

2024

Annual Report



*Helping People
Live Healthier*



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OUR MISSION:

Helping People Live Healthier

OUR VISION:

*To be the trusted health resource
for all people.*

- Website: bhsj.org
- Facebook: [branch-hillsdale-stjoseph
community health agency](https://www.facebook.com/branch-hillsdale-stjoseph-community-health-agency)
- Instagram: [bhsj_healthagency](https://www.instagram.com/bhsj_healthagency)
- YouTube: [@bhsjchamedia](https://www.youtube.com/@bhsjchamedia)
- Nextdoor: [branch-hillsdale-
stjosephcommunityhealthagency](https://www.nextdoor.com/branch-hillsdale-stjosephcommunityhealthagency)

BOARD OF HEALTH



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St. Joseph County
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Steve Lanius
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AGENCY DIRECTORS



Rebecca A. Burns, MPH, RS
Health Officer



Karen Luparello, DO, MPH
Medical Director



Theresa Fisher, BS
Director of
Administrative Services



Heidi Hazel, BSN, RN
Director of Personal
Health and Disease
Prevention



Laura Sutter, BS
Director of Area Agency
on Aging Region IIIC



Paul Andriacchi, REHS
Director of
Environmental Health

*"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where
there is no path and leave a trail."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Dear Community:

To the Residents of Branch, Hillsdale, and St. Joseph Counties,
On behalf of the Board of Health and staff of the agency, it is my pleasure to share with you this fiscal year (FY) 2024 Annual Report.

In fiscal year 2024, the agency monitored and responded to public health concerns; including protecting residents from the risks of lead, radon, tick and mosquito carried diseases, and providing information on "bird flu". Our Health Education & Promotion team provided timely information on prevention strategies related to these issues, as well as supporting the safe storage of marijuana products to keep them out of the hands of children.

The Personal Health & Disease Prevention team provided seasonal and routine vaccines, nutrition education through WIC, breastfeeding support, hearing and vision screening for children, and support to families of children with chronic conditions. Our nurses investigated incidents of communicable disease, provide testing and follow-up for STI/HIV, and responded to human encounters with animals to prevent rabies.

We implemented a planning process for the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) program during the fiscal year. Actual implementation is planned for next fiscal year. KOHA requires the services of a dental professional to provide a screening to children entering and in kindergarten. Good oral health promotes better learning, nutrition, and socialization.

The Environmental Health team supported residents by ensuring safe drinking water, sanitary sewage disposal, and safe food service. Seasonally, they evaluate campgrounds, public swimming pools, septage hauling trucks, distribute radon test kits, and have worked hard to prevent disease.

The Area Agency on Aging IIC continued to support adults who want to age in their home and help those that are victims of abuse and exploitation.

To ensure we are maintaining our facilities, we replaced carpet in Hillsdale, and painted our Hillsdale and Coldwater facilities. All offices received new water bottle fill stations that provide filtered water.

The team at Your Local Health Department is proud of our public health work and we look forward to continuing to serve you and your family into 2025.

Yours in Good Health,
Rebecca A. Burns, MPH, RS
Health Officer

DID YOU KNOW?



We focus on these...



- Protecting food & water
- Ensuring proper sewage disposal
- Providing hearing, vision & dental screenings
- Preventing sexually transmitted infections
- Offering immunizations
- Controlling infectious diseases

so you can focus on these...



Credit to: HDNW 2023 Annual Report

LOCATIONS



Branch County

 570 Marshall Road
Coldwater, MI
517-279-9561

Hillsdale County

 20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI
517-437-7395

St. Joseph County

 1110 Hill Street
Three Rivers, MI
269-273-2161
 1555 E. Chicago Road
Suite C
Sturgis, MI
269-273-2161

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Protecting Families

Keeping Our Water Clean

Our communities are blessed with many lakes, rivers, and streams. Additionally, we have aquifers and underground water sources to protect for the benefit of all.

Our well program ensures that residents have safe and clean water sources from which to drink, recreate, and irrigate.

Another way to ensure we have clean water is to ensure we are handling sewage in a safe and sanitary manner. Septic systems are used to treat wastewater for more than 1.3 million homes and businesses in Michigan. These systems are prominent in our area because many residents and businesses cannot connect to municipal systems.

Our Sanitarians work with homeowners, contractors, and business owners to evaluate the site and issue a permit. The final review process provides assurance that the systems will operate as intended.

