

Board of Health Meeting

June 25, 2026



Open Session Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Thursday, June 25, 2026, commencing at 1:00 p.m.

Present:

Ms. C. Agar	Board Member
Ms. B. Martin	Board Member (Chair)
Mr. J. Couckuyt	Board Member
Mr. J. Herbert	Board Member
Ms. K. Hobbs	Board Member
Mr. G. Jones	Board Member
Mr. D. Mayberry	Board Member
Mr. S. Molnar**	Board Member
Mr. J. Palmer	Board Member
Mr. L. Rowden	Board Member
Mr. E. Taylor	Board Member
Mr. D. Shinedling	Board Member (Vice Chair)
Mr. D. Warden	Board Member
Dr. N. Tran	Medical Officer of Health (ex officio)
Ms. C. St. John	Chief Executive Officer (ex officio)
Ms. W. Lee	Executive Assistant

Guests:

Ms. J. Austin	Public Health Promoter
Ms. J. Gordon	Administrative Assistant
Mr. P. Heywood	Program Director
Ms. S. MacIsaac	Program Director
Mr. D. McDonald	Director, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Ms. M. Nusink	Director, Finance
Ms. N. Rowe**	Manager, Communications
Ms. C. Richards	Manager, Foundational Standards
Ms. E. Robertson	Public Health Nurse
Mr. Y. Santos	Manager, IT
Mr. D. Smith	Program Director
Ms. M. Van Den Neucker	Program Manager, iHEAL
Ms. M. Van Wylie	Program Manager, CDIP
Ms. A. Vito	Public Health Promoter

Media:

Mr. R. Perry	Aylmer Express
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Note: ** indicates virtual participation

Regrets:

Mr. M. Peterson

Board Member

1.1 Call to order, recognition of quorum

The meeting was called to order by B. Martin at 1:05 p.m.

1.2 Approval of agenda**Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-1.2**

Moved by D. Shinedling

Seconded by K. Hobbs

That the agenda for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for Thursday, June 25, 2026, be approved.

Carried.

1.3 Reminder of conflicts of interest

Reminder to disclose any pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof when the item arises, including interests related to a previous meeting the member did not attend.

1.4 Recording of minutes

Reminder that meetings are recorded for minute-taking purposes, and open session portions are publicly available for viewing for 30 days after being posted on Southwestern Public Health's website.

2.0 Approval of minutes**Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-2.1**

Moved by G. Jones

Seconded by J. Palmer

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for May 28, 2026, be approved.

Carried.

3.0 Consent agenda items

No items.

4.0 Correspondence received requiring action

No items.

5.0 Agenda items for information, discussion, decision.

5.1 SWPH iHEAL Report

Emily Robertson and Mary Van Den Neucker presented the iHEAL program report and provided an overview of the program's implementation, outcomes, and ongoing research partnership with Western University examining the delivery of the program in a rural setting.

Board members commended the program and discussed participant recruitment, community awareness, and referral pathways. Staff advised that while a communications campaign was undertaken, recruitment was largely driven through one-on-one engagement with community partners. To avoid creating an unmanageable waitlist, promotion was moderated once program capacity had been reached.

Discussion included the program's reach within rural and Low-German-speaking communities, the role of trusted community partners in increasing referrals, and the importance of evidence-informed practice. Staff noted that the program has demonstrated strong uptake locally, with referrals from hospitals, primary care, community mental health organizations, and other partners. Preliminary observations suggest strong participant engagement and empowerment, with the final research report expected to provide additional findings later this year.

Board members asked questions regarding statistics cited in the report, trends in intimate partner violence, participant demographics, program capacity, and long-term sustainability. Staff explained that data referenced in the report was drawn from Statistics Canada, local violence against women organizations, and Western University researchers, and acknowledged the challenges associated with collecting comprehensive intimate partner violence data. Staff also noted that while the program primarily serves women, participants have included individuals with partners of various genders.

The Board discussed opportunities to sustain and expand the program. Staff advised that advocacy efforts are underway with regional public health partners and that additional funding opportunities, including private sector grants, are being explored. It was noted that current staffing limits the program to approximately 15–16 active participants at a time and that additional nursing resources would eliminate the existing waitlist. The Chair highlighted the importance of the program as a preventative initiative, noting its broader, long-term benefits for individuals, families, and the community, and expressed support for continued advocacy for sustainable funding. Staff also indicated that lessons learned from the project, including both quantitative and qualitative findings, will be incorporated into the final evaluation.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-5.1

Moved by J. Herbert
Seconded by D. Shinedling

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health receive the SWPH iHEAL Report for June 25, 2026.

