

# DODGE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

## PROGRAM GUIDE



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# MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICER

Dear Dodge County Residents,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the resilience and unity demonstrated by our public health team as we looked to rebuild and reinvent public health service delivery in a post-pandemic world. As the health officer overseeing our local health department, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the collaborative efforts that have been pivotal in navigating these extraordinary times.

Throughout the year, we have forged invaluable partnerships with community organizations, healthcare providers, and dedicated individuals who have worked tirelessly to safeguard the health and well-being of our residents. Together, we have tackled complex issues with determination, compassion, and a shared commitment to the greater good.

Looking ahead, our vision for the future will always be rooted in building a healthier, more resilient community. We will continue to prioritize public health education, access to healthcare services, and proactive measures to prevent and respond to emerging health threats. By fostering a culture of well-being and inclusivity, we aim to create a community where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

I am pleased to present our 2024 Program Guide, a comprehensive overview of the initiatives, achievements, and challenges we encountered in the past year.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and I am confident that together, we will build a healthier, more vibrant future for Dodge County



Sincerely,  
Roman Mullen, MS, REHS  
Dodge County Public Health Officer

## 10 Essential Services of Public Health

**Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community**

**Protect people from health problems and health hazards**

**Give people information they need to make healthy choices**

**Engage the community to identify and solve health problems**

**Develop public health polices and plans**

**Enforce public health laws and regulations**

**Help people receive health services**

**Maintain a competent public health workforce**

**Evaluate and improve programs and interventions**

**Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health**

# OUR ORGANIZATION

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## Mission

Our **mission** as the Dodge County Human Services & Health Department – Public Health Unit is to promote healthy living, prevent disease and illness, and protect Dodge County residents from injury and environmental hazards by utilizing prevention services, health education, stakeholder collaboration, and coordination with our neighboring government agencies.

## Vision

Our **vision** is to improve health outcomes and the quality of life by promoting healthy living and providing greater access to health services for all residents of Dodge County.

## Our Values

**Education** – we aim to keep our residents informed.

**Credibility** – we strive for integrity and honesty in all that we do.

**Professionalism** – we take our work seriously and provide a nonjudgmental approach to our work.

**Service** – we deliver exceptional programs and resources to the public by maintaining a well-educated, highly-skilled workforce.

**Respect** – we treat all people with respect, compassion, and sensitivity, while recognizing the importance of diversity.

# OUR ORGANIZATION

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## Health Department Personnel:

Roman Mullen

Health Officer

### **Public Health Services**

Matthew Bartol

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Trisha Bradley

Public Health Strategist - AmeriCorps

Cassie Fissell

Public Health Nurse

Bobbi Gehring

Public Health Nurse

Olivia Gerritson

Community Health Educator

Karen Greenwald

Public Health Nurse

Lina Rooney

Public Health Nurse

Julie Schmidt

Fiscal Assistant

### **Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Program**

Isabel Carbajal

Breast Feeding Peer Counselor

Destiny Goldman

Breast Feeding Peer Counselor

Sara Gray

WIC Program Director

Mary Meyer

WIC/Public Health Technician

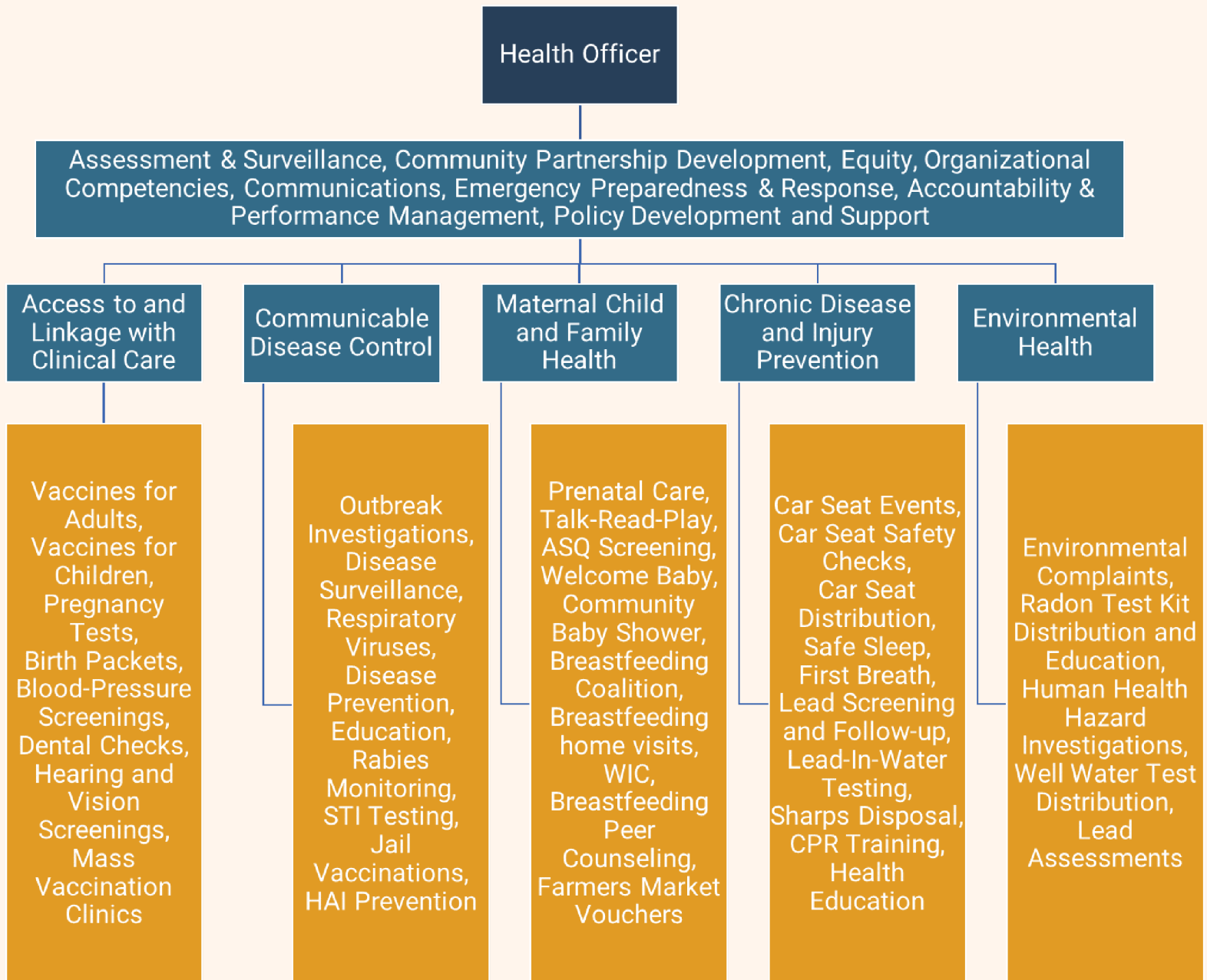
Marvella Puga

WIC/Public Health Technician

Ashley Young

WIC Nutritionist

# SERVICES CHART



# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Access to Linkage with Clinical Care

### Immunizations

Immunization is one of the most important public health victories of the 20th century. Vaccines sharply reduce and even eliminate diseases. Examples of highly successful vaccination efforts include smallpox, which has been successfully eradicated globally due to vaccination efforts, polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough), etc. When vaccination rates drop, the presence and severity of these illnesses can rapidly increase, leading to epidemics or even pandemics.

In 2023, we administered 577 intranasal influenza vaccinations for Dodge County students during school vaccination clinics. Fifteen schools around Dodge County participated in our student flu clinics, servicing ages 3-18. A total of 680 influenza vaccinations were administered by public health staff. Additionally, public health provided 49 vaccinations for COVID-19 to inmates at the Dodge County Detention Facility.

