

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Promote. Preserve. Protect.

A Message from the Health Officer

Dear Howard County Residents and Partners:

The Howard County Health Department is pleased to present the 2018 Annual Report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the department and recognizes the public health issues affecting our community. It also highlights the creative solutions that have been implemented to improve the health and well-being of those who live, work and visit the County.

In addition to continuing to deliver high quality core public health services, we implemented innovative programs to address complex problems including the opioid crisis, sexually transmitted infection (STI) in youth and health disparities. We have been diligently working toward national Public Health Accreditation, a process that seeks to advance quality and performance of local health departments. Completion is expected in mid-2019.

In response to the opioid crisis, a Peer Recovery program was created, more than 1,400 people were trained in overdose response, over 1,000 kits containing Narcan (a lifesaving drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose) were distributed to community members and construction is underway for a halfway house in Howard County that will provide clinically managed, low intensity residential treatment for substance use disorders. These programs contributed to a 35% reduction in opioid fatalities compared to one year ago.

In partnership with Howard County Public School System, a campaign was developed to increase awareness and address increasing rates of sexually transmitted infection (STI) in our youth. As a result, STI information and testing resources can be found in every county high school.

While most residents in Howard County enjoy good health, data shows us that some residents are disproportionately affected by chronic diseases, low birthweight and mental health disorders. To address these issues, we implemented a tool called CAREAPP. With over 25 government agencies and nonprofit organizations participating, CAREAPP links vulnerable residents to affordable resources and community services, thus reducing health disparities and making optimal wellness a reality for all residents.

Many new programs and initiatives are underway for the upcoming year. We look forward to sharing our successes with you as we move into Fiscal Year 2019. Be sure to follow us on our social media platforms where you will get a glimpse of our activities on a regular basis. You can also sign up for news and alerts by visiting our website at www.hchealth.org.

Maura J. Rossman, MD
Health Officer



Board of Health

The Board of Health is comprised of Howard County residents with expertise in various areas concerning health. The Board meets nine times per year and has general responsibility for the health and sanitary interests of the people of the County, working in accord with the County Council to ensure the health and safety of those in Howard County.

Members

Carlessia Hussein, DrPH, RN
– *Chair*
Darryl Burnett, MPH, CHES
Judith Chernoff, MD
Sheri Lewis, MPH
Erica Martin, MSW, LCSW-C

Paul Nagy, PhD
Jill RachBeisel, MD
Matthew Reber, MHA
Deborah R. Rivkin, JD
Gary A. Stewart, MSPharm

Mission

To promote, preserve, and protect the health of all in Howard County.

Vision

A model community in which health equity and optimal wellness are accessible for all who live, work, and visit Howard County.

Values



Leadership

We advocate for and implement effective public health practices. We are a trusted source of health care and information.



Health Equity

We address the social determinants of health to achieve the highest quality of life for all.



Innovation & Excellence

We foster innovation and seek excellence in every endeavor.



Collaboration

We build and maintain partnerships to achieve common goals.



Culture of Respect & Caring

We value and respect our staff and all those we serve.



Advocacy

We inform, educate, and empower to initiate change.



Professionalism

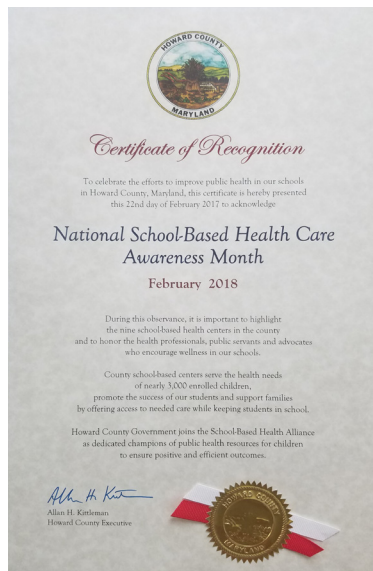
We foster mutual respect, transparency, and accountability.



Integrity

We honor the public's trust and pledge to maintain the highest standard of service.

The services and facilities of the Howard County Health Department are operated on a non-discriminatory basis. This policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, creed, color, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.



Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement (QI) is a systematic approach for achieving measurable improvements in a process or a service provided. The Howard County Health Department seeks a culture of continuous improvement in pursuing its mission of promoting, preserving, and protecting the health of all in the county.

During the past year, QI projects were launched in each bureau across the department. QI teams took on projects to identify and develop changes to services or processes that would offer an opportunity to improve efficiency, effectiveness and satisfaction for internal and external customers of HCHD. Some projects were identified using the department's performance management system, HealthStat. Teams used an iterative, four-stage problem-solving model known as Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) for their work.

