



Scott County Health Department

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SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH DECEMBER 18, 2025 MEETING MINUTES 12:00 p.m.

Meeting Held at: Scott County Administrative Center
600 West 4th Street – 1st Floor Board Room
Davenport, Iowa 52801

Dr. O'Donnell, Chair of the Scott County Board of Health, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Ms. Flaherty, Dr. Franzman, Dr. Hanson, Dr. O'Donnell, Mr. Robinson

Staff Present: Amy Thoreson, Brooke Barnes, Briana Boswell, Lashon Moore, Tiffany Peterson, Parker Prochaska, Lenore Alonso, Mariah Benson, Lorna Bimm, Anna Copp, Ellen Gackle, Vianka Herrera, Amy Long, Christina McDonough, Brenda Schwarz

Others: Richard Whitaker Jr., Chrissy Watters

Dr. O'Donnell called for a motion to accept the agenda. Dr. Hanson moved to accept the agenda. Motion seconded by Mr. Robinson. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. O'Donnell called for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Robinson moved to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2025 Board Meeting. Motion seconded by Ms. Flaherty. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. O'Donnell moved to Public Comment.

There were no public comments.

The following reports were reviewed and discussed by the Board:

Director's Report

Mrs. Thoreson recognized the following employees for their years of service to the department.

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| • Jessica Riddick, Office Assistant | 2 years | December 27 th |
| • Lydia Amissah-Harris, Family Health Coordinator | 3 years | December 19 th |
| • Lenore Alonso, Informing Specialist | 20 years | December 19 th |
| • Tiffany Peterson, Community Health Manager | 21 years | December 6 th |

Mrs. Thoreson recognized new employee, Robin Cousins, who has been hired as an Environmental Health Specialist. Ms. Cousins joined the department on November 26th.

Mrs. Thoreson shared that a recent fire at the downtown Barrel House location resulted in significant smoke damage. The restaurant is expected to be closed for approximately eight to twelve weeks. World Relief Quad Cities, which occupies the upper floors of the same building, will also be impacted and anticipates being unable to use their space for two to three months.

Communicable disease activity has increased, largely due to a significant rise in pertussis cases. At the time of the meeting, for the month of December 40 laboratory-confirmed cases and 22 epi-linked cases were reported. Staff have conducted media outreach to raise public awareness, and a memo has been sent to area health care providers with testing, treatment, and exclusion recommendations. A general informational letter has also been provided to the schools for distribution to families to notify them pertussis is in the community.

Mrs. Thoreson shared that the immunization audits for K-12 schools have been completed and results have been reported to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). An increase in exemption rates among 7th and 12th graders was noted, which is consistent with trends being observed statewide. Audits of childcare facilities are still in progress, and results will be reported once they are completed. They are not due to HHS until December 31st.

The department received approval from HHS for an exemption to policy allowing the Maternal Health Program to operate without a required nurse through the end of the current contract period, September 30, 2027. The request was due to ongoing challenges with nursing recruitment, workload changes related to reduced virtual visit options, and changes in Medicaid eligibility. Staff are coordinating with community partners to ensure continuity of services. No updates to the department's organizational table are currently planned.

Dr. O'Donnell moved to the Public Health Activity Report for the month of November 2025.

Dr. O'Donnell moved to the Budget Report for the month of November 2025.

Following discussion, Mr. Robinson moved to approve the claims. Motion seconded by Ms. Flaherty. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. O'Donnell moved to the Board of Health Orientation: Vera French – Carol Center: Richard Whitaker Jr., Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Whitaker shared an update on the Vera French - Carol Center, which serves as a centralized hub for behavioral health, recovery, and crisis-response services designed to meet individuals where they are and reduce barriers to care. The Carol Center is located at 808 North Harrison Street, Davenport.

Dr. Whitaker provided an overview of the Carol Center's programs, which include employment, wellness, recovery, and crisis-response services.

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program, an evidence-based supported employment model, assists approximately 150 individuals annually in securing and maintaining employment aligned with their goals.

The peer-run Drop-in Wellness Center provides low-barrier peer support and daily meals. This service was initially funded by the Eastern Iowa Mental Health and Substance Use Region and is currently funded by the Iowa Primary Care Association through the Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization.

