



2020 Health Unit Annual Report

Mission:

The mission of the Green Lake County Health Department is to promote and protect health and prevent disease.

Vision:

We will become the leader in Public Health in Green Lake County promoting healthy people, thriving communities, and safe environments.

Core Values:

- *Prevention*
- *Professionalism*
- *Evidence-based Practices*
- *Collaboration*
- *Good Stewardship of All Resources*
- *Responsive*
- *Performance Improvement*
- *Health Equity*



The 2020 COVID Vaccination Response Team included members front row left, Julia McCarroll, Health Educator, Jason Jerome, DHHS Director, Rachel Prellwitz, Public Health Nurse (PHN), Kathy Munsey, Health Officer, Lisa Rollin, PHN, Gary Podoll, Emergency Management Director, Allison McCormick, Environmental Health Specialist, Mark Podoll, Sheriff, Shari Krause PH Program Specialist, Allison Davey, PHN, Renee Peters, Birth to 3/Children's Long Term Support Coordinator and Nancy Gimenez, PHN.

The COVID-19 Pandemic took center stage in 2020. It was a year filled with much uncertainty, strife, hardship, illness and death due to the virus. The Health Unit response started in March and will continue long into 2021. The goal was to minimize the spread of the virus, ensure disease investigation and contact tracing for those affected and finally to begin vaccinating according to priority guidelines. This is the longest lasting public health emergency in Green Lake County history.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Our 2020 Programs and Services

Disease Control and Prevention

Public Health is required by statute to follow up on acute and communicable diseases. Using the WI Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS), we are able to monitor trends and track outbreaks as they occur. Below are some of the diseases we followed in 2020, including COVID 19 cases along with previous year comparables.

Frequency of Reported Diseases in Green Lake County	2017	2018	2019	2020
Babesiosis			1	-
Campylobacteriosis	4	16	11	3
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning *New in 2019	-	-	2	-
Chlamydia	46	46	52	27
COVID 19 Confirmed	-	-	-	1399
COVID 19 Probable	-	-	-	301
Cyclosporiasis	0	7	0	-
Cryptosporidiosis	2	2	2	-
E-Coli	8	25	15	8
Ehrlichiosis	5	1	0	-
Foodborne Disease	-	-	7	
Giardiasis	2	2	0	1
Gonorrhea	3	6	3	5
Haemophilus Influenza	-	-	-	1
Hepatitis B	-	0	1	-
Hepatitis C	12	4	8	3
Histoplasmosis	-	-	-	1
Influenza (hospitalized)	14	19	7	1
Legionellosis	-	1	0	-
Lyme Disease	20	9	18	2
Measles (Rubeola)	-	1*	0	-
Mycobacterium (non-tuberculosis)	4	4	6	-
Norovirus Outbreak	-	-	9	1
Pesticide related disease	-	-	2	-
Pertussis (whooping cough)	2	4	20	3
Salmonellosis	3	4	3	5
Syphilis	-	-	1	-
Invasive Strep Disease	3	2	7	1
Latent TB infection	2	3	0	-
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	134	156	177	1763

COVID 19 required us to review our Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP). The COOP is the plan that is used during emergencies to determine

which programs are essential and which programs can be temporarily put on hold. Many programs were adjusted to be administered virtually, using mailings, phone conferencing or a combination of these. As you can see from the report that follows, many programs suffered due to the pandemic and we will be looking forward to getting back to our in-person services as soon as we can. The pandemic was extremely challenging, pushing staff to the limit of their capabilities as cases rose in our county. In addition to the 1399 confirmed cases and 301 probable cases, we had hundreds of contacts to these cases who had to be notified and quarantined as well. Many of these individuals were less than accepting of the quarantine requirements and some were outright mean and rude and very disrespectful to staff who were just doing their job and trying to reduce the spread and protect the public. We also had 14 confirmed deaths from COVID and three probable deaths related to COVID 19.

We were very fortunate that over the years, we have done extensive disaster training with other Human Services staff members who volunteered to help with contact tracing, following up with families who were quarantined for extensive periods of time and delivering food and medical supplies. Their assistance was very much appreciated and helped the health unit staff manage the pandemic especially when we were seeing 20 new cases a day during October and November. The Health Unit staff helped families, businesses, schools and county employees navigate through these unprecedented times. Toolkits were developed to help schools and businesses do contact tracing in order to keep their places of business safe. These toolkits were necessary as early on it became obvious that we could not do all the contact tracing alone. Many businesses used surveillance videos to determine who had been in contact with a positive case for more than 15 minutes so they would know who to send home and quarantine. The toolkits emphasized cleaning,



rearranging workstations and breakrooms to reduce spread. It was a great community effort.

