



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

2023

Annual Report



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Message From Public Health Director



Ashley Waite

Lewis County Public Health Director

I am pleased to share the 2023 Lewis County Public Health Annual Report with our community. The work we do here at Public Health is always changing, yet what remains constant is our mission to promote and protect the health of our community. This report gives us an opportunity to highlight the important work we do each year and tracks the progress we have made over the years. Tracking this legacy is not only important for seeing how far we have come, but also how far we have to go.

The last 3 annual reports have really highlighted the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tone of this year's annual report is far different. 2023 was a year of building momentum to better serve our community. Our focus is really to build community wellness and resilience, with health equity at the forefront of all we do. We want all residents to have an equal opportunity to live a healthy life. To make this happen, we must make the systems and structures that exist allow even the most vulnerable to live well. Public Health has been and will remain a voice for health equity for all.

2023 was the start of a new Community Health Improvement Plan, and thanks to dedicated community partners, it started off with a lot of success. Community partnerships are at the heart of all we do here at Public Health. We can not impact health outcomes or quality of life alone, it takes an entire community working toward the same vision.

I am excited to share the success we have had in 2023 and I look forward to what the next year will bring for Lewis County. In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the staff, leadership and community partners for the continued commitment to the health of our community.

Public Health Team



ASHLEY WAITE, PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

Shereen Palmer, Medical Director
Sarah Zeger, Rabies Control Officer

VACANT, DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

Stephanie Houser Fouse, Public Health Specialist
Sierra Kempney, Public Health Specialist
Allyson Petrus, Public Health Specialist
Jennifer Edick, Public Health Specialist



MARCIA ASHLINE, SUPERVISING PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

Michelle Beyer-Zehr, Communicable Disease Nurse
Anna Birchenough, Immunization Nurse
Emily Ward, Lead Poisoning Prevention Nurse
Maryann Vargulick, Per Diem Nurse
Ellen Scanlon, Per Diem Nurse
Mary Kimbrell, Per Diem Nurse
Cheryl Kelly, Per Diem Nurse
Dan Moyer, Animal Control Officer

JOE AUSTIN, FISCAL MANAGER



Bernadette Desantis, Senior Account Clerk
Erica Brown, Senior Account Clerk
Temperance Lyndaker, Account Clerk
Kim Gould, Administrative Assistant
Charla Main, Administrative Assistant



REBECCA KELLY, CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS COORDINATOR

Cathy Dosztan, Early Intervention Service Coordinator
April Seymour Ritz, Early Intervention Service Coordinator

Public Health

MISSION

To promote and protect the health of our community.

VISION

Healthy people living in a healthy community.



