

Forest County Health Department

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Forest County, WI Health Department
Public Health
prevent. promote. protect.



**Forest County –
Healthy People in Healthy
Communities**

Mission: *To protect and promote health and prevent disease and injury by providing services essential for a healthy community.*

Values:

- Respect
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Empowerment
- Flexibility
- Collaboration

Board of Health Members 2020

Chairperson: Larry Berg (January – April, 2020)

Chairperson: Scott Goode (April – May, 2020)

Chairperson: Lynne Black (May – present)

Kellee Gallion (January – April, 2020)

Randy Burl (January – July, 2020)

Cheri Collins (April – present)

Cindy Gretzinger

Candy Dailey

Amy Kuebler

Dr. Susan Moore, Medical Advisor

Forest County Health Department Staff



Jacee Shepard BSN, RN
Director/Health Officer



Holli Denton BSN, RN
Public Health Nurse



Kathryn Kincaid, RN
Registered Staff Nurse



Julie Weber
Public Health Assistant



Chris Slagowski
Public Health Clerk



Brenda Husing
Registered Dietitian (part time)
(January- November, 2020)



Steffany Weber
Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
(part time)

Not pictured: Melissa Denton,
Jill Krueger
(COVID-19 response staff)



These 10 Essential Public Health Services identify the actions necessary to provide the protection and improvement of public health. This image shows how the 10 essential public health services align with the 3 Core Functions of public health, which are assessment, policy development, and assurance.

Community Health Improvement

Local health departments are required by law to develop a health improvement plan based on a community needs assessment every 5 years.

Forest County Health Department is collaborating with Oneida and Vilas Counties and Ascension/Ministry Health on a 2016-2020 plan that is available on our website at www.forestcountypublichealth.org

Priority Areas:

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Mental Health
- Chronic Disease



Creating a Path to Better Health



Top Causes of Death in 2020

- #1 All Other
- #2 Cancer
- #3 Heart Disease
- #4 Accidents
- #5 Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease

FCHD is involved in many coalitions and work groups throughout Forest County and the northern region of Wisconsin to work on improving the priority areas determined in our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and overall health and well-being of Forest County residents.

Due to COVID-19 response, FCHD staff was not able to be as involved in coalition work as past years. We look forward to continuing this work into 2021.

What We Are Doing

Working with the Community Coalition of Forest County and other partners to coordinate prescription drug and safe sharps disposal events. Coordinating a Partnership for Success grant to increase awareness through educational materials and events, train law enforcement, and form a Drug Endangered Children committee to respond to the need for services for our families who are struggling with addiction.



Working with Forest County Partnership to provide leadership training at all three schools, Brighter Futures Conference for all 11th graders, and Red Ribbon Week activities.



Working with Tri-County COPE to improve on access to substance abuse and mental health treatment and raising awareness of mental health concerns. Staff is trained in QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer which is a program to train community members on how to respond to suicidal individuals.

Working with Forest County CAN Coalition to increase opportunities for physical activity and increase access to healthier foods.



The health department supported a community garden that provided fresh produce for local pantries and senior meal sites.



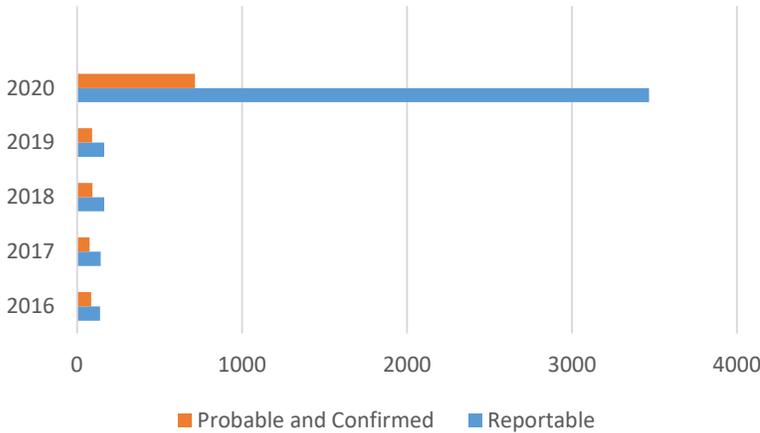
Communicable Disease

By law specific diseases must be reported to local health departments. Staff receive these reports through an electronic reporting system called Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) and investigate in order to stop the spread

Wis. Stat. 252.05

Any health care provider who knows or has reason to believe a person treated or visited by him or her has a communicable disease is required to report per Administrative Rule DHS 145.04 (1), this includes reporting of a case or suspected case.

