

SANITARIANS' NEWS



WVPHA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

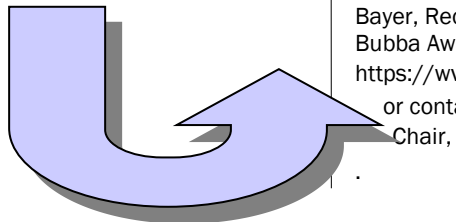
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Recommended Hotels if Reservations at Canaan Valley are full:

Blackwater Lodge 304-259-5216
Canaan Village Inn 304-866 4166
Holiday Inn Express Elkins 304-630-2266
Wyngate by Wyndham Elkins 304-616-1400

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 <https://wvaos.org/awards> 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 Jennifer Costolo Michael at jennifer.a.costolomichael@wv.gov

Join the AOS (or Renew Membership)!

In the 2025 Mid-year Meeting, the WVAS voted on and passed bylaw changes to include all sanitarian registered with the WV State Board of Sanitarians in the WVAS without paying membership fees. Mid-year conference registration fees will then be used to completely fund WVAS activities and expenses.

Canaan Valley September 16-18, 2026



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

Online Hotel Reservation: <https://www.canaanresort.com/book-now/?pid=23301>

News Liaison Committee

No updates. Check back next issue!

WV Board of Sanitarians

The Board is currently working with the WVU School of Public Health on the new hire Sanitarian training program. Modules on the Food and Wastewater programs are slated to be the first modules completed and available for use. Local Health Administrators will be notified as soon as the training is available.

The CEH spreadsheets will be updated again next month. Hopefully all CEHs from this summer will be added by mid September.

Registration renewals will be sent out in November. Deadline for renewal is December 31st. Grace period extends until January 30th. Any registration postmarked after Jan. 30th is subject to a \$25.00 late fee. All CEHs must be submitted and documented before registration renewal can occur. Please note that it is unlawful for anyone to work as a Sanitarian without being properly registered with the Board.

Region Representatives

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

If you have an issue you wish to have addressed by this committee, please send that information to your Region Representatives.

Sanitarian Liaison Committee

webpage:

<https://oehs.wvdhhr.org/phs/public-health-sanitation/state-local-environmental-health-liason-group/>

Neha Exam Study Group Updates

The NEHA Test Study Group has restarted this year with new changes based on responses by test takers from the group, including three new units covering epidemiology, and a new set of practice tests. Requests to join the drive for this group can be sent to Nicholas.B.King@wv.gov

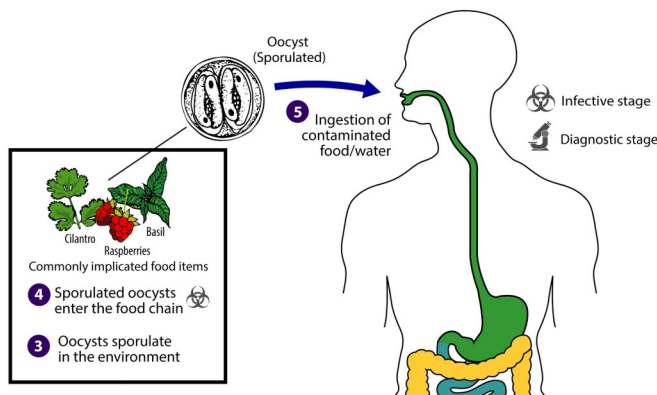


Cyclospora “Diarrhea Parasite” Surges in the US

Since this summer, the US has had over 15,700 confirmed cases of cyclospora, which has been dubbed by most media as the “diarrhea parasite.” There are also 11,000 probable cases but since cyclospora is usually mild, many of the cases are underreported. This is a record high; on average, the US only gets 1180 confirmed cases a year.

The epicenter of the epidemic is at Michigan but also a concentration of cases around Texas and North Carolina. Only one source has been traced so far, being iceberg lettuce from Mexican sources distributed by Taylor Farms. However, this lettuce is not linked to so many cases that some officials suggest the outbreaks could be a convergence of multiple cyclospora outbreaks from different foods.

Even though not all sources of the outbreak are likely to have been found, enough lettuce has been recalled by industry; cyclospora cases are dying down at the time of this writing. We will see if more full genome sequencing can find more sources.



FAQ Series: Microschools

What is a microschool?

Microschools are modern reinventions of 1-room pre-K-12 schoolhouses. The first modern microschool started in DC in 2015. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a surge of demand for alternative schooling when large schools shut down, leading to the rise of microschools in WV and their legalization in 2022.

Where in WV Code were microschools legal?

WV Code section 18-8-1. <https://code.wvlegislature.gov/18-8-1/>

What is the difference between a microschool and a private school.

Size, microschools are under 100 students; the national average size is 22 students. Private and charter schools can have large class numbers.

