



# Annual Report

## 2021



## MISSION

Our mission is to protect and advance the health of our community and environment through partnerships, innovations, and excellent public health practice.

## VISION

Our vision is a healthy community and safe environment for all.

## PRACTICAL VISION

- Equitably distributed services
- Meaningfully enhanced communications
- Continually supported employee well-being
- Proactively improved health
- Expanded risk-reduction interventions
- Innovatively leveraged technology
- Intentionally focused environmental stewardship
- Strategically leveraged resources

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ron Clous  
Betsy Coffia  
Rob Hentschel  
Bryce Hundley

Brad Jewett  
Penny Morris  
Darryl Nelson

## HEALTH OFFICER

Wendy Hirschenberger  
MPH, CPHA

## MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Michael Collins, MD  
Jennifer Morse, MD

# A note from the Health Officer

I am pleased to present the 2021 annual report of the Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD). Throughout this report, you will find not only statistics and data detailing the year's accomplishments, but also summaries demonstrating various programs' contributions to a healthier community. I am proud to work with a public health team so unwavering in their commitment to our mission of advancing the health of our community and environment through partnerships, innovations, and excellent public health practice. This was especially evident during the global pandemic when GTCHD was able to serve our community's needs while handling many challenges in our work environment.

This report reflects the rapid and unparalleled pandemic response in 2021, year 2 of the global pandemic, in which protecting the health of Grand Traverse County residents shifted to more preventative measures in mitigating the effects of the largest outbreak of a single disease in more than 100 years. Our dedicated professionals partnered with community leaders, organizations, and volunteers to develop and implement strategies to combat this highly communicable virus by providing critical information and resources to reduce

transmission with contact tracing and case investigations, preventatively protecting citizens with immunizations and with consistent testing for COVID, and providing resources to obtain treatment. It also reflects the work of providing essential public health programs to the community through innovative ways, in order to meet the ongoing needs of GTHCD clients.

COVID-19 challenged us all in many ways as individuals, as organizations, and as an entire population. I am incredibly grateful to the health department staff, who consistently went above and beyond during the pandemic, as well as our local healthcare workers and community partners. We remain inspired by our vision of a healthy community and safe environment for all and the GTCHD team is devoted to serving Grand Traverse County's residents.



**Sincerely,**  
Wendy Hirschenberger  
MPH, CPHA  
Health Officer

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## MASS VACCINATION CLINIC

The Grand Traverse County Health Department, partnering with Northwestern Michigan College, opened up a mass COVID-19 vaccination clinic at NMC's Hagerty Center on January 18, 2021. Over the course of its operations, the clinic served the Greater Grand Traverse County area administering 41,669 doses of COVID-19 vaccine for ages 12 and older.



Following nearly a year of isolation, an eager community member dresses up wearing a note stating "Best date in a year" to her vaccination appointment at NMC's Hagerty Center.



On March 12, 2021, the Lt. Governor of the State of Michigan, Garlin Gilchrist, toured the vaccination clinic at NMC's Hagerty Center.

## HITTING THE ROAD

In addition to the main mass vaccination site in Grand Traverse County, the Health Department provided 17 pop-up vaccination clinics in the community including: 10 school-focused, 3 municipalities, 2 private businesses, and 2 hospitality (restaurant/brewery). The Health Department also staffed a vaccination clinic during the National Cherry Festival.

Clinic Opened  
**January 18**  
Clinic Closed  
**June 8**  
Days In Operation  
**99**  
Total Doses Administered  
**41,669**

17 → 1,735

Pop-up Vaccination Clinics

Total Doses Administered

# TESTING & TRACKING THE PANDEMIC

In addition to its mass vaccination efforts, the Health Department continued to offer community testing at the Cherryland Mall location that was initiated in November 2020.



