

The Department of Public Health: A History

In the pages that follow, you'll find a brief history of public health in Ottawa County, and read about the achievements of past and present public health professionals.

Annual Report 2023

Looking back on the history of the Department of Public Health

miOttawa Department of
Public Health



Ottawa County Public Health: *Then and Now*

Table of Contents



From the
Health
Officer



A Timeline of Ottawa
County Public Health



Program Statistics



Accreditation

12

Financial
Report



13

Board of
Commissioners
& Staff



14

Mission, Vision,
Values & Strategic
Priorities





A Letter From the Health Officer

The establishment of public health policy in the United States dates back over two centuries to 1778 with the passage of the Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen, under President John Adams. The Act created a network of marine hospitals to care for the health needs of sailors, and eventually became the Marine Hospital Service, which would play a pivotal role in controlling global epidemic diseases like smallpox and yellow fever. The Act was also a critical moment in the history of public health because it paved the way for the Marine Hospital Service to serve not only military personnel, but also the general public.

Almost 100 years later in 1873, the first state Board of Health was created in Michigan, establishing a government entity to identify and address health issues, and prolong and improve the quality of life for Michigan residents.

Recognition of the benefits of attending to whole community health needs in Ottawa County dates back to 1913, when the Board of Supervisors appointed a county nurse to do school health inspections, and teach health and hygiene to

both school children and adults. In 1931, the value of these services to the community led the Board to formally establish a county department dedicated to public health.

Local public health departments are delegated legal responsibility for addressing health issues at a population level, by monitoring and responding to infectious disease, providing education, developing community-specific programs and services, and recommending policies to improve quality of life. These activities, and others, can also improve the health of the individuals in the community. Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said, *“Health care is vital to all of us some of the time, but public health is vital to all of us all of the time.”*

In the pages that follow, you’ll find a brief history of public health in Ottawa County, and read about the achievements of past and present public health staff.

Speaking of achievements, I’m so proud of the Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH) team who maintained accreditation

during the Cycle 8 Accreditation Program from the Michigan Public Health Institute this year. This was the first accreditation cycle in five years, and the first cycle for many of the staff who contributed to the accreditation process. OCDPH received commendation in many areas and continues to stand as a model health department in the State of Michigan. You’ll find more on the accreditation process in this report.

OCDPH could not attend to the community and individual health needs here in Ottawa County without the help of our partners, both private and public. Thank you for your role in accomplishing important public health work. Finally, thank you to the community for your continued trust in our guidance and our programs.

In good health,

Adeline Hambley, MBA, REHS
Administrative Health Officer



Ottawa County Public Health: *Then*

1873

Michigan's first Board of Health is formed.

One of the Board's efforts focused on controlling the spread of diseases including smallpox, scarlet fever, and measles.



1898

Ordinance for the Protection of the Public Health of the City of Grand Haven passed and approved October 12, 1898.

"Occupant or occupants of every house, lot and premises in city to abate all nuisances therein and thereon dangerous to the lives and health of citizens."



1900

More emphasis began to be placed on public health and disease control. Prior to this, fire was considered a greater hazard than the spread of disease and council reports focused more on fire prevention.



1913

Ottawa County Board of Supervisors met and recommended employing a county nurse in Ottawa County, calling it an "important and necessary step for the uplift of the mental and physical activity and training of the people, and the welfare, public health, and prosperity of the County."



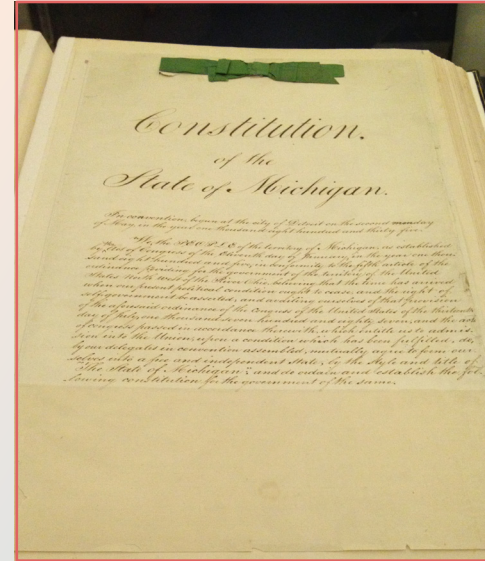
1918

Due to high rates of illness and death in 1918, Michigan Governor, Albert Sleeper, requests local health officers attend a meeting at the Capitol to review influenza protocols and prevention.



