



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# Greene County Public Health Department

## Annual Report 2023



**Submitted: April 1, 2024**

**Prepared by: Laura Churchill, DNP, FNP-BC  
Director of Public Health  
& Public Health Staff**

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Mission / Vision / Values .....	3
2022 Departmental Goals .....	5
Organizational Chart .....	7
Fiscal .....	8
Quality Assurance/Compliance .....	9
<b>Communicable Disease Control</b>	
Diagnostic and Treatment Center .....	10
Lead Poisoning & Prevention .....	10
Communicable Disease .....	10
COVID-19 .....	12
Project Needle Smart – “Kiosk Program” .....	13
<b>Community Health Assessment / Chronic Disease Prevention</b>	
Community Health Education .....	14
Community Health Needs Assessment / Community Health Improvement Plan ..	14
Social Media Outreach .....	15
Harm Reduction .....	16
<b>Emergency Preparedness and Response</b>	
Public Health Emergency Preparedness .....	18
<b>Environmental Health</b>	
Oneonta District Office .....	19
<b>Family Health</b>	
Early Intervention .....	20
Child Find .....	20
Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs .....	20
Preschool Special Education Program .....	22
Licensed Home Care Service Agency/Maternal Child Health .....	24

\*For Family Planning, please see separate report.

**Introduction:** 2023 was a year of transition as the department said goodbye in February to our previous and well-loved Director Kim Kaplan, and welcomed Laura Churchill, the Deputy Director, as Director. The year had its challenges with a small fire which disrupted business but helped us realize what emergency preparedness meant; to watching the COVID-19 pandemic officially declared over by the CDC and NYSDOH in May 2023. The department is pleased to report on the work of this past year and set goals for 2024 as we look ahead.

**MISSION**

*Serving the community to prevent disease, promote and protect health, and provide education supporting healthy lifestyles.*

**VISION**

*Greene County Public Health Department will be a trusted partner in education, preparedness, surveillance, testing, and resources supporting the health of the community.*

**VALUES**

- **Dedication** to excellence.
- **Professionalism** in everything we do.
- **Prepared** to respond to health emergencies.
- **Teamwork** to ensure optimal resources.
- **Compassion** to all those served.
- **Collaboration** with local agencies to promote community health.

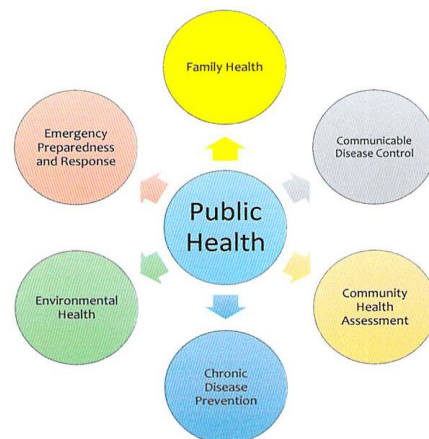
**TEN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**



1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

**SIX CORE SERVICES OF PUBLIC HEALTH:**

- Communicable Disease Control
- Community Health Assessment
- Chronic Disease Prevention
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Environmental Health
- Family Health



## Local Health Departments:

### Are Prepared

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response is a core public health service
- Emergency Response plans include pandemic planning
- Plans are regularly drilled or activated to respond to local emergencies and outbreaks, allowing for lessons learned and plan improvements

### Are Communicable Disease Experts

- Activities routinely conducted:
  - Epidemiological investigations
  - Contact tracing
  - Monitoring of suspected cases
  - Mass clinics
  - Isolation and Quarantine

### Are Experienced

- Have responded to emerging disease threats over the last few decades and learn and improve the response each time, leveraging staff experience, technology and added expertise

### Build Strong Partnerships

- Working hand-in-hand with NYSDOH and CDC to protect the public's health
- Build and maintain strong community partnerships with local hospitals, clinicians, colleges, school districts, businesses, community-based organizations, and individual volunteers
  - All partners are then ready and able to work together in a public health emergency

### Are Responding Every Day

- A strong public health response is our best protection against emerging infections, such as COVID-19
- Making sure that the public health infrastructure is well-funded for everyday work assures that local public health experts act quickly and effectively to mitigate the risks posed by new disease threats.

## New York State has strong Public Health Laws

Public Health Law grants authority to local health officials to respond to disease threats. While other health care sectors play a role, New York's local health departments are the only on-the-ground entities legally responsible for the control of communicable diseases. Local health officials are mindful of their legal authorities and obligations and work closely with their County Attorneys and the NYSDOH to assure the balance of protecting the public while being mindful of individual rights.

## Review of 2023 Public Health Department GOALS:

### 1. Preparation for the next possible pandemic utilizing novel strategies:

#### ✓ **Wastewater surveillance**

*In 2023 we received bi-weekly reports of COVID in wastewater from three Greene County wastewater treatment plants that included the detectible levels, the trends, the ability to project population levels of infection, and the genetic sequence of the strain. We monitored this information internally and used it to inform outreach via social media, public presentations, and to promote vaccine campaigns. Future applications for wastewater monitoring include opioid use, polio, and other emerging pathogens. The limitations of this technology are that it only captures the communities where public wastewater systems are located and the population of people in the sample can include people who reside in other counties but work or travel in Greene County but remains a useful tool in preparing for any future pandemics*

#### ✓ **Electronic Syndromic Surveillance**

*Greene County has no emergency room or hospital. Counties with hospitals and emergency rooms receive reports that can be used to look for trends in illness patterns as sick people seek care. In Greene County, we can research this using a highly confidential electronic syndromic surveillance to see where Greene County residents seek emergency room care and why. Using this technology a public health fellow monitored hospitalization rates from COVID and collated them into a public and staff presentation. This led to an advertising and outreach campaign that encouraged at risk residents with hypertension and diabetes to get COVID booster shots since having these other conditions was shown to increase risk of illness and death. It is important to note that while a majority of residents seek care at Columbia Memorial Health, our residents seek care at over 6 neighboring county emergency rooms.*

### 2. Return staffing to pre-pandemic levels with all branches fully staffed and operational.

*In 2023 seven new staff were hired to work in Public Health and Family Planning, and 7 total staff left employment with 2 new staff retained by years end. We were pleased that by the end of 2023, we had three new hires that have started in Q1 2024. While a few vacancies remain, we are hopeful that with both the UPSEU and CSEA Union contracts settled with higher wages, we can attract and retain new staff. Strategies for staff retention included all public health staff meetings, restarting a workforce development committee to manage employee challenges and concerns, and celebrating together for holidays and milestones. Public Health is a National Health Service Corps. loan repayment site, where qualified candidates can work and have their student loans forgiven. In 2023 this designation was recertified giving us the opportunity to find qualified candidates for our health care vacancies.*

### 3. Improve communications between the Public Health Department and the community through targeted outreach to disseminate education, awareness, and prevention strategies.

*In 2023 we held provided several outreach and education opportunities to the community and to wider audiences including at New York State conferences highlighting both our work and the concerns for the county's health:*

#### Tick-Borne Illness:

1. A [presentation](#) on tick-borne illness in Greene County was held at the Coxsackie High School with guest speaker and expert epidemiologist Jennifer White from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Ms. White discussed trends and rates of tick-borne illness, educated us on strategies to reduce transmission, and called attention to the importance of being treated promptly and correctly for each of the tick-borne diseases.
2. After the tick surveillance from the Greene County parks showed evidence of the Powassan virus among the samples in the Greenville Town Park, the Greenville school administration and parents were notified to increase surveillance and increase prevention measures to avoid this rare but serious tick-borne illness.

#### COVID-19

*A public health fellow examined two years of over 12,000 cases of COVID infections in Greene County looking at age, hospitalizations, other health diagnosis, and deaths, and created a presentation. This data demonstrated by graphs the rates, risks, and trends, as well as the risk factors associated with death. This work was shared with all internal staff and was used to create an advertising campaign to promote COVID vaccination, especially for those at increased risk. This presentation was also shared with Coxsackie Rotary club, and our public health fellow was selected to present her findings at via a poster presentation at the New York State Public Health Corps Fellows conference in Albany NY.*

Public Health created three targeted vaccine videos to encourage vaccination:

<https://www.greene government.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/GCPH-COVID-High-Blood-Pressure.mp4>

<https://www.greene government.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/GCPH-COVID-Diabetes.mp4>

<https://www.greene government.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/GCPH-COVID-FLU.mp4>

#### Harm Reduction

Several presentations on overdose prevention strategies and harm reduction work were done by the Public Health Director at the following:

The New York State Public Health Conference in Tarrytown NY, the New York State Harm Reduction Conference in Syracuse NY and The National Harm Reduction conference which was given online.

