



Division of Health 2023 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 2023 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 2023 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 we look beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division of Health has its eyes on accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board or PHAB. 2024 will be the year of accreditation, all while continuing to deliver the world-class public health services our residents have come to expect from us.

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

Outlined within this document is a detailed snapshot of all of the incredible work the staff has completed throughout the past year. Your health team remains dedicated, compassionate, and effective regardless of whatever the public health topic du jour is. It is the Division's responsibility to prevent diseases, promote healthful behaviors, and protect the community.

Last year I set three goals for 2023:

1. By the end of 2023, achieve a favorable score from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) on the Division's application into the Pathways Recognition Program.
 - a. PHAB reviewed the Division's assessment and determined that we should move directly towards full accreditation. We now must submit all required documents by October 2024.
2. By the end of 2023, increase by 10% the number of adoptions from the Animal Shelter.
 - a. 2023 was another tough year at the shelter. The shelter adopted fewer dogs in 2023 compared to 2022. The Division needs all residents to help support the shelter to get more animals into their "forever" homes. Throughout 2023, the average daily number of dogs at the shelter was 38.4. This means we've consistently been overcapacity. Only 94 out of 365 days the shelter had less than 36 dogs. The lowest number of dogs the shelter housed in 2023 was 30 - and this lasted for 5 days.
3. By the end of 2023, conduct home-water sampling of at least 20 homes for Legionella.
 - a. In partnership with NJDOH, previously sampled homes were resampled for Legionella as part of the ongoing investigation into TWW.

Looking ahead to 2024, the Division will continue to do what it does best - respond to the health needs of Hamilton. This includes resuming health educational programs within the community as part of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign. In 2023, Hamilton was awarded the designation of "Healthy Town," the gold level recognition from the NJ Healthcare Quality Institute. Additionally, the Division will continue to ensure that all residents have access to high quality clinical services such as flu, pneumonia, COVID-19, and other important vaccinations.

This year's goals are:

1. By the end of 2024, submit all documents required for accreditation through PHAB to become an accredited health department.
2. Achieve recognition once again as a "Healthy Town" from NJHQI.

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



Division staff participating in Rock the Block with Habitat for Humanity.

Visit Hamilton Division of Health Online

www.hamiltonnj.com/health

www.hamiltonnj.com/animalshelter

Like us on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/HamiltonTwpNJ

www.facebook.com/HamiltonAnimalShelter

Follow us on Twitter at:

@HamiltonTwpNJ

Like us on Instagram at:

@HamiltonTwpNJ

@HamiltonTownshipAnimalShelter

Mission, Vision, Values

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, health licensing, administration, animal control, sheltering, and adoptions.

MISSION

The mission of the Division of Health is to serve as a trusted resource for Hamilton Township to improve the health and well-being of our residents through health education and promotion, enforcement of public health safety, and adopting to ever-changing community health needs.

VISION

The vision of the Division of Health is to create a culture of health by increasing accessibility and promoting health equity through honest and credible services and community engagement.

VALUES

The values of the Division of Health are Professionalism; Reliability; Accessibility; Integrity; Community-Minded

Township of Hamilton Board of Health

New Jersey Statute requires that each municipality have a Board of Health. Boards of Health, depending on the municipality's form of government, can be advisory, autonomous, or the town council. In Hamilton Township, the Township Council serves as the local Board of Health, under the Faulkner Act. The Council must go out of session as the municipal government and convene as the Board of Health.

The Board of Health's role is 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.

The Health Officer provides updates to the Board of Health throughout the year on the state of the Township's health. Future meeting dates, along with agendas and minutes are posted on the Township's website: www.hamiltonnj.com/council.

2024 Board of Health Members	
Anthony Carabelli, <i>President</i>	Richard Tighe, <i>Vice President</i>
Pasquale "Pat" Papero	Nancy Phillips
Charles F. Whalen	

Organization Chart

Division of Health	
<u>Director</u>	Kathleen Fitzgerald
<u>Health Officer</u>	Chris Hellwig
<u>Administration and Vital Statistics</u> Jessica Purdy - Supervisor Chief of Administrative Services	Sarah Papadem - Principal Clerk / Registrar Lisa Konopka - Clerk Typist / Deputy Registrar VACANT - Senior Clerk Typist
<u>Environmental Health</u> Lisa Surtees - Supervisor Chief REHS	Kelly Thomas - Senior REHS Eric Cuperwich - REHS Randy Donovan - REHS Rylee Evanko - Clerk / Alt 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 - Senior PHN Patricia Buczynski - PHN Christine Santoro - Head Clinic Nurse* Veronica Eisenmann - Health Educator* Brady Rivera - Health Aide, Bilingual* Mamai-ee Freeman - Health Aide* Jill Rudd - Senior 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 Dipersio - Senior Animal Attendant Noelle Goodwin - Animal Attendant Michaela Meleg - Animal Attendant Jeremy Button - Animal Attendant (PT) Alfredo Nieves - Animal Attendant (PT) Charley Rauschert - Animal Attendant (PT) Erin Tessein - Clerk Typist Donna Peroni - Senior Clerk Typist
<u>Hamilton Alliance Against Substance Abuse (HAASA)</u>	VACANT - Alliance Coordinator*

*Grant funded positions

Division of Health Staffing	
Number of Employees	32
Number of Per Diem Employees	3
Number of Volunteers	53
Number of Contract Organizations	6

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%
Age	
Persons under 18 years	18.9%
Persons over 65 years	18.0%
Race and Ethnicity	
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%
Education	
High school graduate or higher, persons 25+ years	91.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher, persons 25+ years	30.6%
Income	
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

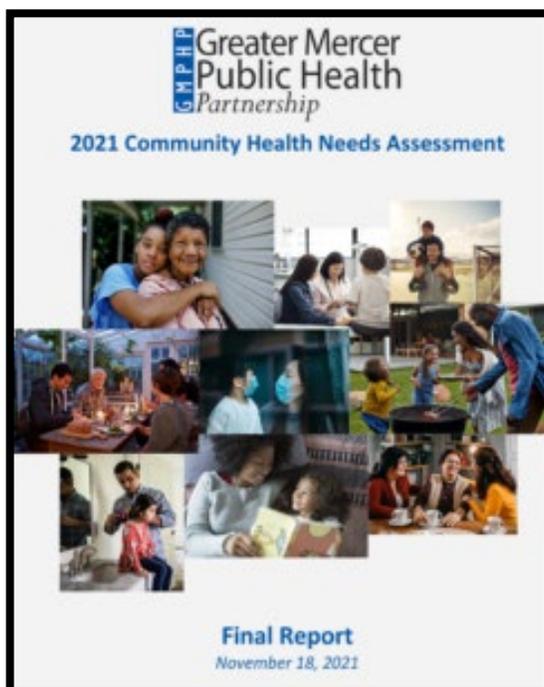
The Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership (GMPHP) is a collaboration of local hospitals, health departments, human and social services agencies, and other not-for-profit organizations, which jointly work to measurably improve the health of residents of the Greater Mercer County community. The development 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 takes the information outlined in the CHNA and develops 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 along with any priority health areas specific to Hamilton. This assessment will be in effect from 2022 - 2024.