Reportable Communicable Diseases



Reportable Diseases include all illnesses consistent with a disease whether or not it is lab confirmed.

We investigated 3,468 diseases. This is an increase of 2,002% compared to 165 investigated diseases in 2019. This is due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Probable Diseases are those illnesses that meet the clinical case definition and is not laboratory confirmed.

Confirmed Diseases are illnesses that meet the case definition and are confirmed by laboratory testing.

Most common diseases:

- Coronavirus 673 confirmed
- Lyme Disease 15 confirmed
- Chlamydia 14 confirmed
- Influenza (Hospitalizations) 3 confirmed
- Campylobacteriosis 2 confirmed

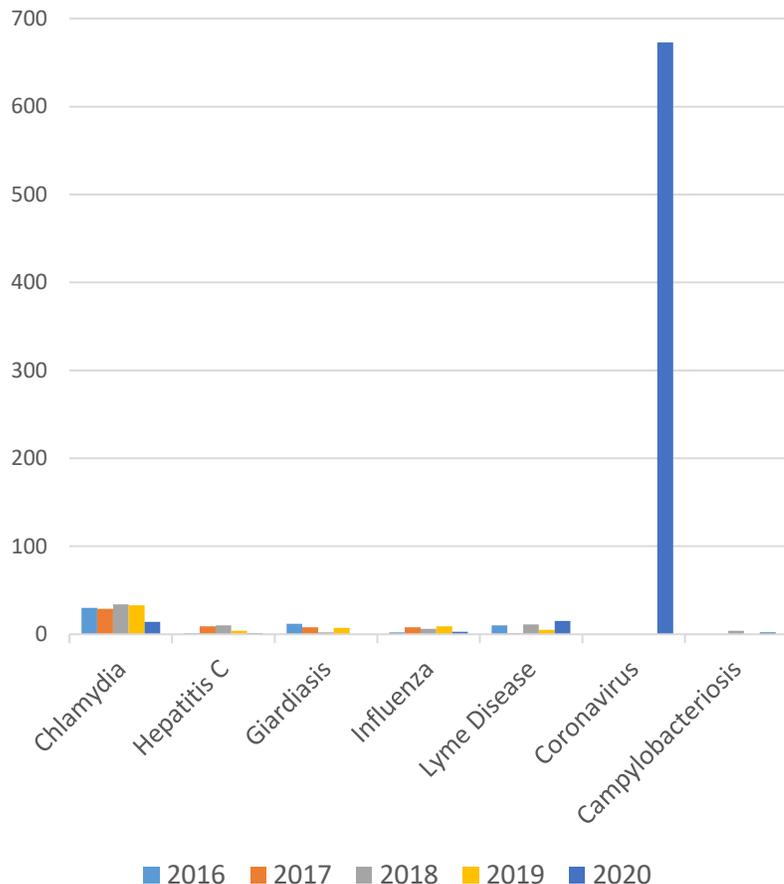
The health department investigates animal bites as part of our **Rabies Prevention Program.**

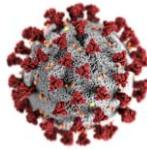
In 2020 we investigated **30** animal bites. 0 animals were sent to the state lab for follow up rabies testing.

FCHD provides Tuberculosis skin tests to screen health care workers and students before they enter the workforce to make sure they do not spread disease.

We provided 13 skin tests in 2020.