#### 4. **Data Management improvements in public health utilizing the expertise and collaboration of the CDC Foundation epidemiologist.**

Each county in NY received funding from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) through the NYSDOH to improve the infrastructure and staffing after the effects of COVID-19 decimated the staff and leadership at many county health departments. Greene County used this funding to hire a fulltime epidemiologist who has been instrumental in helping staff interpret data, synthesize it into presentable work and help us write presentations and grants. Her skills were used to update and maintain the [Opioid Data Dashboard](#), complete our 2023 Overdose to action grant work, and secure the funding for the Bureau of Justice Administration Funding.

#### 5. **Participation in an updated Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Greene and Columbia Counties, as well as the regional assessment.**

All county health departments in New York State are tasked to improve the population health of the communities they serve by setting goals every 3 years. Greene County works collaboratively with Columbia County and Columbia Memorial Hospital to achieve these goals by meeting monthly, strategizing and elevating each other's work to promote greater change and monitoring the outcomes. The health improvement goals for this current 2022-2024 cycle are:

##### **Chronic Disease Prevention**

Focus Areas: Healthy Eating and Food Security, and Physical Activity.

Disparity Area: Adults with disabilities.

##### **Priority Area: Promoting Well-Being and Preventing Substance Use Disorders**

Focus Areas: Promote Well-being, and Prevent Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

##### **Priority Area: Vaccine Preventable Diseases**

Focus Areas: Increasing access to COVID-19 immunizations

Disparity: Rural communities

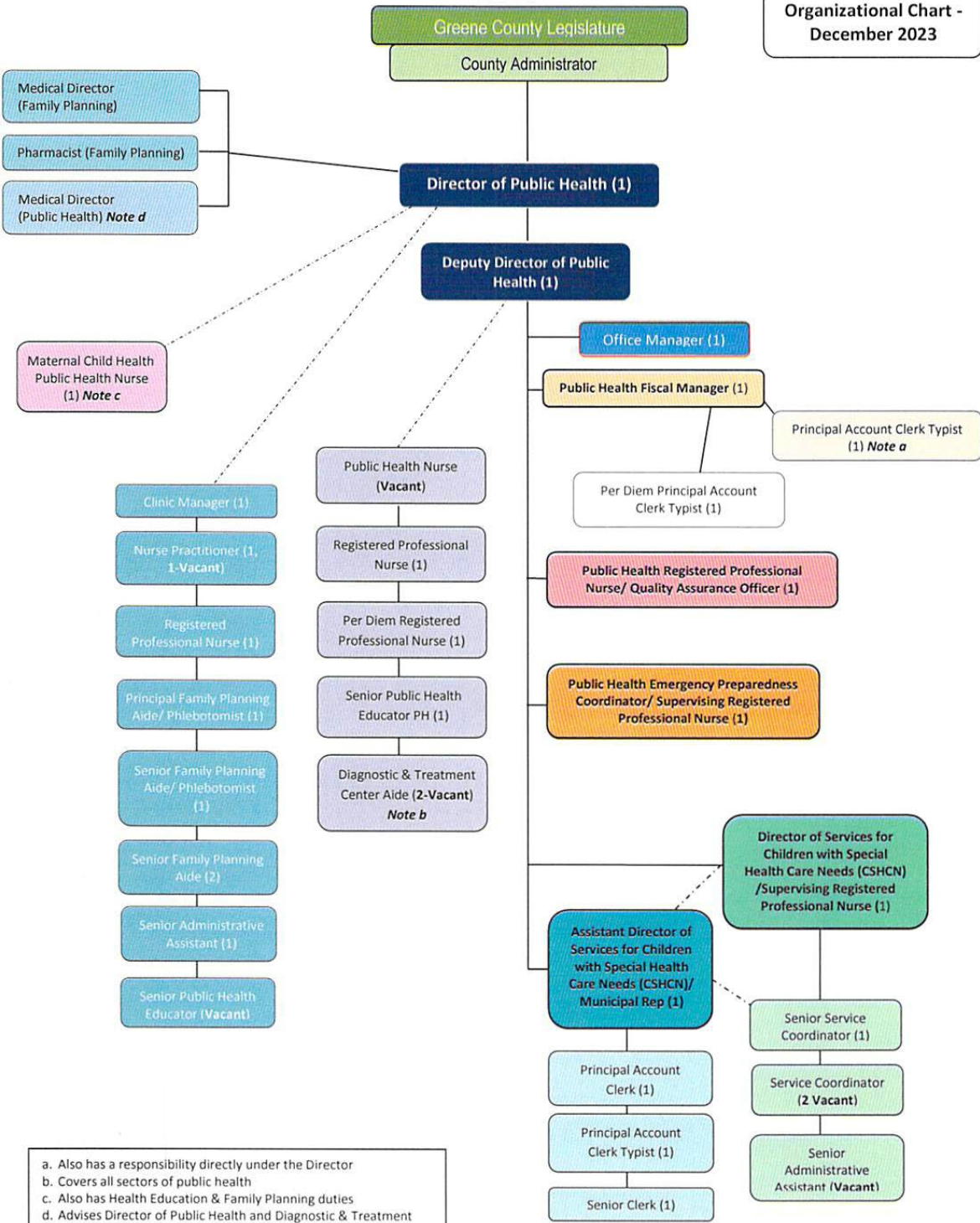
Click on the following link to see Greene Counties dashboard status and current indicators:

[https://apps.health.ny.gov/public/tabvis/PHIG\\_Public/pa/reports/#county](https://apps.health.ny.gov/public/tabvis/PHIG_Public/pa/reports/#county)