The Division has also chosen to focus on Childhood Lead outreach and education. Some activities completed in 2022 related to the CHIP include:

- COVID-19 vaccination clinics and home visits
- COVID-19 rapid test kit distribution.
- Development of informational infographics and flyers
- Launch of a Community Health Survey
- Development of a comprehensive Inventory of Support Services for residents to access freely.
- Screening for and investigating cases of elevated childhood lead



More information on the CHNA and CHIP can be accessed online: www.hamiltonnj.com/health

What does Public Health do?

The Hamilton Township Division of Health (HDOH) 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, HDOH, 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.** HDOH works to prevent disease outbreaks and makes sure the water you drink, the food you eat, and the air you breathe are all safe. The Division is also ready to respond to any health emergency – be it bioterrorism, Ebola, food-borne diseases, rabies, Legionnaires’ disease, COVID-19, or Monkeypox (MPX).
- **Educates you and your neighbors about health issues.** HDOH 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.** HDOH 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. The Division continues to provide annual flu vaccines to all township residents and the pneumonia vaccine to residents aged 65-older. Eligible children receive the immunizations required to attend school and prevent diseases. Additionally, the Division provides confidential STD testing, screening, and treatment to residents.
- **Advances community health.** HDOH 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. The Division stays up-to-date with research and staff training to maintain expertise and deliver up-to-date, cutting-edge health programs.



Administration

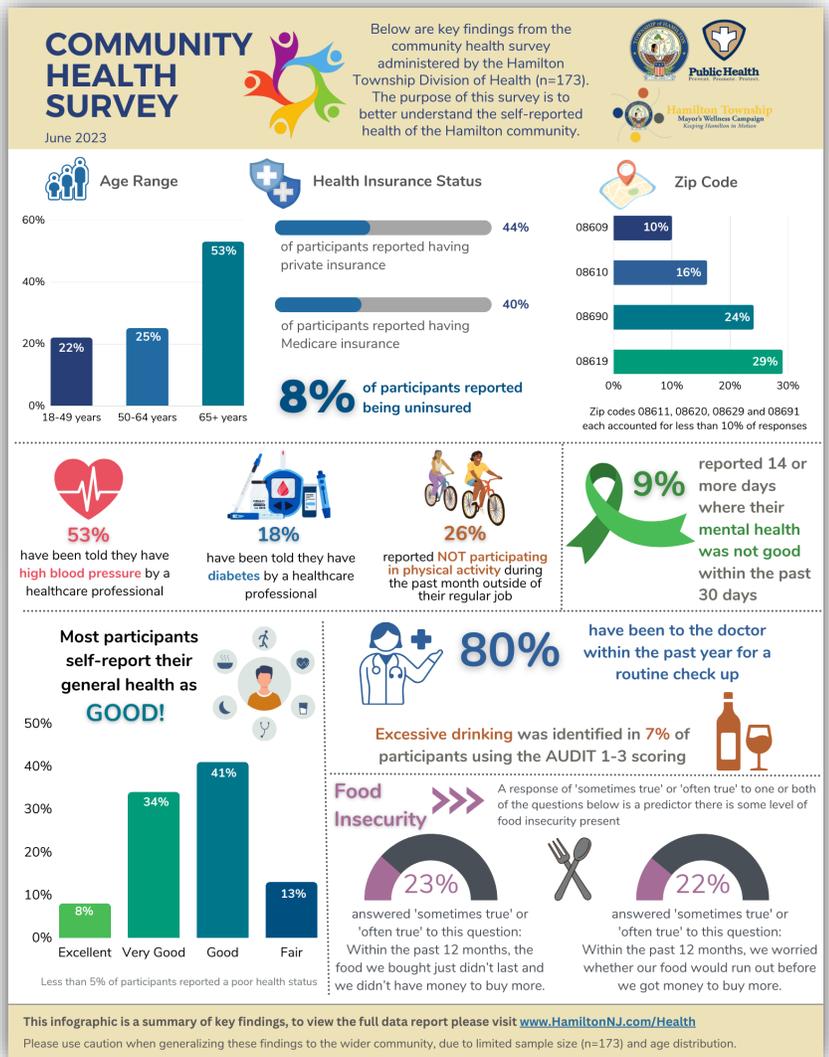
The Office of the Health Officer within the Division of Health plans and executes the decisions needed to ensure continued compliance with all applicable rules, laws, and guidelines set by township, state, and federal agencies. Additionally, the Health Officer is in charge of:

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



Left: Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests can be submitted online: www.townshipofhamiltonnj.nextrequest.com

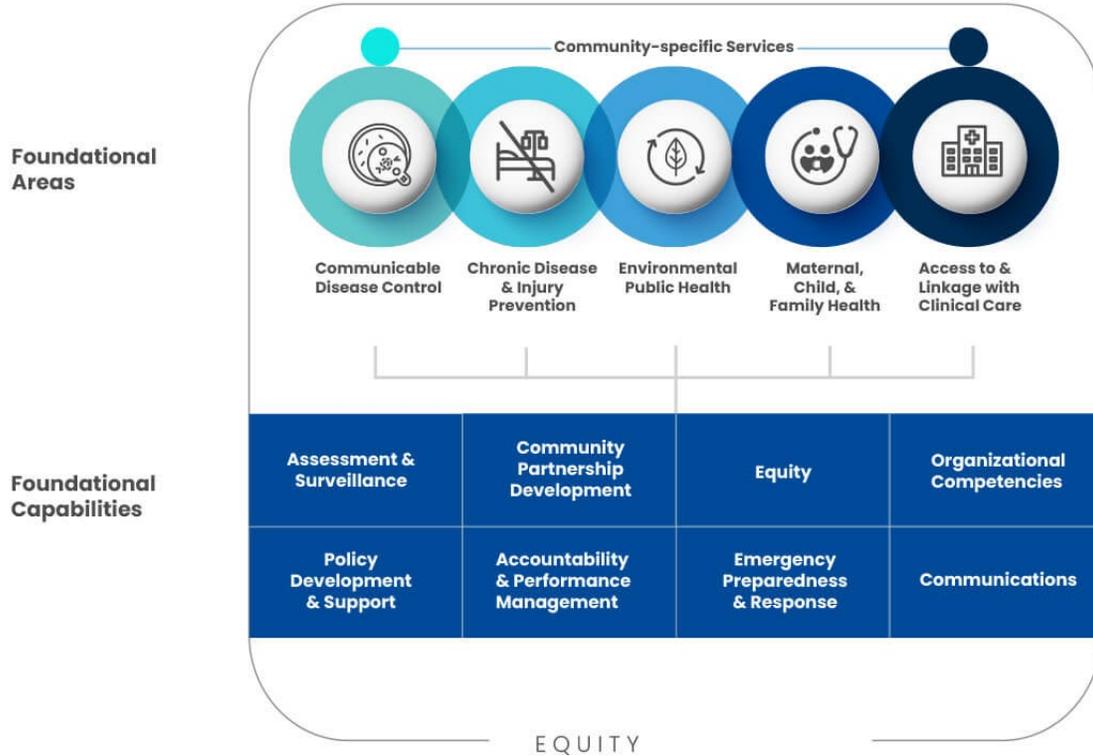
Bottom: Summary of the 2023 Community Health Survey conducted by the Division, which can be accessed through the Division's website.



