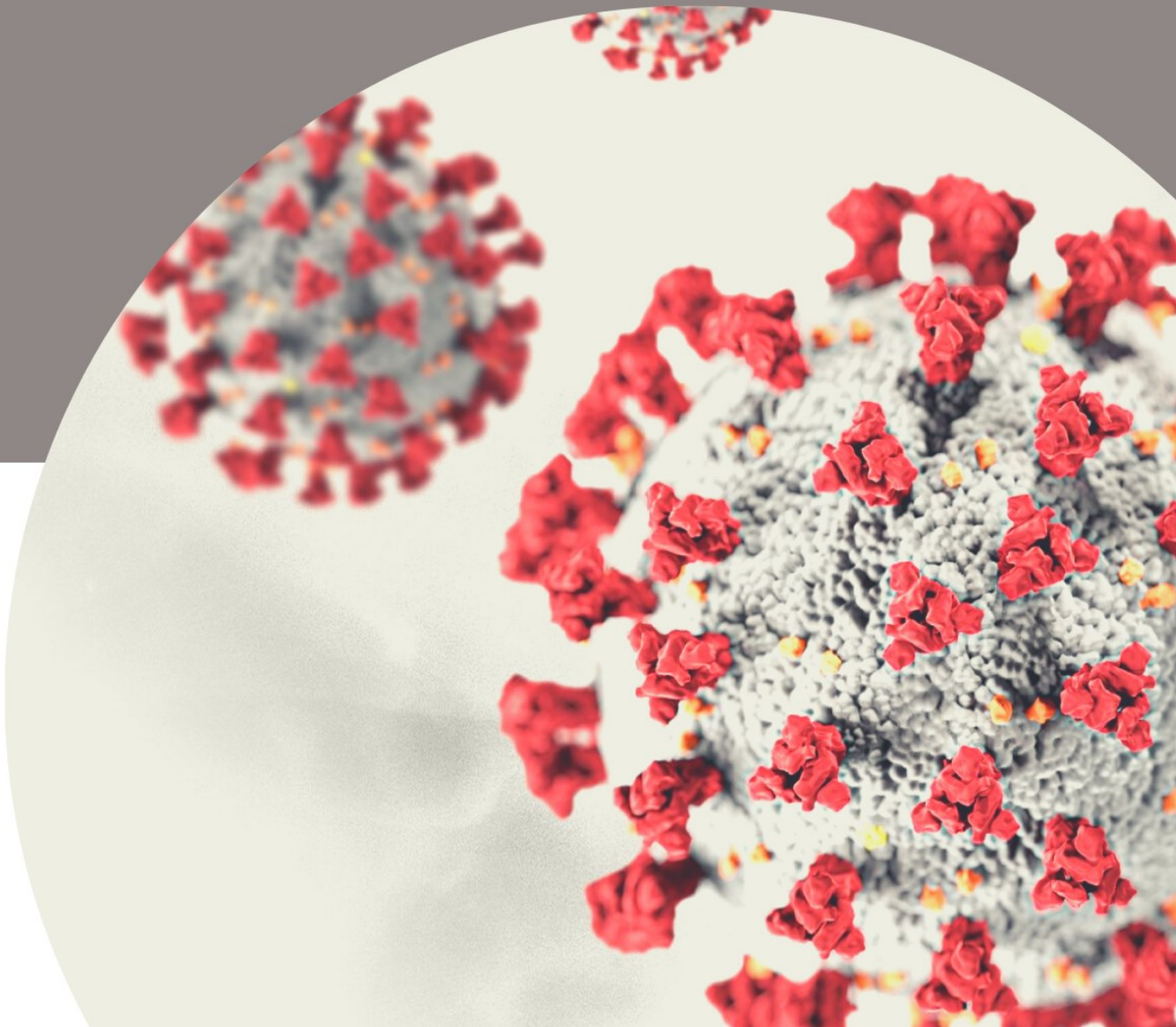


# ANNUAL REPORT

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2020 EDITION  
THE YEAR OF COVID-19



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## COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINICS

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department's Community Dental Clinics provide quality dental care at an affordable price for adults and children. As fully functioning dental clinics with state of the art dental equipment, community members have access to an array of dental services including: preventive, restorative, prosthetic, and surgical services. Dental services are provided at three different office locations (Dowagiac, Hartford, Mattawan) with a total of 27 operatories.

