



New Jersey One Health Task Force Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 29, 2026

200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ, 08611 and Microsoft Teams

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Amar Patil at 10:05 AM.

Notice of Public Meeting

Public meeting notice was given on May 22, 2026.

Pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, adequate notice of this meeting of the One Health Task Force has been provided. On May 22, 2026, written notice of the time, date, location, and to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting was posted on the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's website, which hosts the One Health Task Force's online presence. A direct hyperlink to the meeting notice appears on the Department's website. In addition, at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting, this notice has been posted in the lobby and on the third floor of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture offices at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ, and has been made available through the centralized public notice portal maintained by the Office of the Secretary of State.

Swearing-In of Members

The following members of the NJ One Health Task Force (OHTF) were sworn in by New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Legal Specialist Chris LaRegina at 10:08 AM: Dr. Daniel Druckenbrod and Dr. Holly Cucuzzella.

Roll Call

The following members were present: Dr. Amar Patil, Dr. Darby McDermott, Ms. Christine Schell, Dr. Gloria Bachmann (on Teams), Dr. Vincent Silenzio (on Teams), Dr. Michael Zwick, Dr. Nicole Fahrenfeld (on Teams), Dr. Matthew Edson, Dr. Daniel Druckenbrod, and Dr. Holly Cucuzzella.

Approval of the Minutes

Dr. Edson motioned to approve the Minutes from both February 13 and February 27, 2026 as written. The motion was seconded by Dr. Zwick. The Task Force approved the February 13 and February 27 minutes, with abstentions from Dr. Druckenbrod and Dr. Cucuzzella.

Invited Guests:

Emily Mayer, MS, from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), presented on the department's 2026 projections of freshwater harmful algal blooms (HABs) based on historically collected data from the NJ HAB Program and climate risk overlays from national models. The projected values of reported and confirmed waterbodies with HABs allow NJDEP to be proactive in resource and response preparations. According to the department's data, the 2026 HABs season looks to be similar to last year's numbers.

- Discussion following the presentation mentioned recent changes in reporting for clinical signs of HABs exposure for humans and animals in coordination with NJDEP and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), enhancing the already established reporting structure for HABs between the two agencies.
- It was noted, however, that local leaders could benefit from messaging templates and guidance from NJDEP on HABS communications.
- External funding allows for additional research, such as investigating hydrilla and its role in the growth of supporting cyanobacteria growth and the production of related toxins.
- Future NJDEP directions for this program include testing of private wells near riskier waterbodies and investigating rivers and streams, where there have been increasing reports of HABs activity.

Committee Reports

Education, Training, & Workforce Development: The following report was prepared by Dr. Vincent Silenzio, Chair of the Education, Training, and Workforce Development Committee:

The Education, Training, and Workforce Development (ETWD) Committee continued its work to advance One Health education, training, professional development, and workforce pipeline goals, with particular attention to the education and workforce development objectives identified in the One Health Task Force Strategic Plan.

The committee would like to recognize and acknowledge Dr. Michael Taylor for his service to the Task Force and as former Chair of this Committee. His leadership in organizing the Committee's initial work together has been exemplary, and as his term comes to an end, we will miss his boundless good cheer and dedication to the mission and work of the Task Force.

Higher Education, Workforce Training, and Professional Development

Action: The Committee continued to explore pathways for building One Health workforce capacity across professional fields and educational settings. Discussion has focused on identifying the competencies, training needs, and practical skill sets that would be most useful for students, early-career professionals, and mid-career practitioners working in One Health-relevant roles.

The Committee discussed the importance of developing a process to investigate core competencies based on stakeholder needs, including differences by profession, geographic location, and institutional setting. Members noted that a flexible competency framework may be preferable to a rigid or universal model, given the diversity of One Health work across animal health, human health, environmental health, agriculture, public health, emergency preparedness, research, and education.

The Committee also discussed potential strategies for identifying workforce needs, including an employee or stakeholder survey to assess priority skills, training gaps, and internship or practicum opportunities across state departments, academic institutions, and partner organizations. Such a survey could help the Task Force better understand where One Health capacity already exists, where gaps remain, and what skills would be most useful to employers and partner agencies.

Student Pipeline, Internships, and Practicum Development

Action: The Committee hosted Dr. Nora Jean Nealon and Dr. Omar Tliba from the Shreiber School of Veterinary Medicine at Rowan University to discuss One Health internship and practicum models. Their presentation highlighted the Master of

Science in One Health program at Shreiber, including planned practicum experiences and applied training opportunities.

