



20
22

Annual Report

Van Buren/Cass
District Health
Department



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

A Message From the Health Officer

4

Mission and Values

5

Our Community

6

Public Health: Defined

7

Our Team

8

Environmental Health

11

Dental Services

15

Public Health Nursing

23

Community Health

26

Year in Review

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICER

Our focus this year was on learning and growing. What did we learn about ourselves, our organization, and our community from our collective experience with COVID? What skills did we gain that we want to hold onto and build from, and what are the pieces that we are ready to bid adieu to for our health and well-being? What is our vision for the future? After spending much of 2022 putting in the heart-work, our outlook is optimistic. Allow me to re-introduce ourselves.

As your local public health organization, ***it is our mission to protect and promote the highest level of health possible for the communities we serve.***

Our team is ***community-focused; dedicated to and passionate about public health; grounded in teamwork; accessible, approachable and authentic.***

We hope that throughout the next few years you feel the sincerity and impact of our goal to cultivate a community-centric culture of trust and increase our community's understanding of what public health really means: Healthy people and the communities where we live, learn, work and play.

For now, it is my pleasure and honor to share the impact of Local Public Health through our 2022 Annual Report.

Yours in Health,



Danielle Persky, Health Officer



MISSION

To protect and promote the highest level of health possible for the communities we serve.

