

2020 Annual Report: City of Menasha Health Department

Mission:

To protect and promote health and safety across the lifespan, by building partnerships and providing high quality services guided by community needs

Vision:

A safe and healthy community where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life

Values:

Teamwork, trust, communication, respect, and friendliness



City of Menasha Health Department current staff; Back row (left to right): Kristine Jacobsen, Health Director, Kortney Dahm, Public Health Nurse (PHN), Todd Drew, Sanitarian, Larissa Keller, Office Coordinator, Claire Opsteen, Dental Hygienist. Front row: Claire Holzschuh, Public Health Educator, Liz Rosin, PHN, Meghan Pauly, PHN, Linda Palmbach, PHN

2020 was one like none other before—consumed with masking, social distancing, rigorous handwashing, and a lot of disinfecting. The Menasha Health Department carried the City through Pandemic Response and completed ‘normal’ operations along the way. It was a year filled with uncertainty, anxiety, teamwork, dedication, perseverance, and lessons learned.



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

Dear Menasha Residents:

This past year has been aptly described as historic and unprecedented. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. On January 31, 2020 the United States Department of Health and Human Services declared Public Health Emergency exists Nationwide as a result of the 2019 novel coronavirus. On February 2020, the Menasha Health Department initiated an incident command structure for a City-wide response to COVID-19. On March 12, 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers declared a Health Emergency in response to the COVID-19 Virus. On March 17, 2020, Mayor Merkes declared a Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19 in Menasha.

Prompt declarations are important as they allow for redirecting and securing federal, state, and local (county and municipal) resources for timely response. The majority of federal, state and local public health grants were redirected to COVID-19 pandemic response in 2020. The purpose of pandemic preparedness planning and response is to provide a framework for local, state, and federal public health, health systems and the community to work together to reduce illness, death and social disruption.

Prompt response includes: 1) testing for the presence of the disease; 2) contact tracing, to quickly identify and isolate people with the disease and quarantine their close contacts to prevent the spread; 3) closely monitoring daily and weekly data to inform decisions; and in the absence of vaccine 4) using non-pharmaceutical interventions to limit spread (e.g. masks, physical distancing, disinfection, and hand washing).

Years of public health emergency planning and training prepared Menasha Health Department staff to assume the lead role in managing the City-wide public health emergency response. This response was coordinated in collaboration with the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Menasha Common Council, Menasha Joint School District (MJSD), parochial schools, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Fox Cities-Menasha campus, faith-based organizations, Menasha businesses, Menasha Police Department, Neenah-Menasha Fire Department, Menasha Senior Center, Menasha Park and Recreation, Elisha D. Smith Public Library, Public Works/Facilities, Office of the Mayor, City Attorney, City Clerk, Finance Departments; civic organizations; VFW Post 2126; Fox Valley local health departments; and health systems partners.

As you read this 2020 Annual Report, quotes from staff reflecting on their personal and professional experiences are included. Although scaled back and modified to allow for safe delivery of services, several priority public health programs remained operational. Despite the pandemic, safe in-person elections for 2020 were held.

With the advent of vaccines, we are now turning a corner on the pandemic. I wish to express my gratitude to the City of Menasha Health Department staff for their continued professionalism and commitment to our mission: "protect and promote health and safety across the lifespan." It has been a privilege to witness their strength and courage during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency response.

It has been a pleasure to serve the City of Menasha as your Public Health Director.

Sincerely,
Nancy McKenney, MS, RDH
Public Health Director



2020 PROGRAMS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Environmental Health and Weights and Measures

The environmental health program is responsible for food safety at licensed establishments; asbestos compliance inspections through a contract with the DNR; inspection of manufactured home parks; lead risk assessments; nuisance animal complaints (including follow-up on animal bites/rabies); human health hazard follow-up, and indoor air quality follow-up (mold, elevated radon). Todd, the Sanitarian for the City, conducted 74 food safety inspections, 7 re-inspections, 12 follow-up inspections, and followed up on health code violations and complaints in 2020. The City weights and measures program is also administered by the registered sanitarian. In 2020, 147 devices were inspected (including gas pumps, price scanners, scales, and package weights), and various virtual meetings were attended.

