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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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**BARRON COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH**

*Everyone living better, longer*

# OUR ORGANIZATION

## Guiding Values

- We work to ensure health equity
- We promote trauma-informed practices internally and externally
- We use collaborative processes to achieve our vision and mission
- We lead the community in the use of evidence-based public health practices
- We improve programming through quality improvement
- We provide an environment of professional growth and satisfaction

## Our Staff and Health & Human Services Board

**DHHS Director, Stacey Frolik**

**Program Manager/Health Officer, Karla Potts-Shufelt**

**Medical Advisor, Dr. Richard Sampson MD**

### **Nursing Staff**

Becky Rundhaug (resigned July)  
Emily Holub (started September)  
Nicole Nelson  
Patricia Wickman  
Laura Sauve

### **Environmental Health**

Mackenzie Benda  
Rachel Henke  
Pam Gannon

### **Birth to Three**

Joyce Pond  
Stephanie Hinirchs

### **Administrative Staff**

Brownie Nelson  
Sue Pruzek

### **Public Health Specialist**

Sarah Turner

### **Women, Infant, & Children (WIC)**

Nichole Thompson, Director  
Rhonda Siefert  
Mariah Munger-Lactation Peer Educator

### **Community Outreach Worker**

Isaak Mohammed



### **WELCOME, Abby Hinz, Nurse Practitioner**

Abby joined us in April of 2023, helping to expand our reproductive health services.

### **Board of Health**

**Karolyn Bartlett- Chair, John Banks - Vice Chair, Barb Reisner, Carol Moen, Patti Anderson, Jerry Apfel, Robert Heil, Toniann Knutson, Lynn Kolpack, Richard Sampson, MD, Diane Vaughn, Stacey Wenzel.**



# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## IMMUNIZATIONS

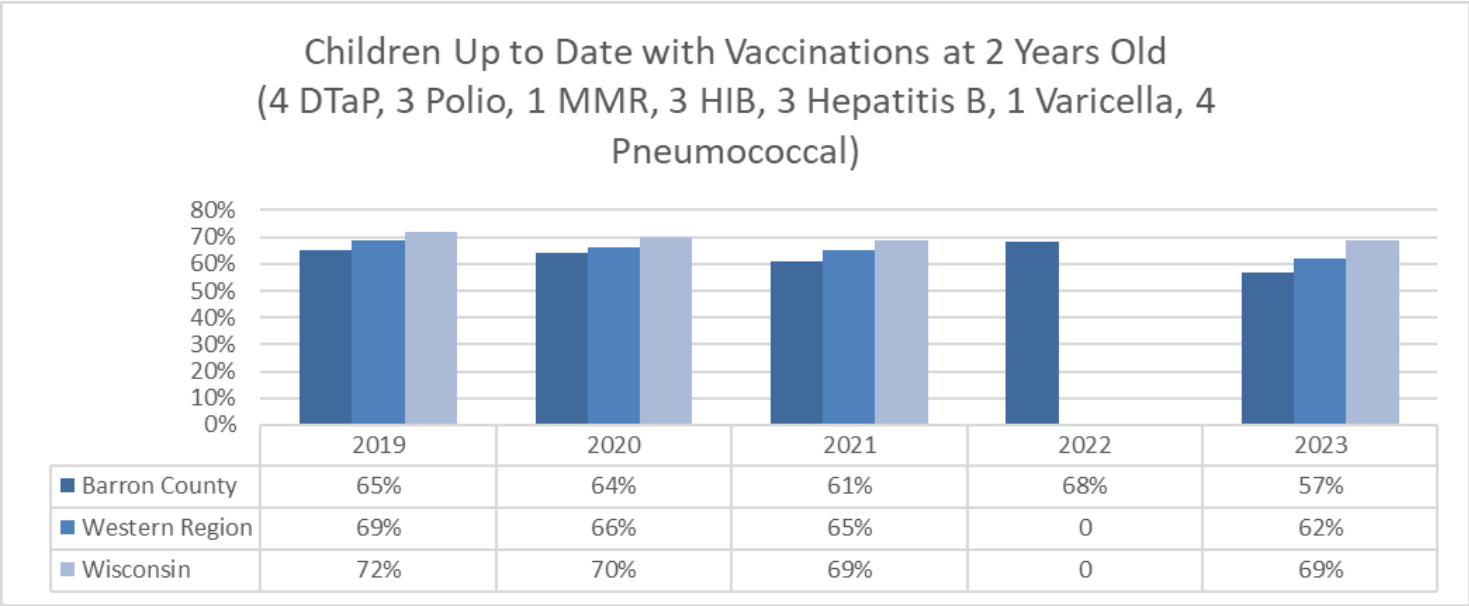
### What we do

We give free immunizations to qualifying children and adults to reduce the spread of disease and protect health.

*\*Public Health currently stocks vaccines for: COVID-19, Diphtheria, Haemophilus influenzae type b (HIB), Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Influenza (Flu), Measles, Meningococcal disease, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Polio, Rotavirus, Rubella, Streptococcus pneumoniae, Tetanus, and Varicella (Chicken Pox).*

### Achievements This Year

- Administered 913 vaccinations in 2023
  - 505 flu
  - 112 COVID-19
  - 296 other childhood vaccinations (MMR, Tdap, polio)
- Held mobile clinics at community events, nursing homes, and the Boys & Girls Club.
- Worked with Barron County Schools to increase accessibility to flu vaccines through school-based clinics.
  - 467 kids were vaccinated
- Sent reminder letters to families with young children monthly and quarterly with information on how and when to get vaccines.



# COMMUNITY HEALTH

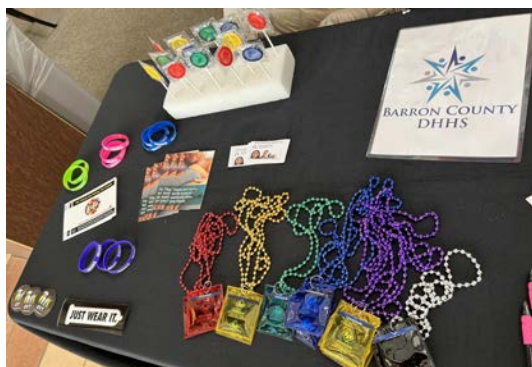
## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

### What we do

We provide family planning services, reproductive health education, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections in an inclusive and stigma free environment.

### Achievements This Year

- Added a part-time nurse practitioner (NP) to our staff in April to expand reproductive health services to include annual exams, clinical breast exams, pap and HPV testing, IUD insertion and removal, expanded STI testing and treatment, urinary tract and yeast infection evaluation and treatment. The NP served 30 people.
- Launched free, at-home, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing kits. LetsGetChecked allows customers to manage their health from home, providing direct access to telehealth services, pharmacy, and laboratory tests with at-home sample collection kits.
- Promoted STI testing and reproductive health services at community events through our, Testing for Tacos program in partnership with the local Taco Johns.
- Condom dispensers were placed in five county taverns in 2023 (7,098 free condoms dispensed). Nearly 10,000 total free condoms were dispensed overall in 2023.
- Four reproductive health presentations were given to students from three Barron County school districts.
- Served a total of 110 men and 171 women through our reproductive health services in 2023.





# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

### What we do

The maternal child health program is focused on a future where all people and families are healthy and thriving. The objectives for Barron County for 2023 were adolescent well-being and health equity and community engagement.

### Achievements This Year

- Youth Mental Health First Aid training provided to Barron County Boys and Girls Club staff.
- Child Death and Suicide Death review teams were re-established. Prevention work from these meetings included safe gun handling and storage education to our county gun shops.
- Raise Your Voice groups were established in our local schools in partnership with our youth and families unit to decrease stigma and increase awareness of youth mental health struggles.
- Community Engagement and Health Equity Surveys were completed and action plans were put into place to be carried out in 2024.