We continue to vaccinate both children and adults who do not have insurance or are underinsured via the Vaccines for Children program (VFC) and the Vaccines for Adults program (VFA). In 2023, we vaccinated a total of 759 clients of all ages, providing 947 vaccines in total.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Children 0 - 18</b>					
Immunizations	395	313	1,071	609	793
Clients	238	258	735	519	619
<b>Adults 19 +</b>					
Immunizations	208	229	14,183	247	154
Clients	201	218	7,539	237	140
<b>Total</b>					
Immunizations	603	542	15,254	856	947
Clients	439	476	8,274	756	759

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Pregnancy Tests

We provide confidential pregnancy testing for women. Upon results of the test, a public health nurse provides proof-of-pregnancy and connects the patient to supportive resources and proper prenatal care. Thirteen pregnancy tests were conducted in 2023.

## Dental Checks

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Dental caries can affect children's growth, lead to difficulty concentrating during the learning process, and cause significant pain and infection. Access problems, due to socioeconomic disparity, present a high risk for tooth decay. Dodge County Public Health has four components to its fluoride varnish program: 1) oral screening, 2) anticipatory guidance, 3) fluoride varnish application, and 4) referral to dentists. This program is offered to children who are at risk for dental caries and are also on Medical Assistance, participants in the WIC program, or those enrolled in any school in Wisconsin. In 2023, twelve children received fluoride varnish services.

In 2023, we developed a partnership with Bridging Brighter Smiles to provide free dental checkups and teeth cleaning services for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) participants within our clinic. If Bridging Brighter Smiles identifies dental issues or complications, they will refer the participant to a dentist to seek further treatment. This service is offered to participants quarterly.

## Health Screenings

Dodge County Public Health provides various health screenings to residents that request them, such as tuberculosis skin-tests, blood-pressure, and vision screenings. In 2023, twenty-nine individuals received tuberculosis skin-tests, fourteen received blood-pressure screenings, and six received a vision screening.

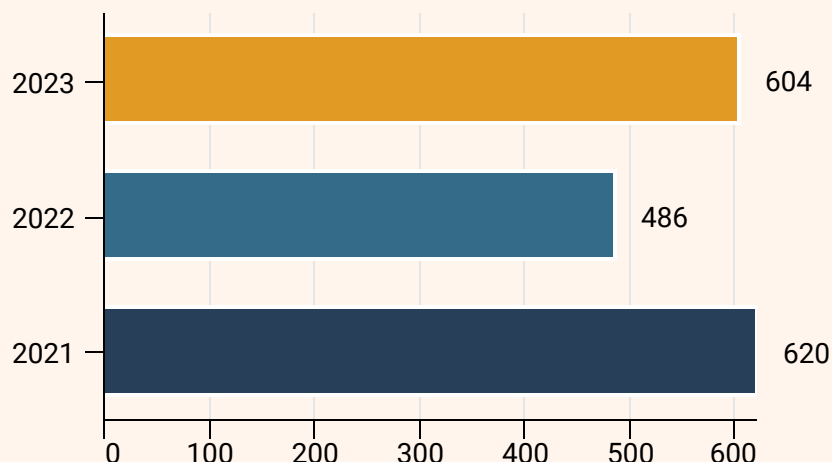


# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Birth Packets

Dodge County Public Health receives birth reports for newborns who reside in Dodge County. These reports reflect how the pregnancy went, noting any complications, how labor and delivery went, and any social-economic factors that were identified that may impact the success of the family unit. These reports are utilized to provide “birth packets” to families with newborns, which consist of brochures and information on how public health and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) can benefit their family. More specifically, we ensure that information regarding well-water sampling, car seat safety, our home visiting programs, and a milestone hand out is provided within the packets. Each birth report is reviewed by a public health nurse to identify if families are high risk – possible financial problems, complicated pregnancy or delivery, and lack of support. If they are high risk, the family will not only receive a “birth packet,” but also receive a call and/or text from a public health nurse to discuss the benefits of enrolling in our TalkReadPlay program, offer breastfeeding assistance (if applicable), discuss other home visiting programs, and provide an opportunity to answer any questions that the family may have. In 2023, we sent 604 birth packets.

Birth Packets Distributed



# Foundational Public Health Areas

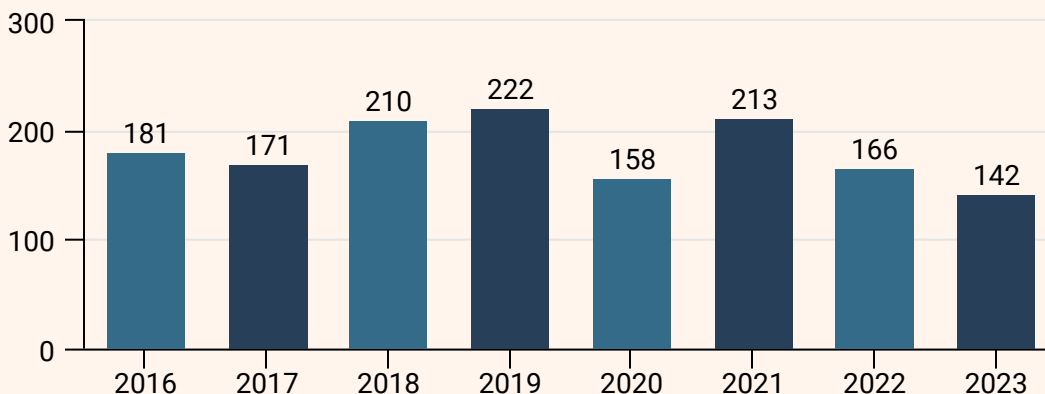
## Communicable Disease Control

### Disease Surveillance

Communicable disease reports are tracked through an electronic reporting system linking the local, regional, and state public health officials with private physicians, hospitals, and laboratories. This allows Dodge County Public Health to conduct prompt follow-up with affected individuals, as well as investigations of possible outbreaks to minimize further spread of disease. Public Health staff educate individuals about illnesses and encourage or ensure treatment (if needed). Steps are continually taken to control and reduce the spread of disease. Telephone calls, letters, and/or face-to-face contacts are used to gather and distribute information. In 2023, Dodge County Public health followed up on 2,365 cases of communicable disease.

Based on the continued high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STI) in Dodge County and poor accessibility for affordable testing in the area, we have been working on a program to provide free, at-home STI test kits to residents of Dodge County. STIs are a burden to the healthcare system both in cost and resources. By having affordable testing available, we can improve equity of care, help prevent the spread of STIs and reduce the long-term effects on an individual's health.

**Dodge County Chlamydia Cases**



Chlamydia, often silent and asymptomatic, can cause serious long-term complications if left untreated.

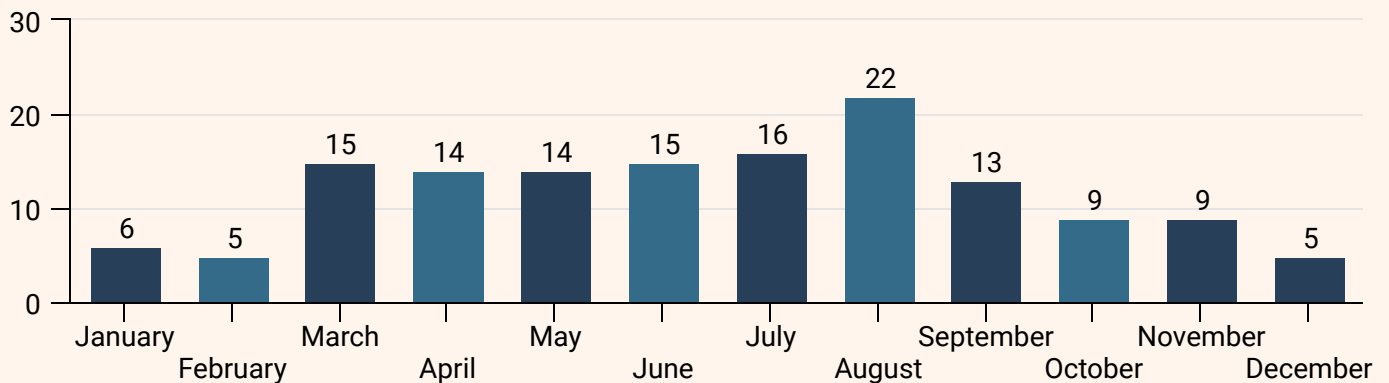
# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Disease Surveillance (cont.)