Accreditation

During 2023, the Division has been actively pursuing accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

Foundational Public Health Services



February 2022

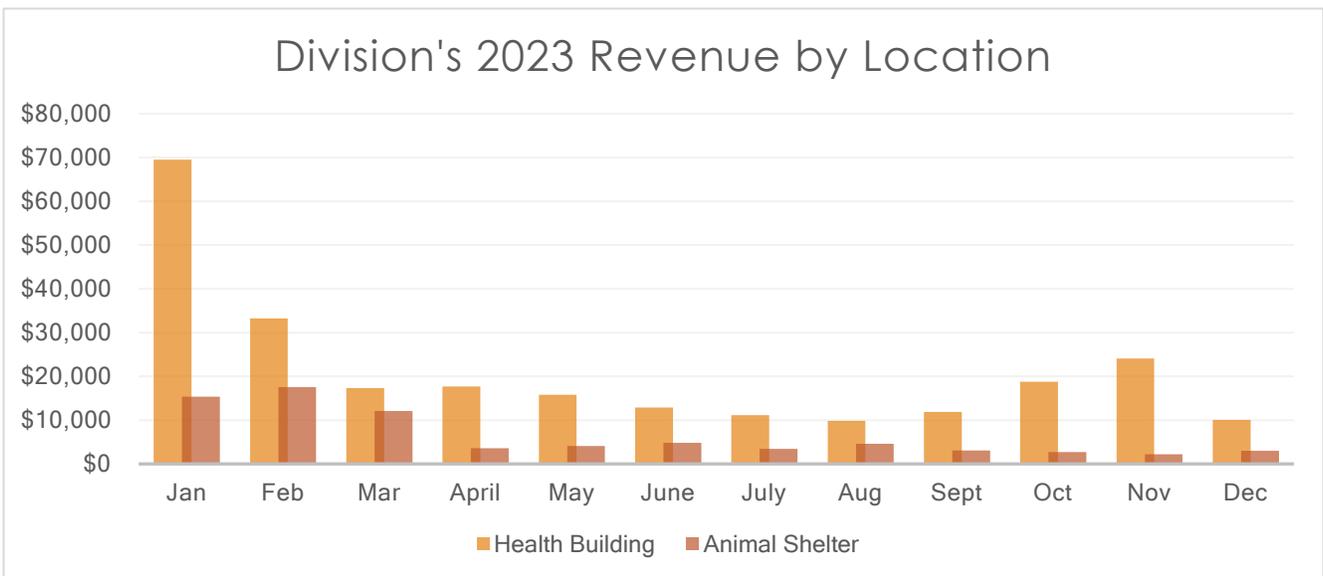
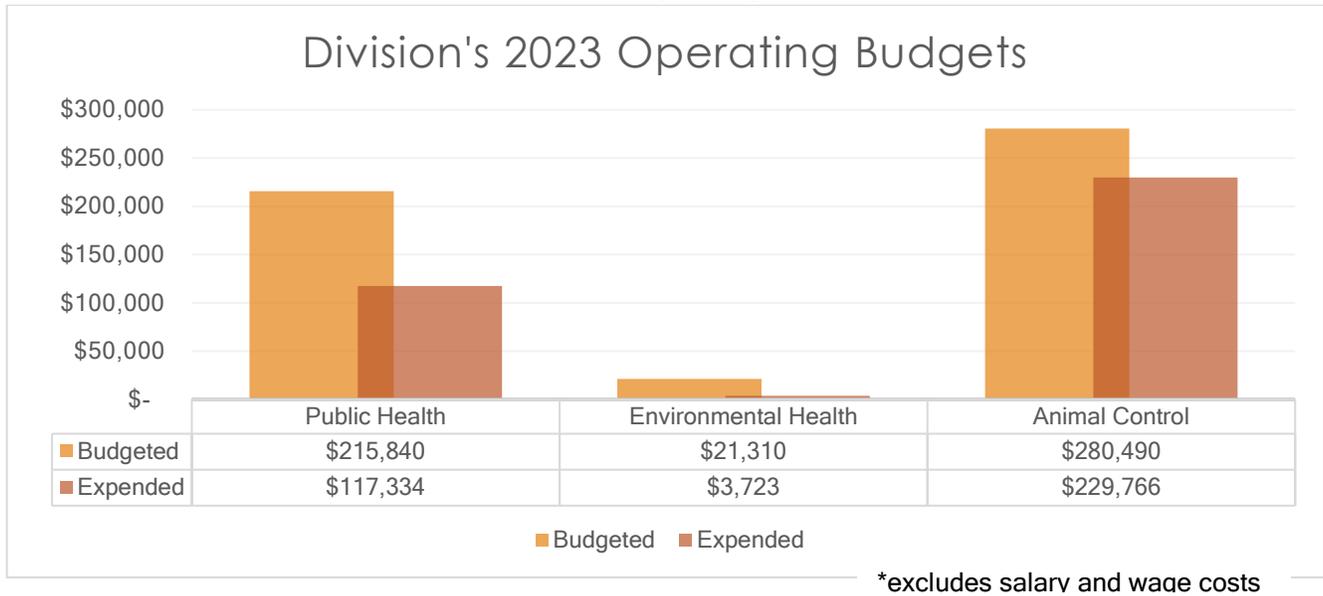
Accreditation measures Division’s performance against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused, and evidence based standards. Accreditation has many benefits including improvements in the areas of quality, workforce development, emergency preparedness, community partnerships, health equity and overall accountability and use of resources.

In October 2023, the Division submitted the application for initial accreditation, which was accepted by PHAB. The Division ended the 2023 year in step three of the seven-step accreditation process. Step 3 is document selection and submission that involves selecting documents that highlight each of the standards and measures provided by PHAB. The standards and measures are the criteria used to evaluate the Division’s performance and ability to provide the foundational public health services to the community. Moving forward the Division will continue with document selection and submission for most of the 2024 calendar year, with the goal to have all documents submitted by October 2024.

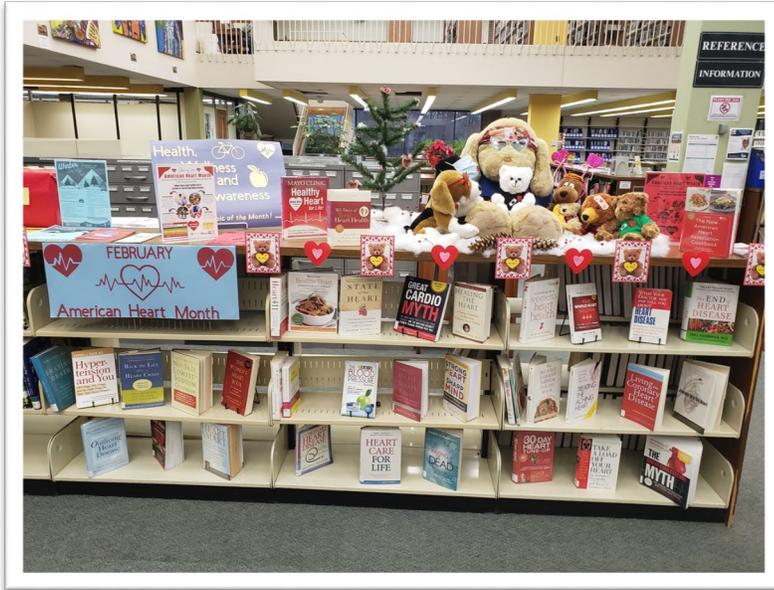
Financial Management

One of the main responsibilities of the Office of the Health Officer is to monitor the financial health of the Division. This includes ensuring that bills are paid in a timely manner; staff have the resources needed to complete their jobs; applying for grants to offset costs to the Township; and being responsible stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

The chart below displays the Division's appropriated budgets verse what was actually spent. In 2023, once again vet costs increased because of an influx of animals arriving at the shelter, the number of animals arriving needing extensive medical care, and cost increases in general. Grants continue to help offset expenses usually charged to Environmental and Public Health.