#### **Our goals for 2024:**

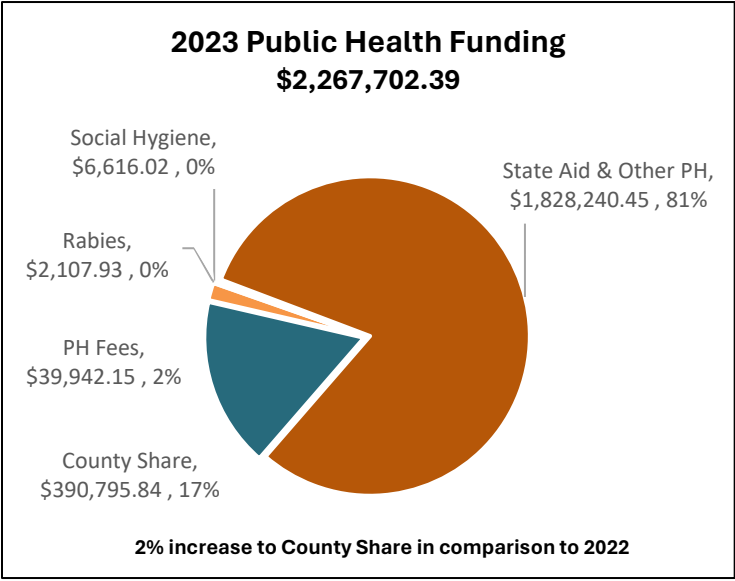
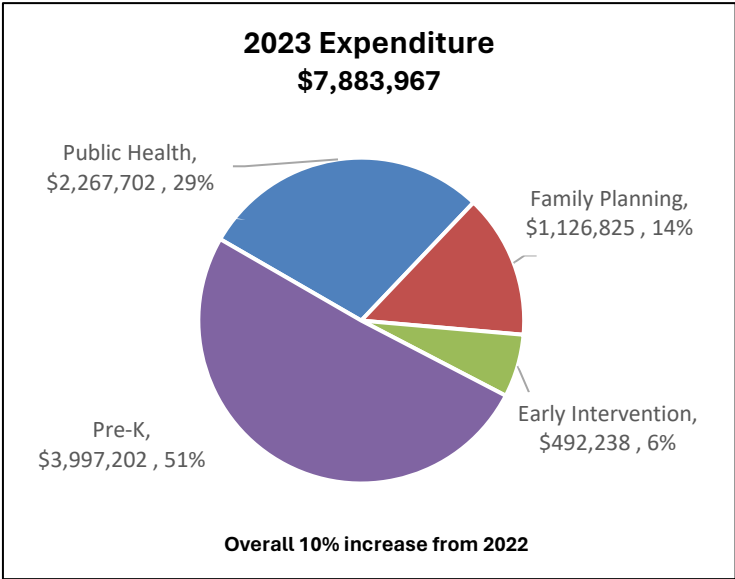
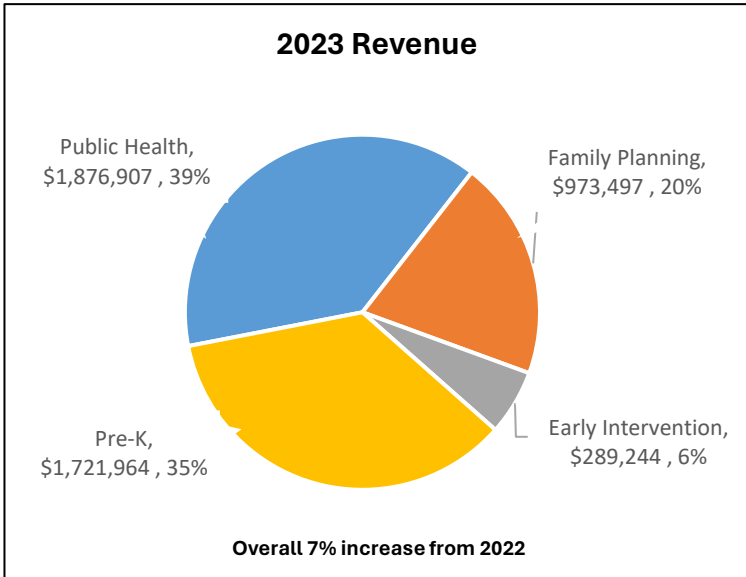
- Address the opioid epidemic with new tools and strategies by partnering with public safety, EMS, Albany Medical Center, and other county partners to form an overdose review team that will examine the root causes of overdose deaths and recommend strategies to improve lives.
- Use the newly acquired Mobile Clinic Van to provide education, outreach, and mobile clinic services to those who lack access.
- Promote Project Safe Streets, an incentive from the NYSDOH to leverage public health to look for ways communities can improve health activities such as walking and cycling to prevent chronic disease and promote health.
- Increase the capacity for data collection and analyzing data by training a new public health fellow in epidemiology under the mentorship of a public health epidemiologist.
- Explore Public Health accreditation with strategic planning utilizing a public health fellow under the mentorship of a PH supervisor.

**Organizational Chart -  
December 2023**



a. Also has a responsibility directly under the Director  
 b. Covers all sectors of public health  
 c. Also has Health Education & Family Planning duties  
 d. Advises Director of Public Health and Diagnostic & Treatment Center

**Fiscal:**



- ### 2023 Accomplishments:
- ELC grants –
    - Provided funding to support Greene County Schools, Daycares, Summer Camps, and the Community.
      - Distributed air purifiers, surgical gloves, masks, and test kits.
      - Approved and purchased a four-wheel drive Vehicle for travel to homebound patients.
      - After much hard work and correspondence with Grants Administration received approval to purchase a mobile clinic van. This will allow for greater exposure for Public Health in the community.
  - ELC Grant Desk Audit –
    - Required by Health Research Institute (contracted partner with the NYSDOH) to determine if disbursement of funds was made in accordance with cost principles outlined in 2CFR, Part 200. HRI reviewed 93.71% (\$787,999.28) of the total amount claimed (\$840,851.33) during the requested audit period. Their findings were that the documentation submitted fully supported the claimed expenses. Their one recommendation was that a subrecipient monitoring policy and procedure be established.



## Quality Assurance

Public Health Quality Assurance (QA) is designed to improve patient care and service by improving quality processes and maintaining program integrity. The QA Officer evaluates systems of care, identifies problems, and works collaboratively to develop solutions, with a focus on New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), federal and programmatic regulatory requirements.

### Quality Assurance Duties:

#### Policies

- Continued new policy development when need identified, or new State or Federal mandates
- Annual review of previously developed policies and existing practices, making recommendations for combining and revision when necessary for 3 areas within Public Health: Family Planning, Diagnostic & Treatment Center (D&TC), and the Licensed Home Care Service Agency (LHCSA)
- Easy access for all staff: all policies are located on the corresponding SharePoint for Public Health and Family Planning

### 2023 Accomplishments:

- ✓ Annual record reviews of D&TC, LHCSA & Family Planning, performed by a NYS Article 28 Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) accredited reviewer, determined that staff documentation in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) is complete and they are performing well.
- ✓ Medical Directors chart review / audit completed.
- ✓ Automating quarterly FP chart audits that target specific areas.
- ✓ Quarterly Peer review meetings held to review, maintain, and improve quality performance.
- ✓ Successful implementation of AccuShelf pharmacy inventory system to improve inventory accuracy, and tracking/reporting of 340B medications.



### QA Goals for 2024:

- Update Public Health's Strategic Plan and Mission.
- Replace paper policy manuals with electronic versions to be placed on ShareDrives.
- Explore implementation of a dictation system for EMR to improve speed and accuracy of provider charting.
- Continue to automate our quality assurance processes.
- Maintain relationships/contracts with colleges to accept and help educate/train students/Fellows (RN, NP, Pharmacy, MPH).
- Implement electronic surveys for the Diagnostic & Treatment Center.
- Provide excellent, competent care and services to the clients of Public Health and Family Planning.

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL

## Diagnostic & Treatment Center (DTC):

The Diagnostic and Treatment Center handles 3 major programs: The Lead Poisoning and Prevention Program, Adult and Childhood Immunization Program and Communicable Disease. These programs are very time intensive with required reporting to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH).

### Lead Poisoning & Prevention

Blood Lead Levels (BLL) processed through Lead Web	659
Reminder letters sent to parents to contact health care provider to test child for lead	550
Children with BLL over 5 µg/dl, requiring case management by Public Health Nurses and Environmental Staff	7
Children who met criteria for discharge	27

### Immunization



- Provided free of charge by the NYSDOH or on a sliding fee:
  - Vaccines for Children (all childhood vaccines)
  - Vaccines for Adults (common adult vaccines)
- Criteria to receive free vaccines:
  - Uninsured
  - Under insured
  - Insured with Medicaid Managed Care

#### Adult Immunizations Offered

Hepatitis B
Influenza
MMR
Pneumococcal
Shingles
Tdap
TwinRix (combined Hepatitis A & B)

#### Communicable Disease (C/D):

- Over 75 state reportable diseases in NYS requiring Local Health Departments (LHD) to investigate and provide supporting documentation from providers to the NYSDOH
- 1570 positive state reportable lab results were processed

Children seen at immunization clinics	160
Childhood Immunizations given	291
	
Adults seen for immunizations and PPDs (on-site and off-site)	275
Adult Immunizations given	294
	

#### School Vaccinations:

- This year, Public Health worked with each school district to assist in getting students up to date with vaccinations.
- All Superintendents agreed to have Public Health vaccinate in school with parents' permission completed prior.
- Vaccinating RN's saw students at:
  - Catskill Elementary
  - Catskill High School
  - Coxsackie Elementary
  - Cairo Elementary
  - Cairo-Durham High School, and
  - Hunter-Tannersville Elementary.



