

Nassau County Department of Health

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Prevent. Promote. Protect.

2023 Impact Report

Irina Gelman, DPM, PhD, MPH

Commissioner of Health



November 2024



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Board of Health

The Nassau County Board of Health and the Nassau County Department of Health were created in 1938 by the Nassau County Charter.

Members of the Board of Health (hereafter referred to as the “Board”) are appointed by the County Executive to five-year terms. The Board enforces the New York State Public Health Law as well as New York State and local sanitary codes.

The Board is authorized to:

- Prescribe the duties of and direct the Commissioner of Health.
- Make and publish orders and regulations for the preservation of life and health.
- Create orders and regulations for the supervision of nuisances and other matters detrimental to public health.
- Restrain by injunction violators of its orders and regulations.
- Issue subpoenas, compel the attendance of witnesses, and administer oaths and compel testimony.
- Issue warrants to peace officers to enforce the law.
- Prescribe and impose penalties for violations of, or failure to comply with, its orders or regulations or any of the regulations of the state sanitary code.

Inquiries to the Nassau County Board of Health can be addressed to:

Ellen J. Braunstein, MD, Chair
Nassau County Board of Health
c/o Nassau County Department of Health
200 County Seat Drive, Mineola, NY 11501

Department of Health Vision

The Nassau County Department of Health will lead a public health system that works to create healthy communities.

Values

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Dedication
- Innovation

Department of Health Mission

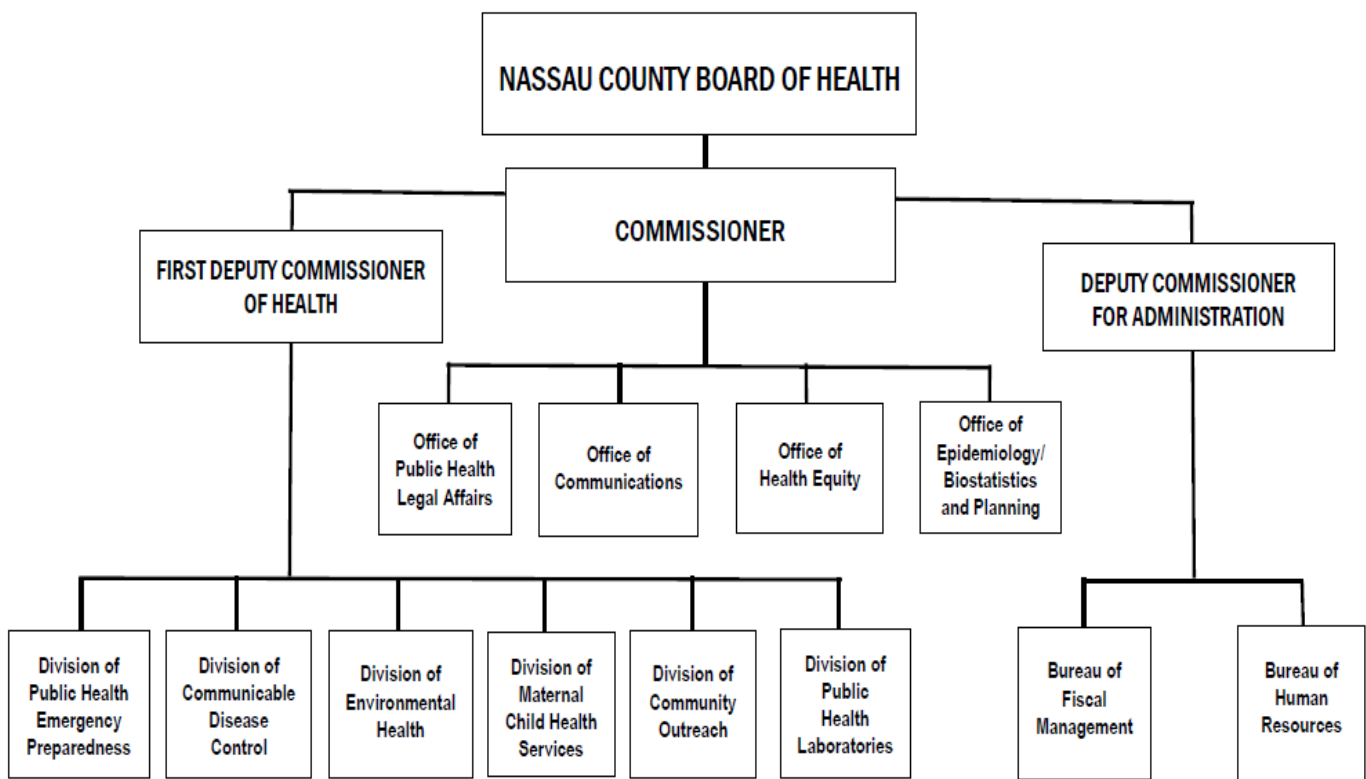
Nassau County Department of Health promotes and protects the health of all who live, work, and play in Nassau County.

