



New Hampshire Health Officers Association

Winter Newsletter 2024

Our Vision is to build, sustain, and empower a local public health workforce.

Our Mission is to promote high standards of professionalism among municipal and regional health officers through programs of education, technical assistance, legislative representation, and collaboration with public health colleagues.

President's Message



Welcome to the second edition of the NHHOA newsletter! Many exciting activities are included here on what the organization has been doing over the last 6 months. Our Fall Conference was a highlight of the year, with over 75 who gathered at the Concord Holiday Inn for a full day of professional development sponsored by NH Division of Public Health Laboratory. The 2023-2024 Health Officer Readiness Report, has been submitted, satisfying the yearly legislative reporting requirement in RSA 128. A newly elected NHHOA Executive Board has been solidified, along with welcoming three incoming board members who have joined in pursuit of continued growth for Health Officer advocacy in our beautiful state of New Hampshire. Don't forget to visit the NHHOA website for many resources and tools that can help you in your position, including a link to the latest version of the NH Health Officer Manual.

Happy Holidays to all NH Health Officers! Best of Luck into 2025!

– Wayne Whitford, President

The 2023-2024 Health Officer Readiness Report has been submitted!

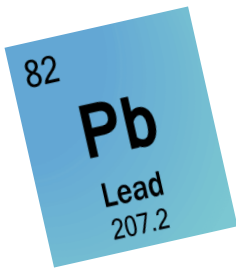
The Health Officer Readiness Report is a collaborative effort between the New Hampshire Health Officer Association (NHHOA) the NH DHHS Health Officer Liaison program (HOLU) to satisfy the yearly legislative reporting requirement in RSA 128.

Highlighting the readiness of local health officers (LHOs) to respond to local public health threats, this report utilizes survey feedback from local health officers to outline the work of the health officers to legislators. Here are some of the highlights of the report:

- ◇ Of the **325** total number of health officers and their deputies, roughly **60% report serving in multiple municipal roles**. As a result, more than 70% of LHOs report spending less than 9 hours a week on health officer activities.
- ◇ **Only 29%** of LHOs report engaging with their Regional Public Health Networks.
- ◇ Between 2023 and 2024, **55 LHOs received NH DHHS scholarship** money to pursue continuing education opportunities including coursework towards the UNH Master of Public Health Degree and attendance at the NH Environmental Health Conference and the NH Health Officers Association Conference. Additionally, nine LHOs took a Lead Inspector and Lead Risk Assessor Training provided by the NH DHHS Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.
- ◇ Between 2023 and 2024, **health officers report successes** in areas such as building relationships with Adult Protective Services to address hoarding issues, completing a health needs assessment for their communities, and developing a tick prevention program.
- ◇ **Health officers report the top challenges** facing their communities:
1) housing safety; 2) septic compliance; 3) public health nuisance complaints, and 4) capacity limitations.

You can find this report on the [NHHOA website](#). The NHHOA and HOLU program will be presenting this report to New Hampshire's State Health Improvement Plan group and to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services.

Thank you to all the health officers who completed the survey to inform this report.



Health Officer Spotlight

Angela-Martin Giroux has been the City of Berlin Health Officer for 13 years. In addition to responding to the typical tasks of the health officer role, Angela conducts the City’s food service inspections and serves as the Welfare Administrator. Despite her dual roles, Angela also has found time to represent the North Country in numerous DHHS public health initiatives including serving on the Choose Safe Places Advisory Committee and advocating for school and child-care lead testing. DHHS staff explained that Angela “has been a great collaborator and resource for her community in support of required lead in schools testing. She repeatedly made contact with a non-compliant facility to support the sampling process, in addition to reaching out to state program staff to provide updates and solicit input on appropriate next steps. Angela’s communication and outreach has been invaluable to supporting this program and insuring children have access to high quality drinking water while at school and child care.” Additionally, the staff reports “Angela is an essential piece of the public health system in the North Country. Angela brings not only an enthusiasm to the role, but she is an avid learner and continues to ask thoughtful questions, engage in training opportunities, and shares this knowledge with her community.” Go Angela!

The Health Officer Liaison Program (HOLU) would like to thank all of the health officers who participated in the 2024 Scholarship Program. As of November 30th, the program has distributed over \$20,000 to fund health officers’ continuing education. Participating health officers have used this money to:

- 1) participate in conferences such as the New Hampshire Environmental Health Conference and the New Hampshire Health Officer Association Conference;
- 2) pursue their Masters in Public Health degrees;
- 3) participate in a Septic Evaluator course as well as many other trainings. Stay tuned for a possible round 2 of the scholarship program in the spring of 2025.

