



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Mercer County  
Health Department**

# ANNUAL REPORT

## FY 2025

DECEMBER 1, 2024 -  
NOVEMBER 30, 2025

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305 NW Seventh St.

Aledo, IL 61231

Monday - Thursday

8:00 am - 5:00 pm or by  
appointment



**HOURS**  
MONDAY - THURSDAY  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

# MISSION

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Our mission at Mercer County Health Department is promoting health and well-being, preventing and managing disease, and protecting the community through education, intervention, and inspection management.

# VALUES

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Our work will be guided by the following beliefs and commitment to:

**Diversity and Inclusion** - we respect people, value diversity, and seek to include all.

**Integrity** - we value honesty and strong moral principles when serving our clients.

**Quality** - we commit to striving for excellence in service to the public of Mercer County by continually evaluating and educating ourselves to best practices and community need.

# VISION

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To promote a community in which all people achieve their full potential for health and well-being across the lifespan. We work to be trusted by clients, a valued partner in the community, and creators of positive outcomes.





# Mercer County Board of Health

The Mercer County Board of Health meets quarterly on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Mercer County Health Department.

## Officers:

Myron Higgins, MBA, RRT ..... President  
Elaine Wheeler, RN ..... Vice President  
Kristin Wurzbarger, MD ..... Secretary

## Members at Large:

Tim Arbet, OD  
Lori Bruning, RN  
Larry Rhodenbaugh



# OPERATING SUMMARY

## YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2025 (UNAUDITED)

### Revenue

Tax Levy	\$220,635.39
State & Federal Grants & Reimbursements	\$777,525.96
Environmental and Clinic Fees	\$145,772.12
Donations, Contracts & Other Reimbursements	\$12,720.04
Prepaid Grants Funds	\$323,619.55
Interest	\$5,562.98

**TOTAL REVENUE** **\$1,485,836.04**

### Expenditures

Personnel Wages & Benefits	\$1,059,770.75
Purchased Services	\$141,030.48
Travel & Education	\$12,181.50
Fuel	\$1,922.47
Supplies	\$131,912.47
Capital/Equipment/Principal	\$29,241.97
Misc./Other Exp	\$5,618.53

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES** **\$1,381,678.45**

### Net Operating Income\*\*

Excess <deficiency> of revenue over  
Expenditures **\$104,157.59**

\*\*(Profit amount attributed to prepaid grant funds)





# STAFF

## FULL-TIME

Angie Litterst, BS ..... Administrator  
Annette Doonan ..... Program Coordinator  
Diana Eggen ..... Business Office Coordinator  
Hannah Garrett, MPH, CHES ..... Assistant Administrator & MHAP  
Program Director (starting August 2025)  
Jenifer Frere ..... MHAP School-Based Case Manager  
Jesse Hoffeditz, BS, MHP ..... MHAP Adult Case Manager  
Krissy Dixon, RN, QMH ..... MHAP Nurse Navigator/ Program Director  
(until August 2025)  
Kyle Lloyd, MS, REHS/RS, LEHP ..... Director of Environmental Services  
Megan Bull, BS, MHP ..... MHAP School-Based Case Manager  
Megan Koresko, RN, BSN ..... WIC Coordinator  
Melissa Hajostek, APRN ..... Public Health & MHAP Nurse Navigator  
Mindy McManus ..... MHAP Care Coordinator  
Stephanie Retherford ..... Dental and Billing Coordinator  
Tina Matlick ..... WIC/FCM/Imm and Environmental Secretary  
Todd Walthall ..... PHEP Coordinator  
Wendy Bigham, RN ..... Supervisor, Maternal Child Health; CD Coordinator

## PART-TIME

Brandi Myers ..... Custodian (starting March 2025)  
Diane Dunn ..... Custodian (until February 2025)  
Drue Griffin, RN ..... Public Health Nurse  
Felicia Bonyngne ..... Breastfeeding Peer Counselor  
Jim Sharp ..... Maintenance (until February 2025)  
Josh Hajostek ..... Maintenance (starting February 2025)  
Peggy Kaufman, LPN ..... Public Health Nurse



# PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (PHEP)

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## Public Health Emergency Preparedness

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The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program plans for all hazards, including receipt and distribution of the Strategic National Stockpile of Pharmaceuticals, emergency response for natural disasters, infectious disease pandemics, terrorism, bioterrorism, communication strategies, volunteer management, shelter management, NIMS compliance, and training and exercise development for disasters. Activities include quarterly call-down drills with health department staff as well as community partners, and the completion of appropriate training opportunities and NIMS courses. At least one exercise is held every year, in which partners with community emergency response agencies and test emergency plans in place to identify strengths and areas of improvement.

Our PHEP Coordinator has completed a considerable number of training courses this year. He attended and completed a very complex All Hazards Planning for Animal, Agriculture, and Food Related Disasters, Chemical Differentiation and Treatment Considerations for Nerve Agent Exposure, Active Shooter Incident Management, and Online Child Abuse/Exploitation Training presented by the Department of Homeland Security. He also received his certification as a Professional Coach Advocate.

For this upcoming grant year, our PHEP Coordinator will continue to further his education, attend informational meetings, both in person and online, and continue to engage the community in preparedness activities.

## Medical Reserve Corps

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Medical Reserve Corps is “a national network of local groups of volunteers engaging local communities to strengthen public health, reduce vulnerability, build resilience, and improve preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.” Mercer County MRC is comprised of medical and non-medical volunteers. Volunteers are able to stay engaged throughout the year in a variety of ways: Incident Command System trainings, miscellaneous emergency and disaster trainings, community events, exercises, and other non-emergency events. Several volunteers serve on the Mercer County Local Emergency Planning Committee to enhance planning for chemical transportation emergencies. Others are serving through the Mental Health Action Program, assisting the program’s Food Mission and/or conducting spiritual counselling as part of the Spiritual Care Team. Volunteers stand ready for activation for emergency events. Each member is provided an ID badge and a t-shirt. Mercer County Medical Reserve Corps is always seeking new applicants to serve the community.

# OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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## Food Service Program

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MCHD inspects for health and safety: restaurants, convenience stores, grocery stores, etc. (any establishment selling prepackaged or preparing and serving food to the public). Educational services on food preparation and proper sanitation techniques are available. MCHD works closely with local schools to provide educational materials focusing on the importance of handwashing and prevention of cross-contamination.

FISCAL YEAR	2025
Food Service Licenses Issued	87
Food Service Inspections	122
Temporary Food Licenses Issued	60
Complaints Investigated	2
Pre-operational	6
Food Classes Taught	7
Students	62
New Business	8
Closed Business	7

# OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CONT.)

## Private Sewage

MCHD issues required permits and inspects all new and renovated septic systems within the county.

FISCAL YEAR	2025
Private Sewage Permits Issued	28
Septic Inspections Completed	28
Contractors Registered in County:	
Installers	8
Pumpers	5

## Water Well Program

MCHD provides water sampling for wells with the county. We approve, issue required permits, inspect, and sample new wells. Water sample bottles are available to the public for a fee. MCHD approves the required plans for sealing abandoned wells located in Mercer County. Non-Community wells are also monitored quarterly or annually, depending on classification.

FISCAL YEAR	2025
Water Well Permits Issued	24
Water Wells Inspected	8
Water Samples Collected	71
Abandoned Wells Sealed	5



# OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CONT.)

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## West Nile Virus Prevention and Surveillance

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The goal of the project is to educate about West Nile Virus and Encephalitis prevention, detection, and treatment. This program is designed to track the progression of the virus within the community and enhance existing interventions regarding WNV community education and community surveillance. In addition, surveillance and testing of both mosquitoes and birds for West Nile Virus in vulnerable areas were conducted. Mosquito kits and education were created and disseminated to the public. Information was distributed throughout the county, including the MCHD booth at the Mercer County Fair. A public informational tri-fold poster set was displayed throughout the season. In 2025, there were 26 batches of mosquitoes tested with no positives.