This chart displays the gross revenue of the Division. Revenue is made through the collection of fees for licenses, plan reviews, vital records, adoptions, and insurance reimbursements. The beginning of the year sees the greatest revenue due to license renewals, while a spike occurs in the fall due to insurance reimbursements for vaccinations.



Grants allow the Division to expand or launch new programs to improve the wellbeing of Hamilton Township without placing the burden solely on Township tax dollars. Each grant mandates that the Division meet certain deliverables and report on the progress quarterly. Additionally, most state grants are awarded according to state fiscal year (SFY) which runs from July 1 - June 30, each year.

Left: Mayor's Wellness Campaign display at the Hamilton Library.

Grants awarded in 2023

<u>Township Program</u> - Funder - <i>Grant Name</i>	Amount
<u>Municipal Alliance</u> - Governor's Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse - <i>Drug Enforcement Demand Reduction fund</i>	\$22,650
<u>Public Health</u> - National Council on Aging - <i>Vaccine Uptake grant</i>	\$62,264
<u>Public Health</u> - New Jersey Department of Health - <i>Vaccination Supplemental Funding grant</i>	\$20,000
<u>Public Health</u> - New Jersey Department of Health - <i>Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Program grant</i>	\$495,411
<u>Public Health</u> - New Jersey Assoc. of County & City Health Officials - <i>Enhancing Local Public Health Infrastructure grant</i>	\$610,278
<u>Environmental Health</u> - New Jersey Department of Health - <i>Childhood Lead Exposure Prevention grant</i>	\$177,300
TOTAL	\$1,387,903

Public health tends to see large influxes of grant funds following health emergencies (H1N1, Ebola, COVID-19, etc...), which taper off and eventually end. The grants the Division received in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have been extremely important in allowing the Division to scale up and meet the needs of the Township's residents.

Public Health Services

The Division of Health employs Public Health Nurses and Health Educators 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

	2021	2022	2023
Individual Children Seen in Clinics	421	522	609
Childhood Immunizations Administered	1,095	1,721	1,661
Blood Lead Level (BLL) Screenings	8	21	27
Reported Children with Elevated BLLs	5	12	13
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Enrollment	66	160	253
Children Tested for Anemia (Iron Deficiency)	8	21	28
School Immunization Records Audited	4,750	5,736	5,844

*WIC data not provided in time for report



Public Health Nursing Section staff offering health education and flu vaccinations at the annual Senior Center Picnic!

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP DIVISION OF HEALTH

FLU VACCINE CLINIC

Free! Regardless of insurance status, ages 6 months and up welcome.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23
from 3:00PM-6:00PM

Hamilton Township Division of Health:
2100 Greenwood Ave

WHAT TO BRING TO THE CLINIC:

- **Registration form:** Visit HamiltonNJ.com/flushots to download your registration form in advance to avoid delays
- **Health insurance card** (if you have)

609-890-3884

Annual School Immunization Audit Analysis

Each year the Division's Public Health Nurses conduct routine immunization audits of student records in schools across the Township. These audits take place to ensure children attending the Township's public and private schools have all the required immunizations mandated by the State. Schools must have proof of the students' immunization history or proof of exemption. Ensuring adherence to immunization requirements limits the spread of vaccine preventable diseases.

2023 Immunization Audit Statistics			
School Category	Number of Records Audited	Percentage of schools that received 100% compliance on their original audit	Percentage of Schools that required a re-audit
Daycares and Pre-Schools	1,991	49%	51%
Private and Religious Schools - Pre-K	164	100%	--
Private and Religious Schools - Kindergarten	166	100%	--
Private and Religious Schools - 6 th Grade	179	86%	14%
Private and Religious Schools - Transfers	130	100%	--
Public Schools - Pre-K	268	33%	67%
Public Schools - Kindergarten	880	56%	44%
Public Schools - 6 th Grade	952	60%	40%
Public Elementary School - Transfer Students	506	65%	35%
Public Middle School - Transfer Students	214	25%	75%
Public High School - Transfer Students	394	50%	50%
Totals all schools	5,844	61%	39%

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 (2023 Confirmed Cases*)	COUNT
Novel Coronavirus - 2019 Ncov	1,971
Influenza, Human Isolates	215
Other - Diseases With Case Counts Of 4 Or Less	30
Hepatitis C - Chronic	22
Campylobacteriosis	14
Streptococcus Pneumoniae	13
Salmonellosis - Non Typhoid	12
Streptococcus Pyogenes (Gas) - Without Toxic Shock Syndrome	9
Hepatitis B - Chronic	7
Shigellosis	5
Total	2,298

*Preliminary data - Municipality-level data with values less than five could lead to the identification of individuals and therefore are not released publicly without accompanying interpretation.

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of flu clinics held	17	18	21
Total number of flu vaccines administered	1,898	1,951	1,691
Number of High-Dose flu vaccine administered	388	349	497
Total number of pneumonia vaccines administered	49	25	54
Total number of home visits made for vaccination	78	49	61

Several flu vaccine clinics were held throughout the community including at the Nottingham Firehouse, Hamilton Senior Center, Hamilton Public Library, John O. Wilson Hamilton Neighborhood Center, Bromley Neighborhood Civic Center, Project Freedom, 55+ Living Communities, the Hamilton YMCA, and at Oktoberfest. In addition the Division of Health staff performed home visits for homebound residents within the community. The Prevnar-20 pneumonia vaccine was also available to eligible residents and administered at the clinics, or by appointment at the Division of Health.

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 call Directly Observed Therapy (DOT.) The Division also conducts PPDs, which is a skin test for TB. *In 2021, Trenton Health Team managed DOTs.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of residents placed under DOT	0*	3	1
Number of home visits conducted	0*	183	66
Number of PPDs conducted	116	167	124
Number of positive PPDs referred for follow up	5	8	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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of College/University affiliation agreements	3	3	3
Total number of interns/student nurses	11	9	15



