



Division of Health 2024 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 2024 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 2024 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.

The Division of Health has its eyes on accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board or PHAB. In 2024, the Division submitted its application for accreditation, all while continuing to deliver the world-class public health services our residents have come to expect from us. Approval from PHAB is expected in 2025.

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 two goals for 2024:

1. By the end of 2024, submit all documents required for accreditation through PHAB to become an accredited health department.
 - a. I am happy to report, that in October 2024 the Division submitted its application for accreditation by PHAB. Next steps include site visits, and documentation review and clarification, which will occur in 2025. We expect to receive the results of the application later in 2025.
2. Achieve recognition once again as a "Healthy Town" from the NJ Healthcare Quality Institute (NJHQI).
 - a. The Township has received the designation of "Healthy Town" in 2022, 2023, and we're awaiting the announcement for 2024. Join Hamilton's Mayor's Wellness Campaign at our free events that occur throughout the year!

Looking ahead to 2025, the Division will continue to do what it does best - respond to the health needs of Hamilton. This includes providing health educational programs within the community as part of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign, preparing for emergencies, and ensuring all residents have a healthy place to live, work, and play.

This year's goals are by the end of 2025:

1. Finally be an official PHAB accredited Health Department!
2. Achieve recognition once again as a "Healthy Town" from NJHQI.
3. Review and update the Animal Shelter's policies and procedures.
4. Encourage employees to implement at least one innovative pilot project.

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 wear red day.

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.

2025 Board of Health Members	
Richard Tighe, <i>President</i>	Pasquale "Pat" Papero, <i>Vice President</i>
Anthony Carabelli	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 VACANT - 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 Brielle Spadola - Health Aide*
<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* 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 Jocelynn VanHandel - Animal Attendant Brielle Bianchini - Animal Attendant (PT) Erin Tessein - Clerk Typist Donna Peroni - Senior Clerk Typist VACANT - Volunteer Coordinator (PT)
<u>Hamilton Alliance Against Substance Abuse (HAASA)</u>	VACANT - Alliance Coordinator*

*Grant funded positions

Division of Health Staffing	
Number of Employees/Positions	34
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

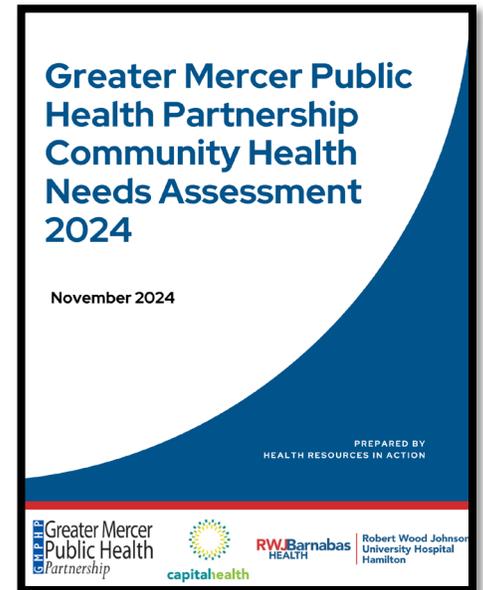
Mortality Statistic	Hamilton Twp.	Mercer County
Avg. age at death, 2000-2019, years	76.9	74.5
Age-Adjusted Rate, Deaths per 100,000 population	718.6	646.3

Community Health Assessments

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.

In 2024, GMPHP participated in the development of the new Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP with the consultant group Health Resources in Action (HRiA). The process included a combination of data collection and analysis of primary and secondary source data, including a comprehensive community health survey for the community. 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:

- Mental and Behavioral Health
 - Goal: Mercer County nourishes the mental health and wellness of all, promoting a healthier community.
- Access to Wellness
 - Goal: All in Mercer County have equitable access to physical, social, and economic resources to achieve their own optimal health and wellness.
- Housing and Built Environment
 - Goal: Everyone in Mercer County has a place to feel safe and call home in a thriving community.
- Maternal and Infant Health
 - All birthing people and infants in Mercer County have equitable access to quality care and resources across the continuum to improve health outcomes.



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

The Community Health Survey conducted in 2024 to inform the new Community Health Needs Assessment and Improvement Plan (CHNA/CHIP) included open-ended response for residents to share thoughts and concerns. The Division reviewed this qualitative data specifically for Hamilton Township residents to further understand health concerns within the community.

The question asked was "Use the space below to expand on a topic previously mentioned or an important health-related topic that was not mentioned in this survey that you believe is important for when planning health and community services." The Division analyzed the comments collected to this question for responses connected to Hamilton Township zip codes (08619, 08690, 08610, 08620, 08629, 08691, 08501, 08609, and 08650). There were 1,210 respondents to the survey within these zip codes, 194 of them had a response to the open-ended question (16% of the responses).

The 194 comments were analyzed using content analysis in Microsoft Excel. Three separate staff members at the Division read the comments independently to identify common patterns among words and phrases. Each comment was categorized into the theme(s) it represents, and then totals are calculated to see which themes appear most often across all comments. Results were compared between the three different analyses to identify the most common patterns and themes.



The most common themes that emerged from the data included healthcare access, mental health, healthcare quality and health insurance concerns. The word cloud shows all of the themes that emerged from the data.

