

ONONDAGA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET WRITTEN STATEMENT

SECTION 1:

2026 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accreditation

- Achieved national reaccreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) in November 2025, one of a limited number of accredited local health departments in New York State

Disease Control

- Immunization clinic administered over 6,200 vaccines to more than 2,500 children in 2025, sustaining the expanded volume as national primary care shortages widened access gaps
- Onondaga County leads New York State in childhood immunization rates: 89.2% of children received one MMR by age 2 (81.2% statewide) and 90.3% received three polio immunizations by age 2 (82.7% statewide)

Lead poisoning prevention

- Childhood lead poisoning prevalence continued to decline: 4.5% county-wide in 2025, down from 4.9% in 2024; Syracuse prevalence fell to 9.1%
- 452 children identified with elevated blood lead levels in 2025, down from 545 in 2024, out of 10,026 children tested
- Howard Weinberger House opened for temporary relocation and housing for families impacted by lead hazards and necessary remediations

Substance use response

- Unintended opioid-related deaths fell to 81 in 2025, down from 186 at the 2021 peak, a 56% reduction, and down from 90 in 2024
- Peer Engagement Services reached over 670 people, including partnerships with the library system, drug court, and faith-based organizations. Intensive case management services launched.

Healthy Families

- WIC exceeded caseload goals, serving an average of more than 9,800 participants monthly

Community Health

- Secured \$5 million over five years from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for Regional Market infrastructure, expanding capacity to aggregate, process, and distribute CNY farm products to local school food programs

Special Children's Services

- 98% of Early Intervention caregiver survey respondents reported satisfaction with the program and with service coordination staff
- Early Intervention waitlists declined steadily across all four therapy modalities: speech, PT, OT, and special instruction

Environmental Health

- Continued innovative surveillance and research for emerging mosquito-borne and tick-borne diseases through strategic partnerships with SUNY Upstate
- Maintained comprehensive inspection and monitoring programs

Tick-borne diseases

- Sustained countywide tick surveillance and public education through continued funding of local partners: the Upstate tick laboratory, which provides testing and surveillance capacity, and the CNY Tick and Lyme Alliance, which delivers community education on tick-borne disease prevention

Center for Forensic Sciences (Laboratory and Medical Examiner's Office)

- Maintained critical forensic services for Onondaga and neighboring counties

Academic Health Department

- Established a formal Academic Health Department agreement with SUNY Upstate Medical University, creating a structure for shared data, applied research, and workforce pipeline development

2026 BUDGET REVIEW

The Health Department is projected to finish 2026 within budget.

SECTION 2:

2027 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2027 budget includes targeted workforce and organizational adjustments designed to strengthen the Department's ability to carry out its core public health mission. The proposed personnel changes are accomplished at no additional local cost and result in an increase of 14 authorized positions, with no increase in the total number of funded positions.

The Department's 2027 budget includes a \$2.7 million increase in Special Children Services, which includes Preschool Special Education and Early Intervention. Both programs continue to experience growth in the number of children receiving services, while State-approved provider rate increases are also driving higher costs per case.

The Health Department's 2027 Executive Budget includes a \$184,438 increase in Professional Services. Of this increase, \$125,000 supports enhanced tick surveillance, testing, and education through the Upstate Tick Testing Laboratory and the CNY Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Alliance, while \$25,000 supports a new Academic Health Collaboration with SUNY Upstate. The remaining increase primarily reflects contractual cost increases. The Professional Services account continues to support the Department's core public health mission, including laboratory, pharmacy, and imaging services for the Bureau of Disease Control; Medical Examiner services such as transportation, pathology and other expert consultations, forensic investigators, and toxicology; client management and care coordination software; rabies treatment; interpreter services; mosquito control; specialized environmental testing; security and janitorial services; and department-wide answering and transcription services.

The Department's Travel and Training appropriation decreases slightly in 2027 and primarily supports required mileage and parking for employees performing duties in the community. The account also supports specialized training and professional development across the Department's diverse public health responsibilities, including forensic and crime laboratory services, medical examiner operations, lead and environmental health, nutrition, disease prevention, tobacco control, and other public health programs. These trainings help staff maintain required certifications and remain current on evolving regulations, technical standards, and best practices. The 2027 Budget also includes increased cost in maintenance & utilities due to inflation and contract escalators.

The majority of revenue changes in the Health Department are related to State and Federal reimbursements associated with program expenditures. In particular, changes in State, Federal, and Medicaid revenues in accounts 590013, 590021, 590023, 590025, and 590043 are primarily associated with Preschool Special Education and Early Intervention services. The Department also receives miscellaneous revenue from fees associated with the delivery of documents through Vital Statistics.

SECTION 3:

2027 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **Institutionalize the Academic Health Department partnership.** Operationalize the agreement with SUNY Upstate through collaborative projects, shared data infrastructure, and applied research that translates directly into local practice, establishing a model for replication across New York State and strengthening the public health workforce pipeline in a period of federal funding uncertainty.
- **Establish local authority over unregulated retail products that harm residents.** Pursue local laws and enforcement mechanisms to address the local sale of synthetic cannabinoids, commonly sold as spike, and flavored vapor products. Both are sold largely outside the reach of current state authority, particularly by unregistered dealers, and both reach young people and vulnerable residents directly.
- **Streamline and facilitate access to resources for mothers and children.** Established in 2024, the health department's Refugee and Immigrant Health Hub has proven that a public health nursing-led coordination hub can efficiently move families through fragmented systems and into care (824 individuals served in 2025). The Health Department intends to adapt that successful model to maternal and child health, building an integrated referral and linkage structure that connects pregnant and postpartum residents and their infants to diverse supports and services through a single point of navigation, rather than parallel program-by-program entry.
- **Sustain the decline in overdose mortality.** Maintain and adapt outreach, peer engagement, case management, and crisis co-response as driven by local needs and trends.
- **Serve as the community safety net for essential clinical services.** Continue meeting immunization, women's health, and STD service demand created by primary care shortages, while improving billing efficiency to support growing volume.