

2020 Annual Report

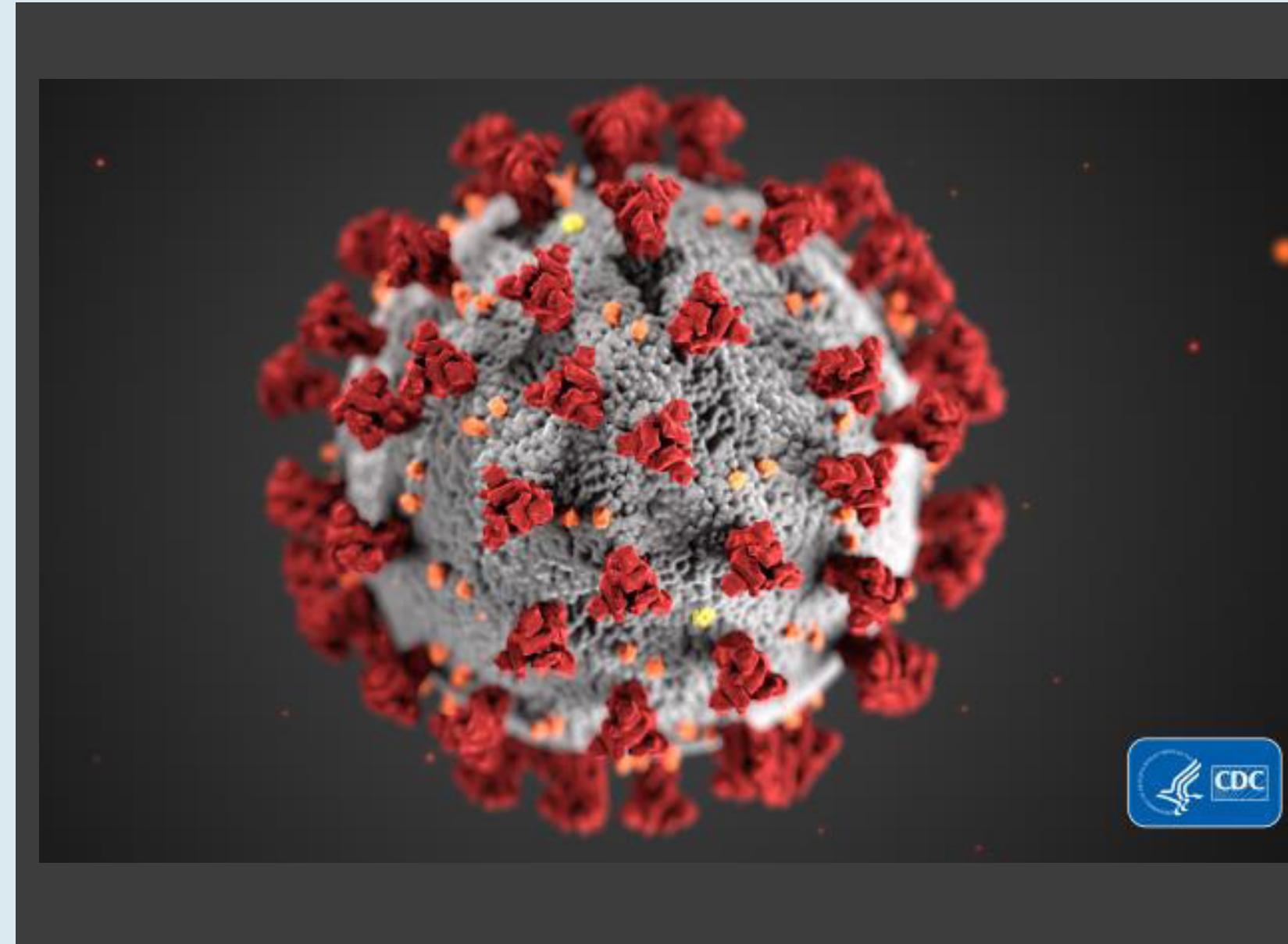
2020 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ron Clous
Betsy Coffia
Rob Hentschel
Bryce Hundley

Brad Jewett
Gordie LaPointe
Addison “Sonny” Wheelock, Jr.

Health Officer: Wendy Hirschenberger, MPH, CPHA

Medical Director: Michael Collins, MD



A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICER

2020 was a year that the Grand Traverse County Health Department staff devoted much of its time and resources towards COVID-19 pandemic response. Even before Michigan and Grand Traverse County had the first case of COVID-19, Health Department staff were preparing to respond and keeping local community partners and key stakeholders informed through a joint operations center, established in early March.

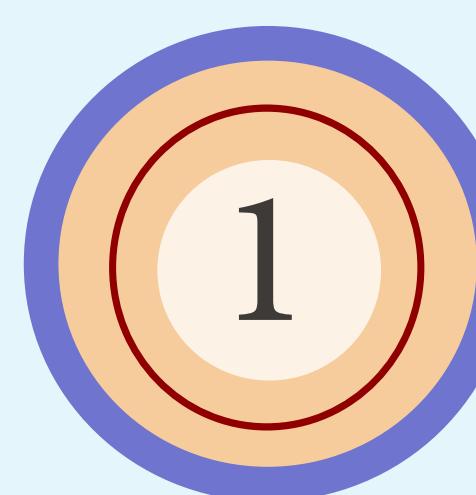
March through December 2020 was a challenging time when the pandemic was new with a lot of uncertainty and unknowns. During this time, the state of Michigan issued many Public Health Orders and the health department staff focused their efforts on educating the public on these orders through toolkits, virtual meetings, and a lot of media interviews, as well as enforcement when needed.

