

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2025



## *We're Nationally Accredited!*

In March, we were awarded national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) for our commitment to adopting national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement.



Front: Dr. Oberhauser, Dr. Cawrse, Mrs. Barr  
Back: Dr. Furness, Mr. Puglisi

## *Board of Health*

Mrs. Janet Barr  
Mr. Doug Campbell  
Dr. Rebecca Cawrse, DVM  
Dr. Patrick Furness, MD  
Mr. Ron Puglisi

Medical Director:  
Dr. Megan Oberhauser, DO

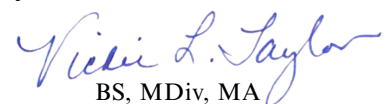


We strive to promote optimal health for individuals and families of the Ashland County, Ohio community through public health education, prevention of disease and injury, and response to public health challenges.

## *Message from the Health Commissioner...*

We are pleased to present our 2025 Annual Report, which highlights the efforts of our dedicated public health professionals. Earning national accreditation in 2025 further affirmed our commitment to the well-being of our community. We also conducted a Community Health Assessment to identify Ashland's most pressing health needs. Additionally, the State changed multiple shared platforms in 2025, including a new vital records system that gives us the ability to issue certified death certificates for any Ohio county.

2025 also brought challenges, as the Care's Act Grant was unexpectedly eliminated. And we are navigating emerging public health risks driven by efforts to challenge long-standing scientific evidence on vaccine efficacy and safety. If you are looking for resources that focus on evidence-based information, read our "Trustworthy Science Online" blog at [ashlandhealth.com](http://ashlandhealth.com), and talk to your doctor!

  
BS, MDiv, MA



**Ashland County**

# BIRTH & DEATH

## 2025 STATISTICS\*

### 584 Births

68 home births delivered in Ashland County

516 delivered in another county (primarily Wayne and Richland Counties)

- 303 males
- 281 females

### 581 Deaths

280 males

- 1 child fatality

301 females

- 2 child fatalities

### Leading Cause of Death

1. Acute Respiratory Failure
2. Cardiac Arrest
3. Alzheimer's Disease
4. Congestive Heart Failure
5. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease



## SteppingOn

Congratulations to our first Stepping On graduates! Stepping On is a 7-week falls prevention program that we offer at the health department. A special thank you to our Stepping On guest presenters: physical therapist Truly Moore, pharmacist Stephanie Lane, and fire chief Doug Campbell. We'd also like to thank nurse Wendy Gunder from OhioHealth for helping us facilitate our first Stepping On workshop.

\*2025 data are not finalized and may change. These data were provided by the Ohio Department of Health. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for analyses, interpretations, or conclusions.



**CERTIFIED**

**Ashland County Health Department provides same day certified birth and death certificate copies for all Ohio counties. Please call 419-282-4231 for more information.**

## Falls can be prevented!

The Preparedness and Prevention Division at ACHD runs a falls prevention program to help older adults live independently for as long as possible. We teach two award-winning workshops, Stepping On and Matter of Balance, to help individuals improve balance, flexibility and strength. We also offer Tai Chi and Chair Tai Chi classes throughout the year.

In 2025 we coordinated our first Falls Prevention Awareness Day at Freer Field to encourage movement, especially as we age. The event featured Chair Yoga and Tai Chi demonstrations, along with deep breathing and balance exercises.

To learn more about ACHD's falls prevention program, visit us at [ashlandhealth.com](http://ashlandhealth.com) or call **419-282-4356**.

## Public Health NURSING

ACHD's Mobile Clinic deployed 13 times in 2025, where 50 immunizations were given and 96 free health screenings were completed. Other highlights of the year included two Amish Women's Health Day events, the annual Amish Health and Safety Day, and the initiation of xylazine test strip distribution.



In March, the Health & Wellness Target Action Group, led by our Director of Nursing, hosted a Colorectal Cancer Panel discussion with local medical experts. The event raised awareness of colorectal cancer, as Ashland County has a higher rate of colorectal cancer deaths than the state.



Blood Pressure Checks = 20	Hearing & Vision Screenings (Dale Roy) = 28
Car Seat Education/Installation = 22	Homebound Visits = 45
CMH (Complex Medical Help) Program, 152 average monthly clients	Immunizations Given = 941
COVID Vaccines = 125 Flu Vaccines = 243	Narcan (Naloxone) Doses Dispensed = 319
CPR Classes Conducted = 9	TB Tests Conducted = 69

# REPORTABLE

## DISEASES

Over 80 infectious diseases must be reported to Ohio health departments. For individuals with a reportable disease, we provide education and work together to identify the disease source to keep others healthy. Since the emergence of COVID-19, individual cases have been reported to health departments. However, in October 2025, reporting requirements changed to align with other respiratory diseases, like influenza and RSV. Now, only hospitalizations due to COVID-19 and outbreaks caused by COVID-19 are reportable.

