

# Division of Health 2021 Annual Report

**TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON**  
**Department of Health, Recreation, Seniors, and Veterans Services**

2100 Greenwood Ave, Hamilton, NJ 08609



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## Message from the Director

I am pleased to present our 2021 year-end Annual report. Inside you will gain insight into the work of the Hamilton Township Division of Health, whose mission is to protect the health and well-being of our Hamilton residents. The achievements highlighted in the 2021 Annual Report would not be possible without the expertise and dedication of our Hamilton Division of Health staff.

Our division is comprised of the following sections: Public Health, Environmental Health and Animal Control Services. Each of our sections are dedicated to providing high quality services to our community within the challenges and opportunities encountered in the evolving public health and healthcare environments.

Animal care is another key component of a healthy community and this section maintains the highest standards of humane animal sheltering; promotes the placement of animals into homes; and encourages responsible pet ownership through education, enforcement, and community partnership.

As the pandemic continues to disrupt our nation and state, our Hamilton Township Division of Health has never faltered in delivering essential public health services to our community. I am also very proud of the exceptional staff at the division who have worked tirelessly and passionately to protect the public's health while continuing to address other programmatic priorities.

I would like to thank the residents of our community for their continued perseverance and adherence to many restrictions put upon us during these unprecedented times. Your compliance in wearing masks, socially distancing, practicing hand hygiene, and being vaccinated has help to control the spread of the virus and keep us all safe.

Thank you to Mayor Martin, his Administration, and our Township Council for their ongoing support of our Department. Our team will continue to work hard in protecting the health and safety of all those we are so privileged to serve in our community.

Yours in Health,

**Kathleen Fitzgerald, RN, BSN, CALA, CDP**  
**Director of Health**

## Message from the Health Officer

Thank you! You and all of our residents deserve it. 2021 was another challenging year for everyone and each of us did our part - whether that was wearing a mask, changing holiday plans, or getting vaccinated. As we all experienced in December and into the New Year, we might be “over” COVID-19 but it is not “over” us. Hamilton experienced the Omicron surge and saw a record number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths that once again disrupted the daily lives of our residents. While we are getting closer to normalcy, each of us still needs to practice good hygiene habits and get vaccinated (and boosted!)

I am proud to present you with the Division of Health’s 2021 Annual Report. Outlined within this document is a quick snapshot of all of the incredible work the staff has completed throughout the past year. Your health team remains dedicated, compassionate, and effective.

Last year I set three goals for 2021:

1. By the end of 2021, every eligible resident who would like to be vaccinated against COVID-19 will have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.
  - a. Yes! I give the Division of Health and our partners an A+ on this goal. The Division was and remains at the forefront of the vaccination effort. You can read more about COVID-19 vaccination in the Public Health Nursing section.
2. By the end of 2021, in order to increase convenience for our businesses, all health business license payments will be able to be made online.
  - a. It has been a slow roll out, but starting with the 2022 Retail Food Licenses, the Division’s licensees are now able to pay for their licenses online.
3. By the end of 2021, decrease by 10% the average length of stay for animals at the shelter.
  - a. The Division did not meet this goal. In 2020 we saw record low animal intake levels, likely due to residents remaining at home. In 2021, the Animal Shelter had higher levels of animal intake and flat year-over-year adoption numbers. What continues to be extraordinary bright spots are the Shelter’s return-to-owner rates, which far exceed state averages. The Shelter continues to be a proud no-kill shelter.

Looking ahead to 2022, I am hopeful that normalcy will return soon. We are stronger together and the only way that we’ll achieve normalcy is if each one of us continues to do our part: avoid crowded indoor spaces, wear an appropriate mask correctly, stay home when you’re sick, wash your hands with soap and warm water often, and get vaccinated and boosted! This year’s goals are:

1. By the end of 2022, 65% of the 5-11 year olds within the Township will have received at least 1-dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
2. By the end of 2022, increase by 10% the number of adoptions from the Animal Shelter.

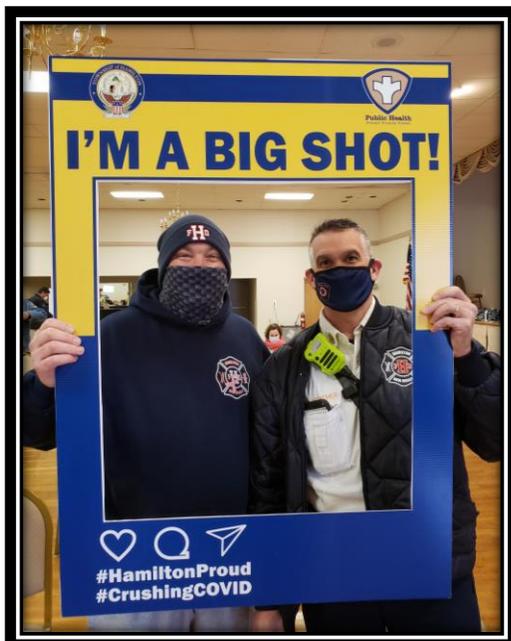
Thank you again for taking the time to review the division’s annual report.

In good health,

**Christopher Hellwig, MPH MCHES**  
Health Officer

## Contact Information

Division of Health	
<u>Administration</u>	609-689-5562
Director	(Director) 609-890-3686
Health Officer	
Accounts Receivable/Payable	
<u>Public Health Nursing</u>	609-890-3884
Health Education	hamnurse@hamiltonnj.com
Childhood Vaccinations	covidvaccine@hamiltonnj.com
Flu / Pneumonia Vaccinations	
STD Clinic	
Infectious Disease Investigations	
<u>Environmental Health</u>	609-890-3828
Inspections and Licensing	environmental@hamiltonnj.com
Public Health Nuisances	
<u>Vital Statistics</u>	609-890-3826
Marriage Licenses	vitalstats@hamiltonnj.com
Certified Copies of Marriage, Birth, and Death Certificates	
<u>Animal Shelter</u>	609-890-3555
Animal Control	(ACOs) 609-890-3550
Adoption Inquiries	animal-shelter@hamiltonnj.com
Dog Licensing	
<u>After Hours and Holidays (HTPD)</u>	609-581-4000
<u>Complaints or Service Requests (HamStat)</u>	609-586-0311



### Visit Hamilton Division of Health Online

[www.hamiltonnj.com/health](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/health)

[www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter)

Like us on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/HamiltonTwpNJ](https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonTwpNJ)

[www.facebook.com/HamiltonAnimalShelter](https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonAnimalShelter)

Follow us on Twitter at:

@HamiltonTwpNJ

Like us on Instagram at:

@HamiltonTwpNJ

@HamiltonTownshipAnimalShelter

## Division of Health Structure

The Township of Hamilton Division of Health serves as the local health authority for the township. Under the guidance of Mayor Martin, Director Fitzgerald, and the Hamilton Board of Health, the Division of Health is responsible for the program areas of public health nursing, environmental health, vital statistics, licensing, administration, animal control, sheltering, and adoptions.