VALUES



Community Focused



Dedicated and Passionate About Public Health



Grounded in Teamwork

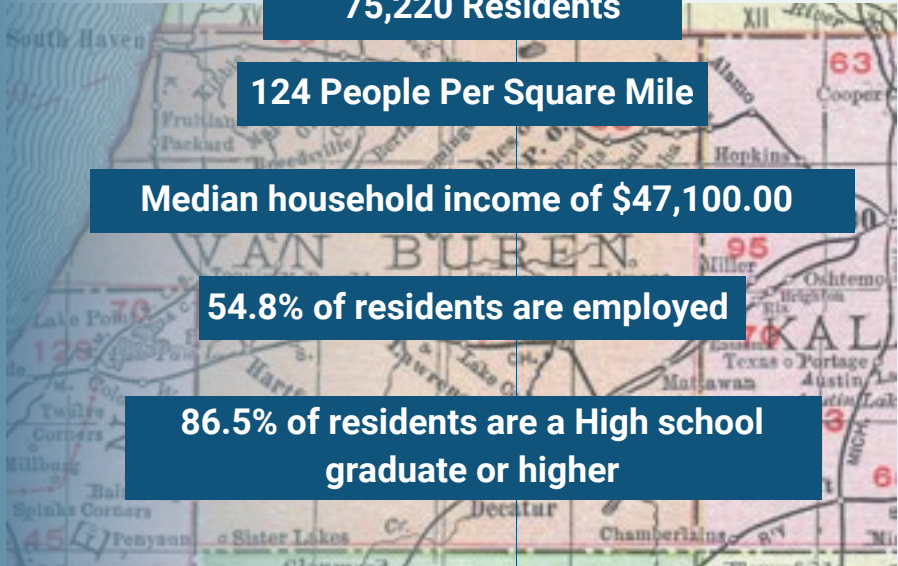


Accessible, Approachable, Authentic

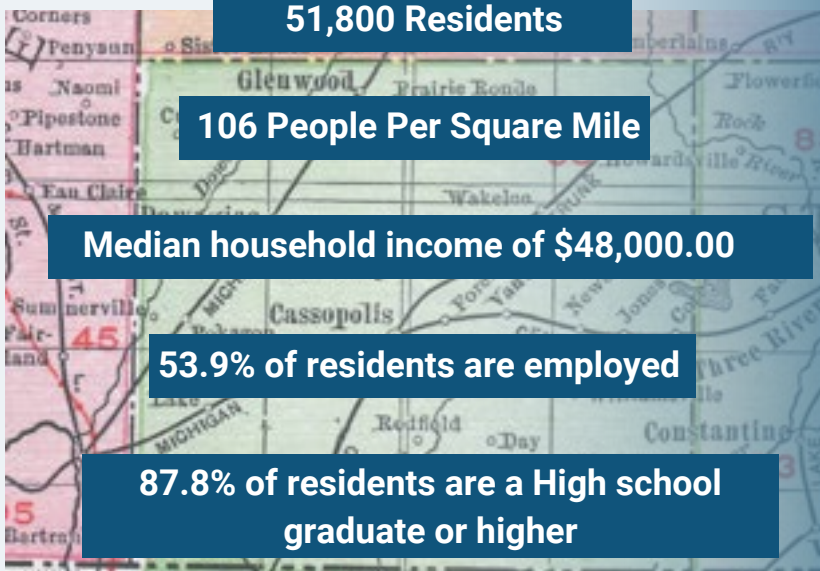


ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

VAN BUREN



CASS



PUBLIC HEALTH: DEFINED

Core Functions & 10 Essential Services of Public Health



The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve equity, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and overall community conditions that enable optimal health for all and seek to remove systemic and structural barriers that have resulted in health inequities. Such barriers include poverty, racism, gender discrimination, ableism, and other forms of oppression. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being.

Public Health 3.0 is a paradigm for public health that builds upon the success of previous public health efforts and emphasizes collaboration within local communities. and well-being.



OUR TEAM



Danielle Persky
Health Officer



Dr. Larry Wile, MD, MPH
Medical Director



Julie Beeching, RN, BSN
Nursing Director



George Friday, RS/REH
Environmental Health Director



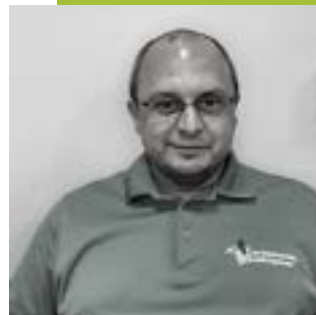
George Kilts
Finance Director



Jennifer Zordan, CHES
Health Programs and
Planning Director



Anna DeLaRosa
Dental Supervisor



Israel Diaz
Data Management

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, noncommunity public water supply oversight, subdivision development, housing compliant investigations, and water supply monitoring in areas of contamination.

During the summer months, Environmental Health Sanitarians conduct public beach monitoring to test for harmful bacteria along the shorelines of Lake Michigan. The monitoring is done in four locations in Van Buren: Covert State Park, Van Buren State Park, North Beach in South Haven, and South Beach in South Haven. All findings are tested and reported to the State of Michigan. All testing results are available to the public.

Mosquito and tick surveillance also proceeds in the summer to determine the presence of specific species capable of carrying harmful diseases that can be passed on to humans or animals. Around 8 to 10 mosquito traps are placed across Van Buren and Cass at various locations. Two tick drags are done in high incidences of infestation. Mosquitoes and ticks are collected and go through a meticulous surveillance process. All findings are reported to the State of Michigan.

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Food Service

432

Licensed
Food
Facilities

0

Foodborne
Illness

65

Transitory
Food Unit
Inspections

169

Temp Food
Inspections

61

New
Restaurant
Ownership

729

Septic
Permits



892

Well
Permits



73
Soil
Evals.

81
Home
Loan Evals.



82

Pool
Inspections



54

Campground
Inspections



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

HIGHLIGHTS

The Environmental Health Division of the local health department has made significant strides toward protecting the health of the community and promoting a safe and sustainable environment over the past year.

One of the major accomplishments of the division was the successful continuation of the comprehensive food safety initiative. This included regular inspections of food establishments, providing training to food handlers, and responding promptly to complaints related to food safety. As a result, the number of foodborne illnesses reported in the community from Van Buren and Cass County establishments were zero.

Another key achievement was the successful implementation of a vector control program to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile virus and Zika virus. The division conducted regular mosquito surveillance and worked with community partners to promote public awareness and education on mosquito control measures.

