

HAMILTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



A NOTE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER



**GREG KESTERMAN,
HEALTH COMMISSIONER,
HAMILTON COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

As I look back on 2024, I can't help but be proud of the way Hamilton County Public Health continues to serve our communities.

From enhancing our clinical services, to collaborating with on-the-ground organizations, to coaching residents and business owners through important health initiatives, HCPH truly helped communities thrive in 2024.

That work will continue in 2025, with even more improvements to our agency's programming on the way. But for now, I'm pleased to share a few highlights from 2024 that helped us develop better health within Hamilton County.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

A NEW CAMPUS ON THE HORIZON

Hamilton County Public Health soon will have a new home – Bond Hill.

In 2024, Hamilton County's board of commissioners purchased a former hospital administration building and its campus in order to house many of the county's major agencies. HCPH will share space in Bond Hill with Jobs and Family Services, Developmental Disabilities Services, Environmental Services and other county agencies and offices. The initiative will allow for greater collaboration in order to provide enhanced services to Hamilton County residents.

The location also will offer opportunities for new partnerships within Hamilton County Public Health itself, with the agency's clinical, harm-reduction and emergency preparedness teams only a few blocks away.

Hamilton County Public Health anticipates being fully operational at the Bond Hill campus by early 2026.

BOND HILL AMENITIES

In 2026, the Bond Hill campus will provide a variety of new ways in which Hamilton County Public Health can serve community members. Visitors to the campus can expect:

- centrally located office
- enhanced customer service area
- comfortable welcome lobby
- meeting/review rooms
- clear wayfinding signage and useful visual cues
- easy access to other Hamilton County agencies

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

HCPH'S CLINICAL OUTREACH EVOLVED.

Last year, Hamilton County Public Health opened its clinic in Norwood, delivering top-tier healthcare and clinical support to thousands of community members.

The clinic at 5050 Section Ave. offers tuberculosis care, sexual-health testing and treatment services, the Children with Medical Handicaps program and more. HCPH saw more than 2,500 patients at the clinic in 2024 – more patients than at its previous location on East McMillan Street. The growth in outreach was supported in part by a knowledgeable clinical staff, a new medical records system and additional payment options for patients.

The number of newly diagnosed HIV cases in Hamilton County increased in 2024, but Hamilton County Public Health remained committed to ending the HIV epidemic. HCPH's clinic provided testing, education, personal-care items and other resources for sexual health to community members.

Additionally, because substance use can lead to a community increase in HIV, hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, HCPH's harm-reduction team connected with key communities to offer stigma-free substance-use disorder education, safe-use items, safe-sex education, personal-care items, HIV/STI education and resources, and other services.

In 2024, HCPH also launched a drug-checking program, with the agency's harm-reduction leaders and epidemiologists collaborating to assess regional drug trends and prevent future overdose deaths. Through the program, HCPH collects anonymous substance samples to identify additives that increase the risk of overdose or have other adverse effects, as well as to provide enhanced safety education. This new program already has benefitted Hamilton County by identifying an increase of xylazine in local supplies and other novel substances, allowing HCPH to expand community education about safety, wound care and more.

SUPPORT AND STRENGTH

RECOVERY FRIENDLY HAMILTON COUNTY OFFERED MEANINGFUL RESOURCES.

Hamilton County Public Health's Recovery Friendly Hamilton County initiative grew in size and reputation in 2024, giving more individuals and businesses a greater chance to succeed.

Supplying resources for employers to address substance-use disorder among their personnel while providing a stigma-free workplace, Recovery Friendly Hamilton County welcomed 19 employers to the program by year's end, with the initiative's roster swelling to nearly 70 employers overall.

Government entities also became part of the movement, with Hamilton County agencies and many local governments signing on. In August, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine launched the state's own recovery-friendly workplace program, recognizing Hamilton County Public Health among the first designees and noting that HCPH's years of work in this space had inspired Ohio's statewide project.

Recovery Friendly Hamilton County launched in 2022 and quickly became a cornerstone program within the region's business community. A pioneering force, Recovery Friendly Hamilton County now leads local and national conversations about building healthy, safe environments where employers, employees and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by substance-use disorder.

Recovery Friendly Hamilton County doesn't only address health – a safe, stigma-free workplace has economic benefits, too. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration estimated in 2022 that more than 60% of Americans aged 18 and older with a substance use disorder are part of the workforce. By providing supportive resources to employees, more Hamilton County employers are avoiding ledger losses from decreased productivity, absenteeism and turnover.

RFHC EMPLOYERS

Many employers have committed to providing a healthy, supportive working environment through the Recovery Friendly Hamilton County initiative. Examples:

- Gorilla Glue
- Messer Construction Co.
- Jeff Ruby Culinary Entertainment
- FC Cincinnati
- MadTree Brewing
- 3CDC

A FUTURE-FOCUSED APPROACH TO HEALTH

HCPH'S COMMUNITY SURVEY PROVIDED INSIGHT INTO OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.



