

Improving Community Health

Every three years, Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) meets with local hospital systems, public health agencies and other community partners to take a deep dive into the health of our community. The process begins with an assessment of the health needs of our region, the most recent of which was completed in 2016.

Working from the assessment, the next product of this partnership is the 2018-2020 Community Health Improvement Plan, or CHIP. The CHIP addresses priority health issues and aligns with the Ohio State Health Improvement Plan, as well as with the HCPH Strategic Plan.

The plan focuses on four priority areas:

- Chronic disease and obesity
- Maternal, infant and child health
- Mental health and addiction
- Oral health

Under chronic disease and obesity, the plan's goals include making healthier food choices; more engagement in physical activity and decreased tobacco use. The second priority area focuses on seeing more babies celebrate their first birthdays, including pediatric care and immunization strategies.

For the mental health and addiction section, naturally we would like to see fewer deaths from drug overdose and a reduction in diseases like HIV and hepatitis among people who inject drugs. Finally, in the area of oral health, we are working to increase access to comprehensive oral care (see below).

We began implementation of the CHIP in July. Over the next two years, you will be hearing more about progress in meeting the goals outlined in the plan. We are already beginning to see some progress, as we are aggressively addressing all of the targets and have built partnerships to tackle the complex and intertwined nature of these health challenges.

Opioid Use Disorder

For the past several years, no matter where you turn, opioid use disorder is in the news. It's difficult to get through a day without blaring headlines about the disease of addiction and the peripheral health maladies that accompany it.

While the news remains grim and there is still much work to be done, it is becoming evident that we are chipping away at some of the tragedy. Hamilton County Public Health provides a daily report of opioid cases in the emergency departments.

This report helps healthcare and law enforcement to plan and manage resources, and alerts the community about elevations in these numbers. In 2018, emergency department visits and 911 runs for overdoses were the lowest we've seen in three years. Although year-end fatality numbers are not yet complete, we have also seen a decrease in the number of deaths due to overdose through the first half of the year.

From a public health perspective, there are a couple of important initiatives driving these declines. We have distributed more than 35,000 doses of the lifesaving drug, Narcan, free-of-charge to anyone in the community at risk of witnessing or suffering an overdose. This pilot program studies what public health might affect by saturating a community with this overdose antidote. So far, it appears this effort is saving lives.

In addition, we geared up and operated The Exchange Project at six locations around the region during 2018. The Exchange Project is a comprehensive, community-based public health initiative that provides disease prevention, education and referral services. During the year, we received more than 11,000 visits; exchanged more than 350,000 syringes; and provided hepatitis, HIV and pregnancy screening for hundreds. While hepatitis and HIV remain a threat, removing contaminated injection equipment from the streets helps prevent infection from accidental needle sticks. The program also provides screening and ultimately, referral to treatment.

Our work was nationally recognized by CBS News. I was invited to speak about our programs to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is looking at best practices around the country to replicate in battling opioid use disorder. The bottom line is we must continue our efforts at full speed. After all, everyone deserves a second (and third, fourth.....) chance at life.

TB

The incidence of tuberculosis has been largely contained in the U.S. However, as we become a more global society, we cannot let our guard down and allow TB to again gain a foothold. Earlier this year, a worker at a daycare center contracted TB.

HCPH responded quickly and completely, tracking down any potential exposure. We teamed with Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to open and staff testing and treatment clinics. We were able to get to nearly everyone and I am pleased to report that we were able to contain any spread of TB.

The story doesn't end here. Ohio used to mandate screening teachers and daycare workers for TB prior to their employment. For whatever reason, that protocol was allowed to lapse. We contacted our State legislators to work toward reimplementing of pre-employment screening. We are hoping to see a bill in the State legislature sometime during 2019, addressing this health issue.

Hepatitis A

The State of Ohio declared a state-wide outbreak of hepatitis A after observing an increase in cases linked to certain risk factors. Hamilton County has also seen a considerable increase in cases, with case counts rising from one case in 2017, to 157 in 2018.

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable disease that usually spreads when a person ingests fecal matter from contact with objects, food or drinks contaminated by the stool of an infected person. Hepatitis A can also be spread from close personal contact with an infected person, such as through sex.

People at increased risk for hepatitis A in this outbreak include:

- People with direct contact with individuals infected with the virus
- Men who have sex with men
- People who use street drugs whether they are injected or not
- People who are incarcerated
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who have traveled to other areas of the U.S. currently experiencing outbreaks

Oral Health Care

Health research has identified links between oral infection and a host of diseases, including cardiovascular disease, stroke and diabetes. Based on a 2014 report, here in Hamilton County, 36 percent of adults 18-64 did not have dental insurance; 61 percent of those 65 and older had no insurance.

In Hamilton County, there were more than 11,000 dental-related hospital emergency department visits during the latest year for which data is available. This is an expensive and inefficient use of health care resources, as emergency departments are not equipped to handle dental issues. There are also significant differences in oral care access based on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

In response to these issues, we have assembled an Oral Care Coalition to engage the dental and healthcare communities, as well as other stakeholders in addressing the oral health needs of Hamilton County residents. Long-term goals are to increase dental capacity and access for Medicaid and low-income, uninsured populations and to improve overall oral hygiene and appropriate utilization of dental services.

We are developing strategic plans and looking into opportunities to expand access to dental care among these underserved groups. The Coalition kicked off in 2018 and you will be hearing more about our work as plans develop.

Public Health Data

How many of us regularly go out to eat? I'd venture a guess that the overwhelming majority of us answer in the affirmative. Before dining out, we often hit the internet to check out restaurant reviews and see what others think of our selection.

