

SANITARIANS' NEWS



WVAOS MID-YEAR CONFERENCE 2025

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Canaan Valley Resort May 14-16, 2025



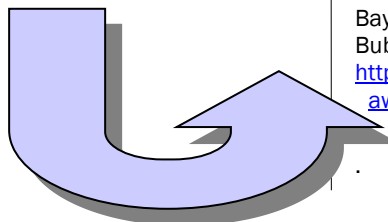
Any photos, stories, or any good news? Share in the next issue by reaching out to Nick King,

Nicholas.B.King@wv.gov

Registration link: <https://wvaos.org/trainings>

Room Reservation: <https://www.canaanresort.com/book-now?pid=24169>

GET INVOLVED WITH WVAS!



Nominate!

Know anyone that deserves recognition for their contributions to environmental health? Nominate them for the Steve Bayer, Recognition, Citizen, or Bubba Award. Info is found at <http://www.wvdhhr.org/wvas/awards.asp> or contact Awards Committee Chair,

Run for Office!

Elections of Executive Council occur once a year during WV Public Health Conference in the Fall. Serve your fellow sanitarians for a two year term as Member at Large or run for Vice President and serve a year as VP and a year as President. If you are interested in running reach out to Cara Harding at charding@berkeleywv.org.

Join the AOS (or Renew Membership)!

In 2025, the WVAS is going to vote on bylaw changes that will allow every sanitarian registered with the WV State Board of Sanitarians to be a member. Mid-year conference registration fees will then be used to completely fund WVAS activities and expenses.

News Liaison Committee

The Sanitarian Liaison Committee last met February 28, 2025. During that meeting, the committee discussed sanitarian in-service meetings. It has been brought up that some areas would like to switch to all virtual in-services while others have indicated wanting to do in-person. Discussion was had about the benefits of in-person versus virtual meetings. It was expressed that in-person meetings are beneficial because of the connections that are made, especially for new sanitarians. We discussed possibly doing a survey in the future to see what the preferences are for in-service meetings.

The committee also discussed a new procedure being developed, H-29 Public, Private Parochial or Church Schools w/ Kindergarten or Pre-K, and Micro-Schools. This procedure is to clarify the permitting process for the kindergarten or pre-k's for these schools. Previously they would have been issued a childcare permit but due to changes in legislation they do not need a childcare permit, these are now included in their school permit. Suggestions were made to make the procedure more clear, these updates are going to be made and brought to the liaison committee before the procedure is finalized.

WV Board of Sanitarians

Training for CEUs needs to be submitted to Linda Whaley to officially count for your sanitarian registration. Email CEUs to linda.k.whaley@wv.gov

Region Representatives

JJ Rose—ROC (Beckley) Region
 Steve Hinerman—PACT (Fairmont) Region
 Vacant—EPHRT (Kearneysville) Region
 Rodney Melton —BUNDLE (St. Albans) Region
 Nicole Needs—MID-OHIO VALLEY
 Lock Johnson—NORTHERN (Wheeling) Region
 Vacant—SPHERE Region

Neha Exam Study Group Launched, Ongoing

The NEHA Test Study Group is in session now. The group is on Unit 8 of 16. The group is hosted by Nick King and meets for an hour and a half from 9:30 AM to 11 AM on Google Meet. Not only is the material reviewed but also practice questions and test taking strategies. Attending these meetings count towards your Sanitarian CEUs. For more information, you can contact Nick King at Nicholas.B.King@WV.gov.



Public Health Infrastructure Cut Down by Trump Administration

Under the Trump Administration's HHS directed by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr, and under the guidance of Elon Musk's DOGE agency, at least 12 billion dollars of funding for public health has been cut under the pretense of efficiency. This also includes grants and contracts granted to state health departments. Tens of thousands of employees at HHS, including FDA and CDC, have had their jobs terminated. State and local health departments across the country have had to lay off employees and issue hiring freezes as well. This is because even in states that have the most public health agencies in the country are primarily funded by the federal government.

The cuts have devastated so many essential services that nn LinkedIn, Former FDA Commissioner Robert Califf wrote, "The FDA as we've known it is finished, with most of the leaders with institutional knowledge and a deep understanding of product development and safety no longer employed." Former CDC executive Ursula Bauer, in an interview with Fortune, stated that even if things turn around, "It is going to take decades to rebuild."