Communicable Disease Trends





Background

Covid-19 is a viral respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats (CDC). The US saw its first COVID-19 case on January 21, 2020. Forest County saw its first positive cases starting in May of 2020. Governor Evers declared a State of Emergency on March 12, 2020 in Wisconsin, and the Forest County Board of Supervisors declared a local state of Emergency in Forest County on March 24, 2020. By the end of 2020 we had 819 total confirmed and probable cases in Forest County and 23 deaths from COVID-19. This has been a rapidly evolving situation from the start for everyone who is involved.

Public Information and Education

Public Health plays an important role in providing updated information and education to the community during emergencies. Our staff responded to thousands of phone calls and emails regarding COVID-19. We sent over 71 press releases to our local newspapers regarding COVID-19 and posted to our website and Facebook page daily. We created a data dashboard to inform the public on the number of tests completed, number of positive and negative results, number of hospitalized patients, recovered cases and deaths.



Partner Collaboration and Communication

We communicated daily with schools, nursing homes, businesses, tribes, law enforcement, emergency management and clinics with virtual meetings. We worked with Emergency management to order PPE and have it delivered to area providers.

Guidance and Resource Sharing

We provided guidance and recommendations for local businesses, schools, health care facilities, nursing home, community members, other county departments, and various community organizations on infection control and best practices.

Disease Investigation and Contact Tracing

We hired two additional part time staff to assist with disease investigation and contact tracing. The nurses worked 7 days a week at the beginning of the response, contacting positive cases, suspect cases and contacts, and going over isolation and quarantine procedures in addition to fielding hundreds of calls from community members. Public health was the lead agency to provide consultation and guidance to our local clinics and tribes.

Testing

The health department coordinated community testing sites with the Wisconsin National Guard to provide a free, convenient testing opportunity for community members.

Vaccine

Much of the later part of 2020 was spent preparing to vaccinate our community once a vaccine was approved. In December 2020 the first vaccines were approved by the FDA under EUA (Emergency Use Authorization). We were able to start planning for mass vaccination in the New Year.

Looking at 2021

We anticipate declining rates of Covid-19 due to social distancing, masks, handwashing and sanitation practices and vaccination.



Emergency Preparedness

The department receives grant funding through the Department of Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to support public health preparedness activities. Each year we focus on two of the CDC Public Health Emergency Capabilities.



Our Local Partners:

Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services, Hospitals and Clinics, Tribal Agencies, Fire Departments, Law Enforcement, American Red Cross, Schools and Volunteer groups. We work to make sure local plans are in place and reviewed on a regular basis and participate in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). We are also working to improve communication with our partners and the public when an emergency happens. We continue to work on our plans for mass vaccination of the public if the need arises and participate in annual trainings to improve our skills.



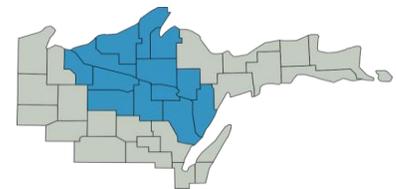
Our Regional Partners:

We are part of a Health Care Coalition that includes Region 2 local public health, hospitals, clinics and tribes. Each year we work with the coalition to complete a table-top exercise to improve our planning and test our capabilities. We also meet with our bordering counties in Michigan on a regular basis to prepare and plan.

Mutual Aid

The health department has several mutual aid agreements in place to assist us when needed. Northern Regional Local Public Health Departments, Wisconsin Disaster Medical Reserve Corps, Wisconsin/Michigan Border County. We also have MOUs in place with local agencies, Forest County Potawatomi and Sokaogon Chippewa tribes to assist with response and recovery.

Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalitions (HERC)



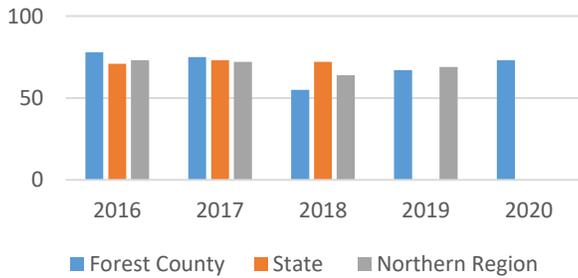
Northwood's Syndromic Surveillance

Forest County Health Department is a member of this group of Northern Wisconsin health care providers who work to ensure that agencies are kept up to date with timely information and guidelines on communicable disease events.

