



Department of Public Health



Annual Report 2023

Letter from Health Officer/Director

Dear Community of Watertown:

It is my privilege to present the 2023 Watertown Department of Public Health Annual Report. This report reflects all the services provided by our department to carry out the 10 essential services of public health. Our health department strives to fulfill the essential services as well as our mission: Support a community where all individuals can achieve their best health.

The public health team worked to review past and present practices and engaged in strategic planning. We identified priorities to focus on for the next five years to best serve the City of Watertown community. This was done while continuing to be responsive to community needs and ensuring public health mandates were addressed.

Collaborative efforts continued to bridge the gaps identified in the Community Health Assessment completed in 2022. Community coalitions began to dig deeper into the priorities of access to affordable quality mental health care and access to affordable reliable transportation. Support was also given to community partners working on access to affordable quality housing and access to affordable quality childcare.

I am honored to work with an extremely dedicated team of public health professionals. Their commitment to serve this incredible community in a responsible and meaningful way is inspiring.

Our team members are committed to improving the quality of life we enjoy in the City of Watertown and we welcome your feedback on how we can better serve you. Visit our website to find out more about what we do: https://www.watertownwi.gov/departments/health_department/index.php and send me an e-mail at cquest@watertownwi.gov if you have any questions or suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Carol Quest, RN, BSN
Health Officer/Director



Mission, Vision and Core Values

MISSION:

Support a community where all individuals can achieve their best health.

VISION:

To work with and advocate for the community by promoting health, preparing for emergencies, and preventing disease for the health of all generations .

ORGANIZATIONAL CORE VALUES:

Accountability: We take responsibility for our actions and decisions while striving to meet goals and outcomes.

Collaboration: We work in partnership to create an environment that brings together diverse people to work collectively towards shared goals.

Community: We promote cooperative and creative approaches to common issues.

Consistency: We are committed to equitable enforcement of agency policies to ensure fair treatment and assessments that uphold the public trust.

Knowledge: We foster education and implementation of best practice and evidence based strategies by educating staff, informing the community and supporting future public health professionals.

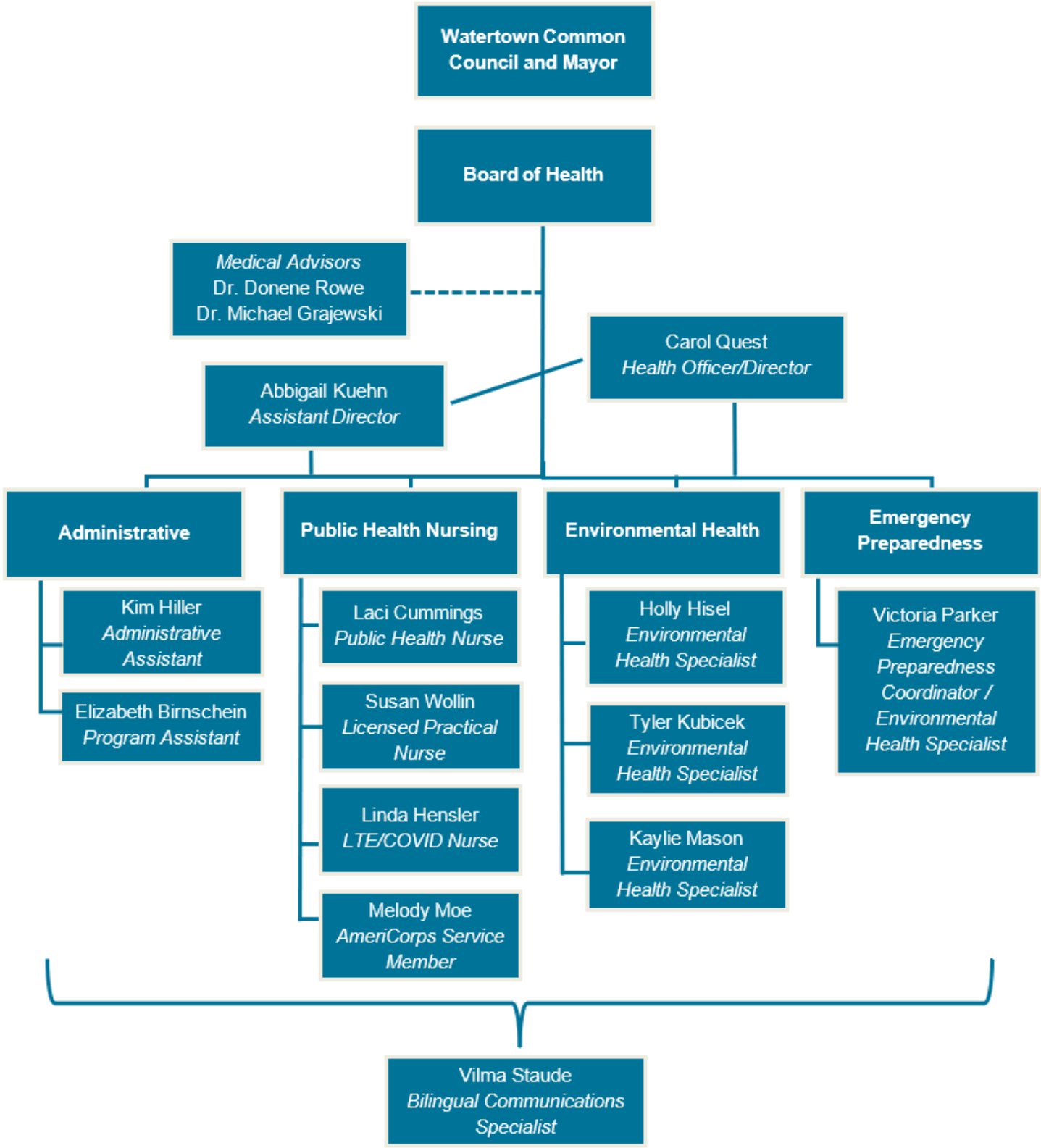
Leadership: As a team of Public Health professionals we adhere to and promote public health core functions and standards of practice, embracing responsibility and leading by example to achieve community public health goals.

Resourcefulness: We are committed to pursuing resources and the efficient use of limited assets to carry out our mission.

Responsive: We respond to the needs of the community by advocating for services that are meaningful and positively impact the health of the community.