The vision of the Division of Health is to create a culture of health through *preventing* disease, *promoting* wellbeing, and *protecting* all those who live, work, and play in Hamilton.

The Township Council serves simultaneously as the Board of Health under the authority of NJSA 26:3-1, to ensure a reliable and efficient public health system exists in Hamilton. Additionally, the Board of Health is responsible for the oversight of the activities of the Division of Health as they pertain to NJAC 8:52, the public health practice standards of performance for local boards of health in New Jersey.

Organization Chart	
<u>Director</u>	Kathleen Fitzgerald
<u>Health Officer</u>	Chris Hellwig
<u>Administration and Vital Statistics</u> Jessica Purdy - Supervisor Principal Clerk Typist	Sarah Papadem - Registrar Cindy Mains - Senior Clerk Typist
<u>Environmental Health</u> Lisa Surtees - Supervisor Chief REHS	Kelly Thomas - REHS Eric Cuperwich - REHS Randy Donovan - REHS Trainee Rylee Evanko - Clerk / Deputy Registrar
<u>Public Health Nursing</u> Giovanna Guarraggi - Supervisor Admin Director of Nursing	Jill Belviso - Asst PHN Supervisor Anita Masiello - Senior PHN Kelly Colton - Head Clinic Nurse Patricia Buczynski - PHN Christine Santoro - PHN (PT)* Veronica Eisenmann - Field Rep, Health Edu* Brady Rivera - Health Aide, Bilingual* Mamai-ee Freeman - Health Aide (PT)* Jill Rudd - Clerk Typist
<u>Animal Shelter</u> Donielle Gioia - Supervisor Management Specialist	Marion Munford - ACO Anthony Agabiti - Asst ACO Jay Schutz - Asst ACO Shaquille Pennerman - Asst ACO Susann Carroll - Animal Attendant Paige Conte - Animal Attendant (PT) Noelle Goodwin - Animal Attendant (PT) Nicole Muller - Clerk Typist Donna Peroni - Senior Clerk Typist

\*Grant funded positions

## Demographic and Health Profile of Hamilton

Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. Most residents have heard the recommendations of a healthier lifestyle: seeking preventative care, not smoking, eating more fruits and vegetables, and getting regular exercise. But, did you know that where you live has an important role in you and your loved ones' health? According to HealthyPeople 2030, which is a set of national health objectives, our health is also determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities; the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities; the quality of our schooling; the safety of our workplaces; the cleanliness of our water, food, and air; and the nature of our social interactions and relationships. In the tables below, are selected characteristics intended to provide a quick glance at the indicators that play a role in determining the health of Hamilton residents.

**Table 1.** US Census Bureau (2020) Demographic Characteristics for Hamilton Township, NJ

Demographic Characteristic	Measure
Total Population	92,297
Veteran Population	4.8%
Disabled Population	10%
<b>Age</b>	
Persons under 18 years	18.9%
Persons over 65 years	18.0%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>	
White alone	75.2%
Hispanic or Latinx	15.8%
Black or African American alone	14.9%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latinx	63.7%
Asian, alone	4.4%
Two or more races	2.1%
<b>Education</b>	
High school graduate or higher, persons 25+ years	91.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher, persons 25+ years	30.6%
<b>Income</b>	
Median household income	\$78,177
Persons in poverty	7.9%

**Table 2.** BRFSS 2017 Age-Adjusted Comparison of Health Indicators for Hamilton Township (n=81) and Mercer County (n=540), NJ

Health Indicator	Hamilton Twp.	Mercer County
Fair or Poor Health Status Reported	24.3%	16.9%
Adults with at least one chronic condition	12.3%	14.0%
Diabetes	5.3%	9.3%
Pre-Diabetes	7.0%	11.6%
Angina or Coronary Heart Disease	5.6%	3.5%
Cancer, other than skin cancer	7.4%	5.5%
Frequent mental distress	3.8%	16.8%
Obese, individuals 20+	27.8%	28.0%

**Table 3.** Comparison of Mortality Data (deaths due to any cause) between Hamilton Township and Mercer County, NJ, 2019

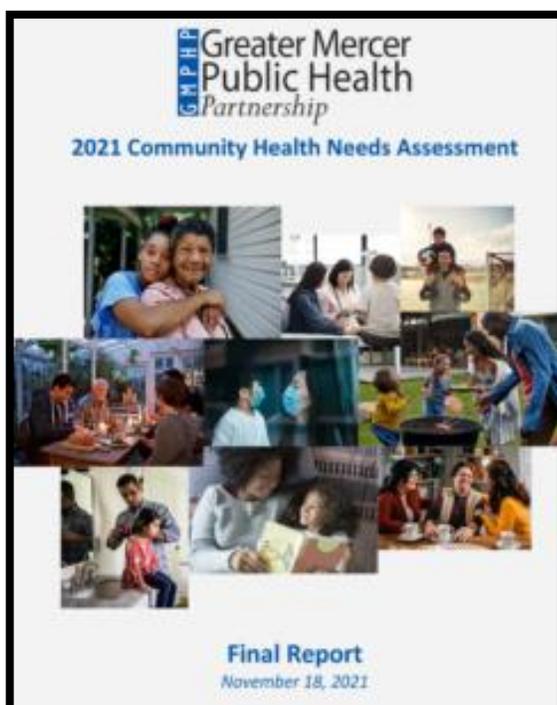
Mortality Statistic	Hamilton Twp.	Mercer County
Avg. age at death, 2000-2019, years	76.9	74.5
Age-Adjusted Rate, Deaths per 100,000 population	718.6	646.3

## Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership

The Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership (GMPHP) is a collaboration of local hospitals, health departments, human and social services agencies, and other not-for-profit organizations, which jointly work to measurably improve the health of residents of the Greater Mercer County community. The development of the most current Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) began in early 2021 to identify the significant health priorities for Mercer County. The process included a combination of data collection and analysis of primary and secondary source data. This process resulted in the Community Advisory Board (CAB) and Executive Board identifying Mercer County's priority health areas to be addressed in a plan for collaboratively improving the community's health. The priority areas identified include:

- **COVID-19**
  - Guiding goal: Reduce death disparities among vulnerable populations
- **Chronic Disease and Life Expectancy**
  - Guiding goal: Achieve equitable life expectancy among all residents in Mercer County
- **Behavioral Health and Trauma**
  - Guiding goal: Reduce the impact of trauma on health outcomes
- **Maternal and Infant Health**
  - Guiding goal: Achieve equitable outcomes for mothers and babies

The Division of Health will take the information outlined in the CHNA and develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Hamilton. The CHIP will outline how the Division will respond to the priority health areas identified in the CHNA. Look for the Hamilton CHIP in 2022.