The mission is accomplished through direct services and community partnerships in the following areas:

- Development and maintenance of individual and community preparedness for public health hazards and events.
- Investigation, prevention, and control of communicable diseases.
- Prevention of environmental health hazards through assessment, regulation, and remediation.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles through outreach and education.
- Provision for evaluation and services to individuals, children, and families that have developmental delays and concerns.

Departmental Structure

The Board of Health is the governing body of Nassau County Health Department (NCDOH), overseeing the Commissioner of Health. In March of 2023, NCDOH underwent a restructuring. The Offices of Public Health Legal Affairs, Communications, Health Equity, and Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Planning report directly to the Commissioner. The Divisions of Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Communicable Disease Control, Environmental Health, Maternal Child Health Services, Community Outreach, and Public Health Laboratories are under the leadership of the First Deputy Commissioner of Health. The Deputy Commissioner for Administration oversees the Bureau of Fiscal Management and the Bureau of Human Resources.



NCDOH HIGHLIGHT OF 2023:

CDC Director Mandy K. Cohen Comes to Town!

In November, NCDOH hosted Nassau County native and CDC Director Mandy K. Cohen. She along with Commissioner Irina Gelman and the NCDOH Division Directors visited Nassau University Medical Center, Nassau County's public-benefit hospital. Director Cohen shared tips on how to stay well and recommended that everyone stay up to date with their Flu and Covid-19 vaccines. Director Cohen, Commissioner Gelman, and NCDOH Division Directors also toured the South Shore Water Reclamation Facility to showcase the pioneering Wastewater Surveillance Program work, piloted this year and on track for expansion within 2024.



Dr. John Zaso, Dr. Irina Gelman, CDC Director Mandy Cohen, Dr. Ellen Braunstein, and Dr. Paul Pipia



CDC Director Mandy Cohen, Dr. Irina Gelman, and NCDOH Division Directors at South Shore Water Reclamation Facility

Nassau County Department of Health 2023 Impact Report

NCDOH HIGHLIGHT OF 2023:

Reaccreditation Efforts

In 2017 NCDOH was granted accreditation status by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), a national organization which evaluates local health departments based on 10 Essential Public Health Services. Accreditation status is valid for 5 years after which, re-application is necessary. In 2023, NCDOH began the process of applying for Reaccreditation. This is an extensive, rigorous process of gathering and submitting documentation to demonstrate satisfactory fulfillment of the 10 Essential Public Health Services, depicted in the graphic on the next page. There were 10 domains comprised of 55 measures in the Standards and Measures for Reaccreditation that needed to be addressed. This resulted in more than 400 documents. PHAB will review submission in 2024.