### Notable Disease Trends

In 2025, we saw an increase in influenza hospitalization, with 74 reported in 2025 versus 34 reported in 2024. We also saw increases in Lyme disease, pertussis (whooping cough), salmonellosis, and invasive *S. pneumoniae*.

Thirty fewer Chlamydia cases were reported to us in 2025 than 2024. Chronic Hepatitis C cases also declined in 2025.

### Emergency Preparedness



We participate in the federal government's emergency preparedness program with one dedicated, full-time employee. Our PHEP coordinator completes over 15 grant deliverables in a fiscal year while serving on the Local Emergency Planning Committee and Ashland County Healthcare Coalition. ACHD hosted a chemical tabletop exercise (TTX) to improve communication and collaboration among our staff, first responders, hospitals, healthcare coalitions, the Emergency Management Agency, public transportation, mental health agencies, private businesses, and elected officials. Representatives at the TTX shared what they would be responsible for if a chemical spill happened. TTXs help us identify and address gaps in services.

### Investigations\*

30 diseases

605 cases

\*Does not include influenza testing data.

### Outbreaks

32 reported



51

### EpiCenter Alerts Investigated

EpiCenter is Ohio's surveillance system that automatically alerts health departments of an unusual illness pattern based on patient symptoms. If our investigation reveals signs of a new disease, outbreak, environmental exposures, or potential bioterrorism, we can act quickly to protect public health.

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## *Water Program*

**324** consultations  
**173** water samples collected  
**84** inspections  
**63** permits to install/seal issued  
**1** permit to alter issued

Public health is the “invisible shield” protecting our community every day. You may not see our environmental health team in action—but they’re working behind the scenes to keep you safe when you dine out, dive into a public pool, or get a tattoo. Because of them, your everyday spaces are safer.



## *Food Protection Program*

**1,296** inspections  
**534** consultations  
**426** licenses issued  
**193** plan reviews  
**45** complaints investigated

## *Sewage Program*

**248** private sewage consultations  
**143** household sewage inspections  
**135** permits issued  
**82** site reviews  
**26** complaints investigated

— HAPPY —  
*Retirement*

We celebrate Pat Donaldson’s 40+ years of dedicated service! As Ashland’s first female sanitarian where she also served as Director of Environmental Health, she mentored countless sanitarians and made a lasting impact on both the profession and the Ashland community. Congratulations, Pat!

## *Other Environmental Health Services*

**124** pools/spa inspections  
**115** reported animal bites/exposures  
**29** public health nuisance complaints/consults  
**26** tattoo/body art facility consults  
**23** camp/campground inspections  
**22** manufactured home park inspections  
**14** tattoo/body art facility inspections  
**10** insect and rodent investigations  
**7** school inspections  
**5** jail inspections  
**5** septage hauler truck inspections  
**4** water hauler truck inspections  
**3** solid waste facility inspections  
**2** compost facility inspections

*Environmental Health employees mingle with the crowd at Touch-a-Truck!*





# FINANCE REPORT

\*Figures based on what was provided for the 2025 Financial Annual Report.

## *ACHD Finances as of 12/31/25\**

Fund	Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenses	Fund Balance
General	\$867,624.65	\$1,318,062.81	\$1,637,107.95	\$548,579.51
PHEP Grant	\$49,568.94	\$58,432.00	\$72,810.94	\$35,190.00
Mosquito Grant	\$11,659.69	\$23,965.00	\$24,873.22	\$10,751.47
Workforce Development	\$19,754.53	\$167,228.96	\$182,700.40	\$4,283.09
Food Program	\$199,921.56	\$109,507.22	\$120,078.82	\$189,349.96
Care's Act Grant	\$61,801.75	\$37,481.39	\$99,283.14	\$0

### *Quality Improvement at ACHD*

Did you know we are on-call 24/7? After a tornado hit near our on-call employee's home and disabled our emergency cell phone for a week, we launched a Quality Improvement project to find a more reliable solution.

Now, after-hours calls go through the Ashland County Sheriff's Department non-emergency line. Operators follow a call-down list to notify one of three ACHD employees, ensuring a dependable backup system.



**Falls prevention expert Lynn Friebe leads a breathing demonstration for Elder Empowerment Month.**