2015 Annual Report

Western Upper Peninsula
Health Department

Serving Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon counties, Michigan
From the Health Officer

To the Residents of the Western Upper Peninsula and Our Partners in Public Health

On behalf of the Western U. P. Board of Health and staff, I am proud to present this report summarizing the accomplishments of your health department in 2015. As a public trust, we want everything we do to be open and understood by our communities.

More than 60 employees and board members work tirelessly to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of every resident and visitor to our region. We do this by making sure that our food is safe, our drinking water is clean, and disease outbreaks are controlled. We also play a lead role in creating conditions that support healthy lifestyles through education and planning for healthy communities.

This report contains information about our services and finances. You will find statistics about the number of people served by our programs in 2015, about our agency’s innovations in program development, and about our financial stability. Look for features spotlighting a new partnership with MCDC to establish a dental clinic in Ewen, a new home visiting program to benefit at-risk children, our Ebola response, projects building safe routes to schools and improving access to locally grown foods, and more.

The year 2015 marked a change in leadership for our agency. It was my honor to be hired by the Board as the health department’s new Health Officer, after having served for nearly 20 years in such roles as Director of Accounting and Chief Executive Officer of the home health division.

I encourage you to read this report carefully and provide your feedback. Western U.P. Health Department looks forward to continuing to lead our community toward better health.

Cathryn A. Beer, MPA, CPA, CGMA
Health Officer/Administrator
Vaccination Waivers Put Communities at Risk

Immunizations are one of the most important public health achievements of the 20th Century. It is estimated that in the past 20 years alone, vaccines have saved 750,000 lives and prevented 332 million illnesses in the U.S. The science is clear – vaccination is both highly effective and extremely safe. In spite of this fact, parental concerns about safety have grown, in large part due to the abundance of misinformation disseminated widely across the internet. Pseudo “research” has made it difficult for concerned parents to make truly informed decisions and some Michigan parents have responded by simply declining or delaying vaccination for their children.

Unfortunately, Michigan now has one of the highest immunization school waiver rates in the country. In looking at the table below, it is clear that Michigan has fallen far behind in vaccination rates as measured in kindergarten. In fact, the state fell from fifth to 47th in national rankings for full vaccination coverage in just five years.
In Michigan, waivers for vaccination may be on medical, religious or philosophical grounds. Healthcare providers complete a small number of medical waivers for children who cannot receive some vaccines due to an underlying health condition, such as cancer or immune deficiency. But the vast majority of waivers are signed by parents citing philosophical or, less frequently, religious opposition to vaccination. Religious opposition is puzzling because in reality, objection to vaccination by formal religious doctrine is very rare.

Maintenance of herd immunity through vaccination of a high percentage of the population is essential to disease prevention. When a large percentage of the population is immunized and resists infection, there are fewer individuals capable of spreading disease, particularly to those who are too young or too ill to be vaccinated. Declining immunization rates put the entire community at risk. Therefore, in 2014, a change was made in the administrative rules of the public health code in Michigan requiring that parents who wish to waive immunization for their children first present to the local public health department for immunization education. The health department may then provide a certified waiver.

Prior to this amendment, parents whose children were not up to date on their immunizations could sign a waiver form with the school secretary, allowing the child to immediately enter school. Because of this, even parents who had no particular opposition to vaccination would often sign a waiver to expedite school entry and then fail to follow through on vaccination at a later, more convenient time. In addition, it was clear that parents who were making a conscious decision not to immunize were often doing so because they had not received credible information about vaccines. The new process will ensure that every parent is given accurate, credible information and will have a chance to have questions and concerns addressed.

Public health nurses have received training on working with concerned parents and doing so in a collaborative, non-adversarial manner. The state is already seeing a decline in waiver rates since implementation of the rule in early 2015, but whether it will be enough to curtail outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases we are seeing across the country is not yet clear. Attention will be focused on states like California that are going a large step further and not accepting waivers for anything other than medical indications – a practice already in place in Mississippi and West Virginia. In Mississippi last year, 99.7 percent of kindergarteners were fully vaccinated.