Additional Activities in 2020

Tourist Rooming House Inspections: 3

Pools: 3 (reduced due to COVID-19 closure)

Animals Bites: 34

Rabies Sample Submissions: 7

Placarded Houses (unfit for human habitation): 4

Housing Inspection Cases: 26

Nuisance Complaints: 42

DNR Asbestos Contract Inspections: 16

Employee Safety

The health department employs the City Safety Coordinator (also the registered sanitarian, Todd) who provides mandatory safety trainings for City staff and oversight of three safety committees. In 2020, Todd conducted blood borne pathogen, personal protective equipment (PPE), and Narcan training for 6 new Menasha Police Department officers. He also organized the annual hearing screening for all affected staff and followed-up on reported work related injuries. While essential trainings continued and necessary supplies and equipment were maintained throughout 2020, some regular safety activities were put on hold as Todd was deployed for COVID-19 Response. When the Incident Command System was activated, Todd served as the Safety Officer for the COVID-19 Emergency. His main goal was keeping employees safe from COVID-19 in the workplace. He secured and distributed PPE and trained employees on proper PPE donning and doffing, ensured safe elections, assisted in the development of City safety policies and procedures, and worked with community groups and MJSD to provide safe events.

"The COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on me as a Public Health Registered Dental Hygienist. As stay at home orders were put in place and the schools and businesses were locked down, my dental programs ceased operation. The effects of the delay of preventive oral health services will be evident in the upcoming years. I look forward to implementing these critical services again and addressing the oral health needs of our community." — Claire O., Registered Dental Hygienist

2020 PROGRAMS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Maternal and Child Health

The Menasha Health Department provides a number of services and programs to promote the health and safety of babies, children, and moms. Although car seat events and fitting stations were cancelled during the pandemic, Linda, PHN, completed 3 car seat fittings to ensure the safety of child passengers in the community. Newborn birth packets were mailed to families in the community who have newborns. Nursing staff also provided home visits and case management services to families. In early 2020, technical assistance was provided to workplaces and childcare centers to become designated or maintain designation as breastfeeding friendly. Of note, Menasha Health Department worked with the Elisha D. Smith Public Library to create a nursing room for breastfeeding mothers. Once the COVID-19 pandemic began, funds and staff time were redirected to pandemic response efforts.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

In 2019, MHD received a \$10,000 grant to work on childhood lead poisoning prevention, continuing work started in 2017. The Lead Safe Menasha project was started with these funds with the goal of promoting the reduction or elimination of lead sources in children's environments before they are exposed. The Menasha Home Lead Risks [Database](#) was made publically available on the Health Department website to families in the community in 2020. Outreach and enrollment staff at Partnership Community Health Center were provided educational materials about preventing childhood lead poisoning to give to their clients. They were also given trainings on lead screening to prevent poisoning. Water filters and replacement filters were offered to families with lead or galvanized service laterals at a discounted cost through the health department. As part of the MHD Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention grant, Liz, PHN, and Todd, Sanitarian, reviewed all childhood blood level reports from the State Laboratory of Hygiene. There were no reports in the City of Menasha of children who had elevated blood lead levels in 2020! Home visits and lead hazard investigations were also provided to City residents requesting this service.

Oral Health

Menasha Health Department has a Dental Program led by a public health registered dental hygienist, Claire. The main goal of the program is to prevent tooth decay, the most common chronic disease in children. Claire provides oral health services, including oral health education, screenings, topical fluoride application, dental sealants, and patient follow-up and referrals for treatment to students in the Menasha Joint School District, daycares, and Headstart programs. From fall 2020 to spring 2021, Claire provided 457 total fluoride applications. Due to COVID-19, aerosol-generating procedures were not allowed and other dental services were limited. In order to support the MHD COVID-19 response efforts, Claire was trained as a disease investigator and contact tracer.

This pandemic reminded me exactly why working in Public Health is gratifying and that we are a pillar in the community. Going forward, I see a bright future and a community that can better understand what Public Health does. — Kortney, Public Health Nurse

2020 PROGRAMS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

School Health

The Menasha Joint School District contracts with the Menasha Health Department for school nursing services. The four public health/school nurses develop individual health plans for students with medical needs, provide individual health conferences with students and staff, monitor illnesses in the school setting, refer parents to appropriate resources in the community, provide classroom education on health topics, and educate and train staff on emergency medications. Additionally, health department staff provides CPR/First Aid certification training for school employees. This year, 66 MJSD employees were trained in CPR/First Aid. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the public health/school nurses worked with school officials to implement new health and safety plans and conducted disease investigation for students who tested positive for the virus.