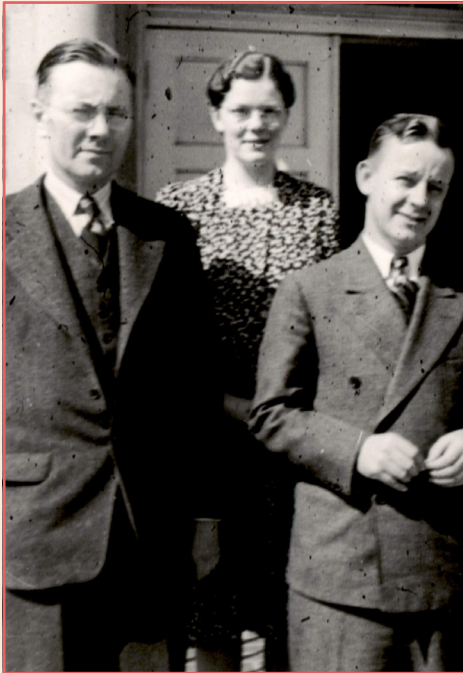
1963

The Constitution of Michigan declares that, "the public health and general welfare of the people of the state are hereby declared to be matters of primary public concern. The legislature shall pass suitable laws for the protection and promotion of public health." (Article IV, Section 51)



1931

Ottawa County Health Department was founded with one health officer, Dr. Ralph Ten Have, and two nurses to "serve basic elements of public health services, including control of communicable diseases, school health service, and immunization against smallpox and diphtheria."



1978

After five years of work, the Michigan Public Health Code is signed into law.

"A local health department shall continually and diligently endeavor to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote the public health through organized programs, including prevention and control of environmental hazards; prevention and control of diseases; prevention and control of health problems of particularly vulnerable population groups." (MCL 369-1978, 333.2433)



Ottawa County Public Health: **Now**



Environmental Health Services



Onsite Services

- Conducted **790** real estate transfer evaluations of well and septic systems. **24%** required connections of deficiencies including non-compliant septic systems contaminating ground or surface water.
- Issued **614** sewage disposal system permits and conducted **573** final inspections.
- Issued **360** well permits and conducted **545** final inspections.

Food Safety

- Completed **2,319** restaurant inspections.
- **3,145** food safety violations were cited.
- **94%** of high risk food safety violations cited were corrected within 30 days.
- Investigated **83** food safety complaints.
- Offered post-inspection surveys to all restaurants. **97%** of restaurants surveyed indicated public health service was helpful.

- Investigated **118** foodborne illness complaints and gastrointestinal illness cases.

Environmental Sustainability

- Collected more than **328 tons** of recyclable materials and household hazardous waste, a **26%** increase over 2022.
- Served **21,941** residents, a **22%** increase over 2022.
- Provided **28,174** services.



6



Communicable Disease

- Investigated **2,755** cases of reportable communicable diseases requiring public health follow up.*
- Investigated and monitored an outbreak of **37** probable and confirmed cases of Cryptosporidium, a parasite that infects animals and humans.
- Offered preventive treatment for **59** cases of latent tuberculosis (TB) to reduce the risk of the disease progressing to active TB, and treated **3** cases of active TB.

Immunizations

- Administered **6,805** routine vaccinations, in addition to COVID-19 and mpox vaccinations.



- Provided immunization recommendations to **158** people traveling outside of the US, **28** more people than 2022.

Family Planning and Women’s Health Services

- Cared for **674** patients at **1,558** visits, **235** fewer visits than 2022.
- Screened **141** patients for cervical cancer, detecting abnormal results in **32** people who were referred for or provided preventive treatment and monitoring.

Sexually Transmitted Infection

- Served **630** patients at **828** visits, nearly **20%** more visits than 2022.
- Provided **840** screenings for HIV and **1,033** screenings for chlamydia and gonorrhea.

*Not all communicable diseases require further public health investigation.