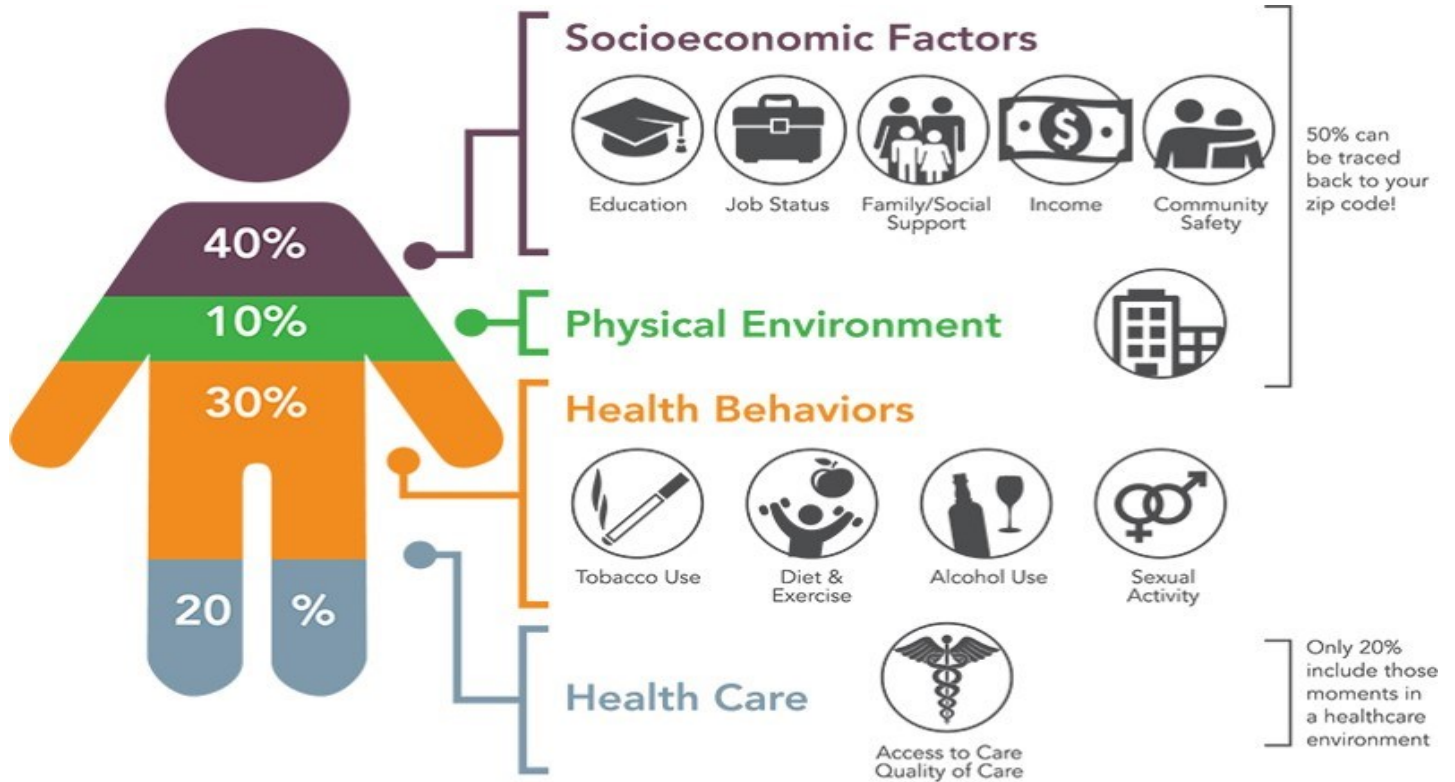
Organizational Chart 2023



Essential Service #1

Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.

What determines our health?



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

Demographics

	Watertown	Dodge County	Jefferson County	Wisconsin	USA
Population	23,030	90,186	85,622	5,922,426	333,934,112
Median Age	39.4	42.3	40.4	40.2	38.8
Median Household Income	\$59,111	\$61,969	\$71,285	\$63,001	\$64,730
Annual Population Growth (2021-2026)	-0.41% (2020)	0.19%	0.37%	0.41%	0.71%
Household Population	8,996	34,769	33,815	2,404,113	126,470,675
Businesses	402	2,999	3,018	215,273	12,013,469
Employees	9,795	42,128	39,005	3,151,581	150,287,786
Health Care Index	95	91	98	95	100
Average Health Expenditures	NA	\$5,658	\$6,090	\$5,922	\$6,237
Total Health Expenditures	NA	196.7 M	205.9 M	14.2 B	788.8 B
Racial and Ethnic Make-up					
White	84%	92%	92%	84%	69%
Black	1%	3%	1%	7%	13%
American Indian	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%	1%	1%	3%	6%
Other	0%	2%	3%	3%	7%
Mixed Race	3%	1%	2%	2%	4%
Hispanic Origin	11%	5%	8%	7%	19%

Sources: Dodge and Jefferson Counties, WI, and USA data retrieved from 2022 published DJHCP CHA document, listed source Esri. Watertown data retrieved from the following sources: Population data from <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US5583975-watertown-wi/>, Business and employee from [https://data.census.gov/](https://data.census.gov/table?q=Watertown,WI&tid=ACST5Y2021.S0804) and <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/watertowncitywisconsin/SB0001217#SB0001217>; Annual Population Growth rate from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/watertown-wi-population>, and Health Expenditures retrieved from BestPlaces Health Cost Index

Community Health Assessment Presentation

Several WDPH staff members are a part of Dodge Jefferson Healthier Community Partnership (DJHCP), a committee that completes a Community Health Assessment (CHA) every three years with partners from Dodge County Human Services and Health Department, Jefferson County Health Department, Watertown Regional Medical Center, Fort Health Care, Marshfield Medical Center- Beaver Dam, Rock River Community Clinic, and Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation. In 2023, the DJHCP Steering Committee participated in a pilot project offered through Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA). This pilot project worked with the DJHCP Steering Community on their CHA process to help develop a toolkit for Wisconsin health departments working on their CHA in the future as well as worked with the committee on next steps for developing their Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Members of the DJHCP Steering Committee were invited to present at the WPHA conference about their participation in the pilot.



DJHCP Steering Committee members at WPHA Conference. Left to right: Melody Moe, Carol Quest, Abbey Kuehn, Kim Melcher



Melody Moe presenting during a breakout session at WPHA conference

Essential Service #2

Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.

Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases are reported to the local health department to help stop the transmission of disease. Communicable diseases are reported based on State Statute 252.

Communicable Disease	2021	2022	2023
Chlamydia & Gonorrhea	97	55	84
Food/Water Borne	20	12	20
Hepatitis A, B, C	27	50	46
Hospitalized Associated Influenza	47	29	28
Lyme Disease	*	*	9
Measles & Mumps	*	*	*
Pertussis	*	10	9
Invasive Streptococcal Disease	*	5	5
Tuberculosis- Latent	*	*	*
Varicella	8	6	*

* Numbers less than 5 will not be reported due to privacy
 Chart includes confirmed, probable, suspect, and not a case numbers



Long-Term Care Facility Outbreaks

Three long-term care facilities were monitored for multiple or ongoing respiratory outbreaks due to COVID-19 in 2023. Health department staff provide guidance for facilities during outbreaks.



Rabies Follow-up

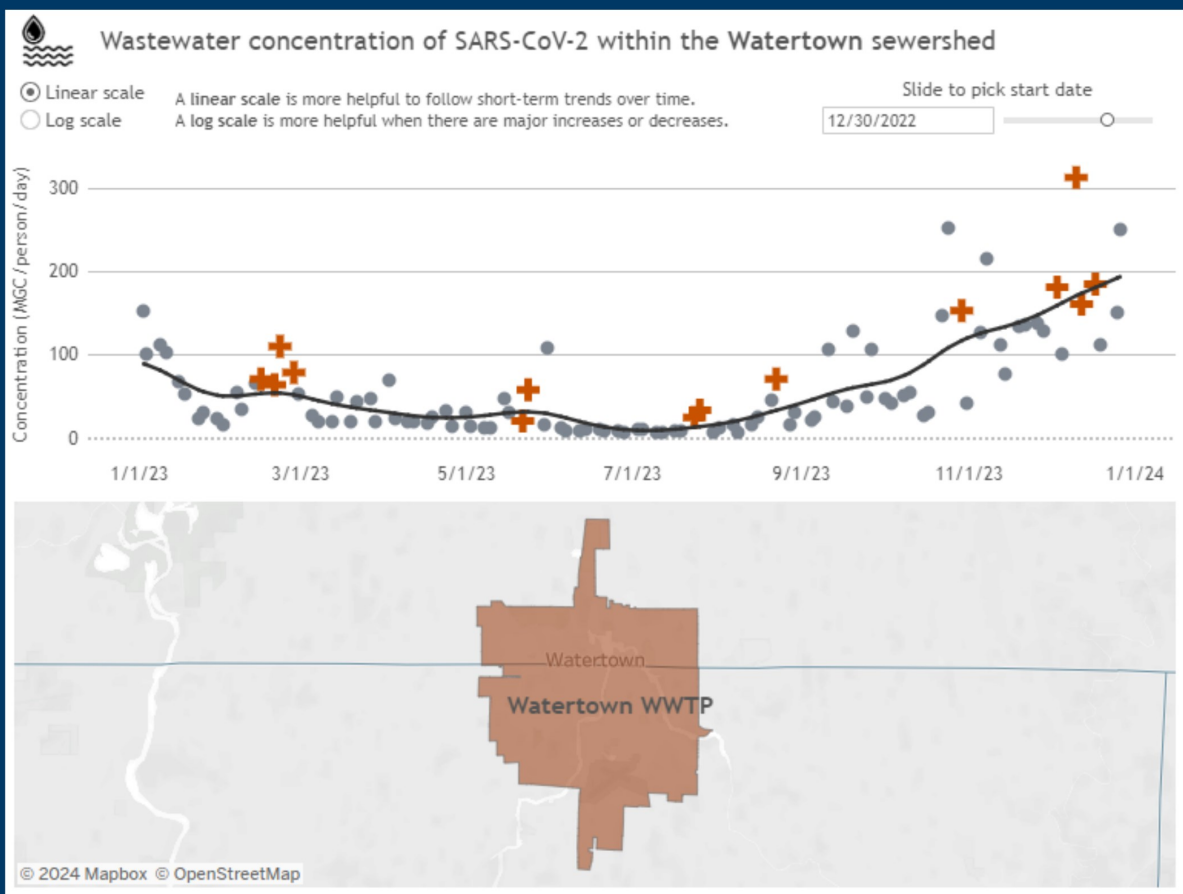
Staff conducted follow-up including guidance and next steps for community members with possible exposures to rabies. One dog and one bat were sent to Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene for testing.