In addition to employment and wellness programs, the Carol Center offers several recovery-focused initiatives. The Recovery Community Center offers structured recovery programming for individuals with substance use disorders, serving more than 20 participants daily. The program is funded through state opioid settlement dollars. The Pre- and Post-Release Support Services (PAPRS) program, operated in collaboration with the Seventh Judicial District Department of Corrections, supports individuals with substance use disorders transitioning from incarceration to community-based behavioral health care. The program is funded through state opioid settlement dollars.

Dr. Whitaker shared that the Carol Center provides community-based crisis response services. The Co-Responder Program, which pairs mental health professionals with law enforcement, has resulted in an approximate 90% diversion rate from arrest to treatment or hospitalization. The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team provides multidisciplinary, community-based services to high need individuals, reducing emergency room utilization, incarceration, and homelessness.

Dr. Whitaker also highlighted Carol's Village Gardens, a newly completed 30-unit supportive housing development adjacent to the Carol Center, which reached full capacity in late November. The housing development serves both individuals and families, including residents transitioning out of homelessness through the coordinated entry system, and provides high-quality affordable units with supportive services to promote long-term stability.

Dr. Whitaker noted that the programs at the Carol Center and Carol's Village Gardens support improved housing stability, employment outcomes, crisis diversion, and recovery support for adults with complex behavioral health and substance use needs.

Dr. O'Donnell called for a motion to accept the reports. Dr. Hanson moved to approve the reports. Motion seconded by Mr. Robinson. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. O'Donnell moved to Unfinished Business.

Mrs. Thoreson shared that based on current information, no public health alignment legislation is anticipated during the 2026 legislative session. The legislative session begins on January 12, 2026.

At the federal level, the Acting Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved a recommendation from the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) modifying guidance related to the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine. Under the updated guidance, the birth dose is now considered a shared clinical decision-making option for families of infants born to mothers who test negative for hepatitis B. A lawsuit has been filed by the American Academy of

Pediatrics (AAP) and other professional organizations challenging both recent ACIP appointments and recommendations. A ruling is anticipated in January.

Mrs. Thoreson explained that the department is waiting on funding decisions for a couple of grants scheduled to begin January 1, 2026. These include the Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) contract and the Syndemic Prevention Outreach and Testing Services (SPOTS) grant, which supports HIV testing and outreach. The department has received a portion of the DIS contract funding; however, the amount received is less than what is typically awarded. Uncertainty remains regarding full funding for both programs.

Board members reviewed and discussed two drafts of the updated Board of Health (BOH) Position Statement on School and Child Care Vaccination Requirements. Revisions focused on improving clarity and readability for a broad audience, removing outdated or rapidly changing statistics, and excluding signatures from the document for security reasons.

Discussion highlighted trends in religious exemptions, particularly related to the 7th grade meningococcal vaccine requirement. Members emphasized the importance of community trust, clear communication, and directing families to credible sources of information.

Following discussion, the Board reached consensus to approve the draft stating, *Therefore, the Scott County Board of Health supports maintaining and strengthening Iowa's childcare and school vaccination requirements as a tool to reduce vaccine-preventable illness in the community.*

Dr. O'Donnell called for a motion to accept the revised statement. Dr. Franzman moved to approve the revised statement. Motion seconded by Dr. Hanson. Motion carried unanimously.

Brooke Barnes provided an overview of Fiscal Year 2026 – 1st Quarter Performance Measures/Budgeting for Outcomes (BFOs). Mrs. Barnes explained that the measures illustrate the work staff are doing, the impact on the community, and performance trends over time. The BFOs are reported quarterly, including metrics for every program, and align with the department's budgeting structure. The measures are used internally to monitor performance and identify improvements, and externally as part of the county's budgeting for outcomes process.

Dr. O'Donnell moved to New Business.

Board members discussed updating the current BOH Position Statement on Water Fluoridation. The discussion emphasized the importance of ensuring public health messages accurately reflect the Board's position and remain consistent with professional guidance, such as the American Dental Association (ADA). Members noted that CDC recommendations on fluoridation have not changed, but the statement should remain adaptable in case future guidance evolves. The Board agreed to review the statement and consider including references to additional reputable organizations, such as the ADA. No decisions were made during the meeting, and work on the position statement will continue, with further discussion planned for the January meeting.

The next meeting will be held on January 15, 2026, at the Scott County Administration Center, 1st Floor

Board Room. There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Schwarz
Recording Secretary