



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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 Director/Health Officer, Karla Potts-Shufelt

Medical Advisor, Dr. Richard Sampson MD

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.



Staff

Nursing Staff

Emily Holub
Laura Sauve
Nicole Nelson
Patricia Wickman

Birth to Three

Joyce Pond
Robin Rivard
Stephanie Hinrichs

Environmental Health

Mackenzie Benda
Rachel Henke

Public Health Specialist

Sarah Turner

Administrative Staff

Angela Vroman
Brownie Nelson
Pam Gannon

Women, Infant, & Children (WIC)

Nicole Thompson
Rhonda Siefert
Mariah Munger - Lactation Peer Educator

Community Health Worker

Isaak Mohammed
Nasra Xashi



COMMUNITY HEALTH

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT (CHA)

What we do

Every 3 years Barron County Public Health leads a county-wide community health assessment. The goal is to engage the community and review data to understand the most pressing health needs for our county.



Achievements This Year

- In April the Steering Committee began meeting to plan the CHA.
- In June the CHA survey was finalized focusing on including the Social Determinants of Health into the survey which was new for Barron County.
- The Survey was conducted July-September with more than 1100 county members completing the survey.
- A Community Conversation was held in October with more than 40 community partners attending to discuss the survey results and identify the priorities.
- The Steering Committee met in October to discuss the Community Conversation results and set the priorities for the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for 2025-2027.
- The CHIP priorities for Barron County are Mental Health, Substance Use, and Access to Healthcare.
- Focus Groups to dive deeper into barriers and solutions will be held in February of 2025.

Mental Health

Includes:

- Mental health
- Access to mental healthcare providers
- Suicide prevention



Substance Use

Includes:

- Alcohol use and misuse
- Prescription drug use and misuse
- Illegal drug use and misuse



Access to Care

Includes:

- Access to health services
- Access to specialty care services
- Access to providers





COMMUNITY HEALTH

IMMUNIZATIONS

What we do

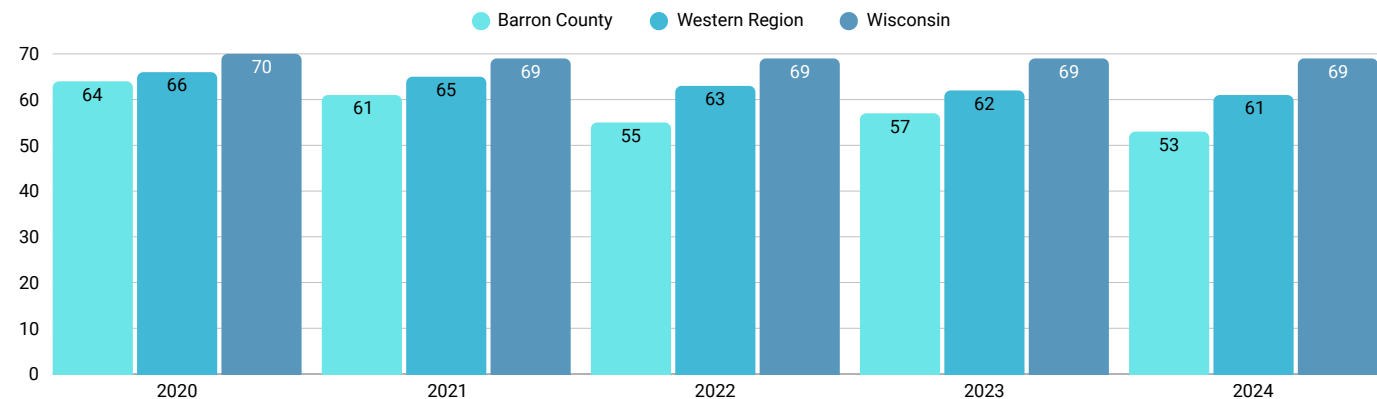
We give free immunizations to qualifying children and adults to reduce the spread of disease and protect health.

**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

- 744 childhood immunizations were given.
- 116 immunizations were given to uninsured or underinsured adults.
- Offered influenza vaccine clinics at Barron County Schools to increase accessibility. 444 children were vaccinated at these clinics.
- Sent reminder letters to families with young children monthly and quarterly to increase vaccine uptake.
- Provided informational letters to schools to send out to parents related to vaccine-preventable diseases occurring at the schools.