## PRENATAL CARE COORDINATION

### What we do

We provide personal support for pregnant people in the pursuit of healthy pregnancy and birth outcomes. We help clients set and reach goals, connect them with community services and healthcare, and answer questions about nutrition, preparing for childbirth and parenting, child development, and much more.

### Achievements This Year

- Supported 20 families in 2023.
- Seven pack-n-plays and 14 car seats were given out to families to promote safe sleep and prevent injury.
- Began initial conversations about bringing the Nurse-Family Partnership Program to Barron County. This program is an evidence-based home visiting program that promotes healthy pregnancies, child development, and economic self-sufficiency. Nurses provide clients home visits over two and a half years, from pregnancy until the child reaches two years of age.



# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

### What we do

We interview people diagnosed with reportable diseases to gather information about the source of their infection and provide information so they don't spread the disease to others. We also conduct contact tracing to identify others who may have been exposed to make sure they take steps to protect themselves and others.

### Achievements This Year

- Followed up on 3,607 communicable disease reports.
- Gave out over 250 tick kits at local community events.
- Decrease in tick-related illness by almost 50% from 2022.
- Overall decrease in gastrointestinal infections by over 70% in some strains.
- Increase in some sexually transmitted infections. Chlamydia increased by 17 to 106. Syphilis cases increased from 7 to 10. However, Gonorrhea cases decreased from 19 to 12.
  - In response to the increase in syphilis cases, new recommendations for testing during pregnancy were implemented in our reproductive health program. Education was provided to local healthcare partners on the new testing guidance.
- Two commercial farms were infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 2023. Public health monitored 38 people for signs and symptoms for ten days after exposure to the infected birds.

## TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

### What we do

To prevent the spread of TB in the community, we provide TB screening, triage referrals of latent TB infection, conduct sputum collection for people with active and suspect TB disease, provide Directly Observed Therapy (DOT), conduct contact investigations, and administer phlebotomies for TB screening.

### Achievements This Year

- Monitored 64 people with latent tuberculosis in 2023.
  - None were active/able to spread disease.
- To support provider learning and improve care, we had nurses attend the Wisconsin Virtual Tuberculosis Summits as well as training at the Mayo Tuberculosis Center.
- Continued to partner with community groups and businesses to provide TB tests to prevent potential outbreaks and the spread of disease.
- Administered 19 student/pre-employment TB skin tests.

# COMMUNITY HEALTH

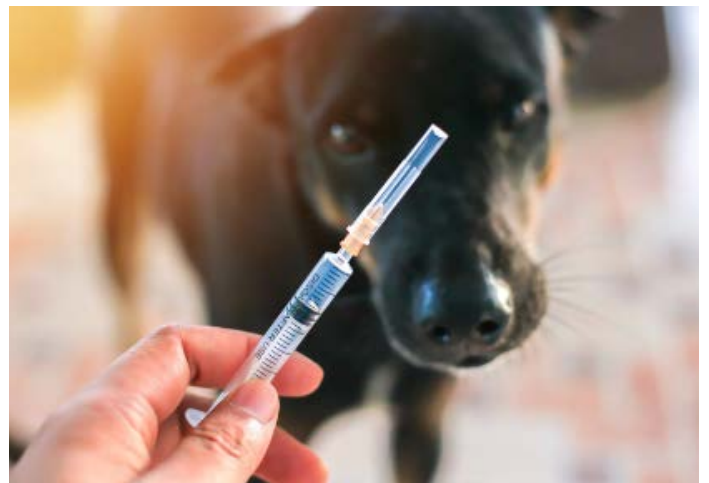
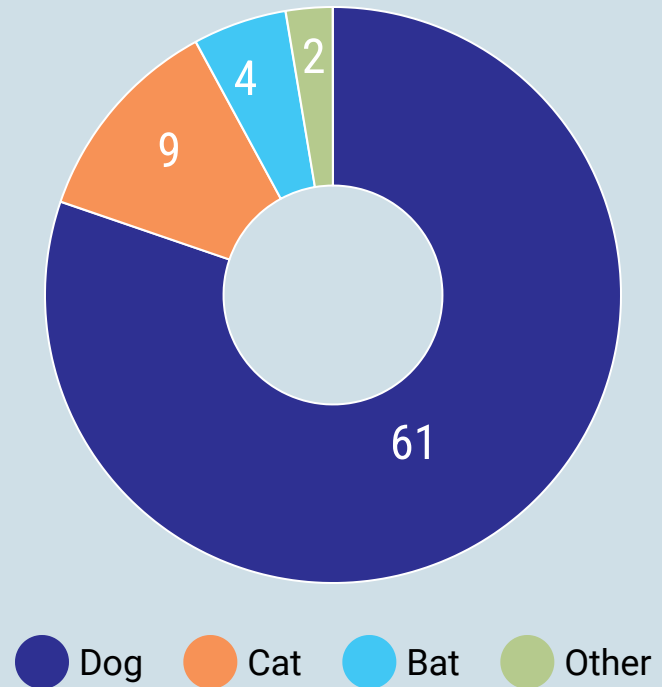
## RABIES