### Rabies

Rabies exposure investigations	208
Human rabies post-exposure treatment given	14
Rabies vaccination clinics for animals	4
Animals vaccinated	215

### Lyme/Tick-borne Diseases

Positive Lyme reports investigated (20%)	450
Anaplasmosis	54
Babesia	31
Powassan	2



## 2023 Highlights

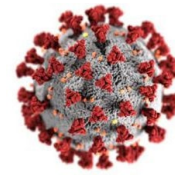
- *New Director of Public Health with new vision post Covid pandemic.*
- *Hired an Epidemiologist to assist with projects and any outbreaks.*
- *Hired a per-diem RN.*
- *Mobile clinic van purchased with COVID grant funds to expand services and outreach in the county arrived in December 2023.*
- *Upgraded Immunization equipment with use of Covid grant funds.*
- *Promotion of current staff and making use of their strengths.*
- *In-person outreach to providers for Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers (IQIP) continued.*
  - *Meeting and discussing strategies to improve vaccination rates their practices.*
- *Case managing patients admitted to our services acquire health insurance, rides to doctor appointments and link them to other resources available to them.*
- *Constant communication with school RNs on interpreting vaccine records, titers drawn and validity of medical exemptions*
- *Instituting vaccines in schools. This allowed students to remain in school and avoid exclusion because they are not up to date on required vaccines.*
- *Fielding calls from the public and offering guidance with environmental issues, working with local ACO regarding animal bites, and handling rabies exposure.*
- *Compiling health news and statistics on what is currently trending in our county for our annual newsletter to providers*

### 2023 Challenges

- Short staffing continued
- Recruiting nursing and paraprofessionals due to low salaries
- Meeting grant deliverables with no staff
- Fire within the department in May 2023 disrupting workflow

### 2024 Goals

- Hiring DTC aide
- Increased Community Outreach
- Negotiate MVP contract
- Contract rabies post exposure treatment out to EmUrgent Care
- Continue to grow our community partnerships post Covid
- Pilot program for new moms regarding lead education/swabs
- Inspecting the home prior to children getting lead poisoning
- Partner with Greene County Paramedics to provide in-home services where permitted by statute



# COVID-19

Governor Hochul announced in May 2023 that the NYSDOH Emergency has been lifted for the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths have been continually declining. Local Health Departments (LHD) are no longer required to issue isolation orders, and the CDC released guidance on those who test positive which the LHD would disseminate to residents.

At the end of the emergency, the NYS Public Health Corps fellows working with us on COVID were reassigned:

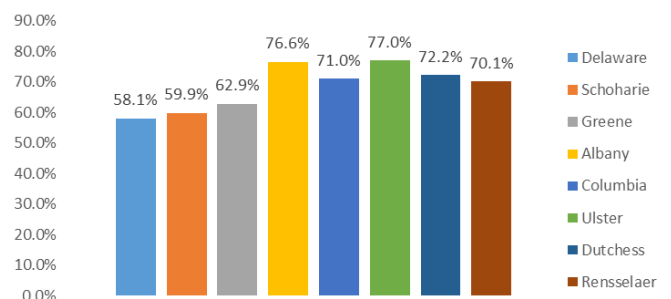
- One assisting the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to develop a more robust Medical Reserve Corp, and
- One working with the Greene County COVID data generated during the pandemic. The information below was presented at the NYS Public Health Corps Summit in December 2023.



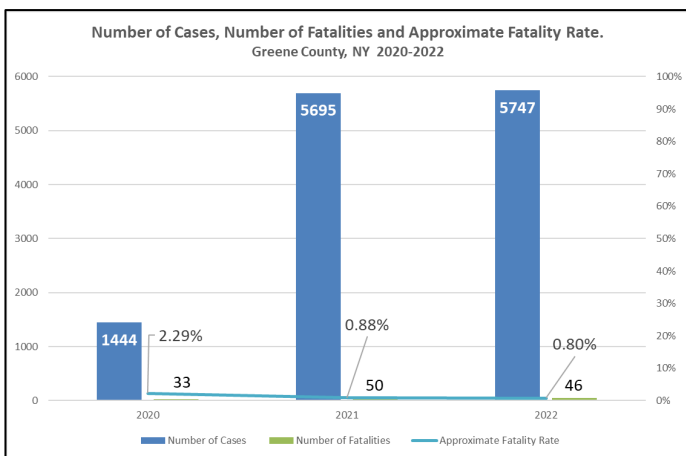
**COVID Cases, Fatalities and Vaccination Rates by Region  
Greene County, NY 2020-2022**

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
% Cases	31%	18%	9%	31%	6%	6%
Case Rank	1	2	5	3	6	4
%Fatalities	53%	16%	5%	18%	5%	3%
Fatality Rank	1	2	4	3	5	6
% Vaccinated	62%	61%	75%	62%	64%	53%
Vaccination Rank	3	5	1	4	2	6

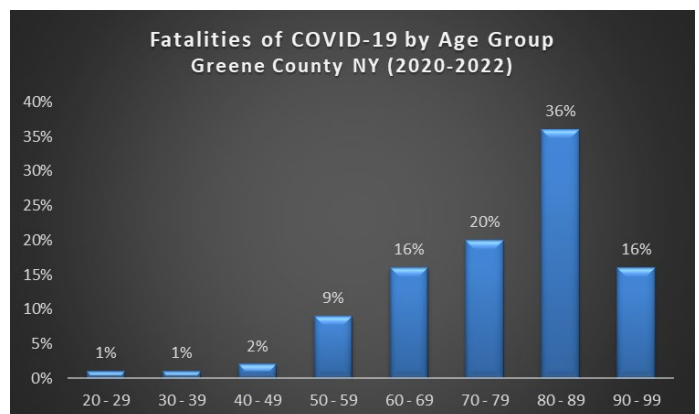
**Vaccination Percentage of COVID-19  
Greene County NY August 31, 2023**



**Number of Cases, Number of Fatalities and Approximate Fatality Rate.  
Greene County, NY 2020-2022**



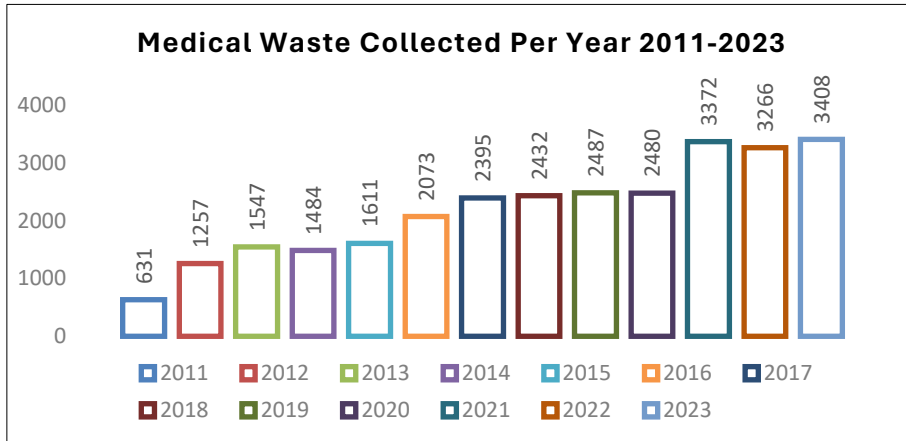
**Fatalities of COVID-19 by Age Group  
Greene County NY (2020-2022)**



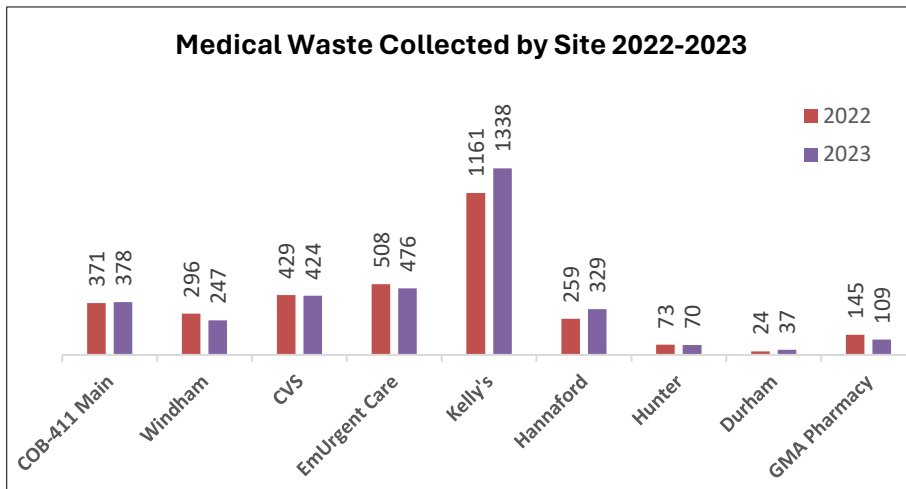
# Project Needle Smart “Kiosk Program”