Due to an increase in funding, the division was able to acquire much needed staff to aid in the success of their existing programs. VBCDHD was excited to welcome these new additions and grow their team.



DENTAL SERVICES

Community Dental Clinics of Van Buren/Cass District Health Department has the mission of improving and maintaining the health of our population rendering dental services without discrimination through the application of health care techniques that guarantee the quality of services.

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 two different office locations (Dowagiac and Lawrence).

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 in preschool through 12th grade in Van Buren and Cass 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 preventative 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 are linked to care.

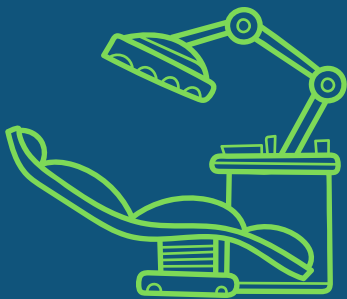
DENTAL SERVICES



14,457
Dental
Patients



509
Students
Received Sealants



60,098
Dental
Procedures



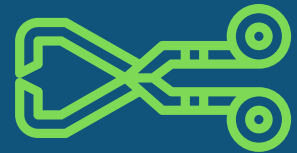
52
Schools
Visited



1,796
Students
Screened



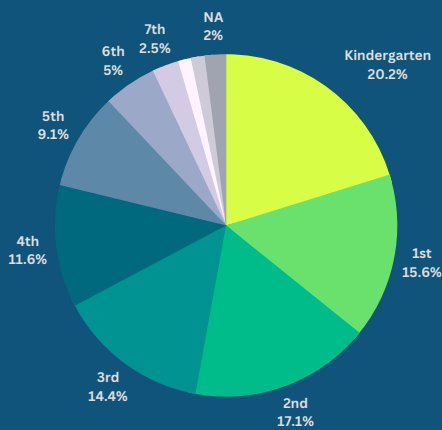
10,501
Oral Health
Lessons



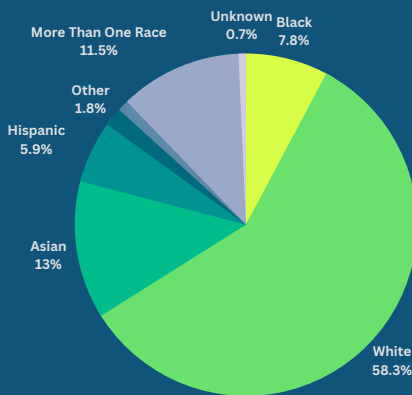
3,170
Total
Sealants

DENTAL SEALANT PROGRAM

GRADE



RACE



The program provides dental sealants on permanent molars. Sealants are thin coatings painted on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth and can prevent cavities or tooth decay for many years.

27.6%

Students Screened Having Special Health Care Needs

Students Screened that Have Insurance

81%

34.5%

Students Screened with Untreated Cavities

Students Screened With No Sealants Present

67.1%



No Obvious Problems



Early Care Needed

DENTAL SERVICES

HIGHLIGHTS

Since 2020, VBCDHD's Dental Program has faced many setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The staff has shown astounding resiliency and adaptability during times of uncertainty. In 2022, Dental Hygienists could now reenter schools to conduct oral health education and dental screenings. The Registered Dental Hygienist and Dental Outreach Coordinator played a significant role in the success of the Dental Sealant Program in Van Buren and Cass Counties. They also participated in community events to advertise health department services and educate on career opportunities at VBCDHD in dentistry. These community events included the Van Buren and Cass County Fairs, Kalamazoo Valley Community College Fall Career Fair, and the 2022 Career Fair in Muskegon, MI. We thank them for their dedication to oral health education and dental care.

