

Annual Report 2009



Leading the community to better health



Western Upper Peninsula
Health Department

A regional public health department serving Baraga, Gogebic,
Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon counties, Michigan

To Our Community,

On behalf of our staff and Board of Health, we are pleased to present the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department report to our community for the fiscal period ending September 30, 2009. This annual report will give you information about the health of the community and the work of our agency.

Western U.P. Health Department is a special unit of government providing the public health structure for Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon counties. We are a complex organization that is supported by a varied funding stream, encompassing not only state and county funds, but private and federal grants, health insurance reimbursements and fees charged for some unique services.

The year 2009 was a time of significant achievement for our health department. We continued to address immediate community health needs while taking strategic actions to restructure the agency and lay the groundwork for programs which will impact our communities for years.

One of the most noticeable effects of our new structure is a new name and logo. We are now known simply as Western U.P. Health Department, underscoring the regional reach of our programs. We will continue to seek local and regional partnerships and collaborate in the provision of services, in order to reduce overlap with other providers and serve our community most effectively.

The activities highlighted in this report represent the work of more than 100 employees, the leadership of the Board of Health, and the support of our five founding counties. It is because of their commitment that this health department can continue to serve its vital role in the health of our communities.

Guy St. Germain
Health Officer/Executive Officer

William C. Rolof
Board of Health Chairperson

Board of Health

Baraga County

William C. Rolof, Chairperson
Paul Tesonovich

Gogebic County

Joseph Bonovetz
James Oliver

Houghton County

Edward Jenich, Secretary
Dennis Barrette
Dr. Anton Pintar

Keweenaw County

Joseph Langdon
Frank Stubenrauch

Ontonagon County

Dale Parent
John Pelkola

Our Mission

To lead the community toward better health through education, advocacy and disease prevention.

Our Vision

We will set the standard for community health agencies, as we perform our role within the healthcare system in a manner that reflects our core values. We will be recognized as the expert in community health protection and improvement, as a model of effective and responsive government, and as the regional leader in public health.

Health Department Highlights 2009

Pandemic Flu Response

The health department played the lead role in the regional response to the new H1N1 influenza virus. When the novel virus emerged in April 2009, the health department disseminated information to local healthcare providers, school officials, employers and the general public, and coordinated the rapid distribution of anti-viral medications to area pharmacies. Last fall, the agency distributed some 12,000 doses of vaccine to public and private healthcare providers. Public health nurses vaccinated many thousands of residents at clinics in 16 public schools, three colleges, and the four health department offices.

Healthy Communities Planning

In the spirit of good public health practice, which aims to prevent disease in large populations, the health department received a planning grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health to begin work on community-level initiatives to improve cardiovascular health and reduce the rate of childhood obesity. Strategies to help communities become more pedestrian and bike friendly and to establish community gardens and farmers markets are designed to complement the efforts of families, schools, hospitals and other partners in wellness. In Fiscal 2009, the health department convened local partners in planning and sought additional grants to build local capacity to work toward healthier communities.

Agency Restructures

Forms New Home Health Corporation

In 2009, the health department completed a business deal which significantly altered its structure. Through innovative collaboration with a regional hospital system, our home care division transitioned from a service of the health department to a stand-alone private, not-for-profit agency. At the end of the year, the health department closed its Superior Home Health and Hospice division, whose 190 clients and 60 employees transitioned to the new Aspirus Superior Home Health and Hospice, Inc.. The health department had provided Medicare certified home care in the five counties since 1966. Home health provided revenue to the agency and essential care to underserved areas. As part of its continuing emphasis on maintaining and expanding home health services, the health department entered talks with Wisconsin-based Aspirus Health System in early 2009. The result was the creation of a new Michigan not-for-profit organization, owned by Western U.P. Health Department, and by Aspirus VNA and Aspirus Keweenaw Health Foundation. Aspirus is a community-guided health system providing leading heart, cancer, women's and spine and neurological care. Aspirus serves north central Wisconsin and the Western U.P. Aspirus Superior is a new kind of partnership between public and private entities, unique in Michigan. The combination of the organizations' strengths will enable the new company to build on the health department's commitment to quality and bolster the company's ability to provide care to residents anywhere in the region.

The health department enters 2010 a leaner entity, structured to provide public health and environmental health services. The restructured agency will operate with 60 employees and a \$4.2 million budget, compared with 115 employees and a \$7.5 million budget in 2009. In 2010, the health department will provide mandated public health services and some 20 special programs to improve the health of our communities.

Public Health Programs

The health department provides a wide range of services to the general public and special populations. A few of the agency's programs are highlighted below:

Seasonal Flu Shots: In addition to H1N1 vaccination clinics, the health department led large-scale community clinics for seasonal flu shots in Hancock, L'Anse, Ontonagon and Ironwood, in partnership with five hospitals, two schools of nursing, and one Wisconsin health department.