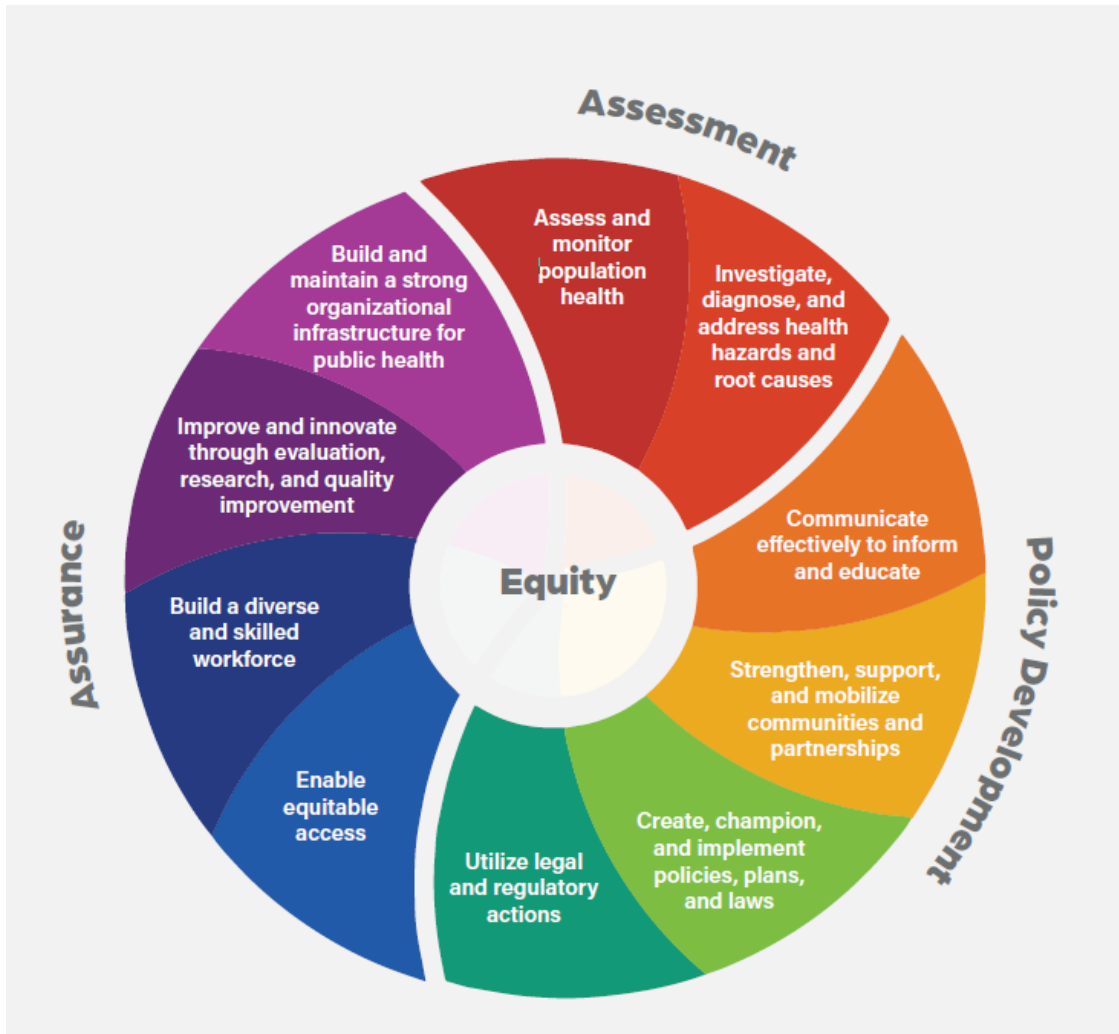
<https://phaboard.org/accreditation-recognition/reaccreditation/>

10 Domains

55 Measures

400+ Documents

10 Essential Public Health Services



<https://phaboard.org/accreditation-recognition/reaccreditation/>

Bureau of Human Resources

From 2022 to 2023, NCDOH experienced considerable growth in total number of employees. In 2022, NCDOH ended the year with 191 total employees, and in 2023, NCDOH ended the year with 218 total employees. This represents a 14.1% increase in the total employees over the course of the calendar year. The chart to the right shows the breakdown of total employees for the years 2022 and 2023, whether they were full-time or part-time, and if they were paid by the general or grant funded. Also, in 2023, the NYS Public Health Corps Fellowship Program launched, providing additional staff support.

