



New Jersey One Health Task Force Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 26, 2025

200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ, 08611 and Microsoft Teams

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Amar Patil at 10:10 AM.

Notice of Public Meeting

Public meeting notice was given on September 18, 2025.

Public meeting notice was given on May 16, 2025. Pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting to Gannett and Advance Media Legal Publications and the Office of the Secretary of State. In addition, at least 48 hours in advance, this notice has been posted in the lobby and on the third floor of the offices of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey.

Roll Call

The following members were present: Dr. Amar Patil, Dr. Darby McDermott, Ms. Christine Schell, Dr. Gloria Bachmann, Dr. Vincent Silenzio (on Teams), Dr. Michael Zwick, Dr. Nicole Fahrenfeld, Dr. Matthew Edson, and Dr. Michael Taylor (on Teams).

Swearing-In of Members

Dr. Fahrenfeld was sworn-in by New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Legal Specialist Chris LaRegina at 10:12 AM.

Approval of the Minutes

Dr. Bachmann motioned to approve the Minutes from May 23, 2025 as written. The motion was seconded by Dr. Edson. The Task Force approved the May 23 minutes.

Introductions

Dr. Andrea Egizi introduced Ms. Agatha Winiarski, a recently hired One Health Program Support Specialist onboarded at the NJDA. Her responsibilities include supporting Dr. Egizi with the Task Force and other One Health projects. Ms. Winiarski graduated with her bachelor's in Animal Science from Rutgers University and received her Master's in One Health from the University of Florida.

Committee Reports

Education, Training, & Workforce Development: The following report was prepared by Dr. Michael Taylor, Chair of the Education, Training, & Workforce Development Committee:

The committee met on June 16th, June 30th, July 14th, and August 18th, and has begun work on elements of Goal 3 and Goal 4 of the strategic plan.

3.1.1 Develop an inventory of One Health focused academic credentials (certificates, minors, majors) offered at colleges and universities

- *Action(s): The committee has collected and compiled data on the common elements of "One Health Core Competencies" across multiple disciplines (veterinary medicine, human medicine, environmental science, nursing, public policy and administration, etc.)*
- *Next Steps: This information will inform future committee work related to conceptualizing workforce development needs.*

3.1.2 Continue to develop inventory and collect relevant programming materials (student learning outcomes, syllabi, URLs) for analysis of common curriculum, specialization, and to identify gaps.

- *Action(s): Members attended the North America One Health University Network Conference in early September. The organization has active working groups in three areas critical to the work of the taskforce including research, education, and public outreach.*

- Next Steps: *The committee has reached out to the chair of the Education working group, to follow up on discussions at the conference and to extend an invitation to attend a future committee meeting.*

4.1.1 Develop an inventory of One Health public education programming and best practices with special attention on target audiences (K-12, public, FFA, etc.) and learning outcomes.

- Action(s): *Identifying multiple nonprofit organizations with extensive public education resources and collected links to key resources and materials. Anna Kimtis (NJDA Animal Health) attended our June 30th committee meeting to provide insights as a former K-12 educator.*
- Next Steps: *Continue to develop inventory and collect relevant programming materials.*

4.1.2 Participate in upcoming One Health conferences to better assess the current best practices in One Health public education and begin to develop a more formal network of specialists.

- Action: *Identified One Health conferences that can serve as resources for data collection and members began to reach out to contacts at key agencies and organizations (CDC, One Health Commission, American Association of Extension Veterinarians, etc.) to learn about existing public education materials and resources.*
- Next Steps: *Anna Kimtis identified the coordinator of the STEM committee at the PHEAL lab as a potential source of expertise on K-12 education relevant to the committee's work. The committee will make contact to extend an invitation to attend a future meeting.*

Research and Innovation: The following report was prepared by Ms. Christine Schell, Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee:

1) *The Research and Innovation Committee sent a request to the Chief Research Officers at NJ colleges and universities asking them to identify any One Health-related research already on-going to help the Committee better understand gaps in critical One Health research. They were also asked about any impacts to existing on-going research due to funding changes at the Federal level. The request was sent to Rutgers, Rowan, NJIT, Stevens, Montclair State, Kean, Princeton, Seton*

Hall, and TCNJ in late May with a deadline of –September 1st. The Committee also provided a template script developed by Rutgers to help the other colleges and universities query their research databases for the relevant information. To date, the Committee has received responses from Rutgers, Rowan, Princeton and TCNJ. For context, the Rutgers query identified 166 One Health-related on-going grants.

2) The Committee also plans to work with the NJ life sciences industry to collect similar One Health-related research data.

3) The Committee explored ResearchwithNJ.com, a free research asset database. Participating academic and health institutions are Hackensack Meridian Health, Kean, Montclair State, NJIT, Princeton, Rowan, Rutgers and Stevens. Once we have responses to our request from the NJ academic institutions, the Committee can use this resource to cross reference ongoing research in New Jersey.