WIC: In 2009, the Women, Infants and Children Program provided nutrition education and supplemental food benefits for more than 1,700 infants, children and pregnant, post-partum and breast-feeding women per month.

MIHP: The Maternal Infant Health Program conducted 1,137 visits by registered nurses, registered dietitians and social workers to high-needs families with pregnancies or infants.

Hearing and Vision Screening: More than 6,000 hearing and vision screenings were conducted in preschools and K-12 schools throughout the five counties.

Family Planning: Family planning clinics in the agency's four offices served 958 clients in 2009, providing clinical exams, education, communicable disease testing and affordable birth control.

BCCCP: Through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, 480 low-to-moderate income women age 40-64 received breast and pelvic exams, pap tests, mammograms, and follow-up treatment as needed.

Senior Screening:

At 12 clinics throughout the region, 217 residents age 60-plus received free health screenings, referral and follow-up services.

RSVP: Western U.P. Retired and Senior Volunteer Program engages people age 55 and older in community service. In 2009, 90 RSVP volunteers contributed 14,108 hours of service to 19 community organizations and programs.

Environmental Health Programs

Environmental health (EH) programs prevent illness from contaminated food, water and other environmental sources. Permitting, inspections, education, and when necessary, enforcement actions protect the public's health.

Food Safety Program: Food safety is one of public health's highest priorities. Agency sanitarians conducted 1,031 evaluations at restaurants, schools and temporary food events in 2009. The health department offers a Certified Food Safety Manager course; 174 food establishment managers successfully completed this program in 2009.

New This Year

Inspection reports on area restaurants are now available for review through the health department web site, in the EH Food Protection Program section.

Water Supply Program: We monitor the quality of 135 non-community public water supplies such as schools, restaurants and campgrounds. Last year, construction permits for 168 new wells were issued to ensure well construction and water quality requirements were met.

On-Site Sewage Program: Site and soil assessments, construction permitting, and inspections are conducted by health department sanitarians to prevent environmental contamination from human waste. In 2009, 243 site assessments were completed, and 200 construction permits were issued for new on-site sewage systems.

Beach Monitoring

Seventeen public beaches were monitored weekly from May to September. Samples were tested for water quality and beaches were evaluated to determine if they were safe and healthy for public use. One beach was closed for several days due to high bacteria levels and two beaches were posted with swimmers' itch warnings in 2009. The public can find beach information through the health department web site.

Community Health Status Indicators

Local public health departments track, analyze and publicize rates of disease, health care access and utilization rates, demographics and other community health indicators.

Did you know that the population of the Western U.P. region declined by 5.6 percent from 1998 to 2008, from 72,855 to 68,776? About 18 percent of local residents are age 65 and older, compared with 13 percent statewide. Ontonagon County (27 percent), Keweenaw County (23.3 percent) and Gogebic County (21.5 percent) have among the state's largest proportions of over-65 residents. Baraga County, with 16.5 percent over 65, has a higher per capita birth rate than surrounding counties; Houghton County's 14.8 percent figure is affected by the larger college-aged population.

There have been about 700 births and 900 deaths per year in the five-county region for the last decade. The leading causes of death – heart disease, cancer and stroke – are the same locally, and in similar percentages, as state and national statistics.

The health department monitors reports from physicians and laboratories of a variety of communicable diseases, and is alert to possible disease outbreaks. Below are annual trends for several common conditions, including illnesses such as influenza, chickenpox and pertussis that can be prevented or reduced through immunization.

Selected Communicable Disease Reports

Disease or Disease Group (Five-County Totals)	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Food-borne Illnesses (Campylobacter, Giardia, Salmonella)	39	20	29	18	25	18
Flu-Like Disease	1,848	2,516	2,287	1,631	2,173	1,851
Varicella (Chickenpox)	8	59	26	10	34	11
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	7	33	12	0	1	0
Chlamydia	64	50	66	73	72	97
Hepatitis C (Acute and Chronic)	19	39	37	52	54	44

Western U.P. Health Department Finances in Fiscal 2009

The health department operates more than 30 personal and community health programs. Some are required by Michigan statute, but most are designed to meet locally defined needs. Funding is secured through a mix of federal, state and private foundation grants, fees, insurance payments, and local county appropriations. Fiscal 2009 was another year of reduced funding from the state for required public health services. However, the health department was successful in developing new grant sources and managing operating costs through good business practices.

Revenues

Home Health Fees and Insurance Payments	\$3,499,391
State of Michigan Funding	1,267,492
Federal and Private Grants	388,570
Client Fees and Internal Service Funds	1,407,439
Five County Appropriations	<u>438,146</u>
Total	\$7,001,038

Expenses

Personnel and Contract	\$5,654,908
Supplies and Insurance	587,942
Facilities and Capital Outlay	268,222
Travel Costs	348,017
Other	<u>141,949</u>
Total	\$7,001,038