The Rowan model includes two practicum experiences. The first practicum, targeted for a spring/summer 2027 start, is expected to include focused applied training in areas such as molecular methods, genomics, serology, microbiology, and field or environmental methods. The second practicum, targeted for summer 2028, is expected to involve a longer mentored project experience, including orientation and goal planning, background research, project design, data collection, independent execution, troubleshooting, data analysis, report drafting, presentation preparation, and final evaluation.

The Committee discussed how this model could inform broader One Health training and workforce development efforts in New Jersey. Members also discussed the value of building student pipelines into One Health work by connecting academic requirements, practicum placements, state agency needs, and applied research or service opportunities.

The Committee noted that such efforts could enhance scholarship within the state while also helping agencies and organizations identify future workforce talent. However, members also recognized that administrative requirements for student placements often fall on faculty and universities, and that sustainable implementation will require clear institutional roles, practical coordination, and potentially external funding support.

K–12 Education and Youth Engagement

Action: The Committee reviewed Strategic Plan Goal 4, including objectives related to increasing public awareness of One Health and acceptance of interdisciplinary thinking. The Committee discussed strategies for identifying, cataloguing, and disseminating One Health education materials for K–12 audiences.

The Committee noted that an inventory of One Health education programs, resources, and best practices has already been developed as part of the pending First Year Report. Members discussed the need to move from inventory toward practical integration, including identifying how One Health content could be incorporated into existing curriculum standards, youth programs, and educational partnerships.

The Committee recognized that developing entirely new curriculum may not be realistic in the near term. Instead, members discussed more feasible strategies, including working through existing programs and networks such as 4-H, FFA,

Rutgers Cooperative Extension, county-based extension agents, and other education partners that can reach youth and educators across all 21 counties.

The Committee also discussed the importance of engaging with the New Jersey Department of Education and others involved in curriculum development to determine how One Health modules or examples might be incorporated into existing standards and educational structures.

Public Education, Outreach, and Communication

Action: The Committee continued discussion of public education and communication strategies for One Health. Members reviewed Strategic Plan objectives related to distributing educational materials at county fairs, professional meetings, extension offices, and other venues, as well as developing public-facing webinars or podcasts highlighting interdisciplinary One Health work in New Jersey.

The Committee emphasized the need to identify priority target audiences before developing messages or communication products. Members discussed the importance of clarifying who the Task Force is trying to reach, what messages are most important for each audience, and which channels are most appropriate for communication.

The Committee also notes the value of capitalizing on existing relationships among state departments, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, professional organizations, academic institutions, and community partners. Rather than creating entirely new communication infrastructure, the Committee discussed using trusted existing networks to disseminate One Health education and outreach materials.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of organizing One Health webinars or podcast-style educational products that could highlight interdisciplinary work in New Jersey and potentially support professional development or continuing education.

Cross-Committee Alignment and Strategic Plan Implementation

Action: The Committee discussed the importance of aligning its work with the broader Task Force Strategic Plan, especially Goals 3 and 4. Members noted that the Task Force itself is not responsible for directly building all needed educational or workforce capacity, but can play an important role in fostering, facilitating, and encouraging the conditions under which such capacity can develop.

The Committee discussed how One Health education and workforce development require coordination across institutions and sectors. Examples discussed included

the potential for agriculture, public health, environmental health, and veterinary medicine partners to influence curricula and training opportunities across professional schools and programs.

Members also discussed possible funding pathways to support One Health education, training, internship, and curriculum development efforts. Potential sources discussed included state funding, foundation support, corporate or private-sector partnerships, and grant-supported initiatives. Members noted that private or foundation support could potentially serve as a lower-risk, high-reward pathway for developing models that might later support broader state or federal funding opportunities.

The Committee also discussed the importance of clear goals and objectives, including the need to simplify and clarify the Committee's immediate priorities so that work can move forward efficiently.

Committee Next Steps

The Education, Training, and Workforce Development Committee will focus its near-term work on the following priorities:

- 1) Developing a process to identify One Health workforce competencies and stakeholder training needs.*
- 2) Exploring a stakeholder or employer survey to assess skills gaps, internship needs, and workforce priorities.*
- 3) Reviewing and learning from Rowan University's One Health practicum model.*
- 4) Identifying possible state agency, academic, and partner organization needs for interns, student projects, and applied One Health training.*
- 5) Advancing realistic K–12 and youth education strategies through existing programs and networks.*
- 6) Refining the Task Force communication plan in consultation with other committees.*
- 7) Exploring public education and professional development products, including webinars, podcasts, and continuing education opportunities.*
- 8) Identifying funding, policy, and institutional levers that can help build sustainable One Health education and workforce capacity in New Jersey.*

Research & Innovation: The following report was prepared by Ms. Christine Schell, Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee:

The Research and Innovation (R&I) Committee of the OHTF reviewed the subtasks to each of their assigned Strategic Planning document goals. For Goal Task 2.3, the Committee agreed that instead of distributing grants, it would be more feasible because of costs to devise a way to play "matchmaker" and connect relevant researchers with funders on specific topics to encourage research development. This could start with the Committee identifying potential funders and educating them about the One Health space. Another thought was to host a symposium in 2027 for both funders and researchers. The Committee agreed that there was no need to change the overarching goals in the Strategic Plan.

