

**New York State Department of Health
State Camp Safety Advisory Council Meeting**

**Empire State Plaza Concourse
Convention Hall Meeting Room 1
Albany, NY, 12242**

AGENDA

March 3, 2026

10:30 A.M.

1. Roll Call/Quorum Determination
2. Welcome/Council Administrative Business
 - Approval of Past Meeting Minutes
3. Overview of the NYS Opioid Overdose Prevention Initiative
 - Clara De Sanctis Johnson, Opioid Overdose Prevention Program
4. Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Trends
 - Bryon Backenson, Bureau of Community Disease Control
5. Overview of Camp Incidents: Injury and Illness Trends
6. Status of Proposed Amendments
7. Climate Change and Extreme Weather Guidance
8. Other Business
9. Public Comments
10. Next Meeting
11. Adjourn

Go to health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/camps/scsac for information about the State Camp Safety Advisory Council and any available materials for the meeting.

State Camp Safety Advisory Council (SCSAC)

March 3, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Members

Present: Dawn Ewing (Chairperson), Eric Bacon (Vice-Chairperson), Dr. Thomas Welch, Randy DeFrank, Jamie Sirkin, Kevin Kung, and Michael Clarke

Non-Members

Present: Christine Westerman, New York State Department of Health (DOH)
Darby Greco, DOH
Dan Lang, DOH
Eric Wiegert, DOH
William Sacks, DOH
Deanna Laney, DOH
Kathleen Bush, DOH
James Maurer, DOH
Amanda Tarrier, DOH
Emily Edmister, DOH
Clara De Sanctis, DOH
Brian Backenson, DOH
Taylor Rijos, DOH
Elizabeth Brower, DOH
Keith Graham, DOH

Mr. Maurer called the meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. at the Empire State Plaza Concourse Convention Hall Meeting Room 1, Albany, New York. A quorum was present with seven members in attendance.

Council Administrative Business

The meeting minutes from October 21, 2025 were unanimously approved by the Council.

Mr. Maurer provided an update on Council membership. There are two vacancies. He requested any recommendations or applications from those interested be submitted to the Recreational Environmental Health Section.

Overview of the NYS Opioid Overdose Prevention Initiative

Clara De Sanctis, Overdose Prevention Coordinator with the New York State Department of Health's (Department's) Office of Drug User Health provided an overview of the New York State Opioid Overdose Prevention Initiative and the work of the Office of Drug User Health. The presentation reviewed more than 30 years of harm-reduction efforts and detailed statewide trends in fatal drug poisoning. Ms. De Sanctis noted that naloxone use has increased in recent years and that street drugs increasingly contain multiple or unknown chemicals which can make them more dangerous and increase potential for an overdose.

Ms. De Sanctis discussed increased access to naloxone and training for non-medical individuals to administer naloxone during an opioid overdose emergency. There are now more than 1,800

overdose prevention programs statewide, and camps may be able to partner with local programs. Youth ages 14 to 20 years are a higher-risk population in part due to increased experimentation with drugs during adolescence. Ms. De Sanctis showed statistics on overdose deaths, emergency room visits, and naloxone administration. She noted that 56.4% of overdose deaths involved at least one potential opportunity for intervention.

Council members discussed naloxone access, storage, and possible legislation related to access in camps. Ms. Sirkin noted that the Department has partnerships with organizations that help with access to free naloxone and training and inquired how they can help children's camps obtain similar access. Ms. De Sanctis stated that the quickest and easiest way is to partner with a community organization who is a registered program, but that a camp itself could also become a registered program. Ms. Sirkin asked if it was recommended to store naloxone with an AED. Ms. De Sanctis said she didn't have any specific recommendation, but stressed naloxone should be stored in a location where it can be accessed quickly and that trained users know where it is stored. Dr. Welch stated that regardless of being at camp or not, or whether they have had training, every citizen that interacts with the public should carry naloxone on them and that the skill set needed to administer naloxone was minimal. The presentation concluded with a short educational video demonstrating the signs and symptoms of overdose and the proper use of naloxone.

The Council provided the audience with the opportunity to ask questions. An audience member referenced recently passed New York State legislation which goes into effect in June that would require employers who are federally mandated to provide readily available first aid supplies for employees to include an opioid antagonist with those supplies. Ms. DeSanctis said her program is aware of the legislation.

Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Trends

Byron Backenson, Director of the Department's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control, presented recent communicable disease trends in New York State and reviewed the purpose of disease surveillance and communicable disease reporting requirements. He noted an increase in the overall number of reported communicable disease cases, which could be due to expanded reporting requirements and increased testing. Mr. Backenson reviewed weekly respiratory disease surveillance reports covering COVID-19, influenza, and RSV, and noted COVID-19 has not yet demonstrated a predictable seasonal pattern.

Mr. Backenson discussed tick-borne disease trends and noted a 2022 reclassification that has contributed to an increase in the number of Lyme disease diagnoses. He noted that anaplasmosis cases are increasing faster than Lyme disease cases. He showed the Department's new sign cautioning against interactions with wild animals and potential for them to transmit disease. The metal signs are available for camps to order. Mr. Kung asked about guidance for campers sent home due to a tick bite. Mr. Backenson indicated that parents should follow up with the camper's healthcare provider. He stressed the importance of prompt tick removal and discussed the procedure for proper removal of an embedded tick.

Overview of Camp Incidents: Injury and Illness Trends

Ms. Tarrier gave an overview of the 2025 children's camp season. The number of camps permitted statewide was consistent with previous years. She mentioned notable incidents reported during 2025, including one fatality, four fires, and five non-fatal drownings. Cossackie

virus was the leading cause of individual illness cases and illness outbreaks. She also noted a large norovirus outbreak that affected 139 individuals.

Dr. Welch voiced concerns that the data showed an increase in the number of epinephrine administrations at camps in recent years and noted there are potential health effects from epinephrine administration. He suggested the likelihood of a camper experiencing anaphylaxis at camp because of a previously unknown allergy was low and questioned whether laws allowing camps and other entities to stock epinephrine auto-injectors without a patient-specific order has led to unnecessary administration. Council members asked who was administering epinephrine in camp settings and whether the Department of Health tracks the total number of camps/campers when evaluating statistics. Ms. Tarrier stated increased access to epinephrine after the PHL implementation could be one factor in the increase in administration. Ms. Ewing stated it may also be due to a higher number of camps or more campers attending camp in general. Ms. Sirkin noted that medical practice has shifted over time, with epinephrine now often administered first for severe allergic reactions rather than antihistamines such as Benadryl. The Department will review their data on reported epinephrine administrations at children's camps with respect to the source of the epinephrine auto-injector and who did the administration and will report on their findings at a future meeting.

Status of Proposed Amendments

Ms. Tarrier gave an update on the status of proposed amendments to Subpart 7-2. She stated the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published in the State Register in November 2025 and the 60-day public comment period ended January 18, 2026. Ms. Tarrier stated they are currently reviewing comments that were received and that she is unsure if the amendments would be effective by the upcoming camp season; however, most of the proposed amendments were in response to changes to Public Health Law and camps have already been implementing these changes to comply, including pesticide application, national sex offender registry checks, minimum lifeguard age changes, and automated external defibrillator (AED) requirements.

Climate Change and Extreme Weather Guidance

Ms. Tarrier presented an update on the resource guide for operators that is under development, which will provide information and resources regarding extreme heat, severe storms, air quality, flooding, and other health and safety concerns due to climate change. She stated that the Department is also in the process of updating the camp Safety Plan templates, and the Department's children's camps website has been updated with links to climate resources. Ms. Tarrier showed the Council the website, pointing out the sections where families, camp operators, and local health departments can find information. Ms. Ewing recalled the previous Council meeting presentation on Climate Change and Extreme Weather and emphasized the importance of incorporating extreme weather preparedness into camp safety plans. Ms. Ewing asked how local health departments are being trained and how they will monitor and respond to weather-related safety concerns. Ms. Tarrier responded that the Department plans to work with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and county emergency management offices. She stated it was important for local health departments to have established contacts with county emergency managers, and that camps should know who to contact in an emergency.

Other Business

Ms. Sirkin asked about the status of implementing the legislation tasking the Department with creating a registry of children's non-regulated camps. Ms. Westerman stated that the Department intends to fully comply with the legislation, but no timeline has been established. Council members noted the importance of increasing public awareness regarding non-regulated camps.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting

The next Council meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2026. A Spring 2027 meeting was tentatively scheduled for March 17, 2027, with a snow date of March 18, 2027. The location for both meetings is to be determined.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 P.M.