Review of the qualitative data from the Community Health Survey provides greater insight into the health concerns among Hamilton residents. The recurring themes highlight gaps in access, affordability, and quality of care across healthcare, housing, and community services. Many of the comments centered on concerns with accessing healthcare, issues with insurance and coverage and the quality of care received from healthcare providers. It was also evident that mental health is a significant concern among residents highlighting the cost of care, provider availability, accessible resources, education on mental health and call for local programs for mental health conditions.

The health of specific populations are of concern including older adults, people with disabilities, children and pregnant/postpartum women. A common theme intertwined with comments included cost of living and financial struggles when it came to housing, food and healthcare. Transportation issues centered around two common concerns, first, lack of public transportation and difficulty getting to and from appointments. The second centered around pedestrian safety and traffic volume on the roads making residents feel unsafe driving, walking or biking.

This data highlights the wide variety of social conditions that affect health and wellness within the community, also known as social determinants of health (SDOH) - the conditions in the environment where people live, learn, work and play that affect health and quality of life.

The qualitative and quantitative data from the Community Health Survey is a valuable resource for the Division in the development and revision of programs to help meet resident health needs. The priority areas identified in the CHIP (Mental & Behavioral Health, Access to Wellness, Housing and Built Environment and Maternal and Infant Health) directly relate to the themes from the open-ended responses from residents.

Upstream policy and systemic changes are needed to result in substantial improvements to healthcare access, quality, health insurance and cost of living concerns. At the local level modifications to programs, resource sharing and partnerships have the opportunity to help inform and connect residents to existing resources and services. The Division will utilize the comments from this survey and other data sources to help provide programs, connections and support to residents to help them reach their health and wellness needs in 2025 and beyond.

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:

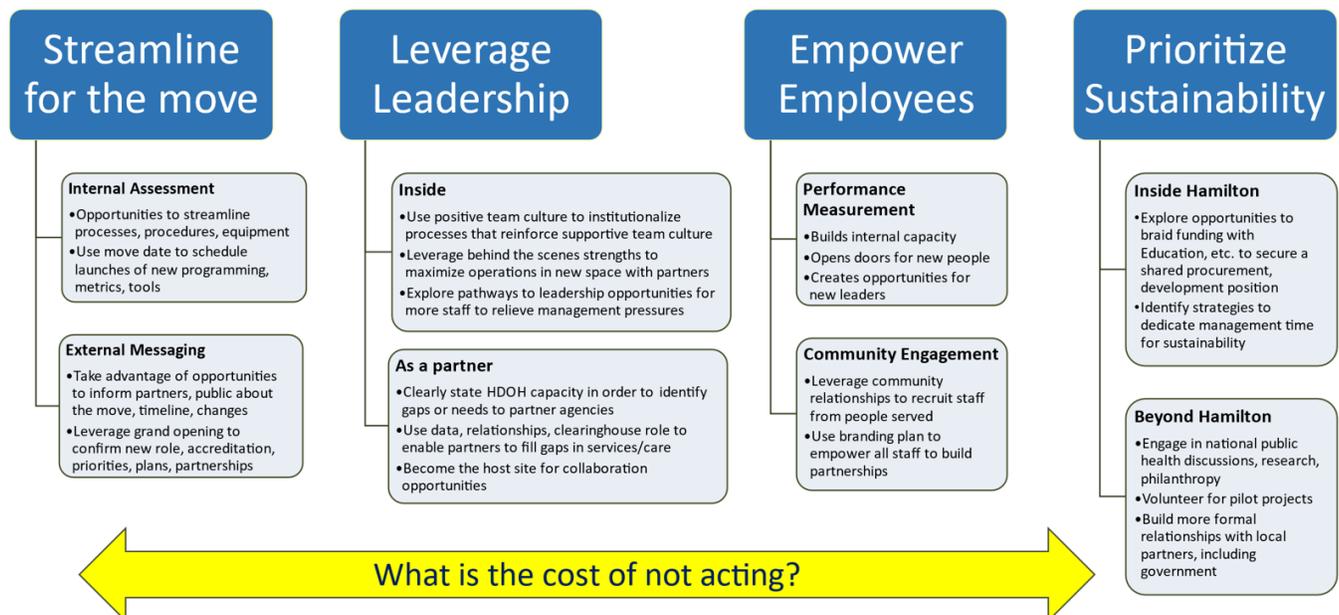
Financial Management	Strategic Planning
Public Information	Workforce Development
Record Keeping	Inter-Governmental Affairs
Personnel Management	Public Health Enforcement

	2022	2023	2024
Total number of OPRA requests filled	304	351	377
Animal Shelter related requests	135	164	144
Environmental/Public Health requests	170	187	198
Approximate number of staffing hours spent filling requests	72	80	80
Approximate cost of staff time spent filling requests	\$1,769	\$2,585	\$2,672

The Division of Health, with the assistance of a consultant, conducted strategic planning sessions in order to prioritize and guide the Division’s actions over the next three (3) years. The below infographic illustrates our four priority areas: 1) streamlining for the move to the new municipal building, 2) leverage our leadership skills, 3) workforce development, and 4) become more sustainable. Within each priority area, are objectives for the Division to work on.