As the pandemic persisted, many people were scared, isolated, and lonely. The Grand Traverse County Health Department rose to the challenge of providing its usual essential public health services and educating the community on COVID-19 and necessary precautions. The uncertainty of the pandemic continued through the summer and into the fall with many events and festivals canceled or significantly modified based upon risk mitigation for the public. During this uncertainty, as we faced a fall of unknowns and increasing cases, the health department remained committed to providing the public with credible COVID-19 information and resources.

In December of 2020, we received our first shipment of the COVID-19 vaccine and quickly got to work to vaccinate Grand Traverse County residents starting with public health staff, first responders, and health care providers, as we began planning for mass vaccination clinics in 2021.

As we share the breadth and impact of our services in this report, we also look ahead to strengthening our role as a trusted leader to improve health for all by advancing health equity practice and responding proactively to public health needs through innovative and community-driven strategies. Addressing complex health issues in a rapidly changing environment requires collaboration and participation across multiple sectors that serve Grand Traverse County as well as residents and community leaders.

I am pleased to share this 2020 Annual Report from the Grand Traverse County Health Department. This was a year of significant challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet through those changes, our dedicated staff continued to provide essential public health services to promote and protect the health of our residents. The pages that follow will include highlights of our progress throughout the year of essential public health services and the many facets of our COVID-19 response. While 2020 was a very challenging year for public health, I am grateful for the support of our community, our partners and fortunate to work with health department staff that worked tirelessly over the past year, rising to one challenge after another, to keep our community safe!



JANUARY

The CDC urges physicians who treat patients with pneumonia-like sickness to consider a link to the outbreak in Wuhan, China

8



FEBRUARY

The State of Michigan sets up the state Emergency Operations Center

3

The first case of SARS-CoV-2 was identified in the United States

21

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) holds first Incident Command meeting

23

The CDC holds Coronavirus Tele-briefing

27

MDHHS set up the Community Health Emergency Coordination Center

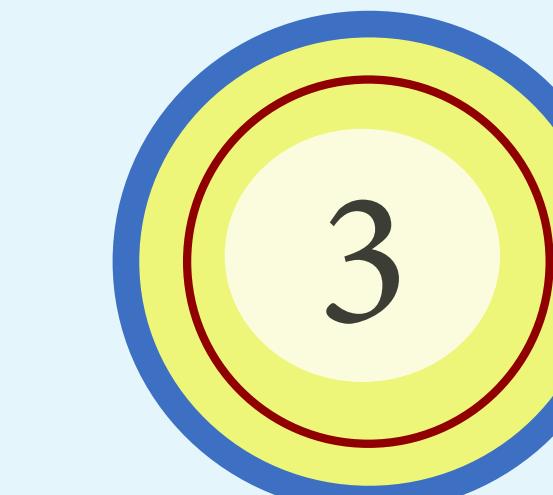
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The World Health Organization declared a global public health emergency

30

Airlines around the world start shutting down flights from China

31



MARCH

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) expands the Incident Command structure

4

The public in US begins to panic, stocking up on extra food, cleaning supplies

5

The first case appears in Michigan

10

GTCHD begins fit testing N95 masks for staff in priority order

16

Grand Traverse County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was partially activated

17

Governor activates Stay Home & Shelter in Place Epidemic Orders

23

First orders of public PPE are received at Howe Arena for the State Emergency

25

All Health Department Employees deemed essential and leadership began reassigning roles to respond to pandemic

7

A little over 100,000 cases are now in the US

13

Joint Operations Center is activated with multiple Community groups

Pallets of PPE designated for healthcare and emergency responders began being delivered from the strategic National Stockpile (SNS)

