

# Annual Report

HARFORD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# FY 2021



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Harford County  
Health Department



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# Letter from the Health Officer

Our Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report offers an overview of the Harford County Health Department's efforts to advance health and wellness. The report will provide insight into the successes achieved and diverse opportunities presented during the last year (July 2020 - June 2021). The Harford County Health Department is committed to making Harford County the healthiest community in Maryland.

When we entered FY 21, the COVID-19 pandemic was still a high priority for the Harford County Health Department. The pandemic required extensive coordination between our communicable disease, emergency response, environmental health, health education, health planning, outbreak investigation, and population health units. Harford County began vaccinating individuals in December 2020 and the health department vaccinated over 28,000 people in FY 21. The health department will continue to provide COVID-19 response and partnerships as necessary in FY 22.

The aim of FY 21 was to continue to strengthen wraparound services. Due to the pandemic, there was a delay in opening the 1 North Main Family Health Center. However, planning and preparation still continued to prepare for a soft opening at the start of FY 22. The center offers a comprehensive, holistic, youth and family-driven way of responding to health and mental health needs in our community. The services offered will include the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP), Care Coordination, Dental Services, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Adolescent Behavioral Health, and Women's Wellness Services.

The health department programs still continued to offer services during the pandemic and some programs even saw more clients during the pandemic than they had in previous years. In FY 21, there were 1,027 referrals to Care Coordination Plus, remaining consistent from FY 20 (1,074). There were also 2,502 psychiatric visits in FY 21, which is 663 more than FY 20. WIC averaged 5,171 patients per month, and the dental clinic had 2,575 clinic visits for FY 21. We anticipate these programs to continue to excel in FY 22 with the 1 North Main Family Health Center giving families access to wraparound services in one convenient location. Thank you for your part in advancing Harford County's public health. The Harford County Health Department looks forward to continuing our work and meeting challenges together in Fiscal Year 2022.

## **MARCY AUSTIN**

Harford County Health Department  
Acting Health Officer



# About the Health Department

The Harford County Health Department is the local operating arm of the Maryland Department of Health. The health department employs more than 190 committed professionals to deliver a vast array of services in Aberdeen, Bel Air, Edgewood, and Havre de Grace.

- **Mission:** To protect, promote, and improve the health, safety, and environment of Harford County residents.
- **Vision:** To make Harford County the healthiest community in Maryland.
- **Values:** Teamwork, Leadership, Collaboration, Integrity, Commitment, & Cultural Sensitivity

## Board of Health:

- Patrick S. Vincenti, President
- Andre V. Johnson
- Joseph M. Woods
- Tony Giangiordano
- Chad R. Shrodes
- Robert S. Wagner
- Curtis L. Beulah



# Local Health Improvement Coalition

HCHD directs the Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) and hosts the coalition's annual meeting each year. During the virtual October 2020 meeting, LHIC members shared individual work group plans to address behavioral and mental health, family health and resiliency, and chronic disease prevention and wellness priorities within Harford County.

## Behavioral Health

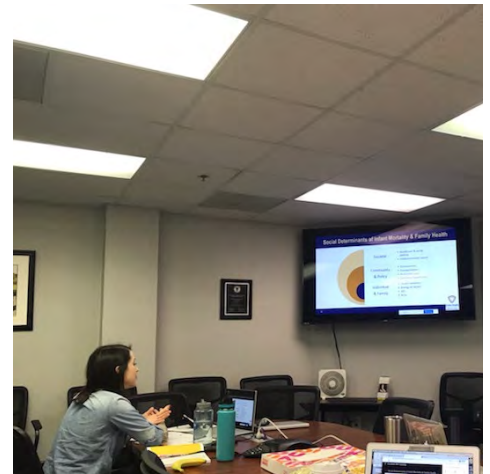
- The Behavioral Health workgroup focuses on addressing mental and behavioral health needs in the community, including overdose prevention.

## Family Health & Resiliency

- This work group's primary focus is connecting pregnant and postpartum women experiencing substance use disorders (SUD) to essential services, treatment, and resiliency resources.

## Chronic Disease Prevention & Wellness

- This workgroup has three main areas of focus: healthy eating and active living, cancer prevention and screening, and tobacco use Prevention. The workgroup is also dedicated to improving health literacy within each focus area. Most recently, the group has placed a focus on diabetes prevention.



