia infection) refuses to allow medical treatment (e.g., Vitamin K injection or eye prophylaxis) for the newborn, which could place the newborn at imminent risk of harm.

Hospitals and healthcare providers must make every effort to engage parents and provide the necessary education and treatment, as the consequences of not administering these medications can be catastrophic.

Emergency Medical Services

State Emergency Medical Services Council (SEMSCO) met on May 7, 2025. During the meeting, the importance of working collaboratively to address difficulties within the health care system and also the growing use of Artificial Intelligence to aid emergency medical service activities were discussed.

The New York State Emergency Medical Services' Memorial was on May 20, 2025. Among the five names that were added to the [Tree of Life memorial](#), one passed away following a medical episode while on duty and four succumbed to illnesses that developed after responding to the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. This year's ceremony recognized four individuals from the Fire Department of New York - Lieutenant Anthony S. Cozzino, Captain Robert R. De Leon, Jr, Chief Mark E. Steffens, and Emergency Medical Technician Christopher Swierkowski. New York also recognized an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician from the Clausson Raught Community Rescue Squad in Copake, Stephen J. Walsh. The families, friends, and colleagues of the fallen as well as many others who honored their memory were in attendance.

The New York State Trauma Advisory Committee (STAC) met on May 28, 2025. Among other topics, there was discussion related to the potential need for a new trauma center in Far Rockaway, Queens and other matters related to patient care.

Nursing Summit on Workforce

On June 9, 2025, the Department hosted the New York State Nursing Summit in Albany, New York, that focused on workforce challenges in nursing. Commissioner McDonald provided the welcome and kickoff. This strategic symposium, structured by nursing professionals, fostered meaningful dialogue and gathered critical insights into the future of New York's nursing workforce.

Statewide IV Capital Awards

The Statewide IV awards for the Office of Aging and Long-Term Care and the Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management are on track to be announced in the near future.

OFFICE OF AGING & LONG-TERM CARE

The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care

The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care within the Office of Aging and Long-Term Care, is leading efforts to improve hospice and palliative care utilization across New York State via a multi-layered public education initiative. Through a series of meetings, “Question and Answer” sessions known as “Office Hours,” and “lunch and learn” events, staff are engaging providers and provider association groups in conversations around improving access to and understanding of end-of-life care options. Specific partner groups have recently been expanded to include the Medical Society of New York, New York Society of Medical Directors, New York American College of Emergency Physicians, and executive physician leaders in emergency medicine. This inclusive and broad approach to the health care field is enabled by the Department’s Center on Hospice and Palliative Care which is dedicated to a specific area within health care, and being outside of a regulatory role, can build and encourage relationships necessary to improve end of life care.

The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care has a director and three staff, including a Registered Nurse, a Health Program Administrator and a Licensed Master Social Worker who is certified in “Five Wishes,” a program that develops communicating skills and framing conversations to empower clinicians to have advance care planning discussions to arrive at medical, emotional, spiritual and communication of patient preferences.

In addition, the Department of Health was joined by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Office of Mental Health (OMH), and the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs in updating the Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) Form in May of this year. After the updates appeared, practitioners who use the Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment form with patients, health care agents and surrogates, identified critical elements that were needed, and the Department quickly made the amendments with a revised Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment form which was distributed on June 2, 2025. Updates will also be incorporated into the electronic Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment application (eMOLST). The Department also released a series of videos in May to promote the Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST). The videos can be accessed on the Department’s YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@NYSDOH/videos>.

Center for Residential Surveillance

In addition to surveillance activities which include nursing home and adult care facility surveys and complaint investigations, the Center has focused on developing and delivering education to build and maintain organizational infrastructure. In that capacity, the Center hosts monthly educational webinars in concert with the Quality Improvement Organization and produces guidance-oriented education with industry representatives. Participants have an opportunity to participate in the live webinar and/or to review the recorded information on the Department’s publicly accessible Learning Management System under the OALTC catalogue. An example of the Center’s education that is tailored to the needs of the field include a three-part series on

Legionella and a series on the Fundamentals of Operations (e.g., medication management), which incorporates both federal and State requirements. The Center tracks and trends operational patterns to develop targeted trainings to improve the quality of life for residents living in New York's long-term care settings.