19,987	DENTAL PATIENTS
49,719	DENTAL PROCEDURES PERFORMED

## MOBILE DENTAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

VBCDHD proudly delivers a mobile dental outreach program, providing screening and fluoride varnish, oral health education, and referrals to dental homes/restorative care to students preschool through 12th grade in Van Buren and Cass County schools. Through the Mobile Dental Outreach Program a Dental Hygienist and Dental Assistant travel to area schools to administer services on site, making it easy and convenient for children to get the preventive care and oral health education they need. Students receive dental kits (toothbrush, toothpaste, floss) and dental staff work with parents to set up care plans to ensure students with treatment needs—restorative and emergent—are linked to the care they need. Community mobile dental outreach also extends to community sites and adult programming.

744	STUDENTS SCREENED
749	STUDENTS RECEIVED SEALANTS
1,706	TOTAL SEALANTS PLACED
7,508	STUDENTS RECEIVED ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION
31	SCHOOLS IN VAN BUREN & CASS COUNTY VISITED

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Like many other dental providers, the Community Dental Clinics also experienced a temporary shut down and subsequent significant slow down in services due to the required change in safety procedures. The increased safety precautions meant fewer appointments in a day and therefore, fewer patients seen. In December 2020, VBCDHD consolidated clinics, moving all Mattawan services and patients to the Dowagiac or Hartford clinic locations.

Although the mobile dental outreach program looked different this year, the department found ways to still provide services, including delivering 9,100 toothbrush gifts. Inside each bag was a ticket that students could use to redeem an electric toothbrush with a completed dental visit at one of our clinics.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REPORT

2020 began with the identification of a novel coronavirus in China that had been detected in the United States. In January of 2020, the State of Michigan Emergency Operations Center opened to provide information and resources to Local, Regional and State partners as the COVID-19 situation developed. As travelers arrived in Michigan, local public health officials were being informed. During the first quarter of 2020, the health department focused on communications with State and Local officials and prepared for the first case of COVID-19 to be identified in Van Buren or Cass County.

During the 2nd Quarter of 2020, VBCDHD was notified of its 1st case of COVID-19. The cases were increasing across the State. It was identified that this virus did not respond to antiviral therapies currently on the market and no vaccine was available. The development caused Emergency Preparedness programs and other partners to come together quickly to develop an Incident Action Plan for response to the new pandemic. Quickly guidance was released to healthcare providers, dentists and other partners to cease high risk procedures and to use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Many agencies did not stock enough PPE to continue routine services. VBCDHD worked closely with state and local officials to identify and procure PPE for community partners such as nursing homes, adult care facilities, dentists, and law enforcement officers. We worked non-stop to support our community agencies and protect their employees. Cases of COVID-19 continued to rise and fall throughout the next several months causing our staff to be overwhelmed with investigations, testing centers and quarantine protocol.

Early fall, VBCDHD experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of cases being identified in the jurisdiction. New guidelines were pushed out to wear masks and complete COVID screenings prior to entering all facilities. We worked with community agencies and businesses to assist them in daily operations in a safe manner and following the Governors Executive Orders. Executive orders changed often and it was difficult to ensure the public was kept informed of the current guidelines and orders. PPE requests from the State were available from the State/Regional warehouse through the 5th District Medical Coalition to support local EMS, Healthcare providers, and other at risk employers such as dentists.

Additionally, the fall season also requires increased services to the public such as immunizations and influenza vaccine. National public health officials informed local public health that a COVID-19 vaccine was on the horizon and were hopeful one would be released by the end of the year. To prepare for the arrival for COVID-19 vaccine, our team developed a Drive-through plan for flu vaccinations. We procured supplies and equipment to test this plan. We offered several drive-through clinics throughout the fall. We partnered with EMS for adverse events following vaccinations, with law enforcement and County Emergency Management for traffic control and road signage and local agencies to utilize their large parking lots for the clinics. We had great success with this drive-through process, but not without some lessons learned. Weather could not be predicted, appointments were necessary, and external resource support was required including volunteers for staffing. Our team of public health nurses were already working to control the pandemic with investigations, education and guidance to the public. We learned that many more nursing staff would need to be available to make COVID vaccination clinics successful.