22

First SARS-CoV-2 case appears in Grand Traverse County

24

Three cases in Grand Traverse County - continued local transmission expected

2020 - PANDEMIC BEGINNING TIMELINE

COMMUNITY HEALTH

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINIC

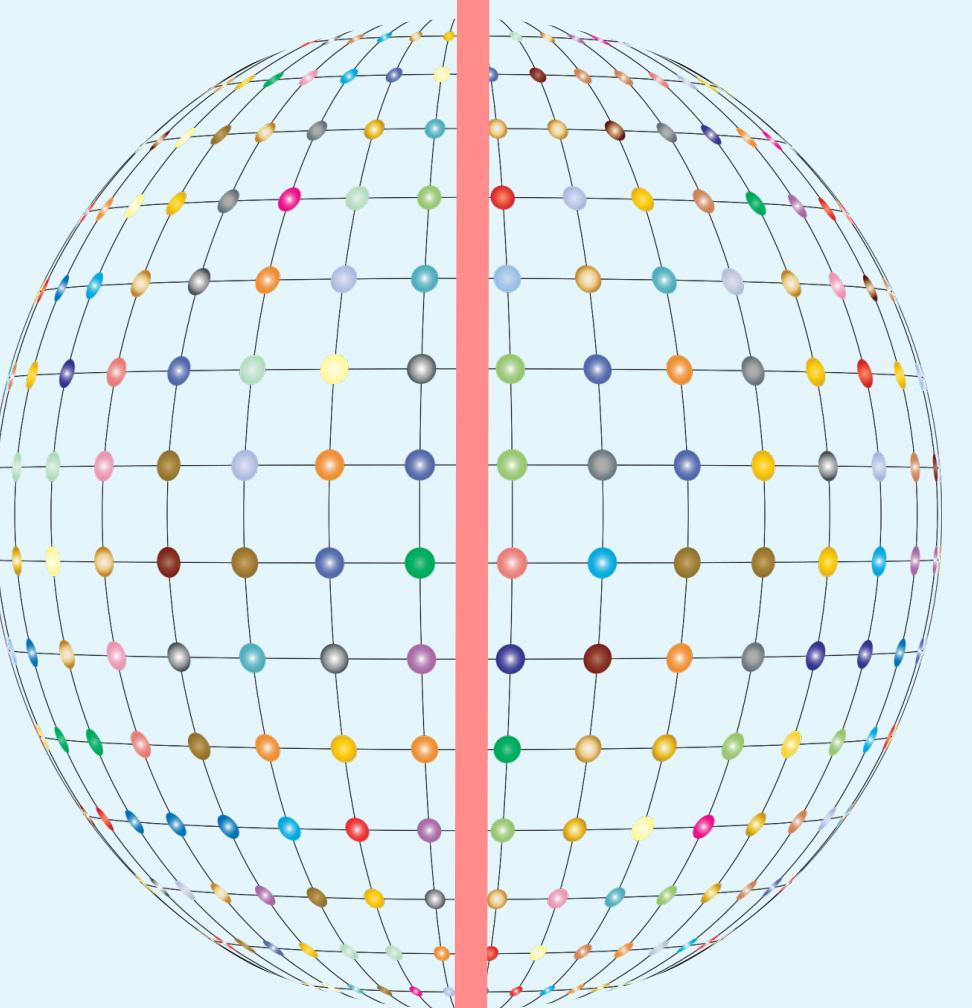
The Reproductive Health clinic remained open throughout the pandemic to provide necessary reproductive health services for our community. Along with clinical duties related to the Reproductive Health program, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, supported the COVID-19 response for case investigations and contact tracing, COVID-19 testing, and vaccine clinics.

In an effort to provide continued and convenient services, the clinic utilized innovative service delivery methods, such as telehealth visits and “curbside delivery” for birth control and other medication pickups. In 2020, a total of 549 individual clients visited the Reproductive Health Clinic, for a total of 981 encounters. Sexually transmitted infection screenings continued, with high rates of screening for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV. The Reproductive Health Clinic’s collaboration with area partners such as Community Connections, Addiction Treatment Services, and Thomas Judd Care Center for referrals was vital to maintaining seamless connections for client service.

Reproductive Health 2020 by the numbers:

- 49.4% of clients seen were at or below 100% of the HHS federal poverty level
- 8% of clients were publicly insured through Medicaid and 30% of clients were uninsured
- 21% of all clients were teens
- 87% of female clients age 15-44 relied on a most or moderately effective method of birth control, such as oral contraceptives, 3-month hormonal injection, or LARC – long-acting reversible contraception such as i.e. Nexplanon implant or intrauterine device/IUD

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE



Nearly all of 2020 was focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. Eight staff members covered a 7 day/week schedule, including holidays. For the 2020 calendar year, there were 3,225 confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases in Grand Traverse County.

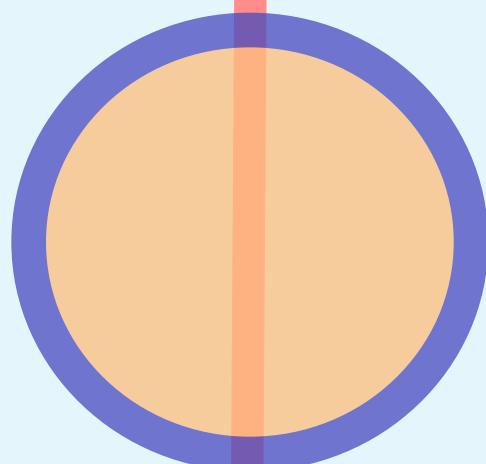
In addition to COVID-19, the Communicable Disease office never halted its normal functions during the pandemic, investigating all the other reportable communicable diseases. Sexually transmitted infection cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis remained at almost consistent levels with 2019; in addition, foodborne illnesses and animal bite cases were also close to normal pre-pandemic numbers.

Beyond contact tracing for all communicable diseases, staff time was spent collaborating with area healthcare providers, helping them understand and set up COVID-19 protocols for staff and patients; and answering questions about MDHHS pandemic orders. To assist with communication to over 50 area providers and community agencies, the Communicable Disease program continued to distribute a quarterly newsletter that included disease trends, vaccination rates, and additional updates.