In 2024, the entire agency supported the City of Three Rivers to address elevated lead levels in community water supplies by distributing filtration systems, providing professional education, and distributing educational materials to residents.

We work with residents who have had their wells impacted by PFAS contamination, providing filtration systems and advocating for long term solutions.

In 2024 the agency transitioned to a new online platform that will provide residents with additional information on well and septic sites for which we have record. Residents and contractors are able to review recorded site plans without making a trip to the local office.

Additional features such as online application and permit payment options are planned for 2025.

By the Numbers:



Well Permits
Issued & Wells
Inspected
1,037



On-Site Sewage
Evaluated, Permits
Issued, & Inspected
1,010



Food Establishment
Inspections
1,276



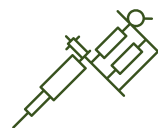
Campground
Inspections
59



Public Swimming
Pool Inspections
59



Daycare & Foster
Care Inspections
60



Body Art Inspections
18



Septage Hauler Inspections
48

Ensuring Safe Food Supply

Our Sanitarians ensure restaurants, schools, food trucks, community fairs, and festivals follow safe food handling practices and sanitation standards.

Public Health's role is not just a regulatory function, but an educational one as well. Our agency provides Food Manager Certification classes to support food service operators in their efforts to provide a pleasant and healthy dining experience.

Watching for Vectors of Disease

Each summer the agency has Vector Surveillance Technicians in each county monitoring the population of mosquitos and ticks.

The technicians trap and identify mosquitos throughout the three counties looking for the species that transmit diseases such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Zika Virus, and Jackson Canyon Virus.

They also drag tall grass and wood lines looking for the species of tick that transmit Lyme's disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Supporting Families

Helping the Most Vulnerable

In 2024, the agency continued to focus efforts on the Community Health Worker program. Community Health Workers are trained and certified to address the social determinants of health which include economic stability, education access, healthcare access, and community supports.

Community Health Workers have assisted individuals to enroll in health insurance, find resources for food, locate safe housing, complete their education, access rehabilitative services, access medical care, secure transportation, and address urgent financial needs.

The agency partners with additional community agencies and services to ensure needs of residents in our communities are met. Together, we strive to ensure residents with the greatest needs are connected to the resources that can assist them to become healthier by stabilizing their social situation.

Our Community Health Worker and Health Education and Promotion staff participate in monthly outreach activities in all three counties. Outreach events allow us to share information on the services the agency provides to support families and the community.

The agency provides car seats to families who participate in the WIC program or who are unable to afford a car seat. This program is funded with local dollars to ensure our youngest residents are safe when traveling in a car.

Our Emergency Preparedness program works with county Emergency Managers and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to ensure a coordinated response to emergency situations that could impact public health. We also provide community education to help residents be prepared to respond to and recover from an emergency.

By the Numbers:



Community Events
Attended

60



Coalitions We
Participate With

28



Community Health
Worker Clients

51



News Stories

93



Social Media
Followers

4,300



Car Seats
Distributed

247

In 2024, we supported the response to the BP Gas Line rupture in Girard Township, sewage spilled into the St. Joseph River, Harmful Algal Bloom public access notifications, and the Quincy Community Schools student health concerns.

Communications is Key

The Health Education and Promotions team is responsible for communicating information with the public. This includes management of our social media platforms, maintaining relationships with local media, press releases, updating website information, developing newsletters, and preparing for crisis communications.

Our digital platforms are the primary vehicle for ensuring the community has information that is timely, relevant, and credible.



INVESTING IN FAMILIES

Investing in You

Starting off Strong

Our clinical services are designed to support individuals of all ages. From the cradle to the rocking chair, and everywhere in between, Your Local Health Department is here to serve your needs.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services are designed to support healthy pregnancy and thriving children. Education for parents on child development milestones, nutritional support for children up to age 5, and breastfeeding support are the cornerstones of this program.

Children's Special Healthcare Services (CSHCS) provides case management support to families of children with chronic health conditions. This includes assistance with referrals and transportation to specialists, coverage of medical supplies, and specialized equipment.

Immunizations are provided for residents of all ages to prevent severe illness from the fourteen vaccine preventable diseases of childhood as well as respiratory illnesses, meningitis, HPV, and shingles. The Vaccines for Children and Adult Vaccine Program offer certain immunizations at no cost for those without insurance or low income.