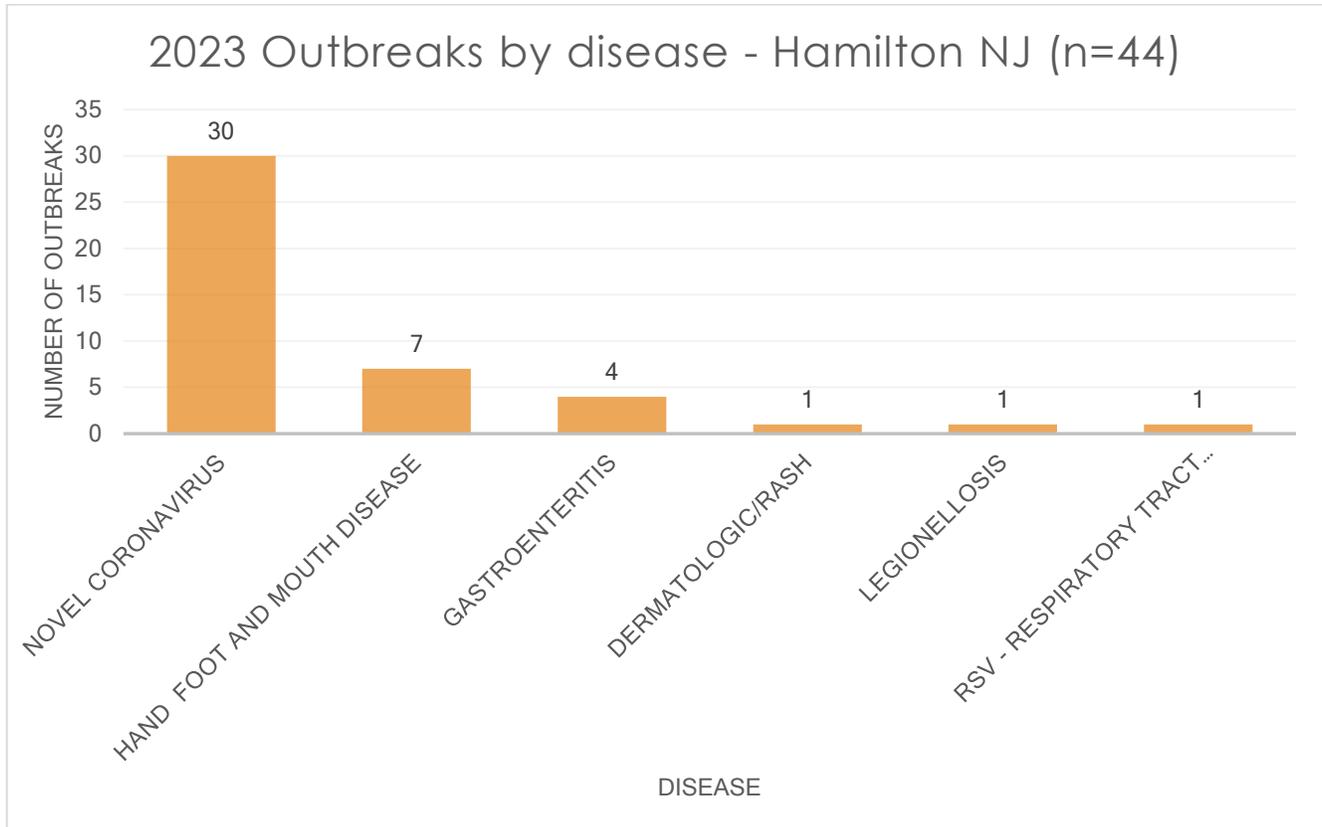
Left: Mayor Martin, Director Kathleen Fitzgerald and staff from the Division of Health, John O. Wilson Hamilton Neighborhood Center and Mercer County WIC at the WIC mobile unit unveiling in Hamilton!

Top: Health staff and intern at the YMCA Senior Health and Fitness Day.

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 and investigations by Exposure Setting	2022	2023
Group home	1	-
Daycare facility	1	6
Healthcare - Assisted Living Residence	15	13
Healthcare - Long Term Care	15	18
Healthcare - Acute Care Hospital	1	1
Healthcare - Outpatient	-	1
Community	2	1
School or University	21	4
Total	56	44



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 when buildup is visible, follow manufacturer instructions	A hot water tank set to a temperature of 140°F is best for controlling <i>Legionella</i>. 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. Drain and flush hot water tank per manufacturer instructions, consider hiring a professional.	
	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
 NJ Department of Health (NJDOH): www.nj.gov/health

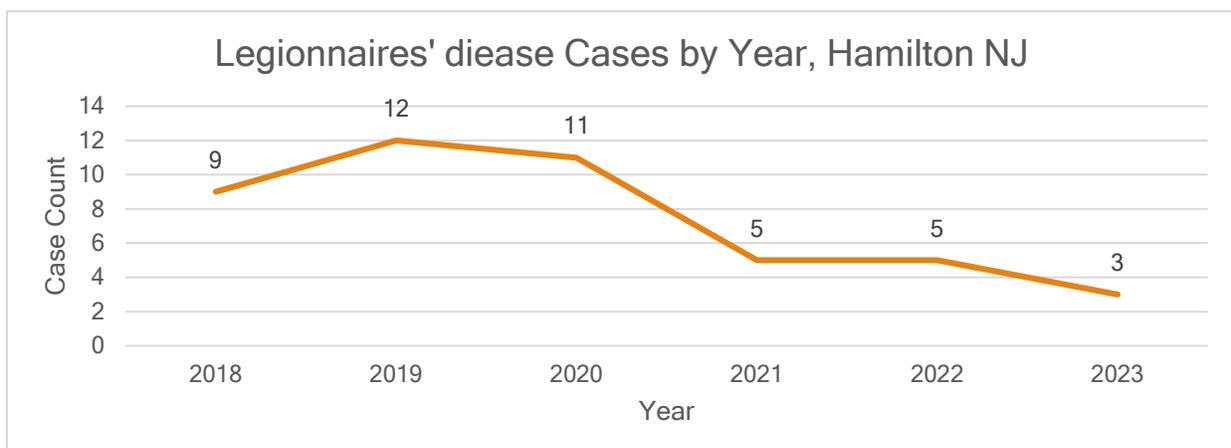
November 2022



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.

For more information, residents can call HamStat, the Division of Health, or visit www.hamiltonnj.com/legionella.



COVID-19

In 2023, the Division continued to respond to COVID-19 through outreach and vaccination. The Division uses grant funds to support COVID-19 efforts and public health obligations. That work includes:

Contact tracing	Case investigation
Long Term Care (LTC) outbreak coordination	School guidance
Technical assistance to businesses	Health education
Vaccination	Test-kit distribution

COVID-19 Test-Kit Distribution

In 2023, the Division was provided with home COVID-19 test kits from the New Jersey Department of Health. Home test kits were distributed to residents at community events, health fairs, to schools, community centers, 55+ living communities and more! Contact the Division of Health for free at-home test kits while supplies last.

	2023
Test-kits distributed	7,299

COVID-19 Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines remain an important tool in the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent severe illness (CDC, 2023). In 2023, there were some changes to the vaccine formula and distribution of vaccines. Up until September 2023, the Division was holding regular free walk-in clinics for residents to receive the 2022-2023 Bivalent formula doses. Starting in September 2023, the new vaccine formula (2023-2024 Monovalent) was authorized and the vaccines became commercialized, meaning the vaccines were now required to be purchased by providers instead of receiving a supply from the federal government. Residents were then required to use their health insurance to be vaccinated through pharmacies or other providers.

The Division did not purchase any private stock of the COVID-19 vaccine, but remains a vaccine provider for the uninsured population through the state 317 funds program for adults and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. During the months of September through December, the Division administered vaccines to the uninsured, and through pharmacy partnerships with Olden Pharmacy and Acme Pharmacy. Additionally, the Burlington County Health Department was able to provide some doses of private stock 2023-2024 Monovalent vaccine, which the Division utilized for homebound visits and walk-ins.



