

BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



# LETTER FROM MEDICAL DIRECTOR AND HEALTH OFFICER

As we reflect upon 2021, we brainstormed a few words to describe the last year. The words that best depict our staff and agency were **commitment**, **growth**, and **collaboration**. As the demands and constant changes of COVID-19 kept us adapting to the changing variants and needs of our citizens, one thing never wavered: our commitment to our communities.

Our dedicated full-time and temporary staff, community partners, and hundreds of volunteers showed an incredible level of commitment, - the kind required to keep our communities healthy and protected amid the continuing pandemic.

From staff shifting to new roles and responsibilities to meet new needs of the community, to the hundreds of amazing volunteers who signed up to be greeters or provide vaccinations - we simply could not have done it without the support and collaboration of the community!

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department celebrated its 25th year in October 2021. When Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department separated from Grand Traverse County Health Department, we had 25 employees. Our agency has come a long way, and we now have 48 part-time/full-time employees who provide a large diversity of specialties.

On the following pages you will read about the work our staff, along with other partners, did to continue to provide the myriad of services our Health Department offers to assure our community has pure water to drink, safe food establishments to visit with family and friends, and other lifesaving programs for children, men and women. Throughout the pandemic, our staff continued to provide all our essential services and did so professionally and empathetically.

We hope you'll enjoy reading highlights of the challenging, but amazing year for our staff, volunteers, and communities have shared.



**JOSHUA MEYERSON, MD, MPH**

*Medical Director*



**LISA PEACOCK, MSN, MPH, RN, WHNP-BC**

*Health Officer*

## ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Medical Director: Joshua Meyerson, MD, MPH

Health Officer: Lisa Peacock, MSN, MPH, RN, WHNP-BC

Personal Health Director: Michelle Klein, RN, MA, PH-C

Assistant Director: Debbie Aldridge, RN

Personal Health Supervisor: Autumn Jurek, RN IBCLC

Personal Health Supervisor: Betsy Hardy, MSN, RN

Public Health Technician Supervisor: Kerry Turner, MBA

Director of Administrative Services: Dodie Putney, BS

Environmental Health Director: Eric Johnston, RS

## BOARD OF HEALTH

Chairperson: Dr. Barbara Conley

Vice Chairperson: Gary Sauer

Members:

William Bunek

Patricia Soutas-Little

Dr. Mark Kuiper

Rhonda Nye

# PERSONAL HEALTH

## PERSONAL HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

- Debbie Aldridge was promoted to Assistant Director.
- Betsy Hardy was promoted to Personal Health Supervisor.
- Bobbi Scott was promoted to Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.
- Courtney Yapple completed Community Health Worker Training.
- Robin Ronk completed Community Health Worker Training.
- Syringe Service Program collaborated with Harm Reduction of Northern Michigan to provide additional support and resources.
- Several important steps were taken toward addressing the mental health gap: school-based services, Leelanau County mental health workgroup, MomPower, Regional Behavioral Health Summit, and Leelanau Early Childhood Services.
- Regional Grant allowed for a full-time Social Worker in Suttons Bay Public Schools.
- Increased our innovative communication to the public and built a better social media presence. Facebook followers increased from 100 to 2,500 in under 12 months and an Instagram account was created for the health department.



Photo: Community Connection Team (left to right: Lady Palmer, CHW. Debbie Aldridge, RN, Lauren Wolf, LMSW, Carolina Tabora-Cortez, CHW, Gabby Casares, CHW, Vicky Kriskywicz, CHW, Robin Ronk, CHW, and Jamie Strickland BSN, RN.

Community Connections is a free program that provides assistance to adults, children, and families, connecting them to local resources. During the pandemic, Community Connections expanded its ability to serve residents affected by COVID-19. This included doing porch deliveries of food from local pantries to residents who were quarantined at home.

Community Health workers assisted many residents apply for health insurance, find

primary care providers, and find assistance to pay for things like rent and utility bills. Three of our Community Health Workers are bilingual and can assist our Spanish speaking clients in their own language.

