

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Van Buren/Cass District
Health Department

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A LETTER FROM THE HEALTH OFFICER

2021 was a significant year in the story of public health. COVID-19 brought challenges like we have never experienced before. Not only in the supply chain, balancing issues of supply and demand for vaccines, personal protective equipment, and testing, but also in human capital and rapid decision-making that required a constant review of ethics and morality.

COVID-19 vaccines were shipped to every health department across our state and nation just before the New Year and mass vaccination clinics began with a pace that we soon realized would not let up for the next 5 months. We guided schools, businesses & organizations, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, healthcare organizations and community members, doing our best to walk alongside them as we collectively worked to reduce the risk of COVID-19 on our community. Despite the hardships throughout 2021, there were glimmers of hope and small rays of sunshine, too.

1) A vaccine, for one! After a year of fear and uncertainty, we headed into 2021 with optimism; we had a significant prevention tool to fight off the spread of COVID-19. “Here Comes the Sun” by the Beatles played throughout our clinic as we began the first round of vaccinations.

2) Partnerships. Partnerships are core to our work and have never been more important than they were this year. Without partnerships, mass vaccination clinics would not have had space to fill, patients to vaccinate, providers & nurses to serve, and masks, tests, vaccines and communication would not have been distributed as widely. It was because of great partnerships that our local public health response expanded as broadly as it did.

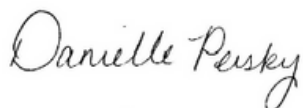
3) People. During the worst times is when we often get to see the true character of people, and there are so many good people. Hours of endless contact tracing, volunteers giving up their days and putting themselves at increased risk to vaccinate, and the constant kindness extended by helping hands and notes of gratitude were some of the ways we bore witness to the great people that live and serve Cass and Van Buren Counties.

2021 was also a year of transition. At the end of December 2020 we closed the doors to our Mattawan dental clinic and in April 2021 closed the doors to our Hartford clinic, merging both into one brand new state-of-the-art Health Education Facility in Lawrence. We now serve residents out of two locations: Dowagiac and Lawrence. In July we transitioned leadership. Jeff Elliott, Health Officer for over 30 years, retired. We thank him for his service and wish him well in his retirement.

I am so proud to lead this team of dedicated, hard-working public health experts. It is because of their resilience, determination and resourcefulness that we stand tall today, passionate and ready to continue improving the health of the community we serve.

On behalf of the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department, I am pleased to present the 2021 Annual Report and invite you to join us, working together to protect and improve the health and lives of our community.

Yours in health,



Danielle Perky, Health Officer



Department Leads and Board

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department prides itself on the incomparable abilities of the department leads. Through times of uncertainty and public health crisis, the leaders of each department showed strength and resilience that does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.



DANIELLE PERSKY *Health Officer*

Medical Director **DR. LARRY WILE, MPH**



JULIE BEECHING, RN, BSN *Director of Nursing*

Director of Environmental Health **GEORGE FRIDAY, RS/REH**



GEORGE KILTS *Director of Finance*

Director of Health Programs and Planning **JENNIFER ZORDAN, CHES**



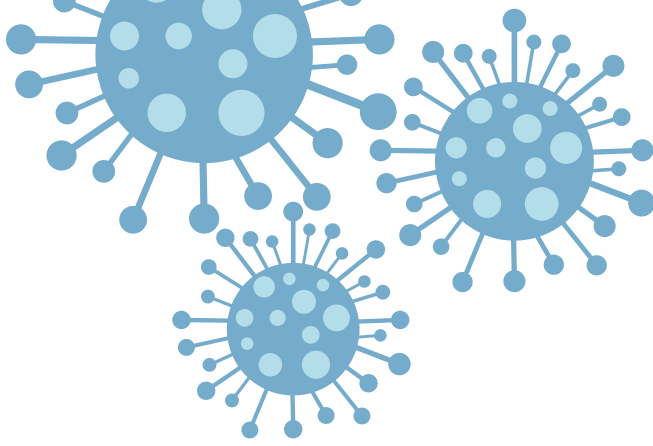
ANNA DELEROSA *Dental Supervisor*

Data Management Administrator **ISRAEL DIAZ**



The District Board of Health meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at alternating counties at 3:00 pm. Meetings are held at our Dowagiac facility at 302 S. Front Street Community Center (lower level) or at the VBISD Conference Center, 490 South Paw Paw Street, Lawrence. All meetings are open to the public.

