



Ripley County Health Department
102 West First North Street
Versailles, Indiana 47042
812.689.5751
healthadmin@ripleycounty.in.gov

**Ripley County Health Board Meeting
October 28, 2025 5:00 PM
Commissioner's Meeting Room**

Open Session Meeting Agenda

1. **Call to Order:** Health Board President Jason Smith

5:01 PM – Jason Smith called the meeting to order.

2. **Roll Call:** Health Board President Jason Smith

All board members were in attendance.

3. **Approval of July Meeting Minutes:** Health Board President

Health Board approved minutes for July's Session.

4. **Health Officer's Report:** Health Officer Dr. Welsh

Dr. Welsh provided an overview of key topics during the meeting. HFI funding was discussed, including its current status and anticipated limitations. Questions regarding immunization issues were addressed, with emphasis on the importance of keeping vaccinations up to date. Updates on environmental health included cleanup and follow-up efforts. Additionally, a local restaurant requested support from Traci Bauman, and Missy Byrd reported difficulties accessing SharePoint.

5:05 PM- Dr. Welsh provided updates on several public health concerns. He reported on vector-borne diseases, noting the presence of Eastern Equine Encephalitis and confirming a flu-related death in the state. Regarding respiratory illnesses, RSV, COVID-19, and flu cases are trending worse than last year, and he emphasized the importance of flu vaccinations.



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Dr. Welsh also discussed cold weather preparedness, recommending chimney inspections, ensuring carbon monoxide monitors are functional, and proper generator placement. He shared an anecdote about a cracked furnace that caused carbon monoxide poisoning, underscoring the importance of these precautions.

Finally, he reminded attendees to keep immunizations up to date. No questions were raised following the report.

5. Health Department's Quarterly 3 Report: Health Administrator Tara Briggs

Tara Briggs presented the Q3 report, highlighting the following topics of discussion.

Tara provided a status update on the HFI Mini-Grants that have been paid out in 2025, that are in the 30-day public review window, and that are still pending approval.

During the fall, the Health Department fulfilled several school requests. Tara plans to send out a request form to schools again in the Spring.

Tara conducted her first CPR training, certifying two staff members and planning sessions for EMS and Dispatch personnel by the end of November. Discussion continues on how to fund the new American Heart Association curriculum and manage payment for e-cards.

At **5:11 PM**, Dr. Amy Glaser-Carpenter asked about the best method for ordering CPR certification cards through the American Heart Association. Tara Briggs explained that card issuance is tied to instructors rather than facilities, and emphasized the importance of transparency in the process. Jason Smith asked if the training center could bill the student directly and issue the e-cards. Tara said she would inquire.



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Quarter 3 events included the Back to School Bash and 4-H Fair. On October 6th and 7th, Tara attended the Health Officer Boot Camp alongside Dr. Carpenter and Mr. Smith. The Health Department also continues to participate in the Health Care Coalition, which meets monthly, typically attended with Mr. Smith and Mr. Coffey.

Tara provided several staff and department updates.

Pilar Gomez translated essential Health Department forms into Spanish to improve accessibility for the community. Distributed 32 tick kits and 40 lice kits to families. Represented the Health Department at the Milan School Open House and the Batesville Trunk or Treat and attended the Indiana Vital Records Association (IVRA) Conference.

Missy Byrd has been elected as the Vice-President of the Indiana Vital Records Association (IVRA)—Tara Briggs congratulated her. Missy is also working on various SOPs. There have been important changes to Vital Records Public Access Law: records will now become public 99 years after their creation, instead of the previous 75 years. Additionally, all amendments to death certificates, regardless of how minor, now require a court order if the death occurred more than one year ago.

Vital Records Digitization will take place through November.

Tara reported 61 suicide calls to 911 with two resulting in deaths so far in 2025. To support Harm Reduction efforts, the Health Department now has medication lock boxes in stock for community distribution due to the interest shown by the Probation Department.



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Additionally, staff are working with schools to implement Naloxone training through Overdose Lifeline before dispersing naloxone to school personnel.

The Health Department's Maternal Child Health Program run by Cindy Gerstbaur has introduced Bright Course, an educational resource for families, and launched a Voucher Program to assist with pregnancy and infant needs. Through this program, families can utilize Twice Blessed for essential items. People get \$10 voucher for every 20 minutes of course time.