Updates on Other Activities Within OALTC:

- **Community Aging in Place – Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) Program** -As we have discussed previously, this an evidence-based program that combines nursing, occupational therapy, and the services of a handy worker to help older adults live independently in their home. The Department is currently reviewing 43 responses to the Request for Applications (RFAs) it issued in February 2025 seeking 20 qualified organizations to implement and manage the Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders Program. We look forward to the roll out of this program and successes thereof to allow older New Yorkers to age in their home and community.
- **Master Plan for Aging** – the Department of Health and the New York State Office for the Aging led a two-year effort, beginning in November of 2022, to develop a Master Plan for Aging for New York. The final Master Plan for Aging report is under review by State government partners and will provide the recommendations generated by the drafting process, with responses by applicable State agencies to identify challenges or next steps for implementation. Following release, ongoing engagement will continue.

OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Office of Health Equity and Human Rights Executive Team

Migrant and Seasonal Worker Request for Applications Due June 20, 2025

The Office of Health Equity and Human Rights is currently engaged in the procurement process through a Request for Applications (RFA) for the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Program. The primary purpose of the New York State Department of Health's Migrant and Seasonal Worker Request for Applications is to award grants to public and not-for-profit, community-based health and/or human service organizations to provide access to high quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate health and social support services. The goal is to improve the health status of Migrant and Seasonal Workers (MSW) and their families, defined as individuals who are employed in agriculture or other employment on a seasonal basis that establish a temporary residence for the purpose of such employment. In issuing a Request for Applications, the Department seeks to sustain and expand its current network of services supporting Migrant and Seasonal Workers and their families in New York State. Applications for this opportunity are due June 20, 2025, with a five-year contract period beginning in January of 2026.

Health Equity Council Meeting on June 13, 2025

The Office of Health Equity and Human Rights will be hosting the next Health Equity Council meeting (formerly the Minority Health Council) in Albany on Friday, June 13, 2025. The Health Equity Council provides recommendations to the Commissioner of Health on topics related to minority health and health equity matters. This year, the Council is looking at three topics to provide recommendations on: Maternal and Child Health Outcomes, Artificial Intelligence and Minority Health, and Sickle Cell Disease education and treatment. The Council meeting is open to the public and will be livestreamed through the New York State Webcast system. For more information about the Health Equity Council, please visit our [webpage](#).

Ongoing Development of the New York State Department of Health's Language Access Report

The Office of Language Access within the New York State Office of General Services requests the submission of the annual reporting on State agencies' language access efforts, which supports Executive Law Section 202-a to ensure the provision of language services to linguistically diverse New Yorkers when accessing government programs and services. This includes the provision of interpreting (spoken and signed) and translation services. As the Department's designated Language Access Coordinator in support of New York State Language Access Law, the program within the Office of Health Equity and Human Rights Executive Team worked with staff across the New York State Department of Health to develop the required annual report. The annual report does this by showing OLA (Office of Language Access), the amount of language access services rendered by the New York State Department of Health for the year. The Department's annual report has been submitted and is currently under review by the New York State Office of Language Access. Preliminary feedback indicates the reporting of the content to be in compliance with New York State Language Access Law requirements.

Ongoing Development of the New York State Department of Health's Health Literacy Committee

The Office continues to move forward with the Department's Health Literacy Committee, which was put on pause during the COVID-19 pandemic to focus efforts on pandemic response. The committee's goal is to strengthen individual and organizational health literacy by promoting best practices, developing resources, and identifying strategies to make health communication more effective, within the Department and beyond. The Health Literacy Committee will play a vital role in advancing the Department of Health's commitment to health equity in addition to the planning of activities for October is Health Literacy Month. Committee members are being identified, with the first meeting scheduled for June of 2025.

AIDS Institute

Sexually Transmitted Infection Surveillance Dashboard Now Live

An interactive sexually transmitted infection dashboard for New York State is now live! The Sexually Transmitted Infection Surveillance Dashboard features interactive data visualizations of key trends of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia in the State. Please [subscribe to the mailing list](#) to receive future announcements and notifications about the Sexually Transmitted Infection Surveillance Dashboard.

New York State Congenital Syphilis Elimination Framework

Since the last meeting in which the release of New York State Department of Health's Congenital Syphilis Elimination Framework was announced, a series of Discussion Forums to share the recommendations with identified community collaborators has begun. These forums are intended not only to share key recommendations, but also to engage collaborators in discussions on how to effectively implement them in support of our shared goal of elimination. The forums will continue through October of this year.