(Expanded Syringe Access Program [ESAP] sponsored by NYSDOH AIDS Institute)

- A county collaboration between Public Health, Highway and Solid Waste
- Provides a safe way of disposing medical sharps without causing injury to others
- Amounts collected per location and outreach performed are reported quarterly to the NYSDOH AIDS Institute



- The Kiosk Program has collected **25,035 pounds** of residential medical sharps since mid-2011



### 2023 Statistics:

- **4.2% increase** from 2022 (3408 vs. 3266 lbs.)
- 294 containers collected

### 2023 Challenges:

- Delay in pickups by Stericycle caused lagged quarterly reporting to NYSDOH

## KIOSK LOCATIONS

- Greene County Office Building** (2011)  
411 Main St Rear (Water Street Side), Catskill
- Windham Pharmacy** (2011)  
68 Route 296, Windham
- CVS Pharmacy** (2011)  
Routes 23 & 32, Cairo
- EmUrgent Care Coxsackie** (2011)  
11835 Route 9W, Coxsackie
- Kelly's Pharmacy** (2012)  
4852 Route 81, Greenville (inside)
- Hannaford Supermarket & Pharmacy** (2014)  
223 Main Street, Cairo
- Hunter Ambulance** (2015)  
5740 Route 23A, Tannersville
- Durham Town Hall** (2016)  
7309 Route 81, East Durham
- Greene Medical Arts Pharmacy** (2022)  
159 Jefferson Heights, Suite D102, Catskill



# COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT / CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

## Community Health Education

In 2023, health education opportunities increased, due to more relaxed COVID-19 restrictions in schools and community locations. Community events were better attended than in the few previous years as individuals became more comfortable at public events. Education in schools across the county increased, covering topics of puberty, hygiene, healthy relationship, and more.

The total number of individuals reached through Community Health Education in 2023 was approximately 4,915 vs. 600 in 2022; this was due to Health Educator’s Maternity leave.

Meetings/Task Force Involvement:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Columbia Greene Addiction Coalition</li><li>• Columbia Greene Addiction Coalition – Prevention Workgroup</li><li>• Medical Professional Advisory Committee (MPAC)</li><li>• Columbia Greene Planning Partners</li><li>• Out of the Darkness Committee</li><li>• Suicide Prevention Committee</li><li>• Healthy People Partnership</li></ul>

### 2023 Goal Review:

- **Increase access to education and information regarding Lyme disease, especially in more rural communities in Greene County.**  
*Educator increased online educator regarding Lyme disease. NYSDOH provided seminar for community.*
- **Increase access to education, prevention, and cessation of tobacco products for all Greene County residents.**  
*This goal was not reached in 2023.*
- **Increase public awareness and usage of the Opioid Dashboard**  
*Public knowledge and use of the opioid dashboard has increased this year*

### 2024 Goals:

- Increase the number of community members utilizing the Harm Reduction Order Form
- Participate in all county-wide outreach days to increase public knowledge of the department

## Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

In 2023, NYSDOH approved the Community Health Improvement Plan as submitted by the Healthy People Partnership. The DOH is currently not requiring counties to submit yearly updates regarding the process of the CHIP, although this may change in the future.

CHNA/CHIP PARTNERS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greene County Public Health Department</li><li>• Columbia County Department of Health</li><li>• Columbia Memorial Health</li></ul>

Columbia-Greene Healthy People Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meets quarterly to assess and track the progress of the community work plans to be reported to NYSDOH.</li></ul>

In late 2023, NYSDOH launched the Year 12 Performance Incentive to LHDs: Active Communities project to improve the health of a community in the county by examining the current infrastructure for pedestrian and bike safety. Out of 2 communities suggested by the DOH, Durham was chosen, and will be the subject of our assessment and implementation goals in 2024.

**Review of 2023 Goals:**

- **Engage Healthy People Partnership Meeting to deliver a multi-agency update for all providers in Greene and Columbia County.**  
*This goal was completed in 2023.*
- **Provide data for/update the revised CHIP plan for the 2023 year.**  
*This requirement was dropped by NYSDOH in 2023.*

**Priority Area: Chronic Disease Prevention**  
Focus Areas: Healthy Eating and Food Security, and Physical Activity.  
Disparity Area: Adults with disabilities.

**Priority Area: Promoting Well-Being and Preventing Substance Use Disorders**  
Focus Areas: Promote Well-being, and Prevent Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

**Priority Area: Vaccine Preventable Diseases**  
Focus Areas: Increasing access to COVID-19 immunizations

**NYS Prevention Agenda**

Identifies New York’s most urgent health concerns and acts as a guide for hospitals and LHDs and are worked on in conjunction with community agencies.

**Goals:**

- Prevent Chronic Disease;
- Promote a Healthy and Safe Environment;
- Promote Healthy Women, Infants and Children;
- Promote Mental Health and Prevent Substance Abuse; and
- Prevent HIV, Sexually-Transmitted Diseases, Vaccine Preventable Diseases, and Healthcare-Associated Infections.

**Goals for 2024:**

- Continue meeting with Planning Partners to update progress of CHIP outcomes
- Submit Action Plan for the Year 12 NYSDOH Performance Incentive

**Social Media Topics:**

A broad variety of health information was provided in 2023, such as:

- Lead poisoning
- Tick-borne illnesses
- Opioid addiction
- Rabies education
- Healthy eating and exercise
- Heart health
- Stress
- Smoking cessation
- Mental Health – 988 Line
- Public Health Events (Upcoming clinics)

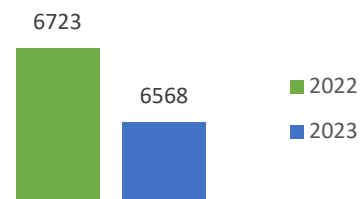
**Goals for 2023:**

- **Increase the variety of social media postings including all health-related topics.**  
*This goal was met in 2023.*

**Goals for 2024:**

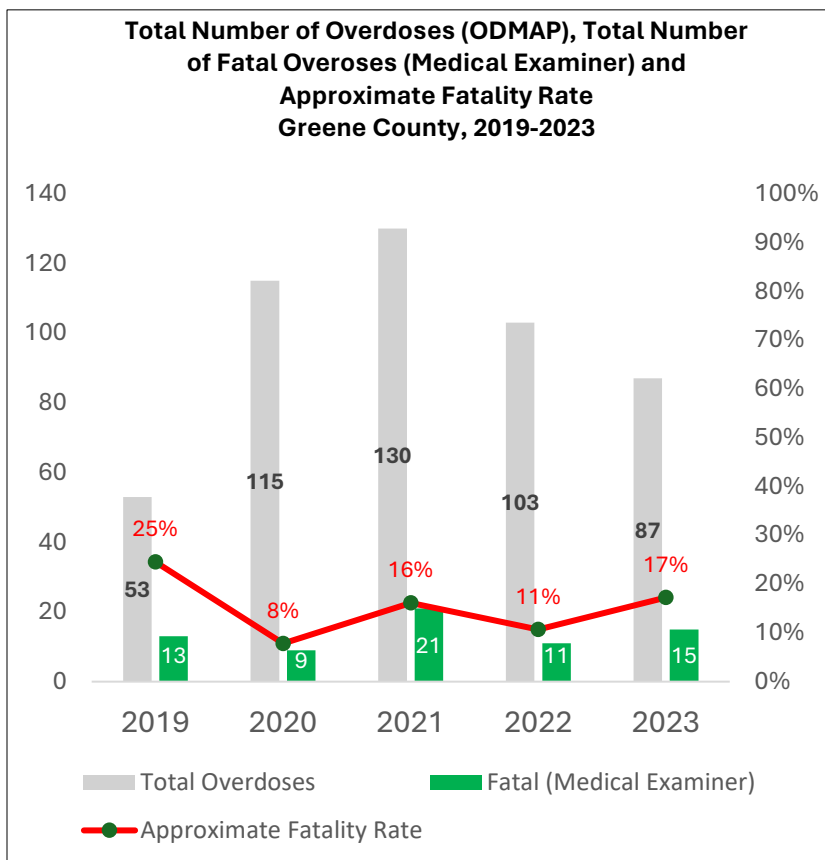
- Increase the frequency of posting Public Health Education on Social Media.