The Committee continued pursuing its assigned goals related to research and data sharing. With respect to its first goal to stimulate New Jersey-based research efforts addressing One Health issues, the Committee met with Ian McLaughlin from BioNJ to discuss efforts to engage with the private sector regarding their research. Ian indicated that based on his past engagement efforts, it's challenging to get companies to participate because of proprietary issues. Companies know that any information about their research endeavors can impact their company stock, and so generally avoid those discussions. Ian recommended targeting a specific company that might be interested in engaging in conversations first to narrow and focus the request. He also suggested reframing the ask to "what could the state do to support and/or increase private research? rather than "what research is happening and why or why not?" Ian was going to look into companies who were interested specifically in the federally introduced Pioneering Antimicrobial Subscriptions to End Upsurging Resistance (PASTEUR) Act, which would encourage innovative drug development targeting the most threatening infections, improve the appropriate use of antibiotics and antifungals, and ensure domestic availability of critical antimicrobials when needed, and other initiatives related to improving public health (e.g., Sanofi or Merck). Another thought was to highlight work already being done by different companies, including preventing pharmaceutically active compounds in waste stream discharges. Finally, there was discussion of contacting private funding foundations (e.g., RWJF) to understand what work they are funding. The Committee needs to follow up with Ian on progress.

With respect to its first second goal to address data sharing that would improve One Health analysis and responses, the Committee met with representatives from the Mosquito Control Commission to learn about JerseyServ, a vector control server

founded and hosted by UC Davis since 2017. The thought was to look at a data sharing effort that's working and determine if it could be used for others as a template. Nine full states and additional state agencies now use the VectorServ platform at no cost; UC Davis received seed funding. All of the New Jersey counties are a part of the server and where state agencies can see all data, counties can see their own data and potentially others if they agree to share. UC Davis has adapted JerseyServ to fit NJ's needs like adding insecticide resistance data. There are generally no agreements between data sharing entities, just informal collaboration. However, some academic institutions will draft agreements for specific purposes and NJDOH will also draft agreements if needed. Everyone involved meets annually to discuss potential changes and sends out requests to UC Davis to adapt. VectorServ has its own YouTube channel with training videos for use. While this is an interesting template, the need for independent third-party involvement and funding makes it challenging to replicate.

Strategic Planning (including Stakeholder Workshop): The following report was prepared by Dr. Darby McDermott, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee:

The Strategic Planning (SP) Committee met monthly since the last Task Force meeting and began to conduct the annual review of the OHTF Strategic Plan. Each committee is expected to review their own goals to determine if any changes are needed. The SP Committee's focus was on the sustainability of activities and confirming the plans were on track. If there are any recommended changes to the public facing document, such changes should be mentioned to the Committee and ultimately voted on by the Task Force. The Committee also reviewed internal goals and objectives, to which several were adjusted to ensure they were feasible based on what was completed during the Task Force's first year. One of the main goals was to create any necessary guidance documents for some of the focuses the OHTF is tasked to investigate, like zoonotic diseases. Work has begun on a flow chart that organizes a directory of One Health-related contacts depending on select scenarios, which was a recommendation from stakeholders during the OH-SMART needs assessment process conducted the year prior. This directory plays into the communications plan discussed in previous meetings, particularly identifying all relevant stakeholders, which stakeholder groups to target in the near-term, and providing a platform for others to find these contacts. The Committee is hoping to discuss with the rest of the Task Force overarching communication goals.

Old Business

Strategic Plan Objectives: Review of main goals and objectives for the Strategic Plan is ongoing. Many discussed changes involved narrowing internal goals, ensuring their scope was realistic. Any suggested changes by committee or Task Force member can be mentioned to the SP Committee or discussed at the following public meeting to be voted on for approval.

Task Force Report: The Year 1 Report of the OHTF is pending review in the Governor's Office. Staff continue to check in regularly regarding potential updates.

Appointments: Two of the four remaining vacant positions on the Task Force were filled by Dr. Druckenbrod and Dr. Cucuzzella. The Task Force is grateful for the expedited action from the appointment personnel of the Governor's Office to support the continued work of the OHTF.