As VBCDHD staff settled into the new Lawrence location, there was an opportunity to upgrade dental tools and equipment for both locations. The program transitioned from phosphor plate x-rays to digital sensor x-rays. For context, a dental phosphor plate is a device used in the radiology technique to capture digital images of one's dental formula inside the mouth. The new digital x-ray sensor provides higher image quality than the phosphor plate, faster processing speed, durability, accessibility, and productivity. Many other upgrades were made within the dental department, including but not limited to new chairs in Dowagiac, new portable nitrous delivery units (one for each location), and two new Electrosurges systems for each office.



PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Public health nursing is a critical component of the services provided by local health departments. Public health nurses (PHNs) are registered nurses who specialize in promoting and protecting the health of populations rather than individual patients. They work in various settings, including local health departments, and their primary focus is preventing disease and promoting health. Public health nurses perform multiple duties at Van Buren/Cass District Health Department. These include but are not limited to the following:

Disease prevention and control: Public health nurses play a crucial role in preventing and controlling the spread of infectious diseases. They conduct screenings and immunizations, investigate disease outbreaks, and provide education and guidance on infection control measures.

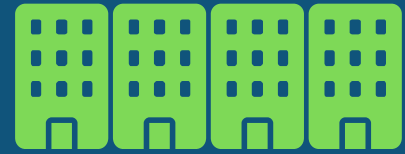
Family and Child Health: Public health nurses provide support and resources for children's unique healthcare needs and their families through the Children's Special Health Care Services Program. Children and some adults are also served through VBCDHD's hearing and vision program.

Health Education and Promotion: Public health nurses work to promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles through education and outreach. They may provide information on topics such as sexual health, routine immunizations, COVID-19, and many others.

The Public Health Nursing team also consists of administrative employees that work behind the scenes to ensure the accessibility of services and the staff's productivity. Secretarial employees handle scheduling clinic appointments, providing vaccine records, organizing information, and many other essential duties. VBCDHD prides itself on employing a team that is accessible, approachable, and authentic, as outlined in our mission and values.

COVID-19

Education and Outreach: provided critical information to the public about COVID-19, including how to prevent the spread of the virus, symptoms to watch out for, and where to go for testing and treatment. VBCDHD also provided educational materials to schools, businesses, and other organizations.



**4 Clinics Weekly
Across Both Locations**



**49,140 Tests
Administered**

Testing and contact tracing: Rapid testing sites across Van Buren and Cass at multiple locations, often in partnership with other healthcare providers. Public Health Nurses conducted contact tracing, which involved identifying individuals in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and advising them on appropriate measures.

Vaccination efforts: Coordinating COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administering vaccines to eligible individuals. VBCDHD also provided information to the public about vaccine safety and efficacy.