Members: Dwight (Skip) Dyes, Randall Peat, Vicki Vaughn, Robert Linderman, Roseann Marchetti, Dr. Vincent Cabras, and Don Hanson.



COVID-19 Response

13,080

Confirmed cases
investigated

1,668

Probable cases
investigated

106,434

COVID-19 tests
administered

"Van Buren Cass District Health Department team continues to work diligently in educating, vaccinating, and working together collaboratively with our partners toward ending the COVID-19 pandemic. As new information emerges about COVID-19 vaccines, variants, quarantine, and more, local public health will continue to pivot and adapt toward protecting public health in our communities at a moment's notice. Public Health will continue to be a "warrior against the virus" along with our many community partners and individuals who have been infected or affected by the virus. For more information on COVID-19, please visit our website at vbcassdhd.org and click the COVID-19 link."

- JULIE BEECHING
Director of Nursing

14,449

Vaccines
administered at
VBCDHD events

4

Vaccine
clinics held
per week

103

Off-site vaccine
clinics hosted
by VBCDHD



CHILDHOOD HEARING & 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 kindergarten, in grades 1,3,5,7, and in conjunction with driver's education or 9th grade. Hearing screens are completed once before kindergarten and in grades 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 that they may seek medical intervention, diagnosis and treatment, and care recommendations.



2,508 Vision Screens



1,776 Hearing Screens

Throughout 2021, schools, daycares, and other childcare establishments were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition to virtual learning impacted the amount of patients that received hearing and vision screenings. Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, VBCDHD continued to offer screenings in the Lawrence and Dowagiac offices.



CHILDREN'S SPECIAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program aims to enable individuals with special health care needs to have improved health outcomes and an enhanced quality of life.

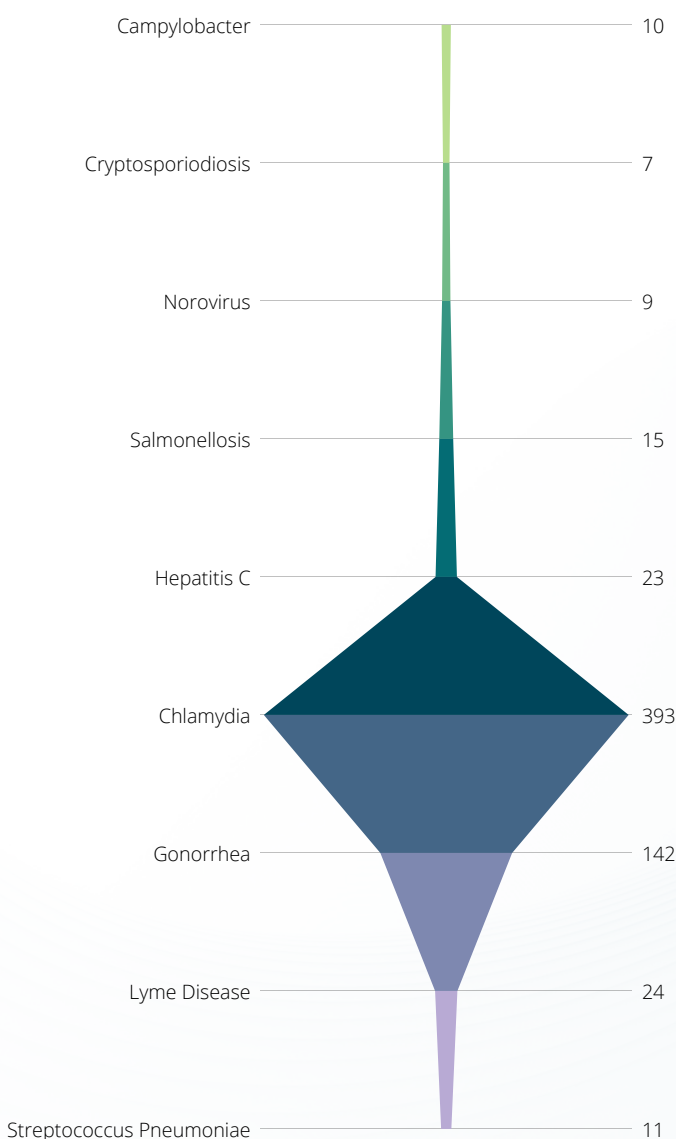
CSHCS nurses help families access specialty health care services by encouraging and facilitating parent involvement and collaboration with professionals and working to remove barriers that interfere with access to and delivery of services and supports to meet clients' unique health care needs.

