

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

CITY OF AMARILLO

On October 16, 2025, the Amarillo Area Public Health Board held its quarterly meeting at the City of Amarillo Department of Public Health conference room, 850 Martin Road, Amarillo, Texas. The following members were present:

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Kenneth Crossland, DDS Chair, City of Canyon	Y	233	207
Kevin Hawkins, Vice Chair City of Amarillo	Y	82	77
Delores Thompson Potter County	N	57	37
Hector Mendoza Randall County	Y	2	2
Marjorie Schroeder Randall County	Y	8	7
Jennifer Potter City of Amarillo	N	8	3
Rebecca Scott, MD Potter County	N	25	21
Amber Bell Tanglewood	N	8	2

Administrative Officers Present:

Carol Hill Assistant Director, Public Health, City of Amarillo
Casie Stoughton Director, Public Health, City of Amarillo
Dr. Todd Bell Health Authority, Public Health, City of Amarillo
Joe Mike Briseno Recording Secretary, Public Health, City of Amarillo
Margaret Payton Director, WIC, City of Amarillo
Victoria Medley Director, Animal Management & Welfare, City of Amarillo
Zachary Badrow Deputy Director, Environmental Health, City of Amarillo

Guests Present

Janet Crossland Citizen

Item 1: Call to Order and Welcome

Vice Chairman Kevin Hawkins called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., confirmed a quorum was present, and proceeded to address the agenda items in the order presented.

Item 2: Public Comment

There were no public comments from citizens on issues related to the policies, programs, or services of the Amarillo Area Public Health District.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes

Minutes from June 26, 2025, meeting were submitted for approval. A motion to approve was entertained by Kevin Hawkins and passed with all members voting in favor.

Item 4: Regular Meeting Items

4.A Consider approval of the Amarillo Area Public Health District funding update.

Casie Stoughton, Director of Public Health, presented the update for the district funding.

Cooperative Agreement Funding updates

Overview of current funding sources across the Amarillo Area Public Health District, including grant awards, Amarillo Hospital District support, City of Amarillo General Fund contributions, limited fee revenue from Environmental Health, WIC grant funding, and General Fund support for Animal Management & Welfare.

A proposed cost-sharing model for the Public Health District was presented, modeled after the Office of Emergency Management’s approach. Under this framework, each member jurisdiction would be billed annually based on a population-based formula. Estimated funding needs would be calculated during the fiscal year budget process, with preliminary cost estimates provided to jurisdictions in June and final true-up billing issued between October and November.

Three cost-sharing implementation options were outlined for consideration by the Amarillo City Council:

1. **Option 1:** Move to a 100% cost-sharing model in Year 1.
2. **Option 2:** A two-year step plan—50% cost share in Year 1 and 100% in Year 2.
3. **Option 3:** A four-year step plan—cost share increases by 25% annually, reaching 100% in Year 4.

An example cost-share scenario was presented using a total funding need of \$350,000. Based on population, estimated contributions would include:

- City of Amarillo: \$275,000
- City of Canyon: just over \$21,000
- Potter County: \$23,000
- Randall County: \$27,000
- Smaller jurisdictions (Tanglewood, Timber Creek, Palisades, Bishop Hills): \$290–\$944

Additional cost-share estimates were modeled for funding levels up to \$3 million to illustrate potential impacts, though such high levels are not anticipated.

Presentation of the funding proposal to the Amarillo City Council is set for November 18, 2025. A motion to recommend the presented funding model to the Amarillo City Council was made by Hector Mendoza and seconded by Dr. Crossland. All in favor.

Item 5: Discussion Topical Updates from Health Authority

Dr. Todd Bell, Health Authority of Public Health, presented the updates.

General Vaccine Context

- No major changes to the national vaccine schedule.
- Concern about shifts in federal vaccine-approval personnel and potential downstream effects.