*HIV Partner Services:* This program provides counseling and referrals for individuals with HIV; staff assist with medical resources, notifications, and testing of sexual and needle sharing partners. This is a comprehensive public health strategy for reducing the spread of HIV. Four partner services cases were evaluated by Dodge County Public Health staff in 2023.

*Rabies control program:* As a public health unit, we provide follow-ups for all known animal bites and potential exposures. If a domestic animal has bitten a resident, the animal will be placed under quarantine by either the Dodge County Sheriff or local Police Department, a veterinary service, or our public health team. During an animal's quarantine, the animal must be visited three times by a licensed veterinarian to analyze the animal for potential symptoms of rabies. The resident who was bitten, can coordinate with their doctor and our public health team to determine if a series of rabies vaccinations is appropriate, which is very circumstantial. If the owner of the domesticated animal does not wish to quarantine the animal, then the animal must be euthanized and tested for rabies at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. These measures are taken to prevent fatal cases of human rabies; after the onset of symptoms, rabies is nearly 100% fatal. In 2023, 147 animal bites/exposures were reported to our public health team, and 37 rabies specimens were submitted to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene.

## 2023 Monthly Reported Animal Bites Breakdown



# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Disease Surveillance (cont.)

*Tuberculosis (TB) program:* Dodge County Public Health provides education, case management, and medications (through the state TB Program), to prevent and control infection and disease caused by tuberculosis bacteria. Anti-tuberculosis therapy is provided to persons with tuberculosis (latent) infection, suspect or confirmed tuberculosis (active) disease, and close contacts of a person with active tuberculosis. In 2023, we provided case management for one active TB disease case and followed-up on seventeen latent TB infections. Seven of these cases received directly observed medication therapy weekly for 12 weeks and case management through Public Health.

*Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI):* is an infection that occurs while receiving healthcare services. These infections are typically associated with hospitals and long-term care settings, but can also occur in outpatient clinics, dental offices, and urgent care settings. Some examples of HAIs include catheter-associated urinary-tract infections (UTIs), central-line-associated infections, which can lead to sepsis, and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which can be difficult to treat due to its antibiotic resistance. One in every 31 hospital patients and one in every 43 nursing-home residents acquire a HAI, leading to an increased mortality rate for patients, especially for those who are elderly or immunocompromised.

In 2023, one of our public health nurses participated in an HAI mentorship through the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Through the six-month program, our nurse received infection prevention and control education through classes, self-paced modules, and on-site investigations. Looking forward, we are excited to use the learned knowledge and skills to serve as a resource and ally in reducing the prevalence of HAIs in Dodge County.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Disease Surveillance (cont.)

Top Reporting Disease - Dodge County Public Health Jurisdiction	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Sexually transmitted Infections (STI)</b>					
Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection	204	135	195	153	148
Gonorrhea	14	27	33	13	22
<b>Food/Water Borne Illness</b>					
Camplobacterosis	20	11	18	21	21
Cryptosporidiosis	10	10	8	10	8
E-coli, Shiga Toxin-Producing (STEC)	9	3	12	4	13
E-coli, Enterotoxigenic (ETEC) *not tracked	*	*	*	*	6
Giardiasis	3	8	4	5	4
Salmonellosis	17	17	17	14	17
<b>Vaccine Preventable (Except Hep C)</b>					
Influenza-associated Hospitalization	43	37	1	57	30
Hepatitis A	0	0	1	1	0
Hepatitis B	1	5	2	9	1
Hepatitis C	31	30	36	16	19
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	9	0	1	0	0
Varicella (Chickenpox)	3	1	2	2	3
<b>Other</b>					
Lyme Disease (B.Burgdorfer)	16	17	8	6	2
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	16	28	13	25	13
Legionellosis	2	3	2	1	0
Tuberculosis Disease - Active	0	2	1	1	1
Tuberculosis Infection - Latent	18	13	18	22	17
Coronavirus, Novel 2019 (COVID-19) *newly reportable in 2020	*	8,868	9,062	9,508	1,667
Streptococcal Invasive Disease *not tracked	*	*	*	16	33

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Maternal Child and Family Health

### Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC)

Prenatal care coordination is also known as Health Beginning+. In this home-visiting program a public health nurse conducts monthly home visits for those that are pregnant to provide them with support and services they need to promote a successful birth and a healthy baby. During these visits, we provide extra education on fetal development, information about labor and delivery, breastfeeding information, and information on the expectations of birth. These topics are just a few of many educational materials we can discuss during a home visit; they are intended to be very open to what the family will benefit from or what they would like to learn. During these visits, we identify possible pregnancy or newborn outcome risk factors before delivery, and we collaborate with their providers to address any concerns. In 2023, we completed 63 Healthy Beginning+ home visits.

### Infant-Child Home Visits

Our infant-child home visits are also known as the TalkReadPlay program. Our target population is birth to three. During these visits we focus on the child's intellectual, language, social, and physical development by using the Parents as Teachers curriculum. Our intent is to promote education to the family and identify any early child developmental delays. We use ASQ-3 and ASQ-2 screening tools to help the family and parents' educator identify any delays in communication, fine motor, large motor, personal-social, and problem-solving skills that the infant may be behind in. At these visits, a public health nurse measures the height and weight of the infant, reassures families that their child is developing appropriately, and teaches them how to promote their child's learning. We can then refer and update their providers along the way. Finally, during these visits, the nurse assists and answers any questions the parents may have regarding breastfeeding. In 2023, we completed 132 TalkReadPlay home visits.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Breastfeeding Home Visits

Breastfeeding not only provides the best nutrition for newborns, but it also saves the family money during difficult times. Three of our public health nurses are Certified Lactation Specialists (CLS). With this training, they can conduct home visits to those breastfeeding in the community who need extra help with breastfeeding. Dodge County WIC promotes and supports breastfeeding through our active breastfeeding program. Research shows there is no better nutrition than breast milk for our first year of life. Breastfeeding provides health, nutrition, economic, and emotional benefits to both mom and baby. In 2023, our public health nurses conducted 37 breastfeeding home visits.



## Welcome Baby Coalition

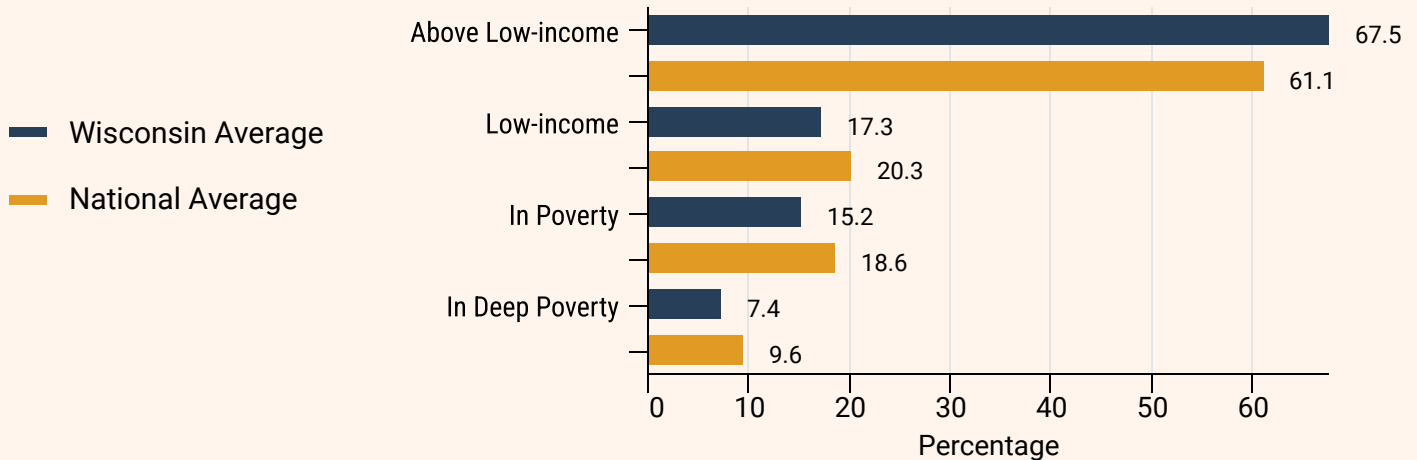
The Welcome Baby Coalition is comprised of several different community organizations that aim to provide all families with support and necessary resources to be confident in providing a safe, stable, and supportive environments for their child from prenatal to postpartum. The coalition focuses on building systems of support through universal social determinants of health screenings and referral networks, establishing a universal home visiting program, and creating group-centered prenatal care. In 2023, the coalition identified that the largest barrier to connecting clients to resources is the lack of closed loops. To address this barrier, they began tracking data to aid in the development of a resource referral system that allows partnerships to better communicate to ensure that families are receiving the resources they may need.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