Communicable Disease 2020 by the Numbers:

- 612 total Communicable Diseases were reported
- 148 sexually transmitted disease screenings were performed
- 244 Chlamydia cases, lower than average
- 41 Gonorrhea cases, lower than average
- 6 Syphilis cases, typical annual average
- 185 animal bite cases investigated; 2 bats in Grand Traverse County tested positive for rabies

PROGRAMS

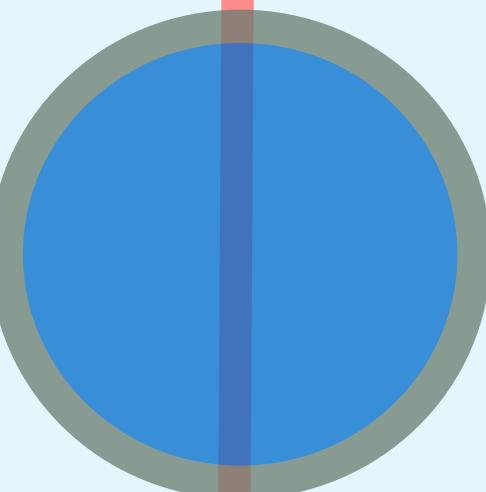


IMMUNIZATIONS

The Grand Traverse County Health Department's routine immunization clinic continued to meet emergent/urgent vaccination needs, such as healthcare workers, to those needing vaccine for employment or education, and to those with special health conditions, such as immunocompromised individuals. The clinic fully reopened in late spring to focus efforts on falling immunization rates with coverage levels declining in particular for the childhood and adolescent population groups.

Immunizations 2020 by the Numbers:

- 63,086 administered vaccinations
- 915 influenza vaccinations
- 211 hepatitis A vaccinations
- 292 Tdap vaccinations



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Women Infant Children (WIC): In response to the pandemic, WIC began virtual appointments as soon as they were granted permission from the USDA on March 23, 2020. Even with the lack of in-person visits, all 1692 WIC participants were able to be served in some capacity during 2020. These services included providing curbside drive-up service for project fresh during the summer, which was able to distribute 400 coupons or \$10,000. In addition, in-person, by appointment, pick-up services for products such as formula, were available. The Breastfeeding Peer Support counselors available through WIC offered remote support to all clients throughout the year.

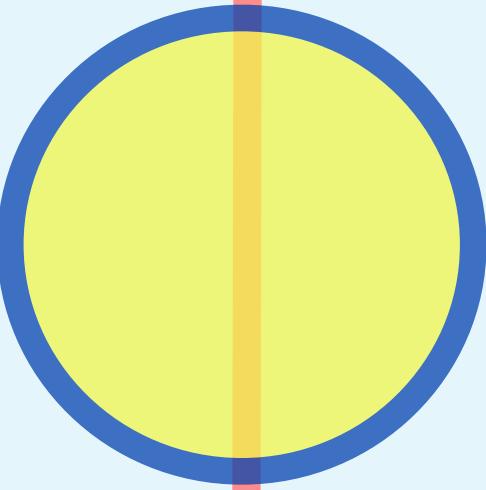
All Maternal and Child Health staff participated in efforts of COVID-19 response, including testing, case investigations, and vaccine clinics.

Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP): The Maternal Infant Health Program continued to offer and implement integrated services at the Grand Traverse County Health Department throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Telehealth services were approved by the State to help accommodate the safety and wellbeing of the community and in-person services were offered and continued for high-risk clients, resulting in a total of 1,743 MIHP visits for 2020. MIHP enrollment rates decreased statewide, a 25% reduction was experienced for Grand Traverse County eligible moms and babies.

Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS): During the pandemic, all CSHCS services were provided as telehealth appointments, offering case management services, referrals for resources within the community, and functioned as a primary contact within the health department for families with special needs children to navigate the pandemic challenges. Public health nurses also participated in contact tracing, testing, and vaccination efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Healthy Futures: Starting in March of 2020, the Healthy Futures program offered phone support for new moms, along with a limited number of home visits to help moms with breastfeeding support. From March through December public health nurses provided approximately 10 home visits per month to support face-to-face the highest risk mom and babies.

PROGRAMS



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH (cont.)

The Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP): Public health nurses working in this program provided virtual follow-up education and case management services to families, local pediatricians and primary care providers, and health department staff related to prevention and harm reduction. Although Grand Traverse County is a low incidence county in the State of Michigan for child elevated blood lead levels, the public health nurses provided nearly 100 phone calls to families for follow-up and placed an average of 2 cases per month into case management services until the child blood lead level was resolved.

Vision & Hearing: While school and office screenings were on hold, the technicians and coordinator assisted with N95 mask fit testing for all Health Department staff, participated in the launch of COVID-19 testing in the back parking lot of the health department, community mass testing, and vaccination clinics, contact tracing and school quarantine notification process, data management, and integrated with the Communicable Disease team to assist with the launch of the electronic COVID-19 case investigation survey.

Maternal and Child Health 2020 by the Numbers:

- 1743 total MIHP home visits
- 4964 total WIC appointments
- 332 total caseload for Children's Special Health Care Services
- 427 total caseload for Healthy Futures
- 210 total Vision screenings
- 1675 total Hearing screenings



CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Youth Health & Wellness Center: As schools closed for nearly 6 months of the 2020 year, the school-based child and adolescent clinic utilized telehealth technology to reach students needing medical and mental health assistance, and leveraged strong working relationships with community partners to connect students as able.

K-Town Youth Health Center: As a school-linked child and adolescent clinic, K-TOWN remained open to servicing students for most of the 2020 year, creatively implementing telehealth and "curb-side" drive-up services in Kingsley.