During the summer of 2024, Hamilton County Public Health conducted a wide-ranging survey as part of its Community Health Assessment, which occurs every three years. The goal: gather feedback from residents about factors affecting the health and wellbeing of their communities, their families and themselves.

The survey covered a variety of topics, including access to healthcare, housing, safety, community connections, and other factors. Importantly, HCPH received 863 responses from residents throughout 44 of the agency's 45 jurisdictions, providing a diverse collection of viewpoints and needs. The collected information will help HCPH plan effective public health programming and advocate for policies that directly enhance residents' quality of life.

HCPH will publish complete findings from the survey in its full community health assessment in 2025. The report will analyze responses to all survey questions and will include an examination of Hamilton County's health status, opportunities and challenges – information our region can use to move forward.

“LEARNING ABOUT RESIDENTS’ OBSERVATIONS AND CHALLENGES CAN HELP HCPH BETTER ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS.”

GREG KESTERMAN,
HEALTH COMMISSIONER

PROFOUND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

HCPH CONCENTRATED ON HELPING HAMILTON COUNTY COMMUNITIES.

Hamilton County Public Health had plenty of support behind the agency's major programs, including \$13.5 million in community-changing grants from a variety of state and federal funding sources. In 2024, the agency put millions of dollars to work for infant and child health, disease prevention, clinical services, harm-reduction initiatives, wellness education and more.

In a huge milestone, HCPH's WeTHRIVE!SM initiative celebrated 15 transformative years in 2024. The program's population health specialists collaborate with schools, child-care facilities, governments and neighbors throughout Hamilton County to develop meaningful and sustainable changes for individual communities.

Major WeTHRIVE!SM projects over the years have included active transportation plans for safer walking, biking and rolling; community gardens with fresh produce; inclusive parks and recreation projects; and engaging educational opportunities for students of all ages.

HCPH also changed individual lives through its lead-hazard reduction programs. In 2024, nearly 30 homes became safer from lead, thanks to significant grants that allowed HCPH to remove lead paint hazards and fund health and safety improvements to homes throughout many of Hamilton County's communities. A healthier home improves quality of life, increases property values and helps families build both generational health and wealth.

ALWAYS ON CALL

EVEN IN DIFFICULT TIMES, HCPH LIVED ITS MISSION.

In collaboration with the region's emergency partners, Hamilton County Public Health responded to a chemical leak that occurred in Whitewater Township. The agency – especially the environmental health, water quality and emergency preparedness divisions – prioritized the health and safety of residents, students, employees and business owners by proactively advising on safety measures and providing testing for well water. HCPH also kept the public and media informed through on-site and virtual interviews, town hall appearances and social media alerts.

In addition, HCPH responded to a number of infectious disease concerns throughout the year. Southwestern Ohio saw a rise in several illnesses in 2024, and Hamilton County Public Health was there to provide resources and relief. Schools in the region experienced a fall surge of pertussis (also known as whooping cough), while many Hamilton County residents dealt with norovirus, a very contagious intestinal virus. When appropriate, HCPH provided much-needed guidance for each issue through contact-tracing, targeted communications and media interviews.

HCPH IN THE MEDIA

Hamilton County Public Health proactively and reactively connected with local and national news reporters about many issues throughout 2024. Topics included:

- maternal and infant health
- environmental health
- seasonal illnesses
- harm-reduction initiatives
- landfills
- safety issues
- infectious diseases
- general wellness

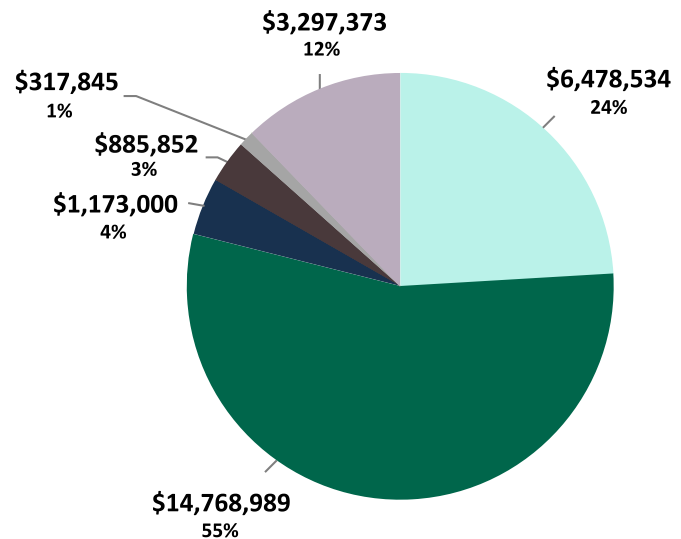
AGENCY INFORMATION

FINANCIAL DETAILS

2024 REVENUE

- Grants and contracts
- Fees and permits
- TB control-indigent care/
levy for harm and oral care
- Cities, townships, villages
- State subsidies
- Other revenue