CSHCS serves individuals under 21 years of age with one or more of the 2,700 + medically qualifying conditions, including individuals 21 years or older with cystic fibrosis or hemophilia. The program helps pay for specialty medical care, transportation, co-pays, and deductibles and assists families with the 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.

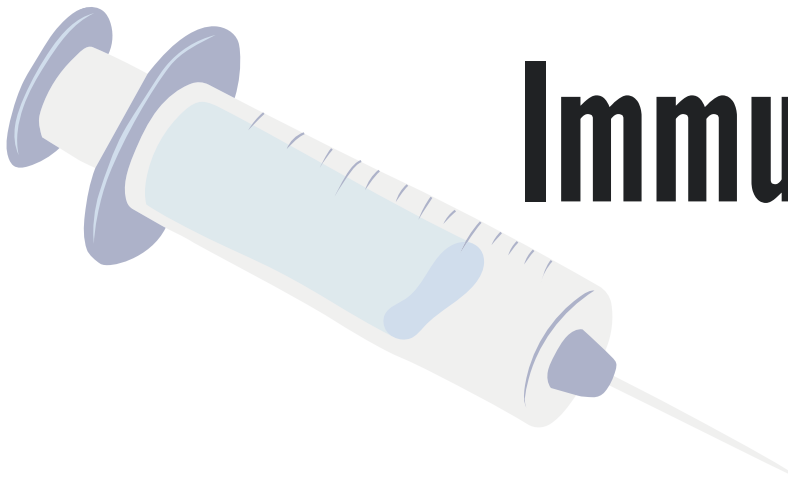
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL



2021 REPORTABLE CASES



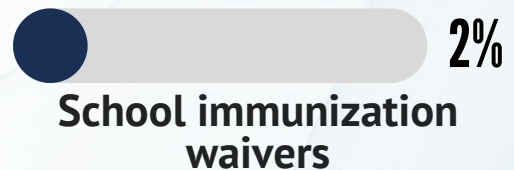
VBCDHD Communicable Disease Control program monitors and receives reports of all suspected and confirmed cases of communicable diseases by area health providers, laboratories, schools, and daycare centers, including information from community members, as required by Michigan law. Utilizing the Michigan 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 the transmission, prevention, and intervention of infectious diseases and how to protect themselves, their families, and their community. Local Public Health staff operate under protocols established by MDHHS according to Michigan Public Health Codes and Local Public Health policies and procedures.



Immunization Program

Local immunization efforts protect the public from epidemics or threatened epidemics of vaccine-preventable diseases and protect individuals from avoidable diseases and 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 vaccines;*
- 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 vaccines;*
- And it is ensuring accessibility to vaccines, improving local immunization rates, providing immunization education, and developing private and public partnerships to promote high immunization coverage rates across both counties.*



Sexually Transmitted Disease Program

VBCDHD's STD/HIV program aims to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases 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 and standards are upheld.



256
STD Clinic
visits



55
Individuals educated
in clinic and
community



135
Individuals received
counseling and
testing

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health division is compliant with a board 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 compliant investigations, water supply monitoring in areas of contamination, and public beach monitoring along the Lake Michigan Shoreline.

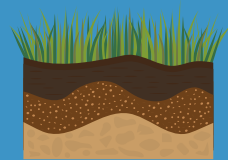
Services



86 Home Loan Evaluations

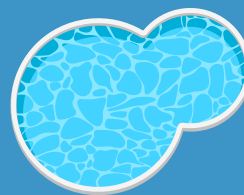
Well Permits

655



78 Soil Evaluations

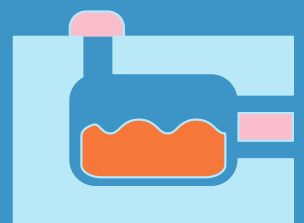
Campgrounds **50**



78 Public Pools

Septic Plumbers

47



700 Septic Permits

Services



411 Licensed Establishments

Foodborne illness

0



60 Transitory Food Units

Temporary Licenses

120



36 New Ownership

Food Sanitation

VBCDHD's Food Service program identifies food handling issues associated with the district's preparation, processing, and serving of food and beverages. 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 of 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.

