



Wood County
Health Department

2023

Annual Report



This annual report highlights some of the programs and services which meet the requirements to be a nationally accredited health department. It is not an all-inclusive list of the programs and services provided by the Wood County Health Department.

Accreditation is the measurement of performance against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused and evidence-based standards. The goal of national public health department accreditation is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of our work. Many positive changes have happened at the Wood County Health Department since becoming accredited in May 2013. One of the most significant changes we've seen is how the culture of quality improvement has become ingrained within our staff and throughout our department.

We continue to maintain accreditation status, demonstrating a commitment to transparency, accountability, and a culture of quality improvement.

Message From The Health Officer

Dear Wood County Board Members, Health and Human Services Committee Members, Colleagues, Partners and Residents:

I am pleased to present this 2023 annual report of the Wood County Health Department.

Throughout the past year, our department has remained steadfast in its commitment to addressing the evolving needs of our population. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, opioid addiction and overdose, a child care crisis, difficulty finding safe and affordable housing, and other public health concerns, our team has demonstrated resilience, innovation, and unwavering dedication to our mission: *Maximizing quality of life across the lifespan.*

In this report, we will highlight our key achievements, initiatives, and partnerships over the past year. As the tide of the pandemic subsided in late 2022, we completed a new strategic planning process. Throughout 2023, we have pursued our objectives with diligence, compassion, and a focus on evidence-based practices and quality improvement.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to our community partners who walk alongside us in our collaborative work. We are blessed to have driven and resilient communities and leaders. We have amazing groups of partners at the table with us looking at major issues impacting our communities and our residents. Together, we have made significant strides in promoting health and well-being, and we remain committed to continuing this important work for the betterment of all.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2023, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Wood County Board of Supervisors, Health and Human Services Committee, the healthcare community, and our valued community partners. This appreciation is also extended to our dedicated health department staff. I am incredibly proud of our team, their strong work ethic, and their ability to bounce back from extremely challenging experiences. We are blessed to serve this incredible community in a responsible and meaningful way and I am thankful for the opportunity to lead this great health department serving all of you.

Our team members are committed to improving the quality of life we enjoy in Wood County and we welcome your feedback on how we can better serve you. Visit our website to find out more about what we do: www.woodcountywi.gov/Departments/Health and send me an e-mail at sue.smith@woodcountywi.gov if you have any questions or suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you for your ongoing support, and we invite you to join us in our collective efforts to build healthier, more resilient communities for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Sue Smith, RN, MSN, CPM
Director/Health Officer



Contents

What Guides Our Work	1
Our Programs & Services	2
Family Health & Injury Prevention	3
Communicable Disease	7
Women, Infants, & Children	9
Healthy Smiles for Wood County	10
Environmental Health	11
Health Promotion & Community Health	13
Community Health Workers	18
Health Equity & Community Engagement	19
Our Team	22
Financial Summary	25
Performance Management	26
Communication	27

What Guides Our Work

Mission

Maximizing quality of life across the lifespan

Vision

Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to thrive, be healthy, and live their best life.

Core Values

- Integrity
- Service
- Diversity
- Professionalism
- Compassion
- Initiative

Strategic Plan

The Wood County Health Department (WCHD) 2023-2025 Strategic Plan is purposefully internally-focused. As part of our recovery from the pandemic response, we recognized the need to assure a strong emphasis within, and strengthen our own foundation in order to allow us the capacity to accomplish our mission. This strategic plan was developed through engagement of our own team and governing entity. Our Department is committed to regaining a passionate, resilient, and energized workforce as we reset and prioritize reducing burnout and maximizing impact. We seek to build trust and understanding of how our department adds value in our communities, and we look forward to creating and maintaining a culture that exemplifies health equity.

Public Health Core Competencies

The Core Competencies are desirable skills for the broad practice of public health. They reflect the characteristics public health employees need to possess in their work to protect and promote health. Employees work with their supervisor annually to assess their core competencies and develop goals to improve competency scores. In 2023, WCHD employees participated in 108 continuing education events that built on their competencies.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency

WCHD receives federal financial assistance and is required to comply with all State and Federal Civil Rights laws. WCHD provides annual training to employees, assists Wood County in complying with submission requirements of the Civil Rights Letter of Assurance and Civil Rights Compliance Plan, and works with Wood County Human Resources to ensure equal opportunity in employment and service delivery to all individuals.

Health and Human Services Committee

The [Health and Human Services Committee](#) is comprised of nine members. Five County Board supervisors, one medical doctor, one nurse, and two citizen members. They provide oversight to WCHD, Wood County Human Services, and Wood County Veterans Service. The Committee looks at public health needs and advocates for reasonable and necessary public health services to be provided.



Five of the nine Health and Human Services Committee Members



Our Programs & Services

We work together to provide the following vital public health services...

Family Health & Injury Prevention

This team serves pregnant individuals, new parents and caregivers, and infants, in addition to providing outreach to the Plain Population and other underrepresented populations. Services include offering immunization clinics, prenatal care coordination, nutrition counseling, injury prevention initiatives, referral and follow-up for children with healthcare needs, lactation support, and childhood lead poisoning prevention.

Communicable Disease

This team focuses on disease investigation and follow-up, health education, prevention initiatives, and collaboration with agencies in implementing the emergency preparedness plan.

Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)

WIC is a federally funded program, which provides eligible participants with nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods, and healthcare referrals. Persons served include pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five. WIC also provides farmers' market nutrition program vouchers to WIC participants.

Healthy Smiles Wood County

This team focuses on the promotion of good oral health through dental screenings, sealants, fluoride varnish treatments, education, and outreach.

Environmental Health

Registered Sanitarians enforce codes, license and inspect restaurants, pools, hotels/motels, mobile home parks, campgrounds, body art establishments, and retail food stores. Environmental Health also enforces ordinances regarding public health hazards, investigates air quality issues, ensures safe beach and drinking water quality, and provides radon education and rabies control. Services are also provided to Adams and Juneau Counties through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Health Promotion & Community Health

This team works with the community to address health priorities identified through the Wood County Community Health Improvement Plan. Current health priorities are: access to healthy food, family health, Health in All Policies, housing, incarceration, leadership development, mental health, substance use, youth health, and transportation and recreation.

Community Health Workers

This team provides interpretation and translation services, culturally appropriate health education, information and outreach, cultural mediation between communities and health and human services system, home visits, linkage to services, and advocacy for underserved individuals or communities.



Family Health & Injury Prevention

Maternal Child Health Services & Parents as Teachers

Public health nurses provide prenatal and maternal-child health (MCH) outreach, phone support, and home visiting services to families who need health education, resources, lactation services, or support before and after having a baby. Goals include increasing mental health screening and service access, increasing access to appropriate preventative medical services, increasing adequate and safe housing and food stability, increasing breastfeeding rates, and decreasing prenatal alcohol, drug, and tobacco exposure.