The last quarter of 2020 brought many more cases of COVID-19 and restrictions to the public. Emergency Preparedness worked with state, regional and local partners to prepare for the arrival of a new COVID-19 vaccine. November 2020 marked a new record high number of cases and caused our staff to be stretched and tired. We began receiving requests from locals to volunteer when vaccine arrived. Notably, one local pharmacy reached out in early December and offered assistance. This began our greatly successful partnership that allowed us to train pharmacists, EMS, fire and nursing personnel to administer the new COVID-19 vaccine that was released at the end of December 2020. VBCDHD received our first shipment of very limited supplies of vaccine to local public health departments the week of Christmas. The following week, we trained more than 20 volunteers to administer the vaccine throughout our community.

As the year came to an end, the Emergency Preparedness program was gearing up for a very long response to COVID-19 in the coming months. We prepared our freezers to store vaccine, trained our staff and volunteers, and used many formats of communication to keep our constituents informed including social media and the use of our website. Over the year long response that continued into 2021 we had a total of 11,411 cases and 186 deaths.

# Our Mission

To promote and contribute to the highest level of health possible for the people of Van Buren and Cass County *by:*

- *Identifying & reducing health risks in the community;*
- *Detecting, investigating & preventing the spread of disease;*
- *Promoting healthy lifestyles;*
- *Promoting a safe & healthful environment;*
- *Promoting the availability of accessible quality healthcare services through the private sector;*
- *and Providing quality healthcare services to those with limited resources and access.*

# Our Personality

## ACCESSIBLE

*We are available to meet your needs. We make it easy to receive health services by making your healthcare affordable. Accessible is thoughtful when determining the priorities most important to our community.*

## PASSIONATE

*We care about you and our community. Your health is our health—we advocate for you in everything we do. Passionate is energized but never overbearing or intrusive.*

## DEPENDABLE

*We are trustworthy and reliable. Dependable means we take pride in our history of serving the community and are committed to always being here when you need us.*

## DEDICATED

*We get things done. We are smart, hard-working and responsive to the needs of our community. We remain focused on our goal—protecting and promoting health. Dedicated is driven and strategic but not arrogant or short-sighted.*



## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Environmental Health Division is compliant with a broad set of issues affecting public health in Van Buren and Cass Counties, including septic system design and inspection, well construction code compliance, body art licensing, raw land evaluations, campgrounds and swimming pool inspections, non-community public water supply oversight, subdivision development, housing complaint investigations, water supply monitoring in areas of contamination, and public beach monitoring along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

234	ACTIVE NON-COMMUNITY FACILITIES	5	BODY ART FACILITIES
73	HOME LOAN EVALUATIONS	78	PUBLIC POOLS
640	SEPTIC PERMITS	53	CAMPGROUNDS
864	WELL PERMITS	47	SEPTIC PUMPERS
87	SOIL EVALUATIONS		

## FOOD SERVICE

VBCDHD's Food Service Program identifies food handling issues associated with the preparation, processing, and serving of food and beverages within our district. Food Service Environmental Health staff are responsible for: licensing and inspecting fixed mobile and transitory food establishments; issuing temporary permits to transient vendors that provide food at summer festivals and special events; performing plan reviews as an essential component to food establishment development and operator training; providing education and training opportunities to food service operators; tracking and reducing risks when food-related illnesses are reported.

0	FOODBORNE ILLNESS	0	FOODBORNE OUTBREAKS
395	LICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS	33	NEW/CHANGE OWNERSHIP
30	PLAN REVIEWS	0	SMOKING RELATED COMPLAINTS
6	SPECIAL TRANSITORY FOOD UNITS/ MOBILE UNITS	32	TEMPORARY LICENSES

## CHILDHOOD HEARING AND VISION SCREENING PROGRAM

VBCDHD Hearing and Vision Technicians provide objective hearing and vision screenings to children entering kindergarten through seventh grade. Vision screens are conducted once before entering kindergarten, in grades 1, 3, 5, 7 and in conjunction with driver's education or in 9th grade. Hearing screens are conducted once before entering kindergarten and in grades K, 2 and 4. All screenings are free of charge and offered in collaboration with Michigan grade schools and preschools including public, private, parochial, and charter. Parents are notified if their child fails a screening so they may seek medical intervention, diagnosis and treatment, and recommendations for care.