**Facebook Followers 2022-2023**



## Harm Reduction

Overdose deaths peaked in Greene County in 2021. That year, the rate of opioid involved overdose deaths was double the upstate New York average (46.3/100,000 vs. 23.5/100,000) and Greene County ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> of 57 upstate New York counties for overdose deaths involving opioids and it ranked 1<sup>st</sup> for deaths involving heroin. Between 2021 and 2023 the volume of death has decreased by 33% (21 deaths in 2021 vs 15 deaths in 2023). However, the approximate fatality rate for overdose increased from 16% to 17%. As well, subcounty disparities in death rates persist; fatality rates are lowest in the Catskill region (11%) and highest in the Mountain Top region (35%).



In 2023, Greene County Public Health applied for and was awarded a 3-year federal grant in the amount of \$996,144 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The aim of the grant-funded project is to strengthen collaboration between public health and public safety partners to decrease county-wide overdose rates; decrease subcounty disparities in overdose death rates; and identify and address substance use related disparities among at-risk and marginalized populations.

## 2023 Milestones

- Continued routine monitoring and surveillance of overdose trends using first responder ODMAP data and coroner/medical examiner data.
- Maintained an online, public facing [Opioid Data Dashboard](#) which includes information on overdose volume and fatality rates at the county and sub-county level, as well as demographics of overdose decedents and substances involved in deaths.
- Maintained the Overdose Spike Response Plan which details the role of Public Health in identifying and alerting stakeholders of potential overdose spikes. In 2022 there were two overdose spikes in July. Real time alerts were created and shared with over 20 partner agencies.
- Enrolled 37 new patients into the Greene County Family Planning MAT program for buprenorphine treatment and served 62 existing patients.
- Completed an implementation evaluation of the GCPH Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) program and analyzed factors associated with patient retention.
- Developed application to the NYSDOH to operate a Second Tier Syringe Distribution Program that will be embedded within the MAT program.
- Hosted 2 Community Listening Sessions where community members with lived experience with substance use attended and provided feedback on department priorities and overdose prevention strategies.
- Trained community members in overdose prevention and overdose reversal strategies and distributed harm reduction tools, including naloxone kits and fentanyl test strips, through the MAT Program and through community outreach events.
- Developed outreach materials relating to xylazine and began offering xylazine test strips alongside naloxone and fentanyl test strips.
  - # Narcan kits –
  - # Fentanyl/Xylazine kits -
- Developed a [website](#) and online ordering form for shipping harm reduction supplies to Greene County residents.

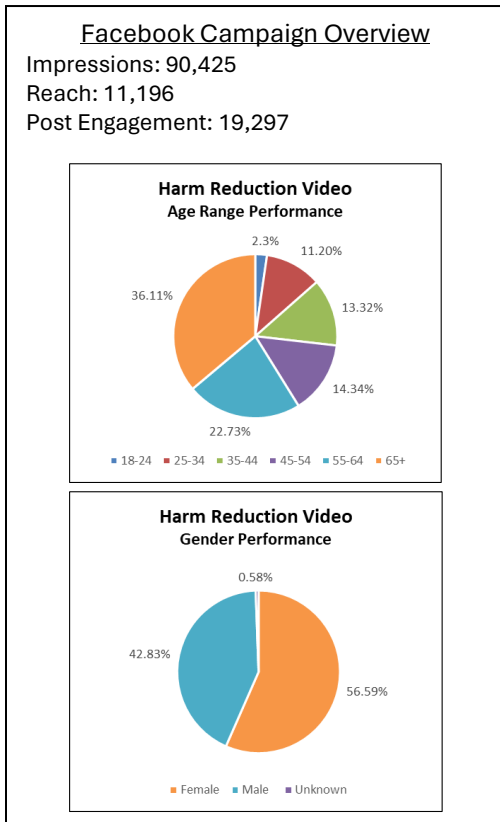


Over the next 3 years, funding will be used to:

- Increase MOUD capacity at the Greene County Family Planning Clinic (GCFP) through hiring an additional Nurse Practitioner to prescribe MOUD and hiring a MOUD Patient Services and Linkage Coordinator who will provide peer services;
- Partner with the Greene County Sheriff’s Office to provide warm handoffs for peer services and MOUD treatment between the GCFP Clinic’s MOUD Coordinator and the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, the Impacted Citizens Program, and the jail;
- Partner with Greene County paramedics to provide warm handoffs for peer services and MOUD treatment through GCFP Clinic’s MOUD Coordinator following an overdose;
- Partner with Albany Medical College to provide training and technical assistance to paramedics to increase Naloxone Leave Behind and referrals to peer services and MOUD treatment through NY Matters and the GCFP Clinic’s MOUD Coordinator;
- Partner with Albany Medical College to implement paramedic administered buprenorphine to patients following an overdose.

Additionally, the project will convene three stakeholder groups. An Overdose Task Force is made up of county department heads and administrators who will act as a steering committee for the project overall. The group will also receive policy and service recommendations from two subcommittees and will implement action plans to address recommendations.

- An Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) subcommittee will do comprehensive reviews of overdose death cases to identify gaps and opportunities and make recommendations for policy and service changes that may prevent future overdose deaths.
- A Health Equity subcommittee will convene community members address stigma and inequities negatively impacting marginalized populations including people belonging to racial minority populations, LGBTQ populations and formerly incarcerated individuals. In addition to providing qualitative information based on lived experience, the group will review available criminal justice data and data collected through a stigma and bias survey that will be administered across points of the sequential intercept model to staff working in public health, mental health, law enforcement, social services, and emergency response.



**Harm Reduction Landing Page**  
 Total Users: 843



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

## Overview:

Emergency Preparedness is a mandated component of all local health departments. Greene County Public Health (GCPH) receives annual funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) grant. This grant provides financial support as well as organizational structure to the preparedness program. The conditions of the grant require successful completion of quarterly deliverables. These deliverables include--but are not limited to--creating and updating planning documents, attending/providing trainings, and attending state meetings as well as executing exercises. Funding for the 2022-2023 year totaled \$52,099.

### 2023 Highlights:

- ✓ Emergency preparedness information given at the Greene County Youth Fair, the Catskill farmer’s market, and flu clinics
- ✓ CPR and First Aid training to the Greene NY MRC volunteers and 2 Girl Scout Troops
- ✓ Stop the Bleed trainings provided to Greene NY MRC, two Girl Scout Troops, Questar BOCES in East Durham, Hunter-Tannersville School staff, and students at both Catskill and Greenville High Schools
- ✓ Greene NY MRC Orientation for MRC volunteers
- ✓ N95 mask training and fit testing
- ✓ Naloxone training to GCPH staff, Hunter-Tannersville School staff
- ✓ IHANS notification drills to GCPH staff and ServNY notification drills to Greene NY MRC volunteers
- ✓ Two POD drills for GCPH staff
- ✓ Emergency preparedness training to 2 Girl Scout Troops
- ✓ Infectious Disease Surge Tabletop

### Disaster Preparedness Trainings:

- Overdose Fatality Review
- Annual Emergency Preparedness Summit
- CPR/BLS Instructor Training
- Radiological and Burn Surge
- CHEMPACK overview
- Medical Countermeasures (MCM) Clinical Operations (ClinOPs) Access and Functional Needs exercise/event
- Pediatric Emergency Preparedness

### 2023 Goal Review:

- **Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) revitalization:**  
*Many classes and orientations were scheduled for the volunteers. Newsletters were sent out to the volunteers quarterly. The volunteer handbook was updated, and a Volunteer Management Plan is in process.*
- **Update of plans as required by the NYSDOH Office of Emergency Preparedness:**  
*The following plans were reviewed and updated as needed: PHEPRP, MCM ClinOPs, COOP, CEMP, Pandemic Flu.*

### 2024 Goals:

- Expand Emergency Trainings:
  - Provide trainings to new areas of our community while continuing to provide emergency training to MRC volunteers and schools throughout the county.
- Complete MRC Policies and Procedures:
  - Complete the Volunteer Management Plan and create a training plan for the volunteers. Review the Volunteer Handbook and update if needed.
- Learn more about climate change:
  - Further knowledge on climate change and begin assessing how it affects Greene County.