Additionally, the HOLU program would like to remind health officers that the DHHS Cornerstone Learning Management System now has the following free on-demand style trainings: 1) Introduction to the Role of the Local Health Officer; 2) School Health Inspections; and 3) Housing Inspections. Please let Sophia or Joanne know if you would like access to any of these courses.

Finally, the HOLU program is excited to announce its 2025 Spring Regional Health Officer Meetings. These meetings are being organized in partnership with the NH DES Subsurface Program. They will have a septic focus and include a presentation from the NH DES as well as case studies from your peers. Stay tuned for more information!

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Contact Information
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 Joanne Cotton, Health Officer Specialist

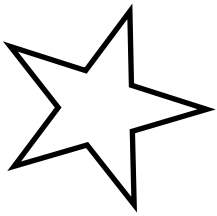


Did you know...



There is a statutory reference that requires towns to pay for the cost of the NHHOA conference. See bolded section.

128:8 Training and Qualifications. – Within one year of appointment every health officer shall complete a minimum of 3 hours of training on topics related to the specific state laws that provide authority to health officers. The training shall be administered at no cost to the municipality by the department of health and human services in collaboration with the New Hampshire health officers association (NHHOA). The curriculum shall cover, but not be limited to, duties and responsibilities of the health officer as required on rental housing standards pursuant to RSA 48-A:3, I(c), assessment and management of health nuisances pursuant to RSA 147, and duties pursuant to RSA 128:5. The required training may be taken in person, or through a remote learning platform as provided by the department of health and human services. **Municipalities shall cover reasonable costs of attending the NHHOA training subject to the provisions of RSA 129:1.**



FALL CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY NH'S PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY A GREAT SUCCESS!



In early October over 70 gathered at the Concord Holiday Inn for a full day of professional development sponsored by the NH Division of Public Health Laboratory. Dr. Fengxiang Gao, Laboratory Bureau Chief, kicked off the conference with a broad overview of services offered by the laboratory as they pertain to municipal health officers. Sessions on water analysis, Arboviral surveillance, wastewater, rabies, radiation, food testing and biomonitoring were covered with ample time for question and answers. Health Officers learned what the laboratory's capabilities are relative to drinking water and water testing, the threat of rabies, ticks and mosquitos across NH, and information on food test kits. We want to thank the six vendors that participated in this full day event that included The Dirty Bird, NH Radon Program, Trauma Services, NH Public Health Laboratory, Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, and the Environmental Public Health Program. The day's schedule allowed for ample networking time, a few photo opportunities and opportunities to visit the vendors. The Holiday Inn provided a hot breakfast and lunch which received rave reviews. A special thank you to the NH Public Health for their generous sponsorship!



Transitions on the NHHOA Executive Board

With retirements and people moving on in their careers, we were sad to see Denise Dubois, Treasurer (Allentown), Ron Eisenhart (Allentown), and Gwen Williams, Secretary (Concord), leave the NHHOA Executive Board. This left four remaining members to perform ‘double-duty’ to cover their vacancies. After several months of having two vacant positions, the Secretary and Treasurer positions are now filled. **A big thank you to Liam Ehrenzweig (Lebanon) and Rene Beaudoin (Nashua)** for volunteering to fill the Secretary and Treasurer position, respectively. A huge thank you to Heidi Peek-Kukulka for filling in as Secretary to the Executive Board over these last many months. The NHHOA Executive Board is made up of Wayne Whitford, President (Newbury), Brian Lockard, Vice President (Salem), Liam Ehrenzweig, Secretary (Lebanon) and Rene Beaudoin, Treasurer (Nashua). We would also like to welcome Lisa Bechok (Pittsburg), Madison Bailey (Exeter), Brian Santiago (Concord) and Angela Martin-Giroux (Berlin) as new board members. Thank you for stepping up to the plate and volunteering.

NHHOA is actively recruiting for new board members. If you have interest in being a part of the NHHOA board or one of the subcommittees, you can contact Wayne Whitford, President at wrrwhitford@aol.com.

NHHOA Develops New Marketing ‘Toolbox’

It has been a busy and successful 2024 for members of the Marketing & Communication subcommittee lead by Liam Ehrenzweig (Lebanon), along with Courtney Bogaert (Derry), Rene Beaudoin (Nashua), Nancy Kilbride (EventsYourWay), Sophia Johnson (DPHS), and Beverly Drouin (DPHS). Over the last several months, members developed a new marketing ‘tool kit’, that includes materials that will be used to advertise future conferences and meetings, improve the branding to our newsletters and website, and be included in future membership promotional materials. The subcommittee wanted to create materials that were consistent and that gave the association a ‘branded look’. Be on the lookout for our new banner stand, tablecloth and a fresh look to the NHHOA website!