**A community member receives drive-up COVID-19 testing services at the Cherryland Mall location.**

Partnerships created with the state Health Department ensured community access to testing remained available while the majority of health department staff staffed the mass vaccination clinic. Testing remained the primary function at the Cherryland Mall clinic until vaccination efforts were moved to this location on May 19, 2021. At that time, testing was moved to the Health Department's main building. A combination of testing and vaccinations was offered to the community based on need and community access for the duration of 2021.

# COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS

**9,356**

CASES REPORTED

**139**

DEATHS

**4,884**

TESTS AT GTCHD

**49,551**

DOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTERED BY GTCHD

# A COMMUNITY EFFORT. THANK YOU, PARTNERS.

To meet the needs of the community and the large-scale effort and resource that the mass vaccination clinic presented itself to the community the Grand Traverse County Health Department would like to recognize the following agencies that assisted with the efforts to bring access to both the COVID-19 vaccine and testing to all who sought it.

- Northwestern Michigan College
- Michigan National Guard
- Grand Traverse County
- Munson Healthcare
- MSU Extension
- United Way of Northwest Michigan
- Northern Lakes Community Mental Health
- Disability Networks of Northern Michigan
- Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan
- Northwest Michigan Education Services
- Traverse City Area Public Schools
- Northwest Education Services
- BATA Transportation
- Munson Healthcare

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers that donated their time to the non-clinical operations of the mass vaccination clinic helped to bridge gaps when our health department staff was needed for clinical services. Thank you to the United Way of Northwest Michigan for assisting us with securing these selfless volunteers!

603

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

1472

VOLUNTEER HOURS



A volunteer prepares bandages for the nurses administering vaccines.

## COMMUNITY APPRECIATION

Despite the long hours that the mass vaccination clinic took to put together and operate - the spirits of the Health Department staff, although tired, were never completely exhausted due to the overwhelming appreciation we received from the community. Meals, treats, and notes of appreciation made their way to the clinic regularly. We couldn't have been more grateful and the impact it had on our staff was priceless.



A Grand Traverse Area Catholic School student presents Health Officer, Wendy Hirschenberger, with hand-crafted flowers with thank you notes on front and back.