# PERSONAL HEALTH

## PERSONAL HEALTH PROGRAM NUMBERS

### **Immunizations (non-COVID):**

1,939 immunizations were administered

### **Hearing Screening:**

704 screenings were completed

### **Vision Screening:**

978 screenings were completed

### **Infection Disease Control:**

4,377 cases investigations were conducted (4,094 COVID-19 cases, 283 other diseases)

### **Healthy Futures:**

207 contacts with 111 families

36 home visits to 29 families

### **Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP):**

824 visits were conducted for an average of 80 families

### **Reproductive Health:**

67 clients were served for a total of 239 visits, and 9 Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) visits were completed

### **Women, Infant, and Children (WIC):**

1,111 clients enrolled in WIC and 10 lead tests were completed

### **Community Connections:**

864 referrals and 2,498 contacts

### **Children's Special Health Care Services:**

141 clients were served and 31 plans of care were completed

# REPORTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

## 5-YEAR REPORT

| Disease                                 | 2021        | 2020        | 2019       | 2018        | 2017        |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Animal Bites                            | 5           | 11          | 13         | 39          | 58          |
| Animal Rabies (Bat)                     | 0           | 0           | 1          | 3           | 1           |
| Brucellosis                             | 1           | 0           | 0          | 1           | 0           |
| Campylobacter                           | 11          | 3           | 3          | 7           | 5           |
| Chickenpox                              | 1           | 0           | 1          | 1           | 2           |
| Chikungunya                             | 0           | 0           | 0          | 0           | 0           |
| Chlamydia                               | 71          | 42          | 66         | 80          | 110         |
| Coccidiomycosis                         | 3           | 0           | 1          | 0           | 1           |
| Cryptosporidiosis                       | 4           | 2           | 3          | 0           | 5           |
| E. Coli                                 | 0           | 0           | 0          | 0           | 0           |
| Ehrlichiosis Anaplasma Phagocytophillum | 0           | 0           | 0          | 1           | 0           |
| Giardiasis                              | 2           | 0           | 2          | 4           | 5           |
| Gonorrhea                               | 17          | 6           | 7          | 7           | 2           |
| Haemophilus Influenza                   | 2           | 1           | 0          | 2           | 0           |
| Hepatitis A                             | 0           | 0           | 0          | 1           | 1           |
| Hepatitis B                             | 21          | 11          | 8          | 6           | 4           |
| Hepatitis C*                            | 61          | 9           | 23         | 38          | 25          |
| Histoplasmosis                          | 3           | 0           | 0          | 2           | 2           |
| Flu Like Disease (School Reports)       | 9           | 164         | 700        | 904         | 1053        |
| Legionellosis                           | 1           | 2           | 2          | 1           | 0           |
| Lyme Disease                            | 51          | 23          | 6          | 0           | 4           |
| Meningitis-Aseptic                      | 2           | 3           | 0          | 7           | 3           |
| Meningitis-Bacterial                    | 1           | 0           | 0          | 3           | 0           |
| Meningitis-Strep Pneumo                 | 0           | 6           | 0          | 3           | 1           |
| Mycobacterium-NonTB                     | 1           | 2           | 3          | 10          | 2           |
| Mycobacterium-TB                        | 0           | 1           |            |             |             |
| Novel Coronavirus-COVID 19              | 4094        | 1409        | 0          | 0           | 0           |
| Pertussis                               | 1           | 0           | 18         | 1           | 3           |
| Rickettsial-Spotted Fever               | 0           | 0           | 0          | 1           | 0           |
| Salmonellosis                           | 6           | 6           | 6          | 2           | 8           |
| Shigellosis                             | 2           | 0           | 0          | 0           | 3           |
| Streptococcal Disease, Grp A            | 0           | 1           | 2          | 0           | 3           |
| Syphilis                                | 1           | 3           | 1          | 2           | 1           |
| Vibriosis                               | 0           | 0           | 1          | 0           | 0           |
| VZ infection                            | 6           | 1           | 9          | 10          | 7           |
|   |             |             |            |             |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>4377</b> | <b>1706</b> | <b>876</b> | <b>1136</b> | <b>1309</b> |

\*2021 HEPATITIS C CASE NUMBERS ARE HIGHER DUE TO A REPORTING LAG FROM 2020.  
SOME OF THESE CASES WERE INITIALLY IDENTIFIED IN 2020.