Our public health nurses investigate communicable diseases to protect the community at large. Providing education to patients and close contacts can reduce disease spread because individuals and families know the steps to take to protect others.

Hearing and Vision technicians provide valuable screening services to school-aged and preschool children. Hearing and vision problems can negatively impact a child's performance in the classroom and hinder social development. Children who are identified with concerns are referred to local physicians for diagnostic testing and treatment.

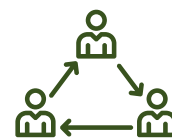
By the Numbers:



WIC Participants
8,218



Maternal Child
Health: Safe Sleep
1,648



Community
Referrals Offered
16,877



Children Enrolled
in CSHCS
953



Vision Screenings
13,519



Hearing
Screenings
6,511



Communicable
Disease Cases
2,022



Immunizations
Administered
6,390



Clients Served at
MCDC Clinics
10,862

Partnering for Oral Health

Your oral health is more important than you may realize. Good oral health contributes to your overall health since the mouth can be a gateway for germs.

Your Local Health Department and My Community Dental Centers have partnered together to ensure residents have access to low cost and Medicaid dental services. These clinics offer preventative and restorative services. My Community Dental Center has offices in Coldwater, Hillsdale, Sturgis, and Three Rivers. To schedule an appointment call (877) 313-6232

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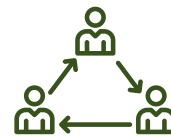
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WORKING WITH NEIGHBORS

Working with You



Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging IIIC team continued working to address community needs, provide comprehensive information & assistance, and develop stronger community partnerships. Our programs & providers work to meet unique needs across our two-county planning & service area.

The Services to Victims of Elder Abuse (SVEA) project served 50 individuals this year. This program supports victims in our communities like "William"*.

"William" was referred by our local interdisciplinary team. He was a victim of domestic abuse. At the time, William was living in a neglected, foreclosed home with inadequate plumbing. He was severely underweight and unable to live independently.

Our Elder Abuse Victim Specialist provided case management services and worked with William to establish goals for regaining his independence. We assisted him in securing medical care, insurance, mental health services, and establishing a medical and financial Power of Attorney. Additionally, we helped him secure housing and community-based services such as home-delivered meals to support his recovery. William has gained 30 pounds, receives regular medical care, has made new friends, and participates in community programs. He shared with us, "I now have a positive outlook on life!"

The Community Living Program's Care Consultants work with individuals and families to develop a person-centered support plan. Nearly 80 individuals were served over the past year.

"John" is 62 years old and lives with his brother in their family home. Through the Community Living Program, we have supported his goal of living as independently as possible. John has developmental and physical disabilities, which make navigating everyday life challenging for him.

His care plan highlights his desire to move around town in his wheelchair and receive in-home support, including personal care, light housekeeping, and

By the Numbers:



Meals Provided
187,330



Hours of In-Home
Services
31,880



Community
Services
2,054



Access to
Services
21,969



Legal Services
4,044



Individuals Served
15,771

Meals on Wheels. He and his brother support each other, such as managing medications, and ensuring their home is safe. Recently, they worked with a neighbor to repair the entryway to their home, ensuring safe access not only for themselves, but also for their care providers.

The Area Agency on Aging Care Consultants collaborate with participants, their friends and family, and diverse community partners to develop goals, monitor care, and address both successes and challenges.

For more information on any of our programs contact our office at 517-278-2538, toll free 888-615-8009, or visit our website www.bhsj.org/aaa.

Services/Project	Funding
Operations	\$69,637.00
Nutrition	\$463,980.00
In-Home Services	\$302,158.00
Community	\$58,717.00
Access	\$228,848.00
Legal	\$12,000.00
Traditional Federal & State (OAA/OMA) funding sources only	
Services to Victims of Elder Abuse	\$185,644.00
American Rescue Plan Act	\$88,168.00
Direct Care Worker Pay	\$67,200.00