INTEGRITY



TEAMWORK



COMMUNITY FOCUS



INNOVATION



EXCELLENCE



COLLABORATION



ACCOUNTABILITY

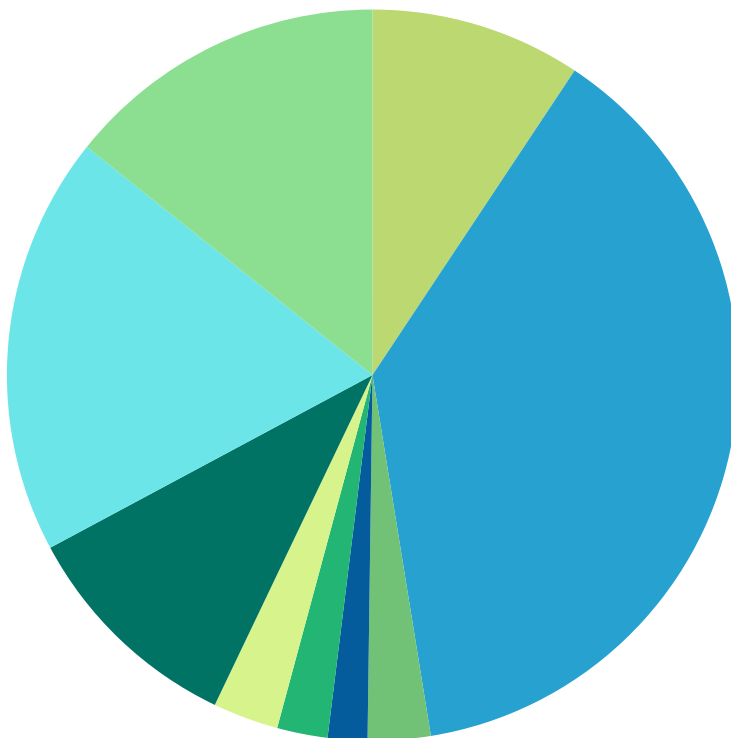
2023 Expenses

Below is a list of expenses by program for 2023 totaling \$3,695,324

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Early Intervention | \$344,657 |
| Preschool Special Education | \$1,408,585 |
| Lead Poisoning Prevention | \$102,390 |
| Injury Prevention | \$64,570 |
| Family Health | \$82,639 |
| Chronic Disease Prevention | \$107,129 |
| Communicable Disease Control | \$372,253 |
| Emergency Preparedness | \$685,656 |
| Agency Administration | \$527,427 |

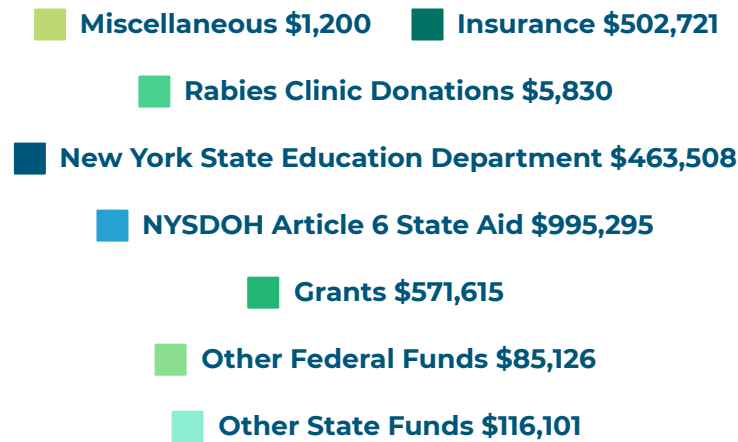
Public Health received a large grant to help schools and daycares reopen safely during the pandemic. 2023 was the last year of this funding and the excess money was used to buy schools and daycares supplies to stop the spread of infections. This spending is reflected in the Emergency Preparedness expenses. Below is a breakdown of the supplies distributed to the schools and daycares in Lewis County.

Personal Protective Equipment-
455 Cases
Cleaning Supplies-508 cases
Hand Sanitizers-229 cases
Tissues-204 cases
HVAC Air Filters-2,813
Air Purifiers-87 units



2023 Revenue

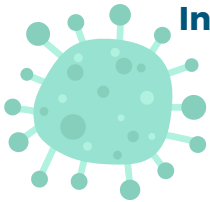
Below is a list of revenue by source for 2023 totaling \$2,741,398



- Public Health bills insurance for immunizations, rabies post exposure, early intervention, and preschool special education services.
- Monies received from the New York State Education Department are for preschool special education services.
- Public Health receives Article 6 State Aid for core public health services required by the NYSDOH.
- Grants include Early Intervention Administration, Lead Poisoning Prevention, Immunizations, Emergency Preparedness, Rabies, and the Public Health Infrastructure Grant.

