



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

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## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – JANUARY 15, 2025 CODY M. KELLY, CHAIR

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. McCarron, \*Mr. Meaker, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Bush**

**ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Romeo; also see attached list**

Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. **LEAD:** Jessica Vinceguerra, Deputy Director Strategic Initiatives, Office of County Executive; Rebecca Shultz, Deputy Commissioner, Health Department; Marty Skahen, Community Development
  - a. **INFORMATIONAL: Onondaga County Lead Programming**
    - Since 2022, received \$12.2M for lead poisoning prevention from Onondaga County and American Rescue Plan
      - 2022 \$3.7M
      - 2023 \$5M
      - 2024 \$2.5M
      - 2025 \$1M
    - Housing Remediation
      - Since 2002, county received ~\$41M from HUD to administer the Lead Hazard Reduction grant program (LHR)
        - Remediated lead-based paint hazards in over 2,000 homes
      - 2019, county received 11<sup>th</sup> grant and met goal of remediating lead based paint hazards in 220 units
      - October 2024, awarded \$7.7M from HUD to continue LHR program
        - County added additional \$1M
        - Will remediate lead based paint hazards from 270 units over the next 4 years
    - Windows, Doors & More
      - The program abates lead based paint where OCHD has an open violation
        - Partner with Home Headquarters
        - Program replaces windows and doors in rental properties in high risk zip codes
        - Funded through Onondaga County (\$1M) and NYS Division of Homes and Community Renewal (\$1.3M)
    - Training & EPA Certification
      - Grant program requires EPA certified contractors be used
        - COVID-19 resulted in lack of certified contractors and supply shortages
      - Partnered with Eco-Testing to provide 3 types of local trainings
        - County covers the cost of trainings for individuals working in homes built before 1978
        - 348 certificates have been issued since January 2024
    - Train the Trainer
      - County funded program to increase the number of EPA certified instructors
    - Lead Testing and Education
      - OCHD offers free blood lead level testing to children in need of a test
        - 9,423 children were tested in 2024
      - Mobile Lead Van visited 28 unique locations including:
        - Gifford Street WIC office
        - Syracuse Community Health
        - White Branch Library

- Site based indoor testing was provided at:
  - Sankofa
  - Tucker Missionary Baptist Church
  - Head Start
  - WIC satellite locations
- Staff completes outreach and education on a regular basis within the community
- Case Managers help provide:
  - Coordination of services with medical and community partners
  - Child behavior risk assessments
  - Exposure investigations
- Lead it Go Program
  - Launched in 2024 for school-aged children with an elevated blood lead level (EBL)
    - Program ensures developmental milestones are met
    - Children with EBL are offered this free service by case manager and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
  - 2 new staff will be identifying and contacting families of children eligible for services
    - Eligible students include those not already enrolled in Early Intervention, Head Start, Pre-K programming
  - Funded through Onondaga County and grant funds

### Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- How many classes are there?
  - 3 different courses
    - RRP (Renovations, Repair and Painting) – 1 day course
      - Offered once per month to property owners, landlords, maintenance companies
      - Do not need to work under a supervisor
      - Syracuse City Lead Ordinance requires RRP training when there is an open violation
    - Abatement Supervisor – 4 day course
      - Offered once per quarter to company owners
      - RRP course is a pre-requisite
    - Abatement Worker – 2 day course
      - Enhanced version of RRP course - offered once per quarter
      - Abatement Worker must work under Abatement Supervisor
        - Do not need to work under supervisor if RRP course already completed
      - Course is good for 5 years
- Who takes most advantage of the classes offered?
  - Most advantage – property maintenance companies and landlords
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> most - contractors
  - Least advantage – private homeowners
- Are real estate companies still required to have a lead advisory disclosure?
  - Yes, although very generic
  - When OCHD has an open violation, a licensed EPA certified contractor must do necessary work
- Is the county far enough along where results are able to be seen on an annual basis?
  - 2025 will be the most accurate year
  - Anticipate seeing an increase in the number of units per year
  - Recently awarded the largest HUD grant for lead hazard reduction in 270 units
  - County funding has also been awarded towards abatement and remediation
  - Completed 3 units at potential foster care homes; 6 more will be done in 2025
    - Averaged \$21K per unit
- Lead initiatives are a priority for this body and this administration
- Partner local dollars with federal HUD money and state grant money
- Some people have the idea that other communities are doing things that Onondaga County is missing
  - Always open to ideas from other municipalities