Cindy participated in the Batesville Middle School Health Fair and the Batesville Area Resource Center Health Fair, providing outreach and resources to local families.

Elisha Forwalt participated in the Kid's Day event at the Versailles Farmer's Market, where she assisted children in decorating their helmets to encourage children to take pride in wearing their helmets.

The Health Department reported that all animals submitted for rabies testing were negative. Environmental Health saw a notable increase in septic inspections and retail food complaints over the same period last year.

Upcoming Events included the Humane Society Rabies Clinic in Osgood on November 1st and Radiation Training on October 31

6. FIMR Coordinator Introduction: Health Administrator Tara Briggs

Tara introduced Kirstin McCleary, the new Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Coordinator. Jason Smith and Paul Ketcham asked questions about the FIMR program and Kirstin's background. While Ripley County is hosting the coordinator, the grant covers seven counties.



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7. Mini Grant: YMCA

At 5:25 The YMCA Wellness Coordinator presented two health-focused programs aimed at supporting vulnerable populations in Ripley County. The first, Rock Steady Boxing, is designed for individuals with Parkinson’s disease. The program has seen steady growth, and the coordinator proposed expanding it to offer two separate classes. Funding was requested to help subsidize participant fees—currently \$50 per month—with the goal of reducing the cost to \$25.

The second program, Strong at the YMCA, supports cancer survivors in their journey back to healthy living. It consists of weekly 1.5-hour sessions. Funding is being sought to cover costs for instructors, materials, journals, and guest speakers. Dr. Glaser-Carpenter and Paul Ketcham expressed appreciation for the YMCA’s efforts and asked questions, along with other board members, about program costs and accessibility.

8. Mini Grant: Ripley County Parks and Recreation

A representative of the Parks and Recreation Department was not present. Tara Briggs provided an update on facility improvements on behalf of the Parks manager who was unable to attend. She shared that multiple bids had been requested but the current bid was provided by a local veteran owned company, and presented photos to the Health Board showing progress and the status of the restroom floors. A Health Board member asked for clarification on where the restrooms were located, and Tara said the restrooms were in the middle of the park, not the restrooms by the office.

9. Mini Grant: Ripley County Community Foundation



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Lexi Brown from the Indiana Health Foundation introduced herself and presented a funding request to support the installation of AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) in 46 police cruisers across the county. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$71,000, which would cover all vehicles, but Ripley County was only being asked for \$25,000. The initiative is in partnership with Margaret Mary Health and aligns with Ripley County Health Department's strategic priorities.

A question was raised about which agencies would receive an AED. Lexi explained that the sheriff's departments and municipal police would be provided AEDs, but that state police operating in Ripley County would not be covered under the program.

Lexi explained that funding is being requested now through December, with AED training and distribution scheduled for February. The proposal includes sustainability measures, such as providing batteries and pads for the AEDs through other funding sources. Dr. Welsh emphasized the importance of standardizing the brand of AEDs and planning for future replacements, noting that cardiac injury and death are significant concerns in Southeast Indiana. He also suggested that the Health Department could serve as a repository for replacement pads.

Questions were raised by the Health Board about the frequency of cardiac arrests and whether police typically arrive on-scene before EMS. Dr. Welsh confirmed that law enforcement often reaches the scene first, which supports the need for AEDs in cruisers. Lexi added that temperature storage for batteries would be addressed during training.



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5:45 PM- Lexi confirmed that the Community Foundation could meet all reporting requirements by collecting data from the various law enforcement agencies to be served.

10. Mini Grant: Indiana Immunization Coalition

Health Administrator Tara Briggs presented on behalf of the Indiana Immunization Coalition, as their representative was not present. Jason Smith raised questions about vaccination rates and noted that the coalition's services are not limited to Ripley County residents. Several questions were raised by other board members about vaccines costs and wastage rates. These could not be answered due to the absence of the coalition representative.

