

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



# WELCOME MESSAGE

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Dear Community,

At the Grand Traverse County Health Department, we remain steadfast in our vision of “a healthy community and safe environment for all.” In 2024, our dedicated team of public health professionals continued working alongside our community to protect and improve our community’s health through high-quality services, innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based practices.

This year’s Annual Report highlights the progress we’ve made across critical public health areas. These include advancing maternal and child health initiatives, enhancing protections against communicable and vaccine-preventable diseases, and reinforcing our commitment to environmental health. We also took deliberate steps to ensure the sustainability of our programs—safeguarding vital public health resources through sound, exemplary practices.

Access to mental health services remains a growing priority in our community. In response, we’ve positioned ourselves as a local leader in this space. Our Youth Health and Wellness Centers—particularly their school-based mental health services—have continued to provide essential support to young people throughout the county.

Environmental protection is another central focus of our work. You may have seen our staff in the field conducting well and septic inspections, engaging in community outreach, or working to ensure the health and safety of our community’s restaurants and animal companions.

At the core of everything we do is our mission of service. Every program and initiative is built around the needs of our residents—because when individual health outcomes improve, the entire community thrives.

As we look toward 2025, we remain committed to expanding access to care, addressing disparities, promoting environmental stewardship, and tackling emerging public health challenges. Thank you for your continued trust and support as we work together toward a healthier Grand Traverse County for all.

Mike Lahey, MPH  
Health Officer  
Grand Traverse County Health Department

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- Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance
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## Connect with us:

- Phone
  - 231-995-6111
- Website
  - [gtcountymi.gov/Health-Department](http://gtcountymi.gov/Health-Department)
- Social Media
  - Facebook: GTCHealthDept
  - Instagram: gtchealth

## Our Board of Commissioners:

- Brian McAllister, District 1
- Lauren Flynn, District 2
- Ashlea Walter, District 3
- Brad Jewett, Vice Chair, District 4
- Rob Hentschel, Chair, District 5
- Darryl Nelson, District 6
- TJ Andrews, District 7
- Scott Sieffert, District 8
- Penny Morris, District 9

## Our Leadership:

- Wendy Hirschenberger, MPH, CPHA  
*Health Officer*
- Najibah Rehman, MD, MPH  
*Medical Director*
- Mike Lahey, MPH  
*Deputy Health Officer*

## Our Vision:

A healthy community and safe environment for all.

## Our Mission:

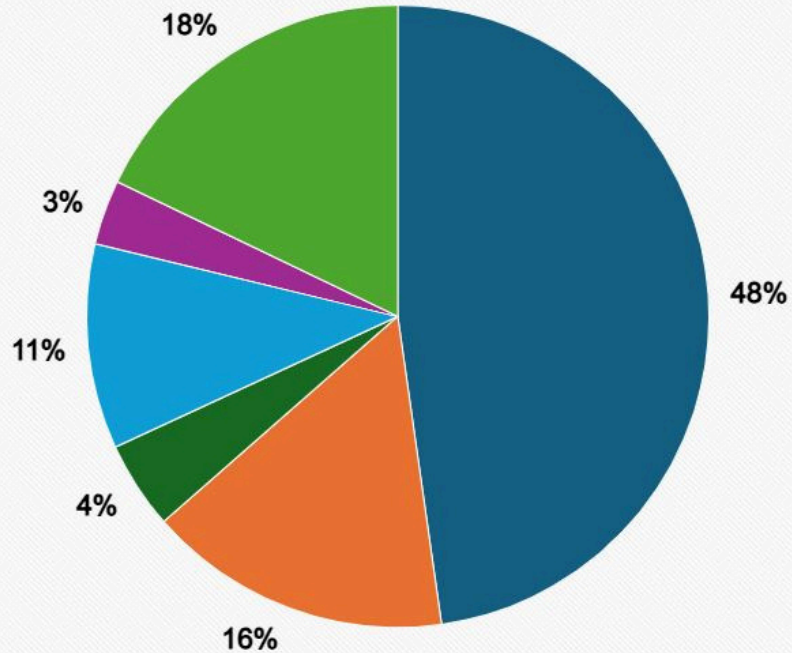
To protect and advance the health of our community and environment through partnerships, innovations, and excellent public health practice.