**11,223
Confirmed
and
Probable
Cases**

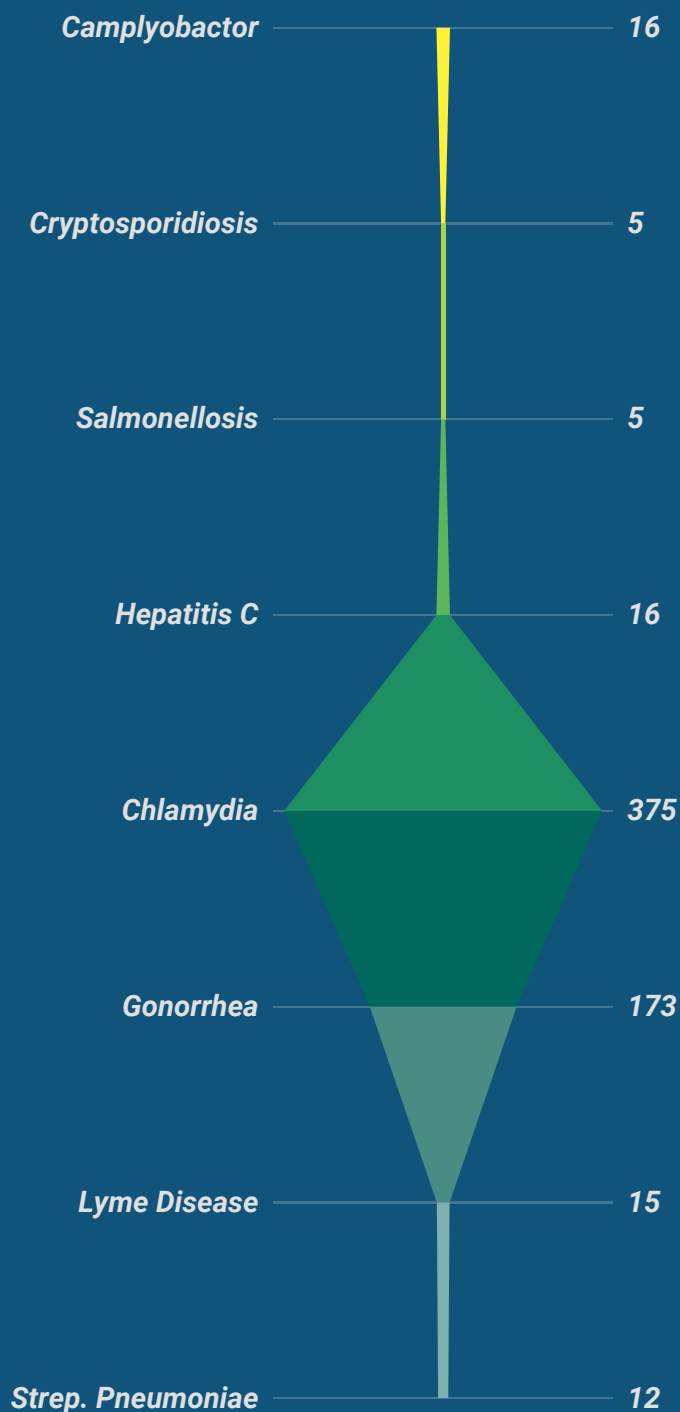


8 Combo Outreach Clinics offering COVID-19 and Flu vaccines



**1,243 COVID-19
Vaccines Administered**

DISEASE CONTROL



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.

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL HEALTH CARE

532 Children Served in Van Buren and Cass County



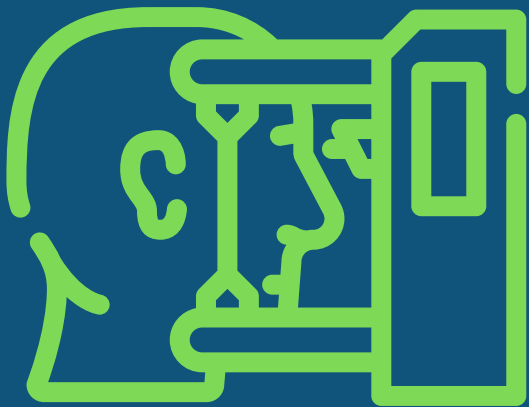
The Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program aims to enable individuals with special health care needs to have improved health outcomes and an enhanced quality of life. CSHCS nurses help families access specialty health care services by encouraging and facilitating parent involvement and 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.

HEARING AND VISION



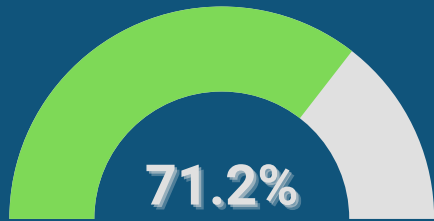
**5,064 Hearing
Screens**



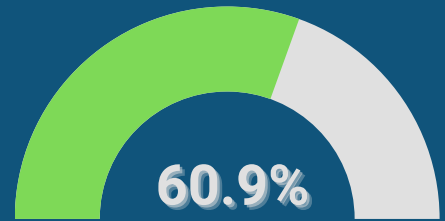
**8,959 Vision
Screens**

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.