COVID-19 Wastewater Sampling

In April 2023, Environmental Health staff partnered with the City of Watertown Water Department to collect and ship wastewater samples to determine the amount of SARS-CoV-2 virus was present in untreated wastewater in the community. Rather than test every single person individually, this approach allows monitoring of the entire community at the same time and provides a more complete picture of COVID-19 activity in our community. We will continue this partnership in 2024.



WI DHS Wastewater Surveillance Dashboard



Categories are calculated by averaging the SARS-CoV-2 concentrations of the three most recent samples at the Watertown Wastewater Treatment Plant and comparing this current level to past levels measured at that facility, which are sorted into five categories:

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

October, November, and December were in the "Very High" category in 2023.

Lead

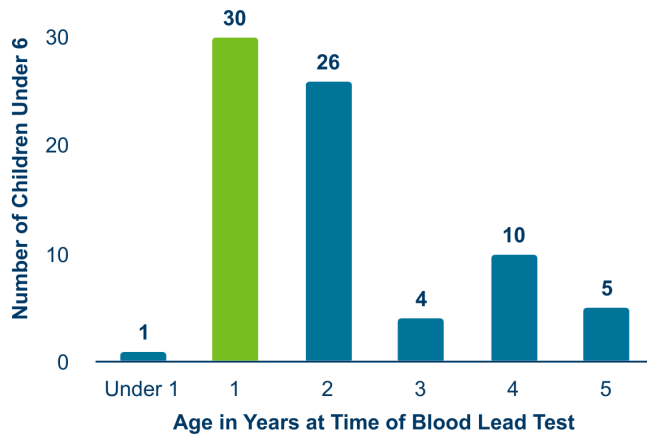


Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

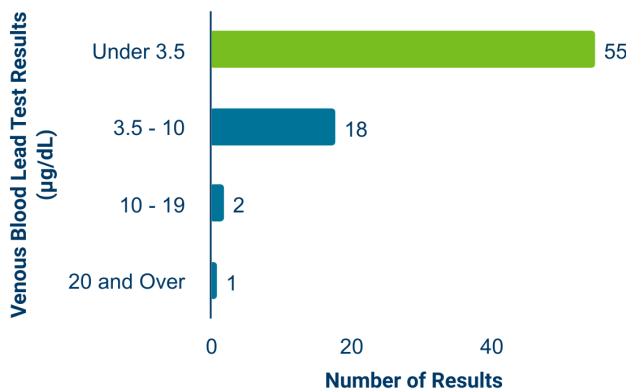
Lead is a naturally occurring metal that can cause negative health effects. People are exposed to lead by eating lead paint chips, ingesting contaminated food or water, and/or by breathing in lead dust. Children younger than 6 years are more likely to be exposed due to their hand-to-mouth behavior.

Public health is central in addressing all components of this childhood disease, including prevention of exposure, treatment, and surveillance.

2023 Lead Program Data



76 children in the City of Watertown received at least one venous blood lead test in 2023.



Lead Poisoning

- There is no safe blood lead level in children.
- However, the CDC uses a blood lead reference value of 3.5 µg/dL to better identify children with higher levels of lead in their blood compared to most children.

2023 Objectives

Wisconsin law requires intervention when a child's blood lead level (BLL) reaches an "elevated blood lead level (EBLL)." The statutory definition of an EBLL is a venous BLL \geq 20 µg/dL or two venous BLLs \geq 15 µg/dL drawn at least 90 days apart. Local health departments are required to do environmental investigations for all children with an EBLL.

Children with results over 10 µg/dL receive comprehensive home visits from a public health nurse.

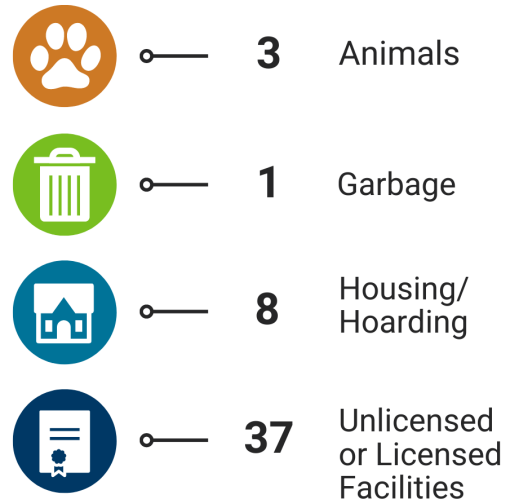
Human Health Hazards

Throughout the year, the Environmental Public Health Consortium handles a variety of complaints from citizens that require investigation and follow-up.

Follow Up Contacts



Complaints by Type - 49 Total

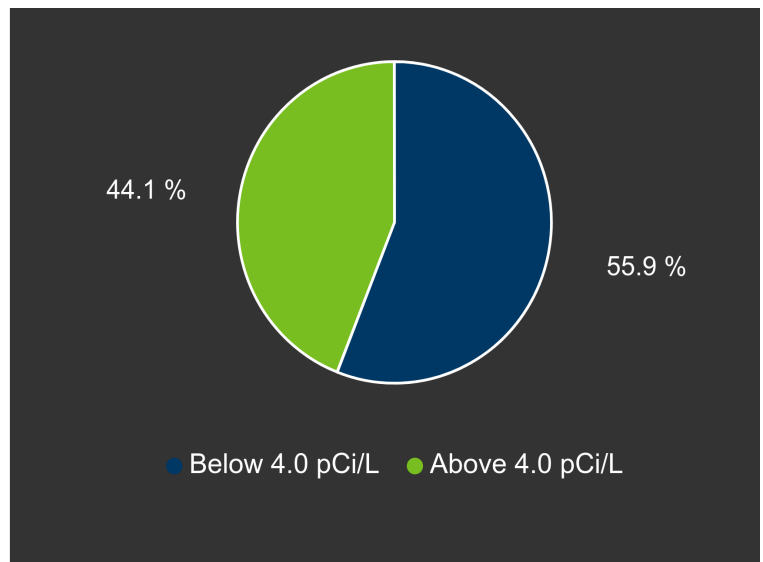


Radon

The Watertown Radon Information Center (RIC) serves the City of Watertown, Jefferson and Dodge Counties as the lead contact for Radon awareness and education. Funded by a grant through the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Watertown RIC provides free Radon test kits at all three local health departments. The Watertown RIC also provides outreach to the public through press releases, social media, and public events.

In December 2023 and going forward, postage-paid Radon kits will be purchased for distribution for a more equitable opportunity for all citizens to test their home.

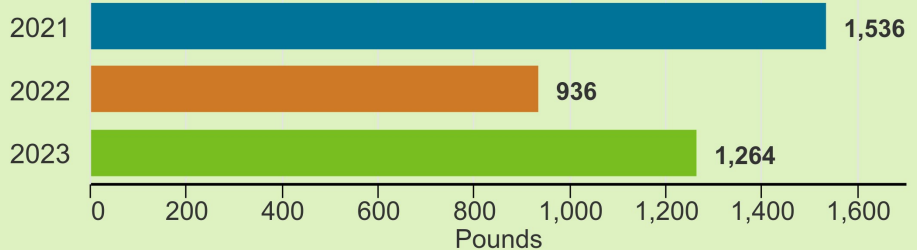
Of the 311 Radon kits distributed throughout Dodge and Jefferson Counties that were returned for analyzing, 137 of the results were above 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), which is the EPA's recommended action level.