Residents can access the full CHNA and Mercer County CHIP, along with a recording of the launch of the CHNA on the Division's website:

[www.hamiltonnj.com/health](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/health)

## What does Public Health do?

The Hamilton Township Division of Health (HTHD) works tirelessly to protect and improve the health and well-being of our community, as well as the environmental resources upon which we all depend. Since 1900, the average lifespan of U.S. residents has increased by more than 30 years, with 25 years of this gain attributable to advances in public health, such as:

Vaccination	Safer and healthier foods
Motor-vehicle safety	Healthier mothers and babies
Safer workplaces	Family planning
Control of infectious diseases	Fluoridation of drinking water
Decline in deaths from coronary heart disease and stroke	Recognition of tobacco use as a health hazard

Today, HTHD, along with our sister agencies across New Jersey and the country continue to promote health and wellness. The Division of Health...

- **Protects you from health threats.** HTHD works to prevent disease outbreaks and makes sure the water you drink, the food you eat, and the air you breathe are all safe. We are also ready to respond to any health emergency – be it bioterrorism, Ebola, food-borne diseases, rabies, or COVID-19.
- **Educates you and your neighbors about health issues.** HTHD provides you with information that helps you to make more healthful decisions, like exercising more, eating right, quitting smoking, and washing your hands to protect yourself from communicable diseases. During a public health emergency, we also provide important alerts and warnings to protect your health.
- **Provides healthy solutions.** HTHD offers the preventive care you need to avoid disease and maintain your health. The Division took the lead in Mercer County and launched COVID-19 vaccination for eligible residents in December 2020. We continue to provide the annual flu vaccine to all township residents and the pneumonia vaccine to residents aged 65+ older. We also provide eligible children with the immunizations required for them to attend school. Additionally, the Division provides confidential STD testing, screening, and treatment to residents.
- **Advances community health.** HTHD takes part in developing new policies and standards that address existing and emerging challenges to our township's health while enforcing a range of laws to help keep our residents safe. We work through research and staff training to maintain expertise and deliver up-to-date, cutting-edge health programs.



## Administration

The Office of the Health Officer within the Division of Health plans and executes the decisions needed to ensure continued compliance with all applicable rules, laws, and guidelines set by township, state, and federal agencies. Additionally, the Health Officer is in charge of:

Financial Management	Strategic Planning
Public Information	Workforce Development
Record Keeping	Inter-Governmental Affairs
Personnel Management	Public Health Enforcement

Division of Health Staffing	
Number of Employees	34
Number of Contract Staff	11
Number of Volunteers	51
Number of Contract Organizations	5

Residents seeking information on the division's services and functions may request specific documents through the Open Public Records Act (OPRA). Request online at: [townshipofhamiltonnj.nextrequest.com](http://townshipofhamiltonnj.nextrequest.com)

2021 Grants	
GCADA - Municipal Alliance Grant	\$21,311
NJDOH - Vaccination Supplemental	\$100,000
NJDOH - Strengthening Public Health	\$291,042
NJDOH - Childhood Lead Grant	\$53,000
American Rescue Plan	\$150,515
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$615,868</b>

### OPRA Requests

**2021**  
**Division of Health**

 <b>296</b> Total Requests for Information to Health	 <b>83</b> Animal Shelter Requests	 <b>213</b> Environmental Health Requests
 <b>83</b> Approx. Staff Hours Spent on OPRA's	 <b>6</b> Approximate Requests per Week	 <b>\$2,015</b> Approximate Cost for Staff Time



NJ's Public Health workforce was awarded the 2021 Distinguished Public Service Award from the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

## Public Health Nursing

The Division of Health employs Public Health Nurses to provide health promotion services to our residents in Hamilton Township as well as the residents of the municipalities the division maintains shared services agreements. The nurses and staff in the Public Health Nursing Section work closely with all the sections of the division in order to support the following services:

Flu and Pneumonia Vaccinations	Health Education
Childhood Immunizations	STD Screening and Treatment
Childhood Blood Lead Screenings	Communicable Disease Investigations
School Immunization Audits	Public Health Clinics

## Childhood health

	2019	2020	2021
Well child Home Visits	7	2	0
Individual Children Seen in Clinics	645	403	421
Childhood Immunizations Administered	1,450	978	1,095
Blood Lead Level (BLL) Screenings	33	8	8
Reported Children with Elevated BLLs	13	7	5
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Enrollment	301	208	66
Children Tested for Anemia (Iron Deficiency)	33	7	8
School Immunization Records Audited	3,077	3,612	4,750



Public Health Nursing Section staff offering health education and vaccinations at St. Greg’s Carnival.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
**Children aged 6-59 months must receive a seasonal flu shot by 12/31 in order to stay enrolled in preschool or childcare**

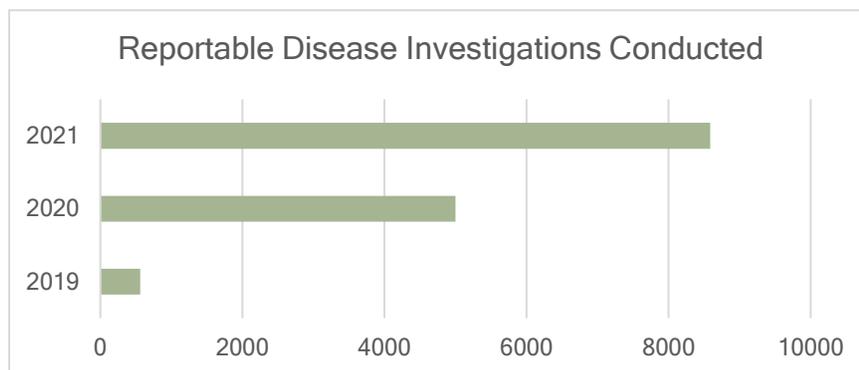
CALL THE HAMILTON DIVISION OF HEALTH TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR YOUR CHILD'S ANNUAL FLU SHOT TODAY!

## Communicable Diseases

The Public Health Nursing Section is responsible for the investigation of all NJDOH reportable communicable diseases that occur within Hamilton Township residents. The nurses provide case management with medical providers and residents to ensure that all of the required information is collected to prevent the further spread of disease, proper treatment is given, and the diagnosis is correct. The nurses also work closely with congregate settings, schools, and high-density housing located within the township on any outbreaks, which may occur.

DISEASE NAME (2021 Confirmed Cases*)	COUNT
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS - 2019 NCOV	8,447
HEPATITIS C – CHRONIC	28
LYME DISEASE	28
INFLUENZA, HUMAN ISOLATES	26
OTHER (Diseases with case counts of 4 or less)	24
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS	17
SALMONELLOSIS - NON TYPHOID	6
HEPATITIS B - CHRONIC	5
LEGIONELLOSIS	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,586</b>

\*Preliminary data



Staff hired by NJDOH and managed by Mercer County conduct routine COVID-19 case investigations and contact tracing. Hamilton is responsible for all other communicable disease investigations.