Having these preparedness plans, partnerships and mutual aid in place were critical pieces in our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

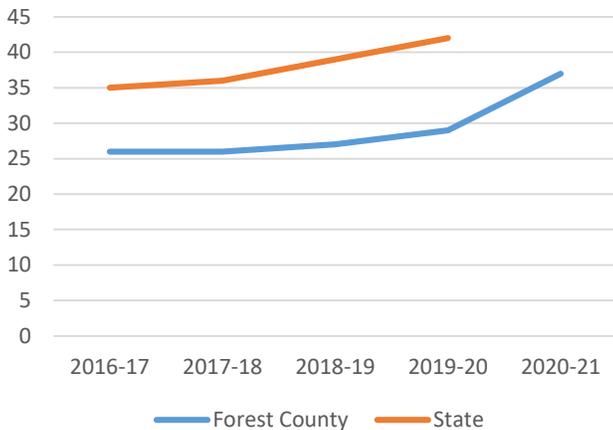
Immunizations

24 month old up to date with all recommended vaccines

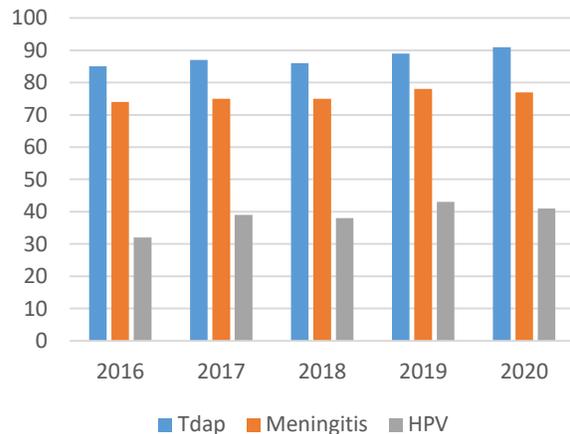


Schools and Day Care Providers are required by law (Wis. Stat. 252.04) to report child immunization status to the Health Department. We work with the schools and daycares to ensure the reporting forms are completed timely.

Adult Flu Immunization Rates



13 to 18 Year Old Vaccination Rates



The Health Department has taken part in a school mass vaccination clinic to offer students flu vaccine free of charge while testing our capability to provide mass clinic vaccines off-site.

The Health Department is part of the Northwood's Immunization Coalition which focuses on improving vaccination rates, increasing access to care, vaccine education, and being prepared for mass vaccination.

School Influenza Mass Clinic Numbers

- 2017: 171 doses
- 2018: 202 doses for an increase of 18%
- 2019: 280 doses for an increase of 39%
- 2020: 243 doses for a decrease of 13%

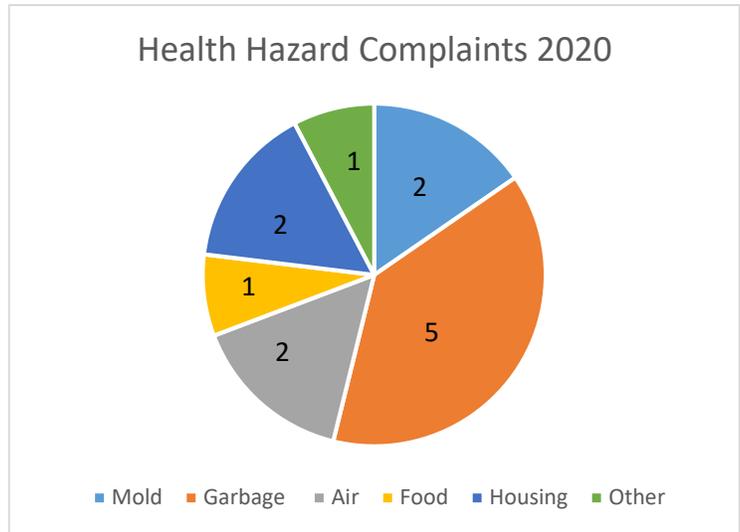


437 vaccinations were given by the health department in 2020. 38 were given free to children under the Vaccine for Children Program. 434 were administered to adults and of those, 383 were flu shots.

