

**Western U.P. Board of Health
Health Department Office
303 Baraga Avenue L'Anse, MI 49946
Monday, August 25, 2025**

Minutes

Opening

Chair Anderson opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. (EST). Present were G. Anderson, J. Cane, B. Dakota, W. Menge, R. Nousianen, and D. Rajala. Absent was R. Britz, J. Cayer, R. DeMarois, J. Keranen, and M. Yon. Also, in attendance were Cathryn Beer, Health Officer/Administrator; Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director; and Julie Heikkinen, Administrative/HR Assistant. There was no one present in attendance as audience.

Chair Anderson requested action on the agenda. This action followed:

Motion: Cane/second Rajala to approve the agenda with the addition of 12a. Closed Session to discuss succession planning for key staff. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Chair Anderson asked for public comment, no one spoke.

Minutes of the July 28, 2025 meeting were reviewed. This action followed:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Menge to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2025 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Closed Session Minutes of the July 28, 2025 meeting were reviewed. This action followed:

Motion: Dakota/second Rajala to approve the closed session minutes of the July 28, 2025 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed expenditures for the period: 07/18/2025 to 08/14/2025, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Dakota to approve the general expenditures for the period 07/18/2025 to 08/14/2025, voucher # 22 and voucher # 23 in the amount of \$82,180.01. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

Reports:

Kate Beer, Health Officer:

Personnel/Programs

Annette Hunthrop, our EPC, has resigned to return to a position in the academic world. The position has been posted.

The SNAP-Ed program is in funding limbo. As stated at our previous meeting, we have given notice to the two Health Educators who work on that program. Their last day is this Friday, pending clarification from funders regarding the program's future.

Other:

The regional lab has earned full drinking water certification. They are taking on a few samples this week and will issue a press release and open it to the public in a week or so, once processes are established. They will be starting with bacteria, nitrate, and nitrite testing.

The process of transferring the federal grant from Houghton County to the WUPHD is ongoing. We have requested to adjust the transfer timeline to October 1st.

We were notified today by MDHHS that 2 birds submitted from the Western Upper Peninsula have tested positive for West Nile virus. The Houghton County bird was a Bald Eagle found sick on an unknown date, but received by MSU VDL on 8/12/25 from Chassell, 49916. The Ontonagon County bird was a Canada goose found sick on 6/11/25 in Bergland, 49910.

Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director:

In the past, some have been concerned about the extremely small amounts of aluminum salts in some childhood vaccines. These salts have been added to vaccines since the 1930s as an adjunct that boosts the immune response. Without the aluminum salts, the vaccines would not be as effective. In the first six months of age, an infant will typically receive 4.4 mg of aluminum from vaccines, 7 mg from breast milk, 38 mg from milk-based formula, and 117 from soy-based formula.

A recently published study from Denmark's Staten Serum Institute should dispel these concerns.

The researchers looked to see if the amount of aluminum injected through vaccination in children in the first two years of life increased the risk of developing of 50 separate health conditions in early childhood. There was no positive correlation found in *any* of the 50 conditions. When the conditions were grouped into autoimmune, atopic (allergies and asthma), and neurodevelopment (including autism) conditions, there was also no correlation. The same is true when exposure was stratified into three tiers.

The study examined 1.2 million Danish children. Denmark has the advantage of a national health system that contains extensive health data on all its citizens. All vaccination, health, diagnosis, mental health services, and prescription data are available. Other demographic data are also available so these factors can be controlled for.

What does this mean? Information of this quality can only be generated in countries that are able to collect comprehensive health and demographic data. It is not surprising that the most comprehensive population studies come from the Scandinavian countries. This study could have never been conducted in the United States.

Small differences (many of which are unimportant) can be found to be statistically significant in large studies. With 1.2 million children evaluated, this study had the power to identify small differences as statistically significant. It did not find *any* positive correlations. In fact, many of 50 conditions were found to have a decreased risk as aluminum exposure increased.

Because the study evaluated 50 conditions, by chance alone (one in 20) one would have expected two or three conditions to have a statistically significant positive correlation when no correlation existed. To avoid the possibility of erroneously identifying any positive correlations, the p-value threshold for statistical significance would be reduced by a

factor of 50 (Bonferroni's adjustment). Because none other 50 conditions crossed the p-value of 0.05, this adjustment was not needed.

Given the number of children included, the inclusion of nearly the entire population, and the robustness of the health information system, this is the definitive study on the topic.

Robert Kennedy, Jr. has called for the study to be retracted.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

The board reviewed the FY2025 Budget Amendment # 1 which led to this action:

Motion: Dakota/second Rajala to approve the FY2025 Budget Amendment # 1 as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board interviewed two candidates for the Health Officer position. This action followed:

Motion: Rajala/second Cane to make a conditional offer to Peter Baril, subject to successful negotiations. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board discussed scheduling an executive meeting to discuss negotiations. This action followed:

Motion: Cane/second Dakota to organize a meeting with the executive committee & Karen Dugdale, HR Representative to discuss negotiations. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Other

Chair Anderson set the next meeting for 6:00 pm (EST), September 22, 2025, in person at the health department office in Hancock and also available via Google Meet.

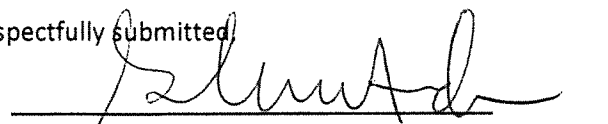
Chair Anderson then asked for public comment, no one spoke.

Adjourn

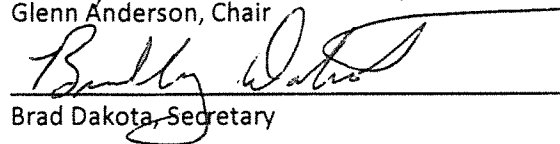
The final motion occurred at 7:28 p.m.

Motion: Menge/second Rajala to adjourn at 7:28 p.m. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Anderson", written over a horizontal line.

Glenn Anderson, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Dakota", written over a horizontal line.

Brad Dakota, Secretary

Prepared by Kate Beer
KB/jh