New in 2023, WCHD became an affiliate of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) evidence-based home visiting program and began accepting referrals at the end of March. Funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, this model serves pregnant people and families with young children through structured personal visits, developmental screening and surveillance, group connections, and networking. Certified parent educators provide personal visits, educational and social connection opportunities, developmental screening, and individualized referrals to needed resources. The goals of the program include improving parent knowledge and parenting practices, increasing school readiness, providing early detection of developmental delays and health issues, preventing child abuse and neglect, and promoting family health and well-being.



The Maternal Child Health Team pictured from left to right: Pat, Danielle, Erica, Mel, and Lori



Lori, Yesenia, Olga, Danielle, Erica, Penny, Mel and Pat are pictured with PAT participants at an event.

Maternal Child Health Services & Parents as Teachers Continued...

Other maternal child health activities focused on improving social connections and promoting awareness, education, and programming for developmental screening. Community health workers promoted social connections through involvement in Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation/Loneliness and a focus on ensuring accessible community resources for those receiving our services.

Developmental screening efforts included training all public health nurses to administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire developmental screening tool. This tool has been integrated into the Parents as Teachers program.

- Nurses conducted 32 developmental screenings in 2023, resulting in 2 referrals for early intervention services.

In 2023, the Family Health & Injury Prevention Home Visitors, which consists of:



1 Community Health Worker

4 Public Health Nurses

Accomplished the following:



202
prenatal,
maternal child
health, and PAT
referrals



25
families were
enrolled in PAT
and had a
minimum of 2
home visits per
month



Over 35%
of home visits
used Spanish
interpretation
Services



10
PAT group
connections
were held with
50% of families
attending at
least one

Safe Kids Wood & Clark Counties

Safe Kids Wood & Clark Counties is part of a global network of organizations whose purpose is to prevent accidental childhood injury, a leading killer of children 17 and under. The coalition is led by Marshfield Medical Center and has representatives from 20 agencies.

2023 Accomplishments:

- 110 bike helmets were sold to kids at a reduced cost
- Provided 20 bike helmets and helmet safety to 40 kids at the Wisconsin Rapids Rodeo
- Provided 23 bike helmets and bike safety at National Night out in Wisconsin Rapids
- 12 car seat check events were offered, 64 car seats were checked
- 53 car seats were provided to families in need
- Cribs for Kids provided safe sleep education and 19 Pack N Plays to families
- 3 "Kids Don't Float" life jacket loaner boards remained placed throughout the County
- Police officers reached 100 young bicyclists in Marshfield with the Caught Being Safe Program; children are rewarded for using safe behaviors with coupons for various treats
- Provided bike safety, fire prevention, home & gun safety at community events
- Participated in the Trunk/Junk Campaign at Pittsville High School by providing education on preparing your vehicle for winter

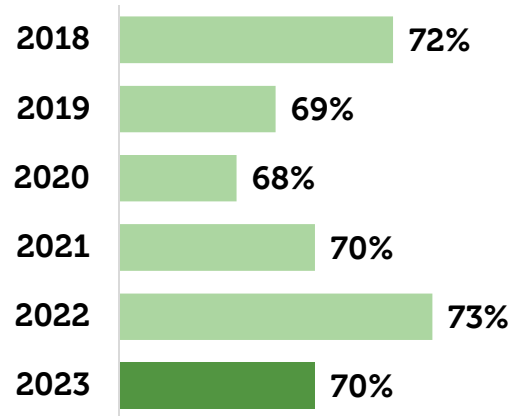


Immunizations

Immunizations, also called vaccinations, can prevent many life-threatening diseases, and help people of all ages live longer, healthier lives. WCHD offers a comprehensive childhood immunization program. For those meeting eligibility requirements, infants through age 18 and adults can get recommended vaccines by appointment.

- 70% of children age 0-2 years, who lived in Wood County during 2023, met the criteria of being fully immunized.
- WCHD helps licensed child care centers and schools in Wood County with completing their annual Department of Health Services Immunization Reports.
- Team members send text reminders to people subscribed when immunizations are due. Routine reminders are also sent to parents/caregivers of children who are overdue for immunizations.
- Articles on the topic of immunizations and vaccine-preventable illnesses are shared in various publications and via social media throughout the year.

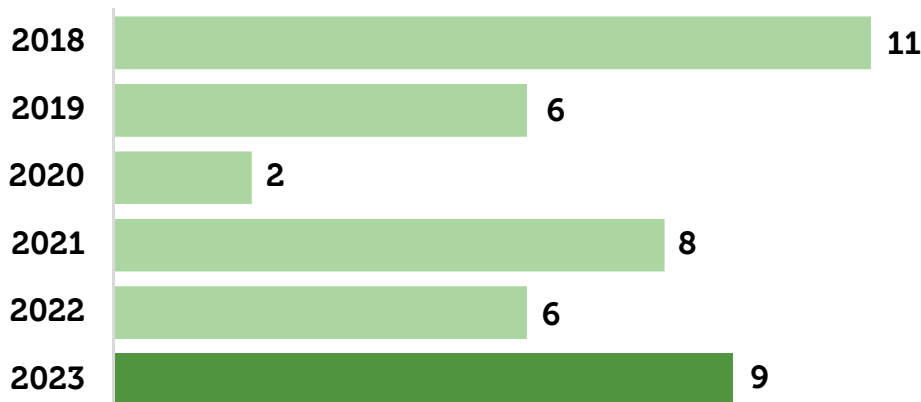
% of children who are fully vaccinated by their 2nd birthday



Child Death Review Team

The Wood County Child Death Review team is a multidisciplinary team of professionals that reviews all intentional and unintentional deaths occurring in Wood County of people age 25 years and younger. The deaths are reviewed from a prevention standpoint and the team makes recommendations for various policy changes, environmental changes, and educational initiatives to prevent future similar deaths. In 2023, nine cases were reviewed.

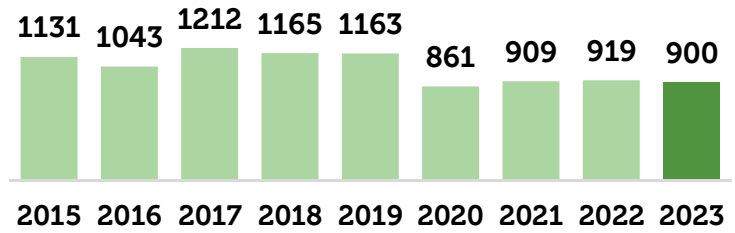
Nine child death cases were reviewed in 2023



Childhood Lead Testing

There is no safe level of lead in the human body. Even very low levels of lead exposure can cause permanent brain damage and negatively affect health throughout a child's life, especially lead exposures occurring between 6 months and 6 years of age.