Strategic Priorities for Action: Foundational Public Health Services

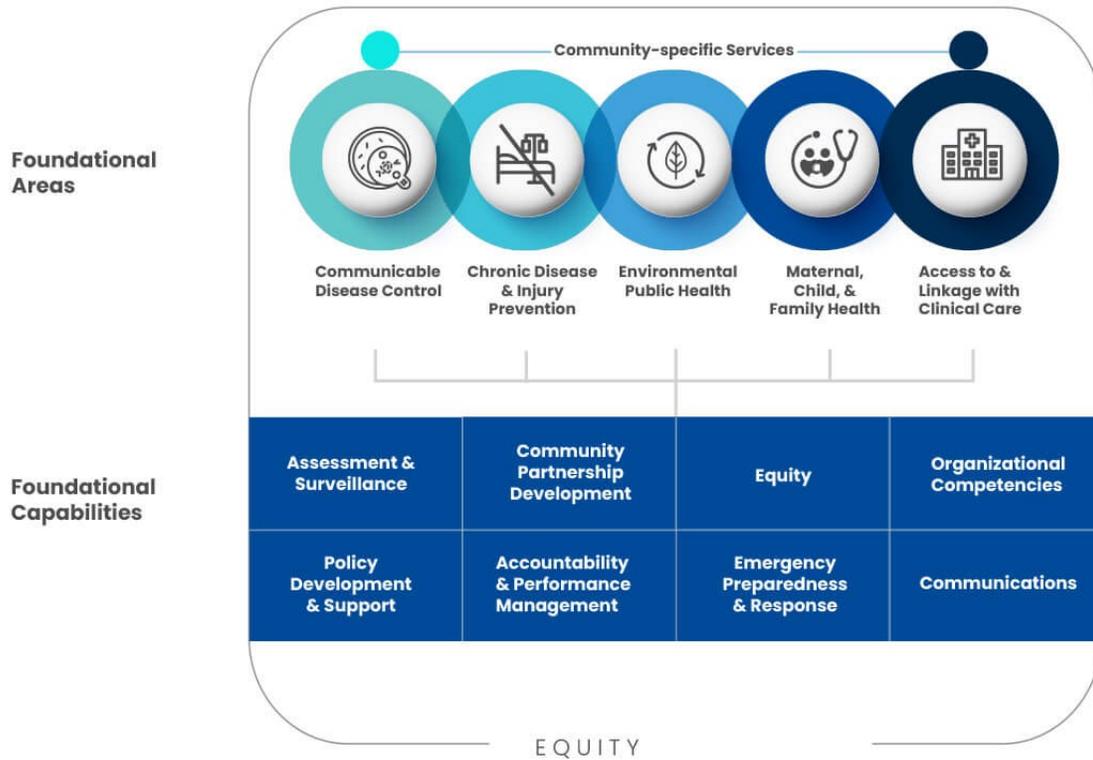
Assessment & Surveillance - Community Partnership Development - Equity - Organizational Competencies -Policy Development & Support, - Accountability & Performance Management - Communications



Accreditation

During 2024, the Division completed its accreditation application through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Accreditation measures the 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.