NCDOH Employee Breakdown

	2022	2023	Net Change
Full-time	179	206	+27
~General Fund	149	173	+24
~Grant Fund	30	33	+3
Part-time	12	12	0
~General Fund	11	11	0
~Grant Fund	1	1	0

	2022	2023	Net Change
Total Employees	191	218	+27

Bureau of Fiscal Management

The Bureau of Fiscal Management oversees the Health Department's budget. The Health Department's budget for 2023 was \$180.10 million. It also manages grants and interacts with other programs within the Health Department as well as other Nassau County agencies.

Primary Responsibilities of Fiscal

- ❖ Purchasing
- ❖ Accounts Payable
- ❖ Accounts Receivable
- ❖ Grant Management
- ❖ Contract Processing
- ❖ Early Intervention & Preschool programs
- ❖ State Aid Article 6 funding



<https://www.allbusiness.com/6-tips-to-effectively-manage-your-budget-15480411-1.html>

Office of Public Health Legal Affairs

The Office of Public Health Legal Affairs provides legal counsel to the Department enabling our Offices and Divisions to best serve the public health needs of our community within our scope of public health legal authority. Various services provided by this Office include:

- ❖ Prosecuting enforcement actions under the New York State Public Health Law, New York State Sanitary Code, New York State Environmental Conservation Laws, and Local County Laws at administrative hearings
- ❖ Drafting Departmental Policies, Commissioner’s Orders, and local public health ordinances
- ❖ Training all staff members on HIPAA and confidentiality issues during onboarding process and refresher sessions
- ❖ Responding to subpoenas and Freedom of Information Law requests
- ❖ Conducting legislative review for purposes of evaluating potential impacts on laws on public health efforts, response, and protection of our residents
- ❖ Assisting staff with archiving documents and other materials
- ❖ Communication With Legislative/Judicial Branches
- ❖ Assisting the Department in complying with litigation holds



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Office of Communications

The Office of Communications plans, organizes, and implements the Department's public information activities in order to provide timely information to the public. This Office interfaces with all Divisions within the NCDOH. In addition, the Office is responsible for writing and distributing all NCDOH press releases, coordinating press conferences, requests for interviews, issuing statements to the media and developing public health campaigns.



<https://images.app.goo.gl/Was2i2fKCGRGyXvX6>

In 2023:

- ❖ NCDOH website development
- ❖ Update NCDOH social media accounts; LinkedIn, Facebook
- ❖ Development of a new, automated departmental telephone answering system
- ❖ Health promotion marketing campaigns; cannabis safety, tick surveillance program



<https://www.facebook.com/NassauCountyDOH/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/nassau-county-department-of-health/>

Public Health Campaign: Cannabis Safety

In 2023, NCDOH began a new public health campaign promoting the safe use of cannabis. The campaign, called Discuss, Distinguish, and Designate urges people to do the following before bringing cannabis products into the household:

1. Discuss the role of cannabis and its effects with members of the household.
2. Distinguish what cannabis products look like.
3. Designate a safe storage spot for cannabis products.

BEFORE BRINGING CANNABIS PRODUCTS INTO YOUR HOME
Discuss. Distinguish. Designate.

Discuss.

Discuss the role of cannabis in your home, and its effects with members of your household. Children and the elderly may experience serious side effects.

Distinguish.

Distinguish what cannabis products will look like in your home to ensure that there is no accidental confusion with non-cannabis products.

Designate.

Designate a safe storage space in your home away from children, pets and the elderly.

BRUCE A. BLAKEMAN
 NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE

NASSAU COUNTY
 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Cannabis Trends in Nassau County

3,646

unintended cannabis use emergency visits in 2023

Nassau County does not have any legal recreational use cannabis dispensaries.

7x

increase

in emergency room visits for accidental ingestion of cannabis in 1-4 year olds

1933%

increase in cannabis related care among 15-19 year olds since 2017

Discuss. Distinguish. Designate.