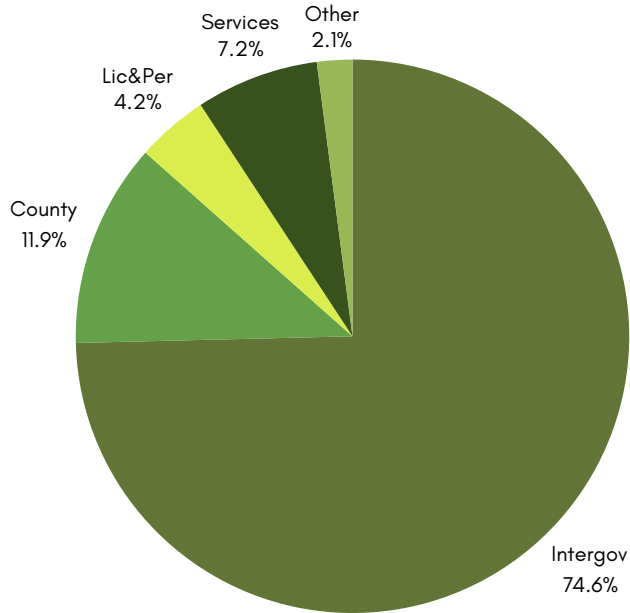
*Note: Names have been changed to honor the individuals' privacy.

MAGNIFYING EFFICIENCIES

Stewarding Your Tax Dollars

2024 Revenue

\$8,395,381



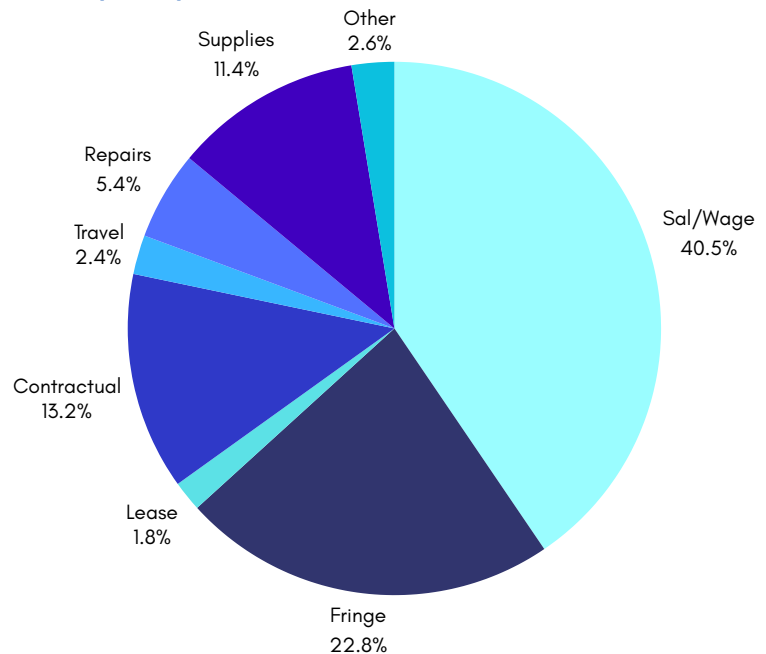
Category	FY24	FY23
Licenses & Permits	\$353,057	\$333,613
Intergovernmental	\$6,264,198	\$6,493,566
County Appropriations & Other Local	\$1,001,853*	\$790,027
Charges for Services	\$602,840	\$513,707
Other	\$173,433	\$226,761
Total	\$8,395,381	\$8,357,674

*Not comparable to FY 2023 as agency reporting of fund category changed .

Category	FY24	FY23
Salaries/Wages	\$3,514,343	\$3,186,375
Fringe Benefits	\$1,974,397	\$1,604,257
Supplies & Materials	\$988,075	\$716,565
Contractual	\$1,144,167	\$1,348,718
Travel & Training	\$206,646	\$192,573
Repairs& Maintenance	\$465,930	\$578,604
Bldg & Equip Lease	\$159,571	\$136,468
Other	\$224,002	\$222,541

