



Lake County Health Department

Chandana Vavilala, M.D.
Health Officer

2900 West 93rd Avenue
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

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Meeting of the Lake County Board of Health

Date: September 2, 2026

Time: 7:30am

Location: Lake County Government Center Auditorium Room B103 or B-109

Call to Order - Meeting called to order by Dr. Nchekwube.

Roll Call

Members Present:

Cynthia Hoess, Chiedu Nchekwube, Deborah McCullough, Philip Golden, Marla Hoyer-Lareau, Dorian Patel, Dean Button, Michael Foreit

Members Absent:

Leona Chandler -Felton

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes 6/2/26

Phillip Goldetn motion to approve, Dorian Patel 2nd - Motion Passes

Approval of Health Department Monthly Activities

Dean Button motion to approve, Deborah McCullough 2nd - Motion Passes

Opening Remarks

Staff Updates

Dr. Vavilala presented on department updates. The report covered vector control and disease surveillance, EPIC integration in the nursing division and support for the community through the Health & Safety Fair and new Food Bank locker. She also highlighted the new program THRIVE 5-2-1-0 that encourages residents to live healthier lives. Dr. Vavilala discussed the new public health coordinator position and upcoming community events.

Sheila Paul shared the Health Department's storm response by connecting residents to resources and support while monitoring conditions through 211.

Lastly, Dr. Vavilala discussed that State Health Commissioner Dr. Lindsay Weaver will be arriving at the Lake County Health Department where they will showcase their progress, successes and impact of Health First Indiana.

Together
**FOR A HEALTHIER
LAKE COUNTY**



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Old Business

a. Board of Health Per Diem

Discussion focused on board member per diem and meeting frequency. The notes reference a survey by Indiana Association of City and County Health Officials (INSACCO) comparing meeting frequency and payment in other counties. Lake County pays \$150 per meeting for 4 meetings/year.

Dr. Hoess requested meetings every other month, for a total of six meetings per year.

Dr. Nchekwube asked if anything is being missed by meeting four times per year. He asked what would be achieved by meeting more frequently. Discussion ensued.

Philip Golden made a motion to keep the meeting schedule the same, and Dr. Foreit 2nd. The decision recorded in the notes was to keep quarterly meetings and the per diem the same, with one or two additional meetings per year if needed. Vote recorded: Phillip Golden, Dean Button, Dorian Patel, Dr. Nchekwube, and Marla Hoyer-Lareau in favor and Cynthia Hoess and Deborah McCullough opposed.

New Business

a. SAFE Coalition HFI Contract Revision

There was a typo in the previous contract's KPI value goal. At the next meeting, an addendum will be added on to the contract.

b. Body Art Ordinance

The ordinance addresses who may operate, public health requirements, and enforcement. It includes annual and temporary permits. This is required as an HFI core service. Inspections will be conducted annually, with additional inspections as needed for follow up and complaints. Questions were asked about proper needle disposal, which will be required. There has been no record of an increase in infections, the ordinance as a proactive measure.

Dean Button made a motion to approve, and Dr. Foreit 2nd.

Comments from the Board

Nchekwube thanked the Health Department for its work.

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Comment from the Floor

Jeff Rosignol, Chairman of the Highland Republican Party, stated that board members should receive \$2,000–\$3,000 per year for their professional work.

Kathy Whitley asked whether contracts are provided before meetings. The board replied that HFI contracts are provided in advance for review and are available to the public on the Lake County Health Department website for up to 30 days.

Barb Kotelis requested the board uses microphones during the meeting and asked about a health impact study concerning a data center in Hobart. She requested contact information and referenced a study conducted in Tucson, Arizona, asking that Lake County conduct a similar study.

A resident agreed with Mr. Rosignol about board per diem and stated that the Health Department should conduct an impact study.

Attorney Sangvi stated that the Health Department is not responsible for data center zoning and cannot insert itself into the process because of concerns about delays and exceeding its authority. She stated that the Health Department takes the concerns seriously, but its authority is defined by law, and that Environmental Management has authority over this issue.

Adjournment: Board member Button motion to adjourn, all in favor.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2026 at 7:30am at Lake County Government Center Auditorium Room B-103 or B-109