Through iterative use of the PDSA cycle throughout the department and developing new QI projects, HCHD aims to foster continued innovation and seek excellence in every endeavor.



PLAN - QI teams carefully consider data about the problem identified and strive to isolate root causes, then hypothesize about how a change could favorably alter the outcome.

DO – The QI team works with the bureau/program to make the change and collect data that can indicate its effects.

STUDY - The QI team reviews data on the effects of the change on efficiency, effectiveness, or other indicators of quality, and draws conclusions about how the change has influenced the process.

ACT - Based on the results of the analysis, the QI team works with the bureau/program to adopt the new practice or continues to experiment with process changes to bring about improvement, repeating the PDSA cycle.



National Accreditation

On July 31, the Health Department submitted all documentation to PHAB, the national accrediting body for state, local and tribal Health Departments. This was a culmination of over 18 months of work to compile documents, update policies and procedures, develop plans, address organizational gaps and more. Accreditation is a quality improvement process that evaluates HCHD against a set of national standards.

Community Outreach and Health Promotion

The Bureau of Health Promotion implements wellness initiatives that reduce health risk factors, improve wellness and safety, and maintain a productive and active Howard County community and workforce. In FY18, the Health Department partnered with over 70 agencies to educate over 4,000 community residents through our community outreach at partner events or community gatherings.

CAREAPP

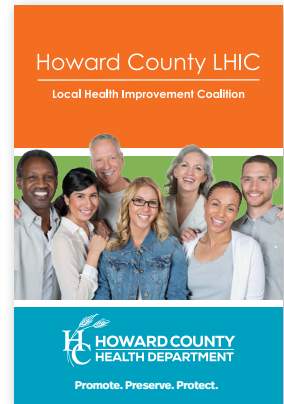
CAREAPP (Community Access to Resources through Enhanced Technology for Providers and Public), is a community-wide project to support healthy living beyond traditional healthcare settings. In FY18, CAREAPP users sent over 450 electronic referrals, with the top referring agencies being HCHD, HC General Hospital-Community Care Team, Chase Brexton, HealthCare Access Maryland, HC Department of Housing and Community Development and HC Department of Community Resources and Services-Office of Aging and Independence. Collaborative efforts also contributed to the expansion of the CAREAPP resource directory, to include over 800 Howard County resources. Successes from the project's first year include:

- Established an electronic resource and referral system for the community;
- CAREAPP has already impacted community capacity by training over 800 users to address the social determinants of health;

- CAREAPP has supported cross-county collaboration to address social determinants of health.

Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC)

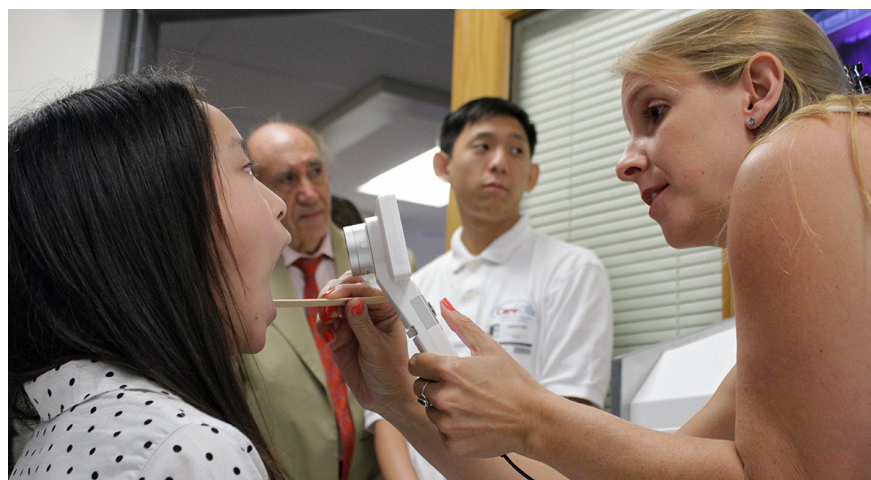
In FY18, the LHIC successfully implemented year-one of the 2018-2020 Strategic Action Plan that was developed with four priority areas: Access to Care, Behavioral Health, Healthy Aging and Healthy Weight. The full plan is available at www.hclhic.org.



Coalition membership was increased by 13.2% to 266 individuals, representing 98 local/regional organizations in Howard County, by June 2018.