4) The Committee also discovered that the NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) was involved in the expansion of ResearchwithNJ.com and is tied to the NJ Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT). Since the Committee members were unfamiliar with this Commission, the Committee thought the Task Force might want to touch base with the Commission, who seem to have some overlap with topics of interest to the One Health Task Force. Also, since the Commission provide grants in various areas, they could provide insight into how they established and fund their grant programs. This would support the Committee's goal to identify possible funding mechanisms to facilitate needed research. The Commission could be invited to speak at the next Task Force meeting if the members agree.

5) The Committee hasn't made progress on its goal to improve data accessibility across sectors and disciplines. This would require the Committee to first determine the barriers to data sharing/access, both technological and legal/administrative.

Strategic Planning Committee: The following report was prepared by Dr. Darby McDermott, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee:

- To align with Goal 1, Objective 1 of the strategic plan (identify gaps, strengths, and priority issues in One Health coordination among NJ's human, animal, plant and ecosystem health professionals) and to ultimately be able to write the first annual report due in Feb. 2026, the strategic planning committee has been meeting*

regularly to coordinate a One Health Needs Assessment following the OH-SMART framework.

- *OH-SMART Stands for One Health Systems Mapping and Analysis Resource Toolkit and is a framework that had been developed and used across many countries to work across organizations and disciplines to address/prepare, or responde to complex one health challenges*
- *NJDA received grant money to help coordinate this assessment, and did a public bid process for assistance with the coordination- it was posted publicly for 2 weeks and received a single bid- University Health Partners affiliated with University of Hawaii*
- *Because of this, we are able to work with Dr. Katey Pelican who is at University of Hawaii and who had helped create this OH-SMART framework. The strategic planning committee has been meeting with her regularly for the planning and implementation of this needs assessment.*
- *On September 4th, we had an initial online meeting with a group of around 15 participants- these initial participants represented various people from local, state, and federal levels that are involved in One Health, and the purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss one health priority focus areas in NJ and conduct stakeholder mapping to identify individuals and organizations for further engagement.*
 - *Priority focus areas were identified as the following, and include areas included as priorities in the legislation:*
 - *Zoonotic Disease*
 - *Vector-borne disease*
 - *Antibiotic resistance*
 - *Climate impacts on health*
 - *Environmental contaminants*
 - *Emergency preparedness*
 - *There were also some cross-cutting challenges and themes that were raised, such as lack of incentives, communication and collaboration best practices*
 - *Participants were also asked about key stakeholders for one health at community/local, county, state, and national levels.*
- *Next steps are reviewing and identifying stakeholders to interview, as well as inviting stakeholders to an in-person workshop planned for December 3rd*
- *On the report side of things-*
 - *Strategic planning committee is also the report writing committee- a reminder to the other committees to think about the report and what you*

would want to go into the report on work committees have done within the first year, goals for the future, needs, etc.

New Business

One Health Day Proclamation: One Health Day is nationally and internationally recognized on November 3, therefore, a proclamation was drafted to ask the governor to recognize it on November 3, 2025 in New Jersey.

Joint agency communications resolution: Dr. Patil opened the floor to discuss a potential resolution from the Task Force that would encourage NJ state agencies (NJDA, NJDEP, NJDOH) that are communicating about One Health related topics & doing One Health coordination (e.g., joint press releases) to acknowledge it as an example of One Health in action. The following major points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- Dr. Zwick pointed out that the Task Force should author a document describing its communications strategy, including which groups we want to communicate with and why. Other questions the document should address are 1) Why should a citizen of New Jersey care that there's a One Health Task Force? and 2) What are the top 3 messages that we want communicated?
 - This document will be developed by the Education, Training & Workforce Development Committee.
- Dr. Edson, Ms. Schell, and Dr. Silenzio felt that highlighting when issues fall under One Health in existing social media posts could be low hanging fruit. Dr. Silenzio mentioned that he follows all 3 agencies on social media and they are already sharing One Health related content, but not in a coordinated way.
- Ms. Schell suggested that a good first step might be to educate each agency's communications departments about what types of issues use One Health coordination, and when it might be appropriate to tag One Health in a post.
- Dr. McDermott cautioned that messaging about specific detections and important public health warnings might be diluted by tacking on One Health, whereas it may be more appropriate to mention One Health in messaging about awareness dates, and Dr. Edson agreed with this distinction.
- Dr. Patil concluded that the Strategic Planning committee will revise the proposed resolution prior to the next meeting to consider these points.