RSV Antibody

- New RSV antibody approved for infants <8 months; another similar product already exists.
- Both are expensive; limited availability locally.
- RSV remains the top cause of infant hospitalization; first local case already admitted.

ACIP Changes

- Significant turnover in committee membership, raising concerns about future recommendations.

MMRV Update

- Age 1: MMR and varicella must be given separately.
- Age 4: combined MMRV still allowed.
- Change based on slightly higher fever risk when combined at age 1.

Multi-Dose Vials

- ACIP recommends ending use of multi-dose vials with thimerosal.
- Most vaccines already single-dose; minimal practical impact.

Broader Concern

- Small wording or policy shifts may increase confusion and erode trust.

COVID Vaccine Updates

Shift to Shared Decision-Making

- Pregnant individuals now advised to discuss vaccination with their provider rather than being directly recommended.
- Science unchanged; wording may increase hesitancy.

Pregnancy Risks & Safety Data

- COVID infection in pregnancy increases miscarriage and maternal mortality.
- New large study shows **no increased risk of birth defects** when vaccinated in the first trimester.

Local Access (Amarillo)

- Adults: easy access at pharmacies.
- Children: difficult access—private clinics not stocking vaccine; pharmacies can't vaccinate very young children; health department available only for Medicaid/uninsured.

Interpretation Issues

- Some areas mistakenly require a doctor's note, creating barriers.

Bottom Line

- Evidence hasn't changed—only the language has.
- These shifts may still affect vaccine confidence.

Other Disease Updates

Measles

- 1,596 U.S. cases; outbreaks in AZ, UT, SC.
- West Texas outbreak resolved.

Flu & Other Diseases

- Potentially heavy flu season.
- Ongoing concerns about pertussis, varicella, and even polio if vaccine uptake drops.

Hepatitis B Birth Dose

- ACIP declined to revisit the recommendation.
- Universal infant vaccination dramatically reduced cases from 20,000/year to double digits.
- Screening-only approach previously missed 1 in 8 infected mothers.

Flu Shot in Pregnancy

- Still universally recommended despite some mixed messaging online.

Item 6: Administrative Reports

6.A Animal Management and Welfare

Victoria Medley, Director of Animal Management and Welfare, presented the AM&W report.

Rabies Activity in the Region

- 18 rabies cases in the region so far; Randall County leads with 5.
- Cases mainly involve skunks and bats.
- Canyon dealt with a large bat colony in an apartment complex that required relocation, not extermination.
- Amarillo had a rabid bat that bit a city employee who wasn't following protocol.
- Public campaign underway: don't touch bats, especially around Halloween; messaging pushed to elementary schools.
- Rabies remains active and present in the region.

Spay/Neuter Pilot Program — Brief Summary

- City launched a free spay/neuter pilot with one-time funds; four vet clinics partnered.
- Two events in the San Jacinto empowerment zone; 87 vouchers issued, 52% redeemed.
- Pets received a quick exam, vaccines, rabies shot, and a microchip before getting a voucher.
- Main challenges: low turnout, no-shows, and transportation barriers.
- Plan: expand slowly to other empowerment zones; continue fixing animals pulled by rescues.
- Exploring a weekly spay/neuter day at the shelter, pending logistics.
- Free microchipping all October (Mon & Sat, 10–6); return-to-owner rates up 60%.

Shelter Capital Improvement Project

- A long-delayed capital improvement project is finally moving forward and awaiting contract signing.
- The shelter, built in 1974, has severe issues with cracked concrete and poor drainage, contributing to disease spread.
- Contractors will remove and replace all concrete, but work must be done in phases so the shelter can stay operational.
- The quarantine building is in the worst condition, but a plan is in place to keep it open using temporary fencing and state-approved modifications.
- Community partners may see construction activity, but services will continue throughout the project.

6.B Environmental Health

Zachary Badrow, Deputy Director of Environmental Health, presented the Environmental Health report.