### What we do

Investigation of reported animal bites for possible exposure to rabies is conducted to ensure that serious illness or death from rabies transmission is prevented. This program is designed to coordinate an effective rabies control procedure between Barron County Public Health, local law enforcement, local veterinarians, physicians, and the general public.

### Achievements This Year

- Investigated 77 animal exposures in 2023.
- One bat tested positive for rabies.
  - Press release was sent out with steps for the public to protect themselves from rabies.



# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## WIC (WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN)

### What we do

We work to improve the health of women, infants, and children by providing healthy foods, health information, breastfeeding education and support, and referrals to healthcare.

### Achievements This Year

- Increased caseload from 702 (2022) to 765 in 2023.
- Increase of \$97,736.29 in total WIC dollars spent in Barron County, for a total of \$661,223.37.
- Increase in Farmers' Market Nutrition Program monies spent for a total of \$6,588.
- Additional breastfeeding support was provided through the Peer Counselor program. The counselor is a local mother trained to assist mothers on their breastfeeding journey. The rate of breastfeeding among Barron County WIC participants is well above the state average at over 90% of moms initiating breastfeeding.
- WIC continues to receive the Fit Families grant, which works with 25 families to provide enhanced services to help reduce childhood obesity.

## BIRTH TO 3

### What we do

We offer early intervention programming for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

### Achievements This Year

- Served a total of 169 families in 2023.
- 123 referrals made to the program (44 unreachable after multiple contacts).
- 79 enrolled (12 screened out/not eligible).
- 35 referred to schools for continued services at age 3.





# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION & HARM REDUCTION

### What we do

We work to reduce the impact of substance use and substance use disorders through prevention, harm reduction, and health promotion. We work with coalitions, agencies, communities, and policy makers on alcohol harm reduction, tobacco prevention and control, overdose prevention, and drug harm reduction.

### Achievements This Year

- Gave out 84 boxes of nasal naloxone (Narcan) through the Narcan Direct Program.
- Completed 42 tobacco compliance checks through the WI WINS Program. The checks resulted in six underage sales. Completed a total of 19 WI WINS activities, including general media outreach and general public outreach activities in 2023.
- Partnered with Rice Lake and Barron Schools, Mayo Health System, and Cumberland Healthcare to bring youth smoking and vaping cessation back to Barron County through NOT On Tobacco, an evidence-based smoking and vaping cessation class for youth. Classes will start in the 2024-2025 school year.
- Hosted a workshop with schools and youth-serving organizations where we shared and discussed local youth data and created prevention-focused action plans to support youth mental health in Barron County.
- Partnered with the Sheriff's Department to hold Prime for Life classes. Eighty-seven participants completed the class in 2023. This is an evidence-based program used as an alternative sanction to underage drinking citations. It has demonstrated success in significantly altering attitudes, reducing high-risk drinking and drug use, and reducing recidivism.
- Provided a mobile prescription drug take-back box and education on proper medication disposal at various community events.
- Disposed of 571 pounds of sharps
  - 55 pounds generated from Public Health
  - 516 pounds collected from community members





# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## WATER QUALITY TESTING

### What we do

We perform water quality tests to protect your health and our environment. This includes drinking water tests and pool tests.