Total # of lead tests done on Wood County children per year

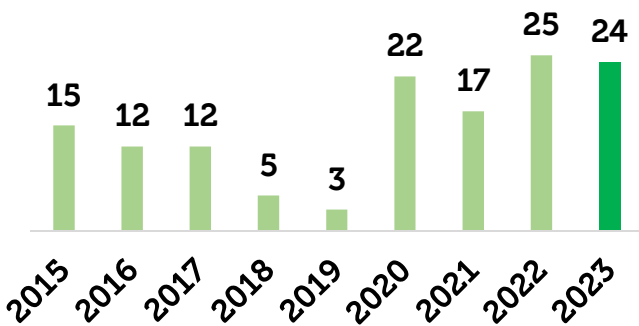


WCHD is proactive in lead poisoning prevention. Many lead hazards still exist in homes and the environment, including paint, drinking water, food stored in lead containers or wrappers, workplace exposure, hobbies, vinyl mini-blinds, and cosmetics. Lead paint hazards are commonly present during the renovation of pre-1978 housing. Children with blood lead levels of 3.5 µg/dL or higher are offered nursing case management services and environmental health intervention. Twenty children and their families were offered case management services for elevated blood lead levels in 2023. Families received lead prevention and reduction education from public health nursing staff and environmental health staff as well as recommendations for future testing. Families were offered a home visit assessment by environmental health staff to aid in determining possible sources of lead exposure.

tests with lead level results 3.5-4.99 µg/dL per year*



tests with lead level results 5 - 19.99 µg/dL per year



*In 2021, CDC updated the blood lead reference value from 5.0 µg/dL to 3.5 µg/dL.



Environmental Health Specialists, Mariah and Tim, provide cleaning supplies to a family enrolled in the Lead Safe Homes Program.

Communicable Disease

Communicable Disease Control and Prevention

WCHD executes the requirements described in Chapter 252 Wisconsin Statutes regarding the reporting, surveillance, and control of communicable diseases. These responsibilities are accomplished through the cooperative efforts of hospital infection control personnel, healthcare providers, local health departments, and laboratories.

Rates of Disease per 100,000 Population in Wood County

Disease	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lyme Disease*	160	283	139	128
Pertussis*	3	0	0	1
Campylobacteriosis	24	0	10	30
Cryptosporidiosis	14	22	16	14
Giardiasis	12	32	1	6
Salmonellosis	9	9	11	12
Chlamydia	266	230	270	239
Hepatitis C	26	1	20	27

*Includes Confirmed, Probable, and Suspect Cases

Communicable Disease Case Summaries

- Sexually transmitted infections continue to be of concern in Wood County. Chlamydia cases decreased slightly in 2023, with 178 cases reported (down from 209 cases in 2022). However, gonorrhea cases increased from 18 cases in 2022 to 30 cases in 2023, and syphilis cases climbed from 11 cases in 2022 to 20 cases in 2023. Prevention efforts continue.
- Tick-borne disease cases of Anaplasmosis increased in 2023, while cases of Babesiosis and Ehrlichiosis decreased in 2023. Lymes cases remained fairly steady.
- There were 25 cases of latent tuberculosis infections reported during 2023. Eight Wood County residents were monitored by public health nurses while receiving medication.
- During 2023, there were 23 cases of hospitalized influenza, a decrease from 54 cases in 2022.
- Long-term care facilities reported outbreaks involving residents and staff in 2023. WCHD provided guidance to facilities. Fee exempt testing was offered at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene.
 - 7 long-term care facilities had non-COVID acute respiratory infection outbreaks.
 - 13 long-term care facilities reported COVID outbreaks.
 - 2 long-term care facilities reported outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis.



Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Each year, capabilities are prioritized and work is done to fulfill the emergency preparedness requirements. 2023 emergency preparedness highlights include:

- Ensured all staff were up to date on current Incident Command System functions, roles and trainings.
- Maintained an active status in the state-level Public Health Emergency Preparedness planning workgroup. This workgroup focuses on identifying regional priorities in planning and collaborating to support emergency preparedness planning across Wisconsin.
- Participated in the Local Emergency Planning Committee.
- Participated in the North Central Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition for collaboration and planning; and participated in a Radiation Annex Table Top exercise.
- Collaborated in a regional Hazard Vulnerability Assessment.
- Conducted full scale exercise of Family Assistance Center, a comprehensive establishment for family and loved ones to go to after a mass fatality incident. Conducted follow up trainings and after action review.
- Updated the WCHD Emergency Preparedness website for members of the community to be informed of preparedness efforts and resources.
- Attended the Preparedness Summit where subject matter experts from around the world presented on public health preparedness strategies, response and lessons learned.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response & Recovery

In 2023, WCHD continued to offer free COVID-19 at-home antigen test kits through the Antigen Test Distribution Program through Wisconsin Department of Health Services. All local libraries within Wood County were stocked with free at-home test kits for distribution to the public. Free test kits were also available to any individual or community entity that requested them at the front desk of WCHD at the River Block Building.

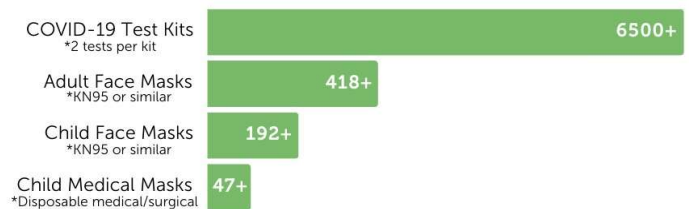
- Over 6,500 COVID-19 at-home antigen test kits and over 657 face masks were distributed.

2023 COVID-19 Antigen Test & Mask Distribution Summary

Total Tests Distributed: 13,000+ Total Masks Distributed: 657+

Total COVID-19 Test Kits	6,500+	Total Adult Face Masks	418+	Total Child Face Masks	192+	Total Child Medical Masks	47+
--------------------------	---------------	------------------------	-------------	------------------------	-------------	---------------------------	------------

Antigen Test and Mask Distribution Totals
January 2023 - December 2023



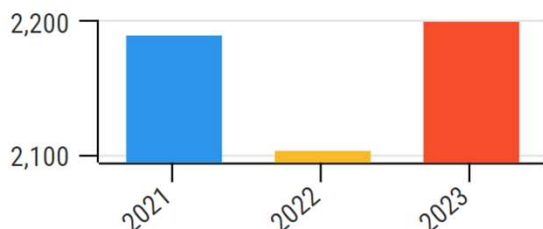
Woman, Infants, & Children

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC provides healthy foods, healthcare referrals, and nutrition and breastfeeding education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Annual Participation

2023 Annual Participation: 2,200
Increase of 5% from 2022



Dollars Generated in Wood County

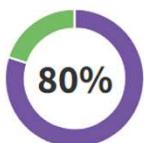


Grocery Stores: \$1,358,058.34

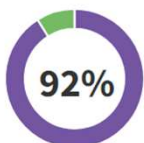
Farmer's Market: \$9,114



2023 Highlights



Initiate Breastfeeding



WIC participants felt prepared to breastfeed after receiving breastfeeding education from WIC



WIC participants increased their fruit & vegetable intake due to what they learned at WIC

Fit Families

Fit Families is a public health nutrition program funded under the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for families with children ages 2 to 4 years old. It strives to prevent childhood overweight/obesity by providing individual counseling to empower families to adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Wood County WIC enrolled 59 families in 2019.