### Seasonal Influenza and Pneumonia Vaccinations

Each year, the Public Health Nurses offer Hamilton residents their annual seasonal flu vaccine at no out-of-pocket costs. The flu clinics are held each fall throughout the township. Additionally, the nurses will make home visits to residents who may be homebound. Residents who are eligible for the pneumonia vaccine are also able to receive it at no out-of-pocket cost from the Division of Health.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of flu clinics held	26	15	17
Total number of flu vaccines administered	2,638	1,624	1,898
Number of High-Dose flu vaccine administered	300	401	388
Total number of pneumonia vaccines administered	181	39	49
Total number of home visits made for vaccination	52	85	78

### *Tuberculosis (TB) Screening and Treatment Program*

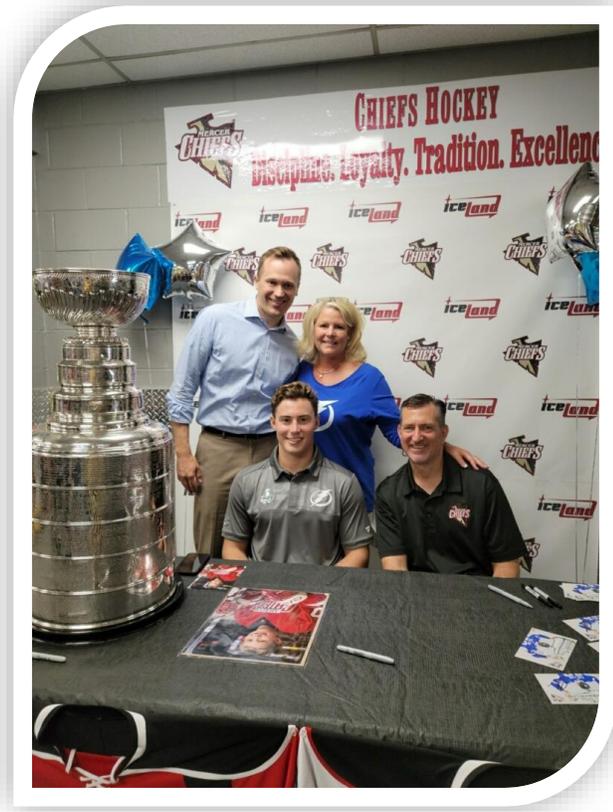
Hamilton residents diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB) are required to complete antibiotic treatment under the observation of a Public Health Nurse in order to prevent the spread of TB in the community. Treatment schedules can range from a few months to over a year depending on the strain of TB, and the resident's compliance. The Public Health Nurse visits the residents home daily to ensure the medication is taken, this is called Directly Observed Therapy (DOT.) The Division also conducts PPDs, which is a skin test for TB. \*In 2021, Trenton Health Team managed DOTs.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of residents placed under DOT	3	1	0*
Number of home visits conducted	214	10	0*
Number of PPDs conducted	176	77	116
Number of positive PPDs referred for follow up	13	1	5

### *Internships and Clinical Education*

The Division of Health strongly supports the training of future public health and nursing professionals. The division provides real world community experience for students interested in public health and nursing. Students assist within the clinics, inspections, and outreach under the guidance of a mentor.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of College/University affiliation agreements	3	4	3
Total number of interns/student nurses	20	11	11



Left: Mayor Martin and Kelly Colton, Public Health Nurse, with her son, Ross Colton. Ross brought the Stanley Cup to Hamilton after scoring the winning goal for the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Top: Jill Rudd, Public Health Nursing Clerk, helping the Division ready for the holidays.

### Outbreak Investigations

In addition to conducting investigations for individual instances of certain diseases, the Public Health Nurses case manage outbreaks in settings such as long term care (LTC) facilities, schools, workplaces, and youth organizations. Outbreaks are defined differently based on the specific disease and may be declared if several individuals who exhibit similar symptoms are in the same room, same wing or attended a common event; there is an increase in absences with report of similar symptoms; two or more individuals are diagnosed with the same reportable disease; or a single case of a highly infectious disease exists or is suspected to exist. The PHN assigned to the outbreak will work closely with the facility to ensure proper infection control measures are implemented, sick individuals are either excluded from participation or isolated, and helps the facility perform contact tracing and case investigation. Outbreaks are assigned an “E” number to designate that an outbreak exists, and investigations are assigned and “I” number. Not all investigations translate into an outbreak.

Outbreaks and investigations by Exposure Setting	2021 Outbreaks	2021 Investigations
Camp	1	-
Daycare facility	5	-
Healthcare - Assisted Living Residence	6	5
Healthcare - Long Term Care	15	3
Independent living	2	-
Restaurant	1	-
School or University	14	-
Sports Team	7	-
Workplace	2	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>8</b>

Outbreaks by Exposure Setting and Disease	Gastroenteritis	Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease	Influenza	COVID-19	Scabies	Total
Camp	-	-	-	1	-	1
Daycares	-	-	-	5	-	5
Healthcare - Assisted Living Residence	-	-	-	6	-	6
Healthcare - LTCs	-	-	1	13	1	15
Independent living	-	-	-	2	-	2
Restaurant	1	-	-	-	-	-
School or University	1	2	-	11	-	14
Sports Team	-	-	-	7	-	7
Workplace	-	-	-	2	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>53</b>

## Legionnaires' disease

### Preventing Legionnaires' Disease

Tips for Homeowners to maintain healthy household water

Legionella bacteria can grow in many parts of a water system that are continually wet, and certain devices can then spread water containing the bacteria. Examples of areas where Legionella can grow and spread include: water storage tanks, water filters, faucets, aerators, showerheads, hoses, pipes, hot tubs, and humidifiers.

Home air conditioners are NOT at risk because they do not use water to cool the air

#### Tips for a healthy home:

	Run faucets and showers for 3 minutes when they have not been used for more than a week		Remove, shorten, and/or regularly flush existing dead legs (a section of pipe with low use)
	Follow manufacturer instructions and clean/replace water filters in your home		If you are at risk for Legionnaires' disease avoid high risk activities (ex: power washing)
	Clean or replace shower heads and faucet screens 3-4 times per year		
	<p><b>A hot water tank set to a temperature of 140°F is best for controlling Legionella.</b>                  The minimum temperature should be 120°F. If the temperature on the tank is higher than 120°F a mixing valve must be installed to prevent burns.  <b>Drain and flush hot water tank every 6-12 months.</b>                  Consider hiring a professional, and follow all manufacturer recommendations.</p>		
	Follow manufacturer instructions for medical devices and humidifiers		Follow manufacturer instructions to maintain proper chemical levels in your hot tub
	Turn off and drain garden hoses when not in use for the season		