Total COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Administered 2023	
Bivalent 2022-2023 Formula: Doses administered between January 2023-September 2023 =	468
Monovalent 2023-2024 Formula: Doses administered between October 2023-December 2023* =	172
TOTAL COVID-19 Vaccine Doses 2023 =	640
Clinics and Home Visits Completed	
Number of COVID-19 Vaccine clinics held 2023 =	55
Home Visits Completed in 2023 for COVID-19 Vaccines =	28

Hamilton Township Division of Health

COVID-19 Vaccine & Testing Updates

November 2023

The FDA and CDC have authorized an updated COVID-19 vaccine formula (Pfizer and Moderna) for the 2023-2024 year. This updated formula targets the Omicron XBB.1.5 variant.

Who is Eligible?



Everyone ages 6 months and older can get the updated vaccine.



People ages 5+ can get one dose of the updated vaccine regardless of previous vaccines received, it just has to be at least 2 months since your last dose.



Children ages 6mo-4yrs may require multiple doses based on the vaccine brand and previous doses received.

Insurance Information

- Health insurance now covers the cost of the vaccine for most people at no out-of-pocket cost.
 - No Health Insurance?** Adults and children with no insurance can access vaccines at their local health department or a Bridge Program Provider at no out-of-pocket cost.
- Contact your health insurance provider if you have questions about coverage for this vaccine.

Where to get Vaccinated?

Vaccines are available at select **pharmacies**. Residents may also check with their primary care physician or pediatrician for availability.

- Search for vaccine locations on [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

Uninsured residents may contact the Hamilton Township Division of Health, 609-890-3884.

FREE COVID-19 Tests!

The Federal Government opened another round of ordering COVID-19 tests, making **4 more free tests available to households ahead of the holidays!** Visit [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.COVIDTests.gov) to order yours!



SCAN ME!



Questions?
609-890-3884 or 609-890-3825
CovidVaccine@HamiltonNJ.com
www.HamiltonNJ.com/Health

	2020	2021	2022
Number of COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics Held	2	91	85
Total COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in 2021	424	8,150	3,199
Vaccine and Dose Breakdown			
1 st doses (all vaccines)	424	3,098	193
2 nd doses (all vaccines)	--	2,213	198
3 rd doses (all vaccines)	--	46	26
Monovalent Boosters (all vaccines)	--	2,793	1,215
Bivalent Boosters (all vaccines)	--	--	1,286
Pfizer (12+), all doses		2,826	1,183
1 st doses	--	915	36
2 nd doses	--	807	42
3 rd doses	--	14	--
Monovalent Booster doses	--	1,090	627
Bivalent Boosters	--	--	478
Pfizer Pediatric (5-11), all doses		844	210
1 st doses	--	538	78
2 nd and 3 rd doses	--	306	85
Monovalent Booster doses	--	--	18
Bivalent Booster doses	--	--	29
Pfizer (6 months - 4 years)			81
1 st doses	--	--	28
2 nd doses	--	--	28
3 rd doses	--	--	25
Moderna (6+), all doses		3,437	1,616
1 st doses	424	774	14
2 nd doses	--	1,100	9
3 rd doses	--	32	--
Monovalent Booster doses	--	1,531	814
Bivalent Booster doses	--	--	779
Moderna (6 months - 5 years)			72
1 st doses	--	--	37
2 nd doses	--	--	35
J&J/Janssen (18+), all doses		1,043	37
1 st doses	--	871	1
Monovalent Booster doses	--	172	36
Number of COVID-19 Vaccine Home Visits Completed	--	145	184

Community Outreach and Partnerships

The Division participated in ongoing community outreach to provide resources and health education on COVID-19 and other health topics. Through the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity grant, the Division completed an update to the Rapid Public Health Assessment. This rapid assessment built upon the previous assessment versions in 2021 and 2022. The assessment included insight into the Hamilton community, identified priority populations, social determinants of health and efforts to help mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 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.

Outreach and health education efforts in 2023 involved partnerships with local organizations to deliver health information and resources to residents. The Division collaborated with 25 individual organizations in 2023 and attended 33 community events/health fairs. Health education and outreach activities included:

- Attending community events and health fairs
- Coordinating health screening events
- Supporting clinics for vaccinations (COVID-19, Influenza, Pneumonia and Shingles)
- Developing media materials (flyers, social media posts, newspaper ads)
- Providing Spanish/English translation services
- Maintaining an inventory of local social support services for residents to access
- Distribution of COVID-19 test kits
- Conducting a Community Health Survey
- Providing referrals and answering questions on health related topics



Health education and outreach staff at a Pop-Up School House event (top) and the John O. Wilson Hamilton Neighborhood Center (left)

Community Health

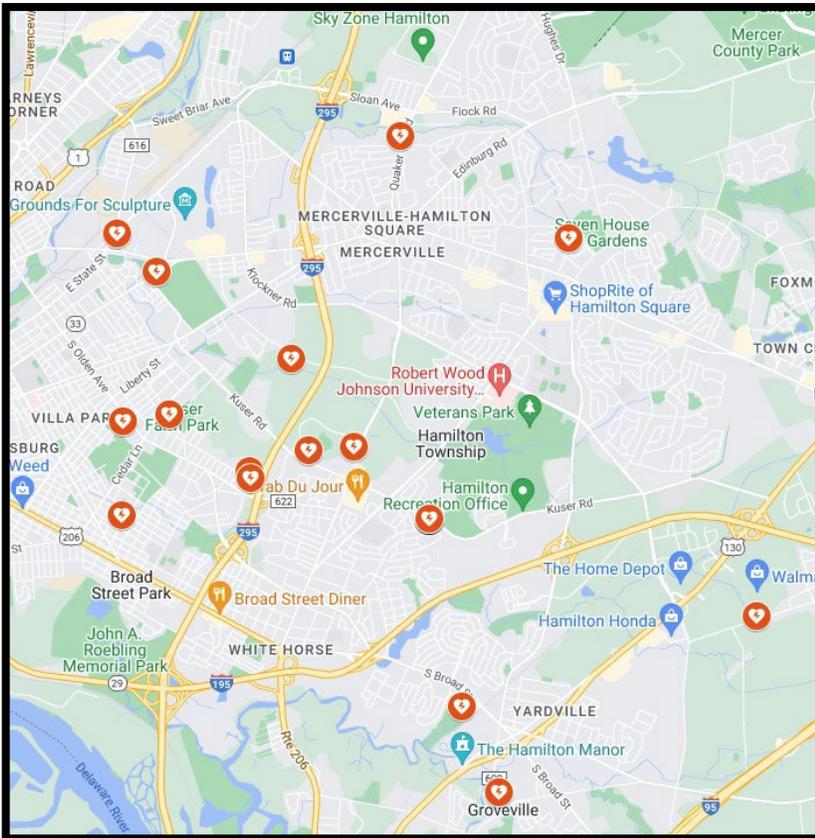
The Division’s staff promote wellness throughout the Township by participating or organizing events and activities. Health should be accessible to everyone. The Division sponsors activities that align with our vision of creating a culture of health here in Hamilton. Activities include:

Health Education

Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Coalitions and Partnerships

Mayor’s Wellness Campaign



The Division’s nurses maintain and conduct monthly checks of 22 AEDs throughout the Township at public facilities.

AEDs save lives!
9 in 10 cardiac arrest victims who receive a shock from an AED in the first minute, live.
 Source: American Heart Assoc.



