



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Mercer County
Health Department**

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2024

DECEMBER 1, 2023 -
NOVEMBER 30, 2024

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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

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

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

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 the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Mercer County Health Department.

Officers:

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

Members at Large:

Tim Arbet, DO
Lori Bruning, RN
Larry Rhodenbaugh



OPERATING SUMMARY

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)

Revenue

Property Taxes	\$170,561.54
State & Federal Grants & Reimbursements	\$651,075.88
Environmental and Clinic Fees	\$183,978.66
Donations, Contracts & Other Reimbursements	\$43,278.23
Prepaid Grants Funds	\$362,463.34

TOTAL REVENUE **\$1,453,357.65**

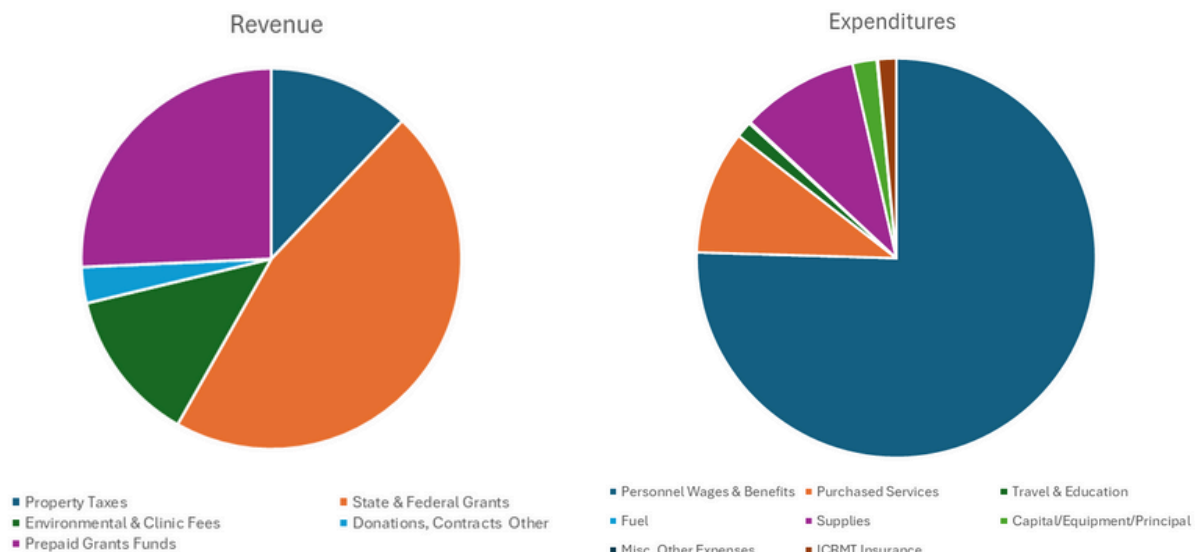
Expenditures

Personnel Wages & Benefits	\$1,075,536.97
Purchased Services	\$143,180.93
Travel & Education	\$18,415.71
Fuel	\$1,990.34
Supplies	\$135,795.49
Capital/Equipment/Principal	\$28,038.98
Misc./Other Exp	\$1,408.24
ICRMT Insurance	\$20,957.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **\$1,470,323.66**

Net Operating Income

Excess <deficiency> of revenue over Expenditures **-\$13,966.01**



STAFF

FULL-TIME

Angie Litterst, BS	Administrator
Annette Doonan	Program Director, Increasing Well Women Visits
Ashley Walthall	WIC/FCM/Imm Secretary
Diana Eggen	Business Office Coordinator
Hannah Garrett, MPH, CHES	Assistant Administrator
Jenifer Frere	MHAP School-Based Case Manager
Jesse Hoffeditz, BS, MHP	MHAP Adult Case Manager
Krissy Dixon, RN, QMH	MHAP Nurse Navigator/ Program Director
Kyle Lloyd, MS, 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 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

Diane Dunn	Housekeeping
Drue Griffin, RN	Public Health Nurse
Felicia Bonyngne	Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
Jim Sharp	Maintenance
Peggy Kaufman, LPN	Public Health Nurse



PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (PHEP)

Public Health Emergency Preparedness

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 tests emergency plans in place to identify strengths and areas of improvement.

We have also begun offering 3 in-person presentations to the community, Senior Citizen Scam Prevention, Retail Security Awareness, and Child Care Facility Safety. Our PHEP Coordinator is also certified by ALERRT through Texas State University to present Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events.

The Senior Citizen Scam Prevention program was presented once this year with more scheduled for the upcoming year.

Our PHEP Coordinator was presented with the IEMA Professional Development Series Certificate and will be working towards achieving the Illinois Professional Emergency Manager Program.

Medical Reserve Corps

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 t-shirt. Mercer County Medical Reserve Corps is always seeking new applicants to serve the community.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Food Service Program

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	2024
Food Service Licenses Issued	89
Food Service Inspections	135
Temporary Food Licenses Issued	65
Complaints Investigated	2
Pre-operational	2
Food Classes Taught	7
Students	104

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	2024
Private Sewage Permits Issued	26
Septic Inspections Completed	26
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	2024
Water Well Permits Issued	17
Water Wells Inspected	7
Water Samples Collected	70
Abandoned Wells Sealed	4

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CONT.)