Annual Hepatitis C Elimination Progress Report Meeting

The AIDS Institute Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology held its Annual Hepatitis C Elimination Progress Report meeting on May 14, 2025. During the meeting, the AIDS Institute released the 2023 data for metrics used to track New York State's progress toward eliminating hepatitis C as a public health problem by 2030. The metrics currently tracked are new hepatitis C diagnoses, hepatitis C treatment and clearance and new hepatitis C infections among people who inject drugs. We are currently meeting two of our metrics' annual targets - new diagnoses and new infections among people who inject drugs. New York State's hepatitis C treatment and clearance goal is to have 80% of persons diagnosed with hepatitis C treated or cleared of their infection by 2030. This metric currently stands at 54.6%.

Additional information on New York's hepatitis C elimination metrics, including what is happening in your county or region, can be found on the hepatitis C dashboard at [HCVdashboardny.org](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/hepatitis/hepatitis_c/elimination.htm). Presentations and the recording from the May 14, 2025, meeting are available on the New York State Department of Health's hepatitis C public web site at: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/hepatitis/hepatitis_c/elimination.htm.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Reports Drug-related Death Decrease

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports a 32% decrease in drug-related deaths in 2024, as compared to the same time period in 2023. The New York State Department of Health can attribute this to a variety of initiatives, including scaled-up harm reduction interventions, prevention, safer use education, linkages-to-care, and recovery services, and continuing collaboration with State and community partners.

New York State Department of Health Participation in June 2025 Pride Month Events

June is Pride Month, marking the month-long observation of contributions, past and present, from the LGBTQ+ communities in New York State and beyond. The New York State Department of Health aims to recognize this year's Pride Month by reaffirming the commitment held to establish affirming and inclusive health care for individuals. The Department is committed to eliminating health disparities that continue to impact the LGBTQ+ communities.

The New York State Department of Health is participating in the following events, including sponsoring a few of the events:

June 7, 2025 – Capital Region Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Pride

- Black, Indigenous and People of Color Pride celebrates LGBTQ+ Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).
- Staff from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's Office of LGBTQ Services; Office of Sexual Health and Epidemiology; Partner Services and Office of Planning and Community Affairs will have a table offering resources.

June 8, 2025 – [Capital Pride 2025](#) Parade and Festival

- New York State Department of Health staff will march in the parade.
- Staff from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's Office of LGBTQ Services; Office of Sexual Health and Epidemiology; Partner Services and Office of Planning and Community Affairs will have a table offering resources.
- Parade steps off at 11:30 a.m.
- Pride Festival begins shortly after.

June 11, 2025 – [Pride at the Plaza](#)

- Event to be held at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Kraig Pannell, Director, Office of LGBTQ Services within the AIDS Institute will deliver remarks.

July 18, 2025 – [ImageOUT](#) Pride Film

- The New York State Department of Health staff will be in attendance.

July 19, 2025 – [Rochester Pride](#) Festival

- Staff from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's Office of LGBTQ Services; Office of Sexual Health and Epidemiology; Partner Services and Office of Planning and Community Affairs will have a table offering resources.

August 13–27, 2025 – New York City Black Pride

- Staff from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's Office of LGBTQ Services; Office of Sexual Health and Epidemiology; Partner Services and Office of Planning and Community Affairs will have a table offering resources.
- Kraig Pannell, Director, Office of LGBTQ Services within the AIDS Institute will participate in a panel on August 13 titled "Healthcare is a Human Right."

August 22, 2025 – New York State Fair LGBTQ Day

- Staff from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's Office of LGBTQ Services; Office of Sexual Health and Epidemiology; Partner Services and Office of Planning and Community Affairs will have a table offering resources.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSIONER – SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Updated Set of Streamlined Substance Use Indicators

In May 2025, an updated set of streamlined indicators for tracking substance use in the State of NY was posted online at the following link:

https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/opioid/docs/summary_key_drug_indicators.pdf.

Data Compendium Presentation to Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board

On May 22, 2025, DOH provided a highly detailed presentation on substance use data for the State of NY to the Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board. The talk and the slide deck are available at the following link: <https://oasas.ny.gov/event/may-2025-opioid-settlement-fund-advisory-board-meeting>.

New Publication on National Goal for Drug Fatality Reduction in the U.S

Commissioner McDonald and Dr Holtgrave have recently published a paper on the benefits of meeting the 2025 national goal for drug fatality reduction. The peer-reviewed article was published in Annals of Epidemiology and is available at the following link:

<https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1lBEr3k7xF-Jcq>