



Health Equity – The Move Forward

Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Achieving this requires focused and ongoing societal efforts to address historical and contemporary injustices; overcome economic, social, and other obstacles to health and healthcare; and eliminate preventable health disparities.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

As we have seen during the global pandemic, health equity and the obstacles to attaining the best outcomes are in significant need of improvement. Minority communities, particularly African Americans, suffered from COVID-19 at higher rates and ultimately had worse outcomes from contracting the virus.

At Hamilton County Public Health, we have seen firsthand the results of inequitable access to health services. Factors affecting inequity include socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability status, where they live, or a combination of these. In 2015, we took a deep dive into the factors affecting health outcomes in Hamilton County. We followed up in 2022 with the second generation of our Health Equity Report, viewing the County through an equity lens focused by COVID-19.

Our learning led us to quickly mobilize resources to combat many of the health disparities witnessed before and during the pandemic. First and foremost was meeting people where they are. As we quickly learned, testing and vaccination clinics were needed in several of the most underserved areas in Hamilton County. We moved our vaccine clinics around the County to focus on areas our research showed were vaccinating at lower rates. Thanks to the Hamilton County Board of Elections, we set up our “home” vaccine clinic in its centrally located office, close to bus lines and accessible from major roadways. Finally, we assembled a mobile team to deliver vaccination to the homebound and others with issues preventing them from attending a clinic.

Many people who attended one of our clinics came seeking information. There was considerable misinformation spreading throughout the pandemic and we trained our teams to listen first and then share facts. While not all who came for information received a vaccine, they did receive trusted information from healthcare professionals to help their decisions.

Immigrant communities also required individualized attention. Language barriers and immigration status concerns served as roadblocks to receiving vaccines among these populations. Our teams set up clinics in targeted areas of high immigrant populations and came equipped with bilingual staff and translation service to reach these vulnerable populations.

As a result of these efforts, Hamilton County achieved a vaccine rate of more than 68 percent, among the top numbers in the State. While we are hopefully seeing the worst of the pandemic behind us, we are continuing preventive efforts including vaccination, test kit distribution and mobile clinics.

WeTHRIVE!

Many of you are already participating in our WeTHRIVE! initiative. The program mission -- to create a culture of health, safety, and vitality in communities, schools, and childcare centers throughout Hamilton County -- advances our work in achieving health equity. Many communities participating in the program have rallied behind this initiative to add healthy habits to their arsenals. These include healthy eating, exercise and play opportunities to make healthy lifestyles accessible to more people.

Infectious Disease

Health disparities also show up when dealing with sexually transmitted infections (STIs), hepatitis and tuberculosis. We have implemented strong outreach programs and trained staff to go into communities in need of attention to deliver information, preventive services and ultimately, treatment. Our team of disease investigators performs “boots-on-the-ground” public health work in painstakingly following up on cases of STIs and HIV, tracking potential contacts and getting people the treatment they need.

Harm Reduction

Mobile outreach is also the centerpiece of our harm reduction services. Those suffering from substance use disorder often have nowhere to turn for help. Our program reaches them where they are, providing safe equipment, Narcan, the overdose reversing drug, fentanyl test strips and other supplies. Perhaps most important, trained staff work with this group to keep them safe and healthy until they are ready to enter a treatment program. At that point, our team can either refer them to a treatment program or in some instances, drive them directly to the program.

Maternal Health & Infant Mortality

Health inequity also manifests itself in one of the saddest trends we see in Hamilton County – that of infant and maternal mortality. Both measures are indicators of the general health of a society. The unfortunate reality is that Hamilton County infants die at higher rates than those in most of the country. Many factors contribute to this problem including, poverty, tobacco and substance use, pregnancy spacing, and lack of prenatal care as well as safe sleep techniques.

Hamilton County Public Health has a lead role in trying to reduce infant mortality rates. We provide all the epidemiological reports necessary to get to the root causes of these rates. Our team thoroughly reviews each death to uncover trends, establish best practices and develop intervention tactics to reach the most vulnerable. We start at the beginning, working with pregnant mothers to provide education and best practices, while helping them through the birthing process and moving to safely raising their children.

There is still considerable work to do to reduce these rates. This work resembles a marathon much more so than a sprint. Many of the behaviors leading to poor outcomes are ingrained in these populations and take time to undo. Trust and education are major factors and our team of trained professionals work one-on-one with many in these vulnerable populations to keep maternal and child health at the forefront.