Special COVID note: On November 24, 2020 a Memo came out from the Hearing and Vision Program Division of Child and Adolescent Health. Subject: COVID-19 Response Activities/Hearing and Vision ELPHS Funding which stated, " Due to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and new MDHHS orders that took effect on November 18, 2020, many K-12 Schools closed, so the Hearing and Vision screening programs were only able to provide minimal services to Pre-K-9th grade students. Some Hearing and Vision Technicians have been reassigned with COVID response activities. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services continue to support Local Public Health in temporary assignments and will allow the use of ELPHS H & V dollars for this effort." VBCDHD made the decision to utilize the Hearing and Vision Staff to assist the COVID Response Team, as a result our numbers reflect the reassignment of our staff temporarily during the surge toward the COVID Response.

4,688 VISION SCREENS

1,280 HEARING SCREENS

## CHILDREN'S SPECIAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES (CSHCS) PROGRAM

The mission of the Children's Special Health Care Services\* program is *to enable individuals with special health care needs to have improved health outcomes and an enhanced quality of life.* CSHCS nurses help families access specialty health care services by encouraging and facilitating parent involvement and collaboration with professionals, and working to remove barriers that interfere with access to and delivery of services and supports to meet clients' special health care needs. CSHCS serves individuals under 21 years of age, who have one or more of the 2,700+ medically qualifying conditions, including individuals 21 years and older with cystic fibrosis or hemophilia. The program helps pay for specialty medical care, transportation, co-pays and deductibles, and assists families with maintenance of private health care insurance. Families of all income levels are eligible.

*\*CSHCS is provided in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the federal government under Title V of the Social Security Act.*

557 CHILDREN ACTIVE IN CSHCS PROGRAM

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL

VBCDHD Communicable Disease Control program monitors and receives reports of all suspect and confirmed cases of communicable disease by area health providers, laboratories, schools, and daycare centers, including reports received from community members, as required by Michigan law. Utilizing the Michigan Disease Surveillance System, or by fax or phone to the Health Department, reports are made to trained VBCDHD Nursing Staff. Nursing staff are trained in disease investigation, treatment, case management, and contact follow up. Nurses educate partners and community members on transmission, prevention and intervention of communicable diseases and how to protect themselves, their families and the community. Local Public Health staff operate under protocols established by MDHHS according to Michigan Public Health Codes and Local Public Health policies and procedures. **See next page for Van Buren and Cass County reportable disease statistics for the past 5 years.**

**VAN BUREN/CASS DISTRICT REPORTABLE DISEASES**  
**Number of cases per year**

<b>ENTERIC DISEASES</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
CAMPYLOBACTER	18	15	8	6	12
CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS	0	7	8	13	12
NOROVIRUS	4	5	0	4	17
GIARDIASIS	3	8	7	14	10
SALMONELLOSIS	18	18	12	14	12
SHIGA TOXIN PRODUCING E. COLI (STEC)	1	4	7	0	0
YERSENIA ENTERITIS	0	1	1	2	1
LISTERIOSIS	1	2	0	0	0
SHIGELLOSIS	1	1	0	0	0
E. COLI 0157:H7	0	0	0	0	0
<b>HEPATITIS</b>					
HEPATITIS A	0	2	4	4	1
HEPATITIS B, ACUTE	0	0	0	2	0
HEPATITIS B, CHRONIC	6	4	4	4	4
HEPATITIS C, ACUTE	1	1	3	2	0
HEPATITIS C, CHRONIC	83	63	65	35	40
<b>STD</b>					
CHLAMYDIA	387	440	469	490	370
GONORRHEA	46	122	145	128	156
SYPHILLIS	4	3	0	1	0
<b>TUBERCULOSIS</b>					
MYOBACTERIUM-OTHER	0	3	10	6	12
TUBERCULOSIS	1	0	1	0	1
<b>VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES</b>					
VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)	4	4	1	1	1
H. INFLUENZA DISEASE—INV.	4	5	6	3	3
PERTUSSIS	2	3	2	1	6
<b>VECTORBORNE DISEASES</b>					
ENCEPHALITIS CALIFORNIA	0	0	0	1	0
ENCEPHALITIS EASTERN EQUINE	0	0	0	3	0
LYME DISEASE	7	3	11	10	9
MALARIA	0	0	0	0	0
RICKETTSIAL SPOTTED FEVER	1	1	0	0	0
WEST NILE	0	0	1	0	0
<b>MENINGITIS</b>					
ASEPTIC MENINGITIS	6	6	3	11	7
NON-MENINGOCOCCAL BACTERIAL MENINGITIS	0	1	0	0	0
MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE	0	0	0	0	0
STREPTOCOCCUS PNEUMONIAE – INV.	9	16	24	27	10
<b>OTHER</b>					
LEGIONELLOSIS	2	2	5	11	6
STREPTOCOCCUS PNEUMONIAE DRUG REST	2	2	0	1	1
VISA	1	0	0	0	0