# FINANCIAL DATA

Revenues	
State & Federal Grants	\$ 3,897,773.89
Medicaid & Cost Settlement	\$ 1,407,830.53
Private Medical Insurance	\$ 267,202.22
Licenses, Permits, Fees	\$ 877,864.47
Local Grants	\$ 148,156.64
County Appropriations	\$ 1,503,151.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8,101,978.75</b>

- State & Federal Grants
- Medicaid & Cost Settlement
- Private Medical Insurance
- Licenses, Permits, Fees
- Local Grants
- County Appropriations

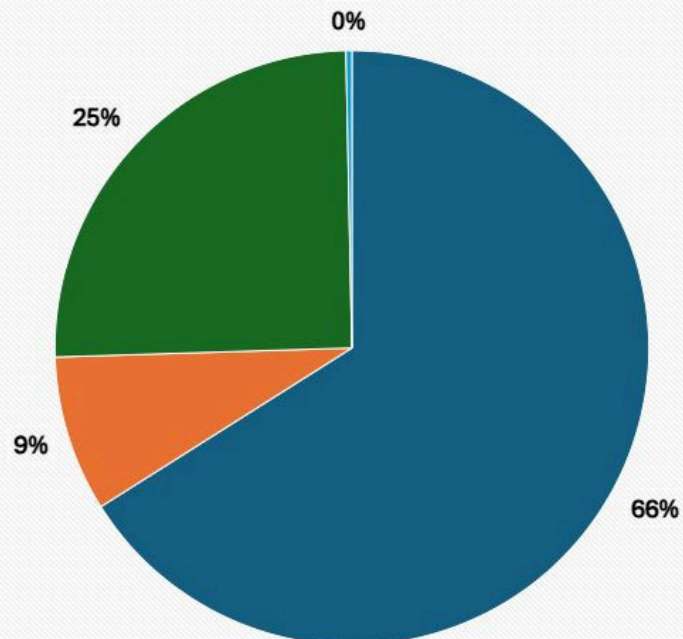
Revenues



Expenditures	
Personnel Services	\$ 5,942,571.94
Supplies	\$ 762,720.79
Other Services	\$ 2,265,136.58
Capital Outlay	\$ 28,785.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8,999,214.31</b>

- Personnel Services
- Supplies
- Other Services
- Capital Outlay

Expenditures





# PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our Environmental Health Division is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of Grand Traverse County residents by ensuring safe food practices and maintaining the integrity of private water and wastewater systems. Through comprehensive food inspections, effective permitting processes, and ongoing public education, we work to create a healthier, safer environment for everyone in our community.

## By the Numbers



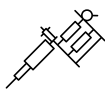
**74**

Swimming Pool  
Inspections



**21**

Campground  
Inspections



**22**

Body Art  
Inspections



**814**

Food Service  
Routine Inspections



**76**

Food Service Follow-Up  
Restaurant  
Inspections



**328**

Soil Erosion  
Permits Issued



**5,455**

Soil Erosion  
Site Inspections



**395**

Well Permits  
Issued



**486**

Septic Permits  
Issued



**122**

Beach Monitoring  
Samples



**2**

Food Borne Illness  
Investigations

This year, our Environmental Health team remained active as Grand Traverse County continued to grow. With increased development, we saw a rise in the number of well and septic permits issued, while our food service and inspection programs remain busy.

The State of Michigan conducted residential water sampling near the Regional Fire Training Facility to investigate potential PFAS contamination resulting from historical firefighting training activities. Encouragingly, all samples were found to be within Michigan's safety standards for PFAS in drinking water, with no exceedances detected.

Additionally, at the request of the Board of Commissioners, an ad hoc committee was formed to discuss what a proposed regulation for well and septic systems during property transfers would look like in Grand Traverse County. Under the current draft, these requirements would apply to properties located within 300 feet of surface water.