The parental decision to immunize or not immunize a child is an important one and has implications for everyone in the community. It is public health’s mission to ensure that every parent has the opportunity to receive credible, scientific information before making that decision.

Teresa Frankovich, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Community Health Assessment

Expanding Partnerships

Community health assessment is a core function of public health, the starting point for effective planning. Building on the success of our award-winning 2012 regional health needs assessment project, in 2015 the health department began a second round of health needs assessment, this time including a sixth Michigan county, Iron County. Assessment partners included six hospitals, two community mental health agencies and a regional federally qualified health center with multiple clinics.

The purpose of the project was to document the health status and needs of the 81,000 residents of Baraga, Gogebic, Iron, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon counties. Data for the assessment report was gathered from a wide array of published sources, from a locally conducted survey of more than 1,800 adults, and from local health care providers.

The Local Health Survey

The local health survey was the most ambitious element of the assessment project. In national and state health surveys, too few residents of rural counties are sampled to make county-level estimates for health indicators. By analyzing the survey responses of 1,834 Western U.P. residents, WUPHD was able to produce the most accurate and complete health data ever generated for this region, covering 70 critical measures of health.

One of the most interesting findings from the assessment, which wrapped up in April 2016, was the dramatic increase in insurance coverage since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

The complete 220-page report and an 8-page community version are available at the health department web site, www.wuphd.org.
Communicable Disease Reporting

One of the core functions of public health is to conduct surveillance for communicable diseases that may impact community health. Healthcare providers, facilities and laboratories are required to report to local public health the diagnosis of more than 60 diseases, from commonly occurring conditions like influenza to far less common ones, like tuberculosis. Reporting is mainly through the state’s computerized system monitored by health department staff.

Surveillance is important for rapidly identifying cases of infectious diseases and helping to limit their spread within households, schools, and neighborhoods. A sampling of communicable diseases monitored by local public health is presented below, with the number of confirmed cases in the district per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reportable Condition</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food-Borne Illnesses</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Bites</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vector Borne/Lyme Disease</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertussis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C (Acute &amp; Chronic)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonorrhea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Health Division

Public health programs protect the public from communicable and vaccine preventable diseases, and provide prevention and screening programs to special populations including pregnant women, children, and seniors.

2015 at a Glance

Maternal Infant Health Program
WUPHD provides nursing, nutrition and social work services to high-risk pregnant women and infants, with a goal of preventing infant health problems. Public health professionals provided families with 1,040 home and office visits in 2015, a 2 percent increase from 2014.

Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)
WIC improves the health of low- to moderate-income pregnant women, infants and young children by providing nutritious food, nutrition education, and screening and referral to health care services. In 2015, monthly enrollment averaged well over 1,400 clients.

Fluoride Varnish Program
275 young children received free fluoride varnish at health department clinics in 2015 to help prevent tooth decay, a 29 percent increase from 2014.

Children’s Special Health Care Services
CSHCS helps families with a child who has a chronic medical condition by paying for specialty care, medical equipment, and travel and lodging for medical appointments. 224 children were served in 2015, a 12 percent increase from 2014.

Hearing and Vision Screening
A trained technician screens children at area preschools and schools, to identify hearing and vision problems that can affect learning. Last year, 2,369 children were screened for hearing problems, resulting in 54 referrals for follow-up testing, while 3,862 children were screened for vision problems, with 211 referrals.
Family Planning
The health department provides low-cost reproductive health services on a sliding fee scale basis, provided by nurse practitioners and RNs. Services include physical exams and contraception dispensing. 416 people were served in 2015.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP)
Public health funding helps women access cancer screenings and other diagnostic and treatment services from providers across the region. 72 women were enrolled in the program in 2015, a 47 percent decline from 2014.

Immunization
In 2015, public health nurses administered more than 5,256 vaccinations to protect children and adults from diseases including influenza, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, chicken pox and pertussis, a 11 percent increase from 2014.