Foundational Public Health Services



February 2022

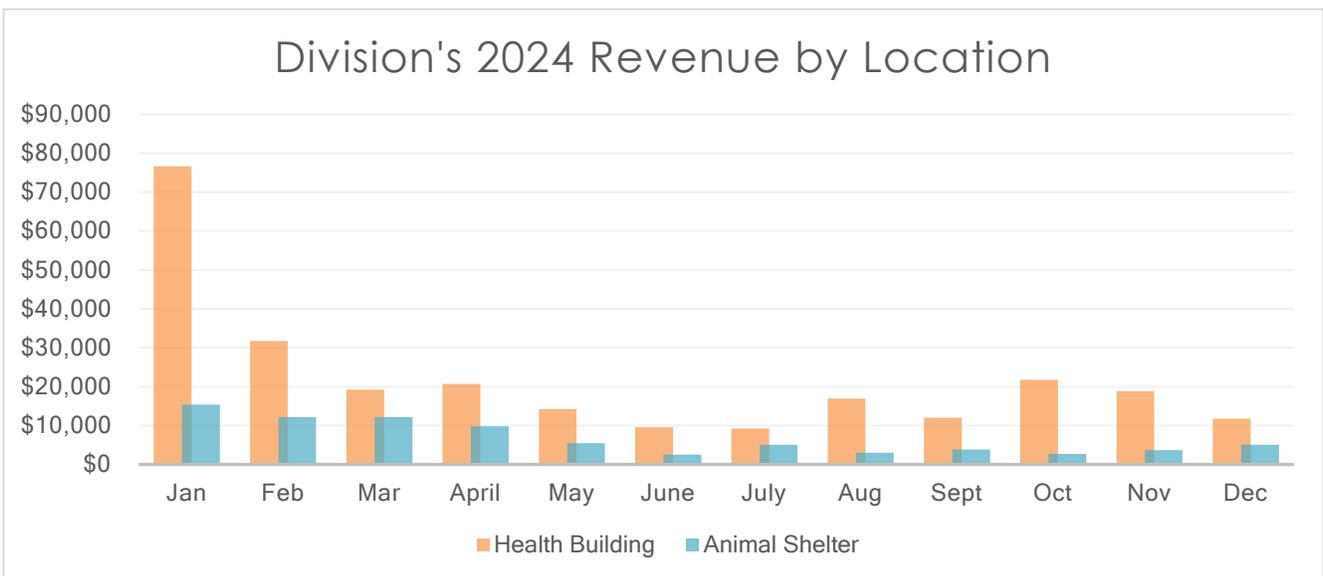
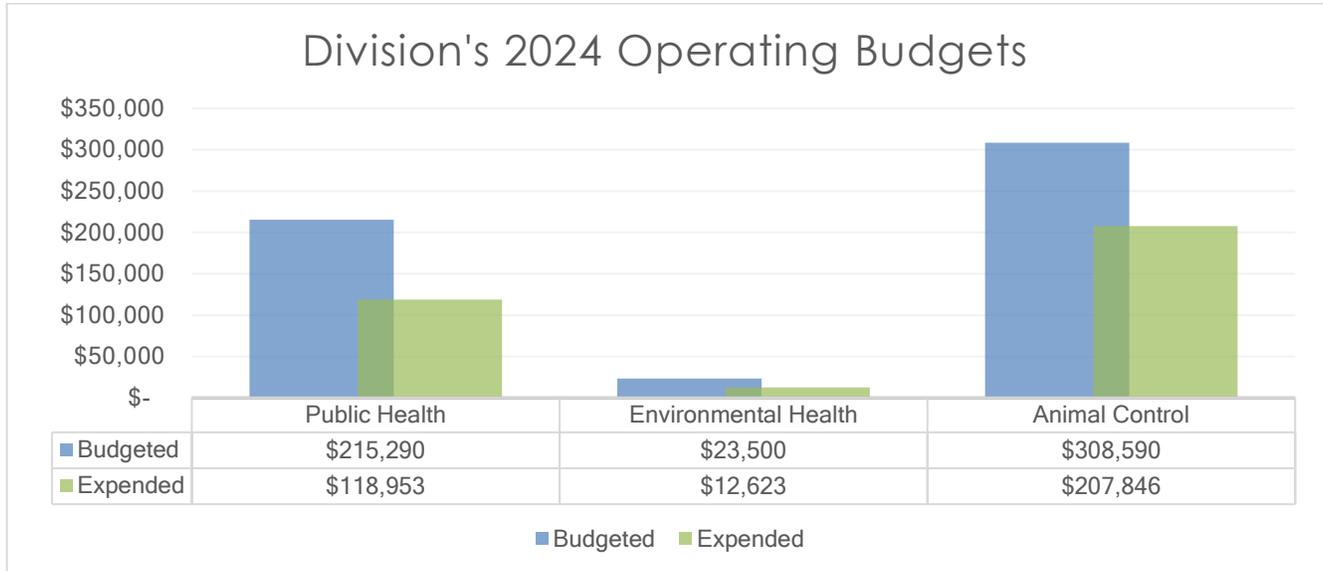
In October 2024, the Division submitted the completed application for initial accreditation to PHAB. Documentation submitted included over 200 examples from different facets of the Division that highlight the standards and measures within the ten different domains. The Division ended 2024 awaiting feedback on the documentation submitted. The next steps in the process include document revision and a site visit from PHAB, which are both expected to happen in 2025.



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. Grants continue to help offset expenses usually charged to Environmental and Public Health. Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, the grant outlook looks limited.



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 walk event.

Grants awarded in 2024

<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>	\$40,811
<u>Public Health</u> - New Jersey Assoc. of County & City Health Officials - <i>Sustaining Local Public Health Infrastructure grant</i>	\$168,049
<u>Public Health</u> - New Jersey Department of Health - <i>Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Program grant</i>	\$74,664
<u>Public Health</u> - New Jersey Assoc. of County & City Health Officials - <i>Enhancing Local Public Health Infrastructure grant (continuation from FY23)</i>	\$1,221,443
<u>Environmental Health</u> - New Jersey Department of Health - <i>Childhood Lead Exposure Prevention grant</i>	\$189,800
TOTAL	\$1,694,767

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

	2022	2023	2024
Individual Children Seen in Clinics	522	609	623
Childhood Immunizations Administered	1,721	1,661	1,790
Blood Lead Level (BLL) Screenings	21	27	20
Reported Children with Elevated BLLs	12	13	8
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Enrollment	160	253	214
Children Tested for Anemia (Iron Deficiency)	21	28	20
School Immunization Records Audited	5,736	5,844	5,787



Local resident, Julianna Guarraggi, presented with a scholarship award at a Board of Health meeting.

FREE VISION SCREENING



Date/Time:
August 19, 2024 from 1pm-4pm

Location:
Hamilton Township Division of Health:
2100 Greenwood Ave, Hamilton, NJ, 08609

DETAILS



SCREENING PROVIDED

Participants will receive a visual acuity screening for distance and an eye pressure check for glaucoma suspect. After the screening you will review your results and get appropriate follow-up instructions.



WHO CAN GET SCREENED?

Adults and children (ages 3+) are welcome at the screening. The screening is free for both insured and uninsured residents! **If you haven't had your eyes checked in a while, make an appointment today!**

Vision screenings are performed by trained screeners from the NJ Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired - [Project BEST!](#)



July 2024

APPOINTMENT REQUIRED
Contact us to schedule!

609-890-3825
HamHealth@HamiltonNJ.com

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.