2024 Expenses

\$8,677,131



HOW WE ARE STRUCTURED

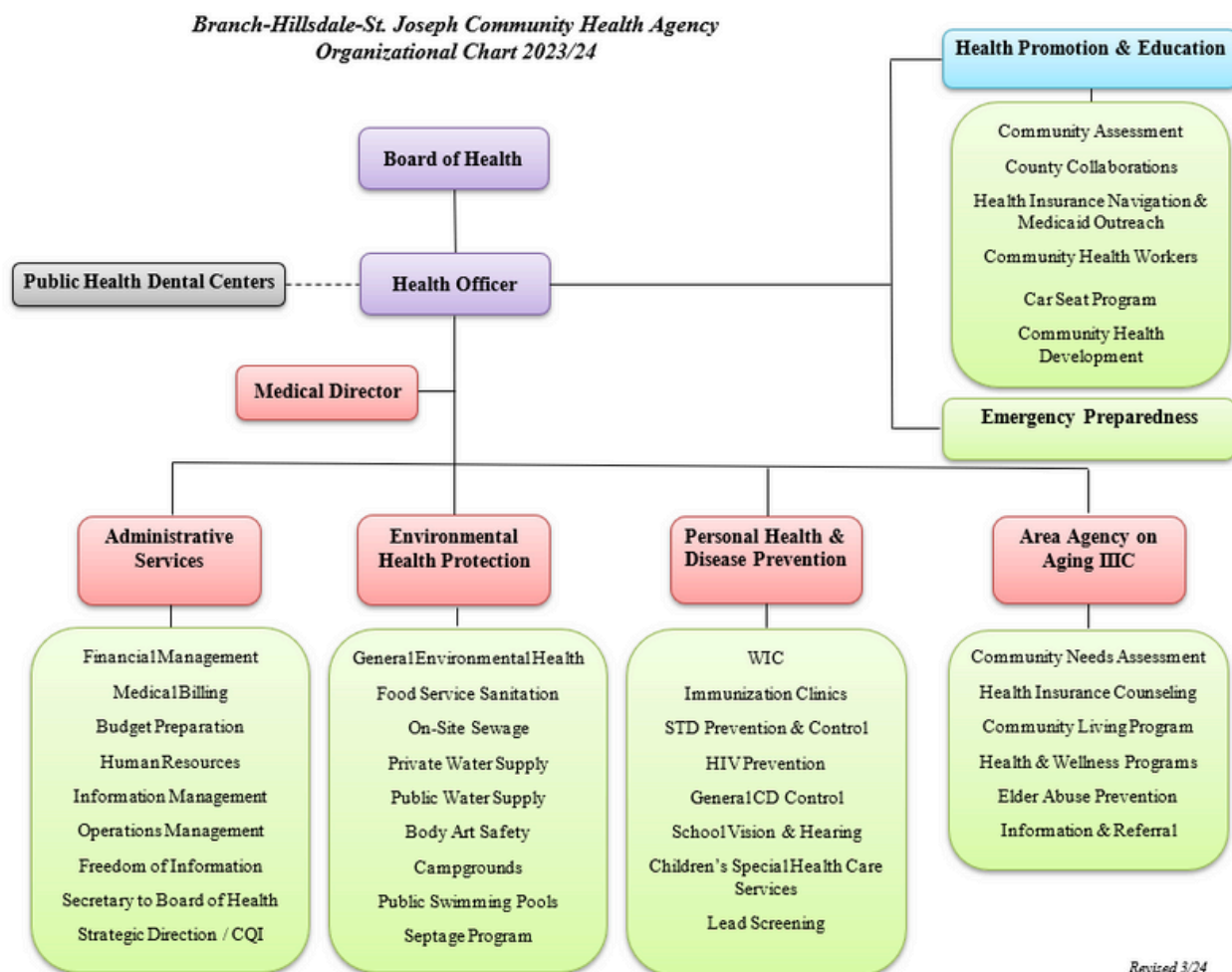
Maximizing Human Resources

Committed to Excellence

Our agency serves three counties, 1604 square miles, 31 communities, and 151,670 residents with approximately 77 full and part-time staff in 2023-24. The agency is lead by the Board of Health, comprised of two county commissioners from each county. The Health Officer is responsible for the operation of the agency. The Health Officer is supported by the Medical Director, a local physician, who advises the agency regarding issues of public health and disease prevention.

Four Division Directors are responsible for program planning, policy development, and staff training. Seven Supervisors ensure that staff are supported in carrying out the requirements of the programs and services we provide. Sixty-four talented team members ensure that each individual receives the high quality services that are expected.

Our staff is committed to our mission and vision, desiring to make our communities safe and providing services to support optimal community health.



We hope that you have found the 2023-24 Annual Report informative. We appreciate the community's support and take seriously the trust and financial resources invested in our agency's programs and employees. Your Local Health Department is here to serve you, contact us with any concerns or needs you may have. Thank you!



570 Marshall Road
Coldwater, Michigan, 49036

Phone: 517-279-9561