>60 mins of Physical Activity

100%

<1 sugar sweetened beverage per week

70%

<6 oz of juice per day

67%

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling

The Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program targets prenatal and postpartum women on WIC to encourage breastfeeding by educating, supporting, and giving basic guidance. Contact is made via telephone, text messaging, email, home visits, office visits, and hospital visits.

Total Successful Contacts from Peer and WIC



85% Pregnant Moms



58% Breastfeeding Moms



Healthy Smiles for Wood County

Oral Health

Healthy Smiles for Wood County is a school-based, school-linked dental education, screening, sealant, and fluoride varnish program. It is a partnership between WCHD, schools in Wood County, Head Start centers, the dental community, and local volunteers. The primary focus is prevention of dental caries through outreach, education, sealant and varnish placement, systems change, reduction of oral health disparities and referrals to establish a dental home for children at an earlier age.

2022/2023 School Year Accomplishments:

- 🦷 Provided 1607 children with dental health education
- 🦷 Screen 1607 children
- 🦷 Placed 1659 sealants
- 🦷 Placed 1566 fluoride varnish treatments
- 🦷 Referred 327 children with unmet dental needs to area dental clinics. 10 of the referred children needed urgent care.



Environmental Health

Complaint Investigations

The Wood County Public Health Ordinance is enforced by the Wood County Health Officer and Environmental Health staff. Environmental Health Specialists regularly respond to citizen and business complaints regarding violations of the Public Health Ordinance. Complaints are listed below from license year: July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

Wood County Food Related Complaints

Pests/Vermin	1
Illness	6
Labeling	3
Quality	7
Facility Cleanliness	3
Service Related	6
Dogs	0
Misc.	2

Wood County Other Complaints

Indoor Air Quality	39
Outdoor Air Quality	3
Cleanliness/Garbage	4
Pests	43
Mobile Home Park	1
Campgrounds	0
Flooding	0
Housing Conditions	20
Lodging	0
Misc.	9

Total Complaints: 147

License Inspections

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, WCHD provides environmental health services to Adams and Juneau Counties in addition to Wood County. Most of Environmental Health inspections happen at retail food establishments. Establishments are inspected once a year, with follow up inspections conducted as needed. Schools receive two inspections per year per contract with the Department of Public Instruction.

- **523 inspections and 49 Temporary Food Stands were inspected** in Wood County between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Wood County Retail Food Inspections

Retail Food	379
Pre-Licensing	36
Routine	331
Re-Inspections	12
Schools	35
Other	4

Total Inspections: 418

Wood County Recreational Inspections/Other

Campground	9
Lodging	34
Pool	35
Mobile Home Community	24
Rec-Ed Campground	3

Total Inspections: 105



In-House Water Lab

Through a contract with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, transient non-community water supply systems were tested in Wood, Adams, and Juneau Counties to ensure a safe water supply for the public. Wells of businesses that serve the public are also inspected for structural soundness and routes of potential contamination. Private well owners are responsible for getting their own well water tested.

- 1,215 licensed establishments & transient non-community water system samples were analyzed for Wood, Adams, and Juneau Counties
- 196 private well water samples were analyzed for Wood, Adams, and Juneau

Wood County public beaches are tested for E. coli throughout the swimming season to protect swimmers' health. If E. coli counts are high, beaches are either closed or have advisory statements posted, depending on the tested value. The beach is then reopened after a safe sample is collected. No beaches were closed during 2023 summer season.

- 160 beach samples were analyzed for Adams and Wood County

Radon

Radon causes lung cancer. Radon gas is odorless and invisible. The only way to know if it is a problem is to test for it. WCHD sells radon test kits year round and provides radon education and presentations for interested organizations or groups.

- 194 Radon kits were sold in 2023 to individuals and school systems.

Wood County Clean Sweep Event

WCHD, UW Extension – Wood County, the Town of Saratoga, and Veolia hosted Wood County's annual Clean Sweep on September 9, 2023.

- 5,014 pounds of household hazardous waste and 324 pounds of agricultural waste was collected.



Vehicles in line to safely dispose of waste at Clean Sweep

Health Promotion & Community Health

Community Health Assessment & Community Health Improvement Plan

In Wood County, the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) are collaborative efforts between WCHD, Marshfield Clinic Health System, and Aspirus Riverview Hospital and Clinics. Staff from these three organizations form the Leadership Team for Healthy People Wood County (HPWC), which is the coalition for the CHA and CHIP efforts. Although this is a collaborative effort, there are different requirements by state and federal law for health departments compared to healthcare systems. Wisconsin Statute Chapter 251, Section 5 details the requirement that all local health departments must complete the CHA and CHIP every five years. On March 23, 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law with an Internal Revenue Service requirement that all non-profit healthcare systems complete a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. Although these laws have different time requirements and language, the mandate is the same: complete a health assessment of the community and develop a long-term plan to improve the determined health needs. WCHD, Marshfield Clinic Health System, and Aspirus Riverview Hospital and Clinics follow a three-year requirement to ensure all entities have aligned health priorities and strategies.

The next Wood County CHA will be published in the spring of 2024. In 2023, the HPWC Leadership Team conducted a large online and paper survey with 3,215 responses and engaged 123 community members through 72 interviews and 6 focus groups with 51 participants to get the community's opinion about factors that impact community health in Wood County. The CHA survey data is paired with local, county, and state level data to identify the most important health needs and prioritize health issues to address in the Wood County CHIP.

The CHIP is a three-year plan to improve the health of Wood County residents as it relates to the identified priorities in the CHA. Input from the community is essential in the development of the CHIP and is a key component to ensure the success of identified strategies. To take action and improve the health of Wood County residents, several key focus areas were identified in the CHIP in 2021, and the work for each of these focus areas is described throughout pages 14-17 of this annual report. The current CHIP goes through December 2024, and the next CHIP will be published by the end of 2024. The current CHIP is available at www.healthypeoplewoodcounty.org



3,215
survey responses



Engaged **123** community members
through interviews and focus groups



Healthy People Wood County

HPWC is a partnership of community organizations and residents all working together to solve big health problems. To take action and improve the health of Wood County residents, several key focus areas were identified in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in 2021. Over the past year, HPWC has made incredible progress toward improving challenges. These are the 2023 Highlights:

General Highlights

- Met one on one with 56 community members to increase engagement in HPWC
- Conducted the [Community Health Assessment \(CHA\) Survey](#) and received 3,215 responses
- Gained over 1000 followers on Facebook
- Engaged with 120 community members through 72 interviews & 6 focus groups to learn how COVID-19 impacted different groups of people
- Held 3 Advisory Council meetings