Children up to date with vaccinations at 2 years old
(4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 HIB, 3 Hepatitis B, 1 Varicella, 4 Pneumococcal)



COMMUNITY HEALTH

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

What we do

We provide family planning services, reproductive health education, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections in a safe, judgement-free environment.



Achievements This Year

- Promoted STI testing and reproductive health services at community events such as the Valentine's event at UWECBC, the Health Fair at Northwood Tech and the Multi-Agency Resource Events.
- The condom dispenser program continues to be successful with 6000 condoms dispensed in local taverns and 8200 overall through public health.
- 7 reproductive health presentations were given to students from five Barron County school districts.
- Provided care for 153 women and 57 men. 57 clients were tested for STIs at the jail.
- We continue to have a Nurse Practitioner come monthly to see clients for advanced care, seeing 33 clients in 2024.



BIRTH TO 3

What we do

The Birth to 3 Program is an early intervention special education program. It helps children under the age of 3 who have delays or disabilities. "Early intervention" is the term used for the services and supports for babies and young children and their families.

Achievements This Year

- 183 families were provided services in 2024.
- 114 referrals were made to the program.
- 87 children were enrolled, 27 families declined or were unable to be reached, and 17 screened out or were not eligible.
- 27 children were referred to schools for continued services at age 3.

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 objective for Barron County for 2024 was adolescent well-being.

Achievements This Year

- Child Death and Suicide Death review teams met regularly and completed all death reviews for 2024. Prevention work from these meetings included safe gun handling and storage education to our county gun shops with handouts for customers.
- Our Sleep Baby Safe Program was started in response to prevention ideas during a Child Death Review. 50 families were provided education about safe sleep, each receiving a book and sleep sack. 16 pack-n-plays were provided to families who did not have a safe place for their infant to sleep.
- The NOT on Tobacco Program was kicked off with our first group of students participating in the program.
- Raise Your Voice groups continue to be established in our local schools in partnership with our youth and families unit to decrease stigma and increase awareness of youth mental health struggles.

NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AND 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

- We became a member of the Western Wisconsin Nurse Family Partnership Consortium and trained one public health nurse in the Nurse Family Partnership Home Visiting Program. This program educates and supports moms and their babies until 2 years of age. Our first new mom was enrolled in November, with 4 total enrolled in 2024.
- 33 women received care through our PNCC program.
- 6 newborns were referred for home visits. 3 requested phone visits and were referred for other services and 2 received a home visit including weights, vital signs, and education.

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

- Public Health nurses followed up on 1,208 communicable disease reports.
- We saw a decrease in sexually transmitted infections. There were 80 Chlamydia cases down from 106 in 2023, 10 Gonorrhea cases down from 12 and we had no syphilis cases (10 in 2023).
- Two commercial farms were infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 2024. Public health monitored exposed workers for signs and symptoms for ten days after exposure to the infected birds. Two symptomatic workers were tested through the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. One was positive for HPAI and was treated. Public Health worked closely with WI DHS and the CDC. This was the first confirmed human case in Wisconsin.
- Closely monitored the measles outbreak and prepared for a case in Barron County. There were no Barron County cases in 2024.
- Monitored our regional situation and prepared for pertussis cases. There were 9 confirmed cases in Barron County in 2024.

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), and conduct contact investigations.

Achievements This Year

- Monitored 29 people who have tuberculosis
 - 27 with latent TB
 - 2 with Active TB, 1 with multi-drug resistant who remained on isolation in 2024
- Continue to partner with community groups and businesses to provide TB tests to prevent potential outbreaks and the spread of disease.
- We administered 33 TB skin test screenings to students and for pre-employment purposes.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

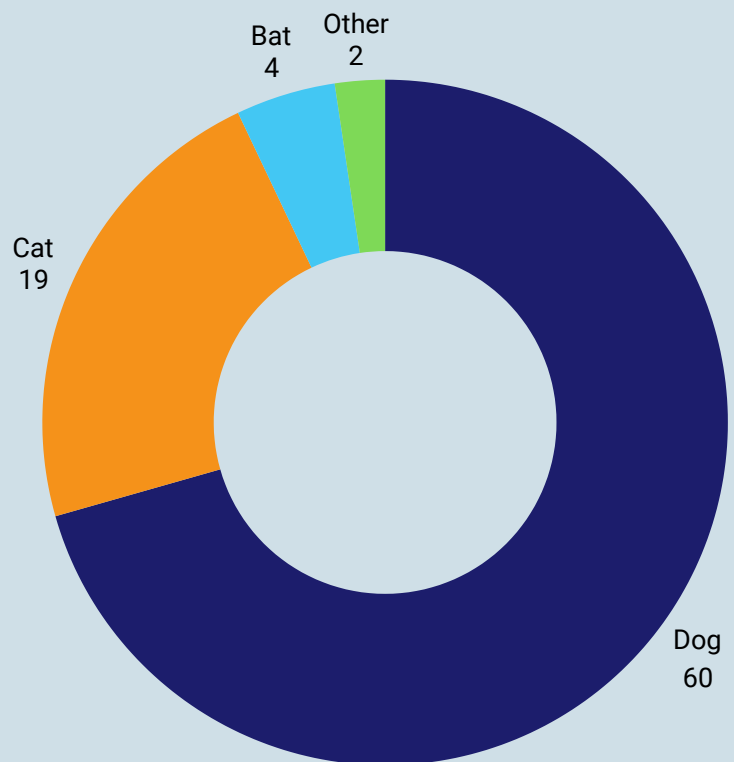
RABIES

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 85 animal exposures in 2024.
- Other animals included a potbelly pig and a raccoon.
- Education to the community regarding keeping pets vaccinated for rabies.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

WIC (Women, Infants & Children)

What we do

The WIC Program offers nutrition education, breastfeeding support, supplemental nutritious foods, and referrals to additional community services for pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as infants and children under the age of 5.

Achievements This Year

- The 2024 caseload was 899 participants, up from 765 in 2023. There has been a 28% increase since 2022.
- In 2024, total WIC spending at stores in Barron County saw a significant increase of \$102,431.48, bringing the total WIC dollars spent in the county to \$763,654.85.
- Additional breastfeeding support was provided through the Peer Counselor program. The breastfeeding peer counselor is a mother from the community with personal breastfeeding experience, making her relatable to other breastfeeding mothers. She is trained to offer ongoing education and support throughout their breastfeeding journey. The rate of breastfeeding among Barron County WIC participants is well above the state average at over 80% of moms initiating breastfeeding.
- WIC continues to support families by providing additional funds for purchasing fresh, locally grown produce at local farmers' markets each summer through the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). In 2024, there was an increase in FMNP spending, totaling \$9,376.
- WIC participates in the Fit Families grant, which supports 15 families by offering enhanced services to help reduce childhood obesity.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

INJURY PREVENTION

What we do

We use data and evidence-based programs to improve the health of our community by leading injury prevention efforts.

Achievements This Year

- We worked with the ADRC to expand the Stepping On Program in Barron County. Wisconsin leads the nation in injury and death due to falls in our aging population. Following COVID instructors had been difficult to find and there was a need to increase the number of classes offered.
- We collaborated with our local healthcare organizations to increase the instructor base as well as had two public health nurses trained as instructors.
- Our public health nurses were also willing to do in-home assessments for participants to help find any fall or trip hazards and make suggestions on interventions.
- Public Health nurses facilitated 2 classes in 2024 and did 9 home visits.
- 13 car seats were given out to families who did not have a car seat to safely transport their child. We continue to have a certified car seat technician on staff to provide car seat checks as well.



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

- Provided training on overdose reversal at large employers and polling places. Gave out 243 boxes of nasal naloxone (Narcan) through the Narcan Direct Program.
- Placed 23 Nalox Boxes in schools and businesses throughout Barron County. Nalox boxes are clear plastic boxes that are mounted to a wall and contain naloxone nasal spray, gloves, a CPR breathing mask and instructions on administering the medication and rescue breaths.
- Completed 32 tobacco compliance checks through the WI WINS Program. The checks resulted in one sale to the underage youth. Sixteen WI WINS activities, including media and public outreach were completed in 2024.
- One nursing staff member, a respiratory therapist with Mayo Clinic Health System, and one community member were trained as Not On Tobacco facilitators. NOT on Tobacco is a program through the American Lung Association that is intended to help youth aged 14-19 years of age quit tobacco and break free from nicotine dependence. One of our nursing staff will start the first session in January 2025
- Provided a mobile prescription drug take-back box and education on proper medication disposal at various community events.
- Disposed of 582 pounds of sharps
 - 30 pounds generated from Public Health
 - 552 pounds collected from community members
- In late 2024, we were awarded an Overdose Fatality Review Grant through the Medical College of Wisconsin. This grant allows us to put together a team to review fatal overdoses and look for strategies to prevent further overdose deaths.





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.
- 44 Sanitary surveys (well inspections) were completed.
- 47 quarterly/monthly bacteria and nitrate samples were taken.
- 104 annual site visits completed.
- 9 Level 2 inspections were completed due to positive water samples.

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

- 736 permitted facilities in 2024, this included 77 new businesses. There has been a 32% increase in licensed facilities since 2017.
- 833 total inspections completed.
- 409 routine inspections.
- 97 pre-inspections.
- 327 re-inspections and follow-ups.
- 3 jail inspections were completed and 21 facility complaints were 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

- 25 cases were referred for:
 - Smell/Garbage: 4
 - Mold/water: 6
 - Hoarding: 2
 - Excessive Animals: 3
 - Vector/Rodent: 7
 - Structural: 1
 - Sewage: 1
- 14 were opened for investigation. 11 did not meet criteria and were referred to other resources, educated on remediation, or actions were already underway by landlords to remediate.

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- the Wisconsin Well Testing Access Program was expanded in 2024 to include free testing for pregnant women, children under 12 and people with weakened immune systems.
- Follow-up on recreational water exposure to harmful algae bloom causing illness.
- Public Health provided follow-up to 7 families whose children had elevated lead levels in 2024.
 - Education was provided to all families and 4 agreed to home visits.





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. This campaign continued throughout 2024.
- The WIC program utilized Facebook as a platform to promote healthy nutrition, lifestyles, and breastfeeding support, and provided valuable information for young families.
- Kept the community informed about 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 to all community members, regardless of their literacy level. 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.

QAADO TALLAALKA HARGABKA

Wax kharash ah tallaalka hargabka lama hayo

Haddii aad qabto wax su'aalo ah oo ku saabsan tallaalka ama cidda u qalanta tallaalka bilaashka ah, fadlan la xiriir Caafimaadka Dadweynaha ee Degmada Barron.

715-537-6169 extension 6442
health@cs.barron.wi.us

OKTOOBAR 21

Rice Lake Public Library
2 E. Marshall Street
2 PM to 6 PM

Dadkani waxay awoodaan inay helaan tallaalka bilaash ah

▶ Imo kasta oo jira 6 bilood ilaa 18 sano (iyaddoon loo eegin caymis)

▶ Dadka qaangaarka ah ee d'i doodu lahay 19 ama ka weyn oo aan lahayn caymis ama aan lahayn caymis.

SLIM YOUR SCREENTIME

SPENDING LESS TIME ON SCREENS CAN POSITIVELY AFFECT YOUR PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND BEHAVIORAL WELL-BEING.

SIGN UP FOR THE MAYO CLINIC SLIM YOUR SCREEN TIME CHALLENGE [HERE](#)

Ask WIC about benefits for buying fruits and veggies at local farmers' markets.

WIC WISCONSIN

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services
Division of Public Health
PO Box 29000
Madison, WI 53729-0000

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

- Attended our area co-op event with over 500 attendees to promote healthy aging.
- Attended various health and safety fairs and student health events to educate on reproductive health and other public health services.
- Provided information on extreme heat, carbon monoxide, and Narcan to over 300 employees through health fairs at two large employers in Barron County.
- Participated in National Night Out to promote safe sleep.
- Partnered with area health systems and local law enforcement to promote injury prevention at the Barron County Fair. We were able to give out over 250 gunlocks and through a partnership with the Regional Trauma Advisory Council, more than 250 children were fitted for and given free bike helmets. In addition, information on the following topics was shared with over 10,000 fairgoers.
 - sun health
 - car seat safety
 - safe sleep
 - bike safety
 - firearm safety
 - CPR
 - tobacco cessation
 - underage substance use prevention
 - Narcan



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

What we do

We sit at the table and collaborate with local, regional, state partners to address the needs of our communities and better serve our neighbors.

Achievements This Year

- The Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortia is a regional consortium consisting of 21 local public health agencies and 2 tribal health agencies. The purpose of the consortia is to help members develop local capacity to effectively respond to all types of health emergencies, including bioterrorism, infectious disease outbreaks, and natural disasters. Barron County completed a new PHEP in 2024 using the consortium template.
- 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 2024, Public Health helped with the following initiatives: Hosting 3 multi-agency resource events serving over 400 people in need and partnering with a local church to launch, Loads of Love, free laundry program. From September- December, 28 loads of free laundry were given to those in need.
- 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 2024, Public Health assisted the coalition in aligning its goals and objectives with the Community Health Assessment and provided 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 2024, we received small project funding to support prevention activities and free training and technical assistance in prevention and coalition building. Our department has been at the table for 30 years!
- 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. The coalition evaluates and attempts to eliminate gaps by providing training and exercises, regional equipment purchases, and opportunities for collaboration. In 2024 they helped provide funding for trainings for staff and for our partners to become Stepping On Facilitators.



HEALTH FOR ALL

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

- During the assessment process in 2022, the Somali community overwhelmingly stated they need certified and licensed childcare providers who speak Somali and follow their traditions. Public Health worked with Northwest Connection Family Resources to conduct a childcare certification class for the Somali Community. 14 women began the process and 8 women completed the class with all requirements to be eligible to become certified childcare providers.

(This project was funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health)

PLAIN CLOTHES COMMUNITY OUTREACH

What we do

We aim to focus on understanding their unique needs and values while respecting their traditions and beliefs so that we can create positive change to promote health outcomes in their communities.

Achievements This Year

- A quarterly newsletter was sent containing information about all of the programs offered as well as any health topics that may be at the forefront.
- Vision and hearing screenings were provided at several Mennonite schools.
- Connections were built with community midwives and transportation was provided to quarterly birth attendant meetings held in Tomah. These are coordinated by the Center for Special Children at the La Farge Medical Clinic.

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.

Barron County is a member of the Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortium (WWPHRC). This allows us to benefit from core expertise and preparedness in response to public health threats through standardized, consistent alignment of emergency response plans.

Achievements This Year

- Participated in the Regional Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC) hazard vulnerability analysis (HVA) and after-action report (AAR).
- Barron County Public Health staff provided influenza vaccine to children during school and community-based immunization clinics. This functional exercise tested Barron County's Mass Clinic Plan and Point of Dispensing procedures. This exercise served seven school districts and the Rice Lake community through the public library event.
- Participated in the WWPHRC and HERC Regional Exercise in January and led the process of engaging county partners to participate in the exercise to determine local processes and gaps. We had participants from 11 different organizations in Barron County.
- Promoted general preparedness education to the community through social media and outreach events.





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 in our staff by providing support to attend various trainings and conferences.



Achievements This Year

- Hosted 21 students in 2024 to help promote public health careers. 19 nursing students, 1 education student in Birth to 3 and 1 student for a shadow day with our Speech Therapist.
- 12 public health staff were certified or re-certified in CPR.
- Continued work with the We Care Initiative to recruit caregivers in our communities. Our public health nurse participated in 4 county parades to promote this initiative.
- Our public health nurses were able to attend 11 conferences or offsite trainings in 2024. Some of these included the state immunization conference, Red Cross Shelter Training, and the Nurse Family Partnership Training.
- Birth to 3 staff attended Ther Connecting for Kids Conference, trainings on evaluation in a natural environment, authentic ongoing assessment and bi-monthly community of practice meetings.
- Environmental Health Sanitarians attended the Annual WEHA conference and the quarterly WALHDAB EH and WREN meetings. They also completed an annual training day with DNR.
- WIC dietitians attended training on Food Allergies, Breastfeeding (including exclusive pumping), Fit Families, and one was able to attend the WIC Celebrating 50 years Conference.



STAY IN TOUCH

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

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publichealth@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
PUBLIC HEALTH