How are microschools regulated in WV.

Microschools must register with the Board of Education; students take an annual standardized assessment. As for local and state health departments, they are exempt by WV Code from general sanitation and food permits. However, not from well and sewer system installation permits.

Is there ever a situation that warrants a food/sanitation inspection of a microschool?

Yes, on a complaint basis or if the microschool is connected to an outbreak.

How can I tell if a school in my county is a microschool?

The Board of Education can answer that. Microschools that receive Promise Scholarship funds are also listed on the Promise Scholarship's website.



2026 Mid Year Meeting Highlights



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/>



New World Screw-worm Returns to the US for the first time in 60 Years



New world screw worm is the maggot stage of the new world screwworm fly. These maggots are flesh eating parasites can devastate livestock and even in rare cases infect humans. Flies typically infect warm blooded animals by laying eggs in the wounds, cuts, or mucous membranes, which hatch into maggots that feed on the hosts flesh from the inside out.

The parasite is endemic in the Caribbean, central, and South America. But in the 20th century, The parasite was the first to be controlled with the sterile insect technique (deploying sterile insects in the wild). By 1982, the parasite was eliminated from the US. However, on June 3rd, the parasite reemerged in Texas and New Mexico after many federal cuts to zoonotic disease surveillance in livestock imports.

Since the outbreak started, Texas has accelerated the construction of a sterile screw worm fly factory in Texas to stop the outbreak; the USDA has started to release sterile flies again.

As of this writing, there are 32 animal cases in the US with fortunately no human cases.

COTTAGE FOOD EMERGENCY RULE INITIATED



In the response to the legalization of TCS cottage food production and sales in WV this year, the WV Department of Agriculture has released an emergency rule setting forth guidelines for the regulation of TCS cottage food, 61CSR42. Here are the highlights of the rule:

- The rule covers both TCS and acidified foods and has permit requirements for all of them.
- WVDA's permits are statewide.
- Non-TCS cottage food vendors still do not need permits.
- Meat, Grade A Dairy, sprouted seeds, and wild mushrooms are still banned as cottage food.
- Federal food labeling requirements (21CFR101) apply to potentially hazardous cottage food.
- Acidified and canned food must be approved by a Process Authority; acidified food producers must have Better Process Control School or similar training.
- TCS cottage food producers must have certified food safety training.
- Private water supplies must be tested at least annually for coliforms.
- Annual inspections by WVDA are required for permit issuance and removal.
- All products must be listed on the permit, and any new ones must be approved by WVDA.
- Local health departments are only involved when an imminent health hazard or implication in a foodborne illness outbreak occurs and can inspect in these scenarios under WVDA's consultation.
- Link to the rule: <https://agriculture.wv.gov/wp-content/uploads/Filed-Cottage-Food-Rule-Emergency-Rule-2026.pdf>

WVPHA Conference Schedule Highlights for WVAS

Tuesday, September 15th

6 PM: WVPHA Executive Council dinner at Mama Mia.

Wednesday, September 16th.

10 AM: Association of Local Health Departments meeting.

12 PM: Registration Desk

1 PM: Welcome address by A. Jay Root. Address by state health officer Dr. McDaniel.

2:30 PM: Address by NA-CHO CEO Lori Freeman.

3:30 PM: Closing remarks by A. Jay Root.

Thursday, Sept. 17 – Sanitarian Section

8:15 AM: Welcome

8:30-12 PM: Foodborne Illness Outbreak Exercise

12 PM: Lunch

1 PM: WVAS Business Meeting

1:30 PM: Restaurant grease trap design.

3 PM: RFFM Program update.

3:15 PM: Professional Ethics Tabletop

4:30 PM: OEHS Update

Friday, Sept. 18

8 AM: Leadership presentations by Dr. Cathy Slemple and J. Lee Jenkins (Johns Hopkins/CDC Region 3)

9:15 AM: Conflict Management by Mark Isabella

11 AM: Presentation on AI's Role in Public Health by Bob Coffield.

12:15 PM: Door Prize Drawings and closing remarks by Mikayla Earl.

MON. CO. HEALTH DEPT. WILL MOVE TO NEW BUILDING



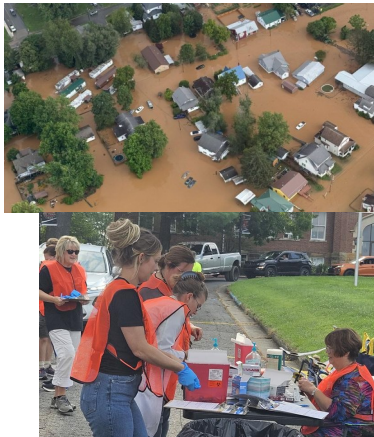
On June 23, MCHD announced in a press release that the department will move from the county public health center to White Birch Towers II, on 1311 Pineview Dr. in Morgantown. This is because the county commission sold the public health building and its next door building to WVU Hospitals for \$6 Million. The new space will also be able to house all of MCHD's employees without the need for rent another space.