Maternal Infant Health Program

- Held **1,748** encounters with **369** MIHP families, **50** more families than 2022.
- MIHP staff contributed to the **Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies** pilot project to improve health outcomes for pregnant individuals and their families who experience higher than average needs.

Children's Special Health Care Services and Childhood Elevated Blood Lead Level Program

- **33** children under the age of six with elevated blood lead levels were referred to the program and **14** in-home nurse care management visits were conducted to provide education and support.
- Provided **1,543** families with special health care services, a **6.5%** increase from 2022.

Hearing and Vision Screening Program

- Completed **11,679** hearing screenings, a **13%** increase over 2022. Of these, **305** children, or **2.6%** of those screened, required follow-up medical care.
- Completed **19,200** vision screenings, a **67%** increase over 2022. Of these, **1,664** children, or **8.7%** of children screened, required follow-up medical care.

Ottawa Pathways to Better Health Program

- Served **491** individuals, **63** more than 2022. Of these, **217** were new enrollees in 2023.
- Opened **1,036** pathways, completing **469** pathways.
- Pathways' Community Health Workers held **5,037** client encounters.



Health Education Program

- Ottawa Food gleaned **36,308 lbs.** of food, benefiting local food resource agencies in Grand Haven and Holland. Ottawa Food's Produce Donation Program resulted in **3,759 lbs.** of produce given to local food pantries, and its Pick for Pantries Program provided **769 lbs.** of fruit to local food pantries.
- The Ottawa County Suicide Prevention Coalition promoted the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** through online advertising to approximately **477,000** users, with more than **4,300** clicking the link for more information.
- Partnered to train **3,500** individuals in HeartSafe Community hands-only CPR in the City of Holland.
- Enrolled **725** people in the Step it Up! program, with **75%** reporting meeting or exceeding national health guidelines for weekly physical activity by the end of the program.



- Completed **287** alcohol and tobacco retailer compliance checks in partnership with the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office with a **94%** retailer compliance rate.
- Distributed **6,500** Safe Homes: Lock It Up bags with messaging about locking up lethal means.
- Completed **12** Vape Education and **18** Prime for Life classes that supported over **300** youth referred to the program.

Oral Health Program

- Miles of Smiles performed **1,295** preventive and restorative appointments for financially qualifying children, a **55%** increase over 2022.
- Performed **2,219** sealant applications, **39%** more than 2022, and completed **335** fluoride applications through the SEAL! Michigan program.
- Educated **3,053** students about oral health.
- Conducted **493** Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment screenings in the first year of the program.



Accreditation and Excellence: A Commitment to Public Health

Since 1999, Michigan has been accrediting the state's 45 local health departments (LHDs) and has been at the forefront of public health accreditation, influencing the development of the first national accreditation program for public health departments. Accreditation in Michigan is more than a formal recognition; a LHD cannot operate without meeting accreditation requirements.

The Michigan Local Public Health Institute (MPHI) Accreditation Program reviews LHDs against rigorously defined Minimum Program Requirements (MPRs) that span critical public health functions including assessment, planning, workforce development, and quality improvement, ensuring LHDs adhere to best practices in service delivery. Accreditation evaluates the department's ability to meet these standards, provides opportunities for continuous quality improvement, ensures local level capacity to meet legally required public health functions, and provides a mechanism for accountability with the State of Michigan.

There was a pause in LHD accreditation in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic response. In 2023, MPHI used the most recent Cycle 8 Accreditation Program to provide feedback to LHDs on strengths and weaknesses, and to identify and establish supports needed prior to the Cycle 9 program. All LHDs participated in the normal accreditation process, which reviewed activities for the period from 2019-2022, and all LHDs retained their current accreditation status instead of the "met" or "not met" designations typically provided.

OCDPH has completed all seven previous accreditation cycles. Cycle 8 was the first cycle in five years, and the first for many of the new leaders in the department. In preparation, OCDPH staff compiled evidence of their work to meet each MPR;

the process culminated in a thorough examination of this evidence through multi-day site visits with accreditation reviewers.

The outcome showed that in addition to compliance with all MPRs, in many instances the department demonstrated excellence beyond MPR standards. This accomplishment reflects OCDPH's dedication

to going above and beyond to fulfill our mission to assure conditions that promote and protect health.