West Nile Virus Prevention and Surveillance

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 enhances existing interventions regarding WNV community education and community surveillance. In addition, surveillance and testing, of both mosquitoes and birds for West Nile Virus from vulnerable areas, was 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 2024 there were 23 batches of mosquitos tested with no positives. 2 birds were tested for WNV, with one being positive and one being negative.

Tick Surveillance

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 of the hazards. This is a new program in its current form. Tick drags are performed and collected ticks are submitted to the state lab for testing. We have completed multiple drags 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. Due to increased funding, we will be utilizing CO2 trapping methods this upcoming year.

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 year 7/01/23 through 6/30/25 was awarded again to the MCHD. This assists women with accessing quality, comprehensive preventative care while continuing to utilize the 'Patient Navigation Toolkit' from Boston Medical Center. This approach focuses on reducing barriers to care and establishing a holistic approach to the preventative needs of the women in the county.

FISCAL YEAR 2024

Cases Attempted	558
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Successfully Navigated	164
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Since the program was implemented on July 1, 2021, 298 women in Mercer County who were behind in their preventative care visits have been successfully navigated through the Well Woman Program.

Dental Program

In 2024 the Dental Program was able to educate 346 Mercer County children by going to the local schools. Through the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation Grant, we purchased 1 light weight portable dental chair and dental instruments for the hygiene. The mobile dental clinic was held in March, April, and May of 2024 and saw 176 children at the local schools. We referred 18 children with dental treatment needs to FQHCs in Oquawka and Rock Island.

FISCAL YEAR 2024

Children Educated	346
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Children who visited the Mobile Dental Clinic	176
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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION (CONT.)

Breast Cancer Navigation Program

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 2024	
Cases Attempted	86
Successfully Navigated	17
Barriers Found:	
Care Coordination	15
Insurance/Medical Costs	0
Distress/Behavior	0
Education	0
Logistical	3
Work/School	0

OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION (CONT.)

Adolescent Health Program

The Adolescent Health Program is focused on education and patient navigation. The program works closely with our local school districts to implement age-appropriate education on various health topics – The ones given so far are navigating the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare, nutrition, and healthy habits, good personal hygiene, and healthy social media practices, but the intent is to expand the topics moving forward. The program helps to provide scheduling, transportation, and insurance assistance for preventative healthcare appointments. Partnerships have been formed with other MCHD programs, such as the Mental Health Action Program, Immunizations, and Dental programs. In doing so, the programs can assist MCHD clients to be taken care of in every aspect of their health.

The Adolescent Health Program also works 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 has started to be implemented at the clinics due to this partnership.

FISCAL YEAR 2024

Reach on Social Media	6,794
Students Educated	87

Tobacco Grant - Smoke Free Illinois Act

Mercer County Tobacco Program is also responsible for the enforcement of Smoke-Free Illinois Act. Public places are checked for signage and receptacle compliance and the program is also responsible for checking complaints for violation. 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 compliance visits on over 300 businesses in the county. 3 letters were sent out with 100% compliance without further warnings. No fines were given during this time. January 1, 2024 Illinois banned e-cigarettes indoors. MCHD has updated stickers to include no vaping and sent them out to all of the businesses.

OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION (CONT.)

Mental Health Action Program

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

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

Immunization Program

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

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

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

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

Maternal Child Health Family Case Management Program

The Family Case Management Program serves all pregnant women and infants who meet eligibility requirements and agree to services. This program assists new mothers and families by providing information and assistance with receiving services vital to family health and safety.

Vision and Hearing Program

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 HeadStart, 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.

High Risk Infant Care

Infants and children (ages 0-2 years old) are referred to the high risk infant follow up program either through the IDPH Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes Reporting System (APORS) or based on assessments done in the Family Case Management program which determine: that the infant has been diagnosed with a serious medical condition after newborn discharge; when maternal alcohol or drug addiction has been diagnosed; or when child abuse or neglect has been indicated based on investigation by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The case manager helps link families to pediatric primary care including well child, immunization and specialty visits. Case manager provides referrals to appropriate community resources based on family needs. She works with the parents to educate them about their child's condition and provides regular physical and developmental screenings to make sure child is meeting age appropriate milestones.

OFFICE OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH (CONT.)

Lead Case Management

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. Beginning in January of 2025, the recommendation will change from 5ug/DI to 3.5ug/DI per CDC guidance.

FISCAL YEAR	2024
Home Inspections	6

Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank

In April of 2019 Mercer County Health Department partnered with Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank in Galesburg, IL. Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank provides diapers, pullups, feminine products, and adult diapers free of charge for those in need. Majority of the families we serve are within our WIC program, although that is not a requirement to receive products. From January 1st, 2024 to November 30st, 2024 we distributed over 22,000 diapers and pullups to children in our county. Clients are able to receive products every 30 days.

OFFICE OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH (CONT.)

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

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 220 clients monthly.

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling

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 those pregnant and breastfeeding to provide ongoing, positive support. Our PC maintains knowledge through frequent education.

Bright Smiles

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.