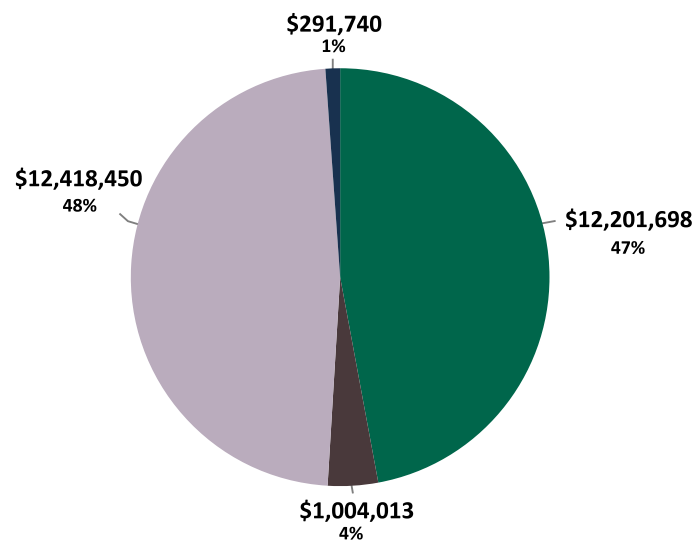
Total revenue: \$26,921,593



2024 EXPENDITURES

- Personnel services
- Capital outlay
- State and other agency fees
- Operating expenses

Total expenditures: \$25,915,901



2024 STATISTICS

9,649: birth records issued

26,020: death certificates issued

2,508: clinic patient visits

14,642: SAFE Services van visits

909: SAFE Services vending machine transactions completed

23,956: doses of naloxone distributed

13,075: fentanyl test strips distributed

19: new employers onboarded to Recovery Friendly Hamilton County

10: WeTHRIVE!SM partners added

34: emergency preparedness trainings and exercises conducted

292: backflow devices registered

57: campground inspections conducted

8,183: food service inspections conducted

532: individuals trained in food safety

358: school inspections conducted

50: homes enrolled in HCPH's Lead Hazard Reduction Program

47: lead investigations completed

4,443: plumbing permits issued

783: rabies quarantine notices sent

15,731: sewage treatment system inspections conducted

202: stormwater complaints addressed

1,574: swimming pool/spa inspections conducted

53: body art facility inspections conducted

301: waste facility inspections conducted

ABOUT HCPH

MISSION STATEMENT

Hamilton County Public Health educates, serves, and protects our community for a healthier future.

VISION

Healthy choices. Healthy lives. Healthy communities.

SERVICE AREA

Hamilton County Public Health serves nearly all communities within Hamilton County, Ohio, with the exceptions of Cincinnati, Norwood and Springdale.

ABOUT HCPH

DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

District Advisory Council (DAC) members select the members of the Hamilton County Board of Health, make recommendations to the Board of Health and authorize city contractual agreements. DAC members include presidents of township boards of trustees, village mayors and the president of the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners. Members are required by law to meet annually in March.

Tony Rosiello
Chair

Dee Stone
Secretary

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health is the governing body of Hamilton County Public Health. It has the authority to adopt rules and regulations which have the same status as law, enact policies within HCPH's jurisdiction, and hire a health commissioner. Meetings are held at the HCPH office on the second Monday of each month at 4 p.m.

Dan Meloy
President

Eric Knapp
Board Member

Dr. Elizabeth Kelly
Vice President

Max Miller
Board Member

Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.
Board Member

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT STAFF

Dr. Stephen Feagins
Medical Director

Nee Fong Chin
Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

ABOUT HCPH

HEALTH COMMISSIONER AND ADMINISTRATION

Greg Kesterman

Health Commissioner

Craig Davidson

Assistant Health Commissioner,
Environmental Health Services

Jackie Lindner

Assistant Health Commissioner,
Community Health Services

Allison Babka

Public Information Officer

Ed Moser

Information Technology Manager

Rebecca Stowe

Performance Management and Grants
Coordinator

Stephanie Taylor

Human Resources Officer

Greg Varner

Finance Officer

AGENCY DIVISION LEADERS

Anne Arble

Director, Epidemiology and Assessment

Denise Comeau

Supervisor, Customer Service

Chuck DeJonckheere

Director, Waste Management

Felicia Erwin

Director, Water Quality

Jeremy Hessel

Director, Environmental Health

Christa Hyson

Director, Emergency Preparedness

Mary Ellen Knaebel

Director, Health Promotion and Education

Sean Moore

Director, Plumbing

Darci Smith

Director, Harm Reduction

Martha Walter

Director, Community Services and Disease
Prevention

Eva Whitehead

Director, Nursing and Clinical Services

CONTACT HCPH

WEBSITE: [HAMILTONCOUNTYHEALTH.ORG](https://hamiltoncountyhealth.org)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Account: @HamCoHealth

Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube

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The 2024 annual report was prepared by HCPH's communications team in January 2025. For more information, email allison.babka@hamilton-co.org.