The community can trust that, as an award-winning health department, OCDPH is committed to improving health for everyone who lives, works, and plays in Ottawa County.

The Accreditation Program assures that a local health department consistently demonstrates the ability to provide required services.

Cycle 8 Accreditation Reviewer Comments

“OCDPH is very well known in the Ottawa County community for providing information, advocacy, and resources for all of their public health services. Their HIV and STI program staff *show strong dedication* to serving their community, evidenced by the tenure of staff. ... The OCDPH team quickly adapted their services during the COVID-19 pandemic while *maintaining the focus on client care* and the greater Ottawa community. Furthermore, OCDPH staff were able to offer (STI) testing services for neighboring counties that were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“OCDPH staff also provided an overview of the philosophy for enforcement, which begins through *attempts to partner with local businesses or residents* to resolve issues voluntarily.”

“The vision team does a great job of making sure that *parents are informed* of the need for their child’s vision care. Letters are also available in Spanish. Great job!”

“The Reviewers found OCDPH’s work in *completing and responding to needs* identified by a migrant health needs assessment to be *a particular area of strength* for the LHD.” ... “Another area of strength is the OCDPH’s work in suicide prevention.” ... “The OCDPH’s initiatives related to substance use disorder prevention are also an area of strength.”

“The (Onsite) staff is recognized as a strength of the OCDPH. ... The Reviewers observed a *customer service focus* ... The Reviewers observed that the OCDPH staff are *dedicated to the work and to serving the community*.”

“OCDPH has been demonstrating their ability to vaccinate susceptible individuals in the event of a vaccine preventable disease (VPD) outbreak throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. OCDPH staff has worked tirelessly to protect the citizens of Ottawa County from VPDs.” ... “There is *excellent collaboration* between the Emergency Preparedness (EP) staff and the Immunization staff at OCDPH.”

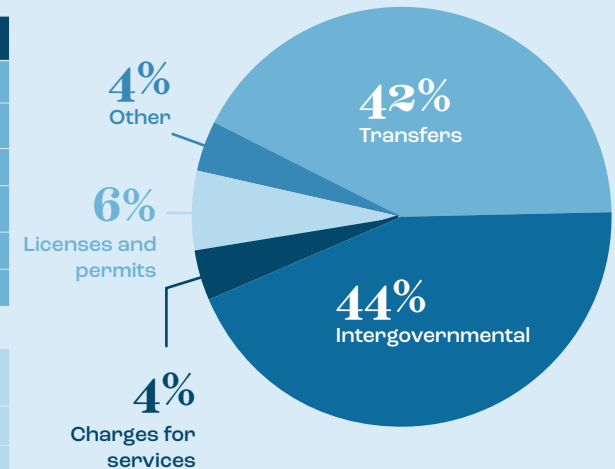
“OCDPH maintains a digital foodborne illness (FBI) complaint log and has policy in place for *ensuring complaint investigations are initiated within 24 hours*... “OCDPH maintains an active Health Survey Team that is comprised of representatives from OCDPH’s Environment Health, Communicable Disease, Epidemiology, and Emergency Preparedness programs. This team reviews all incoming FBI complaints and assesses proper courses of action for each complaint.”

“The OCDPH’s work under the Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP) is also an area of strength for the LHD. OCDPH staff reported *meeting 100% of indicators* for the MIHP program in Accreditation Cycle 8, *a considerable feat* given that the program tracks over 80 different metrics related to client services. A specific area of success is the OCDPH MIHP’s work in increasing breastfeeding rates, which rose from 45 to 47 percent in just one year between fiscal year FY 2021 and FY 2022.”