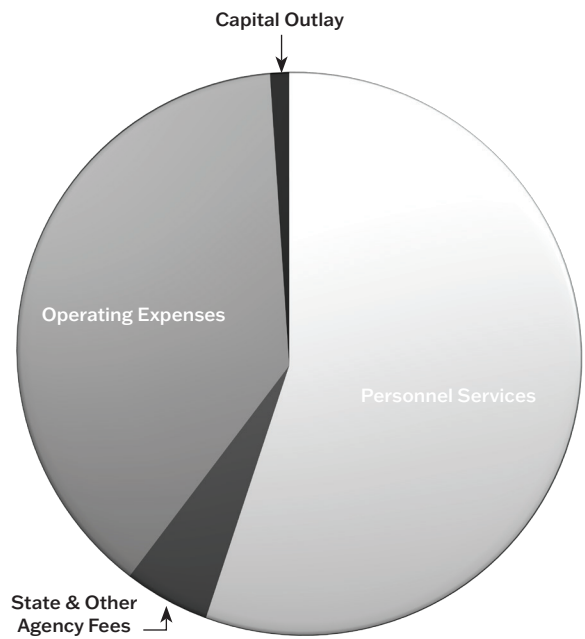
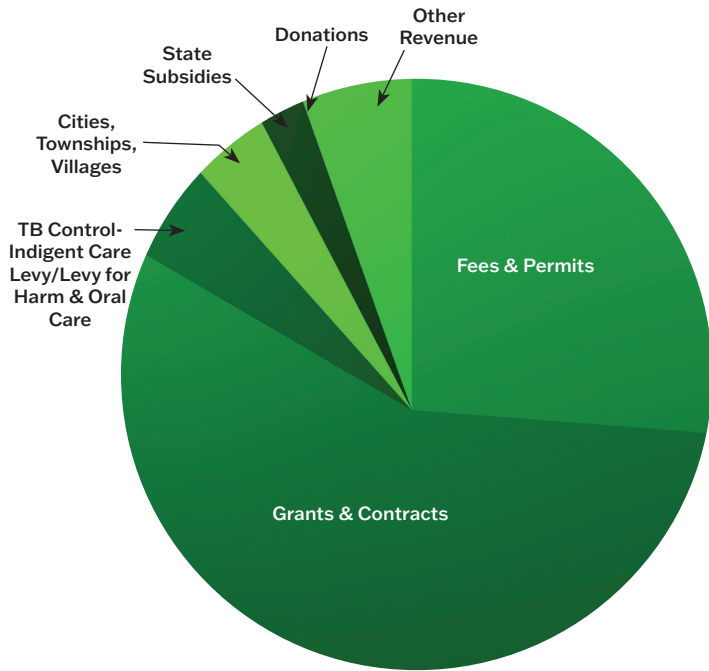
Social Determinants of Health

Each of the above-mentioned issues are very specific. However, there is commonality among them. The background for each lie within the social determinants of health -- the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes. Social determinants of health have a major impact on people’s health, well-being, and quality of life. Examples include: safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods; racism, discrimination, and violence; education, job opportunities, and income; access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities; polluted air and water; language and literacy skills.

All of these factors are underlying causes of the major issues affecting health outcomes. As we learn to live with COVID and move forward in public health, health equity will drive our response to many of the public health issues we face. By looking at health and outcomes through an equity lens, we will continue to work to tear down the barriers preventing great health outcomes for everyone.

Greg Kesterman
Health Commissioner

Revenues & Expenditures - 2022



REVENUES

Fees & Permits	\$5,589,110
Grants & Contracts	12,338,388
TB Control-Indigent Care Levy/Levy for Harm & Oral Care	1,101,000
Cities, Townships, Villages	860,050
State Subsidies	491,314
Donations	1,000
Other Revenue	1,166,945
Total Revenues	\$21,547,807

EXPENDITURES

Personnel Services	\$11,663,772
State & Other Agency Fees	1,091,889
Operating Expenses	8,213,748
Capital Outlay	221,556
Total Expenditures	\$21,190,965

2022 Program Highlights

Community Health

Birth Records Issued	11,309
Death Records Issued	31,253
Emergency Medicine Points of Dispensing Sites	104
Syphilis Clients Treated	419
Harm Reduction	
Total Client Visits to Syringe Exchange	14,329
Syringes Distributed	977,275
HIV Tests Administered at Syringe Exchange	324
Hepatitis C Tests Administered at Syringe Exchange	50
Current Exchange Locations	8
WeTHRIVE! Communities/School Districts	24/8

Environmental Health

Backflow Devices Registered	342
Food Service Inspections	7,976
Food Safety Training – Individuals Trained	524
Lead Investigations Completed	14
Medical Gas Inspections	127
Nuisance Inspections.	1,598
Plumbing Permits Issued	4,057
Rabies Quarantine Notices Sent	745
School Inspections 353	
Sewage Treatment System (STS) Inspections/Re-inspections	15,149
Swimming Pool/Spa Inspections	1,670
Tattoo/Piercing Facility Inspections	52
Waste Facility Inspections	158

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.

Chair	Rose Stertz
Secretary	Jodie Leis

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 4 p.m.

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

Health Commissioner and Staff

Health Commissioner	Greg Kesterman
Assistant Health Commissioner	Jackie Lindner, Department of Community Health Services
Assistant Health Commissioner	Craig Davidson, Department of Environmental Health Services

Divisions

Disease Prevention	Martha Walter, Director
Environmental Health	Jeremy Hessel, Director
Epidemiology and Assessment	Anne Arble, Director
Health Promotion and Education	Mary Ellen Knaebel, Director
Plumbing	Lisa Humble, Director
Waste Management	Chuck DeJonckheere, Director
Water Quality	Felicia Erwin, 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
Join us on Facebook	www.fb.com/HamCoHealth
YouTube	www.youtube.com/HamCoHealth
WeTHRIVE!SM	www.WatchUsThrive.org