Tobacco Enforcement

HCHD provides Tobacco Enforcement for Howard County. Compliance visits and education visits are conducted with 230+ licensed tobacco retailers to ensure that they are compliant with Maryland Laws that prohibit tobacco sales to minors. In FY18, Enforcement Officers conducted 250 tobacco sales compliance visits, citing 10.8% of those retailers with violations for selling tobacco products to minors. These violations are intended to serve as a deterrent to selling to minors in the future.



Behavioral Health

Opioid Outreach, Prevention & Response

In FY18, the Bureau of Behavioral Health worked to combat the opioid epidemic and increase access to care for substance use services and medication assisted treatment in the County through recruitment of outpatient/residential behavioral health providers to expand the system of care. Recruitment efforts have doubled the number of outpatient programs to 10 over the past two years. Provider recruitment efforts increased access to outpatient substance use services providers and co-occurring (mental health and substance use) services for adults and adolescents; services billable to uninsured funds, Medicaid and private insurance; psychiatric care; and Vivitrol and buprenorphine treatment. HCHD efforts secured property for Howard House (halfway house for men) to relocate, allowing the program to continue to operate. Renovations are under way and the move is scheduled for December 2018.

Narcan is a medication used to reverse a potentially fatal opioid overdose. In FY18, it was placed in more than 300 County AED cabinets. All County employees were given the opportunity to be trained on the administration of Narcan as a lifesaving intervention to an opioid overdose.

HCHD secured state funding to expand services at Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, which launched substance use walk-in Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). Launched in January 2018, the program has screened 295 people. Under the new agreement, Grassroots increased its capacity to provide in-person screening to adults, youth and families dealing with substance misuse issues, aided by the technical assistance, training and community promotion provided by the Health Department. A counselor screens clients using SBIRT to link them to treatment services in the community and assist them in removing barriers to getting treatment.

Beginning with the State of Emergency declared by Governor Larry Hogan in March 2017, communication efforts have been a priority for informing the

community. Videos and print advertising materials to increase public awareness regarding the opioid crisis were developed by the department. These materials were displayed to the public using many available resources and through collaboration with other County agencies. These communication strategies have been followed by evaluation efforts to support future communication using evidence-based practices.

Clinical Services

The clinic provides reproductive health services, offering access and education on birth control and family planning, confidential evaluation and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, HIV counseling and testing, treatment and screening for active and inactive tuberculosis, screening for refugees and asylees, adult and child immunizations and breast and cervical cancer screening.

HCHD received funding for a Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) program from the Maryland Department of Health in October 2017. PrEP is an HIV prevention option that can decrease the risk of HIV infection by over 90%. HCHD began offering PrEP on April 1, 2018.

In FY18 the Bureau of Clinical Services: treated 11 cases of active Tuberculosis; screened 24 new refugees for communicable diseases; performed 1,091 HIV tests, yielding 9 new cases who were linked to care; started 7 clients on daily PrEP, encountered 1,548 visits to the Reproductive Health Clinic and completed 109 Sexual Health Clinic visits at Howard Community College.

Communicable Disease

The Communicable Disease program is responsible for monitoring 92 infectious diseases such as Meningitis, Tuberculosis (TB), Lyme, etc.; responding to disease outbreaks; and assuring case management and treatment of certain diseases.

To date, 14 outbreaks of public health significance such as influenza, pneumonia, hand, foot and mouth disease and gastrointestinal illness in County facilities (nursing homes, workplaces, schools, etc.) were reported and investigated by the surveillance and outbreak program.

Environmental Health

The Bureau of Environmental Health protects County residents by identifying environmental hazards and developing methods to reduce or eliminate those hazards.

Food Protection Program

The goal of the Food Protection Program is to reduce foodborne illnesses in the County by inspecting and licensing food service facilities to ensure safe food handling practices are followed. In FY18, the food protection program executed 2,387 mandated inspections and followed-up on 287 foodborne and non-foodborne illness investigations.

The Food Protection Program also played a significant role in HCHD response efforts to the Ellicott City flood. With a large number of food facilities again suffering extensive damage, staff participated in coordinated County reviews and performed pre-opening inspections as cleanup and repairs were completed. Lessons learned from the 2016 flood enabled a much quicker and more efficient response time resulting in many of these facilities re-opening or re-building more quickly. Response efforts also included attendance at policy meetings, hot-team meetings, stakeholder meetings to provide situational report updates to internal and external groups all while managing daily operations.