Mosquito Season Wrap-Up

- Mosquito activity is winding down, with about 4 weeks of treatment left.
- Current mosquito pool results:
 - St. Louis Encephalitis: detected in Randall County.
 - West Nile virus:
 - Potter County: 4 positive pools
 - Randall County: 8 positive pools
- Human/animal cases:
 - 1 bat case of West Nile.
 - 2 donor-related cases reported.

Food Program & Legislative Impact

- New laws (HB 2284, SB 1008) are now fully in effect.
- Resulting permit losses:
 - 278 permits lost → \$225,000 revenue loss.
 - July 1, 2026: mobile food permitting shifts to the state → another 227 permits lost, \$60,000 more in lost revenue.
- Overall: significant financial hit to the local food program.

Inspection Activity (FY 24–25)

- 537 septic inspections.
- 2,558 food hygiene inspections.
- 295 recreational water inspections.
- These numbers reflect routine inspections only—not compliance checks or follow-ups.

6.C Public Health

Casie Stoughton, Director of Public Health, presented the Public Health report.

Federal Budget & Grant Funding

- Federal budget delays have left programs in limbo.
- State Health Department is funded through October 31.
- November funding depends on whether federal grant dollars can be drawn down.
- Awaiting resolution; hoping the necessary federal staff remain in place to release funds.

Women's Health Clinic

- Clinic is doing well and growing its client base.
- New family planning grant began around September 1.
- Services include Pap tests, mammogram referrals, birth control prescriptions, and other testing/referrals.
- Open to referrals; team manages 20–25 grants at any given time.

Communicable Disease Report (2023–2024)

- Report for 2024 is complete; includes totals for 2023 and 2024.

- STD team and TB team each handle their own caseloads; all other diseases are investigated by just three staff members.

Pertussis Increase

- Significant rise in pertussis cases:
 - 2023: 4 cases
 - 2024: 45 cases
- Expecting continued increase in 2025.
- Emphasizes the need for improved vaccination rates.

6.D WIC

Margaret Payton, Director of WIC, presented the WIC report.

WIC Participation Caseload Growth:

- **July:** 6,395 participants
- **August:** 6,391 participants
- **September:** 6,405 participants
- **Quarterly Average (July – September 2025):** 6,397 participants

Program Updates

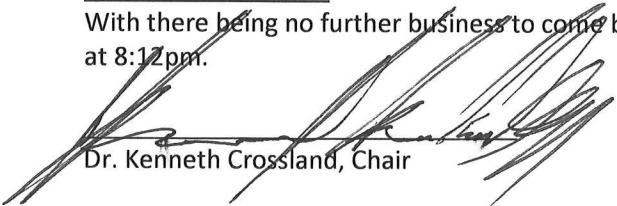
- Participation dipped in August but rose in September; pregnancy, breastfeeding, and infant enrollment is down, while child enrollment is up due to food-cost pressures.
- Even higher-income families are checking eligibility because of rising grocery costs.
- WIC passed its state audit with zero findings, but auditors flagged severe understaffing, the program operates at under 50% of normal staffing levels.
- Financial strain is extreme: city administrative charges (interest, IT, insurance) consume over half the grant, and WIC salaries are too low to attract qualified staff.
- This year, for the first time in 38 years, the program ran in the red.
- Federal budget uncertainty: Texas can fund WIC through Oct 31; November funding is unclear. Temporary federal stopgap money may help, but there is no guidance yet.
- SNAP-Ed funding was defunded, costing the program \$130,000.
- Other WIC agencies statewide are also struggling; some have been asked to prepare layoff plans for Nov 1.

Item 7: Discuss Items for Future Agendas

Members asked for departmental reports and updates. Kevin Hawkins set the next meeting for January 15, 2025, at 7:00 PM, to be held at the Public Health Department at 850 Martin Road.

Item 8: Adjournment

With there being no further business to come before the board, Kevin Hawkins adjourned the meeting at 8:12 pm.



Dr. Kenneth Crossland, Chair



Joe Mike Briseno, Recording Secretary