Immunizations for Children and Adults

We normally have monthly immunization clinics in Green Lake and a home visitation project with Rachel Prellwitz and Julia McCarroll to provide immunizations to the Amish community. Due to the pandemic, we discontinued home visits and our regularly scheduled monthly clinic numbers were greatly reduced. We encouraged families to call and come in for appointments and our immunization rates remain at 66% for our cohort who are completely vaccinated by age 2. That is the same as last year. We have 72% of all 2 years considered “late up to date” which means they are fully vaccinated but not by their 2nd birthday. We expected more of a dip due to the pandemic since families are not going in for regular wellness visits.

Dental

We contract with Carrie Knurowski, Dental Hygienist to provide services to Head Start and school age children for cleanings. This service was also temporarily put on hold during the pandemic due to the high risk of dental procedures. We will continue the services once the pandemic is over.

Childhood Lead Testing

In 2019, Allison McCormick, our Environmental Health Specialist, passed the Lead Risk Assessor test and became certified. Her skills were put to use in 2020 as we did have 2 children with elevated blood lead levels. The goal is to reduce lead hazards in homes and reduce the level of lead in a child’s bloodstream. After home visits and an evaluation of areas that had lead-based paint, remediation was done and the children’s blood lead levels were reduced. All children in WIC get tested for lead, but since this program was virtual, the numbers of children tested was reduced this year also.

Mother, Child and Family

There were 180 births in Green Lake County in 2020 compared to 187 in 2019. In 2017 and

2018, we had 212 and 181 births respectively. We had no births to women less than age 18, compared to 1 last year. We also had 16 babies that were considered “low birth weight” (weighing less than 5lbs, 8oz), the same as last year. In 2020, the percentage of women who smoked during pregnancy was 12.78% compared to 18% in 2018 and 2019. This is a tremendous improvement. Six of the 23 women who reported smoking during their pregnancy had low birth weight babies. Overall, two infants were transferred to Neonatal Intensive Care Units compared to 7 in 2019. Of the 180 births, 3 were born with congenital anomalies compared to one last year. Rachel Prellwitz did 12 car seat checks and was able to provide 9 free car seats due to a grant we received. One hundred percent of those who had car seat installation checks reported an increase in knowledge regarding proper use of a car seat.

Nutrition WIC

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. In Green Lake County, WIC helped many income-eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children ages 1-4. In addition, breastfeeding education was available to all WIC clients. WIC provides a breastfeeding peer mentor, which is an invaluable resource to new mothers. However, early in the pandemic, for safety reasons, in person visits were halted and replaced with phone calls and vouchers were mailed. For the year, 35 pregnant women were served, 34 infants <12 months and 144 children age 1-4 years old.

Birth to 3

Birth to 3 is Wisconsin’s early intervention program for families of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. The Green Lake County Health Unit has been designated by the county board to be the administrative agency in our county for this mandated program. The county is required to maintain a base level of funding for this program and a yearly allocation is provided with state and federal funds. Medicaid and Private



Insurance are billed for services when available with parental permission.

In 2020, 30 new children were referred to the program. Referrals came from a number of sources including: physician (17), family member (5), social worker (6), Berlin Schools Child Development Day (1) and other Birth to 3 Programs (1). Eleven new children were enrolled into the Program during the calendar (the same as 2019). The total number of children served through an Individualized Family Service Plan in 2020 was 27. In addition to those with significant developmental delays, there were several children with specific diagnoses including: Deafness, Spina Bifida, Autism, Sifrim-Hitz Weiss, Wolf-Hirschorn and Down Syndrome.

Renee Peters is the Program and Service Coordinator/Educator. Contracted service providers included Tara McPeak, Occupational Therapist from NEW Rehab in New London. Hannah Lehocky provides Speech and Language therapy via a new contract with Elite Therapy Company, LLC out of Oshkosh. Jody Streeter is the Physical Therapist from Taylored Rehab in Fond du Lac.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has provided a new challenge of how to safely provide services to our families. Most of our services are currently being provided virtually through ZOOM. Although new and challenging at first, we all have become comfortable and are embracing this new way to meet with families. We have found some wonderful benefits. For example, meeting virtually allows for visits even if the weather would not allow for a home visit. Staff meetings via ZOOM also saves time and travel expenses for the therapists.