BRUCE A. BLAKEMAN
 NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE

NASSAU COUNTY
 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Public Health Campaign: Tick Surveillance

In 2023, NCDOH introduced the Tick Surveillance Program. The goals of this program include informing the public on the following: recognizing tick bites, knowing what to do if a tick is found on person or pet, common symptoms of tick-borne diseases, and when to seek medical attention after a tick bite. More information can be found at the NCDOH website. <https://www.nassaucountynv.gov/5711/Tickborne-Diseases>

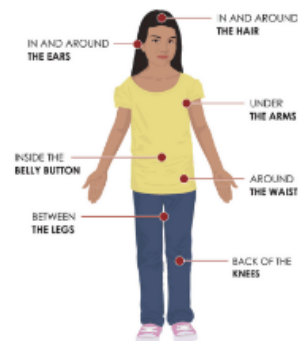
DON'T GET SICK FROM A TICK!

Avoid contact with ticks

Avoid wooded or bushy areas with high grass and leaves. Walk in the center of trails. Use EPA-registered insect repellent. Always follow product instructions.

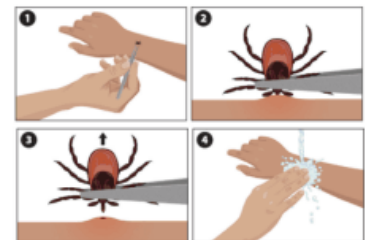


Check your entire body for ticks and shower soon after being outdoors.



Remove attached ticks

properly and as soon as you can. Talk to your doctor if you feel sick in the days and weeks following a tick bite.



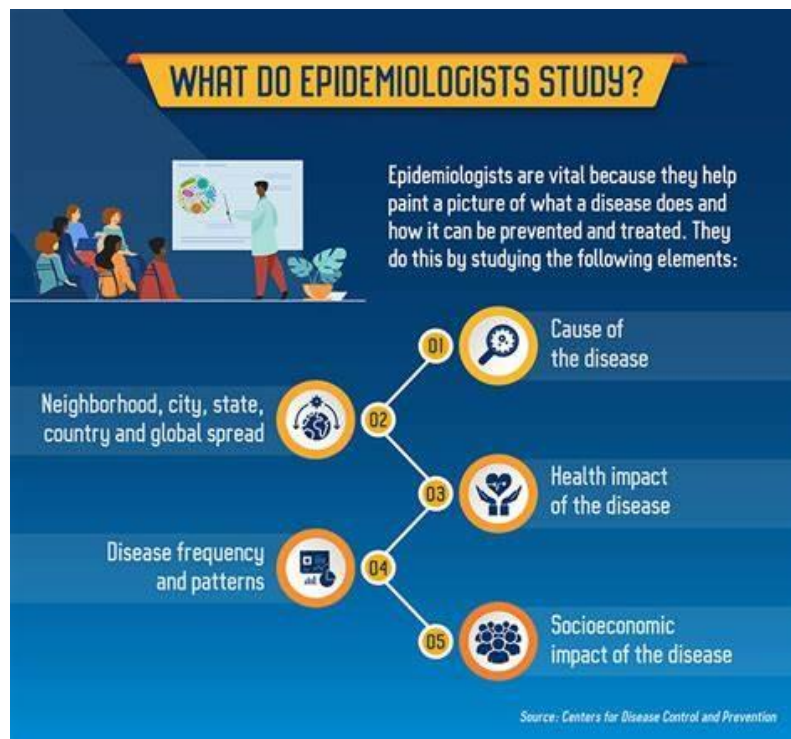
<https://www.nassaucountynv.gov/1652/Health-Department>



NEW
OFFICE

Office of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Planning

The Office of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Planning was established in March 2023. Its mission is to promote the use of data-driven initiatives and programs to properly describe, evaluate, and inform programming, priorities and to improve community health outcomes. This is done using multiple sources of data which are statistically and visually analyzed. Results include informed reporting on trends, outbreaks, and community health assessments.