### Achievements This Year

- All 165 Transient non-community wells were sampled.
- 48 Sanitary surveys (well inspections) were completed.
- 26 quarterly/monthly bacteria samples were taken.
- 146 annual site visits completed.
- 25 follow-up samples (in response to positive samples).
- Lead in water testing was completed at 16 licensed daycare facilities approved by the state in 2023.
  - 155 total initial samples collected
  - 13 follow up samples collected
  - 3 faucet replacements completed

## LICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS

### What we do

We inspect food, lodging, pool, and body art facilities to make sure they are following the laws and codes that keep us healthy. Licensed establishment field work includes routine inspections, re-inspections, complaint follow up, and foodborne and waterborne illness investigations.

### Achievements This Year

- Completed 893 total inspections including:
  - 510 routine inspections
  - 84 pre-inspections
  - 289 re-inspections/follow-ups
- Six facility complaints investigated.

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## HUMAN HAZARDS

### What we do

We investigate complaints subject to the provision of the County Human Health Hazard ordinance. Goals are to protect the health of the public from illness and disease caused by human health hazards.

### Achievements This Year

- 55 cases were reported, 14 were deemed not to be human health hazards, and 41 were opened for investigation.
- Top complaints were for: mold, housing safety, hoarding, pests/vermin, smell, garbage, sewage, animal feces, drug impacted homes, and a noise complaint

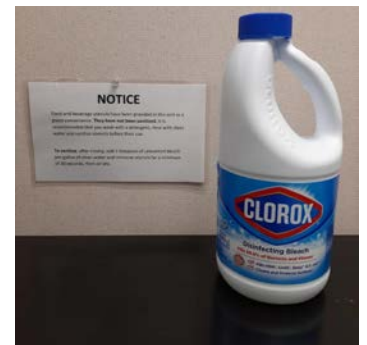
## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### What we do

We work to prevent and reduce risks to our health and the environment from hazards such as radon and lead.

### Achievements This Year

- Radon and water testing kits are available for community members.
  - Water kits- free for pregnant women and children under one.
- Sanitarians checked all three local retailers selling affected applesauce products during lead recall to ensure no recalled products were on the shelf. None were found.
- We partner with local health systems to follow up with families whose children have elevated lead levels. in 2023, we provided education and encouraged follow up testing to 15 families.







# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

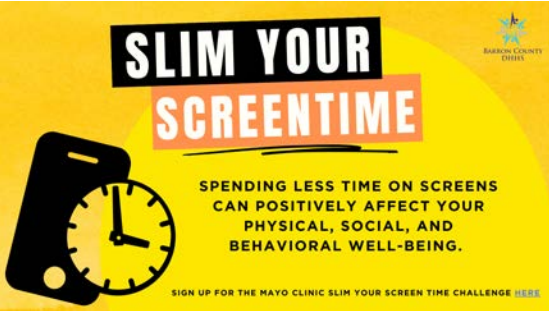
## COMMUNICATIONS

**What we do**

We coordinate communications planning, messaging, and materials for our agency. This includes creating materials, and news releases, answering media questions, managing our social media presence, and coordinating the translation of materials.

**Achievements This Year**

- In 2023, we began the Slim Your Screen Time campaign on social media. The campaign is aimed to promote healthier screen habits, advocates for reduced screen time and increased real-life interactions.
- The WIC program utilized Facebook as a platform to promote healthy nutrition, lifestyles, and breastfeeding support, and provided valuable information for families with young children.
- Kept the community informed about emerging and crucial health-related topics through a multi-channel approach, including press releases, radio ads, and social media messaging. By using various platforms, we aim to reach diverse audiences and empower individuals to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.
- Prioritized accessibility by ensuring that the information we disseminate is comprehensible, keeping our readability levels at or below 9th grade. Additionally, we recognize the importance of language diversity, so we translate essential information into Spanish and Somali to ensure that everyone is informed and included.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

### What we do

We think about community-level health, not just care of individual people. We build relationships with partners and connect people to resources and services. We want community members to have the resources they need to live their healthiest lives.