Community Hygiene Program

The Community Hygiene Program licenses and inspects public and semi-public pools and spas in, monitoring water quality and the safety of each facility. The program is also responsible for the

investigation of animal bites, nuisance complaints involving excess trash, pest infestations, noise pollution, sewage overflows, hazardous waste and general unsanitary conditions.

Staff from the Community Hygiene Program joined the Ellicott City Partnership group to address an ongoing rat problem in the city. These efforts included attending community meetings to discuss HCHD efforts to combat this issue. In preparation for the upcoming summer concert schedule at Merriweather Post Pavilion, the program purchased a new sound level monitor to record data that will help assist in assessing future regulatory needs and updates. Staff from this program are tasked with monitoring concert events held at the Columbia venue to observe and determine the effect of noise on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Well and Septic Program

The Well and Septic Program plays a key role in developing residential and commercial properties not served by public water and sewer.

During FY18, the bureau continued to evaluate the impact of road salt on the ground water of individual wells. Health inspectors collected samples from 65 commercial/non-community properties and 422 residential communities. The number of properties with elevated levels of sodium, chloride and/or total dissolved solids were tracked. HCHD is working with the Patuxent Watershed Technical Advisory Committee to develop strategies to address the issue.



Access to Care

Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP)

At the end of FY18, the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) processed a total of 22,239 MCHP applications, an increase from 13,718 in FY17. As of June 30, 2018, HCHD enrollment in MCHP was 12,151 and Medical Assistance for Families was 6,438. The HCHD Medical Care Program Eligibility Unit experienced a monthly average volume of 1,853 applications, 1,370 walk-in consumers and 245 telephone calls. During FY18, MCHP expanded to include eligibility services to the Howard County pre and post release inmate population, resulting in over 300 pre or post inmates receiving services.

Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)

In FY18, MATP provided 50,797 non-emergency medical transports to Medicaid appointments for over 1,100 Howard



County residents. Effective July 1, 2018, Hart to Heart Transportation became the sole transportation vendor providing ambulance, wheelchair, and sedan modes of service. This program helps transport residents to necessary medical appointments. MATP has partnered with the Bureau of Health Promotion to provide community awareness of this valuable

resource. Their outreach efforts have drastically increased the number MATP participants.

Administrative Care Coordination Unit (ACCU)

ACCU continues to be a strong resource for the Howard County Medical Assistance population by helping clients select medical providers and navigate the Medical Assistance system. During FY18, ACCU processed over 2,000 compliant referrals connecting to providers and providing health education. ACCU maintains a robust network of partner agencies. HCHD participates on advisory boards with the seven managed care organizations that service the residents of Howard County.

Child Health Services

Adolescent Health

Howard County Health Department convened a group of stakeholders including Howard County Public School System, Maryland Department of Health and community members to develop the Teen Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Communication Planning Committee to address the rising rates of STIs in County youth. The purpose of the group is to increase awareness of STIs, provide STI prevention resources, and provide access to screening and treatment to reduce rates of STI infection in County youth ages 15-19. Activities to date include community outreach, conducting focus groups with youth and parents to develop an educational campaign to improve STI knowledge and access to STI Testing.

Maryland Responds: Howard County Maryland Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The MRC continued the work that was started in FY16, assisting to educate residents about opioid overdose response. Through a competitive grant awarded to the Emergency Preparedness program, an Active Assailant

Awareness Program was launched during FY18. By June 30, 2018, MRC volunteers, trained through a partnership with the Howard County Police Department, provided education to over 228 individuals in schools and businesses throughout Howard County.



School Based Wellness Centers

The Health Department opened its 10th school-based wellness center at Hanover Hills Elementary. The 10 school-based wellness centers are at the following schools: Bollman Bridge Elementary, Deep Run Elementary, Ducketts Lane Elementary, Hanover Hills Elementary, Patuxent Valley Middle, Phelps Luck Elementary, Running Brook Elementary, Stevens Forest Elementary, Talbott Springs Elementary, and Wilde Lake High School. Keeping children healthy and in school learning is important to their futures. The centers provide health services to children while they are in school to minimize their time away from educational activities.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings are required by Maryland State Law for students entering the school system, pre-k or kindergarten, and first and eighth grades. The screenings are performed by trained HCHD technicians. Parents of children identified as having a vision or hearing concern are urged to have their children examined by an eye care medical specialist or audiologist. HCHD partnered with the Howard County Public School System to increase the number of children receiving the recommended follow-up for concerns identified during vision and hearing screenings. These screenings lay an important foundation critical for learning.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The WIC Program is a free program for income eligible pregnant and postpartum women and children from birth to age five that provides access to nutritious foods, breastfeeding support and referrals to other health care and support services. The successful implementation of electronic supplemental food dollars, called e-WIC, began in May 2017. WIC participants now have access to a WIC app through their smart phone in which they can check their benefit balances, appointment reminders, vendor locations and Authorized WIC foods list.