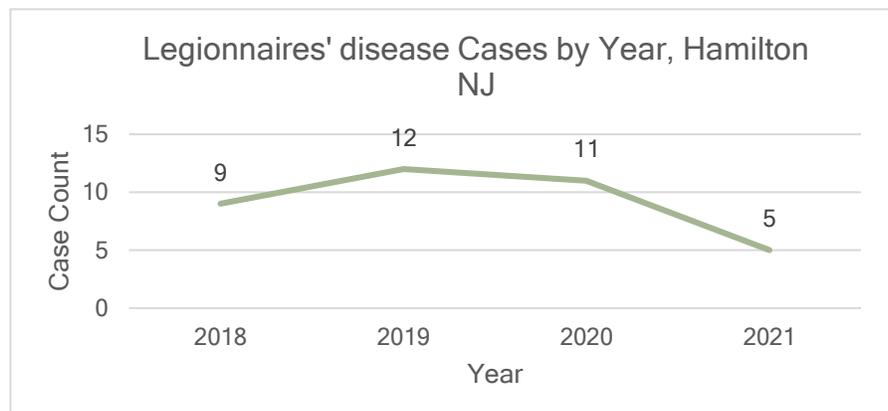
Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
 NJ Department of Health (NJDOH): [www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health)

Legionnaires' disease is a respiratory illness caused by bacteria, and is a type of pneumonia that people can get after breathing in aerosolized water (small droplets of water in the air) containing Legionella bacteria. Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease include cough, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches, and headaches, which are similar to symptoms caused by other respiratory infections, including COVID-19. Most healthy people exposed to Legionella do not become ill. However, people who are 50 years or older, especially those who smoke cigarettes, or those with certain medical conditions, including weakened immune systems, chronic lung disease or other chronic health conditions, are at increased risk for Legionnaires' disease. Legionnaires' disease is treatable with antibiotics so it is important that anyone who thinks they have symptoms of Legionnaires' disease contact their health care provider and seek medical evaluation.

The Township of Hamilton has been working with Trenton Water Works (TWW) and its partners at NJDEP, and NJDOH, to investigate cases of Legionnaires' disease within the Township for over 10-years. The Township and its partners have issued multiple press releases, social media posts, and mass mailers to every TWW customer in regards to our investigation of Legionnaires' disease within the Township. Additionally, there have been numerous news reports covering this. All of these outreach attempts were to better educate our residents.

The Division continues to meet regularly with NJDOH, DEP, and TWW to ensure that steps continue to be taken to improve the water quality for TWW customers in Hamilton. Residents may have noticed TWW flushing hydrants along with other projects, such as the Klockner Ave project and upgrades to the water tanks. These projects are related to this investigation.

For more information, residents can call HamStat, the Division of Health, or visit [www.hamiltonnj.com/health](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/health).



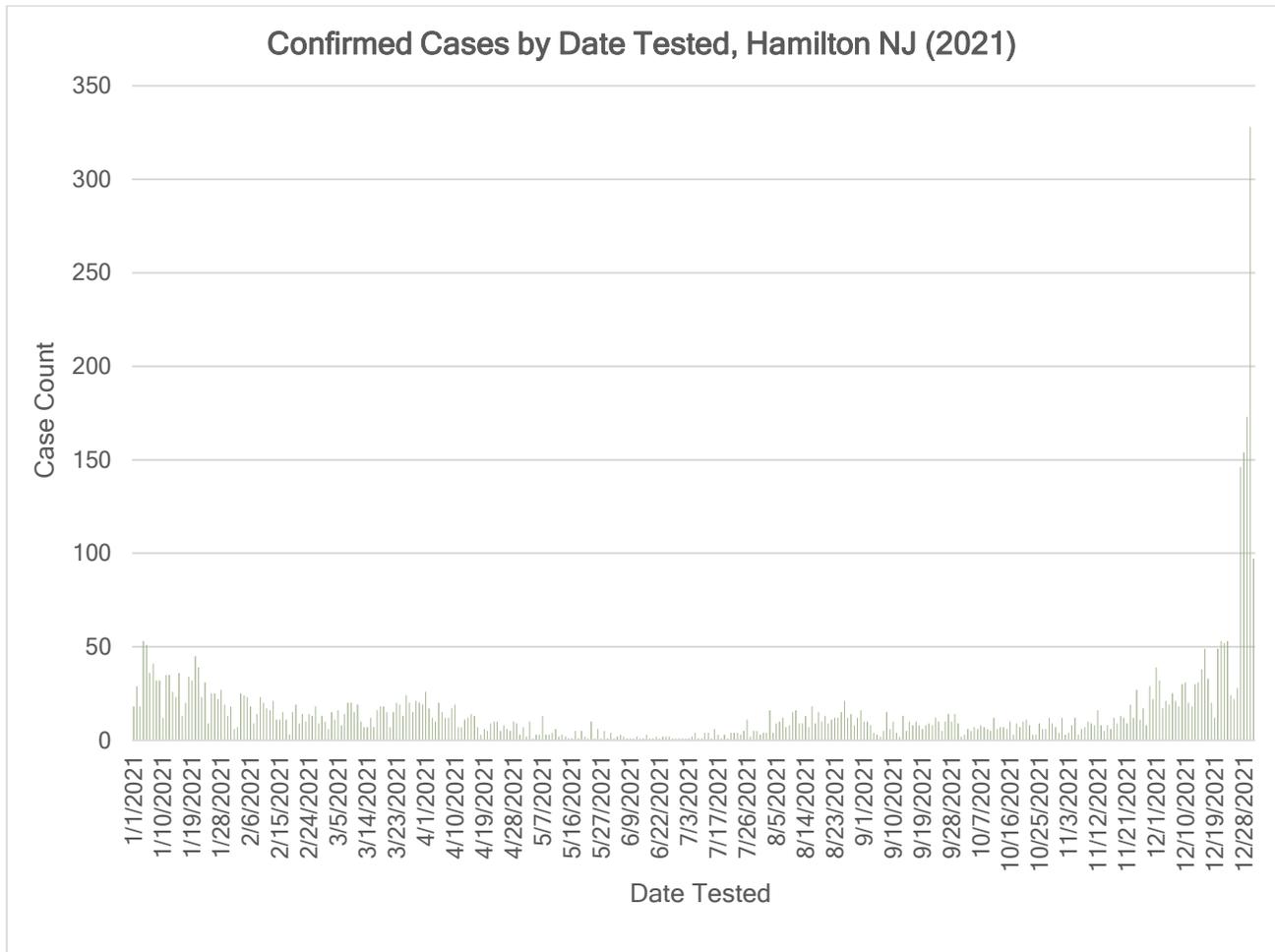
## COVID-19

The Public Health Nursing section was and continues to be the leaders in the Division’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is the most significant public health crisis the Division has responded to in 2021. With grant support, the Division was able to hire Vulnerable Population Outreach Coordinators (VPOCs) and a COVID-19 Generalist (CVG) to support COVID-19 activities within the department. That work includes:

Contact tracing	Case investigation
Long Term Care (LTC) outbreak coordination	School guidance
Technical assistance to businesses	Health education
Vaccination	Public health enforcement

### COVID-19 Cases 2021

Between January and December of 2021 there were 8,447 confirmed PCR cases of COVID-19 in Hamilton Township, unfortunately 111 residents have passed away. As seen in the chart below there was a decline in daily reported cases over the summer months, and toward the end of 2021 a spike in cases due to the Omicron variant surge.