Essential Service #3

Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

Sharps



As the number of persons using sharps (needles, syringes and lancets) in their homes rises, so does the health risk to all workers in recycling facilities. Workers may be accidentally stuck when sharps are mixed with household garbage, recyclables, or when flushed down a toilet.

The Watertown Department of Public Health (WDPH) is a drop off site for household sharps. During 2023, 1,264 pounds of sharps were disposed of between community member drop off and used vaccine syringes.

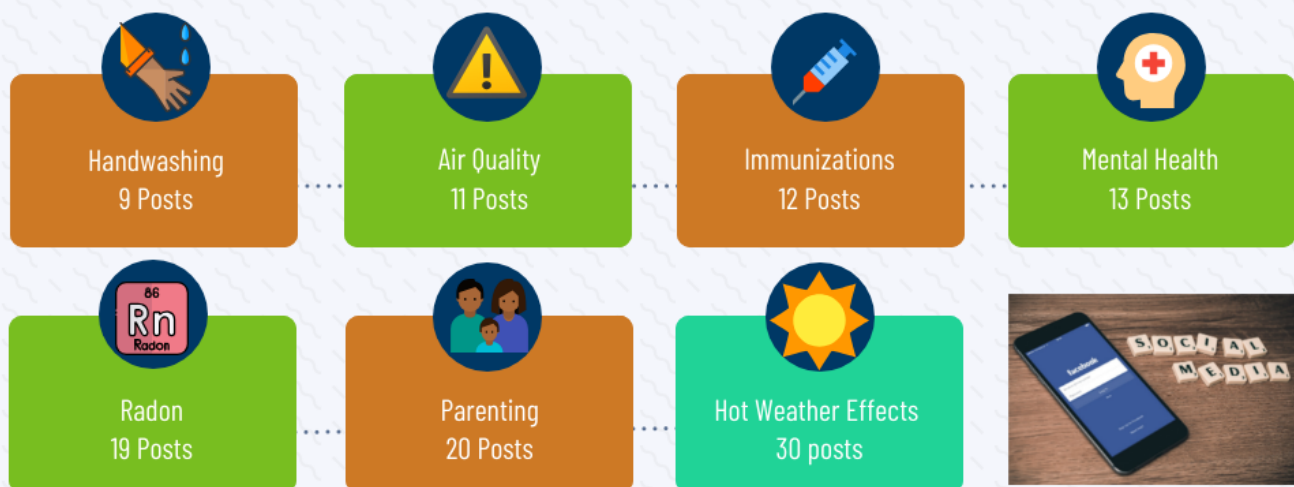
WDPH also offers community members the option to purchase sharps containers for a nominal fee. In 2023, 71 containers were sold.

* increase in 2021 due to large community COVID 19 clinics



Social Media Messaging

Social media messaging is an effective way to inform and educate the community about health, factors that influence health, and ways to improve health. In 2023 there were 547 Facebook posts. Posts included topics such as food recalls, air quality, heat advisories, information and testing on Radon gas, chronic disease, Seal A Smile program, purchase and collection of sharps containers, food safety, child and adult immunizations, preventative measures, and general health and nutrition. The posts about recalled food were to alert the public about apple pouches containing lead and a Salmonella outbreak in cantaloupe products. Posts about air quality were a response to the smoke from the wildfires in Canada during the summer. Excessive heat in August prompted the posts regarding extreme heat/humid conditions where cooling shelters were open to the public for those who did not have ways to cool off. Here are some of the topics that were seen frequently on our Facebook page in 2023:



Child Safety Programs

Car Seat Program

Car seat checks are provided to community members free of charge by certified car seat technicians. Car seat checks ensure children are as safe as possible when riding in vehicles. Each seat is inspected for correct fit for the child's height and weight, expiration, recall, and correct installation in the vehicle. Technicians educate on how to properly use, harness the child, and install the seat. Caregivers are then given an opportunity to practice, ensuring they are able to do it correctly each time on their own.

78 Car seats checked

Car seats dispensed **40**

Car seats are available for dispense through grant funding received through Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation. Families are screened for eligibility to receive a car seat free of charge. Families are educated on proper use of the seat and provided a demonstration before having them practice harnessing and installing the seat to ensure they do not have any questions on how to use the car seat correctly.



Pack 'N Play Program

12 Pack 'N plays dispense in 2023

WDPH continued to dispense pack 'n plays donated from a community partner in 2023 to families in the community who were facing a financial burden and unable to provide a safe sleep environment for their children. Families were provided a demonstration on how to use the pack 'n play and provided education on safe sleep. With the increased need in the community, staff wrote for a Walmart grant at the end of 2023 and received funding to purchase pack 'n plays for 2024.



28 Pack 'N plays purchased for 2024

Essential Service #4

Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.

Get Healthy Watertown



The Get Healthy Watertown coalition promotes physical activity and good nutrition for every generation living in Watertown through community engagement with people, programs, and policies. Get Healthy Watertown is an active participant in our community's health improvement plan and process.



The community garden was planted, maintained and harvested by volunteers through the Watertown Senior & Community Center and an AmeriCorps service member. 176 pounds of fresh produce was provided to senior meals.



The weekly walks and community garden promotes well-being by bringing people together which improves mental health, increases physical health, and creates a sense of purpose and belonging.

Surveys were conducted to learn more about community members' activity levels. Feedback resulted in an additional walking event added per week as well as family bike rides throughout the summer.



Crossroads

Crossroads of Watertown Rental Assistance, Inc.



WDPH staff continue to partner with Crossroads in their mission to serve families and individuals with rental assistance in the Watertown Geographical Area School District.



97 People Helped

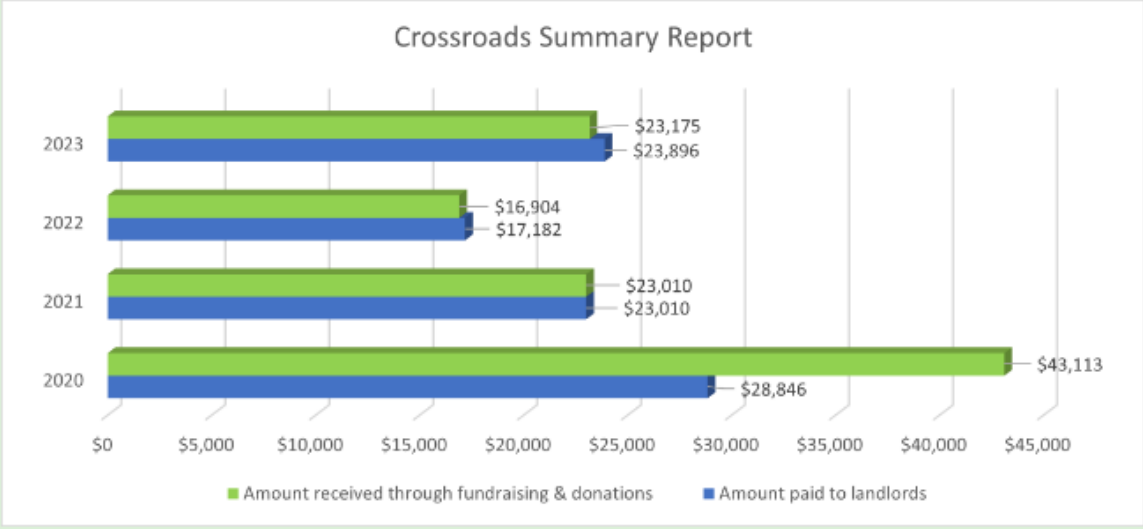
49 adults along with 48 children were supported in 2023.

\$252

The median amount provided per person for 2023.



Given current rental trends, it is anticipated that increased need will be seen in 2024.



In 2023, the primary funding sources for Crossroads included grant money from United Way, along with other donations from charitable organizations and businesses, churches, and generous individuals. Fundraisers were also organized by Crossroads board members along with selfless volunteers.