### Fire in Public Health



On April 21, 2023, a battery power pack exploded and caught fire in the office. The building was evacuated, and employees were dismissed for the remainder of the day. Public Health staff were unable to return to their offices for three days, so they either worked from home or in other parts of the County. The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was implemented, areas for improvement were found, and the COOP was updated accordingly.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

As Greene County is a partial service county, all environmental issues are sent to the Oneonta District Office of the New York State Department of Health. They handle all restaurant, camp, and water system inspections for Greene County.

Program Type	# Current operations (2/22/2024)	2023			2022		
		# Operations	# Inspections	# Complaints	# Operations	# Inspections	# Complaints
Agricultural Fairgrounds	1	1	2	0	1	2	0
ATUPA retail/vending/CIAA	69	N/A	148	4	N/A	117	1
Bathing Beaches	5	5	9	0	5	8	0
Campgrounds	15	16	15	0	16	10	0
Children's Camps	21	21	45	1	16	42	12
Environmental Lead	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Food Service Establishments	340	376	325	24	358	230	12
Institutional Food Services	20	21	23	0	22	27	0
Mass gatherings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Migrant Farmworker Housing	7	7	15	0	6	13	0
Miscellaneous	6	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mobile Food Services	33	38	31	0	47	13	0
Mobile Home Parks	16	18	15	0	16	7	4
Non-public Water Supplies	3	N/A	1	0	N/A	1	0
Onsite Sewage Treatment	400	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	1
Public Gathering Sites	126	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Public Water Supplies	233	N/A	104	2	N/A	88	1
Realty Subdivision (incl NYC)	23	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Recreational Spray Grounds	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
SED Summer Feeding	9	9	10	0	9	10	0
SOFA-Office of Aging Food	5	5	5	0	5	5	0
State Agency Licensed Facilities	4	N/A	1	0	N/A	0	0
Swimming Pools	107	112	138	2	115	110	0
Tanning Facilities	4	4	2	0	4	2	0
Temporary Food Services	N/A	199	18	0	156	11	0
Temporary Residences	109	118	95	16	116	81	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1563</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>40</b>

1. Currently active operations are as of 2/22/2024.
2. Operations active at any time during 2023.
3. Inspections include the following service types: pre-operational inspection, inspection, re-inspection, field visit, HACCP, ATUPA checks and sanitary survey.
4. Only complaints against a specific operation are included due to the need for county. Complaint year is based on the date of the complaint.

# FAMILY HEALTH

## Early Intervention

### What is Early Intervention (EI):

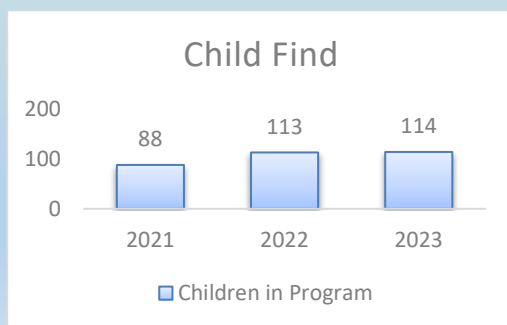
- A program for children from birth to age three that provides evaluations and services for those who qualify
- Services include:
  - Speech Therapy
  - Physical Therapy
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Social Work
  - Special Education
  - Service Coordination
- Referrals come from a variety of sources:
  - Doctors
  - Parents
  - Department of Social Services (DSS)
  - Other counties
- Voluntary participation (only with parental consent)
- Must be evaluated to determine eligibility according to NYS regulations
- Families are asked to provide health insurance information to cover program costs, but at no time incur any costs
- Average number of children in 2023: 66

### 2023 Updates:

- Provider shortages continuing to affect our ability to meet the following state timelines:
  - 45 days from referral to initial evaluation
  - Initiate services within 30 days after initial Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Ongoing efforts to recruit/maintain providers
  - One of the remaining evaluators for Greene County is no longer able to continue doing initial multidisciplinary evaluations due a significantly lower rate set by NYS for Greene County vs Ulster County
- A team of evaluators from Albany County Department of Health will provide evaluations at our county building, but cannot meet the timeframe of 45 days
- Families are provided resources while they wait for services

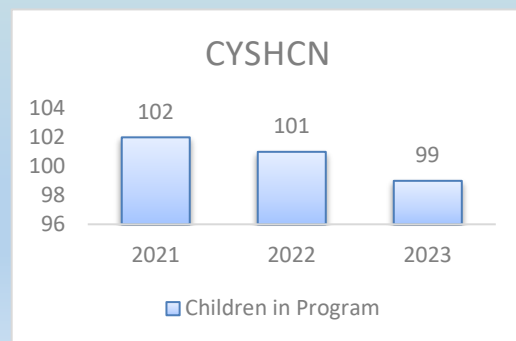
### What is Child Find:

- Program requirement to track and provide developmental surveillance for “at risk” children who may be EI eligible
- All birth certificates are reviewed and families sent outreach material
- MCH nurse may identify children with potential developmental delays and refer with parental permission



### What is the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program:

- Provides resources/referrals to families of children birth to age 21 with a diagnosed disability/medical condition
- Transition fair hosted on September 27<sup>th</sup> by the Greene County ARC; staff distributed outreach materials with the Family Planning health educator



## Review of 2023 Goals:

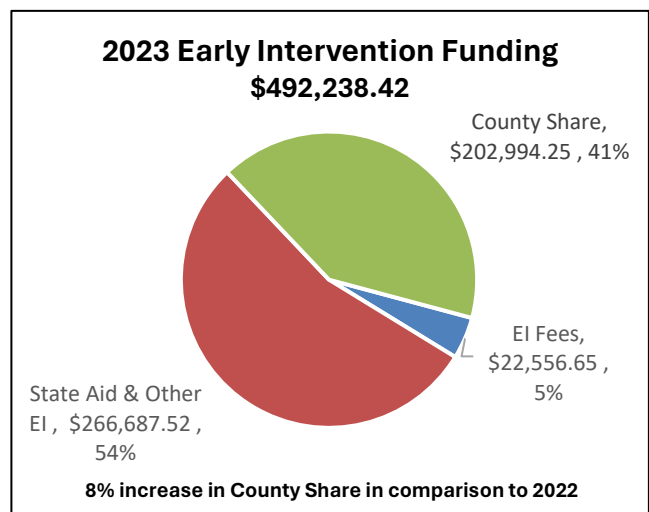
- Staffing retention and active recruitment.**
  - 2023 ended with three staff openings in Early Intervention: two Service Coordinators and the newly created Senior Administrative Assistant. At the time of this report, two out of three vacancies have been filled; these new employees will start in Q1 2024.
- To continue to increase and maintain provider capacity through provider education and collaboration with the New York State Bureau of Early Intervention (NYSBEI), the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) and the County Early Intervention and Preschool Advisory Committee (CEIPAC).**
  - While telehealth services continue to be an option for families in remote locations, there was no expansion in the provider network available to children and families in Greene County.
- To update policies and procedures through collaboration with NYSDOH and other counties, with a focus on policies that are related to Greene County as a Municipality and in consideration of the current health and safety challenges.**
  - This was not addressed in 2023
- To prepare for the launch of the new EI Hub.**
  - NYS has postponed the training to Q1 2024.
- Implement new Person-based Electronic Response Data System (PERDS) entry system for the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program.**
  - Data is now being entered into the PERDS application on the NYS Health Commerce System (HCS).

## Goals for 2024:

- Hiring a new Director of Early Intervention and Service Coordinator.
- Staffing retention.
- Prepare for the launch of the new EI Hub.
- Creatively address provider shortages in Greene County so the needs of children can be met.
- Shift CYSHCN program from the Early Intervention program to our Maternal Child Health nurse to meet the needs of families.

Here are a sample of comments from parent surveys from the past year:

- “The evaluation and staff were amazing and helpful!”
- “I enjoyed working with everyone”
- “Thank you for everything GCEI has done for my son. Tremendous improvement.”
- “Despite all the challenges, the EI program has been wonderful to work with.”