E3-Expanding, Enhancing Emotional Health: Grand Traverse County Health Department provided a full-time mental health counselor at each of two site locations, Kingsley Middle School and Traverse City West High School. The first full year of this program, occurring during the pandemic with more than 6 months of schools being closed, recognized nearly 30 students as clients in need of the on-site mental health counseling.

Nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, mental health counselors, and public health technicians for all child and adolescent program sites supported the COVID-19 pandemic response efforts through outreach to long-term care and congregate care settings, schools, COVID-19 testing, and vaccination clinics.

Child and Adolescent Health 2020 by the Numbers:

- 307 students utilized adolescent health clinic services
- 332 mental health counseling visits at clinics
- 680 healthcare provider visits
- 159 routine vaccinations
- 518 mental health counseling visits within schools

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS

Regional Personal Protective Equipment Distribution Warehouse: Grand Traverse County Health Department Emergency Preparedness and Environmental Health Divisions worked collaboratively with Emergency Management to establish a personal protective equipment (PPE) distribution warehouse to serve a nine-county distribution network and receive and redistribute overflow from Munson's Healthcare's nine surrounding hospitals.

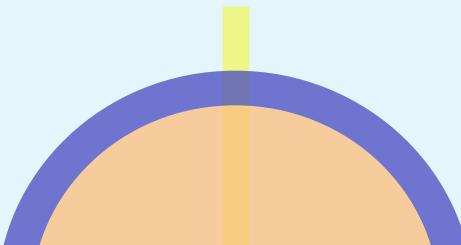
Working in partnership with the Grand Traverse County Facilities Department, Howe Arena was established as a region-wide distribution center beginning on March 25, 2020, and served as such until July 1, 2020. The facility received and pushed out its first shipment of PPE on April 20, 2020. The activation of Howe Arena allowed for expedited shipping of PPE from the state level (State Emergency Operations Center logistics warehouses) to all counties served by this regional center including Grand Traverse Benzie, Leelanau, Antrim, Wexford, Kalkaska, Roscommon, Missaukee, Manistee, and briefly for Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Otsego, Crawford, Montmorency, Presque Isle, and Alpena counties. In addition to the counties it served, the distribution center also served as an overflow distribution facility for all Munson Healthcare facilities in Northern Michigan. The model of Howe Arena was eventually implemented in Alpena, Cheboygan, and Marquette.

Emergency Preparedness, with the assistance of Emergency Management and Facilities, served as a county liaison both internally and externally for a multitude of community agencies to ensure all necessary community-facing entities had the appropriate access to personal protective equipment. Access to the appropriate masking, eye protection, and air quality control was of critical need during the COVID-19 response and Emergency Preparedness played a key role in ensuring all available PPE was directed to the appropriate entities and community members.

Collaborative efforts
for storage and
distribution of the
following PPE during
2020:

- 19,455 boxes of gloves
- 200,500 surgical masks
- 140,600 N-95/KN-95 masks
- 3,782 surgical gowns
- 7,500 face shields
- 768 cases of disinfectant wipes
- 2,284 gallons of hand sanitizer

COLLABORATIONS AND RESPONSE



COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS (cont.)

Joint Operations Center: On Mar 13, 2020, Grand Traverse County's Joint Operations Center (JOC) began meeting to coordinate efforts and communication on the COVID-19 pandemic. Members include key community partners from health, government, first responders, education, social service, and business sectors.

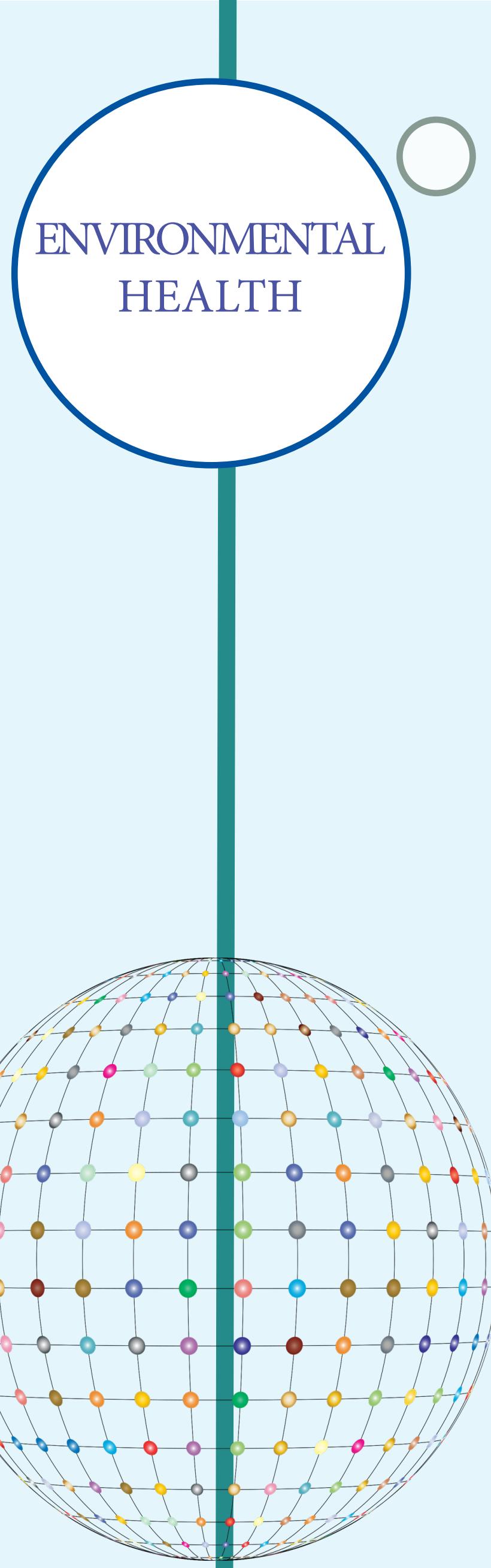
Led by Grand Traverse County Administration and the Health Department, the activation and implementation of the JOC allowed for one consistent joint message to be shared and distributed throughout the county. Additionally, cross-sector collaborations were fostered through the sharing of information and resources. JOC meetings started daily and continued weekly until August when they changed to bi-weekly meetings for the rest of 2020. Weekly reports from the health department with ongoing data and information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be released for all of 2020.