<https://www.cdc.gov>

Projects in the Works:

- ❖ Wastewater Surveillance Initiative
- ❖ Electronic Syndromic Surveillance Monitoring
- ❖ Community Health Profiles
- ❖ Disease Trend Analyses
- ❖ Dashboards on Respiratory/Fever and Cannabis ED Visits
- ❖ Grant awarded, *Infectious Disease Outbreaks: Enhancing Forecasting and Analytics Capabilities for Local Health Departments*

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**New Resource
Center!**

Office of Health Equity

The mission of the Office of Health Equity is to improve the health and well-being of residents living in underserved and vulnerable communities throughout Nassau County. By collaborating with community and health partners, program initiatives help ensure greater health outcomes for those living in these communities. July 12, 2023, was the opening of the Health Equity Resource Center, a space located in Hempstead, NY which houses resources rooms, community events, as well as supplies for those in the community.

Some Initiatives and Programs:

- ❖ Back-to-school Backpack Events
- ❖ Cancer Resource Room
- ❖ Clothing Pantry
- ❖ Commodity Supplemental Food Program for Seniors
- ❖ Community Baby Shower
- ❖ Community Events
- ❖ Diaper and Formula Bank
- ❖ Food Pantry
- ❖ Health Equity Newsletter
- ❖ Kwanza Celebration
- ❖ Let's Discuss Video Series - Diabetes
- ❖ Maternal Health Resource Room
- ❖ Mental Health Resource Room



Community Baby Shower



Maternal Resource Room



Diaper and Formula Bank



Back-to-School Event Westbury

Division of Communicable Disease Control

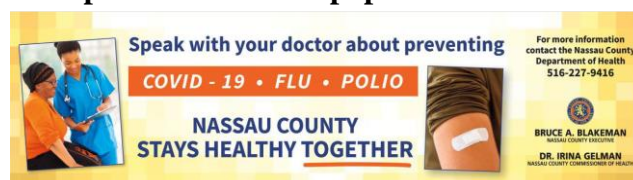
The Division of Communicable Disease Control protects the public from the spread of diseases through surveillance, investigation, intervention, and education. It is comprised of four Bureaus – Tuberculosis Control, STD/HIV Control, and Perinatal Hepatitis B and Immunization, and Disease Control.

2023 Disease Activities:

- ❖ Over 4,500 Communicable Diseases (excluding influenza and Covid 19) reported and confirmed
- ❖ 45 TB cases confirmed and case managed
- ❖ Over 5000 STD cases (including MPOX) confirmed and investigated
- ❖ 107 HIV cases tracked
- ❖ Responded to Pertussis and Cyclospora outbreaks
- ❖ TB Control responded to worksite and school contact investigations
- ❖ Varicella and RSV became reportable in December 2023
- ❖ Triple Threat – RSV, COVID-19, and Influenza – lead to increased numbers and bad respiratory disease season in the fall
- ❖ Worked with school districts who had students that had fraudulent vaccine records from Wild Child Pediatrics
- ❖ Recommended Post-Exposure Prophylaxis for over 420 animal bites

Immunization Efforts:

2023 saw the continuation of an immunization media campaign promoting vaccinations. The campaign specifically targeted the underserved communities in an effort to increase vaccinations. Initially begun in December 2022, the campaign ran the below advertisement on 100 NICE buses throughout Nassau County. The Department works to support school efforts to ensure a vaccine-protected student population.



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Division of Community Outreach

**Up-and-coming
Division!**

2023 saw the soft launch of the new Division of Community Outreach. Its mission is to engage the community about the Department, its programs and public health. The Division of Community Outreach is working to partner with different internal and external stakeholders to provide multiple services for the residents of Nassau County.

Various Outreach Events of 2023:



Breast Cancer Event



Long Island Fair



Hofstra's Poverty Simulation

Division of Environmental Health

The Division of Environmental Health (DEH) protects the community from adverse health effects resulting from environmental pollution, unsanitary conditions or unsafe practices by regulation and enforcement of environmental health programs. DEH is comprised of the following four bureaus: Bureau of Enforcement and Permit Administration, Bureau of Environmental Engineering and Water Supply, Bureau of Food, Recreation, and Community Sanitation, and Bureau of Hazardous Material Storage, Lead, and Vector Borne Diseases.