Community Health

Cancer Control Programs

The Bureau of Community Health provides cancer education, screening and treatment services for the prevention of breast, cervical and colorectal cancers to eligible Maryland residents who are under or uninsured. The program offers patient navigation through a care coordinator who facilitates access to care for those who are fully or partially insured, have barriers to care or require assistance navigating the health care system.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (BCCP)

In FY18, the BCCP experienced a 30% growth in the number of program-funded women enrolled to receive breast and cervical cancer screenings. This significant rise in the number of new clients is



largely due to a partnership, established through the program's outreach, between Chase Brexton's Columbia Health Center and the BCCP.

Colorectal Cancer Screening Program & HCHD Cancer Coalition

In FY18, the Health Department provided case management and funded colonoscopy screenings to 88 eligible residents; 70% of those screened were newly enrolled to the program. 74% of those individuals were referred by Chase Brexton, an invaluable partnership in improving screening rates in the County. To raise awareness about the rising rates of colorectal cancer among young adults, the program initiated a Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Education Campaign. The campaign was coordinated through a work group comprised of members of the HCHD Cancer & Tobacco Coalition and program staff with strategies identified using focus groups. Participants ages 25-49 determined messaging platforms and verbiage for public and healthcare provider education. Additionally, the program coordinated the filming of the testimonials of two individuals' personal experiences with early onset colorectal cancer and created a 30-second public service announcement (PSA). Beginning in August 2018, Comcast Spotlight televised the CRC PSA on multiple stations.

Tobacco Control Program

The Tobacco Control Program offers no-cost Tobacco Cessation education and assistance to those who live, work or study in Howard County. During the 2017

– 2018 school year, the Tobacco Control Program partnered with County private and public schools, to provide education about tobacco and electronic smoking devices (ESDs). Through this initiative, 12,756 Howard County students in 2nd, 3rd, and 5th grades received tobacco/ESD and secondhand smoke prevention education. An additional 8,860 students in 6th and 9th grades were educated with tobacco/ESD use prevention resources provided by HCHD.

Community based initiatives included outreach to four behavioral health agencies who serve individuals with mental health and/or substance-related disorders. An additional community partnership was developed with the Community Care Team at Howard County General Hospital to conduct 4-week cessation classes in the Fall of 2018 and Spring of 2019.

Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) and Nurse Monitoring Program

In FY18, the AERS Program provided over 1,022 in-home evaluations to elderly and disabled Howard County residents in order to determine and recommend services and programs that would foster independence in the home and avoid institutionalization. In addition, more than 600 Howard County residents receiving personal care assistance and other services from home and community based programs funded by the Maryland Department of Health were provided with nurse monitoring services. These nurse monitors work closely with the Support Planning Agencies, family members and clinicians to address the needs of the client and maintain a safe environment to age in place.

Staff Recognition

Governor's Customer Service Hero Award:

- Nurse Practitioner Annette Baldwin (School-Based Wellness Program)

Governor's Citation for Excellence in Customer Service:

- Health Inspector Ryan Rappaport (Community Hygiene Program)
- Renee Bitner and the AERS team
- RN Pat Nolin (ACCU)
- WIC staff



The AERS program is staffed by a group of dedicated health professionals who provided evaluations to 28% more individuals than was anticipated in FY18. The staffing model and flexible scheduling provided in this program has become exemplary for other programs throughout the state.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

The Emergency Preparedness Program develops the response plans and staff training needed to respond to a variety of health emergencies. This year, HCHD responded to two events requiring public health mitigation activities: Winter Storm Jonas in March 2018 and the Ellicott City Flood in May 2018. Multiple dedicated health department staff members were deployed after the devastating May 27th flash flood to serve in the County Emergency Operations Center, the Joint Information Center, the Disaster Assistance Center and in the field providing guidance to residents and property owners involved in the clean-up efforts.

Ongoing outreach and education about Zika virus and mosquito bite prevention continued through the delivery of Zika Prevention Kits to area obstetrical offices. Other community preparedness activities throughout the year included presentations on general preparedness and the distribution of educational materials at outreach events. A “Preparedness Pal” brochure was created and distributed to help the aging and those with functional needs so that all residents have guidance to “make a plan” and be prepared.