Essential Service #5

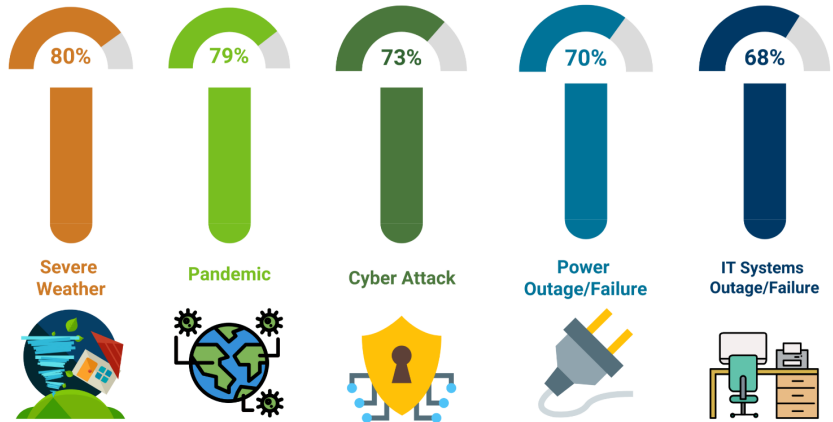
Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

Emergency Preparedness

During 2023, City Department Leadership had a tabletop workshop in the summer and a tabletop exercise in the fall to discuss how polices, plans, and procedures would work in different emergency situations and how different departments would have to collaborate with each other to ensure continuity of operations. The annual Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) was conducted with the Watertown Health Care Coalition to reveal the top five hazards or risks that are most likely to have an impact in Watertown. Continual partnership occurred with SCWIHERC (South Central Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition), and a workshop for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Forum was created to update and revise the plan. In February, the Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) Conference took place, where the overall theme was public health and community resilience. The health department conducted communication drills to ensure proper notification during emergencies take place.



2023 Hazard Vulnerability Analysis Top 5 Risks

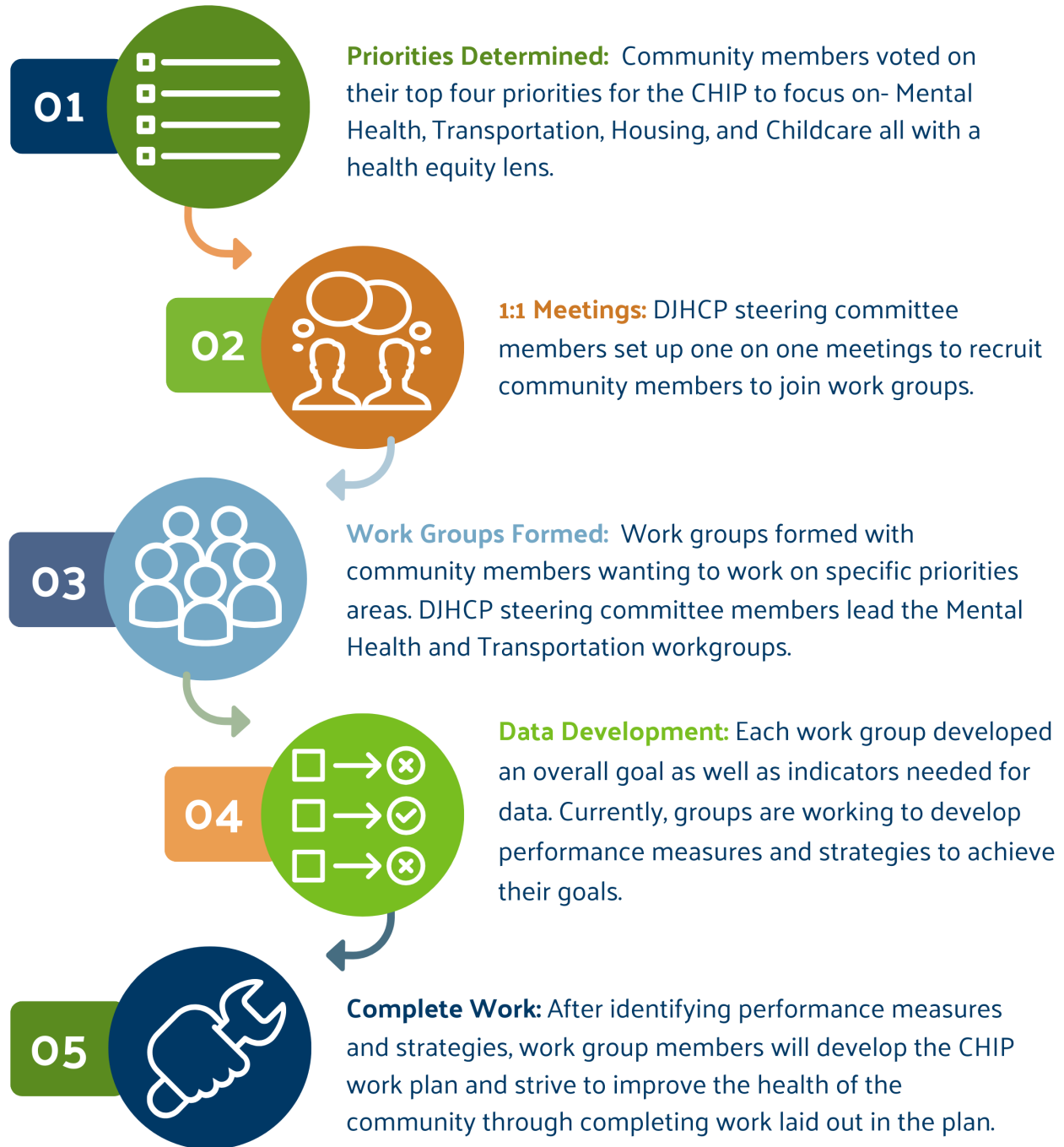


2023 Monthly Emergency Preparedness Education



CHIPP

After completion of the Community Health Assessment, Dodge Jefferson Healthier Community Partnership (DJHCP) develops a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This plan is utilized to lead the work of community members participating in work groups over three years to identify and meet performance measures and utilize strategies to improve the health of the community in the chosen priority areas.



Essential Service #6

Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.

Agent Inspection Program

The City of Watertown/Jefferson County Environmental Public Health Consortium provides health inspections and licensing services for a variety of establishments under contracts with Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS).

License Type	Pre-inspection	Routine	Re-inspection	Onsite Visit	Complaint	Totals
Retail Food: (Restaurants, Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores, bakeries, etc)	107	415	45	3	19	589
Recreational Business: (Recreational Water, Lodging, Rec-Ed Camps, Campgrounds)	46	108	41	280	2	477
Body Art (Tattoo, Body Piercing)	3	8				11

Pre-inspections

Pre-inspections are required for any new business prior to obtaining a license. This includes newly constructed businesses or existing businesses that are changing ownership. A pre-inspection is also required for significant remodels for existing facilities.

During pre-inspections, physical features of the facility must meet most recent Food Code standards. Some facilities may require multiple pre-inspections before having their license released and opening to the public.

Routine

All licensed facilities are required to have a routine inspection completed every license year (July 1 through June 30).

Routine inspections observe food safety practices and processes (e.g. cooking, cooling, hand washing, etc.), physical features of the facility (e.g. equipment, cleanliness, pest control), employee health and competency/training.

Re-inspections

Re-inspections are chargeable inspections that are completed based on violations observed during a routine, complaint, or on-site visit that fall under the re-inspection criteria for that license type.

Re-inspections are required for imminent health hazards, an excessive number of violations or the same violation observed on three consecutive violations.

Monthly pool chemistry onsite visits that result in closure due to non-complying chemicals will also require a re-inspection to re-open.

On-site Visits

On-site visits can be a visit to a facility that does not fall under a pre-inspection, re-inspection, or routine inspection.

Most frequently, onsite visits occur for recreational water facilities (i.e. pools, whirlpools) monthly chemistry inspections. Inspectors test water chemistry to assure levels are within code required ranges.



64

School Food Safety
Inspections completed



104

Inspections completed at
25 different events and 4
local farmer's markets



55

Grease trap inspections
completed

School Food Safety Inspections

Schools participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program receive two inspections per school year by our department as required by the Department of Public Instruction.

One inspection is a routine kitchen inspection based on the Wisconsin Food Code. Second inspections are a review and audit of the school's Food Safety Plan and records, including Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles, policies and procedures, and documentation logs.

Special Event Inspections

Vendors providing food and beverages during special events (e.g. fairs, festivals, farmer's markets) may require licenses and inspections. Inspectors are onsite during special events to complete inspections to assure food safety principles are being followed. Not only do we inspect our locally licensed vendors, but we also complete inspections for vendors that are licensed in other jurisdictions.

