

Nebraska State Board of Health
Public Meeting
Minutes

Monday, January 26th, 2026, 1:00pm

This is a draft. Minutes
have not been approved
by the State Board of
Health.

MEMBERS: Mark Bertch, DPT; Jaime Dodge, MD; Staci Hubert, PharmD; Patricia Kucera, MSN, RN; Brett Lindau, DO (Secretary); Ryan Palmer, OD; Connie Lynn Petersen, PhD; David Reese, MHA (Chair); Jeremiah Rethwisch, DC; Jacob Sikes; Kimberly Stuhmer, RN, MT; Ken Tusha, DDS; Dan Vehle (Vice Chair); Jeffrey Wienke, Jr, DPM.

STAFF: Caryn Vincent, Maggie Mills, Emma Davis

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

David Reese, Board of Health Chair, called a regular meeting of the State Board of Health to order at 1:00 PM on January 26, 2026, in the Otoe Conference Room in the Lower Level of the Nebraska State Office Building in Lincoln. Copies of the agenda were mailed electronically to board members and other interested parties prior to the meeting and posted on the Health and Human Services website and bulletin board. The following members were present: Mark Bertch, DPT; Jaime Dodge, MD; Staci Hubert, PharmD; Brett Lindau, DO; Ryan Palmer, OD; Connie Petersen, PhD; David Reese, MHA; Jeremiah Rethwisch, DC; Jacob Sikes; Kimberly Stuhmer, RN, MT; Ken Tusha, DDS; Dan Vehle. Members not in attendance: Patricia Kucera, RN; Jeffrey Wienke, Jr, DPM. Quorum was met.

Staff and others in attendance: Maggie Mills, Caryn Vincent, Emma Davis

A copy of the Open Meetings Act is available in the meeting room.

2. Adoption of the Agenda and Approval of the Draft Minutes

Mr. Reese asked if there were any changes to the minutes from November 17, 2025 minutes and the January 26, 2026 agenda. Dr. Bertch made a motion to approve the agenda with those changes, seconded by Dr. Hubert; voting yes: 12 (Bertch, Dodge, Hubert, Lindau, Palmer, Petersen, Reese, Rethwisch, Sikes, Stuhmer, Tusha, Vehle); voting no: 0; not voting: 0. Motion carried.

3. Reports and Updates

- Chief Medical Officer – Tim Tesmer, MD
 - Dr. Tesmer gave an update on the influenza respiratory season. Between November and February typically elevates in Nebraska. The common flu in Nebraska is influenza A H3N2 family. The current flu vaccine is still helpful for this flu variant. As of January 17th, over 6,000 cases have been reported in Nebraska. RSV activity in Nebraska is still low. COVID activity is relatively high but seems to be decreasing. DHHS is stressing the importance of talking to your healthcare provider about appropriate vaccines and treatments.
 - Dr. Tesmer gave an update for Ashley Newmeyer (Public Health Director) in her absence. Nebraska was awarded \$218.5 million for the Rural Health Transformation Program. In April, DHHS is to give a report on how we are doing. Division of Public Health took the lead role in the implementation. There are seven basic initiatives that were written into the proposal.
 - Making Rural Nebraska Healthy Again through the Food as Medicine concept
 - Regionalize rural access and navigation
 - Rural workforce acceleration
 - eHealth and mobile

- Rural emergency behavioral health
 - Assisted living facility special needs population incentive
 - Nebraska rural health technology catalyst fund and partnership initiative
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- State Epidemiologist – Sydney Stein, DVM, MPH
 - Dr. Stein gave a measles update. In late December, there were two positive cases. Both cases were unvaccinated children who recently traveled to Arizona. Everyone has recovered from the household. Situation will continue to be monitored.
 - Measles was detected in the wastewater in Lancaster County. Wastewater is tested three days a week. This is the first time measles have been detected in wastewater. There have been two tests since the detection, and all have been negative.
 - Having a positive detection could mean someone in the area had measles, were shedding and are no longer infectious but there have been no cases or suspected cases of measles in the area. This testing center does include the airport so someone could have been traveling through with measles.
- Licensure Unit – Lindsay Braddock
 - Update on the licensing issuing system. This is keeping staff very busy and hoping for a 2027 release.
 - In December, licensure unit was able to issue licenses within an average of 24 days making the average timeframe in the last six months 21 days.
 - There are several professions in the renewal process – massage therapists, veterinarians, vet techs, animal therapists, podiatrists, funeral directors and embalming establishments. This will be closed out by the end of the winter quarter.
 - Unit issued over 73,000 licenses last year. Half were new applicants and half were renewals.
- Board of Health Chairperson – Mr. Reese
 - No members attended professional board meetings.
 - If members are speaking publicly, reminder to identify who you are representing. If the Board of Health has not authorized you to speak for the full Board, then you are speaking as a private practitioner, independent person, or for another association.
 - If new members are contacted for legislative confirmation, please let Emma know. If members are contacted, they will be contacted by the Governor's Office.
 - Reviewed committee assignments handout.