Environmental Programs

Health Hazards

A wide variety of Human Health Hazards from water, air, housing, garbage and a variety of other issues are investigated through a process that typically starts as a complaint. If property owners do not comply with removal of the hazard, a citation may be issued. We investigated 13 health hazard complaints in 2020.



Radon: 14 radon tests were sold to Forest County residents in 2020. 2 of the results were above the recommended level and required either re-testing or remediation.



Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning

Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health.

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

Lead: 60 children were screened for lead in Forest County in 2020 and none were found to have lead poisoning. Parents are given educational information on the environmental risk factors and the symptoms of increased lead in the blood.



Water Testing: The health department offers free water test kits to Forest County residents who have well water with pregnant women or small children in the home. We assist families with information and referrals to other agencies if water is found to be unsafe. In 2020, 4 well water test kits were provided, however, testing was not completed on any of the wells. Transient non-community water supplies are tested and inspected by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources ensuring safe and dependable water to the public.

Licensing and Inspections: Our department relies on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to inspect Forest County food operations, lodging establishments, restaurants, pools and campgrounds. Inspection reports can be found at <http://healthspace.com/Clients/WI/State/web.nsf/home.xsp>



Maternal Child Health Programs

Oral Health:

The Forest County Health Department provides fluoride supplements to children 6 months to 16 years old with non-fluoridated water supply. Unfortunately, in 2020, we did not provide any supplements and most of our in-person services were completed virtually.



Northwood's Dental Project:

We partner with the project to provide FREE fluoride varnish to children 6 months to 5 years and FREE dental sealants to all 2nd and 6th graders at all of our schools by a mobile dental clinic. The program includes oral health education, oral health exams and referrals for dental care. This program is offered FREE due to a Wisconsin Seal A Smile Grant. Unfortunately, the program was suspended during 2020-2021 school year due to COVID-19 pandemic. We are hopeful to continue this program in the 2021-2022 school year.



Child Passenger Safety:

The Health Department has a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and we are able to provide education and assistance to parents on how to choose the correct seat and check that it is installed safely. We are able to give away a limited number of car seats to low income families. In 2020, 13 parents received free car seats and education from the health department. All parents increased their knowledge of how to correctly install a seat.



Child Death Review:

Forest County Health Department is the lead agency for a community wide child death review team. Members come together to review child death information and collaborate on ways to prevent injury. Three Life jacket loaner stations were established in 2017 - two on Lake Metonga in Crandon and one on Silver Lake in Laona. These continued to be utilized by community members and visitors in 2020.

Programs

First Breath:

First Breath is a smoking cessation program for pregnant woman. The program offers nonjudgmental support and counseling and incentives. There were no women referred during 2020 due to COVID-19 response and staff capacity. The health department is will continue to work with other providers in our community to provide the First Breath Cessation program in 2021.

Prenatal Care Coordination:

High risk pregnant women who are on Medicaid can enroll in our PNCC program to receive education and case management with a goal of having a healthy baby. There were no women enrolled in 2020 due to COVID-19 response.



There were
108 Births in
Forest
County in
2020

School Health:

Health department nurses provide consultation to school districts and Head Starts related to school illness and communicable disease, school wellness policy, emergency services, and more. We provide education on a wide variety of topics at the schools' request, participate in wellness events, and offer wellness challenges and taste testing. Medication administration review and training is provided to Wabeno School District and Laona School District. No taste tests or health fairs were done this year due to COVID-19.



Women, Infants and Children WIC & Fit Families

The **Forest County WIC program** helps income eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who recently had a baby, infants and children up to age 5 who are at a health risk due to nutrition.