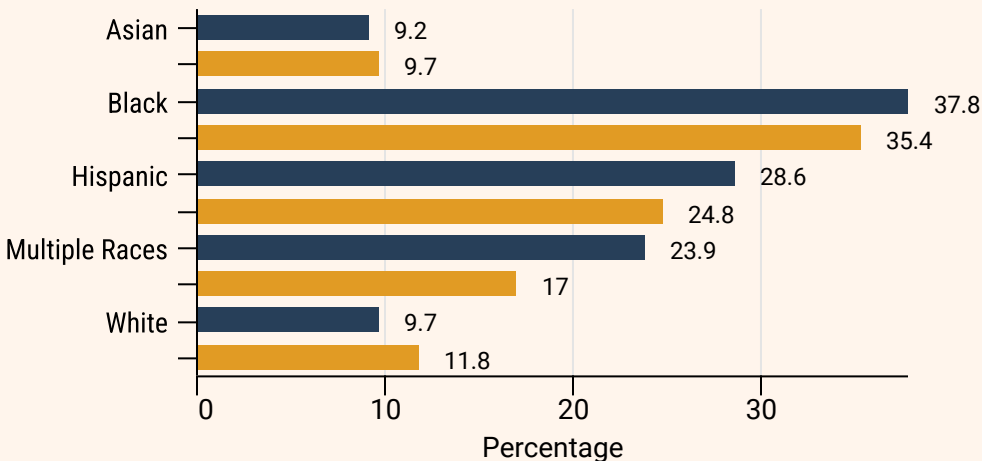
## Community Baby Shower

In 2023, Watertown Family Connections partnered with Dodge County Public Health to have Dodge County’s first community baby shower. This community baby shower invited 15 expecting moms and a support person to a two-hour event that provided families with essential supplies and resources to support their baby’s healthy development and learning. During this event, a gift basket, lunch, and several community resources to connect parents with local early childhood resources and information was provided to the attending mothers. This event not only helped families financially, but also showcased to the families that they are not alone in their parenting journey.

### Poverty status of infants and toddlers



### Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race





# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Jefferson-Dodge Breastfeeding Coalition

The Dodge and Jefferson County Health Departments came together to create the Jefferson-Dodge Breastfeeding Coalition. As a coalition, we have a mission to empower all mothers to breastfeed and fulfill their breastfeeding goals.

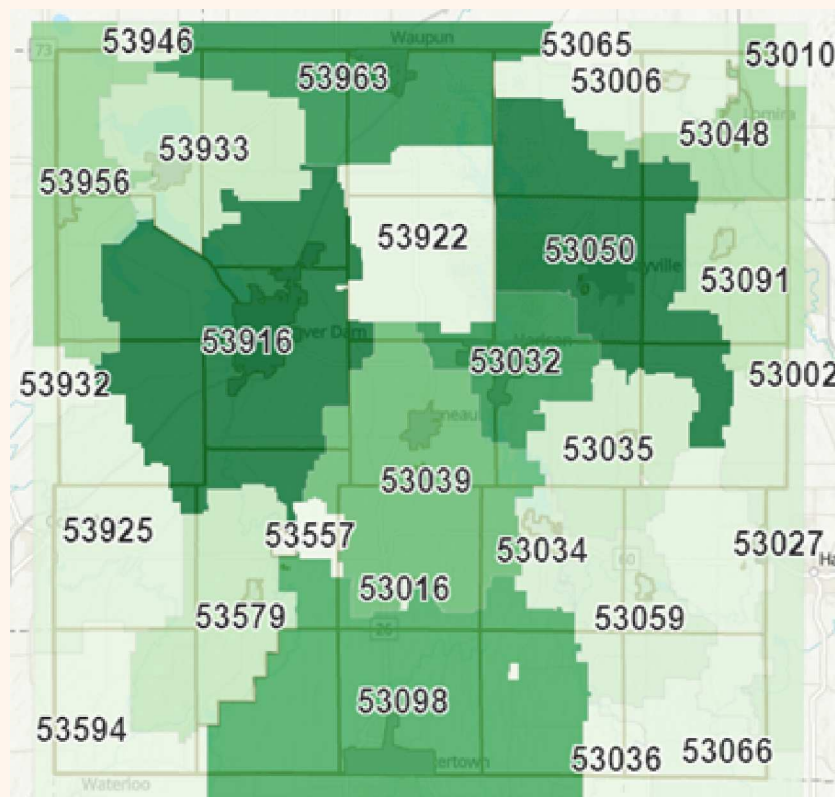
One of our Dodge County Public Health nurses is the co-chair for the coalition and is expected to help organize and facilitate monthly meetings for partnerships to come together to support the efforts that contribute to our mission. In 2023, we developed a strategic plan that includes efforts to address suggestions detailed in survey responses from 2022. Our main objectives as a coalition are to create a breastfeeding policy template, assist and support breastfeeding support groups in Dodge and Jefferson Counties, and to increase community outreach. By the end of 2023, both Jefferson and Dodge County Health Departments created their own monthly support groups within their respective communities. We increased community outreach by attending community events, such as Family Fest, National Night Out, Jefferson and Dodge County fairs, and farmers markets, to promote our coalition and the breastfeeding resources available within our communities. We were able to create a breastfeeding space at both fairs to allow a private place for mothers to breastfeed or pump during these public events. During our coalition meetings, we organized to have several presenters who provided their breastfeeding knowledge and offered support systems to the coalition members. Examples of presenters include the Department of Labor, a local dental office who provided education on lip and tongue ties, a local mom who shared her breastfeeding journey, and a labor and delivery nurse.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. The program helps income eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who have had a baby within the previous six months, infants, and children up to five years of age who are at health risk due to inadequate nutrition. The purpose of WIC is to promote and maintain the health and well-being of its participants by providing education about access to a healthy diet, and by providing participants referrals to other assistance programs, public health programs, and healthcare providers. In 2023, the average monthly WIC enrollment in Dodge County was 805; this was an increase from 2022, which had an average enrollment of 784.

### WIC Participation Concentration by Zip code



\*\*\*Key: A higher concentration of participants will appear in a darker color

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) (cont.)

In 2023, Dodge County WIC maintained modifications to the program, such as remote services, based on guidance from the federal and state WIC offices. WIC participants continue to receive updates and guidance on remote participation in the program, and additional outreach and recruitment from the state WIC office and local WIC staff. Wisconsin WIC also partners with Medicaid and local providers for WIC recruitment, via a referral system.



In response to federal guidelines and a USDA waiver of the physical presence requirement for WIC participants, families were able to participate in WIC nutrition support and education services while abiding by social distancing recommendations. The initial waiver expired in August 2023 and was replaced with an updated waiver that expires September 2026. The current waiver allows for a hybrid type of service which benefits participants by continuing to allow remote services if needed. Remote services have helped to remove barriers, such as transportation, lost wages from leaving work to come to WIC, etc. Due to these benefits, the Federal and State WIC offices are working on revising WIC policies to provide a more permanent option of remote services, offering online and curbside grocery ordering for WIC foods, and streamlining access to anthropometrics measured by providers at well-child checks and prenatal visits. We look forward to seeing these changes improve WIC services for our community in the coming year.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) (cont.)