New Programs for FY19

Leave Behind Program

In partnership with the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services the Leave Behind Program launched in June 2018. Fire and Rescue staff leaves Narcan with opioid overdose survivors, family or friends following an overdose. Peer Recovery Specialists provide follow-up to offer treatment referrals. Home visits are also offered.

Expanded Behavioral Health Services

The Howard County Mental Health Authority was integrated into the Bureau of Behavioral Health, effective July 4, 2018. This integration expanded the Bureau to include mental health services and form a Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA). The role of the newly created LBHA is to plan, develop and manage a full range of prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services in the County for those who have, or are at risk of developing, mental health and/or substance use disorders.

Following the program integration, two new positions were created and hired: a Behavioral Health Navigator and a Behavioral Court Liaison. The navigator guides consumers through the health care system by assisting with access issues including insurance coverage and network adequacy, developing relationships and educating service providers, and tracking outcomes. The court liaison provides screenings for individuals referred by Howard County District Court and maintains relationships with County enforcement and adjudication agencies.

Evidence-Based Programming

In FY19, HCHD is unrolling two new programs that are designed to equip individuals with skills that are shown to reduce substance misuse.

Guiding Good Choices teaches parents skills that will encourage their children to avoid engaging in problematic behaviors, including drug use, during five interactive sessions. HCHD convened its first facilitator training among partner agencies of 20 individuals in Spring 2018 with a goal of offering at least 10 cycles of this training in the community during FY19.

HCHD has partnered with MAC, Inc.’s Maryland Living Well Center of Excellence to train a cohort of facilitators to implement the Chronic Pain Self-Management Seminar series. This program is led by individuals, who provide community-based interventions to help individuals with chronic conditions learn how to manage pain and improve their overall health.

Harm Reduction Program

The Health Department has received funding to do capacity building to determine what Harm Reduction Program is needed in our community, including syringe services and other wrap around services. Informational presentations have been made to many groups, including law enforcement, support and treatment services for addiction, opioid awareness groups, community health nurses, the Board of Health and people who live with or have experience with addiction. After receiving feedback, a pilot program will begin in Fall 2020.

Teen Suicide Prevention

After a mandated review of child fatalities in the County, HCHD became increasingly concerned by a rise in suicide fatalities over a five-year period. This led to the development of a multi-phased plan that includes long-term strategy and an awareness campaign to promote community-based collaboration, coordination and intervention in preventing youth suicide using evidence-based strategies. This will be unrolled throughout FY19.

Expanded School-Based Health Services

Through a grant from the Horizon Foundation, HCHD received funds to expand its school-based mental health services to three additional schools. Through this program, a licensed mental health professional can provide services to students during the school day in collaboration with teachers, student services staff and administrators to support the child's social and emotional well-being.

What is HealthStat?

HealthStat is the health department's performance management system, tracking progress toward desired performance targets and objectives informed by national standards and state requirements. Performance indicator data are reviewed by managers and department leadership monthly. HealthStat reporting shows progress toward achieving goals and areas in need of focused improvement through quality improvement or other processes. The performance improvement process facilitates quality improvement, transparency, evidence-based decisions, increased efficiency and possibilities for funding, and improved health outcomes.

FY18 HealthStat at a Glance

Environmental Health

Mandated Inspections	2,387
Foodborne Illness Investigations	219
Rabies Cases Investigated	692
Pool Inspections	1,101
Building Permit Reviews	762

Access to Care

MCHP Applications Processed	22,239
MA Transports Provided	50,797

Child Health Services

Avg # of WIC Clients	3,963
% of Breastfed Babies in WIC	46.8
Immunizations Provided (adults and children)	3,412
Youth Vision & Hearing Screenings	27,851
SBWC Enrollment	2,983
% Return to Class after SBWC Visit	98
Flu Vaccines Provided	2,824

Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health Client Referrals	133
Peer Overdose Response Referrals	396
People Trained in Overdose Response	1,478

Clinical Services

# of New Refugee Screenings	24
# of Disease Investigations	1,146
# of Individuals Served in Reproductive Health Clinics	1,548
HIV Screenings	1,091
# of Visits to HCC Clinic	109

Community Health

AERS Evaluations Completed	1,022
Residents provided Nurse Monitoring	600+
Breast, Cervical and Colon Cancer Screenings	687
Enrolled in Smoking Cessation Classes	240

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Service Hours Provided by Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers	500+
Residents Educated on Active Assailant Awareness	228