DEH is responsible for the following:

- ❖ **Regulating the safe and sanitary conditions of public water systems, food service establishments, residential environments, children’s camps, public pools and beaches, tattoo/body art facilities, and temporary residences**



<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3027/Environmental-Health>

- ❖ **Certifying food managers, tattoo and body piercing artists**
- ❖ **Monitoring the abatement of lead hazards, preventing the sale of tobacco products to minors, investigating complaints of rodent and insect infestations, and conducting mosquito and rabies surveillance.**

- ❖ **Reviewing and approving engineering plans for water systems, public pools, residential developments of five lots or more, and commercial development in non-sewered areas**



<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3027/Environmental-Health>

2023 At A Glance:

- ❖ **The online Food Manager’s Training Course was re-instated.**
<https://app.nassaucountynv.gov/health/fmtc/index.php>
- ❖ **A link was added to the NCDOH website to allow the public to view partial facility information on Petroleum Bulk Storage.**
- ❖ **DEH worked with NYS DEC to prepare for the new Petroleum Bulk Storage code.**
- ❖ **Sanitarians surveyed and provided guidance regarding roadway and pipe damage from sinkhole emergencies.**
- ❖ **DEH participated in initial plans with consultants for the International Cricket Council, planned for June 2024 at Eisenhower Park.**
- ❖ **DEH began developing a new Tick Surveillance Program**
- ❖ **Staff assisted Town of North Hempstead with an animal vaccination clinic; 40 dogs and 11 cats were vaccinated.**
- ❖ **DEH was involved in a joint investigation with the Division of Communicable Disease Control and the Office of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Planning in a Cyclospora outbreak**

Animal Bites – New Reporting System:

In 2023, NCDOH, with the help from County IT, revamped its method of animal bite reporting, switching from paper to electronic reporting. Animal bite incidents are to be reported immediately to NCDOH and starting in February, the reports were submitted electronically. This can be done by scanning a QR code or filling out the app on the Department’s website (<https://app.nassaucountynv.gov/health/abr/index.php>) This new reporting system has proven to be very efficient and streamlined.

Division of Maternal Child Health Services

The Division of Maternal Child Health Services is comprised of the following: Office of Children with Special Needs, Women, Infants, and Children's Program (WIC), Hewlett House, Childhood Fatality Review Team, and the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

All About Maternal Child Health Services:

- ❖ Office of Children with Special Needs (OCSN) ensures services to children with developmental delays; Early Intervention (EI) from birth to 3-years-old and Preschool Program for 3–5-years-old. The Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs grant provides education, information and referrals for special needs services to families of children from birth to 21.

- ❖ Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) provides an EBT card for food and formula as well as peer counseling to support breastfeeding women, and nutrition education for eligible pregnant/post-partum women, infants and children.



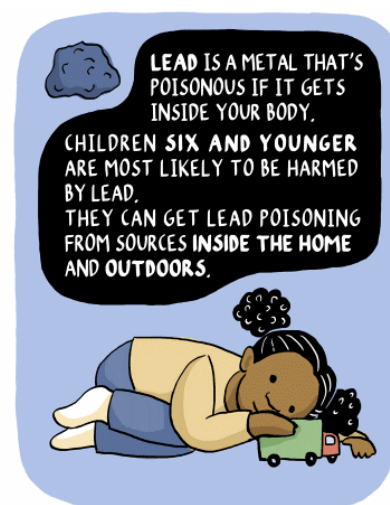
<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3565/WIC?activeLiveTab=widgets>

- ❖ Hewlett House is a community resource center dedicated to the education and support of all cancer patients and their families at every stage of their treatment.