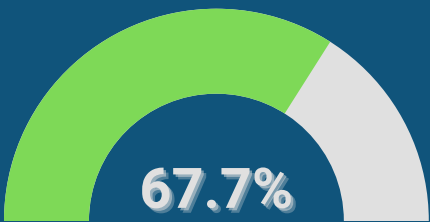
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM



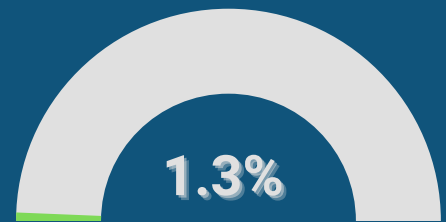
71.2%
**Van Buren Children
19-35 Months
Fully Immunized**



60.9%
**Cass Children
19-35 Months
Fully Immunized**



67.7%
**Michigan Children 19-
35 Months Fully
Immunized**



1.3%
**Van Buren/Cass School
Immunization
Waivers**

VBCDHD maintains highly trained nursing staff responsible for

Providing immunization clinics for residents;

Educate local school staff to understand school immunization requirements and accurately report immunization status to the appropriate sources;

Conduct site visits to 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;

Ensure accessibility, improve immunization rates, provide immunization education, and develop private and public partnerships to promote high coverage rates across both counties.

SEXUAL HEALTH



297 STD Clinic Visits

People Educated in
Community Settings

57



151 People Received HIV
Counseling and Testing

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.

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

HIGHLIGHTS

The Public Health Nursing Division of the local health department has accomplished a great deal in the past year, working tirelessly to improve the health and well-being of the community. One of the significant achievements of the division was the successful expansion of the Wear One Campaign and in-school STD education and prevention presentations. Due to COVID restrictions, VBCDHD could not provide these essential education resources to its desired audience. Still, as restrictions gradually lifted in 2022, public health nursing staff were eager to start up again.

The public health nursing division made significant progress in advancing the nursing profession through professional development opportunities and mentorship programs for new nurses. Nursing students attending Western Michigan University had the chance to shadow VBCDHD staff for a comprehensive experience in the public health sector. These initiatives aimed to build a strong and diverse public health nursing workforce for the future.

This division was also able to hire more staff in 2022. The Nurses are dedicated and hardworking team members that have been a great addition to the health department.

Overall, the Public Health Nursing Division has made significant contributions to the health and well-being of the community, providing essential services and programs that promote health equity, prevent disease, and improve the quality of life for all.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

The community health team is unique in that it involves all staff of VBCDHD and is not constricted to a finite division. All employees are encouraged to participate in various health promotion-based activities and events. The general tasks of a health promotions team at a local health department typically include the following:

Developing and implementing health promotion programs: The team designs and executes programs for individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Conducting community outreach: The team works with community organizations, schools, and businesses to promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

Providing health education: The team provides educational materials and workshops on various health topics, such as nutrition, exercise, and disease prevention.

Conducting research and evaluation: The team conducts research to identify health needs and assess the effectiveness of health promotion programs and uses this information to inform future initiatives.

Collaborating with other health professionals: The team works with other healthcare providers and professionals, such as physicians, nurses, and community gatekeepers to develop comprehensive health promotion strategies.

Overall, the health promotions team at a local health department works to improve the health and well-being of the community by promoting healthy behaviors and lifestyles and providing education, resources, and support to residents.

COMMUNITY HEALTH



52 Conferences and Trainings Attended

22 Community Events Attended

COMMUNITY HEALTH

HIGHLIGHTS

The health promotions team in the local health department has accomplished a great deal in the past year. They have worked tirelessly to promote and improve the health of the community through various initiatives and campaigns.