International Travel Vaccination Program
WUPHD helps international travelers review their immunization status and determine what vaccinations or medications they will need, and provides hepatitis A and B, Japanese encephalitis, polio, rabies, typhoid, and yellow fever vaccines, as well as malaria prophylaxis medications. In 2015, more than 150 travelers were served, with 108 typhoid and 36 yellow fever shots provided.

Senior Screening
Health department nurses and health educators provide free health screenings to Western U.P. residents age 60 and older, regardless of income. 83 seniors were screened in 2015.

Healthy Families Upper Peninsula
All 6 Upper Peninsula health departments collaborated in 2014 on a project to investigate the need for additional home visiting programs for children at-risk for adverse childhood experiences. Beginning in 2015, the departments began providing the Healthy Families program through a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

This nationally recognized, evidence-based program works with families who may have histories of trauma, intimate partner violence, mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Services begin prenatally or right after the birth of a baby. The program is offered voluntarily to families over a long-term period (up to 5 years). Services are provided by a Family Support worker. 12 families were served in our five-county area during this initial year.
Environmental Health Division

Environmental Health works to control physical conditions that could endanger health, by enforcing codes and ordinances, and by monitoring, inspection, educational outreach and consultation. Core EH programs include licensing and inspection of food service establishments, evaluating and permitting private water and sewage systems, and inspecting public campgrounds, pools and septage contractors. In addition, WUPHD protects the public and environment through child care and foster care inspections, mercury spill investigation, radon testing and education, tattoo and body art establishment regulation, and hazard complaint investigation.

Certified Food Manager Training
The Michigan Food Code requires all full-service food establishments to have a manager trained and certified in safe food-handling practices. To assist area facilities, the health department provides courses that train operators in all aspects of food safety. At the end of the two-day class, participants take an exam that fulfills the national certification standard. The health department held four certified food manager classes in 2015, with 191 individuals completing the two-day course, a more than 57 percent increase from 2014, helping to ensure that restaurant managers in the region have up-to-date food preparation knowledge.

Environmental Health Division By the Numbers

In 2015, EH sanitarians conducted 598 inspections at 398 licensed food establishments, a decrease from 606 in 2014. An additional 345 inspections were conducted for temporary licenses, mobile vendors, and reinspections.

91 site evaluations were conducted for new private wells, and 124 well permits were issued, consistent with numbers from 2014.

164 sewage site evaluations were completed in 2015, down from 243 in 2014.

Sanitarians conducted 77 complaint investigations in 2015. Complaint investigations run from concerns about restaurant cleanliness to reports of sewage system leaks and other sanitation and safety concerns.
Environmental Health Division
Quality Improvement

WUPHD’s Food Protection Program is enrolled in and follows FDA National Voluntary Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. FDA standards represent an effective, focused food safety program by providing the foundation and system upon which all regulatory programs can progress through a continuous improvement process. The agency received a $10,000 grant this year to support the purchase of training management software, the development of a Food Program Quality Assurance Policy, and an in-depth self-assessment of our food regulatory program. As an added benefit, this software and quality improvement model can be utilized by all divisions within the department.

The quality improvement project involved all of the food program staff and included an intensive record review and peer-to-peer joint inspections by field staff. A Michigan Department of Agriculture audit in August verified that our Health Department is meeting two additional FDA standards as a result of the project.

Temporary Food Permits
In addition to conducting regular inspections at more than 400 restaurants and other food establishments, the health department also issues many temporary food permits. Food vendors who operate for short periods at fundraisers, festivals and other community events could unwittingly become a source of hazardous food for large numbers of people. The health department works hard to educate these vendors on safe food handling, and issues temporary food licenses under the state food code. Last year, 143 temporary food licenses were issued.

Beach Monitoring
During the summer of 2015, water quality was monitored for E. coli bacteria weekly at 17 public beaches – 11 on Lake Superior and six on inland lakes. Testing is done in our lab in Hancock. The public is able to view test results on line, through a link at the health department web site.
In 2015, Ontonagon County became home to a new public dental clinic operated by Michigan Community Dental Clinics, Inc. on behalf of Western U.P. Health Department. The new clinic, located in Ewen, focuses on serving children and adults enrolled in Medicaid and the Delta Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Plan and MIChild insurance programs. This innovative partnership will improve access to oral health care for low-income residents.