Healthy People
Wood County Team

Youth Health

- Hired a new PATCH Coordinator and 10 Teen Educators
- Trained Teen Educators in Question, Persuade, Refer Suicide Prevention
- Participated in the Stay True to You campaign to reduce vaping and THC use
- Facilitated 1 PATCH workshop at Nekoosa High School



PATCH Teen Educators

Mental Health

- Held 4 Up to Me Storyteller trainings
- Provided 6 Question, Persuade, & Refer trainings
- Held a Storyteller recruitment event at River Cities Clubhouse
- Transitioned leadership of Mental Health Storytelling to Mid-state Independent Living Choices and the Clubhouses for sustainability and increased community ownership
- Completed a Continuum of Care for teens experiencing depression & suicide ideation

Leadership Development

- Created a leadership development workgroup and conducted 30 interviews with Hispanic/Latinx community members to find out what kind of leadership skills are needed in the Hispanic/Latinx community



Substance Use

- Established a LifePoint Program in June to support the health of individuals who inject drugs
- Conducted scans of 22 retailers selling hemp products:
 - 27% of retailers displayed signs for the age of sale restrictions
 - 100% of retailers knew the age of sale must be 21 for psychoactive hemp products
- Distributed 576 kits of NARCAN® nasal spray and trained 222 individuals in Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Administration
- Identified 35 alcohol licensees from 151 alcohol-related incidents to provide education and technical assistance for overserving alcohol through Place of Last Drink data
- Tracked 37 lives saved by first responders through Naloxone administration
- Conducted the 6th annual Wood County Opinion Survey on Substance Use; 304 people participated
- Distributed 120 locking medication boxes & bags to provide additional security to drugs in the home
- Installed 3 sharps disposal kiosks in city parks located in Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids.

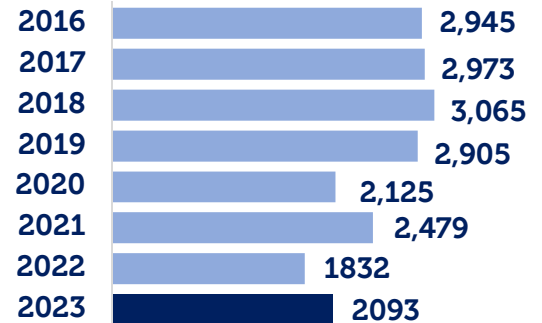
Family Health

- Implemented Parents as Teachers evidence-based home visiting program
 - 25 families enrolled
 - 100% of enrolled children fully immunized
 - 92% clients remained in the program
- Served as a core member of the Wood County Child Care Task Force
- Submitted grant funding requests to the Legacy Foundation, the Wood County ARPA Committee, and the WI Department of Children & Families
- Awarded the Dream Up! Supply-Building Grant

Incarceration

- Worked with UniverCity Year students and Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP) Coordinator to look at EMP data and find out what information needs to be collected to evaluate and report on the program.
- Studied different ways to evaluate the EMP based on evidence-based practices.

Pounds of pharmaceuticals safely disposed of at events and permanent disposal sites



* one take back event held in 2020



Community partners smile for a picture by the new sharps disposal installed in Marshfield

Access to Healthy Food

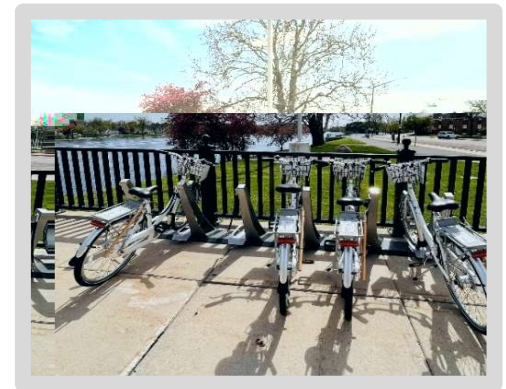
- Collected data at 5 regional farmers markets
 - 20 customer counts
 - 805 customer surveys
 - 349 vendor applications
- WI Rapids Downtown Farmers Market received a sponsorship from Prevail Bank's Charitable Contribution program for \$3,000 to help fund the EBT Double Dollar Day redemption incentive program
- Hosted the WI State Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Childhood Obesity in Wood County. Where we shared effective methods and recommendations to help tackle childhood obesity in WI.
- Continued to support the WI Rapids Downtown Farmers Market
 - 91 market vendors
 - \$6,705 debit/credit sales
 - \$3,530 EBT sales
 - \$1,062 Aspirus Fruit & Veggies Rx program
 - \$206,983 total sales



Staff at the WI Rapids Downtown Farmers Market

Transportation & Recreation

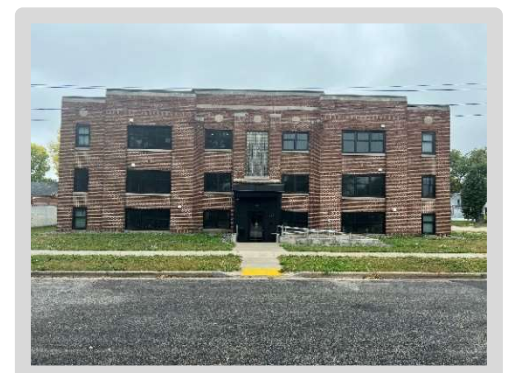
- Tracked community bike rentals:
 - River Riders Bike Share: 241
 - Marshfield Community Bike Share: 89
- Participated in a case study with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute to share how organizations involved in the bike share programs in Wood County have worked together to help fill a rural mobility need
- Worked with Wisconsin Rapids Community Media to create a "how to" video explaining what bike share is and how to use it. Watch the video: bit.ly/RiverRidersHowTo
- Held annual Fall Community Bike Ride around Lake Wazeecha with the Sheriff's Department & Grand Rapids Police Department



River Riders Bike Share rentals by the Wisconsin River

Housing

- Worked with Mary's Place and partners to open a new place to live in [Wisconsin Rapids](#) for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Assisted Mary's Place in raising funds to sustain the new facility, and updated policies & procedures.
- Joined the Wood County Housing Task Force to tackle affordable housing issues.



Newly open Mary's Place in Wisconsin Rapids



Tobacco Control and Prevention

After the federal Tobacco 21 law went into effect in 2019, compliance checks and retailer education have ramped up in efforts to ensure establishments are following the Tobacco 21 law. The increased efforts have shown to decrease failed compliance checks in 2023.

Youth inspectors (age 17) were sold to one time out of twenty completed checks. Wisconsin state law has yet to be updated to match the federal law, but there was a decrease in sales to minors due to the education efforts put forth.

Vendor Type	Number of Inspections	Number of Sales	Sales Rate (%)	Compliance Rate (%)
Gas/Convenience	12	1	8.3	91.7
Liquor	2	0	0	100
Grocery	2	0	0	100
Tobacco/Vape Shop	2	0	0	100
Other	2	0	0	100
Total	20	1	5	95

Drug-Free Communities Support Program

The Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program was established in 1997 by the Drug-Free Communities Act. It is administered by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and managed through a partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The program provides grants to community coalitions to strengthen the infrastructure among local partners and create and sustain a reduction in local youth substance use.