# Snapshot of Services

## Administration

**1,009**

Birth Certificates  
Issued

**8,089**

Death Certificates  
Issued

**31,371**

Medicaid Transport  
Rides

## Behavioral Health

**2,502**

Psychiatric Visits  
Completed

**764**

Peer Contacts

**2,030**

Substance Use  
Appointments Held

## Care Coordination

**1,027**

New CC+ Referrals

**758**

Navigated Through  
Health Care System

**2,689**

Translation Services  
Used

## Clinical Health

**193**

Naloxone Units  
Dispensed

**1,398**

Family Planning Visits

**13,120**

COVID-19  
Investigations

## Environmental Health

**831**

Total Food  
Inspections

**503**

Animal Bite  
Investigations

**1,709**

Total Building Permit  
Reviews

## Family Health

**2,575**

Dental Clinic  
Visits

**5,171**

WIC Clients Seen  
Monthly (Avg)

**607**

MCHP  
Applications

**1074**

Family Home  
Visits

# Spotlight: HCHD COVID Response

The Harford County Health Department has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for the entirety of FY 21. Our Clinical Health Bureau stepped up and took the lead on contact tracing, COVID testing, and COVID vaccinations. Other health department staff stood side by side with the clinical health staff by helping with vaccine clinics, the call center, PPE deliveries, data tracking, communications, business compliance, and testing.

The Harford County Health Department partnered with Harford County Public Schools, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health System, local volunteers, faith-based communities, and the Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force for vaccination efforts. From December 30, 2020 to June 30, 2021 over 28,000 people were vaccinated by the health department and over 142,000 were vaccinated in total.

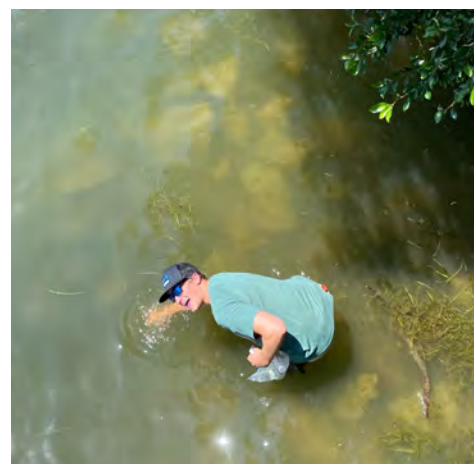
Moving into FY 22, the health department will continue to respond to COVID-19 as new information is released on the vaccine and will offer guidance and partnerships as necessary.



# Spotlight: Recreational Water

The Environmental Health Bureau started its third year of recreational water sampling in FY 21. Sampling occurs between Memorial Day and Labor Day and samples are collected bi-weekly. HCHD monitors for indicator bacteria at five locations in Harford County: Kilgore Falls, Wilsons Picnic Area, Hills Grove Picnic Area, Mariner Point Park, and Flying Point Park. Freshwater (Kilgore Falls, Wilsons Picnic Area, and Hills Grove Picnic Area) is tested for E. coli and Marine Water (Mariner Point Park South, East, and West, and Flying Point Park) is tested for enterococci. By monitoring for indicator bacteria, the Environmental Health Bureau provides education, data, and ways to minimize potential health risks that may be associated with entering these bodies of water.

During FY 21, 189 samples were collected and analyzed against their respective threshold. Although these areas are not beaches, as a reference, the Maryland thresholds for beaches where people are swimming are 104 CFU (colony forming units) of enterococci for marine waters and 235 CFU of E.coli for freshwater. Updating and communicating these results to residents was a major change to the program in FY 21. HCHD created and placed signs at each sampling location that contained a QR code to the recreational water sampling webpage to indicate that those areas are tested for indicator bacteria by the health department. This change came about from successful meetings with the target audience that will continue to improve in FY 22.





# Administration

The Bureau of Administration supports all HCHD programs and continues to provide excellent customer service to the public. Administration collaborates with each HCHD program to ensure that their administrative needs are met, enabling programs to provide clinical and preventive community health services throughout Harford County.

## Administration services include:

### Internal Support Services:

- Budget & Procurement
- Facilities Management
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Billing
- Compliance

### Public Services:

- Birth Certificates
- Certificates of Death
- COVID-19 call center support

## Highlight: COVID-19 Call Center Support

The front desk staff has on a daily basis continued to provide excellent customer service in the handling of COVID-19 calls from the public. They have responded to multiple questions regarding COVID-19, including how to get tested and how to get vaccinated for COVID-19. The bureau has continued to strive to provide excellent customer service and adapt quickly during these unpredictable times and will continue to do so going into FY 22.