Dental Services



Samantha McGee, DDS

Anna Chipman-Bergsma, DDS

Christina Strickler, DDS

Joel Griffin, DDS

VBCDHD Community dental clinics remained open throughout 2021, despite COVID-19 affecting patients and dental staff. While many things have changed, one remains the same: patient safety commitment. Community Dental Clinics of Van Buren/Cass District Health Department aims to improve and maintain our population's health, rendering dental services without discrimination through the application of health care techniques that guarantee the quality of services. Services include preventive, restorative, prosthetic, surgical, and cosmetic.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, dental hygienists could not go into schools. The focus shifted to providing oral health education. Over ten thousand hygiene kits, including toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and brochures, were distributed to schools across Van Buren and Cass Counties. A dental education video accompanied these kits on basic dental hygiene for teachers to play in their classrooms.

Dental Services



Oral Health Education

11,234

Referrals

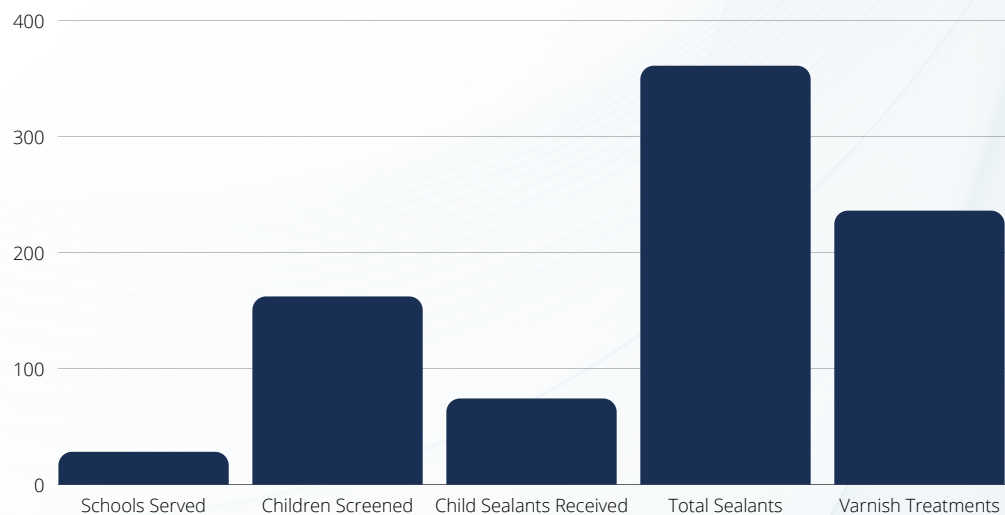
9,236

Active Dental Patients

23,462

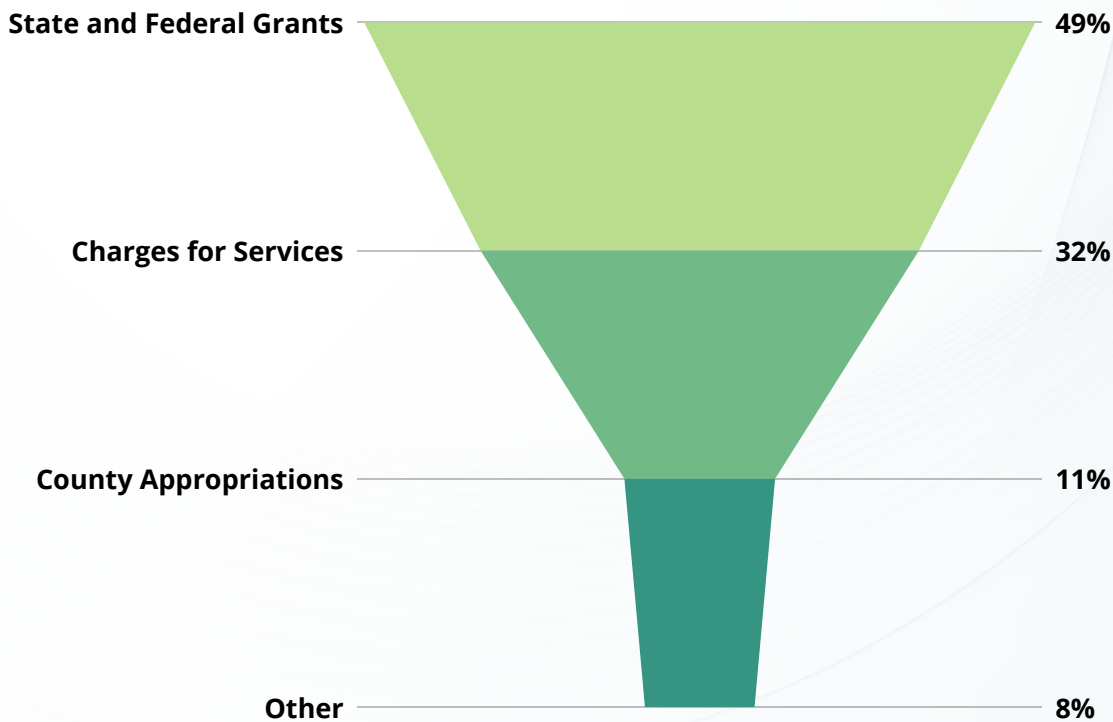
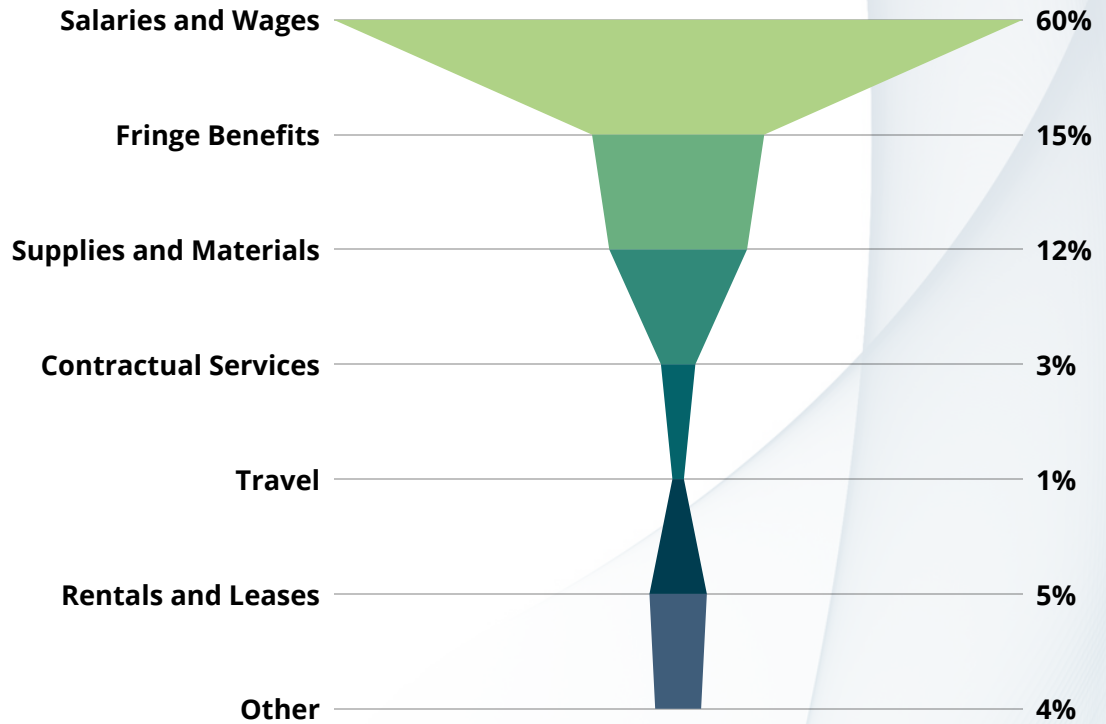
Dental Procedures

67,662



Financial Overview

2021 Expenditures



2021 Revenue

THANK YOU



Van Buren/Cass District Health Department wants to celebrate the power of people who tackle society's most significant challenges and build stronger, more vibrant communities through volunteerism and everyday actions.



Throughout the past two years, the hurdles the health department has had to overcome were insurmountable without the aid of community members that volunteered their time to help in any way possible. We see your care for the cause and the willingness to step up to support the things you believe in regardless of the personal cost. Thank you for being an inspiration to us all.



Even though most volunteers are not in the spotlight, the work does not go unnoticed. From large vaccination clinics to volunteer contact tracers, the work to combat the spread of COVID-19 is immeasurable. Van Buren/Cass District Health Department would not have been able to accomplish these incredible feats if it was not for the help of volunteers.



United Way
of Southwest Michigan



We look forward to teaming with you again and continuing to make a difference together.

Contact Information



Cass County Dowagiac

269.782.0064
302 S. Front St.
Dowagiac, MI 49047
Dental Clinic
Environmental Health
Public Health Nursing

Van Buren County

269.621.3143
260 South St.
Lawrence, MI 49064
Administration
Dental Clinic
Environmental Health
Public Health Nursing

Lawrence