SOS Analytical testing our beach water

# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

The Grand Traverse County Health Department's Maternal, Child, and Family Health team is dedicated to improving the mental and physical health of parents, children, and families in our community. Our experienced healthcare professionals are here to support families in accessing high-quality services, resources, and care tailored to their needs.

## By the Numbers



**1,151**

Maternal Infant Health  
Program Visits



**307**

Children's Special Health  
Care Services Caseload



**492**

Healthy Futures  
New Enrollments



**2,372**

Women, Infants,  
and Children Clients



**287**

Healthy Families  
America Visits



**6,551**

Children Vision  
Screenings



**4,943**

Children Hearing  
Screenings

Our Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is committed to protecting children at risk of lead exposure through preventive education, outreach, and access to critical resources. For children with elevated blood lead levels, we provide nurse case management services that include home visits and assistance with the lead abatement application process, helping families reduce environmental risks and improve health outcomes.

In 2024, our Blood Lead Coordinator distributed educational packets to local medical providers and reviewed updated testing guidelines, including changes to Michigan's universal testing requirements.



# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

The Community Health Division offers a range of clinical programs focused on preventative measures that support the health and well-being of Grand Traverse County residents. Our dedicated team is committed to connecting individuals and families with high-quality healthcare services, ensuring accessible and compassionate care for all members of our community.

## By the Numbers - Reproductive and Sexual Health



**654**

Family Planning  
Client Visits



**384**

Sexually Transmitted  
Infection Screenings



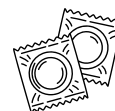
**164**

HIV  
Screenings



**9**

Sexually Transmitted  
Infections Treated



**9,156**

Condoms Distributed in  
our Community

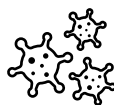
The Grand Traverse County Health Department offers the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Navigation Program (BC3NP), designed to assist uninsured or underinsured women aged 21-64. The program provides free breast and cervical cancer screenings, including mammograms and Pap tests, along with follow-up care for any abnormal results.

## By the Numbers - Immunizations



**3,353**

Immunizations



**543**

COVID-19



**164**

Influenza



**515**

Waivers Given

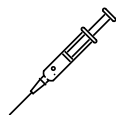
GTC ranked 23rd out of 84 counties in Michigan for childhood vaccination coverage, specifically for completion of the recommended vaccine series. Additionally, during December, peak flu season, our county achieved strong flu vaccine coverage among children aged 6 months to 8 years, thanks to the efforts and dedication of our public health staff.

## By the Numbers - Communicable Disease and Prevention



**374**

Communicable  
Disease Reported



**273**

Tuberculosis Skin  
Test Administered



**212**

Animal Bites  
Investigated



**51**

Bat  
Exposures

In 2024, the Communicable Disease team investigated over 600 cases of reportable illnesses and animal bite or bat exposure incidents. This included 39 pertussis (whooping cough) cases—a significant increase from previous years—primarily linked to schools and childcare settings. In response to national measles concerns, Provider Alerts were issued to help local healthcare providers prepare for potential cases. The team remains a key resource for schools, childcare centers, and long-term care facilities, offering guidance on infection prevention and public health response.

# PROTECTING OUR YOUTH

The Grand Traverse County Health Department operates two adolescent health clinics that provide accessible, high-quality healthcare services for youth ages 10 to 21. Conveniently located in downtown Kingsley and on the Career Tech Center campus, these clinics are designed to accommodate school schedules and parents' work hours—making it easier for families to access the care they need. Services include mental health counseling, general medical care, and comprehensive health education, all delivered in a youth-friendly and supportive environment.

## By the Numbers - Youth Health & Wellness Center



**480**

Counseling  
Sessions



**108**

Immunizations  
Administered



**472**

Clinical  
Visits



**227**

Physical  
Examinations



## By the Numbers - K-Town Youth Health Center



**172**

Counseling  
Sessions



**54**

Immunizations  
Administered



**243**

Clinical  
Visits



**94**

Physical  
Examinations



Our two Expanding, Enhancing Emotional Health (E3) programs provide comprehensive on-site mental health services for students, delivered by licensed mental health providers. These school-based programs are designed to support students' emotional well-being and improve access to mental health care directly within the educational setting.