### Achievements This Year

- Partnered in hosting the first multi-agency resource event in Barron County to address the needs of our neighbors. We helped bring 38 partners together under one roof and served over 100 community members in need with issues like, housing, food, clothing and mental health.
- Attended various health fairs and student health events to educate on reproductive health and other public health services.
- Participated in National Night Out to promote reducing screen time, increasing family togetherness and improving mental health. Giving away games and toys that promoted spending time together to over 300 families.
- Promoted healthy nutrition education at large community events, like National Night Out through the WIC Program.
- Partnered with area health systems, and local enforcement to promote injury prevention at the Barron County Fair. Shared information on fitting and testing life jackets, water safety, bike safety and car seat safety to over 10,000 fairgoers. Through partnerships with the Rice Lake Police Department, Mayo Clinic Health System, Marshfield Medical Center, Cumberland Healthcare and local civic groups and businesses, we were able to give out nearly 100 life jackets and 200 bike helmets to children and adults in Barron County.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## COALITION WORK

### What we do

We sit at the table and collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to plan, prepare and network to best address the needs of our communities and better serve our neighbors while progressing towards a more inclusive and equitable public health system.

### Achievements This Year

- The Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortia is a regional consortium consisting of local public and tribal health agencies. The purpose of the group is to work together to develop local capacity to effectively respond to all types of health emergencies. In 2023, the consortia supported us being trained in Portacount to increase mask fit testing options for our county partners, directed a volunteer reception center exercise that we participated in, and helped us structure a new Public Health Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- Community Connections to Prosperity is a coalition working to create an understanding of how poverty impacts our community. Public Health is an active member of the coalition. In 2023, Public Health helped to place a tiny home and host the first multi-agency resource center.
- The Barron County Community Coalition is a network of businesses, organizations and community members working together to create healthier and safer communities in Barron County. The Coalition works to gather the data, people, and evidence and provides the space and guidance for the community and its stakeholders to work on issues collaboratively. In 2023, Public Health provide resources and staff time to implement coalition objectives.
- The Northwoods Coalition is the largest and oldest network of coalitions dedicated to substance use prevention in Wisconsin. In 2023, we received small project funds to support prevention activities and free training and technical assistance in prevention and coalition building. We have been present at this table for more than 25 years!
- We are apart of the Northwestern Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition is a collaboration of private and public partners working together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Through collaborative planning, training, exercises, and coordination of resources, the coalition leads a regional effort to develop a streamlined response to emergencies.



# HEALTH EQUITY

## MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH GRANT

### What we do

We aim to empower community members to define, describe, and own the changes they want to see in our community. Through a two year grant awarded in 2022, we are working with our Somali community. The goal of the grant is to train and empower community health workers to work with Somali women to connect them to resources to improve the health of their families. The grant also seeks to improve early childhood learning and school readiness.

### Achievements This Year

- Community health workers helped facilitate two in-person events. The first event focused on the importance of play in child development. Held in conjunction with “World Refugee Day” activities, the second event focused on how trauma and mental health affect our well-being.
- After assessment, the Somali community overwhelmingly stated they need certified and licensed childcare providers who speak Somali and follow their traditions. Planning is happening to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate childcare certification classes.

## QUALITATIVE DATA GRANT

### What we do

Through a grant awarded to us by the State, we are working to build qualitative data capacity across the public health system and better understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on health inequities and have developed plans that will address inequities.