# Community Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

### Vaccines Administered

**2,204**

**36**

**69**

K-Town

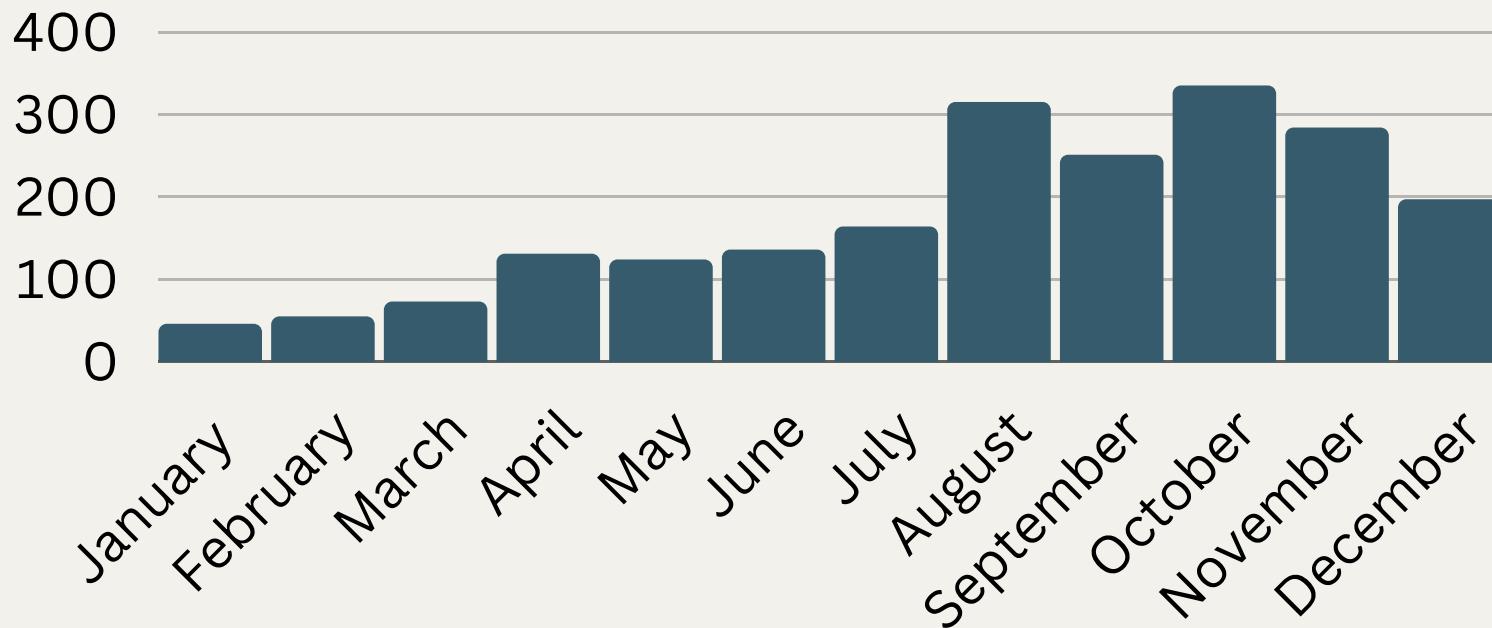
YHWC

### Immunizations

Although the main focus of immunizations in 2021 was administering the COVID-19 vaccine, the Health Department's Immunizations Clinic began accepting limited appointments beginning March of 2021 -- and full-time operations resumed in July of '21.

Between the main Immunization Clinic location and the Adolescent Health locations, the Health Department administered 2,204 vaccinations throughout the 2021 calendar year.

#### ■ Vaccinations Administered



**391**

**Flu Shots**

**126**

**Hepatitis A**

# Community Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

Through its many Community Health programs including Immunizations, Reproductive Health, Maternal & Child Health, Children's Special Health Care Services, and Healthy Futures the Health Department continued its work in the background of Grand Traverse County providing essential public services to its community members through a multitude of modalities that best fit our client's needs. Modalities used were: home visits, office visits, community visits, telehealth visits and phone calls.

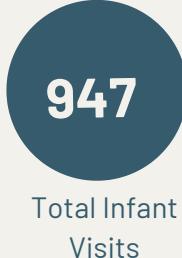
### Maternal Child Health by the numbers

Women  
Infant &  
Children



In addition to traditional WIC benefits awarded to clients, including formula and food, \$10,000 in benefits were allocated to clients on behalf of Project Fresh - a program that partners with local farmers to provide fresh produce to WIC clients. With the combined benefits, \$806,874 was distributed into the Grand Traverse community.

The Maternal Infant Health Program ventured into the community to offer prenatal and postpartum support, including infant education. The Medicaid-eligible program helps to track milestones and identify when referrals for specified care may be needed.



In 2021, there were 448 babies born in Grand Traverse County that enrolled in Healthy Futures. Health Department nurses offered both prenatal and postpartum support to those that enrolled. A total of 1033 contacts were made, including 163 home visits to offer postpartum and breastfeeding support.



1,033

163

# Community Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

### Communicable Disease

COVID-19 was still a main focus of the department in 2021, with over 9,000 cases being reported. However, Communicable Disease nurses investigated over 550 cases of other reportable conditions, including:

198

Animal Bites

285

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

44

Foodbourne Illness

336

Sexually Transmitted Diseases Screened

9,720

FREE Condoms Distributed



75

Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treated

### Reproductive Health

668  
CLIENTS

Reproductive Health Clinic providers continued to see clients via office and telehealth visits. Of the 668 clients served, 43% were insured by Medicaid and 28% were uninsured - with a total of 42% below the federal poverty level.



In 2021, the Reproductive Health Clinic implanted a total of 38 LARCs (long-acting reversible contraception) into clients. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, over time, LARCs are 20 times more effective than other forms of birth control.