# Behavioral Health

The Bureau of Behavioral Health provides comprehensive mental and behavioral health services to Harford County residents. Behavioral Health has integrated services within the county through partnerships with the Detention Center, OB/GYN offices, the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health, and other valued community service providers. In August 2020, the bureau was informed of their successful 3-year CARF reaccreditation.

## Behavioral Health services include:

- Addiction Resources
- Medication Management
- Mental Health Counseling & Group Therapy
- Opiate Recovery Court
- Peer Recovery & Support
- Prevention, Treatment, & Recovery
- Teen Diversion

## Highlight: Telehealth

The Bureau of Behavioral Health performed over 12,000 behavioral health encounters in FY 21 despite closing to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Behavioral Health Clinic was able to maintain its existing client base and offer services via telehealth until in-person services resumed in May 2021. Our Teen Diversion program operated fully virtual, serving 24 teens and their families and 1,300 therapeutic services and 700 psychiatric rehabilitation services were delivered over the course of the year via telehealth.

## Looking Ahead

Additional prescribers and providers were on-boarded in late FY 21 to increase our services for both our adult and adolescent programs in order to provide more access to care for our clients. The Bureau has begun to expand their child and adolescent services at our 120 S. Hays location as we prepare to open our 1 N. Main Family Health Center in early FY 22. The 1 N. Main Family Health Center will offer on adolescent mental health services.



# Care Coordination

The Care Coordination Bureau is committed to ensuring that Harford County residents have access to comprehensive preventive health services and the direct health services they need to achieve optimal health and wellness.

## Care Coordination services include:

- Care Coordination Plus (CC+)
- Administrative Care Coordination Unit (ACCU)
- Adult Evaluation Review Services (AERS)
- Nurse Monitoring



## Highlight: Vaccinating Homebound Residents

The Care Coordination Plus team led the vaccinating of Assisted Living residents and Harford County homebound residents. So far to date, 247 homebound residents have been vaccinated and the clinics continue. The Health Department formed a partnership with the local EMS in these efforts.



## Looking Ahead

There is a continued trend in the needs of Harford County residents for housing, transportation, dental care and services for seniors. The bureau will continue to address these barriers in FY 22. The bureau will also address the need for getting our infants immunized by assisting parents in linkages to care. The second is to connect Harford County residents with Behavioral Health issues to care and services. The Care Coordination Bureau will play a vital role in the 1 North Main Family Health Center by providing families with linkages to care.

# Clinical Health

The Bureau of Clinical Health encompasses direct clinical services, preventive clinical and educational services, infectious disease, and emergency preparedness.

## Clinical Health services include:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Family Planning
- Health Services
- Infectious Disease

## Highlight: Harm Reduction

When COVID-19 hit, the Clinical Health Bureau continued to offer telehealth services for Family Planning, STI/Hepatitis C/PrEP/HIV medical care and case management. The Harm Reduction team worked diligently and obtained budgetary approval to purchase a van to facilitate a mobile health care team. In addition, Harford County's naloxone saturation reached 51% above target thanks to this awesome team in collaboration with local partners such as Voices of Hope and the Bel Air Recovery Center.

## Looking Ahead:

The bureau will be expanding family planning services at the 1 North Main Family Center. In addition, in FY 22, the bureau is currently working with internal teams and community partners to implement prenatal care, pediatric care, HIV primary care, and eventually full-service primary care for uninsured and underinsured communities.



# Communications

The Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for all communications-related activities across the Harford County Health Department. The focus of HCHD communications is to provide cultural and linguistically competent health messaging to the general public in order to improve health literacy throughout the county.

## Communications services include:

- Branding & Content Development
- HCHD Webpage Content Management
- Media & Promotional Campaigns
- News Releases
- Social Media Management
- Joint Information Center

## Highlight: Citizens Crush COVID

In FY 21, the communications team worked on messaging to promote the COVID-19 vaccine. This involved advertising through social media, billboards, radio, flyers, and a very important partnership: the citizens of Harford County. The Harford County Health Department called for volunteers in the community to assist in messaging and they delivered. The volunteers took control and called their neighbors to help them register for the vaccine. In addition, they managed a Facebook page and lead outreach events to connect people to the vaccine. The targeted messaging efforts were immensely effective in getting thousands of Harford County residents vaccinated!



# Environmental Health

The Bureau of Environmental Health is responsible for Land & Water Resources, Permits and Plan Review, and Inspections in the county.