Dr. Welsh acknowledged the coalition's impact, and the many lives reached through their efforts. There was also discussion about a generator request—whether it should be portable or permanent. Tara shared that she did receive an invoice for a standby generator but that the funding request did not specify installation costs. Jason Smith raised questions about the sustainability of the Immunization Coalition, and Dr. Carpenter mentioned the funding cuts that the Immunization Coalition took this past year. A question was raised by other board members if the Health Department would have to take over mobile clinics especially school clinics if the Immunization Coalition did not receive funding.

5:50 PM- The Health Board deliberated about the total funding amount that should be awarded. Tara Briggs presented projected revenue and expenses for the upcoming years along with past and current expenditures. She noted that while there is some flexibility in grant spending, the Health First Indiana (HFI) funding for next two years was cut significantly. The



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Health Department's HFI budget will be operating at a deficit for 2026 and 2027; therefore, some savings are required to cover the two salaries on HFI. The question was raised on how much to set aside for the next two years.

While Tara requested a conservative budget approach, she suggested that grants should still be evaluated on their merit. Dr. Welsh suggested spending no more than \$50,000 on the projects proposed.

Joseph Miller asked about the expected rollover amount, and Tara explained that rollover figures are typically approved mid-year. Last year's rollover was approximately \$150,000. At **5:56 PM**, Paul Ketcham asked for clarification on anticipated funding and whether it would be enough to cover salaries. Tara confirmed that with the 2024 roll-over staff salaries are secured through 2026.

At **6:05**, the Health Board decided to deliberate further on the proposed funds at a later time.

11. Review of Pool and Tattoo/Piercing Ordinance Drafts: Health Administrator Tara Briggs

Tara presented two draft ordinances: one addressing swimming pool regulations and the other concerning tattoo and body piercing establishments. She noted that both drafts had been reviewed by legal counsel. She summarized the drafts and highlighted key provisions.

Tara explained the difficulties the department encounters without clear having clear operational guidance and emphasized the need for ordinances or Health Board policies to promote consistency and transparency. The following topics were discussed:



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- Whether the Board preferred a passive or proactive approach to water quality and pool safety, as well as tattoo/body piercing safety.
- Whether the proposed fee structure—specifying who should pay and who may be eligible for fee waivers—was acceptable.
- Whether the appeals process outlined in the drafts was satisfactory.
- Whether the enforcement provisions were appropriate.

No objections were raised regarding content of the drafts. Tara informed the Board that a few last-minute changes had been made since the drafts were emailed to members. She reviewed these updates, including that tattoo/piercing permits require annual renewal.

Dr. Carpenter requested that Tara verify whether the proposed ordinances align with industry standards by consulting other Health Departments and the state. Tara responded that she had already reviewed policies from other county health departments and would follow up with the state for further confirmation.

6:36 - Donna Pitts motioned to move forward with presenting the revised draft to the Commissioners, seconded by Miller. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Employee Evaluation Policy Draft Review: Health Administrator Tara Briggs

Health Administrator Tara Briggs introduced a draft Employee Evaluation Policy for consideration. She expressed her intention to develop a comprehensive Health Department Policy Book, noting that it is currently difficult to identify existing Health Board policies by reviewing past meeting minutes. Tara emphasized that consolidating policies into a single,



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accessible resource would be beneficial both for her and for future administrators. Tara provided a verbal summary of the proposed policy during the meeting. The Health Board agreed to postpone a vote on the policy until January, allowing time for public comment and review.

13. Health Department Staff Comments:

None were offered.

14. Public Comments:

None were offered.

15. Next Meeting Scheduled: Health Board President Jason Smith

6:48 PM- The next Health Board meeting is scheduled for January 13th.

16. Adjournment: Health Board President Jason Smith

6:48 PM – Jason Smith entertained a motioned for adjournment. Donna motioned first, and Miller seconded. The meeting adjourned.



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October 28, 2025 5:00 PM
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Executive Session Meeting Agenda

Health Board discussed personnel matters and strategy in accordance with IC 5-14-1.5-6.1.



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These minutes were prepared by Pilar Gomez. The Health Board approves these minutes on

_____ (date).

Jason Smith, Health Board Chair

Amy Glaser-Carpenter, M.D.

Cindy Lauber, N.P.

Donna Pitts, Pharmacist

Joseph Miller, Attorney

Paul Ketcham, Batesville Cons. School Corp.

Suzanne Martini, M.D.



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