COVID-19 Information Distribution: From the very beginning, the Health Department began sharing any and all the information available as it became known, with the community. This information included isolation and quarantine requirements, prevention recommendations from the CDC, relaying pandemic orders from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, providing case data for the county, as well as, answering multiple questions from community groups and individuals.

COVID-19 Testing: When testing was first made available to the public, it was in a very limited capacity and only provided through state and federal laboratories. Grand Traverse County Health Department served as one of the key access points for the community to be tested for COVID-19. As testing lab capacity and supplies expanded, the health department worked collaboratively through partnerships in the community, including Traverse City Pit Spitters and Traverse City Area Public Schools, to plan for and run large-scale COVID-19 community testing events. The first large-scale event, which commenced in May of 2020, as drive-through testing at Turtle Creek Stadium in partnership with the Michigan National Guard.

Testing was in high demand and resulted in hundreds of community members being tested at each event and could not have been achieved without the assistance of the Michigan National Guard. Testing was first run by the state Bureau of Laboratories and required a nasopharyngeal swab with delayed testing results and turnaround times. Through careful planning and coordination with local partners and laboratories, the preparedness team was able to expedite testing access and turnaround times. The Preparedness team eventually acquired a RAPID COVID-19 Testing capability through a partnership with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan's regional lab and stood up a testing location in the Cherryland Mall. This second location acted as another point for the community to access COVID-19 testing for a sustained period of time and became a foundational location in the community for access to COVID-19 services. Due to this additional site, access to testing in-house, and laboratory partnerships, the local health department was able to provide a sustainable testing model for the duration of 2020.

COVID-19 Vaccines: As 2020 came to an end, the COVID-19 vaccine finally became available as Grand Traverse County Health Department received its first shipment of Pfizer vaccine on December 17th, 2020. The Health Department team had received an Ultracold Freezer from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and quickly became experts on a unique set of storage and handling requirements for the temperature-sensitive vaccine. On December 18th, 2020, just one day after receiving shipment, the Health Department began administering vaccines to those who would be tasked as frontline vaccination staff at vaccination clinics in the community. With the first few shipments of vaccine, the Health Department began the detailed process of identifying and vaccinating first responders and medical personnel in December of 2020.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

In 2020, the GTCHD Environmental Health Division continued to fulfill its traditional services while following state COVID-19 guidelines. Additionally, Environmental Health took on a new role as the Logistics Team to aid in the pandemic response. Environmental Health employees were assigned different logistical tasks that included, but were not limited to: assisting in the arrival and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the community, transporting supplies to COVID-19 testing sites, set-up and tear down of COVID-19 testing events, and providing support staff for testing events. In April, Environmental Health staff began responding to complaints made against local businesses regarding the COVID-19 guidelines. These activities continued throughout 2020 in addition to traditional Environmental Health Services.

General Environmental Health 2020 by the Numbers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">188 beach monitoring samples collected20 campground inspections61 pool inspections13 body art facility inspections56 department of health services (DHS) inspections
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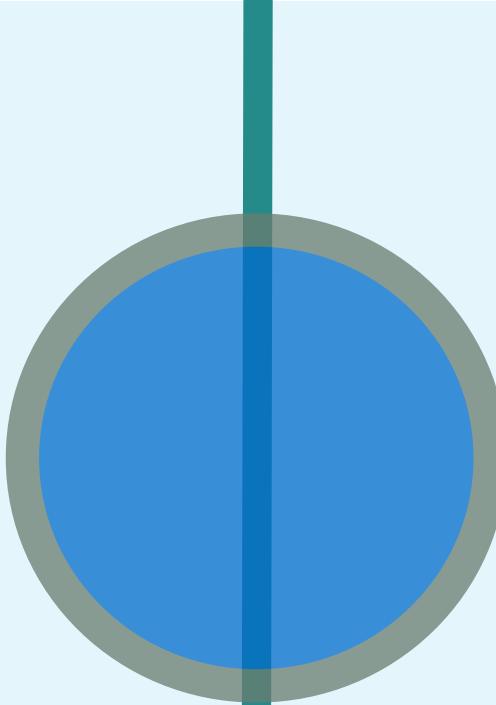
Food Services: Throughout 2020, Environmental Health food service staff were required to keep up to date with the most current guidelines from the State of Michigan impacting local food establishments. In March, all routine in-person food inspections were shifted to in-depth phone consultations that included questions asked during traditional routine inspections. Pre-opening food establishment inspections and complaint investigations continued in-person throughout the year. Food service staff worked closely with local food establishments to make sure they met the most current state guidelines.