## COVID-19 Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination continues to be the most important tool in addressing the pandemic and remains highly effective at preventing severe disease and death due to COVID-19. A large portion of the Division's COVID-19 response in 2021 was the roll out and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines. The Division was quick to offer vaccination locally and when the clinic was centralized at Mercer County College, the Division's staff created a waitlist for eligible residents to book appointments directly through the Township instead of using the State's appointment system. All of the Division's staff kept up to date on continually changing eligibility guidelines throughout the year for the Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson/Janssen and Pfizer Pediatric vaccines. The Division's efforts to vaccinate the Township's residents and those of Greater Mercer County was and continues to be a success. The Division's current clinic dates are posted online at [www.hamiltonnj.com/coronavirus](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/coronavirus) and the clinics remain free and walk-in.

	2020	2021
Number of COVID-19 vaccination clinics held	2	91
Total number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered	424	8,150
<b>Type of Dose Administered (all vaccines)</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> doses	424	3,098
2 <sup>nd</sup> doses	--	2,213
3 <sup>rd</sup> doses	--	46
Booster	--	2,793
<b>Pfizer (12+)</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> doses	--	915
2 <sup>nd</sup> doses	--	807
3 <sup>rd</sup> doses	--	14
Booster	--	1,090
<b>Total</b>	--	<b>2,826</b>
<b>Moderna (18+)</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> doses	424	774
2 <sup>nd</sup> doses	--	1,100
3 <sup>rd</sup> doses	--	32
Booster	--	1,531
<b>Total</b>	--	<b>3,437</b>
<b>Johnson &amp; Johnson/Janssen (18+)</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> doses	--	871
Booster	--	172
<b>Total</b>	--	<b>1,043</b>
<b>Pfizer Pediatric (5-11)</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> doses	--	538
2 <sup>nd</sup> doses	--	306
<b>Total</b>	--	<b>844</b>



Hamilton welcomed NJDOH Commissioner, Judith Persichilli, to a vaccination clinic run in partnership with the Hamilton School District at Wilson Elementary School on November 9.

From left to right: Marta Audino, Director of Student Services; Jeff Martin, Mayor; Kathleen Fitzgerald, Director of Health; Judith Persichilli, NJDOH Commissioner; Chris Hellwig, Health Officer; Giovanna Guarraggi, Director of Nursing; Scott Rocco, Superintendent; Mayreni Fermin-Cannon, Wilson Principal.

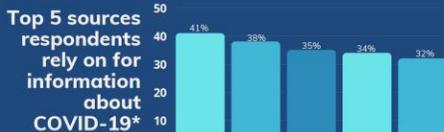
## COVID-19 Vaccine Survey Data

Initial Findings from the Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership (GMPHP) Post COVID-19 Vaccination Survey.

Responses reflected in this data received a COVID-19 vaccine service directly or indirectly through Hamilton Township.



64% of survey respondents live in Hamilton Township



\* Respondents can choose more than one answer for this question



\* Top responses in the "Other" category in order of popularity include work, the Township/Health Department and walk-in clinic

Percent of respondents that agree the clinic location was convenient



Percent of respondents that agree the instructions were clear on where and when to get their vaccine



Percent of respondents that agree scheduling their appointment was easy



During the summer and fall, the Division of Health surveyed vaccination clinic attendees. Two key points emerged, 1) the Division, as the local health department, remains an important place for residents to get health information; and 2) contacting the Division of Health directly was the main way attendees were able to make appointments. The Division strives to maintain reliable and open access to information for our residents. **Between January and April, the Division scheduled over 8,000 appointments for Hamilton residents.**

### *Vulnerable Population Outreach*

The Division participated in ongoing vulnerable population outreach to support those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a Vulnerable Populations Assessment for Hamilton Township, originally completed in March 2021 and revised in September 2021. This rapid assessment provided insight into the Hamilton Township community, identified vulnerable populations and efforts to help mitigate some of the challenges faced by the pandemic.

The assessment, along with an inventory of social services, is available for residents to access on the Division's website: [www.hamiltonnj.com/health](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/health).

Outreach efforts included developing partnerships with local organizations to help provide COVID-19 information to residents; as well as ensure COVID-19 vaccines were accessible to the most vulnerable populations by bringing clinics into the community. Examples of these community clinic sites include 55+ living communities, Hamilton Senior Center, Public and Private Schools, community centers (Bromley Center, John O Wilson Center and Hamilton Public Library), local businesses and Faith Based Organizations. The Division also attended community events including National Night Out, Oktoberfest and the St Gregory the Great Family Carnival to provide COVID-19 and flu vaccinations.

Additional outreach included sharing COVID-19 information via an ongoing email distribution list of over 120 community partners, the Township's social media platforms and newsletter, making regular updates to the Division's website, newspaper ads and canvassing in the community with upcoming clinic flyers. Additional COVID-19 response activities included:

- Answering COVID-19 related questions for residents in person and via phone/email
- Scheduling vaccine clinics
- Providing Spanish/English translation services
- Developing flyers and other educational material to be shared with the community
- Compiling a list of social support services and COVID-19 testing locations to be shared

The actions taken by the Division in 2021 will carry on into 2022 as it continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Division's participation during Oktoberfest at Veteran's Park providing health education to the community, while also administering COVID-19 and Flu vaccinations.



## Adult Health Services

Throughout the year, the Division of Health operates clinics that provide for certain community health services for the Township's residents. These services include the Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinic, Nursing Evaluation Clinic, and Community Home Evaluations. The Division's health services are overseen by the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) who works with the Public Health Medical Director to ensure that standing orders are in place for all procedures being performed by the nursing staff and that best practices are being followed.

### STD Clinic

Hamilton Township provides free and confidential STD Clinical services for the residents of the following municipalities through shared-service agreements:

Ewing Township	East Windsor Township
Hightstown Borough	Hopewell Township
Lawrence Township	Princeton Township
Robbinsville Township	West Windsor Township

	2019	2020	2021
Total clients seen in clinics	292	88	106
Hepatitis B screenings performed	24	4	22
Hepatitis C screenings performed	54	16	38
Oral screenings for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea	193	55	76
Urine screenings for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea	231	63	72
Syphilis screenings performed	190	55	67
Vaccines administered during clinic	36	26	10

Note: In 2020, the STD clinic was closed during certain periods.

### Nursing Evaluation Clinic

This clinic is offered monthly, by appointment, at both of the Senior Centers in Hamilton Township (Hamilton Township Senior Center and the John O. Wilson Neighborhood Center). Blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol tests are performed and referrals made when indicated.