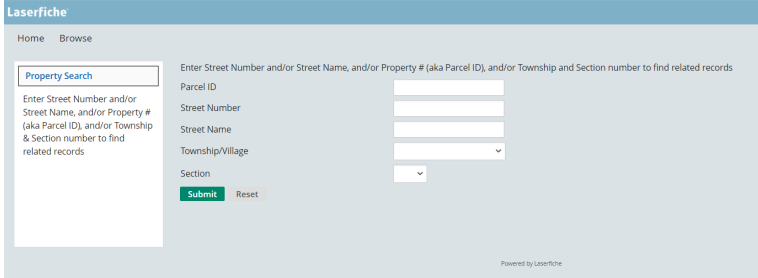


# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

- National Radon Month "Give a can of food, get a kit" was successfully held.
- An additional Sanitarian position was added to meet the increased workload demand. Requests for services increased 35.98% over fiscal year 2020.
- Four Food Service Management classes were held in Benzie and Leelanau counties.
- In addition to their "regular" workload, the Environmental Health Team played a critical role in the COVID-19 immunization response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2019, Environmental Health Director Eric Johnston advocated for funding to digitize septic records and create a portal to increase access for residents. The benefits of the portal were to improve public access to information, add natural disaster protection, and allow staff to get access to important information anywhere that has Internet access.



Screen shot of the Cloud-Based Laserfiche Document Manage System portal used by Environmental Health staff and clients.

The implementation of the Cloud-Based Laserfiche Document Manage System for Leelanau Property Records included an estimated 14,740 files and images scanned, including all historical permits. The Environmental Health staff were trained to use the system for future permits and information. The portal went live and uploaded to the website in early 2021.

Due to the success of the portal, Environmental Health Director Eric Johnston has presented to other health departments and agencies about Laserfiche and digitizing records. The funds were secured and the process of digitizing Properties information has begun to add Benzie County records to the electric portal.

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM NUMBERS

Restaurant Inspections: 483

Food Licenses/Temporary Licenses: 37

Foodborne Illness Report Follow Up: 12

Well Permits Issued: 499

Septic Permits Issued: 591

Vacant Land Evaluations: 229

Existing Well and Septic System Inspections: 480

Swimming Pool and Spa Inspections: 38

Swimming Beach Monitoring: 8

Campground Inspections: 30

Septage Hauling Vehicle Inspections: 28

Septage Receiving Facility Inspections: 4

Tattoo Parlor Inspections: 1

Suspected Rabies Animal Test Submissions: 20



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK RESPONSE

Regionally, our partners and staff demonstrated that we are leaders in the state when it comes to teamwork! Despite extreme stress and receiving small allocations at the beginning of the vaccine rollout, we consistently had the highest vaccination rates in the state for several months.

Our team leading the COVID-19 vaccine response worked around the clock to plan clinics, schedule residents, and transport vaccines in the most efficient way possible. We delivered services with excellence – vaccination and testing clinics were widely available, accessible, and well-received by the community. Our staff received hundreds of compliments about how efficiently the COVID vaccination clinics were run.

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department started providing the COVID-19 vaccine to first responders and health care providers in late December 2020. At the end of 2021, the health department had administered 25,517 doses of COVID-19 vaccine and held 142 large community clinics, 10 small health department pediatric clinics, and 26 small pop-up/homebound clinic days in Benzie and Leelanau counties.



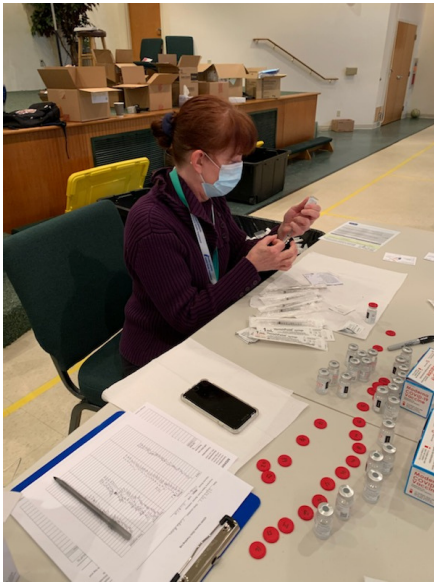
**Top:** Diane Stier RN, Autumn Jurek RN, and Betsy Hardy MSN, RN, prepare COVID vaccines at a community clinic at Suttons Bay Public School.

