



New Jersey One Health Task Force Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 21, 2025

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

Swearing-In of Members

The following members of the NJ One Health Task Force (OHTF) were sworn in by New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Legal Specialist Chris LaRegina at 11:11 AM: Dr. Amar Patil, Dr. Darby McDermott, Christine Schell, Dr. Gloria Bachmann, Dr. Heather Fowler, Dr. Vincent Silenzio, Dr. Alison Stout, Dr. Michael Zwick, and Dr. Michael Taylor.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Andrea Egizi at 11:12 AM.

Notice of Public Meeting

Public meeting notice was given on February 14, 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

All appointed members were present.

Introductory Remarks and Greetings

Secretary of Agriculture Edward D. Wengryn – Secretary Wengryn spoke about the importance of One Health as evidenced by the current outbreak of avian influenza, an illness that started in wild birds and moved into domestic poultry, dairy cows, and farm workers. He welcomed NJDA's state partners, Commissioner of Health Dr. Kaitlan Baston and Deputy Commissioner of Environmental

Protection Jane Rosenblatt, expressed the importance of the Task Force's work, and thanked the members for serving.

Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Protection Jane Rosenblatt – Deputy Commissioner Rosenblatt, on behalf of herself and Commissioner LaTourette, expressed support for the OHTF as a formal mechanism for interagency collaboration among the Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Protection, and Health. Deputy Commissioner Rosenblatt emphasized that Task Force members should be proud of the work they are doing on behalf of NJ people, environment, and agricultural interests.

Commissioner of Health Kaitlan Baston – Commissioner Baston added to Secretary Wengryn's point about avian influenza that even though it is not currently causing significant mortality in humans, continued collaboration is important. The One Health Task Force will support the core work of protecting animals, the environment, our livelihoods, and food as medicine, all of which impact humans in different ways.

New Business

Officer Selection: Per the legislation, the One Health Task Force shall select a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The Secretary need not be a member of the Task Force. Dr. Amar Patil motioned to open nominations and Christine Schell seconded. Dr. Vince Silenzio nominated Dr. Amar Patil as Chairperson, Dr. Gloria Bachmann as Vice-Chairperson, and Dr. Andrea Egizi as Secretary. The nomination was seconded by Dr. Darby McDermott. The NJ One Health Task Force voted to elect Dr. Amar Patil as Chairperson, Dr. Gloria Bachmann as Vice-Chairperson, and Dr. Andrea Egizi as Secretary.

Dr. Amar Patil took over as Chairperson of the meeting and expressed that it is a great honor and responsibility to chair this inaugural meeting. He looks forward to the Task Force addressing public health, environmental, and animal health issues in a team-oriented approach. Dr. Bachmann as Vice-Chairperson reiterated that the OHTF is an important team that will work together, and that she is honored to be on the Task Force.

Future meeting dates: Dr. Patil introduced a slate of potential 2025 meeting dates as well as the next organizational meeting in February 2026. Motion to accept those dates was given by Dr. Alison Stout and seconded by Dr. Vince Silenzio. The NJ One Health Task Force voted to accept the following meeting dates:

- Friday, May 23, 2025 at 10:00AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and Microsoft Teams
- Friday, September 26, 2025 at 10:00AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and Microsoft Teams
- Friday, November 21, 2025 at 10:00AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and Microsoft Teams
- Friday, February 27, 2026 at 10:00AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and Microsoft Teams

Adoption of by-laws: Bylaws drafted by NJDA staff were introduced by Dr. Patil. Motion to accept the bylaws was given by Dr. Mike Zwick and seconded by Dr. Vince Silenzio. The NJ One Health Task Force voted to adopt the bylaws appended to these minutes.

Defining Goals and Responsibilities: Dr. Patil opened the floor to discuss the Goals and Responsibilities assigned to the OHTF in the statute. Dr. Fowler pointed out that the legislation focuses heavily on One Health and infectious disease, but there are many other aspects of One Health (For example, food as medicine, and farm worker safety) and the Task Force should keep a broader definition of One Health in mind. Dr. Patil agreed and added that climate issues should be included as well.

Dr. Bachmann emphasized NJ's leadership in creating the first legislated One Health Task Force in the nation and expressed the importance of presenting the Task Force's work at national and international meetings so other states can look to NJ as a template.

Task Force members discussed which committees would be most beneficial to establish at the outset and agreed on three:

The Strategic Planning Committee will develop a plan of action for the Task Force, including how to prioritize issues, and take the lead in drafting the report due in February 2026.

The Research & Innovation Committee will pursue grants to fund One Health activities, examine how to take advantage of existing tools and technology such as AI, and recommend ways to improve data sharing across agencies.

The Education, Training & Workforce Development Committee will explore partnerships with colleges and universities for One Health curriculum and internships, ways to introduce One Health concepts in continuing education, and creation of educational materials to raise awareness about One Health, including among grade school students.

Dr. Silenzio motioned to establish the three committees. The motion was seconded by Christine Schell and passed unanimously. Committee membership will be determined offline.

Public Comment

David DeFrange, State Board of Agriculture – Mr. DeFrange welcomed the Task Force members into their new and important role. He touched on some challenges the agricultural community is concerned about including urban agriculture, animal diseases, and plant issues, and added that the OHTF partnership will be a huge asset for those in agriculture going forward.

Amy Papi, Co-Chair of NJ One Health Steering Committee and Chair of Advocacy & Community Outreach for Women's Health Institute – Ms. Papi read a quote from Assembly members Stanley, Pinkin, Conaway, and Houghtaling from an op-ed about the bill establishing the New Jersey One Health Task Force. Ms. Papi was involved in the initial start of the bill creating the Task Force and is proud and excited that the One Health Task Force is starting its important work. She thanked the Task Force members for serving.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NJ One Health Task Force will be held Friday, May 23, 2025, beginning at 10:00 AM at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton and on Microsoft Teams.

Adjournment

On the motion of Dr. Zwick, seconded by Dr. Silenzio, the NJ One Health Task Force voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:25 PM.