38  
LARCs  
Implants

# Environmental Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

### Protecting our water

Following a 2020 investigation by the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) that determined that groundwater in the Pine Grove neighborhood located in East Bay Township was contaminated with PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) due to firefighting foam, or aqueous film forming foam (AFFF), used at nearby Cherry Capital Airport and the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station for training purposes, the Environmental Health Department along with East Bay Township and Grand Traverse County assisted with seeing 17 wells hooked up to municipal water by March 16, 2021.

17

The Environmental Health continued to work closely with local agencies to insure the health and safety of several public beaches throughout Grand Traverse County. Working collectively through partnerships and grants with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), surface water from swim areas at several local beaches are sampled and analyzed for E. coli each week. In 2021, Environmental Health reviewed 135 water samples from area beaches and issued 10 swim advisories.

135

10

# Environmental Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

### By the numbers

#### Well & Septic

**435**  
Well  
Permits  
25% 

**533**  
Well  
Permits  
9% 

**3,497**  
Well  
Permits  
14% 

#### Soil Erosion

**427**  
Soil Erosion  
Permits  
11% 

**6,067**  
Site  
Inspections  
17% 

#### Food Service

**570**   
Routine  
Inspections

**30**   
Temporary  
Inspections

**478**   
Licensed  
Establishments

\*Arrows indicate an increase or decrease compared to 2020

# Environmental Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

### Animal Control

Animal Control responded to 948 complaints in 2021 - a slight increase from 2020.

Of the 307 animals that were ultimately picked up by Animal Control Officers, 271 of them were dogs. One of which was Platinum, an unneutered, mixed-breed, male that was surrendered to the care of Grand Traverse County in late September '21.

### PLATINUM'S JOURNEY

Shortly after being adopted, Platinum was placed in the trunk of a small vehicle following a biting incident that occurred during transit.

Animal control officers were alerted to the situation and recovered a timid Platinum from the trunk of the car while it was parked at Munson Medical Center, where the



Animal Control Officer, Jon Brown, sits with Platinum outside of Cherryland Humane Society.

surrendering family was seeking care from the bite.



After observation and proper training were received, Platinum was transferred to the care of Cherryland Humane Society and spent nearly eight long months waiting for a family to choose him. In July '21, he found his forever home!

Responded to  
**948**  
community complaints

Picked up  
**271**  
dogs

Reunited  
**159**  
dogs with their owners

Issued  
**64**  
citations

# Community Health

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

### Adolescent Health

In 2021, the Adolescent Health program served Grand Traverse youth in four different locations within the community including Kingsley Middle School (counseling only), K-Town Youth Health Center, TC West High School (counseling only) and the Youth Health and Wellness Center located on the campus of the Career Tech Center. After spending most of 2021 participating in mass vaccination clinics, providers carried over COVID-19 testing and vaccination to the pediatric population along with regular services including minor illness and injury, STI/STD testing and treatment, physicals, as well as mental health which continued to be a top priority amongst all of our clinic settings.

In total, the four locations served 945 clients for a combination of services, which contributed to 493 hours of low or no-cost mental health counseling sessions.