Food Services 2020 by the Numbers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">559 routine restaurant inspections51 follow-up inspections662 total inspections (includes, mobile, Special Transitory Food Units, and temporary inspections)445 total licensed food establishments
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Well and Septic Permitting: In March of 2020 state guidelines limited well and septic permitting to emergency situations. Due to the public closure of the Public Services Building, applications for permits were required to be submitted via a Dropbox outside of the building or electronically. On May 7th a shift in state guidelines allowed construction and permitting to resume as normal. The building closure continued for much of the year impacting the application process, however, fieldwork was able to continue following proper State guidelines.

Well and Septic Permits 2020 by the Numbers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">489 septic permits (24% increase over 2019)148 failed septic permit applications (52% increase over 2019)347 well permits (21% increase over 2019)3056 well and septic records requests
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PROGRAMS



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (cont.)

Soil Erosion Permitting: As with the well and septic programs, the soil erosion program had to withstand the same state COVID-19 guidelines. In March 2020 all non-emergency soil erosion permitting was paused by state COVID-19 guidelines. Additionally, the guidelines also required a halt in all field site inspections. During this time, Lake Michigan experienced record-high lake elevations causing significant shoreline impacts, and an increase in emergency shoreline protection soil erosion permits. Updated state guidelines released May 7th allowed field inspections and traditional soil erosion permitting to resume.

Soil Erosion Permits 2020 by the Numbers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 478 permits issued (17% increase over 2019)• 33% of permits (157 total) were for shoreline erosion or protection• 5207 site inspections (10% increase over 2019)
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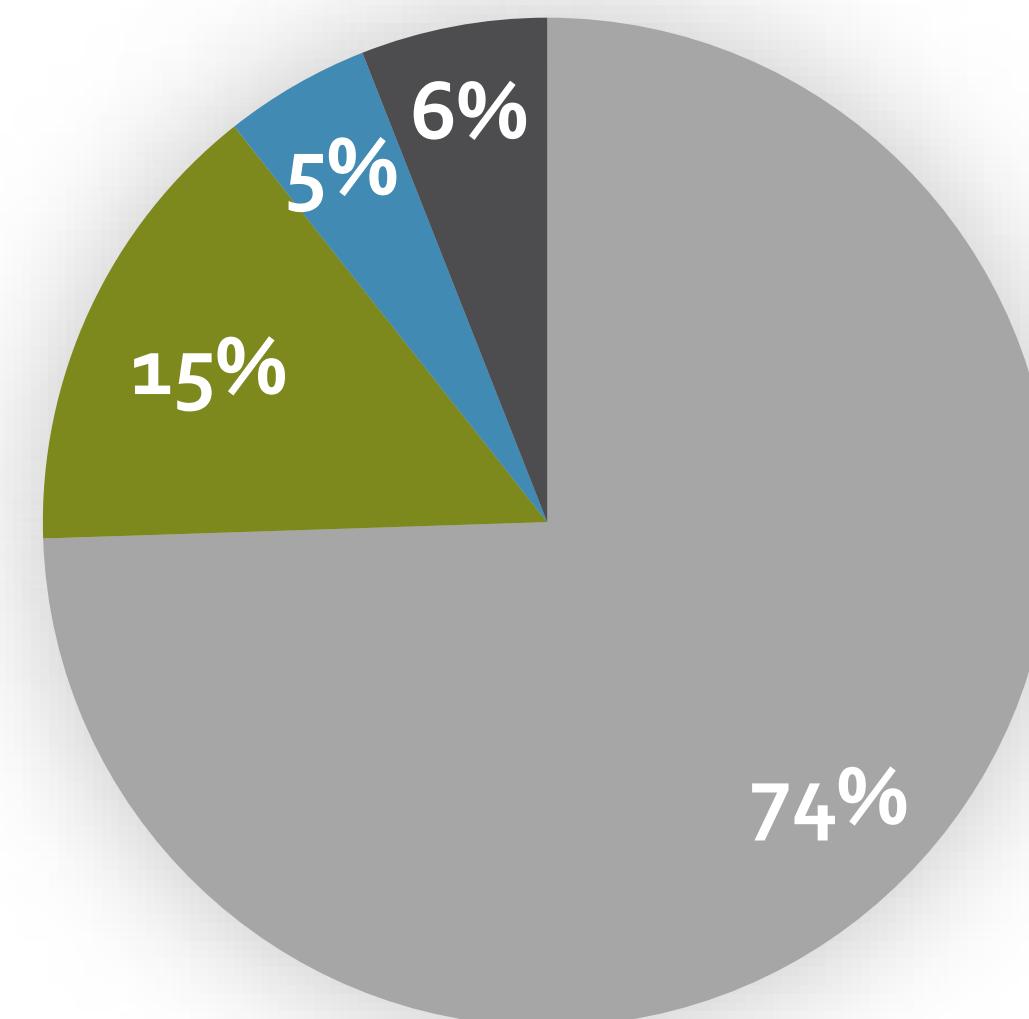


Animal Control

In 2020, animal control began responding to more complaints remotely due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Field visits were completed following COVID-19 protocols when deemed necessary based on the severity of the complaint. To avoid a potential whole staff outbreak of COVID-19 employees, rotated office work schedules between being in the office, utilizing laptops in their county vehicles, and working from home remotely.