Grease Trap Inspections

In collaboration with the Watertown Water/Wastewater Department, inspection staff complete grease trap inspection for businesses in Watertown that have a grease trap (interceptor) installed in their facility.

Grease traps that are not maintained and serviced allow grease to flow into the city sewer lines and infrastructure causing build up and accumulations to occur in sewer laterals.

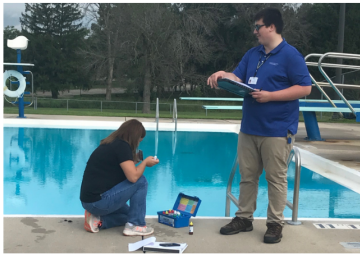
Inspection staff complete onsite visual inspections of the grease traps and review any service or maintenance logs.

Pool Closures January 2023 - December 2023

The Environmental Public Health Consortium continued its monthly onsite chemistry inspection for all recreational water licenses. Onsite chemistry inspections are completed each month when an annual routine inspection is not completed. Below is a breakdown of the closures during 2023, January through December.

323

inspections completed, both onsite and routine inspections of roughly 40 pools



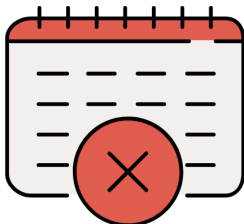
29

temporary closures issued



8

facilities were temporarily closed 2 or more times 2023



10

temporary closures were high disinfectant levels over code limit (chlorine or bromine)



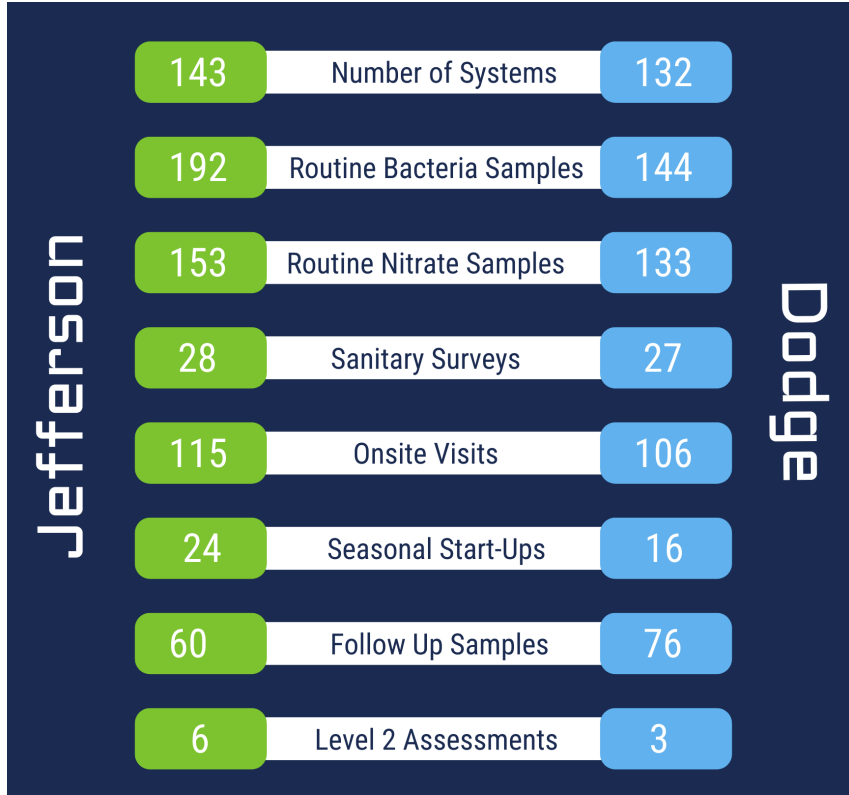
19

temporary closures were due to low disinfectant (chlorine or bromine), of those 15 had no disinfectant detected



Transient Well (TN) Program

Through a contract with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Environmental Public Health Consortium is a county contract for the transient well water program. Transient well water systems are locations with private wells that serve at least 25 transient people at least 60 days a year. Our jurisdiction covers both Jefferson and Dodge Counties. Responsibilities of the contract include water sampling, well inspections, and enforcement.



Beach Water Quality Testing

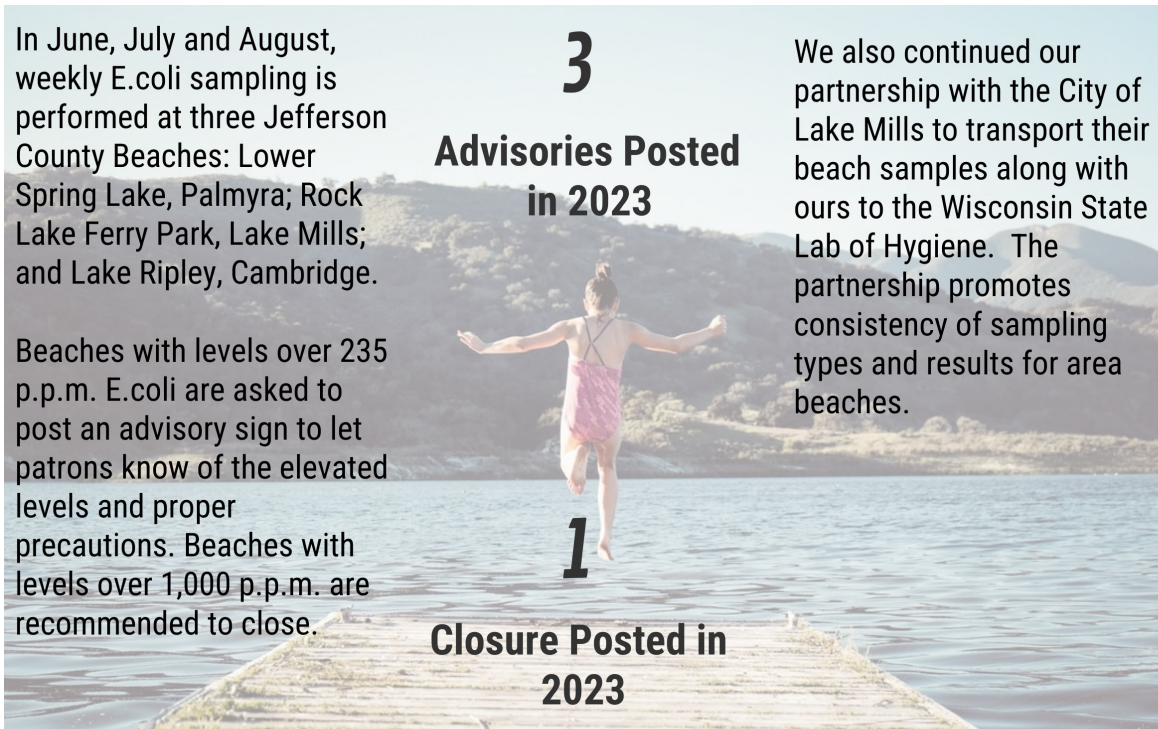
In June, July and August, weekly E.coli sampling is performed at three Jefferson County Beaches: Lower Spring Lake, Palmyra; Rock Lake Ferry Park, Lake Mills; and Lake Ripley, Cambridge.

Beaches with levels over 235 p.p.m. E.coli are asked to post an advisory sign to let patrons know of the elevated levels and proper precautions. Beaches with levels over 1,000 p.p.m. are recommended to close.

3
Advisories Posted in 2023

1
Closure Posted in 2023

We also continued our partnership with the City of Lake Mills to transport their beach samples along with ours to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. The partnership promotes consistency of sampling types and results for area beaches.



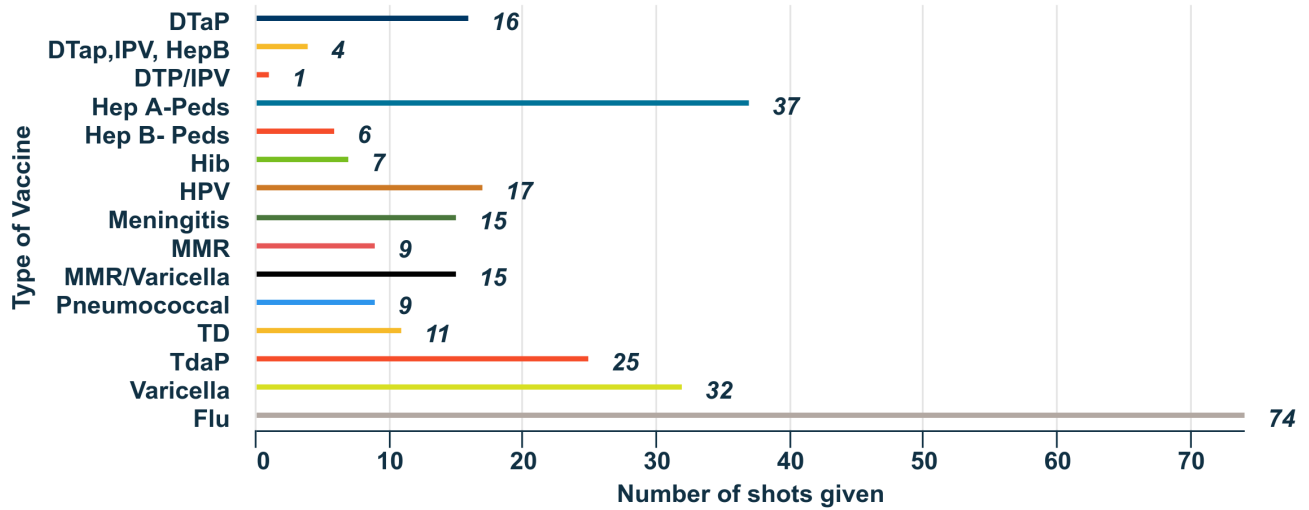
Essential Service #7

Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.

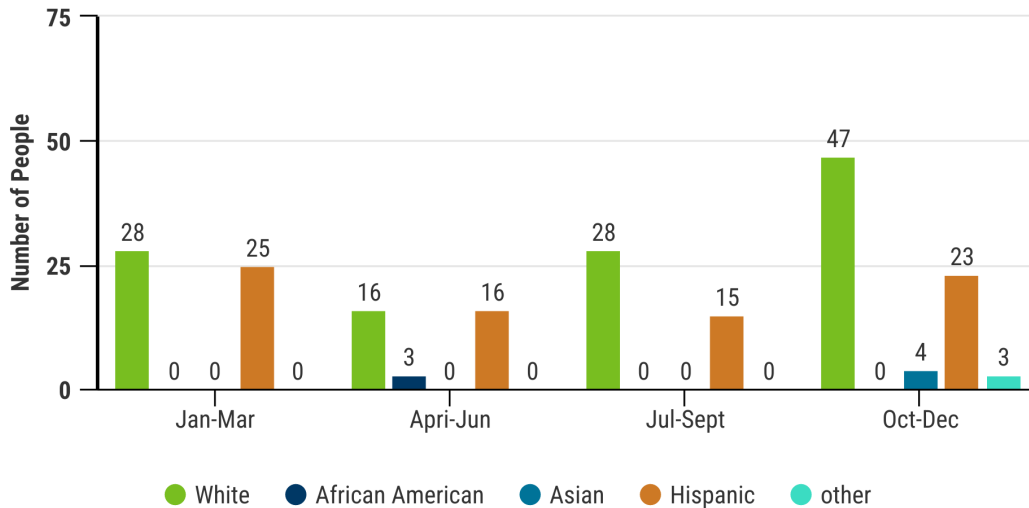
Immunization Program

Immunizations Given in 2023

WDPH offers almost 20 different vaccines to the community. Community members are eligible to receive immunizations from WDPH for a minimal price if they are underinsured or uninsured. The graph below shows which vaccines were requested the most.



Client Data





Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC) is a Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus benefit that helps pregnant people get support and services needed to promote a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Staff provide education and information throughout the pregnancy as well as connection to resources such as: medical care, food security, housing, transportation, and baby items.

Once a client delivers, staff conduct a newborn visit to check in on the family, provide education and support and complete a newborn assessment. Families that complete the PNCC program are offered the opportunity to transition in the TalkReadPlay Program.



What is PNCC?



Staff meet with clients at least once a month to check in and provide education, information, and connection to resources.



Education provided to client on topics such as: pregnancy symptoms and danger signs, weight gain and nutrition, fetal growth and development, breastfeeding and bottle feeding, birth control, stress and coping skills, and labor and delivery.



Staff work to ensure clients have the things they need before baby is born. Clients are connected to resources for baby items, car seat safety, and safe sleep.



PNCC Stats



Clients enrolled in the PNCC program



Newborn visits with clients that completed the PNCC program



Clients transitioned into the TalkReadPlay program after their newborn visit



Staff members completed cultural competency training to help reduce barriers for families in the PNCC program

Community Connections

Staff work to assist families and community members struggling with basic needs, Social Determinants of Health supports, and health inequities by connecting them to community resources. Staff participated in over 25 community events to provide education to the community on programs offered to gain more recognition in the community and participation in voluntary programs.

Our department collaborated with Watertown Public Library and Watertown Family Connections to hold three social connections events at the Watertown Public Library for families in our PNCC and TalkReadPlay programs. Events invited Spanish speaking community members and their families to the library with one of our Public Health Nurses and our Bilingual Communications Specialist. Families were taken on a tour of the library, informed about activities that happen at the library, learned how to check out and return materials, and got signed up for a library card. They also met staff from Watertown Family Connections and learned about their playgroups and activities.



Seal-A-Smile Program



SEAL-A-SMILE

Healthy teeth make a healthy smile!

Seal-A-Smile is a grant funded program through the Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin.

Through the grant, this program is provided free of charge to 2nd, 3rd, 6th & 7th grade students in Watertown Unified School District regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

Dental hygienists screen students for possible decay during their visit. A letter is sent home with students indicating a need for a dental follow up as well as a list of dental resources.



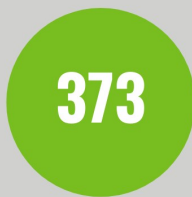
What is a Dental Sealant?

A sealant is a protective coating put on the chewing surfaces of back teeth to keep out germs that cause cavities.

Number of students participating in 2023



Number of sealants applied in 2023



of Students receiving sealants



% of students seen that had tooth decay



In 2023 the Seal A Smile program invested in a rolling toolbox.

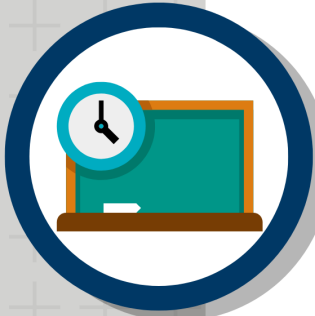
This asset makes it easier to transport supplies for school clinics while keeping supplies organized and clean in the drawers and boxes.



Essential Service #8

Assure competent public and personal health care workforce.

Workforce Development



Students

Ten nursing students from Maranatha completed clinical time at WDPH over ten days from October to November. Students spent time with nursing staff to learn more about programs and services offered by the health department such as PNCC, TalkReadPlay home visiting, community health assessments, communicable diseases, car seats, lead follow-up, and immunizations. Some students also had the opportunity to observe immunization clinics, community health improvement planning meetings, and an emergency preparedness tabletop exercise.

AmeriCorps

WDPH applied for and was granted the opportunity to host an AmeriCorps Service Member through Marshfield Medical Center. The service member completed their first term from September 2022 through August 2023 as a full-time service member working on community health improvement planning projects focusing on mental health and transportation, and organizing volunteers for the community garden located at WDPH. They started to serve their second term in September 2023 part time and will complete their term in August of 2024 continuing work started in their first term.



Masters in Public Health Internship

WDPH is supportive of strengthening the public health workforce and partnered with a graduate student intern working towards her Masters of Public Health. The intern modernized our Performance Management system, which is our organization’s mechanism to measure our progress towards our desired outcomes for our community through the utilization of performance data. The intern improved how we track performance data through the implementation of an interactive program dashboard through Microsoft Power BI. This new method of performance data tracking aimed to improve health department staff’s knowledge of progress towards goals and objectives through interactive data visualizations.