Carried.

5.2 SWPH Planet Youth Report

Jessica Austin and Ashley Vito reviewed the report.

Board members commended the completion of the survey across local schools and noted the encouraging findings related to youth feeling safe and supported in their school environments. Discussion focused on substance use findings, including alcohol use, access to substances, and emerging trends. Staff advised that the survey collects information on a broad range of substances; however, results are only included in the report when response numbers meet reporting thresholds. While additional substance use data was collected, some categories did not meet the threshold for inclusion.

The Board discussed emerging concerns related to youth mental health, social media, cell phone use, and the impacts of online influences. Staff advised that research in these areas continues to evolve and that SWPH is monitoring developments, including guidance related to social media use and work occurring through community coalitions.

Discussion also focused on alcohol use among youth and broader policy considerations related to access and availability. Staff highlighted that alcohol was identified as the most commonly reported substance and noted the importance of supporting families in understanding the role of access, including the finding that some youth reported receiving alcohol from parents or caregivers. Board members discussed the need for continued education and prevention efforts, as well as broader conversations regarding alcohol policy.

Board members asked questions regarding the provincial and federal funding of the Planet Youth model, data sharing, response rates, and the role of parents and caregivers in youth substance prevention. Staff noted that the survey was distributed to all eligible students and that findings reflect consistent themes identified in other youth wellbeing research. Staff emphasized that the report demonstrates opportunities to build on existing strengths, including positive youth-parent relationships, while supporting families with strategies to promote youth wellbeing.

The Board recognized the value of the Planet Youth work and the insights gained through engaging directly with youth and communities.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-5.2

Moved by J. Palmer

Seconded by G. Jones

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health receive the Report on Planet Youth Oxford and Elgin-St. Thomas for June 25, 2026.

Carried.

D. Mayberry joined the meeting at 2:17pm

5.3 Medical Officer of Health's Report

Dr. N. Tran reviewed the report.

No questions were raised on the report.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-5.3

Moved by D. Shinedling

Seconded by J. Herbert

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Medical Officer of Health's Report for June 25, 2026.

Carried.

5.4 Chief Executive Officer's Report

C. St. John reviewed the report.

The Board discussed options related to the timing of the budget process and presentation. Members expressed support for aligning the process with the involvement of newly appointed Board members in the new year, with discussion taking into account the potential impact of municipal election results as well as the timing of Ministry funding announcements.

Discussion included clarification regarding specific budget line items. Staff explained that Lay Home Visiting services are provided by Parent Resource Workers (PRWs) who support new parents and families by providing education and assistance with positive parenting practices. Staff noted that the program has been established within the budget for several years.

Staff also clarified the Home-Based Health Care (HBHC) funding reference, advising that this relates to nurse practitioner services provided through an external arrangement with East Elgin Family Health Team and does not flow through the SWPH operating budget.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-5.2-3.2

Moved by D. Shinedling

Seconded by J. Palmer

That the Board of Health approve the audited financial statements for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program and the Pre and Post Natal Nurse Practitioner program for the period ending March 31, 2026.

Carried.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-5.4

Moved by S. Molnar
Seconded by J. Couckuyt

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Chief Executive Officer's report for June 25, 2026.

Carried.

6.0 New business

No items.

7.0 Closed session

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-C7

Moved by G. Jones
Seconded by J. Palmer

That the Board of Health move to closed session in order to consider the following, as outlined in the Ontario Municipal Act:

- (c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local Board.

Carried.

8.0 Rising and reporting of closed session

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-C8

Moved by J. Palmer
Seconded by D. Shinedling

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

Carried.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-C2.0

Moved by D. Warden
Seconded by L. Rowden

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Special Ad Hoc Building Committee Report for June 25, 2026.

Carried.

9.0 Future meetings and events

The next official Board of Health meeting will be:

- Thursday, September 24, 2026

- Orientation at 12:00 p.m. | Meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- Location: 1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON; virtual participation via MS Teams

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0625-10.0

Moved by J. Palmer

Seconded by J. Herbert

That the regular meeting adjourn to meet again on Thursday, September 24, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Carried.

Confirmed: _____