### Achievements This Year

- 75 people were interviewed regarding the impacts of COVID on their lives, resulting in 2 emerging themes.
  - An increase in mental health issues in children related to increased screen time and decreased family togetherness.
    - 371 board games and outdoor activities provided to families
  - An increase in food insecurity
    - 423 Healthy Cooking on a Budget cookbooks provided to individuals and families

# PLANNING

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### What we do

We ensure our agency is prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies. We do this through training, exercising, and planning. These emergencies are focused on public health emergencies but also prepare us to take a role in other emergencies that impact the county where a public health presence may be beneficial.

### Achievements This Year

- We are a member of the Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortium (WWPHRC) and the Northwestern Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC). This allows us to benefit from core expertise and preparedness in response to public health threats through standardized, consistent alignment of emergency response plans. In 2023 we participated in:
  - Regional HERC hazard vulnerability assessment and after action reporting
  - Portacount training to increase mask fit testing options for our county partners
  - Meetings to structure a new Public Health Emergency Preparedness Plan that will be used by members
  - WWPHRC volunteer reception center exercise
- We also promoted general preparedness education to the community through social media and outreach events.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESMENT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN

### What we do

We plan and implement a community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP). A CHA is a process to gather data and identify community assets and challenges. Once a CHA is completed, its results are used in a CHIP process to identify priority issues, develop objectives, and drive community action to improve health.

### Achievements This Year

- To aid in the goal of reducing suicide rates in Barron County, we trained 23 people in Youth Mental Health First Aide; an evidence-based program that teaches participants how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges in children and adolescents.
- A goal of the Substance Use Action Team was to expand the current Family Recovery Court (FRC) Program. The FRC was awarded an enhancement grant in October 2023 which allows the program to add a mental health clinician and public health nurse to the Treatment Team and develop an interagency Pregnancy and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) workgroup to explore how to best serve pregnant individuals with SUD.
- To increase healthy food consumption in families with limited incomes, we continued the Farmer's Market Program (allows for use of food share benefits at the market) and made plans for expansion of the program in 2024. Expansion plans include more distribution of nutrition education and recipes to provide families with ideas and tools to prepare/consume the foods from the market.





# OPERATIONS

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### What we do

We work closely with colleges and universities to provide observation and project based learning for nursing, medical and other health profession students. We also prioritize quality professional development by supporting staff in attending various trainings and conferences.

### Achievements This Year

- Hosted 19 students in 2023
  - 16 nursing students
  - 3 non-nursing students (environmental health, health information and Birth to 3 students)
- Actively worked to recruit caregivers in our community through the We Care initiative. A statewide movement to bring awareness and educate community members on the caregiver crisis.
- Our nurses attended 17 conferences and trainings in 2023, including the TB Clinical Intensive Course by Mayo Clinic, Under One Roof preparedness conference, reproductive health conferences and the Keeping Kids Alive conference.
- One of our nurses completed the UW-Madison New to Public Health Residency Program in 2023.
- We now have two certified sanitarians with our second completing her testing and certification in 2023.

## 140 REVIEW

### What we do

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is required to formally review the operations of all Wisconsin Local Health Departments every five years. The review establishes the health department as a level I, II, or III agency. A level I agency meets the minimum requirements and a level III meets the maximum requirements established for local health departments.

### Achievements This Year

- The 140 Review was completed in May of 2023. This review confirmed the health department as a Level II agency, meeting all requirements of a local health department at that level. No gaps were noted in the required services being provided. An opportunity suggested from the review committee was to expand reporting of data to our board, partners, and public. This new approach to the annual report hopes to accomplish that through a format that is more encompassing of what we have accomplished over the year.



# STAY IN TOUCH

## GET IN TOUCH WITH US

### E-mail

health@co.barron.wi.us

### Phone

715-537-5691

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@BarronCountyPublicHealth



## OUR VISION

Everyone living better, longer.

## OUR MISSION

Promoting, protecting, and preserving health through partnerships with people and communities.

## WHO WE ARE

We are your local health department and serve people in more than 36 cities, villages, and towns in Barron County, Wisconsin.



BARRON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



BARRON COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH