



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Ashland County Health Department

2022 Annual Report

From the Health Commissioner...

As I reflect on 2022, I do so with the knowledge that the United States plans to end the public health emergency for COVID on May 11, 2023. I am ready, our community is ready, and our nation is ready. However, our work is far from done. The role of public health is to prevent people from getting sick or injured in the first place. We also promote wellness by encouraging healthy behaviors. Our team is committed to these public health principals while still managing the continued COVID threat. In fact, if the current COVID death rate for Americans continues at roughly 500 a day, COVID will be the fourth leading cause of U.S. deaths in 2023 - about triple the threat of influenza. (Source: Your Local Epidemiologist, 2/2/23)

To reinforce our commitment to public health practices, we have adopted the national public health symbol as our logo. The three-pointed shield and stylized plus symbol illustrate what the tag line conveys: prevention, promotion and protection. These icons have universal recognition associated with health, with protection, and with growth. The three-point symmetry reinforces the three core functions of public health. Prevent-Promote-Protect is a phrase that embraces everything that public health accomplishes.

We look forward to serving our community in our new building which will be located at 1211 Claremont Avenue. We anticipate moving this summer or early fall. Until then, you can find us at our current location next to the Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center on State Route 60.



Vickie Taylor

Leadership Team

Health Commissioner
Vickie Taylor, BS, MDiv, MA

Environmental Health
Director
Pat Donaldson, BS, RS

Director of Nursing
Chris Bivens, RN, BSN

Preparedness
& Prevention Director
Jill Hartson

Business Manager
Jenny Helbert

Vital Statistics Registrar
Lauren Jeffery

PHEP Coordinator
Laura Cerrito



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Ashland County Health Department

The Board of Health

The Board of Health meets monthly at 7 p.m. at the Ashland County Health Department offices. Meetings are open to the public and the agenda includes opportunity for public comment. Please visit www.ashlandhealth.com for meeting dates.

Accreditation Update

ACHD is seeking accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Accreditation involves the "measurement of health department performance against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused, and evidence-based standards." In 2022, ACHD submitted over 200 documents as a metric to demonstrate PHAB accreditation standards. PHAB representatives will conduct a Site Visit in 2023 to complete the review.



The District Advisory Council

The Ashland County Health Department serves the townships, villages and contract cities of the county. The mayor of each of the villages, the president of the Ashland County Board of Commissioners, and the chairperson of each township's board of trustees are the designated members of the District Advisory Council. By law, they are required to meet annually in March. Their statutory powers and duties include selecting board of health members and considering special reports from the board of health. They also make recommendations to improve public health throughout the county.

Board of Health

David Tomchak, M.D.
President

Ronald Puglisi
President Pro-tem

Rebecca Cawrse, DVM
Board Member

Krystal Reynolds
Board Member

Doug Campbell
Board Member



District Advisory Officers

Robin Beasley, Chairperson
Hayesville Council

Deb Wertz, Secretary
Milton Council



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Ashland County Health Department

Vital Statistics maintains records of all births and deaths in Ashland County. ACHD can provide certified birth certificates for anyone born in Ohio. Death certificates can only be purchased in the county where the person was pronounced deceased.

Births 2022*

310 births
262 births delivered by a physician
48 births delivered by a midwife
159 males
151 females

Deaths 2022*

4,084 death certificates sold
246 male deaths
264 female deaths
8 childhood fatalities

Leading causes of death

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Alzheimer's Disease
4. COVID-19
5. Chronic Respiratory Disease

Genealogy

ACHD holds records from 1908 - present. Birth records from 1949-2005 are not public records as these certificates contain medical information. Please call our office at 419-282-4231 to learn more.

**2022 data are not finalized and may change. These data were provided by the Ohio Department of Health. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for any analyses, interpretations or conclusions.*

Public health nursing is the practice of promoting and protecting the health of populations using knowledge from nursing, social, and public health sciences.

Ashland County Health Department serves as a Project DAWN site for distribution of naloxone (brand name Narcan) and training. DAWN stands for Deaths Avoided with Naloxone and is named in loving memory of Leslie Dawn Cooper who struggled with substance use disorder for many years before dying from a witnessed opioid overdose on October 3, 2009.

Narcan is administered to rapidly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, which can prevent the loss of life. Without Narcan, two Ashland County deputies may not have survived an exposure to fentanyl. The deputies began to experience symptoms of an overdose after being exposed to the potent drug when booking an inmate in April 2022.

Narcan is available to the public, free of charge. If you feel you could benefit from having Narcan available in case of an emergency, **contact us at 419-282-4231**, the Ashland County Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ACCADA), Appleseed Community Mental Health Center, or any pharmacy.

Children With Medical Handicaps



CMH is a state-administered program that links families of children with special health care needs to a network of quality providers and helps families obtain payments for services their child needs. CMH includes three programs - diagnostic, treatment and service coordination. **Call our CMH nurses at 419-282-4231** for more information or links to community services. We work with our community partners for donations of formula, diapers, and other childcare items that our CMH clients often need but struggle to afford.

At a GLANCE

Public Health Nursing

Staff

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| COVID-19 Vaccines Given 1,301 | Flu (Influenza) Vaccines Given 231 | Children with Medical Handicap (CMH) Services 4,754 | Chris Bivens, Director Laurie McFarlin, PHN Jean Neel, PHN Gary Gallion, PHN/CMH Ashley Williams, CMH Andrea Ellison, Clerk Trish Burgett, Clerk |
| TB Tests Conducted 95 | Immunizations Given 2,162 | Narcan Doses Dispensed 109 | |

Environmental health serves to protect human health through inspection and enforcement of regulations at food facilities, public swimming pools/spas, campground/RV parks, manufactured home parks, beaches, and tattoo/body piercing establishments.

ACHD's **Food Protection Program** prevents the transmission of foodborne illness from items purchased at food service operations, temporary and mobile food services, vending locations, and retail food establishments. This is done through licensing, regular inspections, and education. Further, the Board of Health enforces food safety rules and laws as written in the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code.

As part of the Food Protection Program, all new or altered facilities serving or selling food or beverages in Ashland County must submit a **Plan Review** before a license is issued. The review process ensures the facility can meet the requirements, is properly equipped, and can sustain long-term maintenance for optimum food and consumer protection. The number of Plan Reviews that have been submitted to the health department have increased substantially the last few years. As Ashland grows, the responsibilities of ACHD's Food Protection Program grow as well!

Protecting you at play!

The waterpark at the Ashland Kroc Center is the largest licensed public pool in Ashland County. Environmental health staff at ACHD inspect the waterpark twice a year. It's been a great opportunity for staff to learn about a large system, as the waterpark features 5 pumps and a massive turnover of 97,000 gallons of water. The waterpark inspections take longer than the average inspection due to the number of water features.



STAFF

Pat Donaldson, Director, REHS * Anna Fisher, Clerk
Tom Cassell, REHS * Laura Studeviant, REHS
Jacob Bellamy, REHS-IT * Daniel Trolli, REHS-IT
Mandy Bragg, contracted mosquito program technician

At a Glance

Sewage Program

106 Site Reviews * 73 permits issued * 3 permit-to-alter issued
* 230 household sewage inspections * 615 consultations

Water Program

57 permit to install/seal issued * 1 permit-to-alter issued * 78 total inspections * 177 consultations * 112 water samples collected

Food Protection Program

398 licenses issued * 631 inspections * 467 consultations * 54 plan reviews

Other EH services

46 animal bites reported, 48 animal bite consults, 8 rabies specimens sent
*16 camp/campground inspections, 17 consults
*56 pools/spa inspections, 41 consults
*4 school inspections, 3 consults;
*6 tattoo facility inspections, 12 consults
*13 manufactured home park inspections, 4 consults
*55 public health nuisance complaints, 129 consults

Preparedness and Prevention is a division unique to the Ashland County Health Department. Created in 2022, the division combines the important work of epidemiology, emergency preparedness, and health education.

ACHD's **Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)** program is federally funded through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Through PHEP, we build and strengthen our ability to effectively respond to a range of public health threats, including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological events.

In 2022, local PHEP activities included staff trainings, communication system drills, and the development of the Continuity of Operations plan, the Environmental Health Response plan, and the Medical Countermeasure / Medical Material Management plan.

2022 marks the 20th anniversary of the PHEP program and the national **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)**, a network of more than 300,000 volunteers. The MRC was formed after the September 11th terrorist attacks highlighted a clear need for trained medical and public health professional volunteers. Today, Ashland County's MRC Unit consists of 46 dedicated individuals, many having helped throughout the pandemic to improve the health and safety of our community. In 2022, ACHD deployed 27 MRC volunteers for 16 events, tallying more than 89 hours in support of health department functions.

PHEP focuses on 6 main areas of preparedness to address issues that affect the public's health

- Community Resilience (preparing for & recovering from emergencies)
- Incident Management (coordinating an effective response)
- Information Management (providing information for action)
- Countermeasures and Mitigation (getting medicine and supplies where they are needed)
- Surge Management (expanding medical services to handle large events)
- Biosurveillance (investigating and identifying health threats)



In 2022, planning began for the 2024 total solar eclipse. Because Ashland is within the totality path, we could experience a surge of twice our population. What does that mean for our residents, business owners, schools and visitors? This is the PHEP program in action! Together with EMA, city and county officials, police, fire/EMS, the Red Cross, and others, we will be prepared!

Epidemiology is the method used to find the causes of health outcomes and diseases in populations. It investigates how public health is affected by environmental exposures, infectious diseases, injuries, non-infectious diseases, natural disasters and terrorism.

Epidemiologists are like detectives, but instead of looking for the criminal, they look for viruses, environmental situations, or other factors that cause illness and death. Public cooperation in an epidemiological investigation is just as important as it is for a criminal investigation. Information helps epidemiologists identify the cause of illness, recommend nonpharmaceutical interventions, and implement medical countermeasures. Epidemiologists work closely with public health nurses and environmental health staff to prevent and stop communicable disease outbreaks and foodborne illness outbreaks.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, COVID-19 has been the predominant communicable disease impacting Ashland County. However, the true burden of COVID-19 is unknown due to underreporting and periodic testing limitations.

Experts anticipate COVID-19 will eventually become a seasonal disease, especially as the emergence of new variants slows. In 2022, there were 5,283 reported COVID-19 cases in Ashland County, down from 6,339 in 2021. Thirty-eight percent of those cases occurred in January 2022 alone, with another 30% of the cases reported between July, August and September. Ashland County COVID-19 trends for 2022 followed that of the state and nation. January's high numbers account for the post-holiday Omicron surge. The surge in the summer is attributed to Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, with a natural bump in August when schools resume.

Preparedness & Prevention Staff

Jill Hartson, Director
Laura Cerrito, PHEP Coordinator
Jenna Gerwig, Epidemiologist, PHN

Ashland County's most reported cases include **COVID-19; sexually transmitted infections (STIs); influenza hospitalizations; hepatitis; foodborne illnesses** (salmonella and campylobacter); and **vector-borne illnesses** (Lyme disease).

These are typically the most common cases every year. However, COVID-19 has caused an anomaly with the influenza hospitalizations the last few years. In 2022, it was slightly higher than normal with 54, but in 2021, it deviated greatly with no reported influenza hospitalizations. However, overall influenza hospitalizations were down nationwide in 2021 and 2020. Since influenza and COVID-19 are both airborne diseases, the precautions that were taken to prevent the spread and severity of COVID-19 also reduced the spread and severity of influenza.

You can protect yourself and others from any disease by *washing your hands, staying home when you are ill, getting vaccinated, safely storing and handling food, wearing insect repellent and checking for ticks, and practicing safe sex.*

Finances

Ashland County Health Department finances as of December 31, 2022

| Fund | Revenue | Expenses | Fund Balance |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| General | \$1,195,384.15 | \$1,682,147.54* | \$1,103,885.94 |
| PHEP Grant | \$117,982.78 | \$74,594.40 | \$167,645.79 |
| Workforce Grant | \$170,026.73 | \$107,862.75 | \$62,163.98 |
| Food Program | \$168,800.73 | \$100,637.96 | \$223,899.28 |
| Care's Act Grant | \$587,884.14 | \$212,758.06 | \$554,554.91 |

**Expenses include a \$500,000 transfer to the Care's Act Grant*



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Ashland County Health Department

419-282-4231

After Hours Emergency 419-685-6395

1763 State Route 60, Ashland, Ohio 44805

Like us on Facebook!

Administration Staff

Vickie Taylor
Health Commissioner

Lauren Jeffery, Vital Statistics
Registrar / Executive Secretary
Jen Bosnak, Deputy Registrar

Jenny Helbert, Business Manager
Grace Ward, Student Intern

Submit a Comment/Question at www.ashlandhealth.com