WCHD was awarded the DFC Support Program in 2020 to support Healthy People Wood County’s substance use prevention coalition, which is now known as IMPACT. The support program awards up to \$125,000 annually to support the coalition in establishing and strengthening collaboration and reducing substance use among youth. These funds are used to staff the Providers and Teens Communicating for Health (PATCH) coordinator and the DFC program coordinator at WCHD, in addition to programming. Currently, Healthy People Wood County IMPACT is in its fourth year of the DFC support program, and the program is set to end on September 29, 2025. WCHD plans to apply for a competitive continuation for Years 6-10 of the grant during the last year of the support program.



Community Health Workers

Community Health Workers

Three teams of Community Health Workers (CHWs), including members from the LatinX/Hispanic, Native American, and Hmong communities, have been trained to address health disparities in minority and underserved communities in Wood County. They share similarities with the community members they serve, such as ethnicity, language, culture, values, and life experiences. They have a unique role in implementing culturally competent health promotion and disease prevention programs across the lifespan. Community Health Workers helped to improve access to healthcare, support systems, and social services that affect social determinants of health.

Additional outreach and events include:

- Assisted over 839 individuals in applying for the Farm and Food Worker Relief Program at 16 clinics in partnership with United Migrant Opportunity Services
 - Went to 3 large food processing facilities to assist all employees in applying (Monogram Appetizers, McCain Foods, Mariani)
 - Hosted 18 clinics with the Hmong and Hispanic Communication Network (H2N)
- Distributed the Wood County Community Health Assessment survey and had over 257 people complete the survey
- Over 139 vaccines administered (COVID-19, flu, etc.) at 10 clinics & events in collaboration with H2N and Hometown Pharmacy
- YMCA Vaccine and United Migrant Opportunity Services Resources Clinic (March 9th)
- Egglection Event (April 1st)
- Medicaid Unwinding (June 6th)
- Holiday Health Resource Fair (Dec 15th)

In 2023, Community Health Workers (CHWs)



worked with
243 clients



made 1,299
referrals

Between the start of September 2023 and the end of December 2023 CHWs made the following:



189
social
service
referrals



49
food
referrals



32
medical
referrals



2
COVID
vaccine
referrals



Santa, H2N, Health Department staff and others at the Holiday Health Resource Fair



Health Equity & Community Engagement

Health Equity

Across Wood County there are significant differences in health outcomes from one zip code to the next and among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Health inequities emerge when some individuals gain more than others from consistently better access to opportunities and resources over the course of their lives. Increasing opportunities for everyone can reduce gaps in health and make our entire community healthier. Health equity means that everyone has access to the resources they need to be as healthy as possible regardless of race, income, gender, location, or another group status. Achieving health equity requires working together as a community to eliminate barriers to health while also improving access to and availability of social, economic, and environmental opportunities.

Our Health Department has an internal Health Equity team that is focusing on creating solutions and breaking down barriers. The vision of the team is, *"Wood County residents' health outcomes will not be determined by race, ethnicity, class, gender, income, education, geography, or any other group status."* The goals of the team include:

1. Increase staff knowledge and awareness of health equity in Wood County.
2. Provide support and capacity to system improvements within WCHD focused on improving health equity.

2023 Accomplishments

- Held 10 Health Equity Team meetings
- Conducted focus groups with staff to understand internal health equity needs
- Started equity warm ups within department teams
- Updated the Health Equity Staff Survey
- Provided training related to health equity at 4 all staff meetings
- Translated core communications into Hmong and Spanish where appropriate within Environmental Health and WIC teams
- Updated WCHD interview questions to avoid assumptions and bias
- Updated WCHD policies to include "they/their" pronouns where appropriate
- Created a health equity page for the WCHD website
- Shared MPH student project results with the Human Resources Department, which included a hiring bias toolkit and recommendations to update the Wood County handbook to ensure more inclusive policies and language
- MPH students developed an evaluation tool to assess WCHD programs' incorporation of health equity
- Engaged 123 community members who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 through interviews and focus groups with the Qualitative Data Grant
- Received a health equity narrative implementation grant
- Developed a new Community Health Assessment Survey and distribution plan using an equity lens

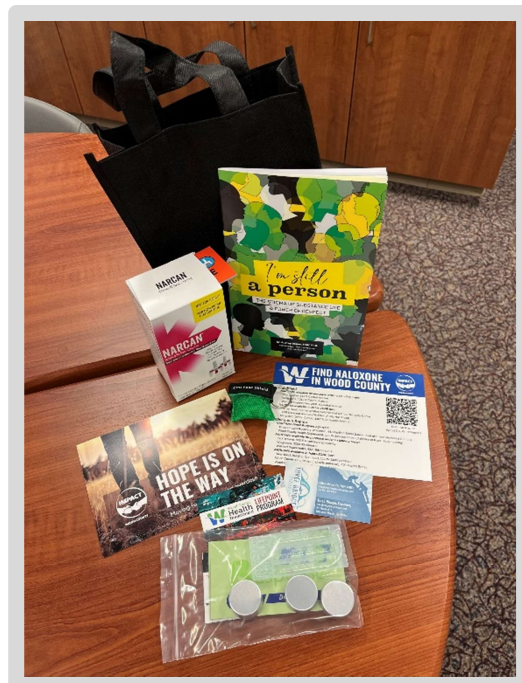


Working with Underserved Populations

Services are offered to special populations to prevent disease spread, promote healthy birth outcomes and to provide education and resources on pregnancy, breastfeeding, immunizations, safety, oral health, and overall family health. WCHD offers comprehensive newborn screening including screening for genetic abnormalities through the blood card, screening for Critical Congenital Heart Defects (CCHD), and hearing screening for eligible underserved populations. Additional services offered include well water testing to ensure safe drinking water and fluoride varnish application to prevent tooth decay. Special population outreach included a focus on LatinX/Hispanic, Native, and Hmong communities. Bilingual Community Health Workers have assisted Public Health Nurses in maternal-child health outreach activities and group learning activities to provide education and support during the perinatal period and early childhood years.

WCHD launched a LifePoint Program, satellite site of Vivent Health, in June 2023. The program serves individuals who use drugs to support positive health habits to reduce risk of injury or harm. Wood County served 52 individuals directly in 2023, and additionally supported an estimated 121 individuals indirectly through the program.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals who are new to a syringe service program are five times more likely to enter drug treatment and three times more likely to stop using drugs than those who do not use the programs. In addition, syringe service programs are associated with an estimated 50% reduction in HIV and hepatitis C incidence.