## **IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM**

Local immunization efforts serve to protect the public from epidemics or threatened epidemics of vaccine preventable diseases as well as protecting individuals from avoidable diseases and their complications. VBCDHD's Immunization Program is based on state immunization program guidelines and monitored for its' effectiveness, compliance with state program guidelines, and adherence to professional standards of practice as detailed by the Standards for Child and Adolescent Immunization and Standards for Adult Immunization Practices. VBCDHD maintains highly trained nursing staff responsible for providing immunization clinics for residents to dispense publicly funded vaccine; educating local school staff to ensure they understand school immunization requirements and accurately report student immunization status to MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Education; conducting site visits to local medical provider offices for quality assurance and compliance with the federal requirements of the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program; monitoring for fraud and abuse of publicly funded vaccine; and ensuring accessibility to vaccine, Improving local immunization rates, providing immunization education, and developing private and public partnerships to promote high immunization coverage rates in the district.

918	IMMUNIZATION CLINIC VISITS
1,473	DOSES ADMINISTERED BY NURSES
70.3%	STATE OF MICHIGAN CHILDREN 19-35 MONTHS FULLY IMMUNIZED
72.3%	VB-CASS CHILDREN 19-35 MONTHS FULLY IMMUNIZED
95.5%	SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION COMPLIANCY RATE
2.7%	SCHOOL WAIVERS

## **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE PROGRAM**

The goal of VBCDHD's STD/HIV program is to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease through clinical and educational services. STD/HIV Nurses provide counseling, testing, treatment and referrals, and facilitate individual and group education at schools, jails, substance abuse programs and other community sites. Partner services are offered to all infected individuals and STD/HIV nurses maintain ongoing communication with local medical providers to ensure appropriate treatment standards are upheld.

301	STD CLINIC VISITS (128 VAN BUREN; 173 CASS)
173	INDIVIDUALS EDUCATED IN SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SETTINGS
376	INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED COUNSELING & TESTING (158 VAN BUREN; 218 CASS)

## SPECIAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC REPORT

COVID-19 PANDEMIC –Local Information- Van Buren Cass District Health Department received its first case of COVID-19 on March 23rd, 2020. From January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 Van Buren Cass District Health Department received 5,000 reports of Confirmed COVID-19 and 503 Probable case reports. Public Health COVID-19 response team worked 7 days a week for most of 2020 to follow-up on reports of suspect, probable and confirmed cases. Public Health worked diligently to follow-up on close contacts that were identified through Case Investigation. We worked with our Schools, Healthcare Providers and Community Members to coordinate efforts toward prevention, intervention and mitigation of the virus. We utilized various platforms to educate and alert the public. As the vaccine was approved via Emergency Use Authorization, Van Buren Cass District Health Department received its first shipment in late December 2020. Finally a “light at the end of the tunnel.” We continue to do Case Investigation and follow-up along with hosting Mass Vaccination Clinics throughout both Counties with the help of our Local Partners. We also have been blessed with many volunteers that were trained to administer vaccine and did so in multiple different venues from indoors, to drive-through clinics. Van Buren Cass District Health Department Staff and Volunteers will continue to be “Public Health Warriors” in the fight against COVID-19!

Background information of the beginnings of the Pandemic: On December 31, 2019, an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). This outbreak is now known to be caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus. On February 11, 2020, the WHO announced the official name for the disease as COVID-19. On March 11, the COVID19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the WHO. Per Michigan Department of Health and Human Services as of April 14, 2021, over 137 million cases have been reported worldwide, including 2.9 million deaths. In the US, over 31 million confirmed cases, including over 560,000 deaths, have been reported. In Michigan, over 756,000 confirmed cases, including over 16,500 deaths, have been reported as of April 14, 2021. Patients with COVID-19 may experience fever, cough, dyspnea, chest tightness, pneumonia, chills, new loss of taste or smell, headache, sore throat, muscle pain, and gastrointestinal distress. Healthcare providers should consider COVID-19 for patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness.