Masters of One Health Support Letter: The Rowan Shreiber School of Veterinary Medicine approached the Task Force seeking a support letter for its application to the NJ Department of Education for a Masters in One Health program. The state's approval process requires letters of support from potential employers to show that the degree would benefit graduates in receiving employment in the state. Dr. Bachmann motioned to approve the writing of a support letter, seconded by Dr. Zwick. The Task Force supported the motion for the letter, with one abstention (Dr. Edson). Dr. Patil also suggested that the Task Force members request letters of support from their respective employers.

PFAS Issues: The Department of Agriculture and related agencies have been working to resolve emerging concerns of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the state's food chain, with sampling and testing efforts underway. Dr. Patil mentioned a lack of data available for determining threshold levels in crops and livestock and requested assistance from the members of the Task Force on their expertise in addressing PFAS-related issues.

- Ms. Schell earlier referenced a PFAS summit organized by NJDEP and NJIT occurring on October 9-10, 2025.
- Dr. Fahrenfeld announced an upcoming One Water Symposium in January 2026 with expected focus areas include drinking water treatment, wastewater treatment, stormwater, and surface waters. PFAS will likely be a topic discussed at this meeting.
- Dr. Patil mentioned the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) has created guidance documents to help address this universal challenge.
- Dr. Fahrenfeld mentions Dr. Arjun Venkatesan of NJIT, who works on research in emerging contaminants and has received funding related to this research previously. She also mentions Dr. Peter Jaffe of Princeton who works on the transportation and transformation of contaminants, with efforts in the degradation of PFAS, as well as Dr. Donna Fennell of Rutgers University, who works on bioremediation.
- There are efforts at Rowan University by Dr. Thivanka Ariyaratna as well focusing on PFAS fate in freshwater and marine environments.
- Dr. Zwick mentions Dr. Atam Dhawan, Senior Vice Provost for Research at NJIT, and mentions that there is a PFAS conference that occurs in April at NJIT.

Executive Session: Dr. Patil explained that at any point the Task Force can decide to enter an Executive Session that is not open to the public. NJDA Legal Specialist Chris LaRegina

would be called on to announce the commencement of executive session and then the Task Force can talk about matters privately. [Editor's Note: The Task Force only enters executive session to discuss subject matter falling under the exemptions defined at N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b), such as attorney-client privilege].

Task Force Member Updates

Dr. Patil announced the addition of a new agenda item going forward where Task Force members are given the floor to provide brief updates or raise issues to the attention of the Task Force.

- Dr. Fahrenfeld: Recruiting participants for a study on bioaerosols, soil, water, at farms and wastewater treatment plants and those who work there. Will study microbiomes and antimicrobial resistance.
- Dr. Zwick: Rutgers researchers had a remarkable year in research funding. Almost a billion dollars in research funding this year, up 23 million dollars over last year. Just launched our Research & Innovation Annual Impact Report on the Office of Research website and social media.
- Dr. Edson: This is week 4 of the new Schreiber School of Veterinary Medicine opening and things are going well. There is a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 3 and the teaching hospital opens to the public October 6.
- Ms. Schell: Jumping back to One Health Day, entities can pass a resolution in support of proclamations. We may want to consider passing a resolution about One Health Day to support the Governor's proclamation.
- Dr. Bachmann: January 23 is Maternal Health Awareness Day, we will have a meeting in New Brunswick.
- Dr. McDermott: World Rabies Day on September 28.
- Dr. Silenzio: No updates to report.
- Dr. Taylor: Dr. Fowler and Dr. Taylor attended the North American One Health University Network meeting on September 4-5, 2025. They have 3 working groups on Education, Research, and Outreach. During the meeting they announced that they are looking for panelists or individuals who would like to present research or teaching information around One Health as a monthly online symposium. This could be an opportunity for Task Force members to give updates from NJ.

Public Comment

- Dr. Dina Fonseca, Rutgers University: Expressed support for One Health affiliated degree programs. In the field of Entomology, having that perspective associated with their degree would increase the likelihood of our graduates obtaining jobs. Indicates the institution they are getting their degree from has a holistic, integrated approach to teaching.
- Drew C: Expressed concern about lab origin of viruses (vs. natural origin). Would like it to be included in the One Health discussion.
 - Dr. Zwick and Dr. Bachmann emphasized that lab research in the US is highly regulated and there are many checkpoints.
 - The commenter pointed out that research done outside of the US where it is not as highly regulated is still a problem, and there could be a biological attack from another country.
 - Dr. Silenzio stressed that biosafety and security issues are a big part of One Health as a broader discipline, even if they have not been discussed here at this time.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NJ One Health Task Force will be held on Friday, November 21, 2025, beginning at 10:00 AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and on Microsoft Teams.

Adjournment

On the motion of Dr. Bachmann, seconded by Ms. Schell, the NJ One Health Task Force voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:44 AM.