## By the Numbers - Expanding, Enhancing Emotional Health (E3) Program



**445**

Counseling Sessions  
at Traverse City  
Central High School



**312**

Counseling Sessions  
at Traverse City West  
Senior High School





# EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY

This year, we remained focused on making a positive impact in our community. Our team actively connected with residents at a variety of outreach events—ranging from schools, clinics, and community health fairs. We are passionate about sharing vital health education resources and offering support, meeting individuals and families where they are to promote healthier lives across Grand Traverse County.



Our Adolescent Health team engaged with hundreds of students at Traverse City West Senior High School during the Mental Health Summit, fostering important conversations around mental wellness and connecting youth with supportive resources.

Jacalyn Money-Bruno, our Communicable Disease and Immunization Supervisor, spoke with students during Career Day at Traverse City West Senior High School, sharing insights into public health careers and the vital role of disease prevention and immunization.



In April, our Environmental Health team participated in MakerFest 2024 – Special Earth Day Edition, spending a Saturday engaging with the community and promoting the importance of Being Septic Smart! Through hands-on education and outreach, the team helped raise awareness about proper septic system care and its impact on environmental and public health.

For 28 years, the Grand Traverse County Health Department has proudly hosted the Baby Tent at the National Cherry Festival. This air-conditioned space offers families a clean, comfortable, and private area to feed their babies and change diapers during the busy event. In 2024, the Baby Tent served 424 families throughout the week-long festival—continuing a beloved tradition of supporting parents and caregivers in our community.



To celebrate National Breastfeeding Month, our Maternal Child Health team—working in collaboration with local organizations—hosted a Milk and Cookies event for families. This free event featured raffle prizes, family and breastfeeding photo opportunities, and a welcoming space for families to connect, share experiences, and celebrate the importance of breastfeeding support in our community.

# KEEPING OUR ANIMALS SAFE

The Animal Control Division provides a range of valuable services to the community, including dog adoptions, reuniting lost dogs with their owners, conducting animal welfare checks, performing kennel inspections, picking up stray dogs, and managing dog licensing. Our officers also work closely with local rescues, foster networks, and the Cherryland Humane Society to ensure the well-being of animals throughout Grand Traverse County.

## By the Numbers



**66**

Dogs  
Adopted



**106**

Dogs Reunited  
with Owners



**11**

Kennel  
Inspections



**241**

Dogs  
Impounded



**2,285**

Phone Calls  
Received



**636**

Community  
Complaints  
Responded

## Some of our pups have found their forever home and family!



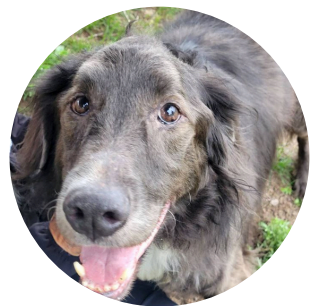
Tiny



Ryder



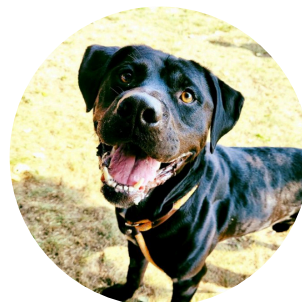
Bailey



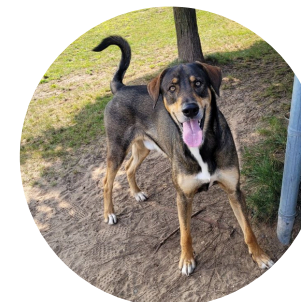
Griffen



Pickles



Kross



Miller



Lacy

# PREPARING OUR COMMUNITY FOR EMERGENCIES

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In 2024, our Emergency Preparedness Program updated the department's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Plan. Additionally, critical public health preparedness documents—including the Pandemic Influenza Plan and the Medical Countermeasures Plan—were reviewed and revised to align with current best practices and ensure readiness for effective response.