Hope Kits provide harm reduction tools and resources to people who use drugs

Community Engagement

Community engagement is an intentional practice that includes the diverse perspectives of the community, addresses power dynamics, fosters strong relationships, and leads to action. It requires organizations to work deliberately to build long-term trusting relationships, to be open and responsive to community input, and offer opportunities for residents to express their views and provide meaningful input for decision-making. It also takes into account the diversity of the community to create an inclusive and equitable process. We firmly believe community members should have the strongest voice when it comes to decision making. We conduct surveys, focus groups, one on one conversations, and more to make sure a diverse community voice leads our work. Engaging community members who are the most impacted by the issues is essential in creating and sustaining change.

Between September and December, the HPWC Leadership Team conducted the Community Health Assessment (CHA) Survey to get the community's opinion about factors that impact community health in Wood County. The survey had 3215 community member responses, which is the most CHA survey responses in Wood County history. The survey was available online and via paper, and was available in English and Spanish. WCHD Community Health Workers (CHWs) assisted in ensuring a diverse community voice was captured by conducting survey outreach in the HMong, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native/Indigenous communities in Wood County.

WCHD received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to build capacity of local health departments to conduct qualitative data and learn about the impact of COVID on underrepresented groups in the community. In 2023, 123 community members were engaged through 72 interviews and 6 focus groups with 51 participants.

IMPACT partners conducted the 6th annual survey on drugs and alcohol titled "2023 Wood County Opinion Survey on Substances". The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of public opinion and awareness of substance use in Wood County. The survey was conducted in October and November of 2023 and collected 304 individual responses. Participants were asked about their perception of the community around drugs and alcohol and their awareness of efforts made by the coalition. Administering this survey is crucial to determine the community's perception regarding substance issues and the level of awareness of prevention efforts. Understanding the concerns and awareness of available resources in the community is vital for IMPACT to enhance its efforts and address the community's needs accurately. According to the survey, the top four substances believed to be used by youth aged 12-18 in the community are tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, and marijuana. The responses from the survey will be used to guide the direction of the coalition's efforts and will be used in strategic planning.



Our Team

Leadership	Years of Service
Susan Smith, MSN, RN, CPM • Director/Health Officer	18.5
Erica Sherman, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC • Public Health Nurse Supervisor	16.5
Kathy Alft, BBA • Public Health Manager	22.5
Kristie Egge, MPH • Supervisor of Strategic Initiatives	15.5
Ben Jeffrey, BS, RS • Environmental Health Supervisor	4.5

Health Promotion & Community Health	Years of Service
Ashley Arendt • Community Health Worker	9.5
Ashley Normington • Public Health Strategist	6.5
David Strong • Epidemiologist	6.5
Reyne Reffner • Program Coordinator	6.0
Hannah Wendels • Health Educator	4.0
Kayleigh Mengel • Policy & Communication Coordinator	3.5
Jacob Wagner • Public Health Strategist	2.5
Niki Lucht • Community Health Planner	1.5
Taylor Christiansen • Community Health Worker	1.5
Nicole Burlingame • Dental Hygienist	1.0
Alyssa Gollon • Community Health Worker	<1.0

Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC)	Years of Service
Camen Hofer • WIC Director/Project Nutritionist	6.0
Jessica Hutchinson • Dietitian	7.5
Whitney Armour • Breastfeeding Peer Counselor	3.0
Jenny Froeba • Nutritionist/RN	2.5
Kayla Saeger • Nutritionist	1.0

Environmental Health	Years of Service
Logan Manthe • EH Specialist & Lab Manager	6.5
Kate Carlson • Registered Sanitarian	18.0
Tim Wuebben • Registered Sanitarian	6.0
Mariah Heiman • Registered Sanitarian	6.0
Dave Joosten • Registered Sanitarian	4.0
Jill Ibarra • Registered Sanitarian	2.5

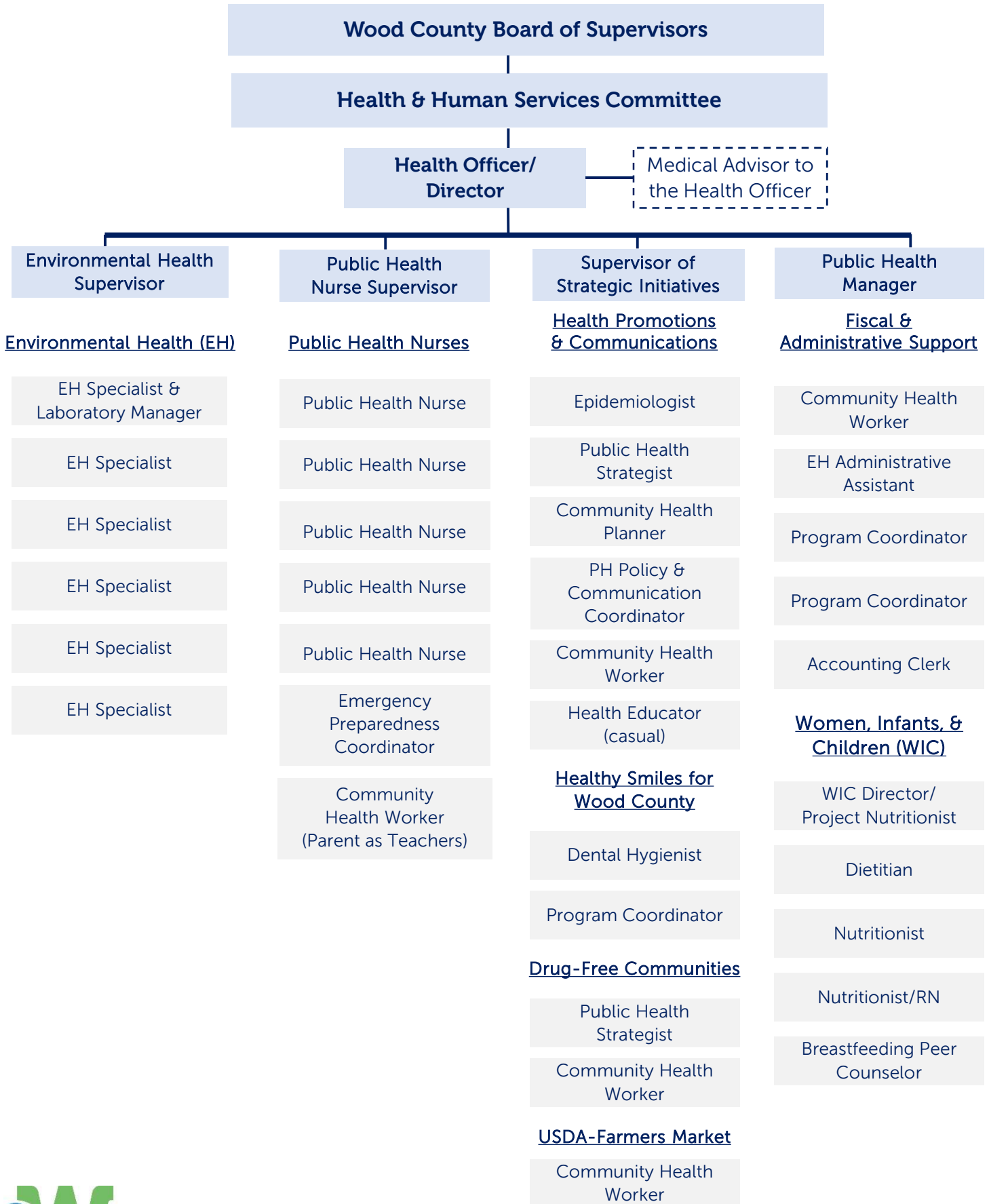
Operational Support	Years of Service
Mai Thao • Community Health Worker	27.5
Val Elliott • EH Administrative Assistant	10.0
Jessi Jacobitz • Program Coordinator	7.5
Macy Mancl • Program Coordinator	3.0
Lindsey Eggleston • Accounting Clerk	1.5