Dodge County WIC consistently receives glowing feedback from its participants via a State-designed survey available through the Wisconsin MyWIC app. A few notes from participants throughout 2023:

- “It is very helpful and helps me and my son eat healthier.”
- “They are very helpful in so many ways.”
- “It's extra help to take some of the financial load off. Especially with formula. It is so expensive and goes so quick.”
- “It helps me not have to worry about feeding my daughter, changed my life.”

Moving forward into 2024, many changes to the WIC program are anticipated at the federal, state, and local levels. Some of the policy changes being considered include:

- More permanent remote options for WIC participants with barriers to coming into clinics
- Extension of WIC eligibility (postpartum mothers for up to 2 years, children up to age 6 years, etc.)
- Increased flexibility in foods covered by WIC to align with updated nutrition recommendations and accommodate dietary restrictions and cultural preferences, as well as increased value to WIC food packages.
- Ability for families to redeem WIC benefits via online ordering and curbside pick-up

Scan QR code for  
WIC application!



# Foundational Public Health Areas

## WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Each summer, the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is available for eligible participants from June 1st to October 31st. Each eligible participant was able to receive \$30 of vouchers to purchase local fruits, herbs, and vegetables from WIC-approved farmers. The WIC FMNP encourages participants to shop locally for produce, while increasing their access to fruits and vegetables. In 2023, Dodge County WIC families spent \$5,292 at local farmers' markets and farm stands. This was a 34% redemption rate, similar to the 34% redemption in 2022. Some obstacles that WIC families face with redeeming their FMNP vouchers include transportation challenges, loss or theft of vouchers, and schedule conflicts, such as work. Despite these obstacles, participants express excitement about these vouchers each year. The FMNP program is mutually beneficial to our local farmers and local families.



## WIC Breastfeeding Support

Every pregnant and breastfeeding mother who enrolls in Dodge County WIC has access to our breastfeeding peer counselors, as well as our Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC). Our breastfeeding peer counselors are moms with experience in breastfeeding, who can provide support and mentorship to other moms on their breastfeeding journey. The WIC CLC provides additional education and support for more complex breastfeeding issues or barriers that may arise. The breastfeeding peer counselor and CLC provide telephone contacts, office visits, and home visits as needed to participating mothers.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## WIC Breastfeeding Support

Breastfeeding incidence rates of Dodge County WIC participants consistently exceed the state average year after year, as do the rates for breastfeeding duration to one month, three months, six months, and twelve months. In 2022, the American Academy of Pediatrics adopted the World Health Organization’s recommendations for breastfeeding, which is six months of exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding to 24 months of age or beyond.

Breastfeeding Incidence and Duration 2021					
	Incidence	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months
Dodge County WIC 2022	88.4%	89.2%	76.5%	57.8%	25.6%
Dodge County WIC 2023	84.9%	85.2%	77.7%	53.4%	36.1%
Wisconsin WIC 2023	75.4%	80.5%	64.9%	44.8%	23.0%

The largest decrease in breastfeeding rates occurs between three and six months. This may be related to most mothers having to return to work after two to three months of maternity leave, which can be a barrier for continued breastfeeding. This is an area where the Dodge County WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator plans to partner with Public Health staff and the Jefferson-Dodge Breastfeeding Coalition in 2024. Some areas that we would like to focus on include identifying barriers to breastfeeding and increasing awareness of the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, supporting the development of breastfeeding-friendly employers, and implementing the changes to breast pump access through WIC. The new program for breast pumps provided by WIC was designed by the State Breastfeeding Coordinator, and was rolled out in 2023, making the process more flexible and efficient for mothers participating in the WIC program. In 2023, 24 breastfeeding home-visits were completed by our WIC breastfeeding support staff.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

### Car Seat Program

We have four of our staff members trained and certified as Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST). The CPSTs provide education on the proper use of car seats, booster seats, and seat belts to help save lives and prevent injuries and death of children. Properly installed car seats decrease the risk of a fatal injury by 71% among infants and 54% among toddlers. As part of this program, we offer car seat safety inspections for families that request one. During these inspections, CPSTs check the expiration, history, recalls, and installation requirements on the installed car seats/boosters. Additionally, our CPSTs provided Child Protective Services (CPS) with car seat training so families, in coordination with CPS, can safely choose and install car seats/boosters. Funding has been received for several consecutive years from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to purchase car seats that can be dispensed to families in need that meet specific income eligibility criteria.

In 2023, we hosted our first ever Dodge County Car Seat Event at the Beaver Dam Fire Department. We offered car seats/boosters to those who were eligible, completed safety checks, and provided education on the safe and proper use of car seats/boosters.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Car Seat Inspections	105	14	25	4	62
Car Seats Distributed	88	21	18	8	95

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Safe Sleep

As a Cribs for Kids® partner, we provide education and Pack N Play cribs to families to prevent infant sleep-related deaths. During home visits with families, videos, handouts, and questionnaires are used to educate parents and caregivers on the importance of safe sleep for their babies. Pack N Play cribs are purchased with grants or donations from local organizations, and distributed to families who need them. In 2023, twenty-two families were provided with safe sleep guidance and a new crib.



## First Breath

First Breath is a referral program that provides resources and support for tobacco cessation to expecting mothers, those who recently gave birth within the last 6 months, and primary caretakers of a child. Since 2022, this program merged with the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation's "My Baby and Me" program, which expands the resources and support of cessation to mothers and caregivers struggling with alcohol and drugs. If one would accept this service, a First Breath Health Educator would reach out to the participant by offering high intensity support, low intensity support, caregiver/family support, and long-term engagement to help them make a change to their tobacco, alcohol, and substance use. In 2023, we made seven referrals to the First Breath program. Statewide in 2022, 908 pregnant, postpartum, and caregiving individuals were referred to the First Breath program.



# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Blood-lead Screening and Follow-up

Lead based paint and varnish exists in many of the Dodge County homes built before 1978. Lead is a toxin, and there is no safe level of lead in the human body. Lead exposure is especially dangerous for children and adolescents. An acute-lead exposure is enough to cause permanent brain damage and negatively affect health throughout a child's life; especially those who are between the ages of one and six years old. To identify exposure levels, children are screened using a capillary sample (finger-stick). Once elevated blood-lead levels are confirmed, a public health nurse monitors the condition of the child by taking a venous sample (blood sample) every three months. Based on the results of laboratory testing, the nurse provides education and recommendations on lifestyle changes that can assist in reducing the child's blood-lead level. With continued elevated blood-lead levels, public health nurses will conduct an at-home lead assessment to determine if the living conditions within the family's home are contributing to the measured lead levels in the child's blood. In severe cases, the child will be removed from the home until the lead conditions can be remediated. In 2023, sixty-six elevated lead levels were reported, which resulted in fourteen home visits by either a public health nurse and/or a lead hazard investigator.

