



Wednesday September 30, 2026
New Hampshire
Health Officers Association

Puritan Conference Center, Manchester, NH
www.nhhealthofficers.org

2026 HEALTH OFFICER CONFERENCE

AGENDA

8:15 – 9:00 AM | Registration & Hot Buffet Breakfast with Vendors

9:00–9:10AM | Welcome–NH Health Officers

Wayne Whitford, *President, NH Health Officers Association*
Brian Lockard, *Vice President, NH Health Officers Association*

9:10 – 9:20 AM DHHS Health Officer Liaison Update

Sophia Johnson, NH DHHS

9:20 – 10:20 AM | HAN System & Other Current Topics

Dr Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist, NH DHHS

10:20 - 10:40 AM | Coffee with Vendors

10:40 – 12:00 PM | Navigating New Hampshire Food Protection: Licensing Requirements, Homesteading Laws, and Priority Violation Awareness

This presentation provides an overview of the key responsibilities within the NH Food Protection Section. It explains food licensing requirements, including which establishments must be licensed and statutory licensing exemptions. The session also reviews current homesteading operations along with recent legislative changes. Finally, it outlines priority and higher-risk food safety violations, helping health officers recognize the issues most likely to impact public health.

Erica Davis, Food Protection Section, Division of Public Health
April Phelps, HO, Fremont

12:00 - 1:00 PM | Lunch with Vendors

1:00 - 2:00 PM | Hoarding Disorder: Too Many Treasures

Hoarding Disorder is a mental health condition that significantly impacts the life of the individual who hoards, as well as those around them. We will discuss the clinical definition of the disorder and some of the many potential underlying causes, as well as tools to assess the severity of a situation, and compare Hoarding Disorder to Challenging Disorganization and squalor. While there is no magical cure, a better understanding of Hoarding Disorder can help avoid approaches that may exacerbate the situation. We will also consider Harm Reduction as an approach, and Motivational Interviewing strategies and language to consider when working with someone with people with Hoarding Disorder.

Lora Gerard, Aging Resource Center, Dartmouth Health Geriatric Center of Excellence

2:00 – 3:00 PM | Rodent Case Study

Marshall will be presenting on a hoarding/rat infestation case that he dealt with this year. This was an extremely large infestation in the basement presenting a dangerous health issue to the 2 occupants which involved several agencies and resources to mitigate.

Marshall Gale, Town of Antrim

3:00 PM | Raffles & Adjourn ~ **Thank You! Drive Safe**

Please Complete our Survey - Let us Know How we are Doing!

Speaker Bios:

[Lora Gerard](#), MPA, works at the Aging Resource Center at the Geriatric Center Center of Excellence at Dartmouth Health in Lebanon, NH. She offers several programs on decluttering, home safety, and Hoarding Disorder. She was trained in an evidence-based intervention for people with Hoarding Disorder and has now led the 16-week program over 10 times. She has also been a Project Manager for several grant funded programs to increase home safety and reduce the risk of injury from a fall.

[Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist, NH DHHS](#)

As the State Epidemiologist for the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Benjamin Chan's goal is to prevent and control disease, and promote the health of Granite state residents. As one of the first to get a call when there is a threat or widespread health concern, Chan has provided medical expertise and support in the state's response to emerging infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19, Ebola, and Zika, as well as to environmental health concerns regarding drinking water contamination with Perfluorinated Chemicals (PFCs). Quality improvement initiatives are also a key part of Chan's work, and he is often looking at how to collaborate more efficiently with local health agencies and providers to use population health data to inform and improve local healthcare delivery, especially for evolving concerns such as the opioid epidemic. One of the greatest challenges of his multi-faceted role in improving population health is addressing the social and behavioral determinants of health.

[Marshall Gale, Chief of Department, Antrim Fire Department](#)

Marshall was appointed by Antrim Selectboard as Health Officer in September 2011. He also serves as Fire Chief, NREMT Advanced EMT, State Forest Fire Warden and Emergency Management Director.