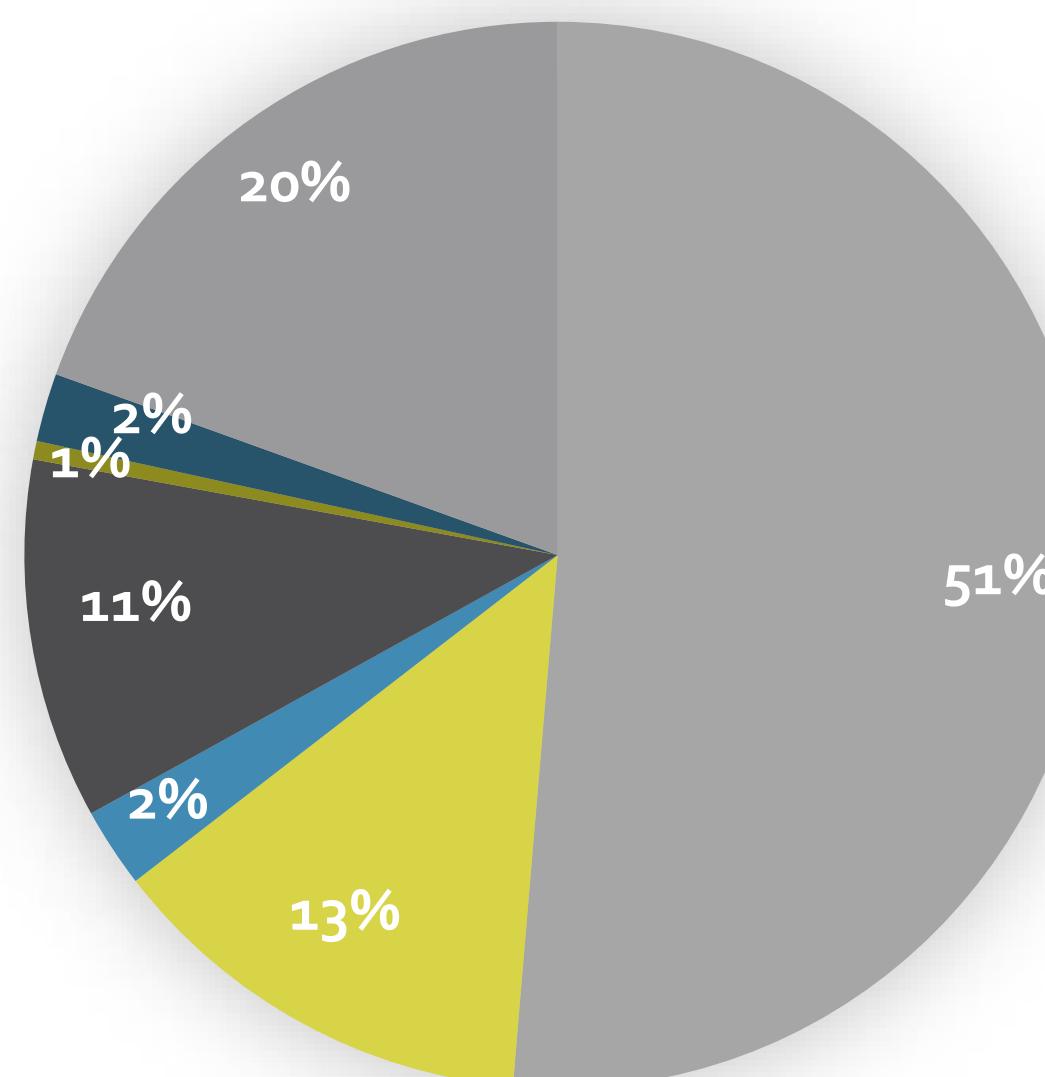
Animal Control 2020 by the Numbers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 930 complaints were addressed• 50 emergency after-hours complaints were responded to• 194 dogs were sheltered• 118 dogs were returned to their owners
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EXPENDITURES



- Community Health
- Environmental Health
- Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management
- Medical Examiner

REVENUES



- State and Federal Funds
- Private Medical Insurance
- Interest Income & Reimbursements
- County Appropriations
- Medicaid and Cost Settlement
- Licenses, Permits, and Fees
- Local Grants

2020 FINANCIALS

LOCATIONS



Grand Traverse County
Health Department
2600 LaFranier Rd., Suite A
Traverse City, MI 49686

Grand Traverse County
Health Department
Office of The Medical Examiner
2600 LaFranier Rd., Suite A
Traverse City, MI 49686

Grand Traverse County
Health Department
Public Health Emergency Preparedness
2600 LaFranier Rd., Suite A
Traverse City, MI 49686

Grand Traverse County
Health Department
Environmental Health
2650 LaFranier Rd.
Traverse City, MI 49686

Grand Traverse County
Health Department
Animal Control
2650 LaFranier Rd.
Traverse City, MI 49686

Grand Traverse County
Health Department
K-Town Youth Health Center
PO Box 117
112 S. Brownson Ave.
Kingsley, MI 49649

Grand Traverse County
Health Department
Youth Health & Wellness Center
TBAISD Career-Tech Center
880 Parsons Rd.
Traverse City, MI 49686