Financial Report

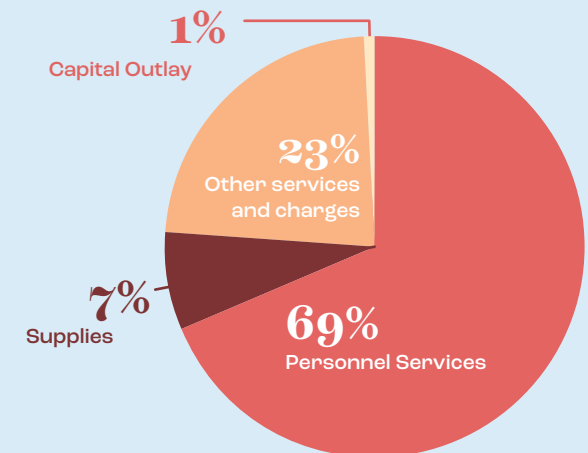
2023 Revenues

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenues					(Unaudited)
Intergovernmental revenues	\$5,946,990	\$6,754,446	\$7,127,943	\$7,084,255	\$7,249,910
Charges for services	705,830	598,829	577,375	654,471	715,502
Licenses and permits	1,052,855	977,837	977,519	1,058,251	983,353
Other	135,976	550,821	223,183	380,771	632,606
Total Revenues	7,841,651	8,881,933	8,906,020	9,177,748	9,581,371



Expenditures					
Current Operations					
Personnel services	7,868,542	8,917,698	9,779,221	11,040,287	10,781,440
Supplies	1,072,513	940,917	1,023,901	960,126	1,182,890
Other services and charges	2,224,040	2,378,035	2,587,715	3,647,388	3,615,981
Debt Service					
Principal retirement	-	-	-	-	-
Interest and fiscal charges	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	6,566	6,030	121,072
Total expenditures	11,165,095	12,236,650	13,397,403	15,653,831	15,701,383
Revenues over (under) expenditures	(3,323,444)	(3,354,717)	(4,491,383)	(6,476,083)	(6,120,012)

2023 Expenditures



Other financing sources (uses)					
Transfers from other funds	4,610,713	4,193,078	5,201,159	6,156,663	6,898,155
Total other financing sources (uses)	4,610,713	4,193,078	5,201,159	6,156,663	6,898,155

Net increase (decrease) in fund balance	1,287,269	838,361	709,776	(319,420)	778,143
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Fund balance, beginning of year	885,613	2,172,882	3,011,243	3,721,019	3,401,599
Fund balance, end of year	\$2,172,882	\$3,011,243	\$3,721,019	\$3,401,599	\$4,179,742

FTE (Employees)	91.75	99.20*	98.88*	120.25**	122.76**
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* Does not include COVID-19 grant funded positions.

** Includes approved COVID-19 grant funded positions. Not all approved positions may have been filled.

Board of Commissioners

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Chairperson

Sylvia Rhodea
Vice Chairperson

Gretchen Cosby

Lucy Ebel

Doug Zylstra

Jacob Bonnema

Kendra Wenzel

Rebekah Curran

Roger Belknap

Roger Bergman

Allison Miedema

Staff

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Administrative Health Officer

Marcia Mansaray, MSc
Deputy Health Officer

Gwendolyn Unzicker, MD
Medical Director

Derel Glashower, MPH, CPH
Senior Epidemiologist
miOttawa.org/HealthData

Jessica Behringer, REHS
Emergency Preparedness Manager
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Nina Baranowski, MPA
Public Health Financial Manager

Deborah Price, CNM, MN, DrPH, FACNM
Acting Clinical Services Manager

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Family Planning & Women's Health Services Program
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Immunizations Program
miOttawa.org/Immunize

Sexually Transmitted Infection Program
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Children's Special Health Care Services & Childhood Elevated Blood Lead Level Programs
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Hearing and Vision Screening Program
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Maternal Infant Health Program
miOttawa.org/MIHP

Ottawa Pathways to Better Health Program
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Food Safety Program
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Onsite Services Program
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Sustainability Program
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miOttawa.org/SAP
miOttawa.org/Suicideprevention
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Oral Health Program
miOttawa.org/Dental

Our Mission

Working together to assure conditions that promote and protect health



Our Vision

Healthy people

Our Values

Equity: All people will be valued and treated fairly with dignity and respect

Integrity: Uphold the highest level of ethical standards

Excellence: Provide the highest quality product, service and customer experience

Our Strategic Priorities

1. Identify and control public health threats
2. Improve the social and physical environments that promote health
3. Empower citizens with credible and timely health information
4. Promote a positive work culture
5. Ensure organizational sustainability



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