Children’s Community Options Program (CCOP)

Special funding available through the state to meet the needs of children who have severe disabilities. Children are now primarily being served with funding through the Children’s Long Term

Support Waiver, however, there are some unique services/goods that are not allowed to be paid for by the waiver. The Coordinator for this Program is Renee Peters.

Tri-County Environmental Health Environmental Issues Addressed

For the licensing period of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, there were 106 routine inspections completed, 18 pre-inspections, 4 re-inspections, and 5 follow-up inspections. Due to COVID-19, Tri-County Environmental Health created an inspection roll out plan as a guide to conducting inspections during the pandemic in 2020. This plan was created using guidance from DATCP. Environmental health staff remained in Phase 1 of the plan throughout 2020. Phase 1 includes:

- *Pre-inspections, re-inspections, and complaints may be conducted in person at all facilities. If a virtual inspection is possible, then staff may do it virtually. Complaints should be handled over the phone whenever possible.
- *Routine inspections can be done in-person at facilities where social distancing can be maintained. For example: tourist rooming houses, hotels, pools, campgrounds, small retail food establishments and restaurants with few staff and customers.
- *All staff are required to wear a mask.
- *Staff may individually decide what facilities they are comfortable inspecting.

Other Activities—

- Animal Bites—41
- Well Water Concerns—1
- Meth House Placards—1
- Housing Inspection Cases—11
- Nuisance/Other—11
- Radon Kits Distributed—96
- Water Kits Distributed—42 (note these were in addition to the free well water grant program discussed below)

The Health Unit also received a \$10,000 grant to do water testing for nitrates in 2019 and it carried over into 2020. The Water Quality Task Force was able to provide free water test kits to 263 county residents. There were 33 wells that tested at a level over ten for nitrates. The plan had been to do a

community event to discuss the results after all results were in, but COVID-19 struck and we simply sent out informational flyers to participants via mail. This project gave us a good baseline to map out our water quality throughout the county. We hope to continue similar projects with our partners once the pandemic is over.

Prevention Activities

Rachel Prellwitz completed the train the trainer QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention curriculum. Rachel was able to train staff within Human Services and the Boys and Girls Club staff on how to recognize a person who may be contemplating suicide and also what to do when this happens. The evaluations on the value of the program were very positive and this will continue into the future. It was not possible to hold more trainings due to the pandemic.

Health Equity

Green Lake County continues to be a partner in the Central WI Health Partnership (CWHP). Our group is focusing on Health Equity in the six counties to improve health outcomes. Our goal in 2020 was to create a strategic plan and many of our meetings had to be canceled due to COVID-19. We have participated in Zoom meetings to work on the strategic plan and will continue our work going forward in 2021.



Health Officer, Kathy Munsey displays the COVID-19 Vaccination card after receiving the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. The white boards in the background allowed vaccinated patients to sign their thoughts on getting the vaccine.

Opioid Prevention Activities

We continue to be a member of the Alliance for WI Youth (AWY) we were able to secure funds to do prevention activities to reduce youth access to drugs and alcohol. We also received additional lock boxes to keep opioids locked up in homes. The distribution was slowed due to the pandemic, but we have provided them to folks in need who have come into our office.

Green Lake County wrote for a grant to start an Opioid Fatality Review team with Marquette and Waushara counties. The successful application allows us to review opioid deaths and determine if there are community interventions that we can implement in order to reduce these premature deaths. In 2020, we completed two death reviews and will continue with this project as we were funded for two additional years.

Staffing Update

We did have some staffing changes due to COVID-19. Kari Schneider did decide to leave her position. Nancy Gimenez, RN was hired as her replacement. We were able to have Melanie Simpkins, RN come back to work as an LTE during a maternity leave in the summer and Lisa Rollin, RN joined us as an LTE to assist with COVID-19 response duties. We used COVID-19 grant funds for these positions



Rachel Prellwitz, Public Health Nurse gives the first COVID-19 vaccine to Green Lake First Responder, Carol Ehrenberg