	2019	2020	2021
Health assessments performed	102	14	30

### Community Home Evaluations

The Division will make home visits based off referrals to assess and follow up on public health concerns/situations by other agencies as well as individuals. They range in ages of infant through adulthood as well as elderly/senior citizen referrals. Services include vaccinations, neglect issues, and public health concerns.

	2019	2020	2021
Home visits conducted	52	85	226

## Environmental Health Services

The Division of Health's Environmental Health Services section is responsible for the enforcement of State Sanitary Codes; the protection of food and potable water supplies; environmental health activities and public health nuisances. In addition to inspections, this section also is responsible for licensing all retail food establishments, recreational bathing facilities, vending machines, camps, and body art establishments. This section performs the following services for the township:

Body Art Program	Public Health Nuisance Program
Childhood Lead Program	Youth Camp Program
Retail Food Program	Wastewater Control Program
Public Recreational Bathing Program	Animal Facilities Program

### Wastewater Control Program

In order to prevent the pollution of the Township's water supply, the Division ensures compliance will local and state rules for the installation of residential septic systems. Staff review all plans for new construction, alterations, and repairs for septic systems within the township. Additionally, the staff review septic systems before real estate transactions. \*\*Increase in septic systems due to information the Division received from real estate transactions on systems not previously known to Environmental Health Staff.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of properties with septic systems	360	360	506**
Permits issued for construction or alteration	14	14	18
Properties reviewed for real estate transactions	<i>Not available*</i>	14	21

### Private Well Testing Act

Environmental Health staff review private well water analysis results for compliance with NJAC 7:9 during real estate transactions.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of wells reviewed for real estate transactions	<i>Not available*</i>	16	19

### Body Art

Environmental Health Services inspects tattoo, piercing, and permanent cosmetic facilities operating within the Township to ensure proper sanitation and safety standards are being followed. Starting in 2021, these facilities will be licensed by the Division of Health.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of Body Art establishments operating	3	1	0

\*Data/records not kept during time frame

## Retail Food Establishments

The Division of Health inspects and regulates restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail food facilities to ensure compliance with safety and sanitation rules. The Environmental Health staff work closely with the Public Health Nurses to investigate and control disease outbreaks linked to retail food facilities. The division also licenses these facilities. Due to ongoing COVID-19 related restaurant difficulties, some retail food establishments closed prior to receiving their annual inspection in 2021.

Licenses	2019	2020	2021
Number of Retail Food Establishment licenses issued	540	527	524
Number of Full Year-Temporary/Mobile licenses issued	32	25	30
Number of Vending Machine licenses issued	204	105	200
Number of Temporary Single-Event licenses issued	117	19	70

Inspections and Investigations	2019	2020	2021
Number of routine inspections completed	505	446	491
Number of re-inspections completed	83	94	86
Number of pre-operational inspections completed	22	31	34
Number of retail food plan reviews completed	14	22	34
Number of complaint driven investigations completed	63	206	50
Number of Notices of Violations issued	143	282	221



REHS Eric Cuperwich conducting an onsite inspection for a temporary retail food establishment during the Township's National Night Out event.

Did you know that the Division posts the inspection scores of all inspected retail food establishments online?

They are available via [www.hamiltonnj.com/environmentalhealth](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/environmentalhealth)

### Youth Camps

In order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the youth who attend camps within the Township, the Division of Health conducts inspections of these facilities. NJDOH is the licensing agency for youth camps.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of inspections completed	11	7	7

### Public Recreational Bathing

Environmental Health Services conducts safety and sanitation inspections of public recreational bathing facilities to reduce the spread of communicable diseases and protect consumers who use these facilities from avoidable harm and danger.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of licenses issued	34	9	28
Number of inspections completed	108	34	97

### Childhood Lead – Environmental Interventions

While the City of Trenton provides Public Health Nursing case management for children residing in Hamilton with elevated blood lead levels, the Division of Health's Environmental Health Services section conducts the environmental interventions within the homes of children identified with high levels of lead.

	2019	2020	2021
New cases of children with EBLLs	12	7	5
Number of homes completing lead abatement	1	3	4

### Animal Facilities

Starting in 2020, the responsibility of inspecting the Township's animal facilities was transferred from the Township's Animal Control Officers to the Environmental Services Staff. The Division of Health inspects kennels, pet shops, shelters, and pounds to ensure that these facilities are operating in compliance with sanitation, safety, and animal welfare rules.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of licenses issued	5	5	5
Number of routine inspections completed	5	5	5

### Massage/Somatic Establishments

The Division of Health enforces safety and sanitation standards for these facilities in order to protect the health and safety of consumers who patronize massage and somatic facilities. Licenses are issued by the Township's Clerk's Office.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of inspections completed	9	8	8

*Public Health Nuisances*

The Environmental Health Services staff conducts investigations into quality of life complaints that pose a nuisance to Township residents. In 2020, the responsibility investigating property maintenance (high grass and weeds, junk, rubbish, debris, etc.) related complaints was transferred to the Department of Community and Economic Development which explains the large reductions in NOV's being issued by Environmental Health Services\*.

	2019	2020	2021
Number of Notices of Violations issued	724	13*	31

## COVID-19 Compliance

The Environmental Health Services staff, in addition to assisting with COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing, provided technical assistance and compliance reviews for the Township's business community in order to help reduce the spread of the virus. The staff conducted these activities above and beyond the routine inspections performed throughout the year.

	2020	2021
COVID-19 compliance checks for indoor/outdoor dining	90	18
Inspections completed on RFEs after COVID-19 related closure	7	0
COVID-10 Pool Operation Prevention Plan reviews completed	36	30*
Youth camp compliance plan review	1	0*
Sports program compliance plan reviews	1	1
Number of RFEs temporarily closed or out of business from COVID-19	36	11

\*No longer required when initial Public Health Emergency expired

Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) Kelly Thomas, Eric Cuperwich, and Randy Donovan.



## Vital Statistics

The Vital Statistics section of the Division of Health is charged with the responsibility of maintaining records in regards to marriages, births, and deaths that take place within the Township. The Registrars process applications for marriages and civil union licenses; issue birth, marriage, civil union, domestic partnership, and death certificates; and issue disinterment and burial permits. Additionally, the Registrar can assist with certain corrections to these records.

	2019	2020	2021
Home birth or birth en-route	7	2	6
Birth certificates issued	613	296	453
Death certificates issued	2,128	2,832	2,320
Marriage certificates issued	1,606	974	1,464
Marriage licenses issued	565	451	572
Domestic Partnership certificates issued	0	0	4
Domestic Partnership registrations issued	0	0	2
Civil Union certificates issued	0	0	1
Civil Union registrations issued	0	0	1
Disinterment permits issued	5	1	3
Burial permits issued	3	0	3
Corrections requested	56	11	71



Left: Division of Health Staff at the Hamilton Golf Center for a team-building event.