Right: Mayor Martin leads participants in a Walk with the Mayor at Veterans Park as part of the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign.



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

	2021	2022	2023
Total clients seen in clinics	106	169	224
Hepatitis B screenings performed	22	17	21
Hepatitis C screenings performed	38	27	22
HIV Screenings performed	-	75	150
Oral screenings for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea	76	109	170
Urine screenings for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea	72	122	169
Syphilis screenings performed	67	110	161
Vaccines administered during clinic	10	23	22
JYNNEOS (MPX) vaccines administered	-	71	45

Note: In 2020, the STD clinic was closed during certain periods. In 2022, HDOH and NJDOH collaborated to restart free and confidential HIV screenings within the STD clinic. The MPX vaccine, JYNNEOS, was offered starting in September, 2022 to eligible residents.

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Health assessments performed	30	77	111

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Home visits conducted	226	49	61

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of properties with septic systems	506**	533	541
Permits issued for construction or alteration	18	28	14
Properties reviewed for real estate transactions	21	10	19

Private Well Testing Act

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

	2021	2022	2023
Number of wells reviewed for real estate transactions	19	8	14

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of Body Art establishments operating	0	2	4

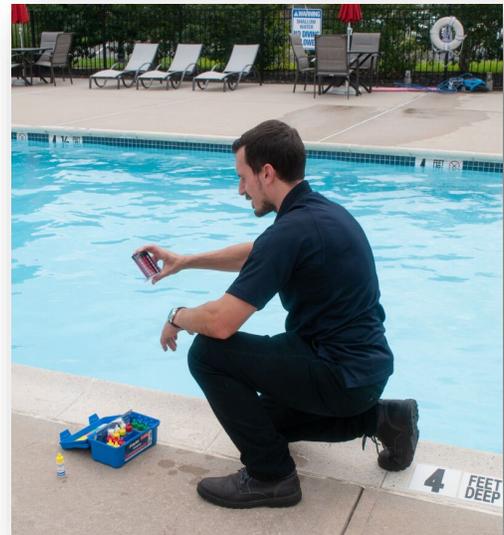
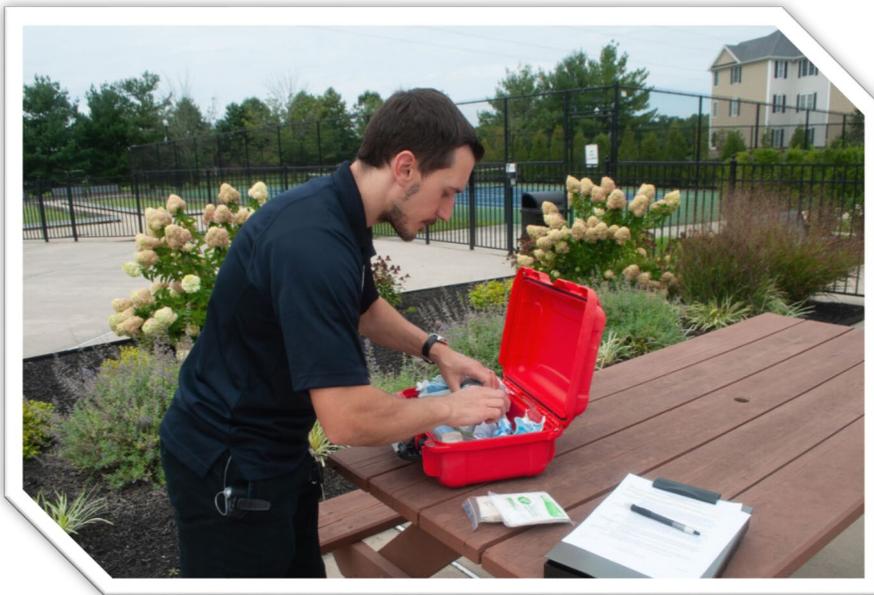
Retail Food Establishments

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.

Licenses	2021	2022	2023
Number of Retail Food Establishment licenses issued	524	514	535
Number of Full Year-Temporary/Mobile licenses issued	30	32	58
Number of Vending Machine licenses issued	200	178	160
Number of Temporary Single-Event licenses issued	70	146	206

Inspections and Investigations	2021	2022	2023
Number of routine inspections completed	491	520	554
Number of re-inspections completed	86	115	167
Number of pre-operational inspections completed	34	24	36
Number of retail food plan reviews completed	34	40	35
Number of complaint driven investigations completed	50	69	69
Number of Notices of Violations issued	221	246	216

REHS, Eric Cuperwich, performing a pool inspection.



Retail Food Establishment Inspection Analysis

The Division's REHSs use a risk-based inspection method to ensure establishments comply with NJAC 8:24. They are graded on 52 measures. If an establishment receives a "Conditionally Satisfactory" score during an inspection, the establishment is given time to correct issues and will be re-inspected. If the establishment fails to receive a "Satisfactory" score, it is required to pay a re-inspection fee. After four re-inspections during a two-year period, the establishment must close until all violations are abated.

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.

Each licensed retail food establishment is assigned a "risk-type" based on the types of food the establishment sells or prepares. The tables below illustrate the types of inspections conducted with the score that was given by risk-type.

Risk 1 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaint	4			
Emergency Response	2			
Pre-Operational	6		6	
Change of Owner	4	2	1	1
Recall	9			
Routine 1	108	2	105	1
Routine 2				
Re-inspection 1	5	1	4	
Re-inspection 2	1		1	
Re-inspection 3				
Total	139	5	117	2

Risk 2 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaint	31			
Emergency Response	7			
Pre-Operational	20		20	
Change of Owner				
Recall				
Routine 1	257	40	213	4
Routine 2	35	7	28	
Re-inspection 1	50	9	37	4
Re-inspection 2	15	4	11	
Re-inspection 3	3		3	
Total	418	60	312	8

Risk 3 Establishments				
<i>Reason For Inspection</i>	<i>Total Inspected</i>	<i>Conditionally-Satisfactory</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
<i>Complaint</i>	14			
<i>Emergency Response</i>	7			
<i>Pre-Operational</i>	9		9	
<i>Change of Owner</i>	1		1	
<i>Recall</i>				
<i>Routine 1</i>	140	70	69	1
<i>Routine 2</i>	2	2		
<i>Re-inspection 1</i>	69	14	54	1
<i>Re-inspection 2</i>	14	2	12	
<i>Re-inspection 3</i>	1		1	
Total	257	88	146	2

Risk 3/4 Establishments				
<i>Reason For Inspection</i>	<i>Total Inspected</i>	<i>Conditionally-Satisfactory</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
<i>Complaint</i>	4			
<i>Emergency Response</i>				
<i>Pre-Operational</i>	1		1	
<i>Change of Owner</i>				
<i>Recall</i>				
<i>Routine 1</i>	11	8	3	
<i>Routine 2</i>	1		1	
<i>Re-inspection 1</i>	8	1	7	
<i>Re-inspection 2</i>	1		1	
<i>Re-inspection 3</i>				
Total	26	8	14	0

All Establishments				
<i>Reason For Inspection</i>	<i>Total Inspected</i>	<i>Conditionally-Satisfactory</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
<i>Complaint</i>	53			
<i>Emergency Response</i>	16			
<i>Pre-Operational</i>	36		36	
<i>Change of Owner</i>	5	2	2	1
<i>Recall</i>	9			
<i>Routine 1</i>	516	120	390	6
<i>Routine 2</i>	38	9	29	
<i>Re-inspection 1</i>	132	25	102	5
<i>Re-inspection 2</i>	31	6	25	
<i>Re-inspection 3</i>	4		4	
Total	840	161	589	12

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of inspections completed	7	14	14

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of licenses issued	28	32	32
Number of inspections completed	97	129	108

Public Recreational Bathing Inspection Analysis

All establishments must receive a Routine 1 inspection and only 56% of establishments passed this inspection. Year Round establishments receive a Routine 2 inspection and only 69% of establishments passed this inspection.