Thanks to the hard work of Courtney Bogaert (Derry), the NHHOA has published its second newsletter in 2024 – well on our way of meeting the goal of publishing two newsletters a year. If you have questions, comments or an idea of what you might like to see in future newsletters – we want to hear from you!

Email your thoughts to Courtney Bogaert at courtneybogaert@derrynh.org.



Call for Case Studies

NH health officers have a unique career as municipal employees without the typical county support. All the training HONU provides can’t always substitute for our own experience. Case studies of new/interesting/challenging/educational experiences can teach us ways to implement and facilitate situations in more effective ways. Historically, the number one ask in post training surveys is for more case studies. **We are listening and need YOU to submit some of your stories.** You are not volunteering yourself for a presentation nor publicity. If you want to call us, email us or complete the [case study worksheet](#) we can help shake out the details with you. Specifically, this year to prep for our regional meetings we would love to have a few regarding septic issues you have encountered. Successes and failures alike. All experiences are beneficial, help out your fellow health officer and submit today!



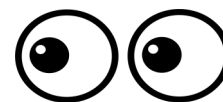
**“BY FACING OUR CHALLENGES AND OVERCOMING THEM,
WE GROW STRONGER, WISER, AND MORE COMPASSIONATE”**

~ JOHN TEMPLETON ~



NHHOA

www.nhhealthofficers.org/



- ⇒ Online Resources
- ⇒ Link to Health Officer Manual
- ⇒ Legislative Updates
- ⇒ Industry Forms and templates
- ⇒ Industry Contacts
- ⇒ Bi-annual Conference details
- ⇒ Past training materials
- ⇒ Membership sign-up forms
- ⇒ NHHOA By-laws
- ⇒ Health Officer Case Study Form
- ⇒ State and Federal Partner Agencies
- ⇒ 2024 State of NH Readiness Report

NHHOA Board of Directors

Executive Board

Wayne Whitford, President
(Newbury)

Brian Lockard, Vice President
(Salem)

Liam Ehrenzweig, Secretary
(Lebanon)

Ren Beaudoin, Treasurer
(Nashua)

Board Members

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Nashua

Madison Baily, Exeter

Lisa Bechok, Pittsburg

Brian Santiago, Concord

Angela-Martin Giroux, Berlin

Courtney Bogaert, Derry

Tips and Tricks: Outdoor Wood Boilers

Madison Bailey, Town of Exeter

Background: As the Winter season approaches us – the use of Outdoor Wood Boilers (OWB) presents the risk of impacting the health of your community. OWB’s are used as an alternative heat source in a residential or commercial space during the winter months. If used incorrectly, additional smoke may be released into the air. However, if installed incorrectly smoke can impact abutting properties. Pellets and clean wood are the only approved fuel sources for an OWB. If the operator is using trash, construction materials, or tires to run their OWB – this can release dangerous toxins and additional smoke into the air. These particles are known as “triggers” for poor health outcomes. Those who experience existing heart and lung conditions like asthma, emphysema, or heart disease can have increased sensitivity. Young children, the elderly, and pregnant women are also susceptible to the smoke due to the fine particles and pollutants emitted from the OWB 1,2.



Enforcement: As a New Hampshire Health Officer, if you receive a complaint about an OWB, there are a few questions to ask yourself:

1) *Is the OWB unit certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)?*

- a. Must be certified to comply with 2020 particulate emission standards using crib or cord wood
- i. Please Note: Each certified OWB is labeled:
 1. Phase 1
 2. Phase 2
 3. Non-Rated

2) *Is the unit installed appropriately?*

- a. If the answer is NO, have the operator relocate the unit or adjust the stack to meet NH regulations
 - i. Please Note: Any unit installed before August 10th 2008 does not conform with current regulations (NH RSA 125-R)

Type:	Set-Back:	Stack Height:
Phase 1	100 ft. from the nearest abutting residence	2 ft. higher than the peak of the residence or place of business located within 300 ft.
Phase 2	50 ft from the property line	None
Non-rated	200 ft. from the nearest abutting residence	200 ft higher than the peak residence or place of business located within 300 ft.

3) *What type of fuel is used to operate the OWB?*

- a. Any material besides clean pellets and wood are not prohibited

4) *Not gaining compliance?*

- a. Contact NH Department of Environmental Services for assistance
- b. Health Officers may site NH RSA 147.16-B to those who violate the OWB rules and regulations.
- c. Partner with your local Fire Department

References:

HOLU. “Outdoor (Ambient) Air Quality.” *HOLU Manual*, Sept. 2011, www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-11/holu-outdoor-air-quality.pdf.

Wisconsin Department of Health. “Air: Outdoor Wood Boilers.” *Wisconsin Department of Health Services*, 21 Aug. 2014, www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/air/woodboiler.htm. Accessed 12