#### Kingsley Middle School

8 Clients  
86 Counseling Sessions



#### K-Town Health Center

198 Clients  
160 Counseling Sessions



#### Youth Health & Wellness Center

213 Clients  
58 Counseling Sessions



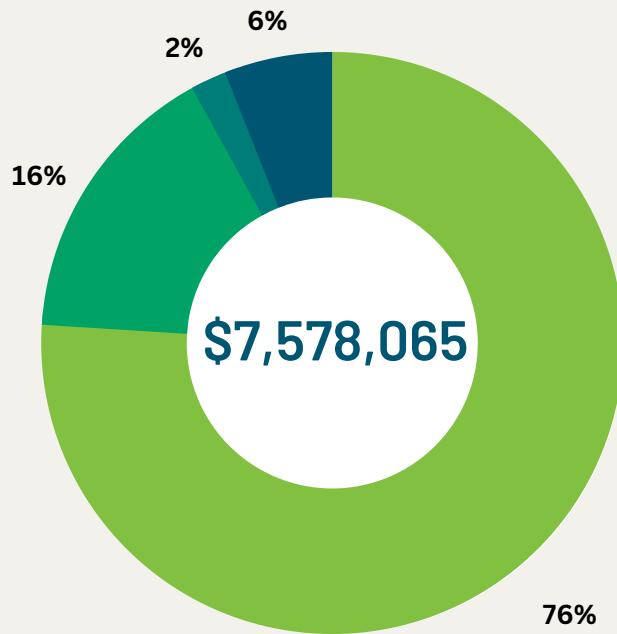
#### T.C. West High School

14 Clients  
189 Counseling Sessions



# FINANCIALS

## Contributing to a Healthier Community

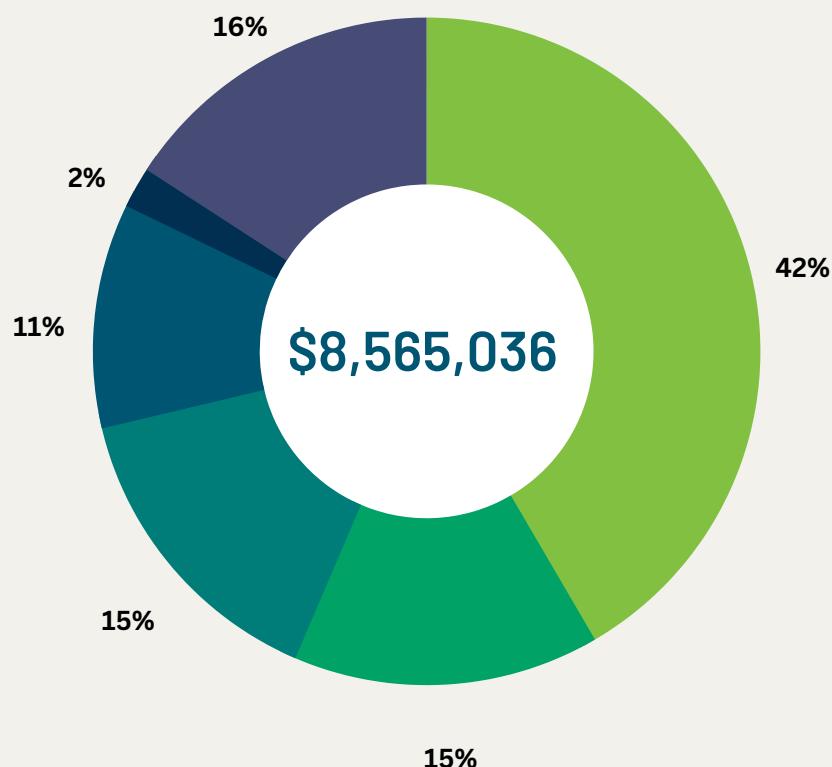


## EXPENDITURES

- 76% Community Health
- 16% Environmental Health
- 2% Emergency Preparedness
- 6% Medical Examiner

## REVENUES

- 42% State & Federal
- 15% Medicaid & Cost Settlement
- 15% Private Medical Insurance
- 11% Licenses, Permits & Fees
- 2% Local Grants
- 16% County Appropriations



# Connect With Us



K-Town  
112 S. Brownson Ave.  
Kingsley, MI 49649



[www.GTCountyMI.gov/Health](http://www.GTCountyMI.gov/Health)



@GTCHealthDept

- Clinical Community Health Services
- Office of The Medical Examiner
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness



2600 LaFranier Rd.  
Suite A  
Traverse City, MI 49686

- Environmental Health Services
- Animal Control



2650 LaFranier Rd.  
Traverse City, MI 49686



Youth Health & Wellness  
880 Parsons Ave.  
Traverse City, MI 49686