## Tick Surveillance

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The goal of the Tick Surveillance Program is to sample the tick population in the county, test the collected ticks for various diseases, and educate the community about the hazards. Tick drags are performed, and collected ticks are submitted to the state lab for testing. We have completed multiple drafts and submitted the ticks to the state. Public information and tick kits were presented at the county fair, and seasonal information has been posted on social media. We will restart the dragging process in the spring and early summer. We utilized both dragging and CO2 capture this year and will continue using both methods depending on terrain and weather. There were no infected ticks in the county as of the end of 2025.

# OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CONT.)

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## Clear WIN Program

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A new grant for this year is the Clear WIN Program. This program assists eligible families with Lead Mitigation when it is detected in the home. Since this is the first year, a considerable amount of time was taken to contact IDPH-licensed contractors in the area to ensure their cooperation and to ensure they were still IDPH-compliant. After a lead inspection is done, we inspect the home, create diagrams to identify the lead paint danger, and submit them to the contractor for replacement. As of this writing, we have one home in the inspection process, and the contractor should be doing the work in early 2026. We can see this program increasing in popularity as we become more proficient with the intricacies and procedures.

# OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION

## Well Woman Program

The Women’s Wellness Planning Grant was implemented in 2020 to address reducing barriers to well-woman prevention visits, screenings, counseling, and immunizations. These visits play a critical role in diagnosing and managing disease, chronic disease, and mental health conditions for the target group of women aged 18-44 years. The grant allowed us to create a stakeholder list, conduct a needs survey, create a resource directory of women’s health and screening providers, promote women’s health through mail and social media, create and distribute a women’s wellness brochure, and assist community members in accessing women’s wellness care and reducing barriers to service such as transportation, insurance, and food insecurity. The ‘Increasing Well-Woman Visits’ grant ended June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, as no additional funding was offered.

FISCAL YEAR 2025	
Cases Attempted	369
Successfully Navigated	77

Through the entirety of the program, 375 women in Mercer County who were behind in their preventative care visits were successfully navigated.

## Dental Program

Mercer County has two school districts: Sherrard and Mercer County. In 2025, the Dental program educated 796 children between both schools. The target age range was 3 to 18 years old. The mobile dental school clinics were held in Dec. 2024 and April/May 2025. We were able to assist 161 children with preventive dental care. We referred 77 children with dental treatment needs to Federal Qualified Health Centers in Oquawka and Rock Island.

FISCAL YEAR 2025	
Children Educated	796
Children who visited the Mobile Dental Clinic	161



# OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION (CONT.)

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## Breast Cancer Navigation Program

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The Breast Cancer Navigation Program identified barriers to receiving care and helped navigate patients through their breast cancer journey, if needed. Women aged 40 and older who were overdue for their annual mammogram were the target population. Patient Navigators assisted with reducing barriers to care such as scheduling assistance, financial assistance, and transportation.

FISCAL YEAR 2025	
Cases Attempted	420
Successfully Navigated	117
Barriers Found:	
Care Coordination	87
Insurance/Medical Costs	4
Distress/Behavior	0
Education	0
Logistical	3
Work/School	0

# OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION (CONT.)

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## Adolescent Health Program

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The Adolescent Health Program was focused on education and patient navigation. The program worked closely with our local school districts to implement age-appropriate education on various health topics. Some of which were navigating the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare, nutrition, and healthy habits, good personal hygiene, and healthy social media practices. The program helped to provide scheduling, transportation, and insurance assistance for preventative healthcare appointments. Partnerships were formed with other MCHD programs, such as the Mental Health Action Program, Immunizations, and Dental programs. In doing so, the programs assisted MCHD clients in being taken care of in every aspect of their health.

The Adolescent Health Program also worked closely with our local hospital and clinics to help get adolescents and their families up to date on their preventative health care. Bright Futures Guidance was implemented at the clinics due to this partnership.