MCHD will have no interruptions in public health services during this time; until June 30, 2027, MCHD will continue to operate out of the public health building at 453 Van Voorhis Road in Morgantown.

WV HAS STRONG SHOWING AT NEHA AEC 2026



Lewis and Buckhannon-Upshur Health Departments Combat Historic Floods



On July 21, 2026, Lewis and Upshur counties were beaten down by torrential rain for days which catalyzed the most damaging flash floods WV has seen since the Election Day Floods of 1985. Some of these areas, especially in Lewis county, experienced the worst floods in their history. Downtown Buckhannon and Weston were flooded as well. There were no deaths from these floods in Lewis county but Upshur had two fatalities. The economic and infrastructural damage however, was unprecedented. Both counties combined lost 33 homes with hundreds more significantly damaged. Over 100 businesses were damaged by the floods in both counties, with at least 3 permanently lost at the time of this writing. Other critical infrastructure such as the public school system had to be temporarily shut down.

Despite the devastation, sanitarians of Lewis County and Upshur-Buckhannon Health Departments responded valiantly and played a key part in the recovery efforts of these counties. Sanitarians of both counties inspected all flooded businesses, public areas, and critical infrastructure such as schools and shelters to evaluate damage and when they could reopen. Sanitarians also conducted food inspections of charitable food operations to ensure that first responders and victims of the flood were fed in a sanitary manner. Lewis County Health Department conducted 184 food and retail inspections. Sanitarians also went to private homes to assess damages, especially to water wells and sewer systems. UBHD responded to many private sewer system failures while LCHD conducted 43 tests of private water wells affected by the floods, finding that 73% of them were adulterated and no potable. Sanitarians also delivered supplies to the owners of these wells such as bleach and buckets to help them treat their wells and conduct follow-up tests. Flood water also exposes the public to a high risk of hepatitis A and tetanus; the nursing sections of both health departments ran emergency vaccine clinics and administered over 2500 hepatitis A and tetanus vaccines combined.

LCHD and UBHD have our thanks for their unyielding response to this emergency. They are great examples of the value of public health to the community in times of crisis. They have also demonstrated that not only are sanitarians key to the development of their counties but also in their recovery.

FALL WVAS ELECTIONS AND AWARDS

Elections for WVAS occur at the PHA conference this fall. There are no appointed positions available.

Anyone interested in these positions can contact Jennifer Costolo Michael at [jen-nifer.a.costolomichael@wv.gov](mailto:jennifer.a.costolomichael@wv.gov).

This year's WVAS Election ballot will be sent out via email to be filled out and mailed but can also be filled out at the conference.

The following positions will be up for election:

Vice President

2 Year Member at Large

Awards that will be presented to sanitarians are below:

The Steve Bayer Award - given to a Sanitarian who works in Environmental Health and whose actions go above and beyond the norm to improve Environmental Health and promote the Environmental Health Profession. (One given per year)

Recognition Award - given to those sanitarians who their peers feel are doing an exceptional job in their program or deserve extra recognition for their actions. (Several may be given)

Citizen Award - is given to an individual or organization in the community that the Sanitarian feels is improving the Public Health through their actions. (Several may be given)

Bubba Award - given to the Sanitarian who has through accident or unfortunate circumstances (usually the incident is only known by a few until winning this prestigious award) have or will become the subject of much joking (in a friendly manner) by their fellow sanitarians. Past winners of this coveted award have received their award for burning up a pan during a food inspection, accidentally been sprayed by septic tank pumper hose, swabbed many bird rears for testing, stepped on a shovel during a septic system inspection hitting themselves in the face, fallen in a swimming pool, etc., dropping your cell phone in a septic tank, etc.

For more information: <https://wvaos.org/awards> or reach Rodney Melton at Rodney.Melton@chhdwv.gov



**West Virginia Association
of Sanitarians**

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Kingwood, WV 26537
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Email: WVAOS@Outlook.com

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

WVAS Executive Council

Elected Officers

President: Bob Custard

Vice-President: Lydia Takemoto

Elected Members at Large: Glenn Ondick, Mark Hawkins

Appointed Members

Secretary-Treasurer: VJ Davis

Newsletter Committee: Nick King

Legislative Committee: Christina Mickey

Nominating Committee: Jennifer Costolo-Michael

Awards: Rodney Melton

By Laws: Mike Bolen

IEHS: Bill Nestor

Media: AJ Root

Event Planning: Mark Hawkins

News Liaison Committee: Stacy King

Credits

Author

Nick King

News Liaison

Stacy King

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