2024 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	1,993	47%	53%
Private and Religious Schools - Pre-K	183	80%	20%
Private and Religious Schools - Kindergarten	181	83%	17%
Private and Religious Schools - 6 th Grade	157	57%	43%
Private and Religious Schools - Transfers	110	83%	17%
Public Schools - Pre-K	302	83%	17%
Public Schools - Kindergarten	835	83%	17%
Public Schools - 6 th Grade	936	80%	20%
Public Elementary School - Transfer Students	455	72%	28%
Public Middle School - Transfer Students	196	50%	50%
Public High School - Transfer Students	439	67%	33%
Totals all schools	5,787	71%	29%

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 (2024 Confirmed Cases*)	COUNT
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS - 2019 NCOV	996
INFLUENZA, HUMAN ISOLATES	664
OTHER - Diseases with case counts of 4 or less	27
HEPATITIS C - CHRONIC	22
SALMONELLOSIS - NON TYPHOID	14
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS	11
PERTUSSIS	10
HEPATITIS B - CHRONIC	9
STREPTOCOCCUS PNEUMONIAE	9
SHIGA TOXIN-PRODUCING E.COLI (STEC)	6
STREPTOCOCCUS PYOGENES (GAS) - WITHOUT TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME	6
AMOEBIASIS	5
Total	1,779

*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 Respiratory 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.



HDOH
Values in Action!
Accessibility

	2022	2023	2024
Number of flu clinics held	18	21	26
Total number of flu vaccines administered	1,951	1,691	1,616
Number of High-Dose flu vaccine administered	349	497	492
Total number of pneumonia vaccines administered	25	54	35
Total number of home visits made for vaccination	49	61	52

Clinics are held throughout the community including at the Nottingham Firehouse, Hamilton Senior Center, Hamilton Public Library, Wilson Center, Bromley Center, Project Freedom, 55+ Living Communities, the YMCA, and at Oktoberfest. In addition, the Division of Health staff performed home visits for homebound residents within the community.

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of residents placed under DOT	3	1	1
Number of home visits conducted	183	66	52
Number of PPDs conducted	167	124	157
Number of positive PPDs referred for follow up	8	5	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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of College/University affiliation agreements	3	3	2
Total number of interns/student nurses	9	15	23

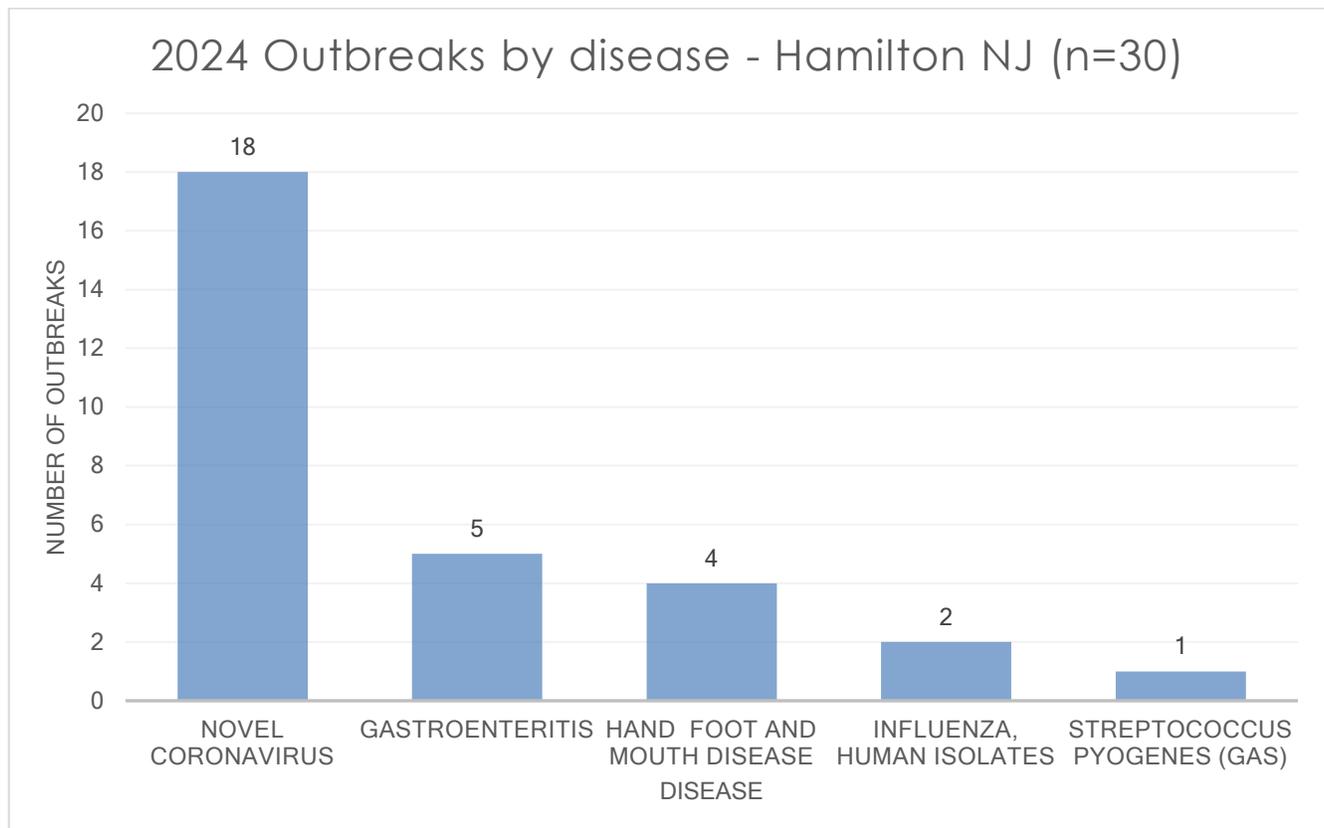


Left: Public Health Nurses participating in Senior Health Day at the Hamilton Senior Center. Top: Staff providing community outreach.