Under the direction of the public health/school nurses, five school health aides provide health related services for school-aged students in the MJSD. They primarily work during lunch hours distributing medications and providing other health services to students. When school started in September 2020, the school health aides conducted contact tracing within the schools. When MJSD schools implemented virtual learning, the health aides continued contact tracing. In September, there was an opportunity to be a part of a COVID-19 pilot testing program with Cooperative Educational Services Agency 6 (CESA 6). CESA 6 partnered with school districts along the HWY 41 corridor to provide a COVID-19 testing program for symptomatic teachers, staff, and their families to identify positive cases promptly. One testing site was located in Menasha, where three of the five health aides collected samples for COVID-19 testing. Together, from October 19, 2020 to April 22, 2021, a total of 486 tests were completed!



Shari (health aide) took a photo to show students what the health aides looked like in full PPE during COVID-19 testing!

We have learned so much over this past year. We have learned a lot about this new virus. We went from doing contact tracing to doing vaccines. It has been a team effort. I have enjoyed working with the amazing people in my department who have all brought something important into the conversations and to the tables. — Linda, Public Health Nurse

2020 PROGRAMS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Communicable Disease

The MHD public health nurses conduct disease surveillance, contact tracing, and other infection control measures as part of the communicable disease program. Staff development and training, improving communication among healthcare professionals, and public education and outreach through our social media channels to prevent the spread of disease are also components of communicable disease control. In 2020, the majority of communicable disease work involved COVID-19. In total, 1,779 communicable diseases were reported for the City of Menasha, with over 90% of reports being cases of COVID-19. Other communicable diseases that were investigated this year were: sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, Hepatitis C, and Tuberculosis (TB). See the chart below for more details on communicable disease reports.

Communicable diseases reported in 2020

Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection—70	Lyme disease—1
Coronavirus—1,663	Mycobacterial Disease (Non TB)—1
Cyclosporiasis—1	Salmonellosis—3
Gonorrhea—25	Syphilis—2
Hepatitis C—3	Varicella—2
Strep Throat (A and B)—2	Legionellosis—2

Immunizations

The goal of the immunization program is to ensure infants 24 months of age are up to date on their recommended vaccines. For 2020, the Menasha Health Department's goal was for 80% of children in the community to meet their recommended vaccines by 24 months. Due to COVID-19, monthly childhood immunization clinics were put on hold for some of the year. Once a safety plan was developed and implemented to create a safe environment for clients and staff the immunization clinics resumed. Of 261 total clients, 127 clients (47%) met all benchmark criteria, while 134 clients did not. 207 clients (79%) met the late-up-to-date criteria (those who received their scheduled vaccines, but after their 2nd birthday), and 54 clients did not. Menasha Health Department also held the annual influenza vaccine clinic in the fall of 2020. Flu vaccines were given at no cost to MJSD, City Staff, and families. These flu vaccine clinics were adjusted from previous years to follow best public health practices. An appointment-only system was utilized, the lay out of the clinic was adjusted to meet physical distancing requirements, and a limited capacity was set for the building. 261 adults and 113 children received their flu vaccine, for a total of 374 clients! Staff also prepared for the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for COVID-19 vaccines that were in the final phases of their clinical trials.

"As a new Public Health professional, I am able to use all the skills that I learned during my undergraduate coursework. The last year has been exhausting, but my passion for Public Health has kept me going." — Claire H., COVID-19 Testing Coordinator/Public Health Educator

2020 PROGRAMS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Older Adults

The Menasha Health Department provides low cost, accessible health services to older adults through its Health Screening 60+ grant. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, health screenings were discontinued for a few months while staff worked to create plans to ensure their safe resumption. In the fall, plans were implemented and screenings were conducted by appointment only, and were limited to 15 minutes or less to avoid close contact and limit the risk of disease transmission. Despite the break in services, Meghan, PHN saw 30 clients for wellness concerns and blood pressure checks. 16 people participated in the Stepping On class held in February, 48 people participated in the Memory Café program, and 128 people participated in the Lunch N Learn programs in January-March. In total, 261 people either received a service and/or participated in older adult health programming in 2020.

The Menasha Senior Center (MSC) provides social, educational, and recreational activities to adults 55+. Participants have opportunities to pursue improved health, strengthen economic security, enhance well-being, and increase societal participation. Due to the risk of illness posed by COVID-19 to older adults, MSC and MHD staff made the difficult decision to close the doors of its physical location in March 2020. But programming didn't stop! Programs were adapted to follow public health guidance. Some programs, like Tai Chi, TED Talk Hour, and Breakfast for Your Brain were provided virtually. Other technology-free programs were offered at no cost, such as, "Don't Worry, Be Happy" activity bags which were delivered to participants' homes by MSC staff. This activity had the largest number of participants! MSC staff also conducted wellness calls to check-in on participants.