**Middle:** COVID pop-up clinic sign in Leland.

**Bottom:** Autumn Jurek, RN, is pictured driving the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department's new truck and trailer filled with COVID-19 clinic supplies.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK RESPONSE



Our COVID-19 vaccination response exemplifies leadership among staff and involvement by our residents - all which led to high vaccination rates regionally and strong relationships with businesses and residents.

We thank all the businesses who supported community vaccination efforts by hosting vaccine clinics, donating food, or helping share our messages, especially, Suttons Bay Public Schools, VFW of Lake Leelanau, Lake Ann United Methodist Church, Crystal Café, Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools, Benzie County Central Schools, and Platte River Association for hosting community COVID-19 clinics.



We also would like to thank all our amazing volunteers and temporary staff for working on-site and behind the scenes to make clinics happen and providing support to residents during case investigations.

Together we are making a difference in the health of our community!

**Top:** Dawn Hynds, BSN RN, preparing COVID-19 vaccines at Lake Ann clinics.

**Bottom:** Kerry Turner, Public Health Technician Supervisor, assisting at Lake Ann COVID-19 clinic by verifying insurance information.



# PARENTING COMMUNITIES

FUNDED BY THE 2019 LEELANAU COUNTY  
EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE

## **Vision:**

Thriving Children and Families in  
Leelanau County.

## **Mission:**

A comprehensive, responsive system  
of opportunities for all families and  
children (birth to six years)

## **Key Values:**

Earlier is Better

Universal Access Family-Focused  
Parents as Leaders

Evidence and Data Collaboration

Parenting Communities is the result of advocacy, volunteerism, innovation, and commitment from early childhood professionals and Leelanau County residents who recognize that supporting families during the earliest years of a child's life sets the stage for social-emotional, physical, and mental health, as well as academic success. While COVID-19 inhibited the robust rollout that was planned, the dedicated Parenting

Communities team forged ahead to create an array of opportunities for our youngest residents and their parents/caregivers.



Photo: Elena Reyes and daughter enjoying music and dance time at the September 1 event featuring Miriam Pico.

Our goal is for all Leelanau County families to be a part of the Parenting Communities network where they can receive information, support, opportunities to connect with other parents, and access professional advice from nurses, dietitians, community health workers, social workers, and breastfeeding specialists.



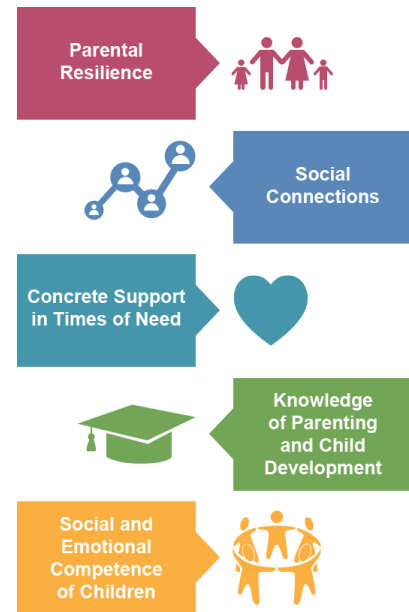
# PARENTING COMMUNITIES

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## Strengthening Families

The research-informed Strengthening Families Framework guides the work of Parenting Communities.

The Framework defines five protective factors that, when supported and strengthened, achieve the best outcomes for kids.



## Parenting Communities

### Program Numbers



Photo: Parenting Community of Leelanau's staff and volunteers after MomPower.

- 281 home visits were conducted to support 44 families and 58 children.
- 17 breastfeeding visits supported 12 Leelanau County moms.
- 47 playgroups were held, and 79 parents and 138 children participated.
- September 2021, presenter Miriam Pico led approximately 90 Leelanau County families and children in interactive music and dance.
- October 2021, two fall festival events brought approximately 200 parents and young children out for pumpkin painting, apple cider, costumes, and fun.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