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	2024
Group home	1	-	-
Daycare facility	1	6	4
Healthcare - Assisted Living Residence	15	13	8
Healthcare - Long Term Care	15	18	13
Healthcare - Acute Care Hospital	1	1	-
Healthcare - Outpatient	-	1	-
Community	2	1	-
School or University	21	4	4
Sports Team	-	-	1
Total	56	44	30



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

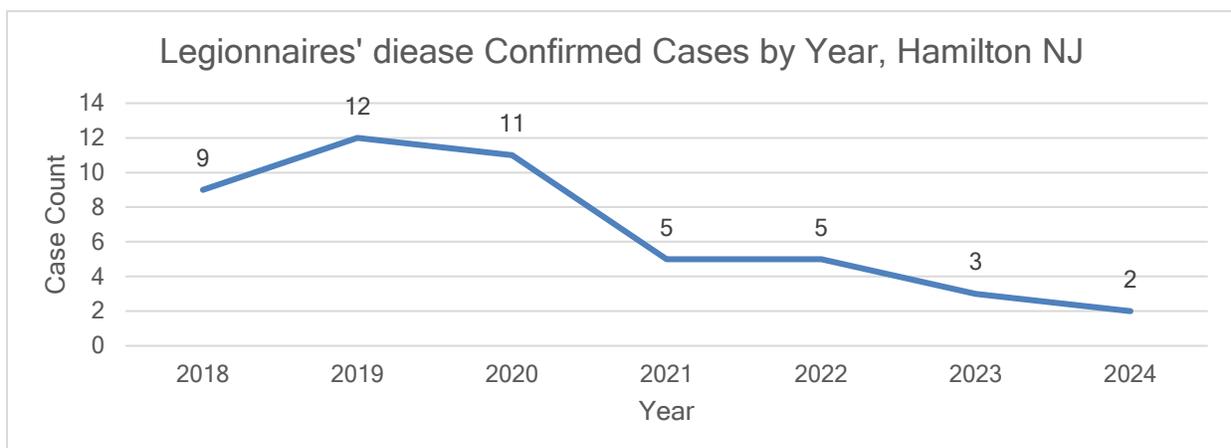
November 2022



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 2024, 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

Since 2023, the Division has been 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	2024
Test-kits distributed	7,299	6,993

COVID-19 Vaccination

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. The Division also receives allotments of state-funded vaccine, which is available to the greater community. As COVID-19 vaccination continues to be available to the Division, it will be offered to eligible residents.

	2022	2023	2024
Total number of COVID-19 vaccines administered	3,198	529	138



Top Left: Staff participate in the ground breaking for the new municipal building. Top Right: Division of Health presenting a grant funded LUCAS Device (automatic chest compressions) to the Fire Department.

Community Outreach and Partnerships

The Division participated in ongoing community outreach to provide resources and health education on various health topics. The Division's health education section maintains information and resources on local services for residents to utilize; this includes an inventory of social services.

The 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 2024 involved partnerships with local organizations to deliver health information and resources to residents. The Division collaborated with 24 individual organizations in 2024 and participated in 51 community events, health fairs and programs. Health education and outreach activities included:

- Attending community events and health fairs
- Coordinating health screening events
- Supporting clinics for vaccinations
- 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
- Providing health education programming at local camps and community centers
- Participating in data collection for the CHNA community health survey
- Providing referrals and answering questions on health related topics

HDOH
Values in Action!

**Community
Minded**



Health education and outreach staff at International Overdose Awareness Day (top) and Oktoberfest (left).

Community Wellness

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



Mayors Wellness Campaign Presents...
WELLNESS WALKS!
2024 SCHEDULE

Join us!
Walking is a great way to get exercise! It can help improve your physical and mental health!

DATE AND TIME	LOCATION	MEETING PLACE
Monday, March 25 at 9am	Hamilton YMCA: 1315 Whitehorse Mercerville Rd	Main Entrance
Monday, April 22 at 12pm (Rain Date: 4/29/24 at 12pm)	Veterans Park (South): 2201 Kuser Rd	DeMeo Baseball Field Parking Lot
Monday, May 13 at 9am (Rain Date: 5/20/24 at 9am)	Nature Walk at the Abbott Marshlands: 157 Westcott Ave	Meet at the Tulpehaking Nature Center Parking Lot
Monday, June 17 at 5pm (Rain Date: 6/24/24 at 9am)	Sayen Gardens: 155 Hughes Dr.	Sayen House and Gardens Parking Lot
Monday, July 22 at 9am (Rain Date: 7/29/24 at 9am)	Kuser Park: 390 Newkirk Ave	Kuser Park Parking Lot
Friday, August 9 at 9am (Rain Date: 8/23/24 at 9am)	Hamilton Senior Center: 409 Cypress Ln	Front entrance
Friday, September 13 at 10:30am (Rain Date: 9/20/24 at 10:30am)	Grounds for Sculpture: 80 Sculptors Way	Grounds for Sculpture Welcome Center
Thursday, October 3 at 9am (Rain Date: 10/10/24 at 9am)	Veterans Park (North): Klockner Rd Entrance (across from Steinert)	Pavilion at the back of the parking lot

Questions? Call, 609-890-3825 Event details are also on the Township Calendar: www.hamiltonnj.com/calendar

Throughout the year, the Division of Health partners with the Mayor’s Office and other Township departments and agencies to deliver free and accessible wellness programming directly to the community.