Public Health in Action

Communicable Disease Investigations



2021- 418

2022-579

2023-942

Immunizations Given



2021-11,410

2022-2,403

2023-1,072

Tuberculosis Skin Tests



2021-85

2022-85

2023-151

Rabies Exposure Investigations



2021-135

2022-148

2023-160

Pets Vaccinated



2021-743

2022-770

2023-741

Animal Control Officer Visits



2021-26

2022-42

2023-63

Evidenced Based Program Participants



2021-13

2022-18

2023-36

Pounds Lost by DPP Participants



2021-75

2022-149

2023-360

Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels



2021-28

2022-19

2023-36

Free Hemoglobin and Lead Tests



2021-30

2022-59

2023-74

Maternal Infant Home Visits



2021-10

2022-7

2023-14

Health Education Outreach Events



2021-1

2022-12

2023-45

Social Media Views



2021-711,958

2022-157,118

2023-129,683

Social Media Engagements



2021-77,461

2022-28,093

2023-25,480

Naturally Healthy App Downloads



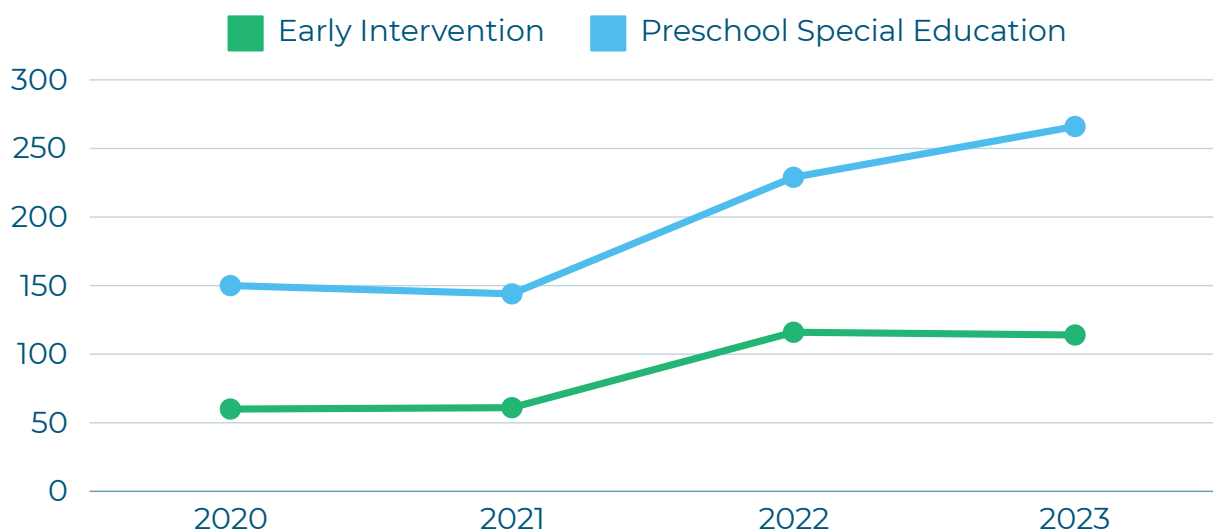
2021-274

2022-365

2023-435

Children with Special Needs Programs

As you can see in the graph below, more children are requiring the services provided by the Early Intervention Program and the Preschool Special Education Program. On top of an increase in children requiring services we are also seeing a decrease in the number of providers offering these services. Staff are working diligently to keep wait times down for services.



Becky Kelly, Children with Special Needs Coordinator during Story Time celebrating Early Intervention Month

Early Intervention

2021-61
2022-116
2023-114

Preschool Special Education

2021-144
2022-229
2023-266

Child Find

2021-15
2022-30
2023-19

Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs

2021-9
2022-61
2023-140

Community Health Improvement Plan

Every 3 years a full Community Health Assessment is completed. Based on this health assessment health priorities are chosen in collaboration with community stakeholders to work on for the next 3 years. 2023 was the start of a new 3 year plan, priorities included obesity, smoking, binge drinking, suicide and fall prevention.

Great progress was made on the community health improvement plan in 2023. A huge success was the passing of the Lewis County Complete Streets Plan and Policy. With one of the highest obesity rates in the state it is critical we start to build the infrastructure to allow our residents to make healthy choices. Thank you to the community leaders and partners that made the adoption of this policy possible.



Getting Ahead Graduates

2021-11
2022-16
2023-16

Individuals trained in Bridges out of Poverty

2021-0
2022-56
2023-137

Poverty is perhaps the most powerful social determinant of health, for this reason we have included Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World as part of our Community Health Improvement Plan. This program empowers individuals living in poverty to build their own stability and live a better life. In addition to Getting Ahead, we now have a Staying Ahead group that offers ongoing support for graduates as they build a more stable life.

Bridges Lewis County was awarded a mini wellness grant that allowed national trainers to come to Lewis County to train first responders and healthcare personnel in Bridges out of Poverty concepts in 2023. Bridges Learning Collaboratives also started in 2023, these will give individuals trained in Bridges concepts an opportunity to stay engaged in this work.