Below: The Animal Shelter assists more than just cats and dogs!



## Animal Shelter and Adoption Center

The Hamilton Township Animal Shelter and Adoption Center (HTAS) serves as the Township's rabies control facility which ensures the health, safety, and welfare of the animals and citizens of our community. The Shelter's goal is to place animals into humane environments through adoption, and to educate the community on responsible pet ownership. HTAS works tirelessly so that the animals in its care are afforded the "Five Freedoms."

Freedom from discomfort	Freedom from hunger and thirst
Freedom from pain, injury, and disease	Freedom to express normal behavior
Freedom from fear and distress	

### Animal Intake and Outflow

	2020			2021		
Animal Intake	Dogs	Cats	Other	Dogs	Cats	Other
Surrendered by owner	31	24	11	39	50	0
Stray/Impounded	178	102	15	185	157	18
Animals received from other organizations	5	13	0	6	10	0
Other (cruelty investigation, animal bite, etc.)	2	1	0	28	20	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>19</b>

	2020			2021		
Animal Outflow	Dogs	Cats	Other	Dogs	Cats	Other
Reclaimed by owner	131	5	4	151	14	2
Adopted	75	103	16	76	135	17
Euthanized	3	7	0	4	24	2
Animals transferred to other organizations	16	25	1	14	17	1
Other (escaped, died at shelter, etc.)	0	6	1	0	11	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>23</b>

### Animal Control Services

The Division of Health's Animal Control Officers (ACOs) are charged with enforcing the Township's animal control laws and responding to animal emergencies. The ACOs respond to animals at large, transporting sick and injured animals, investigating animal bites, assist with rabies clinics, and provide public education. Additionally, the ACOs work closely with the Hamilton Police Department's Humane Law Enforcement Officers (HLEOs) on animal welfare and cruelty investigations.

	2020	2021
Number of field calls	2,614	2,458
Number of animal bite investigations	133	134
Number of summonses issued	50	42
Number of wildlife transported to rehabilitation centers	124	152

	2019	2020	2021
Number of dog licenses issued	4,065	3,554	3,616
Number of free rabies vaccinations administered	853	928	836



The Division's Animal Control Officers.  
Check out the latest adoptable animals at:  
[www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter)

**DID YOU KNOW?** In 2021, HTAS had an **81.6% return rate of stray dogs** to their owners. All dogs entering the shelter as strays are photographed and posted on the shelter's Facebook page and shared by shelter staff to local Lost and Found Pages (Hamilton Area and Mercer County). This is a 8% increase from 2020 when 131 of 178 dogs were reclaimed. This is significantly higher than the 2020 state average for stray dogs redeemed, which is only 26.4%

Unfortunately, cats continue to have a dramatically lower reclaim rate, approximately 9%, but Hamilton's rate is double the state average.

Source:  
[https://www.nj.gov/health/vph/shelter\\_surveys\\_by\\_county\\_2020.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/vph/shelter_surveys_by_county_2020.pdf)

### Volunteers

The volunteer program at HTAS has been revised, including the agreement/waiver packet that all volunteers must complete prior to beginning their volunteer service. More information on how to volunteer is available online at [www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter).

	2020	2021
Number of volunteers	23	51

### Foster Program

The shelter initiated a foster program to assist with space and the well-being of the animals in the care of Hamilton Township. Some animals are very stressed in the shelter environment and/or need more individual care.

	2020	2021
Number of animals fostered	25	112

### Transfer Program

HTAS initiated a rescue/transfer program to assist in maximizing lifesaving efforts and placement of adoptable animals. Approved rescue organizations with different or more resources often assist with medically or behaviorally challenging animals.

	2020	2021
Number of animals transfer to other organizations	42	32

## Non-Live Outcomes

Unfortunately, not all animals that come to the shelter are placed into their “forever” homes. Some animals are terminally ill, others die during treatment, and others present a public safety or public health risk. The Division of Health takes the decision of euthanasia extremely seriously and with humility, and as such the Shelter Management Team makes those decisions jointly. HTAS is proud to be a no-kill shelter.

Euthanasia	2020			2021			
	Dogs	Cats	Total	Dogs	Cats	Other	Total
Aggression, Unsafe to Handle	2	0	2	3*	0	0	3
Cancer	1	0	1	1	4	0	5
Major organ failure	0	1	1	0	2	0	2
Medical – severe	0	5	5	0	14	2	16
Medical – emergency	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Medical – disease	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>

\*1 dog was euthanized under a court order

Died in care	2020			2021		
	Other	Cats	Total	Other	Cats	Total
Neonatal Kitten	0	0	0	0	7	7
Panleukopenia	0	2	2	0	0	0
Post-surgical	0	1	1	0	1	1
Trauma	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	1	3	4	3	2	5
Medical – disease				0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>

Note: no dogs died in care in 2020 or 2021

## 2021 Annual Live Release Rate: 93.4%

The Annual Live Release Rate is calculated by dividing total live outcomes (adoptions, outgoing transfers, and return to owner/guardian) by total outcomes (total live outcomes plus euthanasia not including or died/lost in shelter/care). The generally accepted live-release rate to be considered a no-kill shelter is 90%, which HTAS is proud to exceed.



Animal Shelter Staff with 2021 Vet of Record, Dr. Christa Goeke

## Municipal Alliance Commission

In 2021, the Division of Health absorbed the Hamilton Municipal Alliance and now provides grant management and supervision.

The mission of the Hamilton Alliance Against Substance Abuse Committee (HAASA) is to serve as the official Township coordinating body for the planning, awareness and education of substance abuse prevention efforts on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The committee is dedicated to promoting safe, healthy and responsible lifestyles through community involvement, education programs and family oriented events for all residents of Hamilton Township. HAASA is advisory in nature; and awards State allocated funds to programs that meet certain criteria.

Residents looking for more information can visit [www.hamiltonnj.com/haasa](http://www.hamiltonnj.com/haasa) or email [haasa@hamiltonnj.com](mailto:haasa@hamiltonnj.com).

### Membership

	Type
Adrienne Petta	Chair
Jessica Nitti	Regular
Janice Archambeault	Regular
Lawrence Petta	Regular
Brian Birch	Regular
Kim Saich	Regular
Alejandro Battle	Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Schuster	Representative of Chief of Police
VACANT	Presiding Judge
Rick Tighe	Council Liaison
Cashel Darvas	Representative of the Mayor
Arianna Medina	Commission Secretary
Saisuma Veerapaneni	Coordinator

The Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA) funds HAASA. HAASA uses the funds to support coordination of the alliance, and to provide drug and alcohol education in our schools.

	2021
Number of students reached	1,034
Number of education sessions	76
Number of schools supported	3



Thank you for taking the time to read through the Division of Health's 2021 annual report.

Have a happy, and healthy 2022!!

- *Your Health Team*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.