Did you know you can visit our website (www.hcph.org) before you dine out to review restaurants' or food service facilities' inspection reports? These are likely even more important than that five-star restaurant review.

Why not check into the winners of our Clean Kitchen Award? Now in its eighth year, the award recognizes operators who take sanitation and food safety seriously. The award is difficult to win; the requirements are stringent; and the health benefits of dining in safe establishments are immeasurable.

Food service sanitation is not the only reporting to be found on our website. You can find a wealth of information on various disease conditions. For instance, you can research the disease of addiction, TB, health equity, HIV/STIs, maternal and infant health, and many others.

In addition, you will find inspection reports for odor complaints, swimming pools, tattoo and body art facilities, hotels/motels, plumbing, schools and a host of other topics.

All reports in these sections are available free-of-charge to provide information on health-related topics.

Ball Fields

Not only is public health involved in infectious disease and sanitation issues, but we also find our way into the world of entertainment. The year found us working with a baseball/softball/soccer facility in western Hamilton County to remediate lead contamination. The facility held "turkey shoot" events to raise funds for its organization. Lead shot from the shooting events built up on the fields and required clean up before the fields could be used. As we know, lead can be harmful when ingested. HCPH made sure food service and water were free from contamination and worked closely with the Ohio EPA to clean up the fields.

Summary

Flexibility is a key to a successful public health program. While the fundamentals remain largely the same – stopping the spread of communicable disease – the targets for the spread of disease change. Hepatitis and HIV infections resulting from opioid use disorder are a major part of our current health activities. Oral health care, as well as handling an old public health nemesis like TB, require new approaches. HCPH is working diligently behind the scenes to make certain that the citizens of Hamilton County continue to enjoy a safe and disease-free environment.

In 2019, we will recognize our 100 year anniversary. In 2019, we will invite you to visit our website – www.hcph.org – for a tour of public health history and a good look at how we work to keep you healthy.

Stay healthy!
Tim Ingram

Hamilton County Health Commissioner

Revenues & Expenditures - 2018



REVENUES

● Fees & Permits	\$6,009,404
● Grants & Contracts	\$2,950,568
● TB Control-Indigent Care Levy/Levy for Harm & Oral Care	\$1,101,000
● Cities, Townships, Villages	\$810,680
● State Subsidies	\$297,603
● Donations	\$250,000
● Other Revenue	\$311,100

Total Revenues **\$11,730,355**

EXPENDITURES

● Personnel Services	\$7,048,324
● State & Other Agency Fees	\$1,270,911
● Operating Expenses	\$3,341,139

Total Expenditures **\$11,660,374**

2018 Program Highlights

Community Health

Birth Records Issued	15,528
Death Records Issued	26,432
Communicable Diseases Reported	13,066
Communicable Disease Outbreaks	58
Community Preparedness Points of Dispensing Sites	89
Tuberculosis Screenings	1,556
Active Cases of Tuberculosis	19
The Exchange Project	
Number of Visits	11,211
New Clients Served	1,592
Syringes Exchanged	353,608
HIV Tests Administered	351
Hepatitis C Tests Administered	261
Referrals to Treatment	62
Narcan Distribution Collaborative	
Doses Distributed	26,358

Environmental Health

Backflow Surveys Completed	125
Food Service Inspections	5,852
Food Safety Training – Individuals Trained	1,162
Lead Investigations Completed	13
Medical Gas Inspections	116
Nuisance Inspections	2,269
Plumbing Permits Issued	4,201
Rabies Quarantine Notices Sent	684
School Inspections	313
Sewage Treatment System (STS)	
Inspections/Re-inspections	15,534
Swimming Pool/Spa Inspections	1,610
Tattoo/Piercing Facility Inspections	40
Waste Facility Inspections	301



Hamilton County Public Health Mission

Hamilton County Public Health educates, serves and protects our community for a healthier future.

Hamilton County Public Health Vision

Healthy choices. Healthy lives. Healthy communities.

District Advisory Council

Members include presidents of township boards of trustees, village mayors and the President of the Board of County Commissioners. Members are required by law to meet annually in March. They select the members of the Board of Health, make recommendations to the Board of Health and authorize city contractual agreements.

Chairman Rose Stertz
Secretary Lawanda Corman

Board of Health

The Board of Health is the governing body of Hamilton County Public Health. It has the authority to adopt rules and regulations which have the same status as law, enact policies within the jurisdiction of HCPH and hire a health commissioner. Meetings are held at the HCPH office on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

President Jim Brett
Vice President Mark Rippe
Board Members Kenneth Amend, M.D.
Elizabeth Kelly, M.D.
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.

Health Commissioner and Staff

Health Commissioner Timothy Ingram
Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Davidson, Department of Community Health Services
Assistant Health Commissioner Greg Kesterman, Department of Environmental Health Services

Divisions

Disease Prevention Laura McCreadie, Director
Environmental Health Jeremy Hessel, Director
Epidemiology and Assessment David Carlson, Director
Health Promotion and Education Rebecca Stowe, Director
Plumbing Lisa Humble, Director
Waste Management Chuck DeJonckheere, Director
Water Quality Chris Griffith, Director

Frequently Requested Information

Customer Service and Important Phone Numbers

Main Number (513) 946-7800
Administration/Health Commissioner's Office (513) 946-7822
Main Fax (513) 946-7890

Web and Social Media

Hamilton County Public Health Online www.HCPH.org
Follow us on Twitter @HamCoHealth
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WeTHRIVE!™ www.WatchUsThrive.org