



Public Health
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Tioga County

Tioga County Public Health Department

Heather Vroman, MEd.; Interim Public Health Director

INTERNAL MEMO

TO: Marte Sauerbrey; Chair, Tioga County Legislature
FROM: Heather Vroman, MEd.; Interim Public Health Director
CC: Marte Sauerbrey; Chair, Tioga County Legislature
DATE: February 10th 2023
RE: **Public Health Report 2022**

Attached is our agency's report for 2022 which includes bulleted highlights. The information includes 2022 successes and challenges, as well as 2023 goals.



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2022 Highlights-Summary

2022 started out much the same as how we ended 2021. Our department was still investigating/tracing most COVID-19 cases, keeping up with guidance changes, hosting vaccine clinics throughout the County, coordinating the mandated testing in Tioga County School districts, etc. Then, slowly but surely, COVID began to wean. First, guidance changed quarantine from 10 days to 5, then the State virtual case investigators took over case investigations and strict quarantine orders turned into quarantine self-attestations, and by March/April mask mandates lifted and State virtual investigators had stopped investigating/tracing in the state required software, and our role turned into minor Communicable Disease monitoring. We went from the entire 27-person department handling nothing but COVID, to a one-man crew who became our COVID-19 Specialist monitoring daily incoming cases and taking COVID-related calls. The rest of our department was able to return to a “normal” Public Health routine, which was a definite adjustment period for us all.

- The mentality of mass hysteria from COVID led to community scare over other disease outbreaks (Monkeypox and Polio); we continued to distribute educational material to keep the community informed and only saw one confirmed case of Monkeypox in Tioga County.
- Tioga County Environmental Health Division was busy with various projects: Richford Water Survey, Candor Renewal Project, water testing in the Village of Spencer, Wellhead Replacement Project to replace wellheads hosting Water Operator trainings and certifying new water operators; all to make drinking water safe to drink.
- Returned to hosting monthly Rabie Clinics in collaboration with Stray Haven, vaccinating an approximate total of over 1000 pets! EH Sanitarians intervened in dozens of wild animal incidents/exposures to humans and the actions taken prevented 16 people from getting the Post Exposure Prophylaxis.
- Health Educators completed 2022-2024 Community Health Assessment & Community Health Improvement Plan: collecting over 1,000 surveys from the community.

2022 Successes

- Children Services Division (Early Intervention and Child Find) received lots of new referrals but is still dealing with provider shortages. To assist where we can, a new therapy room was set up at Health and Human Services Building and our Service Coordinators worked with a provider to set up group therapy sessions.
- Dental Services resumed normal operating schedule for both the public and at schools. Over 1,500 patients were seen on the mobile dental van; 340 of them were new.
- TCPH hosted a couple Back-To-School immunization clinics utilizing one of our MRC nursing volunteers and Medical Consultant. We also held a Tioga County employee Flu clinic. Over 60 vaccines were given at these clinics.
- Collaborated with CASA Trinity to assemble Narcan Overdose Response Boxes at CASA Trinity, Catholic Charities, and the Health and Human Services Building; to make Narcan as accessible to the public, similar to the way an AED would be accessible.



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2022 Challenges

- We have gone an entire year unable to fill our Public Health Nurse positions. We have had to improvise and adjust to having other staff fill in some gaps; however, we sorely lack in providing some mandated services, i.e., immunizations.
- The NYSDOH Article 28 Audit was an eye opener; and a realization of the many areas we need to revise, restore and improve.
- Dental saw extensive tooth decay in students this year, due to our mobile van not being able to visit some school districts since the start of COVID. There continues to be only one part-time Dentist working on the van, therefore there is an extended wait for anyone needing to see the Dentist.

2023 Goals

Reset

- Become fully staffed/operational across all divisions; with at least one full time Nurse; and provide mandated services.
- Implement Corrective Action Plan for Article 28 Audit to be compliant with NYSDOH regulations and public health law.

Renew

- Collaborate and reconnect with community partners to work towards common goals.
- Re-establish and grow an agency wide quality/assurance improvement program.

Reimagine

- Develop an agency-wide strategic plan to help guide our work.