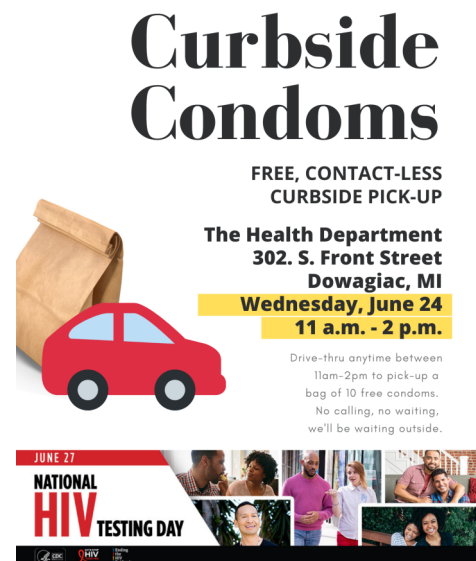
The most current information from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) may be found at [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus). MDHHS is working closely with Local Health Departments (LHDs) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during this outbreak. The MDHHS Community Health Emergency Coordination Center (CHECC), which was fully activated on February 4, 2020 is also assisting the coordination of response efforts. This includes hosting weekly healthcare and LHD conference calls and distributing Health Alert Network messages. Bureau of Infectious Disease Prevention (BIDP) staff were deployed to the EPI DESK to assist with communications and guidance and to liaise with State agencies (e.g., Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs). Duties include compiling and analyzing LHD SITREPs and providing data and epidemiologic situational awareness to the Director’s SITREP and to CHECC staff to assist in decision-making. Guidance is subject to change as more is learned about the virus, as the pandemic progresses, and as CDC recommendations are updated. For the most current information and MDHHS Epidemic Orders, go to [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.com](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.com) The CDC provides guidance for public health recommendations for potential risk of COVID-19 exposure, addressing travel-associated exposures, community-related exposures, and healthcare-associated exposures for healthcare professionals. COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination has been posted at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>. For the most current information, visit: [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus) and [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html). This guidance is subject to change as more is learned about the virus, the outbreak progression, and as CDC recommendations are updated.

## PUBLIC HEALTH PROMOTION

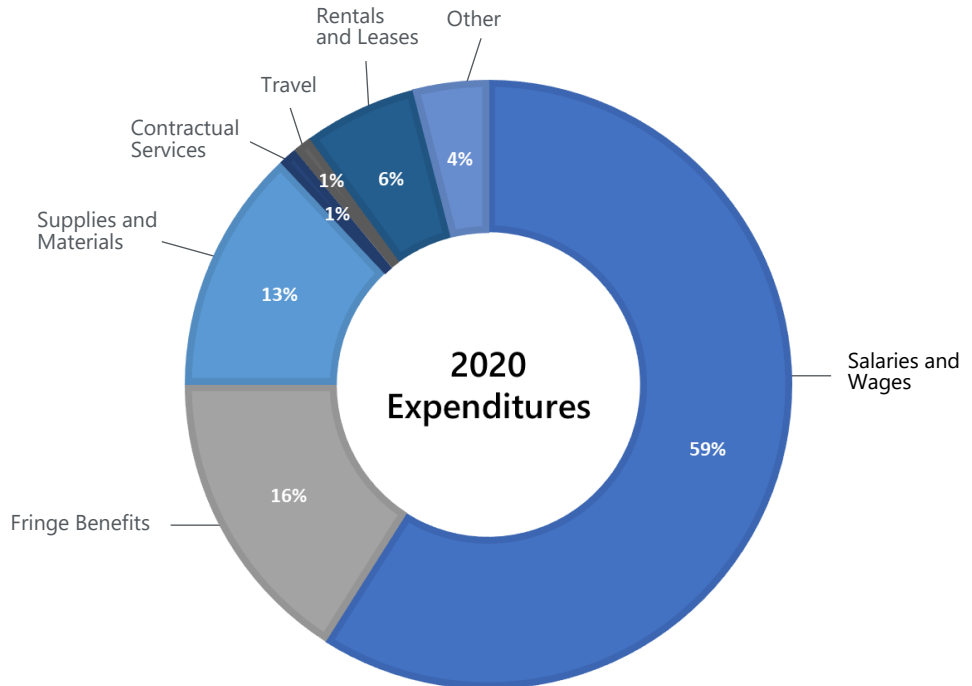
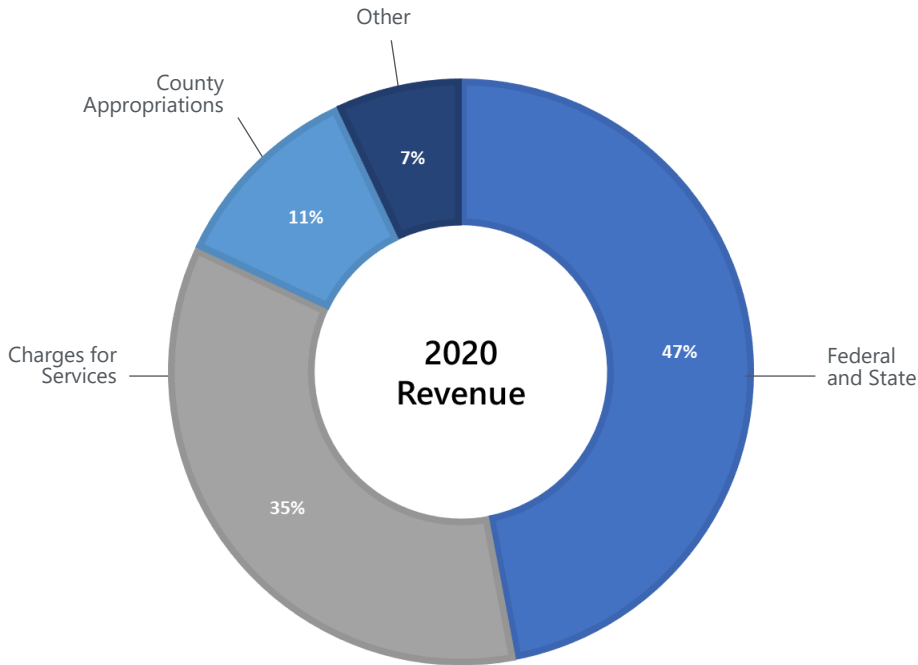
With a focus on social determinants of health and addressing health inequities, Health Promotion implements a range of social and environmental interventions including promoting healthy behaviors, creating supportive environments, encouraging healthy public policies and systems, and empowering people to increase control over and improve their health.