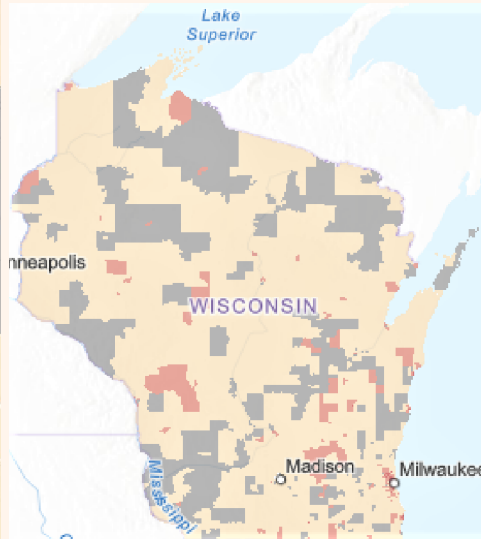
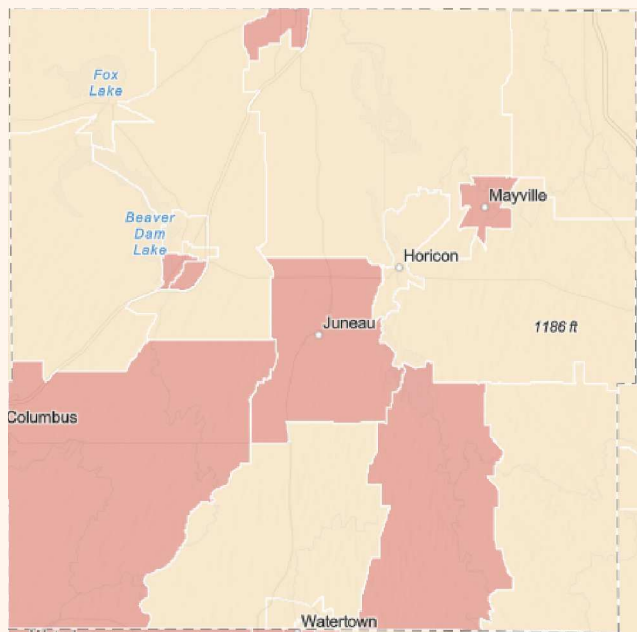
## Lead-In Water Testing at Daycare Facilities

In 2023, Dodge County Public Health participated in a state-funded Wisconsin Lead-in-Water Testing and Remediation (WTR) Initiative. The initiative aimed to reduce lead hazards in licensed group childcare and Head Start facilities across the state. Old plumbing materials and plumbing fixtures, like faucets and water fountains, may contain lead. Over time, this lead can enter our drinking water, which allows the lead to enter our bloodstream when the water is consumed. Children that are exposed to lead can develop behavior and learning problems, hearing problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity, anemia, delayed growth, and speech and language impairments. To reduce a child's exposure to lead in a daycare setting, we tested water outlets for lead contamination throughout the participating childcare facilities. If a fixture tested positive for lead, the State of Wisconsin paid for the remediation efforts of replacing the water fixture. In 2023, we sampled six daycare facilities for the presence of lead in their water fixtures.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

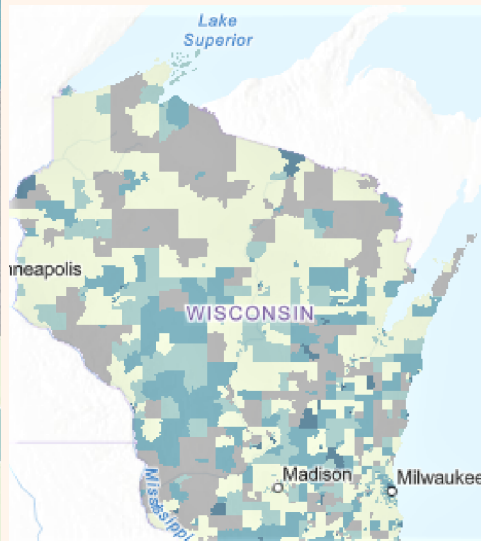
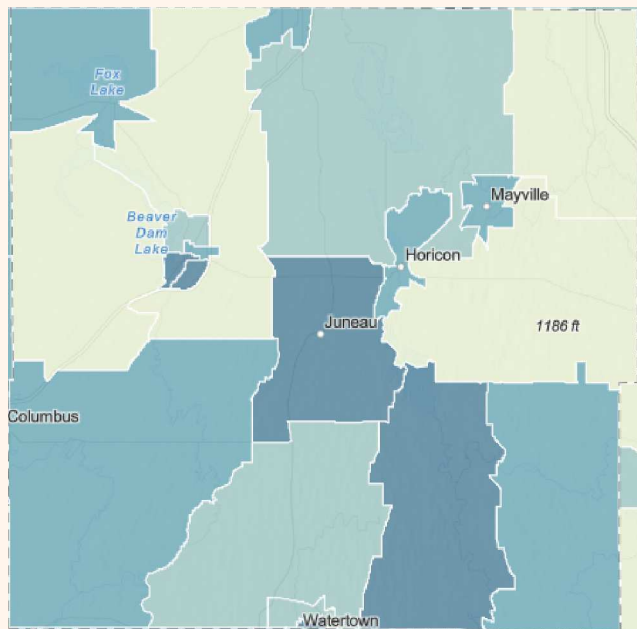
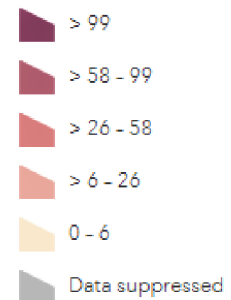
## Blood-lead Screening and Follow-up

Given our older infrastructure and homes, Dodge County has a high prevalence of lead-poisoned children when compared to other areas around Wisconsin



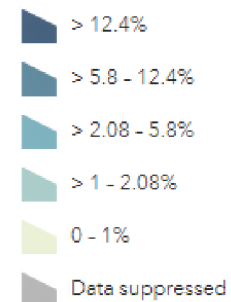
Children Poisoned | 2018-2021

Number of Children Under 6 Years Old Tested with a Blood Lead Level of  $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  by Wisconsin Census Tract



Percent Poisoned | 2018-2021

Percent of Children Under 6 Years Old Tested with a Blood Lead Level of  $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  by Wisconsin Census Tract



# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Sharps Disposal Program

With our Sharps Disposal Program, we exchange full sharp containers with empty ones for a small fee. We then dispose of the full sharp's containers in a proper manner for the entity or person that is dropping them off. This program is utilized by both the community and our own department. Diabetes, vitamin deficiencies, and blood disorders are just a few conditions that would require families to utilize sharps containers on a regular basis. This program allows the community to dispose of their sharps in a safe, convenient way. In 2023, we disposed of 94 sharps containers, and provided 25 new sharps containers to those who needed one.

## Health Education

At Dodge County Public Health, we have a Community Health Educator who is responsible for performing work involving planning, coordinating, assessing, and implementing public health programs. These programs may include communicable and chronic disease, nutrition, health promotion, and other health and wellness topics. In 2023, our Community Health Educator coordinated a presentation through Your Choice Prevention Education to speak to 700 local middle schoolers on the topic of Alcohol and Other Drugs Abuse (AODA). Similarly, they provided 14 one-hour sessions on AODA to over 100 local 6th and 8th graders. Health education was also provided during local community events, such as the Dodge County Fair, where our Community Health Educator coordinated a mental health-based education theme for fair attendees, mainly children, to participate in. Health education was also provided at National Night Out where the focus was physical activity. Day-to-day, our Community Health Educator develops health education material that gets posted on our Facebook page and our website. In 2023, they created a Dodge County Public Health Quarterly Newsletter as well as a Weekly Wellness education initiative. Overall, Dodge County Public Health staff participated in 28 health education events throughout 2023.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Program

In 2023, Dodge County Public Health implemented a CPR training program with the intent of providing all Dodge County employees with the tools necessary to save a life during a cardiac event when the need arises. Ten Dodge County employees were trained and certified to teach CPR classes to their peers. By the end of 2023, those ten trainers provided CPR training to over 150 individuals.

CPR training is crucial for several reasons, as it plays a vital role in saving lives during emergencies.