Right: participants walk at Hamilton’s Grounds for Sculpture 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

	2022	2023	2024
Total clients seen in clinics	169	224	273
Hepatitis B screenings performed	17	21	16
Hepatitis C screenings performed	27	22	16
HIV Screenings performed	75	150	180
Oral screenings for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea	109	170	200
Urine screenings for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea	122	169	182
Syphilis screenings performed	110	161	184
Vaccines administered during clinic	23	22	86
JYNNEOS (MPX) vaccines administered	71	45	62

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Health assessments performed	77	111	324

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Home visits conducted	49	61	52

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 with 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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of properties with septic systems	533	541	559
Permits issued for construction or alteration	28	14	21
Properties reviewed for real estate transactions	10	19	15

Private Well Testing Act

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

	2022	2023	2024
Number of wells reviewed for real estate transactions	8	14	16

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of Body Art establishments operating	2	4	3

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	2022	2023	2024
Number of Retail Food Establishment licenses issued	514	535	555
Number of Full Year-Temporary/Mobile licenses issued	32	58	83
Number of Vending Machine licenses issued	178	160	207
Number of Temporary Single-Event licenses issued	146	206	266

Inspections and Investigations	2022	2023	2024
Number of routine inspections completed	520	554	577
Number of re-inspections completed	115	167	159
Number of pre-operational inspections completed	24	36	34
Number of retail food plan reviews completed	40	35	23
Number of complaint driven investigations completed	69	69	65
Number of Notices of Violations issued	246	216	294

Bottom left: An Environmental Health “intern” learning about plan reviews. *Did you know* the Division of Health reviews and approves renovations and new construction of septic, restaurants, public pools, and many other facilities? Bottom right: the Division participates in many community events.



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. 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.



A slight increase was observed in the overall compliance rates of Routine 1 inspections from 76% (2023) to 78% (2024). The inspection frequency of Risk 3 & 4 establishments increased in 2024 due to low compliance rates. This led to an increase in overall routine inspection compliance rates from 33% (2023) to 44% in 2024. The compliance rates of Risk 3/4 establishments increased from their first routine inspection to their second (33% to 55%) in 2024. Lastly, the compliance rates of Risk 3 Routine inspections increased from 49% (2023) to 60% (2024).

Risk 1 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaint	3			
Emergency Response				
Pre-Operational	8		8	
Change of Owner	1		1	
Recall	8			
Routine 1	106	3	103	
Routine 2				
Re-inspection 1	5		5	
Re-inspection 2				
Re-inspection 3				
Spot Check	11			
Walkthrough	1			
Total	143	3	117	

Risk 2 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaint	28			
Emergency Response	7			
Pre-Operational	17		17	
Change of Owner	1		1	
Food Borne Illness	2			
Recall	5			
Routine 1	265	45	218	2
Routine 2	33	2	31	
Re-inspection 1	50	13	36	1
Re-inspection 2	14	3	10	1
Re-inspection 3	4	1	3	
Spot Check	28			
Walkthrough	6			

Total	460	64	316	4
Risk 2/4 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Pre-Operational	1		1	
Routine 1	1		1	
Total	2		2	

Risk 3 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaint	34*			
Emergency Response	4		1	
Pre-Operational	8		8	
Change of Owner	4	2	2	
Food Borne Illness	2*			
Recall	1			
Routine 1	138	55	83	
Routine 2	4*	1	3	
Re-inspection 1	57	9	48	
Re-inspection 2	9	2	7	
Re-inspection 3	2	2		
Re-inspection 4	2		2	
Spot Check	9			
Walkthrough	4			
Total	278	71	154	

*Note: One of each- Complaint and FBI Investigation were full inspections of the facility, and therefore counted as a Routine 2 Inspection.

Risk 3/4 Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Change of Owner	1	1		
Routine 1	12	8	4	
Routine 2	11	5	6	
Re-inspection 1	14	2	12	
Re-inspection 2	2		2	
Total	40	16	24	

All Establishments				
Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaint	65			
Emergency Response	11		1	
Pre-Operational	34		34	
Change of Owner	7	3	4	
Food Borne Illness	4			
Recall	14			
Routine 1	522	111	409	2
Routine 2	48	8	40	
Re-inspection 1	126	24	101	1
Re-inspection 2	25	5	19	1
Re-inspection 3	6	3	3	
Re-inspection 4	2		2	
Spot Check	48			
Walkthrough	11			
Total	923	154	613	4

The Division posts the inspection scores of all inspected retail food establishments online via 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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of inspections completed	14	14	15

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of licenses issued	32	32	33
Number of inspections completed	129	108	127

Public Recreational Bathing Inspection Analysis

All establishments must receive a Routine 1 inspection and only 55% of establishments passed this inspection. Year Round establishments receive a Routine 2 inspection and only 58% of establishments passed this inspection.

Reason For Inspection	Total Inspected	Conditionally-Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Complaints	2			
Emergency Response	3			
Spot Checks/Water Follow-ups	26			
Pre-Operational	21	3	15	3
Routine 1	33	14	18	1
Routine 2	12	3	7	2
Re-inspection 1	24	3	19	2
Re-inspection 2	5	1	4	
Re-inspection 3	1		1	
Total	127	24	64	8

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.

	2022	2023	2024
New cases of children with EBLLs	8	13	8
Number of homes completing lead abatement	7	2	8

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of licenses issued	5	5	6
Number of routine inspections completed	5	5	6

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.