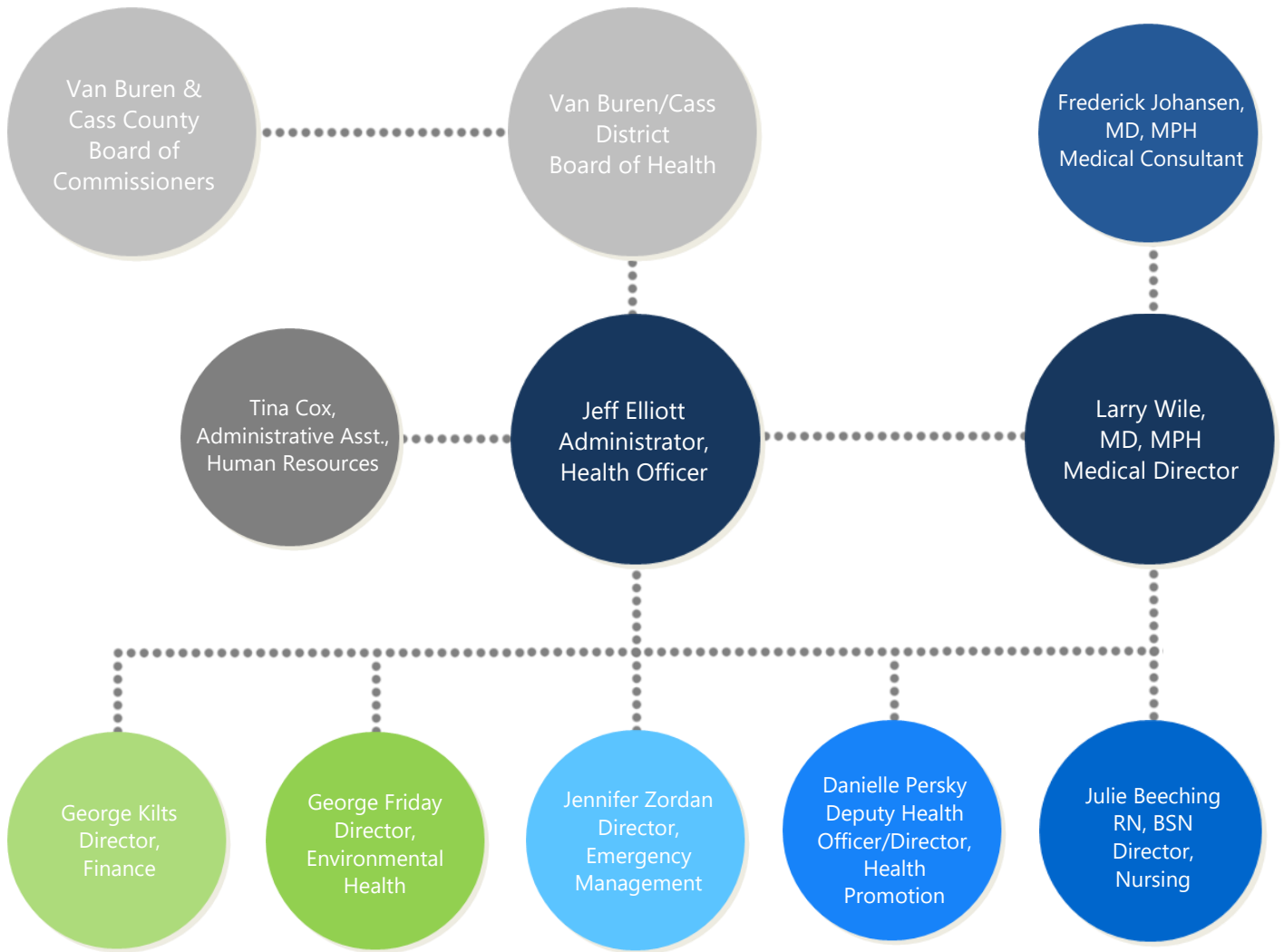
Through community leadership and supporting other local efforts our department is focused on being a change maker and thought leader for our district. It is because of our collective impact efforts—the work of multiple organizations working together towards a common goal—that we experienced many successes working through the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Carried out the Medical Marijuana Operation & Oversight grant funded by LARA by partnering alongside Van Buren Community Mental Health and Berrien County Health Department for a tri-county “Dirt on Weed” campaign. The campaign targeted youth and parents with the intention of preventing teenage marijuana use and use during pregnancy.
- On behalf of the Community Health Committee, a subcommittee of the Van Buren Human Services Coordinating Council, VBCDHD was awarded the “Aging Health Equity & Policy Planning Project”, a two-year \$200,000 grant funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. The grant funds a community informed and data-driven plan development process to identify and address the root causes of disparate health outcomes among minority older adults living in Van Buren county and develop an actionable strategic plan.
- Community-wide COVID-19 prevention and vaccine promotion messaging, including community email updates, press releases, flyers & print materials, social media, etc.
- Curbside Condom event—getting creative, we moved our annual HIV testing event outdoors this year



VBCDHD operating expenditures were \$6,725,585 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020





## BOARD OF HEALTH

**Chair /** Dwight (Skip) Dyes, Cass County Commissioner

**Vice Chair /** Don Hanson, Van Buren County Commissioner

Roseann Marchetti, Cass County Commissioner

Randall Peat, Van Buren County Commissioner

Dr. Vincent Cabras, Van Buren County Member-At-Large

Robert Linderman, Van Buren County Member-At-Large

Vicki Vaughn, Cass County Member-At-Large



VBCDHD



## Cass County DOWAGIAC

(269) 782 0064  
302 S. Front St.  
Dowagiac, MI 49047

Community Dental Clinic  
Environmental Health  
Public Health Nursing



## Van Buren County HARTFORD

(269) 621 3143  
57418 CR 681  
Hartford, MI 49057

Administration  
Community Dental Clinic  
Environmental Health  
Public Health Nursing

In December 2020, VBCDHD consolidated the two Van Buren Community Dental Clinics into one location, permanently closing the Mattawan clinic.

Let's get  
social

Facebook.com/VBCDHD  
@VBCDHD

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