- Have regular check-ins with HCR (Homes and Community Renewal)
- Neighboring counties ask how the Onondaga County program is organized and administered
- Spending 1 full year of training is remarkable
- Excited for 2025 with trained professionals
- What parts of Onondaga County have been served and where will future sites be?
  - The map located on the county website shows all units done since 2010 through county grant program
  - Link to map: <http://www.ongov.net/health/lead/initiatives.html>
  - HUD grants are typically 4 years
- What part of the county is most in need?
  - City of Syracuse
  - NYSDOH prioritized areas of concern which overlaps with high risk areas set by Department of Code Enforcement
  - 70% of grant will be in the City of Syracuse and then out to the suburbs
- Do Foster Care applicants go to the top of the list for remediation?
  - Only county dollars go into the Foster Care unit
    - County dollars are not tied to income eligibility or other requirements for HUD grant
    - Review process is shorter
- Has the fact that the NYSDOH is suing landlords for the lead issue made it difficult for the county to access those homes?
  - There have been times that landlords with open violations have reached out
  - Have not seen a big issue
- Is it true that positive testing through the Lead Van has been low and not many kids are being missed?
  - Health Department
    - 2024 testing data will be finalized in about a month
    - On par to see an increase in the number of children tested; not necessarily an increase in EBL
  - Office of County Executive
    - Tested 400 SCSD Pre-K children during the summer of 2024
- On a statistical level, can larger conclusions be drawn based on the study?
  - Health Department
    - SCSD testing has all been voluntary; did not get high participation rates in a couple schools
      - Need to find out why testing was declined
    - 400 is a good sample size to draw some conclusions, but cannot say it is representative across the district

\*Mr. Meaker arrived at the meeting

- Do lead pipes come under county jurisdiction?
  - No, City of Syracuse handles within the city
  - Distributed 2,000+ water filters between Thanksgiving and Christmas at the following locations:
    - 2 full days at WIC on Gifford Street
    - Salvation Army Christmas Bureau registration days
- Is water tested for lead pipe contamination in other county schools?
  - Will test school aged children if valid concern is received
  - County focuses on testing 1 and 2 year old children due to:
    - Crawling on floor and putting things in their mouth
    - The most neurological impact is at age 1 and 2
  - Many children associated with primary care providers are assessed each year when they go to the doctor
  - Not the county's responsibility to replace lead pipes

- Does the county help with filters?
  - Yes, with distribution, but not with plumbing
- Does the county check lead in water or just the child?
  - Health Department
    - Have not encountered a situation where water is believed to be the source of exposure in a private home
    - Lead paint dust is the primary source of lead contamination within the community
    - If dust is found during home inspection, it is listed as the exposure cause
    - If no lead paint is detected, or no other hazards exist, the water will be tested
- It is always the dust from window sills or chipping paint on the wall?
  - Health Department
    - Dust could get into the soil outside where children are playing
  - Office of County Executive
    - The City of Syracuse is responsible for testing the water with the EPA
- How is outreach going with new Americans?
  - Home country could be the source of EBL
  - Outreach teams have worked with Northside organizations
  - Lead Van has been at Northside Festival, Northside Learning Center
  - Distributed filters at old Bob's School
    - 95% of attendees were new Americans
  - County has many languages represented amongst inspection team, also use LanguageLine to communicate
- Is there enough funding and how much is currently available?
  - Anticipate 2025 to be a big year for production
  - Have \$1.3M award that program administrative costs will come out of
  - Full abatement cost is \$40K per unit
  - A 4 family home is considered 4 units
- How are projects prioritized?
  - Priority is given if a child is in the home
  - Eligibility is based on income, not zip code
- Are there zip codes outside the city that are considered higher risk?
  - Health Department
    - There are some, maps have been created to show where children have been identified
- Is there light at the end of the tunnel with this issue?
  - Office of County Executive
    - Abatement and grant funding is going to be key
    - There is more work to be done, but much farther along now
  - Community Development
    - All initiatives funded by the county are working together to better locate and address the problem
- It is a finite problem, there are only so many homes built within the timeframe with a child that has this problem
- The CDC has lowered the level referred to as elevated blood lead level
- How has that affected the levels currently seen in Onondaga County?
  - Health Department
    - Onondaga County follows recommendations of NYSDOH who has not adopted the 3.5 micrograms per deciliter
    - If recommendations are adopted, caseloads will increase with additional requirements for follow up
  - Office of County Executive
    - Since COVID-19, have not required a child with an EBL to be in the home in order to do the work
    - Having a child in the home makes it a priority over other cases

The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

## ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

DATE: **JANUARY 15, 2025**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Rebecca Shultz	Health
Jessica Vinciguerra	County Exec's Office
Doug Doufy	Syracuse.com
Marty Skalka	CO
Ed Donohue	Community Development
Ethan LaMontagne	Leg.
John DeSantiss	
Jim Beube	