

SANITARIANS' NEWS



WVAS MID-YEAR MEETING 2026

Canaan Valley April 22-24, 2026



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

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

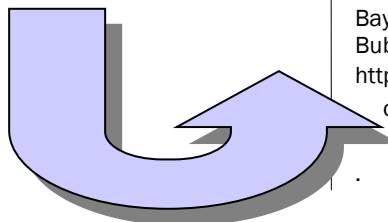
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Any photos, stories, or any good news? Share in the next issue by reaching out to Nick King,

Nicholas.B.King@wv.gov

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 Cara Harding at charding@berkeleywv.org.

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.

News Liaison Committee

No updates. Check back next issue!

WV Board of Sanitarians

The WV Board of Sanitarians voted at the December meeting to change the educational requirements for the San 1 position only. However, several rules and policies would have to change. Therefore, the members voted to wait and revise the rules and policies before implementing the educational requirement change. In the meantime other persons decided to present a bill that established the reduced educational requirement. This legislation passed in the Senate. At this time, Board members and other Sanitarians re-wrote the bill to make improvements and worked with Legislators from the House of Representatives. The revised House bill passed. Moving forward the reduced educational requirement is only for the Sanitarian 1 job classification. To advance, a person hired with an Associate Degree can only be a Sanitarian 1 and can only advance to a higher job classification upon completing a four (4) year degree. The Board of Sanitarians will now have to return to the Legislature next year to change any applicable rules. New policies will be implemented.

The next Board meeting is May 15th at 10:00. If you want the Zoom link for the meeting, please text Linda Whaley the day before. Her number is 304-638-2814. Minutes from the December meeting are being added to the Board webpage. The February meeting minutes will be added after they are voted on during the May meeting.

Other information: The server to which the Board laptop is tied had a devastating malfunction and the system was down for 35 days. The work completed the first week of January was not saved so it had to be redone before Linda could process applications. Linda also took a week vacation to take her granddaughter to NYC to model for New York Fashion week. Therefore, the receipts and new wallet cards are just now being sent out.

Please be patient; you will receive everything in about another week.

In the future, please complete the SS # on the bottom of the second page of the application. The Ex. Director must have that number to pull up the individual's profile to make updates.

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

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/publ>

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



Federal HHS Rehires some fired Employees

The wave of layoffs caused by the former Elon Musk led agency DOGE are beginning to see somewhat of a reversal, but not nearly enough to recover the approximately 10,000 layoffs that occurred at HHS in 2025.

So far, 450 employees have been rehired at the time of this writing, piling in comparison to the amount fired, but good news regardless. These employees are responsible for programs such as lead abatement, measles outbreak response, laboratories, and Epidemic intelligence Service Officers.

Many of these rehires were done because of public pressure and questioning to the current administration about the loss of the programs these employees ran. Continued pressure brings hope that more public health careers can be restored, even before the end of the current administration.

AI DATA CENTERS RAISE PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

AI has been the technological shift that has defined this decade. As was the case with the railroad boom of the 1800s, infrastructure is being rapidly built across the nation to support it, including in WV. The earliest data centers have raised various public health issues in the communities they have been built in, leading to many local communities voting against the construction of them. The most infamous of these is Elon Musk's xAI Colossus data center in South Memphis, TN, which has caused issues ranging from being build without going through a permitting process, water consumption that puts pressure on local resources, increasing electric bills in the town, and the smog and environmental noise created by the gas turbine power generators. The company is now in a class action lawsuit started by the Southern Environmental Law Center over these issues.

Since then, data centers in WV have faced increased scrutiny over potential public health impacts. Google has just announced plans to build one in Putnam county, and with the Governor, had to assure the public that costs and other public issues would not be passed on to the town of Buffalo.

WV AI Data Centers Chart- March 2026

Market	Data Centers
Charleston WV	3
Petersburg	1
Berkeley Springs	1
Bridgeport	1
Morgantown	1
Parsons	1
Total Data Centers:	8

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/>



42% of Potato Chip Customers do not know Potato Chips are made of Potatoes: PepsiCo

A new study commissioned by PepsiCo in December found the 42% of Lays customers don't know that their chips are made of potatoes, despite their labeling as "potato chips."

PepsiCo has reacted to this study by completely re-branding lays products. The rebrand is removing all artificial dyes, putting a potato on the packaging, and stating "Made with real potatoes" on every package.

No studies have been published in the last four months to see if the new packaging has decreased the 42% statistic.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGES THIS SESSION

Senate Bill 44: Cottage Food Expansion to include TCS Food

- TCS Cottage Food definition: Ag uses the term "potentially hazardous food" in their regulations, which will have the same definition as TCS in our regulations.
- WVDA is working on an emergency rule that clarifies what foods are allowed.
- TCS cottage food producers must get a permit from WVDA and can be inspected by them.
- Non-TCS food is still exempt from permitting.
- Permits will be valid statewide, allowing statewide sales for producers.
- Local health only intervenes if there is an imminent health hazard and/or outbreak.
- SB44 goes into effect June 12

House Bill 4463: Changes to Board of Sanitarians and Sanitarian Education/Training

- Sanitarian Training School, AKA Top Notch, must now have an online version available year round.
- Sanitarians in Training (SIT) must complete training in 6 months.
- Any Registered Sanitarian in the state can provide OJT.
- Universal reciprocity for sanitarian licenses from other states further reinforced.
- The change of the educational requirement for Sanitarian 1 from a bachelors to associates degree was proposed, but not adopted in the final version of this bill.