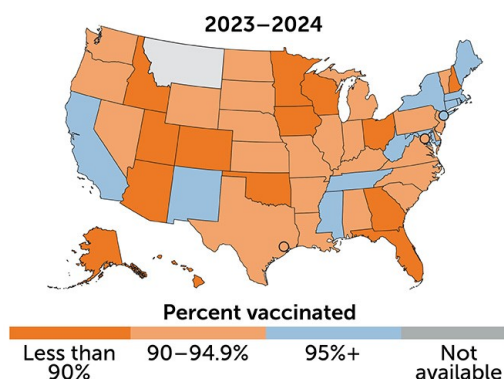
MEASLES OUTBREAK BEGINNING IN RURAL TEXAS BECOMES EPIDEMIC, CAUSES WV VACCINE BILL TO BE VOTED OUT OF HOUSE

As of the time of this writing, April 8, 2025, a second child has died of measles. Also at this time, the measles outbreak beginning in the South Plains Region of Texas among relatively less vaccinated rural communities. There are now over 607 cases; the disease has spread to 22 states. However, because of recent cuts to public health at all levels, the true number and spread of cases is most likely grossly underreported.

The epidemic has caused DDHS Secretary Kennedy to recommend MMR vaccination despite years of advocacy and skepticism towards the vaccine. However, the messaging is still mixed due to continued advocacy of unproven medications such as cod liver oil, budesonide, and clarithromycin. Advocacy for the MMR vaccine also has not promoted community vaccination and instead promotes it as an individual choice, which is insufficient for a community to develop herd immunity that protects the entire population.

The mixed messaging has caused parents to conflate pseudoscience on social media with the actual advice from the scientific community and public health officials. This is accelerating a downward trend in childhood vaccinations that has occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic. The fallout of this epidemic did encourage the WV State Legislature to vote down Senate Bill 56 which would have lowered restrictions on school vaccinations. However, the provisions to allow religious exemptions for school vaccination has been resurrected in House Bill 2776 by the Senate Health Committee.

MMR Vaccination Rates by State in 2023-2024



FIND US ONLINE

WVAS now has a closed group on Facebook to share news and information with members.

Request to join at www.facebook.com/groups/263384244100903/

WVAS also has a website at <https://wvaos.org/>

Our email is wvaos@outlook.com.

The WV Public Health Association also has a website. <https://wvpublichealthassociation.org/>



Acclaimed Actor Gene Hackman and Spouse found Dead, Investigation finds rare Hantavirus as cause.



On Feb. 26, Hackman and spouse Betsy Arakawa were found dead in their Santa Fe, New Mexico property. The deaths sparked mystery and speculation on the internet. Some speculators had suspicions ranging from foul play to intentional drug overdose.

The mysterious deaths were then solved by the New Mexico Department of Public Health. A medical examination of Arakawa found respiratory illness linked to hantavirus. On March 5th, an investigation was performed by environmental health specialists. The inspectors found rodent infestations, including nesting, feces, and live/dead rodents, in all 8 detached buildings in the property barring the main house. At the time, Hackman, 95, was also in the later stages of Alzheimer's disease.

After further medical examination, officials approximated Arakawa's death to hantavirus to Feb. 12 with her husband at Feb. 18 due to his Alzheimer's syndrome. Hantavirus is rare in the US, with only 864 confirmed cases between 1993 and 2022. However, the disease has a relatively strong presence in rural parts of southwestern states. The respiratory illness caused by hantavirus, HPS, has a 38-41% case fatality rate. No treatments are effective other than using ECMO to reduce mortality rates.

Food Dye and Sewage System Design Standards Update Bills Passed

This legislative session, HB 2354 and SB 325 passed; both these bills impact food and sewage programs respectively.

HB 2354 bans many synthetic food dyes from the food supply in WV. This ban will go into effect on January 1, 2028. The banned dyes include:

Red Dye No. 3
Red Dye No. 40
Yellow Dye No. 5
Yellow Dye No. 6
Blue Dye No. 1
Blue Dye No. 2
Green Dye No. 3

These dyes are in a lot of candy, soda, energy drinks, frozen deserts, and fruit flavored snacks and drinks, including some meats such as pepperoni. The bill also bans the food additives butylated hydroxyanisole and propylparaben. The ban will go into effect for school nutrition programs much earlier, on August 1, 2025.