## FISCAL YEAR 2025

Reach on Social Media	6,850
Students Educated	718

## Tobacco Grant - Smoke Free Illinois Act

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The Mercer County Tobacco Program is also responsible for the enforcement of the Smoke-Free Illinois Act. Public places are checked for signage and receptacle compliance, and the program is also responsible for checking complaints for violations. The program promotes events that highlight SFIA; prevention in schools related to tobacco, Juuls, and e-cigarette use; and celebrates Take Down Tobacco Day of Action. MCHD conducted random compliance checks of businesses in the county. No letters were sent out, as 100% of those businesses complied. No fines were given during this time. On January 1, 2024, Illinois banned e-cigarettes indoors. MCHD has updated stickers to include no vaping and sent them out to businesses. MCHD also gives education to businesses as needed or requested.

# OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION (CONT.)

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## Mental Health Action Program

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The Mental Health Action Program (MHAP) provides free navigation and case management services to individuals with a mental health diagnosis and barriers to care, such as: lack of transportation, lack of insurance, housing or food insecurities and financial barriers. The program assists clients with finding a mental health provider for counseling and medication management if needed, and helps ensure that clients can be successful with their recommended treatment plan. Youth has been a focus area for the program, bringing two mental health case managers into the local school districts to provide 1:1 sessions for coping skills/life skills education and screening/referrals and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for mental health counseling. Suicide prevention programming is completed yearly at Mercer County and Sherrard Junior High and High School, with a goal of identifying and assisting students at the first signs of depression and suicide risk factors. MHAP has collaborated with 84 partner agencies to better serve those with mental health illness.

## Emergency Food Pantry

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The Emergency Food Pantry is a volunteer-based mission through partnership with the Loving Hands-Food Ministry from the United Methodist Church in Aledo, IL, Riverbend Food Bank, and MCHD/MHAP. This program has been implemented to fill the gaps in food accessibility for those with financial challenges and to provide referrals to appropriate public aid services such as the local food pantries, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, etc. A focus has been put on screening individuals who are not established clients, to provide further assistance if needed. Food is provided in the form of 'power packs' which include ingredients to make meals, frozen casseroles, sandwiches, and miscellaneous fresh and non-perishable food. There are also toiletry items and cleaning essentials available to those in need. We coordinate with 4 MRC volunteers to help complete this mission.



# OFFICE OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

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## Immunization Program

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MCHD offers immunization services on Wednesdays by appointment. Immunization services are provided for infants, children and adults in need. We continue to work with parents, doctors, schools and the Illinois Department of Public Health in Springfield to ensure children are given the proper immunizations at the appropriate age. The Mercer County Health Department and Genesis Health Group collaborate every year to provide physicals and immunizations onsite at the Mercer schools. The school clinics make it convenient for students and their parents to complete physical and immunization requirements for the following year. Adult Hepatitis B clinics have also been offered on site to organizations who may be at higher risk of disease such as local fire and police departments.  
BE WISE - IMMUNIZE

## Tuberculosis Program

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MCHD offers the following services for tuberculosis prevention and treatment: TB Skin Testing. Follow-up on Positive Skin Tests, education and treatment.

## Foreign Travel Program

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Mercer County Health Department provides residents with information on required and recommended immunizations for traveling outside of the United States. Many of the immunizations can be given at the health department although some may need to be referred to foreign travel clinics for vaccines such as typhoid and yellow fever. Residents are given information about precautions they can take to avoid disease and illnesses so they may have a more enjoyable trip. Residents are urged to call as soon as they know their itinerary to ensure that they are fully immunized before departing. Consultation is free of charge.

## Communicable Disease Program

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There are more than 70 reportable diseases or conditions in the State of Illinois. The CD program conducts communicable disease surveillance, investigation, prevention and reporting of infectious diseases as mandated by Illinois State Law.