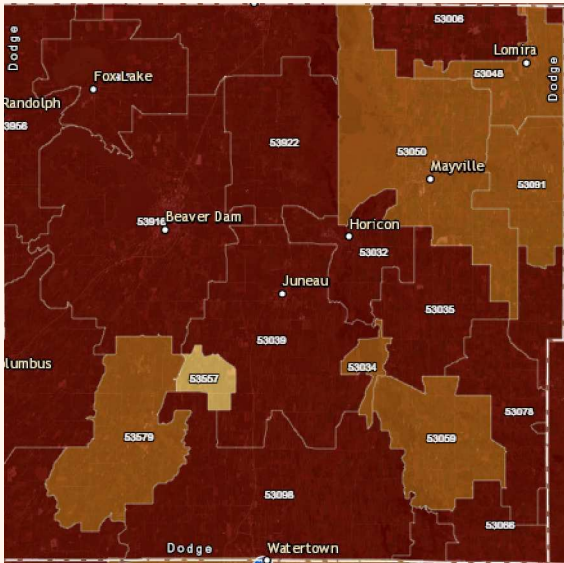
- 1. Immediate Response:** CPR training equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to respond promptly in situations where someone is experiencing cardiac arrest or has stopped breathing. Immediate action can significantly increase the chances of survival.
- 2. Saves Lives:** Performing CPR helps maintain blood circulation and oxygenation to vital organs, especially the brain, until professional medical help arrives. This can be crucial in preventing irreversible damage and increasing the likelihood of survival.
- 3. Bystander Intervention:** In many cases, bystanders are the first to witness a medical emergency. CPR training empowers ordinary people to take action and provide assistance before professional medical personnel arrive, making a significant difference in the outcome.
- 4. Time is Critical:** During cardiac arrest, every second counts. CPR training emphasizes the importance of quick and effective intervention. The sooner CPR is initiated, the better the chances of preserving brain function and preventing complications.
- 5. Community Resilience:** CPR training enhances community resilience by creating a pool of individuals who are prepared to respond to emergencies. This can be particularly important in situations where emergency services may be delayed or inaccessible.
- 6. Increased Confidence:** CPR training not only imparts life-saving skills but also boosts confidence. Knowing what to do in an emergency situation can help individuals remain calm and focused, leading to more effective assistance.
- 7. Wide Applicability:** CPR training is applicable in various settings, including homes, workplaces, public spaces, and recreational areas. Accidents and medical emergencies can happen anywhere, making CPR skills valuable in diverse situations.
- 8. Complements AED Use:** CPR is often combined with the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in certain situations. CPR training provides individuals with the knowledge of how to use AEDs effectively, further improving the chances of a positive outcome.

# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Environmental Health

### Environmental Complaints

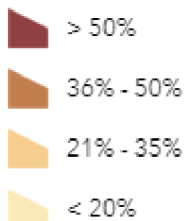
We assist residents with a wide variety of environmental concerns or issues that arise within the county. We receive calls and notifications for consumer concerns, nuisance complaints, housing issues, and water quality concerns. Public health staff provides resources and education to those who notify us of a concern. Each instance will look different in terms of the remediation efforts and follow-up procedures that may be required. In complex scenarios, we will seek help from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) or the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). In 2023, public health followed up on 85 environmental-related calls.



### Radon Test Kits

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that we can't smell or taste. It can get into any type of building, new or old, including our homes, offices, and schools. Radon is second only to smoking as a leading cause for lung cancer. Testing is the only way to know if you are at risk of exposure to radon. We receive free radon test kits from the Watertown Radon Information Center to dispense to our Dodge County residents. Testing is easy and free. If radon is detected, there are ways to lower the level to acceptable standards. In 2023, we distributed 197 kits to our residents.

Percent of Test Results Greater Than or Equal to the EPA Recommended Limit (4.0 pCi/L)



# Foundational Public Health Areas

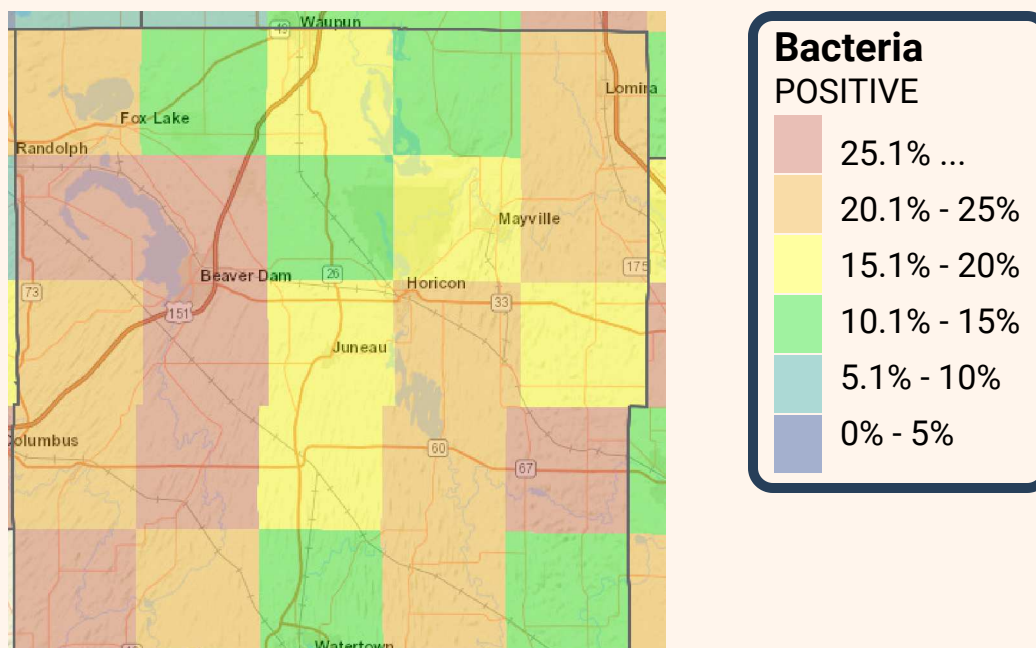
## Well-Water Testing

More than two-thirds of Wisconsin residents use groundwater as their drinking water source and more than 40% of residents rely on a private well. Contamination of private wells occurs all throughout Wisconsin. Safe, clean water is the most essential resource for healthy communities. We rely on clean water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning. Municipal water systems test their water regularly to ensure it is safe, but it is up to private well owners to test their own well water. Dodge County Public Health, with support from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, helps private well owners by distributing well water test kits to families with children under the age of six and pregnant women, of whom are among the most vulnerable groups if exposed to contaminated water. We are committed to:

1. Encouraging regular well water testing
2. Ensuring a confirmation sample has been taken if levels are high
3. Providing advice about appropriate water use
4. Recommending actions to reduce exposure if levels are high.

In 2023, 20 kits were given to families, and 17 follow-up sessions were conducted with subsequent education.

## Reported Well Sample Results



# Foundational Public Health Areas

## Lead Assessments

A home lead assessment involves the evaluation of a residence to identify potential sources of lead exposure. This assessment is crucial for various reasons, particularly in ensuring the safety and well-being of occupants, especially children. Lead, a toxic metal, can have serious health implications, and a home lead assessment helps to mitigate the risks associated with lead exposure. When a child presents high blood-lead levels, our trained and certified Lead Hazard Investigator will conduct a lead assessment of a families dwelling.

During a home lead assessment, our Lead Hazard Investigator typically inspects the dwelling for lead-based paint, dust, and soil contamination. The assessment may involve:

1. **Paint Inspection:** Identifying the presence of lead-based paint in older homes, as lead paint was commonly used before its ban in residential properties in the late 1970s.
2. **Dust and Soil Sampling:** Collecting samples from household dust and soil to assess lead levels, as lead particles from deteriorating paint or other sources can contaminate these areas.
3. **Water Testing:** Assessing lead levels in tap water, especially if the home has plumbing components or pipes made of lead or if the water source is at risk of lead contamination.

The purpose of the assessment is to investigate areas where the child has potential of ingesting lead. For example, if a child is consuming paint chips while at home, and the home is identified to have lead-based paint, the investigator may determine that the lead-based paint is contributing to the child's high blood-lead level readings. The investigator will then recommend remediation efforts to remove the lead-based paint or recommend that the family finds alternative dwelling options to reduce the child's blood-lead levels.

# Foundational Public Health Capabilities

## Assessment & Surveillance

Assessment and surveillance play pivotal roles in safeguarding public health by providing crucial insights into the prevalence, distribution, and determinants of diseases within a population. These processes enable us to identify and monitor health trends, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and make informed decisions to protect and promote community well-being. Surveillance systems help detect outbreaks early, allowing for prompt response and containment measures. Additionally, assessments contribute to the identification of risk factors and vulnerable populations, guiding the development of targeted interventions. By constantly evaluating health indicators and trends, we can implement evidence-based strategies to prevent the spread of diseases, enhance healthcare delivery, and ultimately improve overall community health outcomes. The integration of assessment and surveillance forms a cornerstone in the proactive management of public health, ensuring a comprehensive and timely approach to disease prevention and control.