The Emergency Preparedness Program played a key role in supporting the health department's continuity of operation during a sustained network outage in June.



# OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

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The Office of the Medical Examiner conducts investigations into deaths that may pose a public health concern, with the safety and welfare of our community as the highest priority. In partnership with the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker MD School of Medicine, we deliver these critical services. Upon notification of a death, a thorough investigation is promptly initiated, often including an autopsy to determine cause and circumstances.

The Medical Examiner determines the scope of each examination according to standards set by the National Association of Medical Examiners. All examinations are conducted by board-certified forensic pathologists with advanced training and expertise in their fields.



# COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING YOUR HEALTH

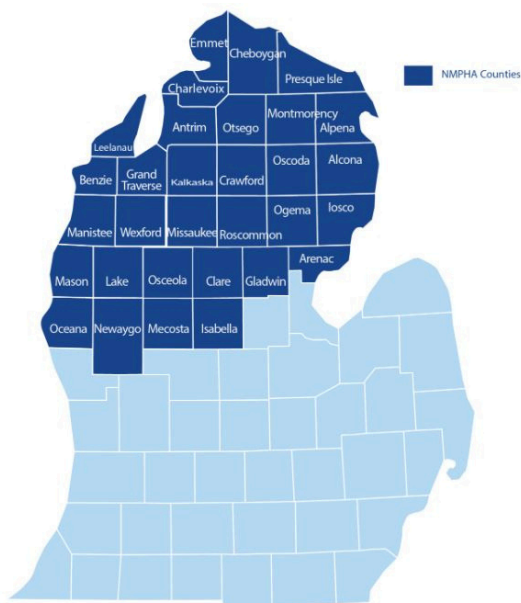
The Grand Traverse County Health Department is a proud member of the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance (NMPHA)—a collaborative partnership of seven local health departments serving 31 counties across northern lower Michigan. Through this alliance, we work together to strengthen public health infrastructure, share resources, and coordinate efforts to improve the health and well-being of communities throughout the region.

In 2024, the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance (NMPHA) proudly celebrated its 10th anniversary. The Alliance's mission is to develop, implement, and sustain models of shared public health services that increase capacity, contain costs, maximize assets, and more effectively improve health outcomes across the region.

Over the past decade, NMPHA has achieved several notable milestones:

- Received the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director's Award for three consecutive years, recognizing excellence in collaborative public health work.
- Established the Northern Michigan Public Health Emergency Preparedness Team—the first collaboration of its kind in the state—by combining state grant funding across three local health departments to strengthen regional emergency preparedness.
- Led a regional Community Health Needs Assessment in partnership with hospitals and community organizations, fostering alignment and data-driven planning across sectors.
- Designated as the backbone organization for the 10-county Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region, helping coordinate collective efforts to improve community health.

As a proud member of NMPHA, the Grand Traverse County Health Department remains committed to advancing regional collaboration and innovative public health solutions that benefit all northern Michigan residents.



To learn more about the NMPHA, scan the QR code below or visit its website.



[www.nmpublichealthalliance.org](http://www.nmpublichealthalliance.org)



# COMMUNICATING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

This year, we made significant strides in strengthening our communication efforts. Key achievements included reorganizing our website for improved accessibility and standardizing our branding across all platforms.

To further enhance community engagement, we revitalized our social media presence by sharing daily posts and incorporating interactive content—making public health information more accessible, timely, and engaging for our residents.

## By the Numbers - Media



17

Beach Monitoring  
Media Releases



15

Public Health  
Media Releases



28

In the  
Newspaper



5

Newspaper  
Interviews



13

On the  
News



8

Television  
Interviews

## By the Numbers - Social Media



99,239

Facebook  
Views



102,643

Facebook  
Reach



986

Instagram Reach &  
Interactions



**Interactions:** Actions taken by users on a piece of content.

**Reach:** The number of individuals who have seen a piece of content at least once.

**Views:** The total number of times a piece of content was viewed.

# THANK YOU