

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
May 28, 2026**

A regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors was held on May 28, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., The Genecov Room, Tyler, Texas with the following present:

Board Members: Laura Newsome, Chair
 Jessica Bowen, MSN, R.N. absent
 Kent Boozer, D.D.S., Sec.
 Jeremy Butler
 Cynthia Ball, D.O.
 Scott Williams
 Nancy Rangel absent
 Pam Cunningham
 Mike McCrady

 Chief Executive Officer: George T. Roberts, Jr.
Smith County Health Authority: Jose Serpa Alvarez, M.D.
 Chief Financial Officer: Lawanda Owens absent
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director: Dusty Gonzalez
Immunizations/TB Program Director: Sylvia Warren
Environmental Health Director: Ginger Points
Community Outreach Director: Terrence Ates
 Vital Statistics Director: Rosie Meza absent
 Human Resources Director: Dawn Strickland absent
Interim Laboratory Director: Amanda Catlin absent
 WIC Director: Tecora Smith absent
 Legal: Gary Landers
Recorder: Janie Jolly

Guests: Srishti Goel, MD
 Charlotte Coultas
 Liz Villalobos, MD
 Fariba Yazdanp, MD
 Jason Phung, MD
 Alex de Ravel

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:04 p.m.

INVOCATION- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the invocation was given by George Roberts.

VISION/MISSION

The Vision and Mission of the Northeast Texas Public Health District was recited by all in attendance.

HEALTH AUTHORITY REPORT by JOSE SERPA, MD

Dr. Serpa gave the Health Authority Report to the Board and reported on the following:

1. NET Health Disease Surveillance Report for April, 2026 the top 2 diseases with the greatest number of cases were: Hepatitis C with 23 cases reported; and Salmonella with 13 cases reported.
2. Texas Respiratory Illness Dashboard shows a decline in cases of RSV, Influenza, and Covid-19 for April and May. The hospitalization rates are reporting the same decline.
3. The International Outbreak in May 2026 of Hantaviru. To date, there are no cases of Hantavirus in the United States.
4. Ebola Disease Outbreak; the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda is experiencing an outbreak of Ebola Disease which is a viral hemorrhagic fever and is serious and often fatal. The CDC recommends avoiding nonessential travel to Ituri and other provinces of the Congo.
5. United States Outbreaks of Salmonella which is linked to backyard poultry. There have been 5 cases reported with 2 hospitalizations in 4 states; Texas, Oklahoma, Iowa, and Nebraska.
6. The Public Health Topic for this month is Tuberculosis (TB) in Smith County. TB is a bacterial infection and a leading cause of death worldwide. TB rates in Texas have been slightly increasing since 2021, following a sharp decline during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Board thanked Dr. Serpa for his report.

MINUTES

Motion made by Kent Boozer to approve the minutes of April 30, 2026, regular meeting; seconded by Mike McCrady; motion carried; approved as presented.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

April Financials will be presented at the June 2026 Board meeting

Motion by Cynthia Ball to approve tabling the April financials until the June 2026 board meeting; seconded by Jeremy Butler; motion carried; approved as presented.

DISTRICT ORDER #2024-2

Ginger Points, Director of Environmental Health reported to the Board that during the 2025 Legislative session, the Texas Legislature passed HB 2844, transferring the exclusive permitting authority of all Mobile Food Units to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to be effective July 1, 2026. As a result, NET Health has entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Contract to perform Mobile Food Inspection Services as a Performing Agency on behalf of DSHS. Additionally, NET Health must amend its existing District Order related to Mobile Food Unit trucks to match the new law. These changes include:

** Removing all previous language regarding NET Health issuing permits or collecting local permitting fees for Mobile Food Units, since now only the State of Texas will do that.*

**Removing all District Rules and replacing them with references to new state law and regulations along with the mandatory Statement of Work requirements in the new DSHS Interlocal Cooperation Contract.*

**Removing references to District Inspections and replacing them with explanation of how District will continue to perform the inspections, but as a Performing Agency for DSHS and that all inspections shall strictly adhere to DSHS standards and documented procedures, including safety items, how often required, (annually), Forms and checklists to be used, and with time limits for reports, complaint investigations, and emergency notifications.*

During the 2025 Legislative session, the Texas Legislature also passed HB 519, defining and deregulating Honey Production Operations and SB 541 expanding the Cottage Food Industry. These changes were effective September 1, 2025. To remain compliant, NET Health is amending definitions and exclusions to match the new law. These changes include:

- Amended the definition for Part I Section 1, B. 13 Cottage Food Operation
- Added the definition for Part I Section 1, B. 14) Cottage Food Vendor
- Added the exclusion for Honey Production Operation in Part I Section 1, B. 27) (b) (v)

Motion made by Jeremy Butler to approve District Order #2024-2, seconded by Scott Williams; motion carried; approved as presented.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board. He mentioned the following:

1. Terrence Ates, Scott Williams, and George Roberts attended a meeting organized by the Health Foundation of East Texas and how Tyler might take steps to become a Blue Zone certified community.
2. The annual Doc Ballard award will be presented at the June 24, 2026 board meeting.
3. Mr. Roberts reported that the funding for most of the NET Health grants have been renewed.
4. Dr. Jennifer Shuford, DSHS Commissioner, has stepped down and will become the CDC Deputy Director and Medical Director.
5. Mr. Roberts recapped the Employee luncheon with a slide presentation.
6. The March of Dimes held the annual March of Dimes Walk on May 16th with NET Health as a sponsor. There was a good turnout for this event.
7. Mr. Roberts recognized Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah and Dr. Liz Villalobos who will both be completing the Preventive Medicine Residency in June.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm.

THE NEXT NET HEALTH BOARD MEETING IS WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026.



Janie Jolly, Recorder



Kent Boozer, Secretary
NET Health Board of Directors