Suicide Prevention

Lewis County has the highest suicide rate in New York State. The Suicide Prevention Coalition works to lower this rate by providing education to the community and coordinating suicide prevention resources. In 2023, the coalition participated in 9 outreach events. Throughout September the coalition did a Facebook Campaign to raise suicide awareness, they received 350 entries in the raffle. At the end of 2023, the coalition distributed 5,525 coasters containing local and national mental health resources to Lewis County bars and restaurants.

The Lewis County Suicide Bereavement Support Group continues to meet monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6pm, in the basement of the Lowville Free Library. The group has 5 consistent members and welcomes any suicide loss survivors.

Lewis County Traumatic Loss Team celebrated their 5th anniversary in 2023 and continues to support community members who have been impacted by a recent sudden or traumatic loss.

Traumatic Loss Team Calls

2021-6

2022-8

2023-13

Individuals Trained

2021-19

2022-123

2023-133

Gun Locks Distributed

2021-100

2022-100

2023-300



Highlights



National Public Health week is held the first week of April every year. It is a time to recognize the accomplishments and importance of Public Health. Public Health Staff celebrated the week by going for a wellness walk as a team as well as highlighting what Public Health means to each team member on our social media accounts.

Public Health collaborated with the Lewis County Fair and other community partners to bring Colt's Corner to the Fair in 2023. Colt's Corner was a quiet space to allow individuals with a sensory disorder or overstimulated children/adults to take a break and reset from all the sights, sounds, and smells of the fair.



Anna Platz, Deputy Public Health Director participated in Beaver River Central School's Career Day. Anna shared about the many career possibilities in the Public Health field and spoke with students about what we do at Lewis County Public Health.

Public Health educated 270 children at Farm Safety Day. Staff presented information about tick bite prevention, Lyme disease and poison prevention.



Highlights



Public Health started doing monthly education sessions at NRCIL's social club. A variety of health topics are covered in these presentations.

Public Health started presenting at the Healthy Knights program at Copenhagen School. A different health topic is covered every month with all children in their elementary school.



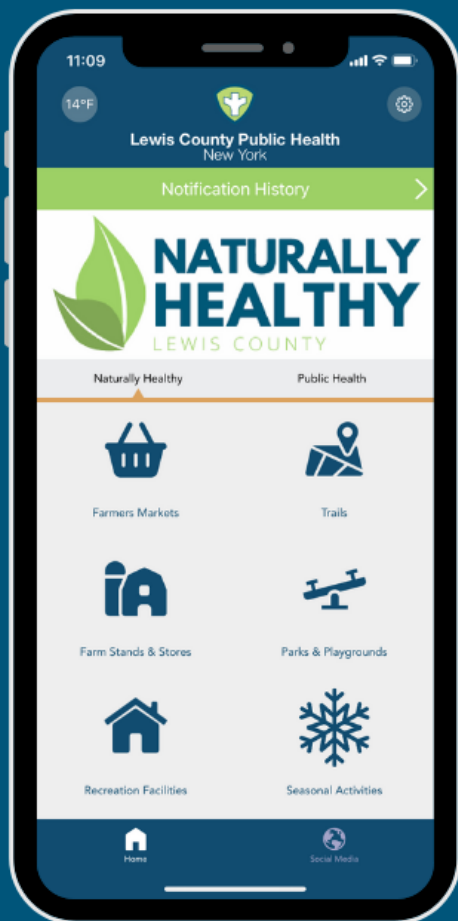
Public Health held an annual emergency preparedness drill in conjunction with our annual flu/covid vaccine clinic at the Lowville Firehall in November.



Public Health did an "It's Real" presentation to 100 students at Beaver River. This presentation raises awareness about mental health issues, how to start a conversation about mental health, the importance of self-care, and how to reach out for help.



Naturally Healthy App



Did you know we have an App? The Naturally Healthy App is an app designed to help residents find free physical activity opportunities as well as fresh local produce. Public Health staff update locations of farm stands, farmers markets, trails, parks, and seasonal activities quarterly.

In addition to the above information, public health also uses this app to communicate to the users about upcoming rabies clinics, immunization clinics, new health information, and upcoming evidence based classes.

Public Health also utilizes the app during emergencies. Push notifications are sent to users with important information about how to keep themselves and their families safe and healthy during an emergency. The app was used for this during the poor air quality event in the summer of 2023.



SCAN
TO DOWNLOAD