<https://hewlett-house.org/>

- ❖ **Child Fatality Review Team reviews fatalities of residents ages 0-17 years whose death is unexpected/unexplained. NCDOH is one of two County Health Departments certified by the State to conduct these reviews. The Cribs4Kids program is an example of a preventive strategy resulting from these reviews.**
- ❖ **The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides medical case management for children with elevated blood-lead levels. It works in close partnership with Environmental Health to identify and abate hazards.**



<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3931/Lead-Poisoning-Prevention>

2023 Happenings:

- ❖ **In July, the EI Program celebrated their 30th anniversary.**
- ❖ **EI and Preschool Programs implemented and trained staff on Axiom, a new electronic records system. The EI and Preschool Programs are now completely paperless.**
- ❖ **WIC was awarded the next 5-year contract by the State Health Department and assigned a caseload of 5,000.**
- ❖ **WIC continues to partner with NUMC for the incorporation of peer breastfeeding counselors into the program.**
- ❖ **The Lead Program received 38,003 lead tests for 2023. There were 355 tests identifying elevated lead levels of ≥ 5.0 mcg/dL 34% of these tests with levels of >10.0 mcg/dL.**
- ❖ **Child Fatality Review Team and Cribs for Kids was approved for the next 5-year grant cycle.**

Division of Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

Since 2002, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement has provided assistance to public health departments across the nation. This helps health departments build and strengthen their abilities to effectively respond to a range of public health threats, including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events. Preparedness activities funded by the PHEP cooperative agreement specifically target the development of emergency-ready public health departments that are flexible and adaptable.

What Does PHEP do?

- ❖ Coordinates the response to any emergency or disaster with a public health impact on the residents of Nassau County
- ❖ Manages approximately 1,651 volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members and provides about 25 trainings per year to DOH staff and MRC volunteers
- ❖ Oversees the NCDOH Logistics Team, which helps to maintain equipment and supplies, pack, transport, set up, and demobilize; as well as staff events and emergency responses
- ❖ Maintains more than 400 pieces of equipment, and a large supply of consumables in addition to medical supplies
- ❖ Staffs the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 at the Nassau County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) that coordinates with healthcare facilities and providers during an emergency

2023 Highlights:

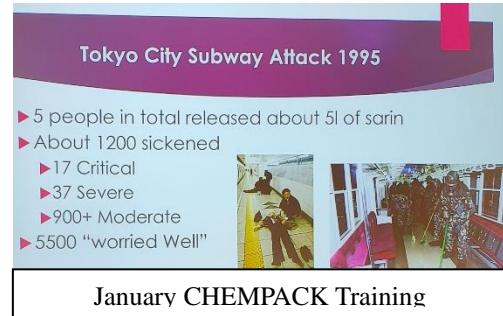
- ❖ In March, PHEP conducted a Point of Dispensing (POD) Logistics exercise to test our ability to set up multiple, simultaneous POD sites.



March 2023 Schlep Exercise

❖ **Managed the COVID-19 Homebound Vaccination Program with three partners – resulting in 98 vaccinations administered to 76 Nassau County residents.**

❖ **Facilitated a CHEMPACK training, with colleagues from Nassau University Medical Center and the Nassau County Police Department Homeland Security for Nassau County Emergency Medical Services personnel. CHEMPACKs are containers of nerve agent antidotes placed in secure locations throughout the County.**



❖ **Provided medical support at the Long Island Marathon, the Nassau County Games for the Physically Challenged, and the Long Island Fair. NCDOH medical and logistics staff work alongside our MRC volunteers at all events.**



Division of Public Health Laboratories

- ❖ **NCDOH Public Health Laboratory is a NYS ELAP certified laboratory conducting chemistry/microbiology/quality assurance-quality control activities.**
- ❖ **The lab monitors the quality of beach and potable drinking water and the efficacy of wastewater treatment (Ex: Lead in drinking water)**
- ❖ **The lab performs chemical agent analyses (volatile and semi-volatile) in water, air, soil, including lead dust samples.**
- ❖ **The lab identifies mosquito species for West Nile and EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) Virus testing.**



<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/5262/Zoonotic-Diseases>

Looking Ahead to 2024

The Nassau County Health Department looks to have a bright future. Many new endeavors and exciting happenings are on the horizon for NCDOH in 2024. A few are listed below.

- ❖ Continued work towards Reaccreditation
- ❖ Efforts to expand DOH staffing
- ❖ Further development of the Health Equity Resource Center and Health Equity Events for the Community
- ❖ Implementation of the new Tick Surveillance Program
- ❖ Integration of Division of Community Outreach into all programs
- ❖ Wastewater Surveillance Program