Another bill affecting environmental health that passed is SB 235. This bill mandates the Department of Health to amend 64CSR47, the sewage system design standards, to add new minimum design loadings for breweries, distilleries, and cideries at Table 64-47-B. The updated table along with the bill text can be found in this link:

https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=sb325%20sub1.htm&yr=2025&sesstype=RS&i=325

WVPHA Conference Schedule Highlights

Wed. May 14th

Track 1: Environmental Health

1:10, NEHA and EH updates

2:45, Pool and Spa Inspection 101

4:00, WVAS general business meeting

Track 2: Threat Prep

1:00, WVPHEMA Business Meeting

3:00, PIO Training

Thursday, May 15th

8:00 Keynote– Collaboration in EH Emergency Response, Dr. David Dyjack, Executive Director, NEHA

Track 1: Environmental Health

9:00, WV Retail Program Standards Collaborative

10:15, Sanitarian Olympics Round 1

10:30, Risk-Based Food Inspections with Jon Tran

1:00, Sanitarian Olympics Round 2

1:45, Pest Control in Food Establishments

3:45 Challenges of Constructing Septic Systems and Wells in Karst, Bob Denton

Track 2: Threat Prep

9:00 WVCTP Resource Sharing

10:30 CTP Radio Training

1:00 JUVARE WV HAN and REDI

Friday, May 16

8:00, Joint Environmental Health/Threat Prep exercise, Bob Custard, Anna Coleman, Nick King, Jamie Moore, Wayland Harris

MICHIGAN MAN DIES OF RABIES FROM ORGAN TRANSPLANT IN OHIO

In December 2024, at a hospital in Ohio, a Michigan resident received a kidney transplant from a donor from Idaho. In January this year, the patient showed back at the hospital with symptoms of rabies, later testing for positive for the virus and passing away since the disease is about 100% fatal when symptoms appear. After the patient's death, an investigation was performed by state health and the CDC. No animal exposures were found on the patient, which then directed investigators to the donor; PEP had been administered to the patient's household exposures.

Investigating the kidney donor revealed a wild animal exposure five months prior to their death; they had not taken rabies PEP to prevent the virus from manifesting into the disease. After this discovery, there was a race to find all of the donor's exposures via organ transplant. Three corneal grafts were performed using the donors organs; investigators stopped a fourth corneal graft. Fortunately, all other organ recipients received PEP and prevented this incident from becoming an outbreak with multiple fatalities.

Human to human rabies transmission via organ donation has happened before in the US. It can happen because of the transmission of contaminated bodily fluids stemming from the nervous system of an infected patient. In the US, there are only two other confirmed incidents, one case in 2013 and three in 2004.

NEHA AEC 2025 AT PHOENIX, AZ.



Due to Cuts, FDA Draws Plans to end Routine Food Safety Inspections, Pass to States



Multiple FDA officials recently revealed to CBS News prior to any official announcement that the FDA is drawing up plans to end its routine food safety inspections within the US. Under this plan, the FDA would still be responsible for inspecting food exporters to the US in foreign countries. However, food in interstate commerce within the US would all be handed to the states. 43 states, including WV, already have contracts from FDA that pay for a specific workload allocated by the contract. For example, the WV Department of Health is usually contracted to do a specified amount of its food manufacturing inspections for FDA a year.

Before the second Trump administration, a plan similar to this was advocated by some in the food safety community in contrast to another that proposed to “take the F out of FDA” and create a separate Federal Food Agency; these moves would have helped prevent the FDA from having a backlog of foreign inspections. However, the dramatic funding and staff cuts to federal and state health agencies may further increase the inspection backlog within the US. Firstly, reductions to training and support staff in FDA hamper the agency’s ability to train and credential new state inspectors to meet the full workload in their states leftover, especially in the 7 states that have never performed inspections for FDA. All FDA trainings this year for new inspectors have already been canceled. Secondly, reductions in federal funding for state health departments may not make it possible for states to have the funds necessary to hire more staff. Lastly, the federal user fee system that funded their domestic food safety inspections is not implemented in most states. The user fee system was a way for the FDA to charge industry for its environmental health services to fund its inspectors without having to pull from taxpayer funds. Many states attempting to implement a similar user fee system would meet resistance from their own state legislatures. For these reasons, this plan will not be able to be fully implemented without funding reform and/or a restoration of the federal funds to state health departments cut by the administration.

FALL CONFERENCE WVAS ELECTIONS

Elections for WVAS occur at the PHA conference this fall. There are currently no elected positions that need to be filled but there are appointed positions available. They are:

Membership

Legislative Community

Awards

Anyone interested in these positions can contact Cara Harding at charding@berkeleywv.org.



**West Virginia Association
of Sanitarians**

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Email: WVAOS@Outlook.com

We're on the Web
<https://wvaos.org/>

WVAS Executive Council

Elected Officers

President: Samantha Beaudoin

Vice-President: Bob Custard

Elected Members at Large: Jimmy Casdorff, David Whittaker, Glen Ondick

Appointed Members

Secretary-Treasurer: VJ Davis

Newsletter: Nick King

Legislative Committee: Vacant

Nominating Committee: Cara Harding

Awards: Vacant

By Laws: Mike Bolen

IEHS: Bill Nestor

Media: AJ Root

Membership: Vacant

Event Planning: Mark Hawkins

News Liaison Committee: Stacy King

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