H5N1 Crisis Grant Update: The CDC H5N1 Crisis Grant received from NJDOH has been crucial for supporting OHTF and One Health activities within the NJDA, including making the needs assessment process from the previous year possible. Funds were applied to fill gaps in federal funding for H5N1 surveillance and testing. Outreach materials were created, translated, and distributed through both professional and public facing events to bring awareness to the One Health approach and share resources on biosecurity, emerging pests, and beyond. Planning is already underway on additional funding streams once the current grant ends in December 2026, including taking advantage of the anticipated announcement for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP) grant.

Dr. Kristine Smith mentioned the power of collaboration between state and other partners for grant applications, as well as the willingness of private corporations to support specific asks like printing for educational materials.

Communication Plan: The Task Force has previously touched upon establishing a communication plan on priority topics and how to approach sharing this information to the broader public. Dr. Patil stated that bringing awareness on the OHTF itself and its presence in the state would serve as a crucial starting point. Dr. Edson emphasized the need to keep in mind how the Task Force's work directly impacts stakeholders – who are we communicating with, what are we communicating, and why they should be interested in One Health and the Task Force. Dr. Zwick noted that a presence on LinkedIn would provide connections to organizations and stakeholders, with Dr. Edson highlighting that it also

aligns with the Governor's priority of streamlining communications. The pending One Health Task Force Year 1 Report and the feedback following its release would provide valuable guidance on the Task Force's next steps.

New Business

One Health Task Force Coordinator Position: Dr. Andrea Egizi, the previous One Health Task Force Coordinator, stepped down from the position at the end of April. The vacancy announcement for the position was posted in early April, and candidates have been screened and selected for the interview process. A final selection is expected to be made in the coming months.

Task Force Member Updates

Task Force members are given the floor to provide brief updates or raise issues to the attention of the Task Force that are related to One Health.

- Dr. Silenzio: Dr. Silenzio presented on tuberculosis at a local science charter high school to test a pilot for a curricular design format for use in speaking engagements that could support a One Health speakers bureau mechanism. He also had discussions with Silicon Valley partners on One Health Artificial Intelligence (OHAi) on the potential of crowdsourcing expertise in particular relevant focus areas.
- Dr. Bachmann: Dr. Bachmann emphasized the importance of collaboration, especially with foundations, medical experts, and professional societies, on awareness of the One Health concept and what the OHTF is doing.
- Dr. Fahrenfeld: Dr. Fahrenfeld led a completed study researching microplastics concentrations and removal in wastewater treatment plants. Samples were collected from plants at various stages of wastewater processing, as well as from surface waters, upstream points, and downstream points near the treatment plants. A fact sheet on the study can be found [here](#).
- Dr. Edson: Experts from the Shreiber School of Veterinary Medicine of Rowan University are hosting a virtual presentation and discussion on the Hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks on June 1st, 2026. Details will be sent out through the One Health Listserv.
- Dr. McDermott: May is Tick-Borne Disease Awareness Month, declared by the Governor in a proclamation. The NJDOH hosts several informative webpages, including [Fight the Bite](#), where there are educational resources and tips for

prevention. NJDOH is diligently monitoring and providing guidance on the Hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks

- Ms. Schell: Governor Sherril announced June 1st through June 5th as [Extreme Heat Awareness Week](#), marking the second year the Governor's Office has supported this awareness campaign. The campaign is especially relevant in preparation for the large upcoming events happening in the state such as FIFA, America 250, and various music festivals. The campaign includes shareable social media posts as well as webinars. Ms. Schell attended the One Health Symposium and Shreiber School of Veterinary Medicine to present on behalf of the One Health Task Force on its activities the past year. NJDEP has released an interactive PFAS tool, providing a one-stop page with collected information all over the state.
- Dr. Patil: The NJDA continues to monitor New World Screwworm, with current closest cases coming within 50 miles of the US-Mexico border. USDA is releasing sterile flies in Mexico and along the border as a biological control to prevent NWS intrusion into the US. While New Jersey is far from the affected region, animals from southern states are frequently transported to the area and the department remains vigilant. Upcoming tabletop exercises for response are being planned through USDA and sister state agencies.
- Dr. Druckenbrod: No updates.
- Dr. Cucuzzella: Rabies season is in full effect, and Burlington County already has an active season. Dr. Cucuzzella highlighted the importance of rabies communication and education, noting an incident where state police advised an exposed individual to release a bat in their house instead of asking the resident to keep it contained to be captured and tested.
- Dr. Zwick: No updates.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NJ One Health Task Force will be held on Friday, September 25th, 2026, beginning at 10:00 AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and on Microsoft Teams.

Adjournment

On the motion of Dr. McDermott, seconded by Ms. Schell, the NJ One Health Task Force voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 PM.