4. Credentialing Review Committee – Dr. Bertch, Committee Chair

- Presentation of Credentialing Review Orientation – slides will be sent out to Board Members and have been added to the 407 website.
- No other updates.

5. Rules and Regulations Committee – Dr. Dodge, Committee Chair

- No proposed or current regulations
- Vote on Annual Committee Report Dr. Dodge made a motion to approve the Annual Committee Report, seconded by Dr. Petersen; voting yes: 12 (Bertch, Dodge, Hubert, Lindau, Palmer, Petersen, Reese, Rethwisch, Sikes, Stuhmer, Tusha, Vehle); voting no: 0; not voting: 0. Motion carried.
- No other updates.

6. Professional Boards Committee – Dr. Hubert, Committee Chair

- There will be interviews in March to fill vacancies on multiple professional boards.
- No other updates.

7. Public Health, Education, & Legislation Committee – Dr. Petersen, Committee Chair

- Dr. Petersen presented the PHEL committee's review of the legislative bills and those of interest for full board discussion:
 - LB 436 carryover bill – Discussed due to the impact on the technical review process. It has not been placed on legislature agenda. No action taken
 - LB 732 - The PHEL Committee reviewed this bill and developed a draft letter of support for the full board to discuss. Dr. Dodge presented the draft letter to be submitted for the upcoming hearing. Mr. Vehle made a motion to approve the letter of support for LB 732, seconded by Dr. Palmer; voting yes: 12 (Bertch, Dodge, Hubert, Lindau, Palmer, Petersen, Reese, Rethwisch, Sikes, Stuhmer, Tusha, Vehle); voting no: 0; not voting: 0. Motion carried.
 - LB 773 – There was a bill previously in 2024 that created the Nebraska Prenatal Plus Program. LB 773 extends the program another five years. This bill was brought to the Board because it was supported in the past. Full board decided no further action was needed as the board is on record of support for previously.
 - LB 961 – Letting the Board know about this bill and no action was taken.
 - Gave a general update about the number of bills containing cannabis and to see if there is need for further discussion. There was no further discussion concerning the Board at this time.
- Staff gave Board Members a reminder that any written communication, including text messages, between Members of the Board of Health are subject to public record requests.

8. Approval of Committee Reports

- Dr. Bertch made a motion to approve Committee Reports, seconded by Dr. Tusha; voting yes: 12 (Bertch, Dodge, Hubert, Lindau, Palmer, Petersen, Reese, Rethwisch, Sikes, Stuhmer, Tusha, Vehle); voting no: 0; not voting: 0. Motion carried.

9. Public Comments

- Dr. Vander Broek suggested monitoring the process of the Rural Health Transformation Program to see how much of the money goes to rural health care and to have input on the program.

10. Unfinished Business

- No unfinished business

11. New Business

- Reminder to complete the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission's statement of financial interests.

12. Topics for Next Meeting

- Dr. Hubert suggested PHEL, Credentialing Review, and Rules and Regulations Committee meetings be scheduled for 15 minutes because Professional Boards Committee will have numerous interviews.
- Next month, PHEL was asked to give an update on the Public Health Recognition Program.

13. Next Steps and Adjournment

- Next regular meeting is Monday, March 16th, 2026, at the Nebraska State Office Building in Lincoln.
- Meeting was adjourned at 2:49pm. Minutes were taken by Emma Davis and will be reviewed at the March 16th, 2026 meeting.

Note: *If you would like any attachments mentioned in these minutes, or have other questions, please contact dhhs.boardofhealth@nebraska.gov.*

Updated: February 5th, 2026