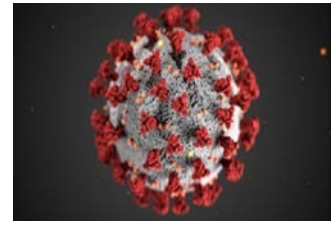
Cookie decorating contest activity provided by MSC

"The COVID-19 pandemic has taught me a lot about how public health and our health care systems operate and how when they work together, helping our patients becomes more efficient." — Meghan, Public Health Nurse

Menasha Community Addiction Assistance Program (MCAAP)

The Menasha Community Addiction Assistance Program (MCAAP) assists individuals and families who are affected by substance use disorders by linking residents who are experiencing substance use challenges to a recovery coach and other resources in the community. Referrals into the program can come from anywhere, but are most often generated through the normal course of business by police officers, paramedics, firefighters, and nurses. A multi-disciplinary team of professionals receives and reviews an MCAAP referral and ensures the individual is offered timely and appropriate resources. The City of Menasha partners with Unity Recovery Services' PRISM team of recovery coaches and peer support specialists who have lived recovery experiences to implement this program. In 2020, there were 35 referrals to MCAAP.

COVID-19 CITY OF MENASHA PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE



As murmurs of the coronavirus began to emerge in early 2020, health department staff began closely monitoring the situation that was occurring overseas. Soon after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern, Nancy McKenney activated the Incident Command System (ICS), which provides a foundation for entities to respond to incidents of any kind, and of all sizes. As Incident Commander, Nancy McKenney led the City through the response, and assigned command roles to Mayor Don Merkes, Pamela Captain (City Attorney, Public Information Officer, or PIO), Kevin Kloehn (Fire Chief, Liaison), Tim Styka (Police Chief, Liaison), Todd Drew (Safety Officer), Kortney Dahm (Operations Chief), Mary Fritz (PH Aide, Logistics Chief), and Kristine Jacobsen (Planning Chief). On March 17, 2020, Mayor Merkes declared a [Public Health Emergency](#) for the City of Menasha.

Public Health Nursing staff were responsible for the disease investigation of positive COVID-19 cases and contact tracing to identify their close contacts. The first positive coronavirus case occurred on April 1, 2020 (1,982 confirmed cases to date). The first coronavirus-associated death occurred on August 13, 2020 (24 deaths to date). Three cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) were reported. Nursing staff also trained the LTE employees who were hired to help with COVID-19 response on contact tracing and disease investigation. Many [Press Releases and Public Health Advisories](#) were sent out to the community to update on important items about COVID-19.

Coronavirus cases surged in September, and remained critically high through November. MJSD switched to all virtual learning on September 25th due to the surge, and the school nurses (also public health nurses) and health aides were consumed with contact tracing and COVID-19 testing. It wasn't until mid-November where cases started finally started to decline in the City.

The City of Menasha assisted the surrounding jurisdictions (Winnebago County, Calumet County, Outagamie County, and City of Appleton) with community testing sites, by providing the COVID-19 Testing Coordinator to assist with on-site duties. In August, a testing site was held at UWO-Fox Cities, where testing was conducted by Wisconsin Army National Guard (WING) members. Additional test kits were requested due to hundreds of cars lining up with people needing to be tested. Another WING site was established at Christ the Rock Church in Menasha, which operated Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays during October, November, and December. After the WING mission ceased, ThedaCare operated a mobile unit every Thursday at this location, where clients collected their own nasal samples to be tested.

[Weekly Data Summaries](#) provided the community with easy-to-understand COVID-19 metrics and data visualizations, and provided a situational overview of COVID-19 activity levels in the community and the surrounding Tri-County area. Menasha Health Department staff also prepared the MJSD with [weekly Pandemic Resiliency Plans](#) to monitor COVID-19 activity levels within the community and the school district. The metrics in the MJSD Pandemic Resiliency Plan highlighted community transmission and COVID-19 activity levels, as well as metrics on school-aged children. These metrics were used to guide decision making regarding hybrid learning models and the transition back to in-person learning. Staff updated the Health Department website with daily case counts and other COVID-19 related information so the community had timely information.

Nearing the end of 2020, COVID-19 vaccine trials provided encouraging data about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, and on December 12, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Following on December 18, 2020, the FDA issued another EUA for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Menasha Health Department staff began preparing for vaccine clinics that ultimately closed out 2020.

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