Staff Continuing Education

WDPH Staff participate in ongoing continuing education trainings through the year. Trainings include conferences, webinars, in-person and online trainings. In 2023, staff participated in over 676 hours of continuing education.



Essential Service #9

Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

Quality Improvement



Nursing Quality Improvement Project



Integration of Covid Clinics into regular immunization clinics.

Previously the Watertown Department of Public Health held Covid vaccine clinics separately from any other immunization. Initially these clinics were full and busy, but as more and more people completed the vaccination series and it became more available through pharmacies and primary care physicians, WDPH saw a decrease in the need for these specialized clinics.

Beginning in March 2023, WDPH integrated the COVID vaccine into regular immunization clinics that were already being held twice a month, allowing clients to receive more than just the Covid vaccine if they chose to.



Integration also allowed nursing staff to reduce the amount of time required from 4 clinics per month to 2 clinics per month. This in turn allowed nursing staff more time to be in the field, connecting with clients and the community on other levels.

Credit Card Payment Options for Operators




Identified a Gap in Operator Payment Options

Operators in the agent inspection program pay many different fees throughout the year and have never been able to use credit cards to make payments. There were many scenarios where credit card payment access would be a helpful option for both operators and the health department:

1. New operators paying large amounts of money for new licenses and pre-inspections
2. Operators trying to pay license renewals near the due date to avoid additional late fees
3. Collecting inspection or license fees in the field so inspectors are not carrying cash
4. Department avoids returned checks and assessing returned check fees

Coordination of Health Department Admin and City Finance Departments

Coordination between WDPH and the city's Finance Department looked for options for handheld swipers for in the field, front desk unit for in person payments at the office, and an online payment portal options for accepting credit card payments. A fee would need to be assessed for the use of credit card payments to cover the processing fee assessed by the processing company.



Utilization of Credit Card Payments

By spring of 2023, our department was able to accept credit card payments with a 2% convenience fee in the following ways:

1. Front desk as card reader unit for in person payments
2. Two bluetooth card readers for department phones to take payments in the field
3. Online payment portal for operators and clients to make payments online

Results and Considerations

WDPH is now able to offer credit card payments department-wide, across all programs, not just the agent inspection program. Considerations will be made for when we offer certain types card reading options:

- Bluetooth card readers are best for summer when collecting inspection fees at special events and farmer's markets, but also can be available if the front desk card reader unit is down
- Online payment portal gets the most use from May through August for license renewal payments, but nice for new operators to pay fees prior to opening



Essential Service #10

Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

Parenting/TalkReadPlay Home Visitors

What is TalkReadPlay?

TalkReadPlay is a free home visiting program available to families in the City of Watertown with children birth to age three.

Families are visited regularly throughout their child's first three years of life to provide support, education, and connection to resources.

TalkReadPlay Visits

Nursing staff trained as Parent Educators work with families utilizing the Parents as Teachers curriculum to help families set goals, check in on family well-being, provide education and information, answer questions, and connect families to resources in the community.

Visits focus on development-centered parenting and encourage parent-child interaction by participating in an activity each visit.

Developmental Screenings

Ages and Stages developmental screenings are completed with families at different times throughout the program. Results of the screenings are shared with the family and activities are provided to foster further development for the child.

Screenings are completed to identify delays earlier in life and provided referrals as needed.



28 Families seen in 2023

Food Pantry

Families continued to identify food insecurity as an issue they were facing in 2023. WDPH continued to partner with the Bread Basket, a local food pantry, to ensure families participating in our programs had a resource for food, personal essential products, and other necessities on the first Friday of each month before the food pantry opened to the public. During that time, families were able to come and meet with health department staff and get connected to resources while getting the things they needed for their family. By holding these private events, families were able to get comfortable using the food pantry and come on their own once a week to ensure they had food security.

With transportation as a barrier for some families, WDPH staff worked to put together food boxes to be delivered to families. Boxes were packed with fruits, veggies, meats, and items that families could put together to make multiple simple meals. WDPH staff delivered boxes of food to 12-18 families each month.

12

Food Pantries held

295

Families served

1,232

Individuals served

164

Boxes delivered



Financial Comparison

Watertown Department of Public Health Financial Information 2021 to 2023			
Revenue	2021	2022	2023
Maternal & Child Health Grant	\$ 10,836.00	\$ 10,454.00	\$ 10,445.00
Prevention Block Grant	\$ 8,020.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,018.00
Family Preservation Grant	\$ 26,126.50	\$ 26,063.00	\$ 24,439.00
Immunization Grant	\$ 6,689.00	\$ 7,461.00	\$ 7,393.00
Car Seat donation	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ -
Credit			
Emergency Preparedness Grant		\$ 33,967.00	\$ 72,098.00
Radon Grant	\$ 8,619.00	\$ 2,547.00	\$ 10,475.00
Childhood Lead Grant	\$ 5,228.00	\$ 2,539.00	\$ 5,932.00
Health Prevention			\$ 1,705.00
COVID -19 - Tracing/Monitor grant	\$ 147,765.00	\$ 139,171.00	\$ 27,694.00
EH - COVID-19			
Workforce / COVID-19			\$ 12,463.00
ARPA / COVID-19			\$ 23,362.00
Communicable Disease	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00
Seal A Smile Grant & Donations		\$ 3,954.87	\$ 6,427.25
Fees for Service			
Title 18 (Medicare)	\$ 906.63	\$ 1,391.70	\$ 744.83
Title 19 (HealthCheck/PNCC)	\$ 263.06	\$ 3,387.05	\$ 12,391.96
Seal A Smile MA	\$ 1,213.88	\$ 12,962.57	\$ 12,104.80
Jefferson Cty Consortium	\$ 32,082.00	\$ 34,998.00	\$ 35,000.00
Environmental Health Fees/Interest	\$ 64,120.89	\$ 49,669.00	\$ 40,682.57
Dept of Ag	\$ 261,487.00	\$ 288,588.00	\$ 304,277.00
Agent Program / DSPS/Body Art	\$ 1,541.00	\$ 1,218.00	\$ 1,401.00
Transient Well Water Program	\$ 51,078.00	\$ 55,181.00	\$ 55,833.75
Emergency Preparedness Consortium	\$ 58,508.71	\$ 112,692.00	
General Health Revenue	\$ 4,509.52	\$ 4,950.26	\$ 6,375.16
Total Revenue	\$ 702,594.19	\$ 792,794.45	\$ 682,862.32
Expenses			
Environmental Carry Over	\$ 23,775.06	\$ 7,449.25	\$ (18,235.75)
Emergency Prep/Pandemic Carry Over	\$ (51,797.28)	\$ 30,343.19	\$ (21,995.81)
Seal A Smile Carry Over	\$ (378.22)	\$ 5,023.80	\$ 7,544.56
Emergency Prep Coordinator Salary	\$ 13,935.19	\$ 30,991.65	\$ 33,141.31
Contracted Salary/SAS Hygienist & Dental Asst.		\$ 3,847.50	\$ 3,300.50
Personnel	\$ 845,707.95	\$ 858,908.53	\$ 873,733.00
General Supplies	\$ 95,859.07	\$ 123,084.11	\$ 161,188.27
Total Expenses	\$ 927,101.77	\$ 1,059,648.03	\$ 1,038,676.08
City Tax Contribution	\$ (224,507.58)	\$ (266,853.58)	\$ (355,813.76)
** The numbers provided are unaudited as of 2/8/2024			

Public Health is Everywhere!



During National Public Health Week, WDPH honors our COVID response limited term employees for their dedication and hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic with our Public Health Partner Award for 2023. Recipients: Lisa Sweet, Vilma Staude, Linda Hensler, Patti Wetzel, Becky Fischer and Taniella Carroll.



Staff wearing red for Wear Red Day 2023!



WPHA Julia Stanley and Emily Dieringer met with Laci Cummings, Carol Quest and Holly Hisel to celebrate Public Health Week.



Holly Hisel was the September winner of the Orange Light Award. The Orange Light Award is circulated among the City of Watertown staff members. It is presented to an individual for being a “beacon of light” in the City of Watertown organization.



Elizabeth Birnschein and Laci Cummings sharing Sun Safety out at Lights and Sirens, July 2023.