Reason For Inspection	Conditionally -Satisfactory	Pending	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total Inspected
Complaint	-	-	-	-	0
Additional Site Visits	-	-	-	1	1
Pre-Operational	-	11	8	-	19
Routine 1	10	-	18	4	32
Routine 2	3	-	9	1	13
Re-inspection 1	3	2	21	3	29
Re-inspection 2	-	-	7	1	8
Re-inspection 3	1	-	1	-	2
Re-inspection 4	-	-	1	-	1
Total	17	13	65	10	105

Childhood Lead – Environmental Interventions

Starting July 1, 2023, the Division of Health took over nursing case management for children residing in Hamilton with elevated blood lead levels from the City of Trenton. The Division of Health's Environmental Health Services section continues to conduct the environmental interventions within the homes of children identified with high levels of lead.

	2021	2022	2023
New cases of children with EBLLs	5	8	13
Number of homes completing lead abatement	4	7	2

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.

	2021	2022	2023
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.

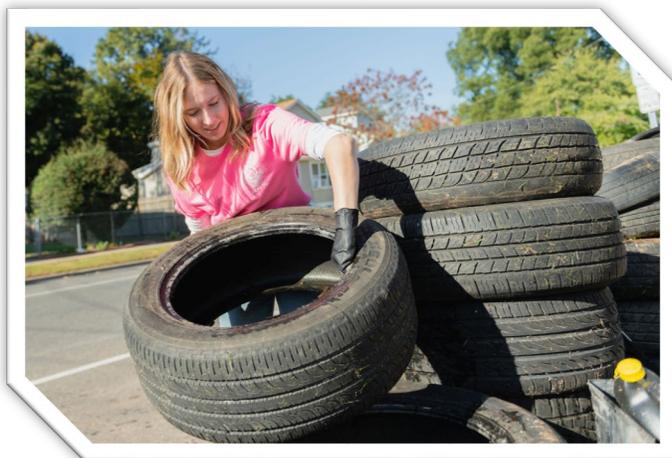
	2021	2022	2023
Number of inspections completed	8	9	10

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*.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of complaint driven investigations completed	N/A	N/A	155*
Number of Notices of Violations issued	31	24	27

*New data point for 2023



Did you know?!

Tires and other objects that can collect water are the perfect breeding ground for mosquitos. Flight the bite! Remove all standing water near your home and business.

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Home birth or birth en-route	6	7	10
Certified copies (birth, marriage and death certificates) issued	4,243	3,358	4,240
Marriage licenses issued	572	565	538
Domestic Partnership certificates issued	4	0	2
Domestic Partnership registrations issued	2	0	1
Civil Union certificates issued	1	0	0
Civil Union registrations issued	1	0	0
Disinterment permits issued	3	5	6
Burial permits issued	3	3	1
Corrections requested	71	56	134

Left: Registrar, Sarah Papadem, performing a marriage license appointment.

Below: The Division of Health's staff at Oktoberfest. Fall is a great time to get your annual flu vaccine, which is a popular "give-away" at Oktoberfest.



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

	2022			2023		
Animal Intake	Dogs	Cats	Other	Dogs	Cats	Other
Surrendered by owner	17	27	0	19	49	1
Stray/Impounded	233	239	21	207	195	30
Animals received from other organizations	5	0	0	0	0	0
Other (cruelty investigation, animal bite, etc.)	24	34	2	8	13	3
TOTAL	279	300	23	234	257	34

	2022			2023		
Animal Outflow	Dogs	Cats	Other	Dogs	Cats	Other
Reclaimed by owner	158	21	1	129	17	5
Adopted	89	215	17	83	213	14
Euthanized	4	31	2	6	12	0
Animals transferred to other organizations	16	10	2	10	7	3
Other (escaped, died at shelter, etc.)	0	9	1	0	8	8
TOTAL	267	286	23	228	257	30

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of field calls	2,458	3,038	3,215
Number of animal bite investigations	134	147	126
Number of summonses issued	42	42	91
Number of wildlife transported to rehabilitation centers	152	130	98

	2021	2022	2023
Number of dog licenses issued	3,616	3,392	3,664
Number of free rabies vaccinations administered	836	748	870



Animal Shelter staff outside of the Shelter building.

DID YOU KNOW? In 2023, HTAS had an **62% 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). Sadly, there continues to be drop in reclaims year over year. This is still significantly higher than the 2022 state average for stray dogs redeemed, which is only 29%

Unfortunately, cats continue to have a dramatically lower reclaim rate, approximately 9%, similar to the state average.

Source: www.nj.gov/health/yph/Shelter_Pound_County_Summary_2022.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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of volunteers	51	53	68
Number of volunteer hours	1,199	1,884	2,110
In-kind value of volunteer hours*	\$38,836	\$63,717	\$71,360

*Source: [Independent Sector](#)

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of animals fostered	112	198	126

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.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of animals transfer to other organizations	32	28	20

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	2022				2023			
	Dogs	Cats	Other	Total	Dogs	Cats	Other	Total
Aggression, Unsafe to Handle	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	2
Cancer	2	2	0	4	2	0	0	2
Failure to thrive	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0
Major organ failure	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Medical – severe	0	12	2	14	2	11	0	13
Medical – emergency	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
Medical – disease	0	7	0	7	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	4	30	2	36	6	12	0	18

Died in care	2022			2023		
	Other	Cats	Total	Other	Cats	Total
Neonatal Kitten	0	5	5	0	8	8
Post-surgical	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	1	0	1	1
Unknown	2	1	3	1	4	5
Medical – disease	0	1	1	0	1	1
TOTAL	2	8	10	1	14	15

Note: no dogs died in care in 2023 or 2022

2023 Annual Live Release Rate: 96.4%

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.



Some of the loving animals that called the Shelter home temporarily in 2023. The Shelter ensures all animals receive the care they need during their stay.

Municipal Alliance Commission

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 or email haasa@hamiltonnj.com.

Membership

	Type
VACANT	Chair
Jessica Nitti	Regular
Janice Archambeault	Regular
VACANT	Regular
Brian Birch	Regular
VACANT	Regular
Alejandro Batlle	Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Schuster	Representative of Chief of Police
VACANT	Representative of Presiding Judge
Pasquale "Pat" Papero	Council Liaison
Cashel Darvas	Representative of the Mayor
Melissa Hutchinson	Commission Secretary
Chris Hellwig	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 the Township's schools.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of students reached	1,034	1,125	944
Number of education sessions	76	43	46
Number of schools supported	3	6	7





Thank you for taking the time to read through the Division of Health's 2023 annual report.
Have a happy, and healthy 2024!!
- Your Health Team



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.