Public Health Nurses	Years of Service
Alecia Pluess • Public Health Nurse	17.5
Danielle Hiller • Public Health Nurse	9.0
Melony Johnson • Public Health Nurse	7.0
Pat Chang • Public Health Nurse	3.0
James Kollross • Public Health Nurse	2.5
Sara Luchini • Emergency Preparedness Coordinator	2.5
Lori Peterson • Community Health Worker	1.0



Our Team Continued...

Organizational Chart



Our Team Continued...

Collaboration with Academia

WCHD strives to train, motivate, and mentor the future public health workforce through strong partnerships and collaboration with numerous higher learning institutions. WCHD serves as a site for student placement, observation, practicum experience, and internships.



In 2023

33 students were hosted at the Wood County Health Department

13 Bachelor of Science in Nursing students from UW-Eau Claire

3 Bachelor of Science students from UW-Stevens Point

1 Applied science student from Mid-State Technical College

1 PhD student from UW-Madison

9 Master of Public Health students in partnership with UniverCity Year

3 Pediatrics residents

2 UW Population Health Service Fellows

1 Bachelor of Science in Nursing student from Viterbo

Marshfield Clinic Health System AmeriCorps

Marshfield Clinic Health System AmeriCorps is a federal program often referred to as a domestic Peace Corps. AmeriCorps provides work experience, a living stipend, and other benefits to individuals, while providing organizations with additional staff capacity to work on important health improvement programs. To learn more about AmeriCorps, visit www.mchsamericorps.org.

During 2023, three AmeriCorps members served at the WCHD to provide organizational support in improving public health through a Community Health Worker Model. Thank you to our past and present members for dedicating your time to serve!

2022-2023 Service Year

Julia Beres

2023-2024 Service Year

Bailey Stark
Jenna Gutowski



Jenna & Bailey at AmeriCorps Training in Wisconsin Dells



Financial Summary

Financial Summary

WCHD continues to advocate for public health funding, explore opportunities for new funding sources, and devote valuable resources to retaining current funding. WCHD adapts programs and services as funding sources change and, as a result, has returned \$1,316,687 of unspent tax levy to the county over the past five years.

Revenues	2023	2022
Intergovernmental Revenues (Federal/State Grants)	\$1,348,670	\$1,695,978
Licenses and Permits (Environmental Health)	\$649,996	\$509,914
Public Charges for Services (Includes MA Revenue)	\$97,549	\$71,921
Intergovernmental Charges (DNR, Adams/Juneau County MOU)	\$144,504	\$126,317
Other Grant Funds/Revenue (*Includes Non-Lapsing Funds for grant budget)	\$83,612	\$85,263
Expenditures		
Public Health	\$2,881,100	\$2,969,280
Women, Infants, & Children*	\$431,227	\$397,556
Consolidated Contract *	\$68,264	\$70,231
Healthy Smiles for Wood County	\$110,257	\$86,038
Adams/Juneau County Environmental Health Services*	\$433,089	\$425,120
Actual Tax Levy	\$1,599,607	\$1,458,832

WCHD used 93.2% of budgeted tax levy in 2023, returning \$116,281 to the General Fund. This was primarily the result of unanticipated grant funding received for COVID response and recovery.



Performance Management

Performance Management

WCHD is committed to maintaining a high level of quality in the services being delivered by our staff. We are held accountable to a high level of quality through a variety of standards set by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Performance Management and Quality Improvement (PMQI) is one of the standards set by PHAB. A Performance Management Plan and Quality Improvement projects take place to maintain accreditation, encourage staff to be innovative, and to hold teams accountable.

- **Performance Management Plan:** The WCHD Performance Management (PM) Plan outlines the key activities, team make up, key goals and objectives, and the essential background information around PMQI that guides our health department's PMQI work. The PM Plan is updated, at least once annually, to ensure the content is up to date and accurately portrays the PMQI efforts of the WCHD.
- **Performance Management:** The purpose of performance management is to track program efficiency and to look at areas for improvement. Below are the program areas for 2023 with performance measures set and the total number of performance measures overall.

Program Areas	Total Number of Performance Measures
Accounting and Finance Emergency Preparedness Environmental Health Healthy People Wood County Management Nurses Women, Infants, and Children	<h1>155</h1>

- **Quality Improvement:** When there are identified areas of improvement, projects are developed to improve the work. Our team uses a storyboard document to plan these projects. WCHD also uses an online suggestion box located on the WCHD's website called solution revolutions. Solution revolutions are an effective way to receive employee and client feedback on ways to improve the WCHD's quality of services and overall operations. Lastly, the WCHD collects customer feedback on a larger scale through regular customer surveys. Below are some highlights from the WCHD's Quality Improvement work completed in 2023. There were 7 quality improvement measures worked on in 2023.

Storyboards	Solution Revolutions	Customer Surveys	Quality Improvement Measures
8	5	7	7
Quality Improvement Tools Used			
Brainstorm, Flow Chart, Fishbone, 5-Whys, Surveys			



Communication

Connect with Us

f Like & follow us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/WoodCoWisc.Health



In 2023, we increased communication efforts through social media and saw a 106% increase in reach.

f Reached
68,900 people
through Facebook

Subscribe to our Newsletter!



Stay up to date on the latest information. WCHD delivers a newsletter every other month to your inbox! To subscribe, go to bit.ly/43zBxqC or scan the QR code on the left.

Our Offices

Wisconsin Rapids Location

Wood County River Block Building - 3rd Floor
111 W Jackson Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
Hours: Monday-Friday
8:00am - 12:00pm / 1:00pm - 4:30pm
Closed Holidays
Phone: (715) 421-8911*
Fax: (715) 421-8962

Marshfield Location

Wood County Annex & Health Center
1600 N Chestnut Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449
Hours: Clinics by appointment only, please call.
Phone: (715) 387-8646*

*If you need to report a communicable disease or public health emergency after hours, please contact the Wood County Dispatch Center at (715) 421-8700.



Annual Report: For additional copies of this report call, 715-421-8911, or visit our website at www.co.wood.wi.us

Information Sources: National Association of County and City Health Officials, Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Public Health Profiles, Wood County Health Department