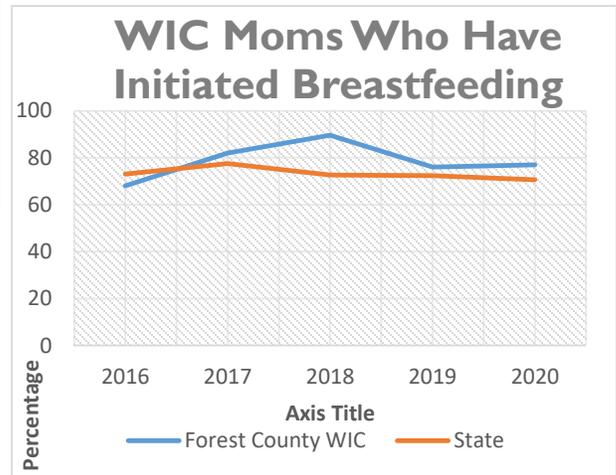


Participants receive nutrition counseling, education, learn about other services and receive WIC approved foods. We averaged **152 clients** per month in 2020.

\$ 82,431.47 of WIC approved food was redeemed at our WIC approved grocery store in Forest County. **\$618** of farmer market coupons were redeemed at WIC approved farm stands.

WIC Peer Breastfeeding Counselor assists our WIC mothers with education and resources needed to be successful at breastfeeding. 77% of our WIC moms initiated breastfeeding and that continues to be above the state average for 2020.

Northwood's Breastfeeding Coalition is working to promote breastfeeding as the natural nourishment for infants and working to improve rates.



Fit Families: Fit Families is an evidenced based behavior change program for families with 2-4-year-old children who are at risk for overweight. The year-long program works with families to set goals and helps them achieve success. It has been found to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, reduce sugary beverages, reduce screen time and increase physical activity.



24 children were actively enrolled in the program in 2020

- 83% of participants met their goal to decrease juice per day
- 82% of participants met their goal to consume no more than 1 sweet beverage per week
- 91% met their goal to be physically active for 60 minutes per day.
- 46% ate at least 4 servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- 82% met their goal to limit screen time to less than 2 hours per day.

Other

Lifeline Services: The health department coordinates a county wide Life Line Program with Langlade Aspirus Hospital. We currently have 35 people on the program.

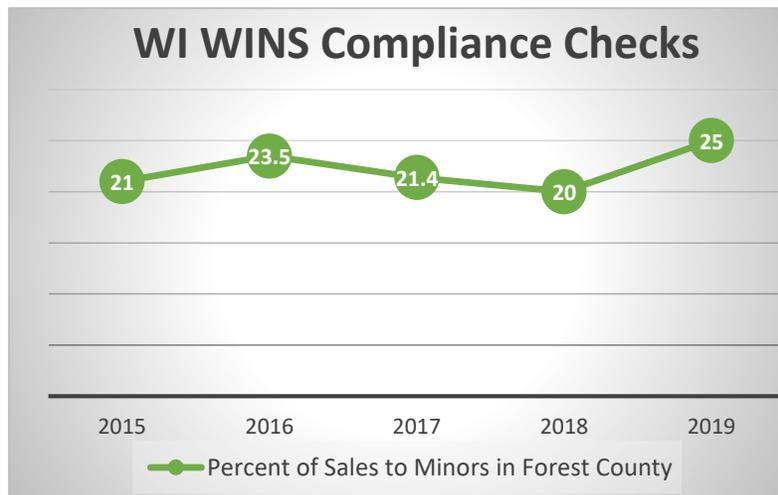


Blood Pressure Screenings: We provide blood pressure screenings in the community at meal sites, community events, worksites or at the office. We provided blood pressure clinics in February prior to COVID-19 pandemic.

Tobacco Prevention: WI WINS Program is designed to monitor the sales of tobacco to minors at our tobacco retailers. Education and information is offered to businesses each year.