# OFFICE OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH

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## Better Birth Outcomes - Comprehensive Program (BBO-C)

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BBO-C is a statewide program (outside the City of Chicago) that provides pregnant and parenting clients with direct, comprehensive, nursing assessments and assistance to connect and engage with desired services and understand the importance of a medical home. The Nurse Navigator provides a comprehensive nursing assessment and any immediate nursing interventions necessary to dyads (pregnant and postpartum individuals and their infants), helping to connect families to the needed supports available in their community during in-person visits. Nurses are required to conduct the initial pregnancy visit and initial postpartum visit for this program and are expected to follow up as indicated using clinical discretion. Non-nurse navigators may provide follow-up at the discretion of the nurse for collaborating with each family to identify and mitigate barriers to accessing desired supports and services. By providing direct, 1:1 assistance to connect and engage with desired services, the Nurse Navigator and Non-Nurse Navigators help the client meet their family's health and wellness goals and promote the reduction of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

The BBO-C program provides these services to dyads throughout pregnancy and the first six months after birth to Illinois residents who meet the eligibility criteria for the program.

## Vision and Hearing Program

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The vision and hearing program offered by MCHD provides vision and hearing screenings to preschool children in Mercer County. A certified vision technician screens children ages 3-5 years at preschool screenings in Mercer County school district. Screenings are also provided at preschools in the area at Tiger Tales and the YMCA Preschool. Children who are unable to complete the initial screening are rescreened and, if necessary, are referred to a specialist for follow-up care. MCHD also screens children from age 6 months for vision using a special photo screener called the SPOT Vision Screener, a handheld portable device designed to help users quickly and easily detect vision issues on patients from 6 months through adult. It can also be used to help screen otherwise difficult patients. This screening can allow for earlier intervention, particularly in children with amblyopia (lazy eye). This machine is used in partnership with other agencies. Approximately 200 children are screened annually.

# OFFICE OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH (CONT.)

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## Lead Case Management

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Capillary lead screening are done upon request or by appointment. Many times the draws are done in conjunction with WIC hemoglobin screenings. Per IDPH's recommendations, a capillary blood level greater than or equal to 5ug/DI in a child requires follow up with a venous draw. If that result is still elevated, then case management must begin. Case management includes education, home visits, environmental home testing, and follow ups. It is an Illinois requirement that a child has a lead screening done before entering school. Mercer County Health Departments has both a lead case manager and an environmental specialist for lead. As of January 2025, the recommendation changed from 5ug/DI to 3.5ug/DI per CDC guidance.

FISCAL YEAR	2025
Home Inspections	5

## Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank

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In April of 2019 Mercer County Health Department partnered with Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank in Galesburg, IL. Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank provides diapers, pull-ups, feminine products, and adult diapers free of charge for those in need. The majority of the families we serve are within our WIC program, although that is not a requirement to receive products. From January 1st, 2025, to November 30th, 2025, we distributed over 25,000 diapers and pull-ups to children in our county. Clients are able to receive products every 30 days.



# OFFICE OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH (CONT.)

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## Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

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WIC is a special supplemental food program for Women, Infants and Children funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). WIC provides supplemental foods for those income-eligible who are pregnant, postpartum, or children up to age 5. WIC focuses on healthy eating and nutritional education for families. Families who participate in WIC can also receive referrals for developmental and physical assessments, immunization, breastfeeding counseling, early intervention services, family case management, lead and hemoglobin screenings, and the diaper bank. MCHD serves around 225 clients monthly.

## Breastfeeding Peer Counseling

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In keeping with USDA's goal for nutrition, the breastfeeding peer counselor (PC) program was established. The PC program educates perinatal women, their families, and the community to the benefits of breastfeeding and provides ongoing support throughout the breastfeeding period for moms and infants. Our PC works both remotely and in office to better serve everyone.

She does frequent follow-ups with pregnant and breastfeeding women to provide ongoing, positive support. Our PC maintains knowledge through frequent education. She earned her Certified Lactation Specialist license in November 2025.

## Bright Smiles

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We began providing fluoride varnish through the Bright Smiles program in October of 2023. We previously had provided this service up until the COVID-19 pandemic when we were serving a lower number of clients in house. We are thrilled to be able to provide this service to our clients. Fluoride varnishes can be applied every 3 months. We begin applying with parental permission from the time of first tooth up until age 6. This service is able to be billed to the client's insurance.