## Equity

Equity is a fundamental principle in public health, emphasizing the fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and healthcare to ensure that everyone has the chance to attain their highest level of health. Recognizing and addressing health disparities based on factors such as race, socioeconomic status, gender, and geographic location is crucial for achieving optimal public health outcomes. An equitable approach involves dismantling systemic barriers that contribute to health inequalities and striving to provide all individuals with equal access to healthcare services, preventive measures, and health information. By prioritizing equity, public health interventions become more inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of populations, ultimately reducing health disparities and promoting social justice. Embracing equity in public health endeavors not only enhances the well-being of individuals but also contributes to the overall resilience and strength of communities and societies as a whole.



# Foundational Public Health Capabilities

## Community Partnership Development

Community partnership development is paramount in public health as it fosters collaboration between health professionals, community leaders, and residents to address health disparities and enhance overall well-being. By forging strong partnerships, public health initiatives can tap into local knowledge, cultural nuances, and community-specific needs, ensuring that interventions are contextually relevant and accepted. Community engagement builds trust and empowers individuals to actively participate in health promotion and disease prevention efforts. Through partnerships, public health programs gain access to valuable resources, such as community networks, facilities, and volunteers, amplifying the impact of interventions. Moreover, involving communities in decision-making processes promotes a sense of ownership and sustainability, making it more likely for health initiatives to be successful in the long term. The collaborative efforts of public health organizations and communities create a synergistic approach that addresses diverse health challenges and fosters a healthier and more resilient society.

In 2023, Dodge County Public Health focused on developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in conjunction with the Dodge Jefferson Healthier Community Partnership (DJHCP), which is comprised of Dodge County, Jefferson County, and the City of Watertown Health Departments; Marshfield Medical Center Beaver Dam, Watertown Regional Medical Center, and Fort Healthcare; the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation, and Rock River Community Clinic. As a partnership, we conduct a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) every three years. Based on our 2022 CHA, we determined that our CHIP needed to focus on four areas: safe, reliable transportation, youth mental health, childcare, and affordable housing. We invited community stakeholders to join the conversation to help develop solutions for the issues of transportation and youth mental health. We held monthly focus groups with our stakeholders for each of the two topics to progress the conversation, develop partnerships, and to create a unified front in addressing the issues.

# Foundational Public Health Capabilities

## Organizational Competencies

Organizational competencies are crucial in public health as they define an entity's capacity to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate public health programs and interventions. A public health organization's competencies encompass a range of skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to address complex health challenges. These competencies involve strategic planning, leadership, data analysis, communication, and the ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders. A well-equipped organization can respond promptly to emerging health issues, allocate resources efficiently, and adapt to changing circumstances. Additionally, organizational competencies contribute to the establishment of evidence-based practices and ensure that public health efforts are grounded in sound research and evaluation methodologies. At Dodge County Public Health, we focus on fostering a culture of continuous improvement and learning. Our organizational competencies enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of public health initiatives, leading to better health outcomes for communities and populations.

## Communications

Effective communication plays a vital role in disseminating information, raising awareness, and promoting behavior change within communities. Clear and accessible communication is essential for conveying public health messages, whether related to disease prevention, health promotion, or emergency response. Communicating health information in a culturally sensitive and easily understandable manner fosters trust between public health authorities and the community, encouraging individuals to make informed decisions about their health. Timely and transparent communication during public health crises is critical for managing public perceptions, dispelling misinformation, and facilitating coordinated responses. Additionally, communication helps mobilize support for health policies and interventions, garnering public cooperation and participation. By prioritizing effective communication strategies, we can bridge knowledge gaps, empower individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles, and ultimately contribute to the overall well-being of populations.

# Foundational Public Health Capabilities

## Emergency Preparedness & Response

Emergency preparedness and response are paramount in public health to effectively address and mitigate the impact of unforeseen events such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and other health crises. At Dodge County Public Health, we are committed to developing robust emergency plans to ensure that we are well-equipped to handle a sudden surge in cases, coordinate resources, and provide timely and efficient care to affected populations. Swift and coordinated responses are critical for preventing the spread of diseases, minimizing casualties, and maintaining public trust. Preparedness measures, including training healthcare professionals, establishing communication protocols, and stockpiling necessary supplies, contribute to a proactive approach that can significantly reduce the severity and duration of public health emergencies. By investing in preparedness and response capabilities, we enhance our resilience and ability to protect Dodge County from a wide range of health threats, ultimately saving lives and safeguarding public well-being.

## Accountability & Performance Management

Performance management involves continuous monitoring and evaluation of programs, allowing for data-driven decision-making and the identification of areas for improvement. This process ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, interventions are evidence-based, and goals of Dodge County Public Health are met. Accountability and performance management enhance the overall effectiveness of public health initiatives, leading to better health outcomes and improved quality of services for communities.

## Policy Development & Support

Well-crafted policies establish guidelines, standards, and regulations that guide our public health interventions, ensuring consistency and alignment with our overarching health goals. Our policies play a crucial role in shaping environments that promote health, influence behaviors, and address social determinants. By actively engaging in policy development and garnering support, our public health professionals create sustainable and impactful interventions that contribute to the overall well-being Dodge County.

# 2023 Notable Accomplishments

In 2023, we had many successes that are worth noting:

- We held our first ever car seat event, which was held at the Beaver Dam Fire Department, and provided a day for families to receive safety inspections on their car seats and to distribute car seats to families who were eligible
- Three of our employees completed their Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician certifications, totaling our number of technicians to four
- We hosted our first annual Family Fest event where we showcased the services our community offers to over 200 residents
- We established a Breastfeeding Support Group in Dodge County
- We hired two Breastfeeding Peer Counselors who provide support to our breastfeeding mothers in our WIC program
- We developed a CPR program that has already held 15 classes and trained over 150 individuals on the lifesaving measures of CPR
- One of our nurses participated in a Hospital-Associated Infections mentorship through the state, which will help us support our long-term care partners with disease prevention measures
- We participated in a state-funded lead-in-water program in which we sampled water fixtures in daycare facilities to help reduce lead-poisoning in Dodge County
- We developed a partnership with a laboratory to offer free at-home sexually-transmitted infection test kits for Dodge County residents
- We provided lead education to pediatric and family practice providers on when, how, and how often a child should be tested for lead in their blood
- We increased the number of residents served for nearly all of our programs
- We increased our average monthly WIC participation, which means more families received nutrition education information and supplemental food benefits
- We partnered with a dental clinic to offer free dental visits for our WIC participants

# 2024 Goals

Public health is a practice that is reliant on analysis and surveillance to adequately determine and assess the needs of a community at any one-time interval. A communities' health needs will forever be changing, and public health is expected to keep up. In 2023, we reevaluated our programs and service delivery and developed a list of goals for 2024 that will help to keep us in line with the needs of Dodge County. Here is a list of a few of those goals:

- Increase our collaborative efforts with healthcare providers and schools to ensure that timely referrals to services and programs are being made
- Increase our outreach efforts on our social media pages to ensure that our information sharing is reaching a larger audience
- Provide opportunities to access our programs outside of our Juneau location to accommodate those who may be experiencing barriers to receiving our services
- Focus on making our services more accessible for our non-English speaking populations
- Attend more community events to educate others on the programs and services that public health offers
- Develop more programs and services to address the prevention of non-communicable chronic conditions and diseases (i.e., hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease)

# Connecting with the Community

Follow us on Facebook!



Subscribe to our quarterly newsletter!



## Public Health Program Guide

For additional copies of this report call 920-386-3670 or visit our website at [www.co.dodge.wi.gov/publichealth](http://www.co.dodge.wi.gov/publichealth)

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