## Environmental Health services include:

### Land & Water Resources:

- Perc Testing
- Septic System Inspections
- Septic System & Well Complaints
- Well Permits & Water Quality

### Permits & Plan Review:

- Building Permits & Review
- Food Facility Plan Review

### Inspections:

- Food Service Facility Inspections
- Rabies, Vector Control, & Zoonotic Diseases
- Nuisance Complaint Investigations
- Public Pool & Spa Inspections

## Highlight: BRF Grant Funding

The Bureau of Environmental Health received a record amount of BRF grant funding in FY 21 totaling \$776,000. As a result, they were able to fund the correction of 56 failing onsite sewage disposal systems by the installation of a Best Available Technology (BAT) septic tank or by connecting the property to a public sewer.

## Highlight: COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic required the Environmental Health staff to work in numerous mass vaccination clinics as line control, temperature checkers, clipboard cleaners, and appointment verifiers, etc. while still finding time to perform all our typical duties and responsibilities. Additionally, we continued performing COVID-19 compliance inspections in response to Executive Orders issued by Governor Hogan and the Secretary of Health.



# Family Health

The Bureau of Family Health provides comprehensive wraparound services to Harford County families. Families may access preventive health services, recovery support, home visiting programs, and services that empower them to access additional community and health resources that they might need.

## Family Health services include:

### Family Services

- Dental
- School-Based Health Centers
- MA Trans

### Maternal Child Health

- Healthy Families and Home Visiting
- Helping Families Recover
- MEGAN's Place
- Lead and Asthma/MC Surveillance
- WIC
- MCHP
- Cancer prevention
- Tobacco use prevention

## Highlight: WIC

This past year the Harford/Cecil WIC Local Agency has been working hard to ensure services remained open and operational to all participants. With the addition of telehealth, staff was able to give more personalized service and stay connected with participants. Throughout the year, the local agency made staff enrichment and development a priority through quarterly professional development, webinar opportunities, and the MD WIC State Conference. One staff member, Emily Simone was also able to complete her dietetic internship throughout the pandemic and COVID relief efforts! WIC was also proud to play a major role in vaccine efforts, with much of their staff spending time working in the vaccine clinics and the Covid call center for the Harford County Health Department. This has been a busy but rewarding year for the WIC staff!



# DIRECTORY OF SERVICES



## Aberdeen

253 Paradise Rd. Aberdeen, MD 21001  
Phone: 410-273-5681  
Services: School Health Readiness, Teen Diversion

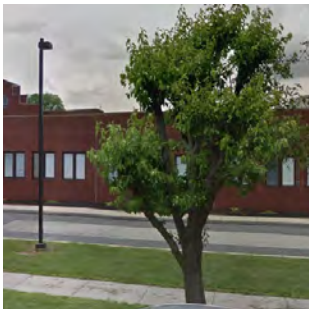


## Bel Air

120 S Hays Street Bel Air, MD 21014  
Phone: 410-838-1500  
Services: Administration, Behavioral Health, Environmental Health, MA Transportation, Walk-in Health Insurance Assistance (MCHP) & Vital Records



1 North Main Street Bel Air, MD 21014  
Phone: 410-638-3060  
Services: New services coming soon!



## Elkton - Cecil County

401 Bow St Elkton, MD 21921  
Phone: 410-996-5255  
Services: WIC

## Edgewood

1321 Woodbridge Station Way Edgewood, MD 21040  
Phone: 410-612-1779 410-612-1776 (WIC)  
Services: MEGAN's Place, Family Planning, Immunizations, Infectious Disease, PrEP, STI Testing, WIC, Walk-in Health Insurance Assistance (MCHP), HIV Testing, Hepatitis C testing, Tuberculosis Services



2204 Hanson Rd. Edgewood, MD 21040  
Phone: 443-922-7670  
Services: Dental



## Havre de Grace

2015 Pulaski Highway Havre de Grace, MD 21078  
Phone: 410-942-7999  
Services: Care Coordination, Cancer Prevention, Tobacco



2027 Pulaski Highway Suite 107 Havre de Grace, MD 21078  
Phone: 410-939-6680  
Services: WIC





# THANK YOU!

The Harford County Health Department would like to extend a special thank you to its employees, our valued community partners, frontline workers, and to all Harford County stakeholders who contributed to advancing the health of Harford County residents in Fiscal Year 2021. Your efforts, insights, and innovative ideas are an essential part of our success as a county. Thank you to Harford community members who shared their voices with us throughout the past year. We look forward to sharing progress with you again next year.



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