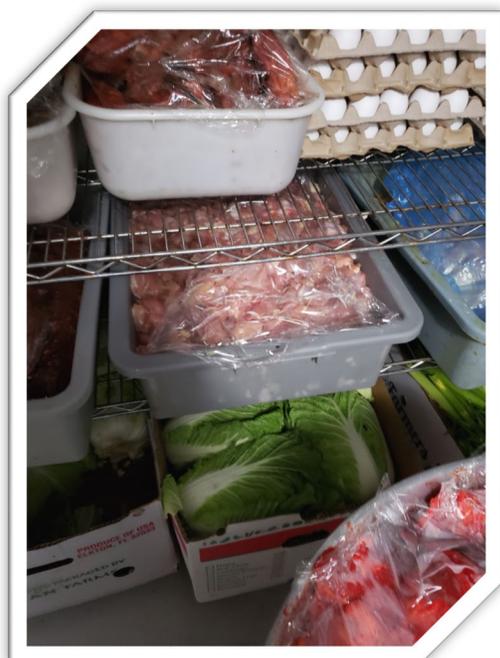
	2022	2023	2024
Number of inspections completed	9	10	18

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*.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of complaint driven investigations completed	N/A	155*	114
Number of Notices of Violations issued	24	27	36

*New data point for 2023



What's wrong with this photo?

The Division's inspectors look for a number of items as part of their risk-based inspections of retail food establishments. One of those items is food storage. Food should not be stored on the ground, and raw meat should not be stored above produce!

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Home birth or birth en-route	7	10	
Certified copies (birth, marriage and death certificates) issued	3,358	4,240	3,927
Marriage licenses issued	565	538	628
Domestic Partnership certificates issued	0	2	2
Domestic Partnership registrations issued	0	1	0
Civil Union certificates issued	0	0	0
Civil Union registrations issued	0	0	0
Disinterment permits issued	5	6	3
Burial permits issued	3	1	0
Corrections requested	56	134	88

Left: Inspector conduct complaint and recall-related site visits of tobacco retail establishments.

Below: "Max" the Animal Shelter mascot, greeting residents 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

	2023			2024		
Animal Intake	Dogs	Cats	Other	Dogs	Cats	Other
Surrendered by owner	19	49	1	4	21	0
Stray/Impounded	207	195	30	262	256	14
Animals received from other organizations	0	0	0	0	2	0
Other (cruelty investigation, animal bite, etc.)	8	13	3	25	16	0
TOTAL	234	257	34	291	295	14

	2023			2024		
Animal Outflow	Dogs	Cats	Other	Dogs	Cats	Other
Reclaimed by owner	129	17	5	178	18	4
Adopted	83	213	14	85	235	12
Euthanized	6	12	0	10	20	0
Animals transferred to other organizations	10	7	3	10	3	2
Other (escaped, died at shelter, etc.)	0	8	8	1	11	0
TOTAL	228	257	30	284	287	18

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of field calls	3,038	3,215	4,890
Number of animal bite investigations	147	126	130
Number of summonses issued	42	91	82
Number of wildlife transported to rehabilitation centers	130	98	79

	2022	2023	2024
Number of dog licenses issued	3,392	3,664	3,741
Number of free rabies vaccinations administered	748	870	870



Animal Shelter staff outside of the Shelter building.

DID YOU KNOW? In 2024, HTAS had an **68% 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). There was a slight increase in reclaims year over year. This is still significantly higher than the 2023 state average for stray dogs redeemed, which is only 30%

Unfortunately, cats continue to have a dramatically lower reclaim rate, approximately 7%, double the state average.

Source:

www.nj.gov/health/vph/shelter_pound_summary_county_2023.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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of volunteers	53	68	52
Number of volunteer hours	1,884	2,110	2,460
In-kind value of volunteer hours*	\$63,717	\$71,360	\$82,385

*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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of animals fostered	198	126	150

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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of animals transfer to other organizations	28	20	15

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	2023				2024			
	Dogs	Cats	Other	Total	Dogs	Cats	Other	Total
Aggression, Unsafe to Handle, Court Order	2	0	0	2	5	0	0	5
Cancer	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
Failure to thrive	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Major organ failure	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Medical – severe	2	11	0	13	5	11	0	16
Medical – emergency	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Medical – disease	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	6	12	0	18	10	20	0	30

Died in care	2023			2024		
	Other	Cats	Total	Dogs	Cats	Total
Neonatal Kitten	0	8	8	0	4	4
Post-surgical	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	1	1	0	1	1
Unknown	1	4	5	1	3	4
Medical – disease	0	1	1	0	1	1
TOTAL	1	14	15	1	10	11

Note: no dogs died in care in 2023

2024 Annual Live Release Rate: 95%

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.



Left: Some of the loving animals that called the Shelter home temporarily in 2024. Bottom: ACO assisting Mercer Wildlife with releasing an Eagle.



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
Miesha Stanley	Regular
Brian Birch	Regular
VACANT	Regular
Alejandro Batlle	Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Schuster	Representative of Chief of Police
Jessica Hammill	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.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of students reached	1,125	944	1,503
Number of education sessions	43	46	77
Number of schools supported	6	7	8



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Left: Mayor Jeff Martin speaking at the International Overdose Awareness Day event in Vet's Park.





Thank you for taking the time to read through the Division of Health's 2024 annual report.
Have a happy, and healthy 2025!!
-Your Health Team



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.