Northwood's Tobacco Free Coalition is a seven county coalition working to address tobacco related health concerns in our communities. A few of the focus areas include:

- Outreach to local & state leaders
- Addressing the dangers of other tobacco products like E-cigarettes
- WI WINS Compliance Checks



Due to COVID-19 pandemic, compliance checks were not completed in 2020.

Health Education: The health department typically provides educational sessions on a variety of health topics throughout the community. Due to COVID-19, many opportunities to provide in person health education were cancelled.

We submitted over 90 different public awareness articles either in newspapers, social media or newsletters. 71 of these press releases was related to COVID-19.

We send a postpartum newsletter and educational information to all new mothers in Forest County.

Our website forestcountypublichealth.org provides information on our programs and services and community events and resources. You can also find us on Facebook where we post and share health information and events.

Workforce Development: In order to provide the highest quality public health service, the Forest County Health Department strives to ensure that staff possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. Typically, staff complete the Public Health Core Competencies each year to determine training needs and also attend trainings and conferences to keep abreast of emerging public health issues but due to COVID-19 these competencies were not completed in 2020.

Professional Memberships:



NACCHO National Association of County and City Health Officials

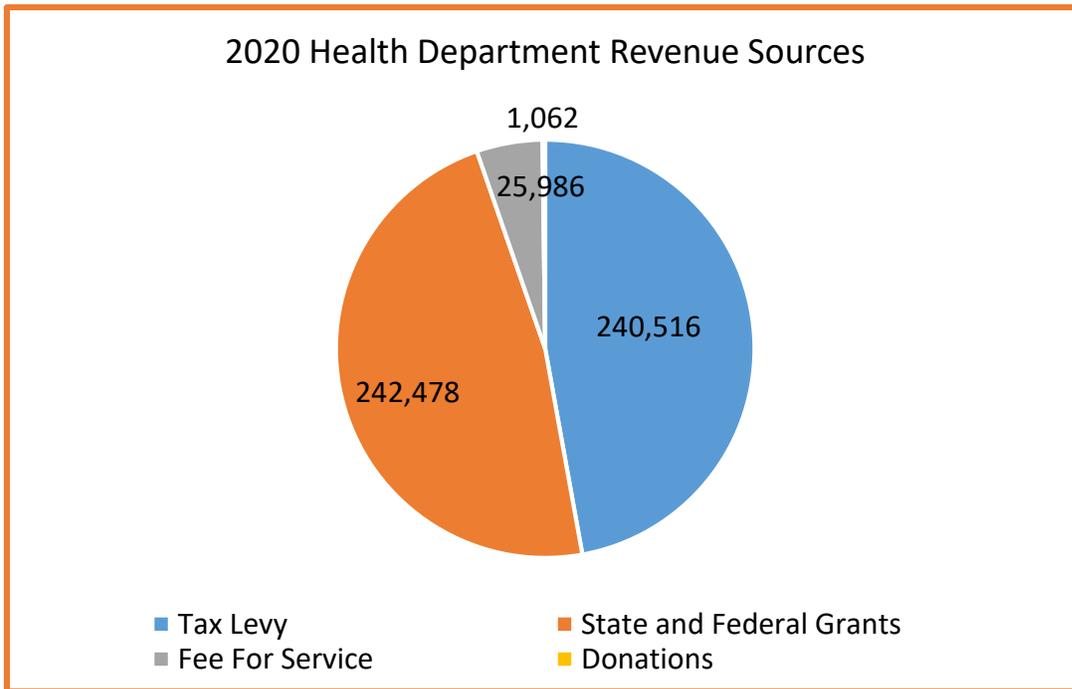
Wisconsin WIC Association (Women, Infants and Children)

WPHA Wisconsin Public Health Association



WALDHAB Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments & Boards

Performance Management: Each year we establish benchmarks for specific programs and monitor the progress towards meeting the targets throughout the year. Typically staff collectively choose a Quality Improvement project each year. Due to COVID-19 in 2020, we were not able to complete a Quality Improvement project.



Forest County Health Department
200 East Madison Street
Crandon, WI 54520
715-478-3371

<http://forestcountypublichealth.org/>