Volunteering and Senior Health

The Western Upper Peninsula Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) invites adults age 55 and over to stay healthy and active by using their skills, talents, and life experience to make a difference in communities through volunteer service.

During 2015, 90 RSVP Volunteers provided more than 13,707 hours of service to 19 programs and organizations in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw counties. Since 2001, RSVP Volunteers have provided more than 171,785 hours of service across the Western Upper Peninsula. Since 2006, RSVP Volunteers have served 3,400 clients under the tax preparation assistance program.

Surveys say that 100 percent of our volunteers would recommend RSVP to their friends!

Community Health Programs

The health department promotes healthy lifestyle choices through traditional health education and promotion programs, and with policy, systems and environmental changes that encourage and support healthy behaviors like daily physical activity and good nutrition, while aiming to reducing tobacco use and obesity, the leading root causes of preventable deaths.

School-based Programs, Policies and Planning

In 2015, the health department completed the three-year federally funded CATCH-UP project, which provided curriculum, equipment and teacher training to 12 elementary schools and nine summer and after-school sites. Through a state Building Healthy Communities grant, we worked with schools to build gardens, greenhouses, and sidewalks for safer walking and biking to school. And with help from the U.P. Food Exchange and community partners, we worked with school administrators and food service managers to make locally grown food a regular feature on school lunch menus.

Nutrition Programs

Health educators worked with 15 classes of 5th-graders in six elementary schools to encourage consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables using Cooking With Kids, an evidence-based, hands-on curriculum where students prepare and sample healthy meals. The health department also played a lead role in the Western U.P. Food Hub, which works to strengthen local food systems, linking producers and consumers.

Active Transportation Planning

The health department participates in several committees and coalitions aimed at improving active transportation policy and infrastructure, including the Hancock Bike and Pedestrian Committee, which worked with Hancock’s city council and planning commission to pass a Complete Streets ordinance last year. When people of all ages can safely walk and bike to work and school, the healthy choice – daily physical activity – becomes the easy choice.
Income Statement
Year Ended Sept. 30, 2015

Revenues and Financing Sources

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>5-County Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees for Services</td>
<td>$1,638,209</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Public Health Funding (State)</td>
<td>$405,256</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDCH &amp; MDEQ Grants &amp; Contracts (State)</td>
<td>$1,161,646</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal, Regional &amp; Private Grants</td>
<td>$287,091</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE and FUNDING</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,027,536</strong></td>
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Expenditures and Financing Uses

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Salaries</td>
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<td>Fringes</td>
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<td>Travel</td>
<td>$120,408</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies &amp; Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$381,552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracted Services</td>
<td>$208,928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repairs, Utilities, Communications &amp; Other</td>
<td>$247,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Funds Available</td>
<td>$218,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND SURPLUS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,027,536</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes on Finances in 2015

The health department’s Fiscal Year 2015 total revenue was $4,027,536 and the cost of operation was $3,808,794, producing a year-end surplus of $218,742.

One reason for this unexpected surplus was the receipt of settlement payments from Medicaid based upon prior years’ cost reporting. These excess funds will help bolster the agency’s overall financial position as we seek innovative ways to provide cost effective services in the future.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) redefined how we are reimbursed for services and the types of direct services that we can provide. As we navigate these changes in scope and practice, we will be seeking ways to collaborate with community partners to provide services and programs that focus increasingly more on prevention and self-management of chronic disease.

The agency budget for next year will be tight as we face increased pressure to cover pension obligations and maintain aging facilities while state funding continues to decline. The agency increasingly relies on the allocations provided by our member counties. The agency will continue to seek grant opportunities that expand our role in promoting overall population health strategies and prioritize needs identified in the 2015 community health needs assessment.
Western Upper Peninsula Board of Health

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Del Rajala

Ontonagon County
John Cane, Chairman
John Pelkola

It is the mission of Western Upper Peninsula Health Department to lead the community toward better health through education, advocacy and disease prevention

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