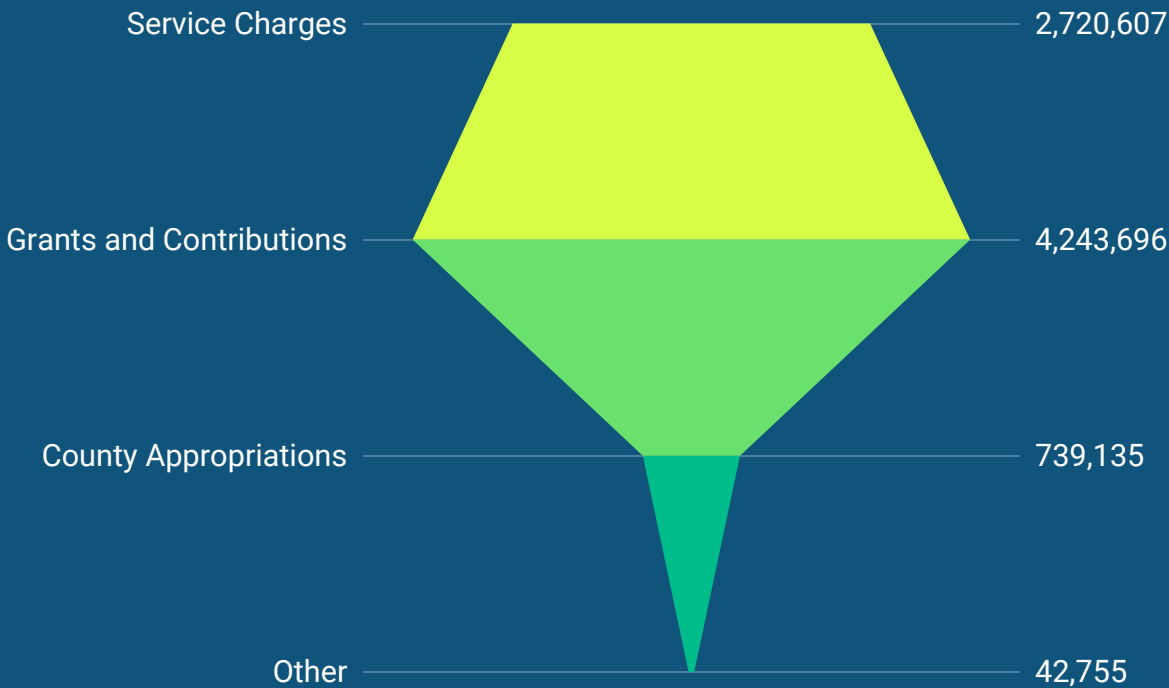
One major accomplishment of the team has been receiving grant funding from the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) to combat COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Many Local Health Organizations across the United States applied, but VBCDHD was one of twenty that received this funding. The health promotions team used this funding to run an extensive social media advertisement campaign across platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, and Spotify. They also implemented a thirteen-week advertisement campaign through 103.7 COZYFM radio. NACCHO representatives also allowed three VBCDHD staff members to attend the annual NACCHO360 Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

VBCDHD was able to host three interns in 2022; A student from the Van Buren Intermediate School District, and two students from Western Michigan University. They strived to obtain a better understanding of Van Buren/Cass District Health Department and the role it plays within the community by attending staff meetings, shadowing staff in the field, assisting with designated duties, and attending program specific meetings and trainings.



YEAR IN REVIEW

EXPENDITURES



REVENUES

CONTACT US



(269) 621 3143



ph@vbcassdhd.org



www.vbcassdhd.org



260 South St.
Lawrence, MI 49064
302 S. Front St.
Dowagiac, MI 49047

WORK WITH US

VBCDHD is always looking for dedicated people to join our team. Working for a local health department is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact in your community and improve the health and well-being of those around you. Whether you're interested in public health nursing, environmental health, or another area of expertise, there are a wide range of rewarding career opportunities available. Local health departments offer a dynamic and collaborative work environment, where you can work with diverse teams to address pressing public health issues and promote health equity. If you're looking for a rewarding career that allows you to make a positive impact on your community, working with VBCDHD could be the perfect fit for you.



Van Buren/Cass District
Health Department