WVPHA Conference Schedule Highlights for WVAS

Wednesday, April 22

1:00 PM: Welcome, Bob Custard

1:10 PM: NEHA Update, CDR James Speckhart

1:25 PM: Environmental Health Updates, Jason Frame and Stacy King

2:10 PM WVAS General Business Meeting, Bob Custard

3:10 PM: Panel on Body Art

Thursday, April 23

8:00 AM: Keynote Interview, Conquering Public Health Challenges, Vince Radke

9:15 AM: Beef Jerkey Prepared Safely, Melissa Vaccaro

10:45 AM: Sanitization for Food Safety- Using Sanitizer Test Strips, Melissa Vaccaro

1:30 PM: Pest Control in Food Establishments, Vicki Decker, Guest Services

2:30 PM: Sanitarian Olympics

3:30 PM: WV Retail Program Standards Collaborative- Progress & Opportunities

3:45 PM: Constructing Septic Systems & Private Wells in Karst Areas

Friday, April 24

8:00 AM: Emergency Response Exercise- Pesticide Contamination of a Stream and Water Supplies

11:45 AM: Closing Words by WVPHEMA and WVAS Presidents

EHD OUTBREAK WIPES OUT WV DEER



Last July, an outbreak of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease, was detected in WV by DNR and has caused local white tail deer populations to die off. Jackson and Wood Co have had the most confirmed cases in the hundreds. . EHD is a viral disease that occurs when deer are bitten by small midge flies, in a similar manner to mosquito borne diseases. There is no vaccine not antiviral drugs for the virus. EHD has a very high mortality rate that can completely wipe out a local deer population.

EHD symptoms occur within a week of exposure and exhibit similar symptoms to chronic wasting disease, but with internal hemorrhaging that causes cases to die. Deer that survive develop antibodies for the virus. But it will take a few years for affected deer populations to recover. As to how this outbreak would affect the 2027 hunting season, it's too early to call. Maybe in update in the Fall Issue will follow-up on this story.

FOOD VS. SUPPLEMENTS

Nutrition Facts vs. Supplement Facts

Nutrition Facts	Supplement Facts
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	<small>Amount Per Serving</small>
Recommended serving size	Recommended serving size
Number of calories per serving	Number of servings per container
Number of servings per container	List of dietary ingredients
List of nutrients	Quantities of each ingredient
Percent Daily Value (%DV) for each nutrient	

Food and supplements are governed by completely different regulations; new products have arisen in the market that have been blurring the line between the two. Supplements are not regulated by health departments in WV. The simplest way to distinguish between food and supplements is the packaging and labeling. Supplements, under federal law, must have Supplement Facts labels while food in similar packaging must have Nutrition Facts.

FAQ Series: Farmer's Market Vendors



This series of articles addresses commonly asked questions/concerns affecting local health departments. This issue will focus on Farmer's Market Vendors.

What is a farmer's market vendor?

A vendor at a farmer's market... More seriously, they can sell not just agricultural commodities but also prepared food like sandwiches and even pickled food. Regardless of what they vend, they are regulated by the WV Department of Agriculture instead of any health department. They must be operated directly by the farm.

Do they need permits?

In some cases yes, but not from us, from Ag.

What about health department permits?

One type does: consignment markets. Consignment means that another business besides the farm the food is sourced from is selling/making the products (the consignor). Consignors are convenient for farms because the farmer, or their staff, do not have to operate that market the whole time. The consignor needs a food establishment permit. An example is The Wild Ramp in Huntington. They are a retail store that sells products for farms so the farms do not have to sell it themselves there. They are permitted as a retail food establishment.

Would we ever have to inspect them?

Consignment farmer's markets are inspected like any other food establishment. For non-consignments, in one specific case, foodborne illness outbreaks.

Is there anything they can't make?

Not really, but for potentially hazardous food (Ag doesn't say TCS), they have to have a farmer's market vendor permit from Ag, except for eggs, raw milk, and pasteurized milk. Ag has their own food safety regulations for those foods.

Could I just open a food tent and call it a farmer's market to not have to get permitted by local health?

If you have your own farm sourcing your ingredients, and get permitted by AG as a farmer's market vendor when required, yes.

What is the best resource for WV Farmer's Markets?

<https://wvfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Farmers-Market-Vendor-Guide-24-1.pdf>

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FALL CONFERENCE WVAS ELECTIONS

Elections for WVAS occur at the PHA conference this fall. The following appointed positions are available.

Legislative Committee

Awards

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

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

There are no positions up for election so far, but stay tuned for the Fall Issue for any updates.



**West Virginia Association
of Sanitarians**

P.O. Box 334
Kingwood, WV 26537
Phone: 304-272-2137
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: Jimmy Casdorph, David Whittaker, Glen Ondick

Appointed Members

Secretary-Treasurer: VJ Davis

Newsletter: Nick King

Legislative Committee: None

Nominating Committee: Cara Harding

Awards: Vacant

By Laws: Mike Bolen

IEHS: Bill Nestor

Media: AJ Root

Event Planning: Mark Hawkins

News Liaison Committee: Stacy King

Credits

Lead Writer

Nick King

News Liaison

Stacy King

WV Board of Sanitarians Updates:

Warren Elmer, Linda Whaley

Additional

Assistance/Editing

WVAS Executive Council