# Preschool Special Education

Children with an IEP			
2022		162	
2023		163	
Evaluations		Transportation	
2022	89	2022	53*
2023	116	2023	81*
Center-Based Services		Related Services	
2022	73	2022	89
2023	81	2023	82

\*This number includes children whose family members also assisted with transportation

## Challenges:

### Availability of Services:

Children are currently on waitlists for the following services:

- A Special Education Itinerant Teacher
- Related services (Speech, Occupational, Physical Therapies, etc.)
- Evaluations

### Classroom Availability:

- Classrooms providing Special Class Integrated Setting have yet to be replaced in Greene County and children continue to be waitlisted.
- An interim federal contractor was assigned to administer the Greene County Head Start program until a permanent grantee is found.
- Despite Circle of Friends opening a special class program in 2022, another is needed, as we still have children waitlisted.

### Transportation Availability:

- Due to staffing shortages:
  - Our contracted transporter continues to experience difficulties adding new runs.
  - Due to this, children spend less time in the classroom.
- To offset the demands on the transporter:
  - We actively encourage parents to assist with transporting their child, a cost saving measure to the County.
  - Parents can meet the transporter along the route to shorten the length of time children are on vehicles.

## Who partners with Preschool Special Education:

### - School Districts (8 in Greene, Albany & Schoharie):

Responsibilities include:

- Taking in referrals
- Tracking timeframes
- Sending out legal notices to parents
- Scheduling Committee for Preschool Special Education (CPSE) meetings
- Authorizing services to begin
- Sending copies of required documentation for children's files

### - Evaluators (10):

- NYS Education Department (NYSED) approved Agencies and/or School Districts who assess a child's developmental functioning

### - Center-Based Programs (11)

Agencies that provide special education services in NYSED approved center-based classrooms.

### - Related Service Providers (11 Agencies/14 Individuals)

Teachers and/or therapists, either working individually or for an agency, providing services in a variety of settings throughout the county:

- Children's homes
- Daycares
- Universal Pre-K classrooms
- Head Start, etc.

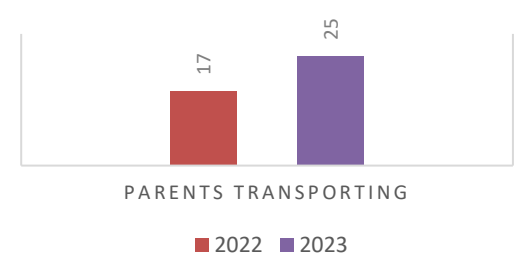
### - Transportation Provider

Company to bus children to their CPSE approved center-based programs

### - Parents & Legal Guardians (Our Most Important Partners)

Provide the carry-over of recommendations by special education providers to help their children make progress toward their IEP goals.

## TRANSPORTATION



## Trends Affecting Costs:

### **NYSED Mandated Costs:**

Costs associated with the preschool special education budget over which the County has no control:

- Tuition rates for center-based programs (set by NYSED) for 2023 ranged between:
  - A 10-month (regular year) special education program: \$33,770.00 to \$57,978.00
  - A 6-week Extended School Year (ESY) or summer program: \$5,628.00 to \$9,663.00
- Chargebacks that may be unrelated to preschool services.



### **Cost Saving Measures:**

- Encouraging parents to provide transportation to center-based programs.
- Encouraging school districts to provide assistive technology devices for children through grants or equipment loans.
- Promoting participation in regular Head Start classrooms, Universal Pre-K programs at school districts, preschool programs, and daycare settings at CPSE meetings. These programs provide opportunities for related services to be provided in the least restrictive environments for children as a less costly alternative to center-based programming when appropriate.
- Encouraging service providers to contact Greene County & the school district once a child's goals are accomplished, as opposed to waiting until the annual review meeting for declassification.
- Monitoring school districts and evaluation agencies to ensure *bilingual evaluations* are completed to guarantee that children are not classified as disabled due to speaking a language other than English.

### **2023 Highlights:**

- Contracts completed:
  - NYS Association of Regional Councils (NYSARC) of Delaware County for center-based program with Carousel Children's Services in Delhi
  - Independent Speech Therapy provider
  - Cairo-Durham CSD for 1:1 aide services
  - Ride Share agreement with Delaware County and Rolling V Bus Corp.

### **2023 Goals:**

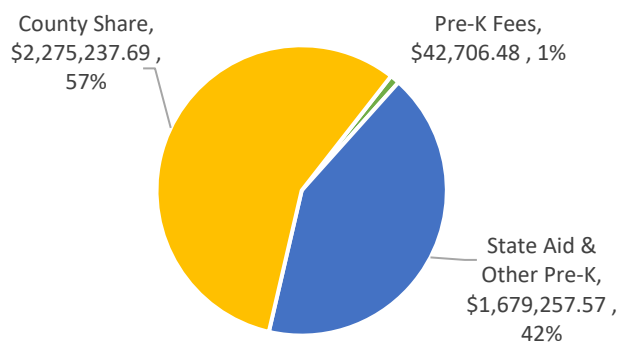
1. **Fill vacant staff position.**  
*Position was filled in October 2023.*
2. **Contract with new providers to increase service availability.**  
*Completed new contracts: two with service providers and one for transportation.*
3. **Contract with school districts where possible for preschool evaluations & related services.**  
*Contract for preschool evaluations was completed with Greenville Central School Districts.*

### **2024 Goals:**

- Staff training and retention.
- Develop new provider contracts to meet the needs of newly enrolled students.
- Contract with school districts where possible for evaluations & related services.

### **2023 Preschool Funding**

**\$3,997,201.74**



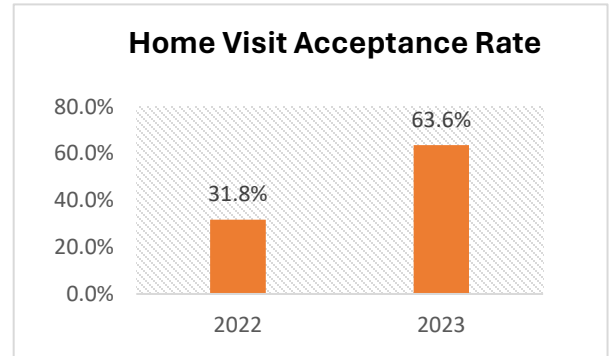
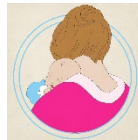
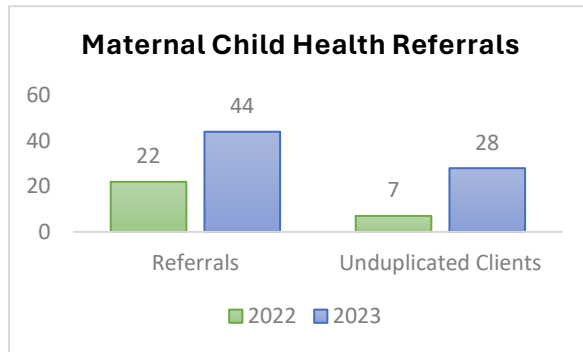
**3% increase in County Share in comparison to 2022**

## What is the Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA):

This designation allows us to provide home visits for:

- Communicable disease:
  - Tuberculosis (TB) Directly Observed Treatment
  - Rabies post-exposure vaccination
  - Childhood lead poisoning – joint visits with the NYSDOH Oneonta District Office for children with elevated lead levels
- Maternal Child Health (MCH):
  - Antepartum, postpartum, and newborn health guidance visits;
  - Breastfeeding support and education.

The MCH health guidance home visit is provided by an experienced Public Health Nurse (PHN), who is also a Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC). The PHN-CLC provides instruction, breastfeeding and lactation support, and linkage to community resources, affording every mother and child an opportunity for a healthy safe start for optimal growth and development.



### MCH Referral Sources:

- Columbia Memorial Pediatrics – 22
- Newborn Screening Program – 4
- Schoolhouse Pediatrics – 7
- CMH Women’s Health – 2
- St. Peter’s Hospital – 2
- Cairo Family Care Center – 2
- Children’s Hospital @ Westchester Medical – 2
- Albany Medical Center Hospital – 1
- Delmar Pediatrics – 1
- Children’s Medical Group - 1

### 2024 Goals:

- Integrate the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs program into the work performed by the Maternal Child Health nurse to meet the needs of families.