

Benton
County

2014

The 2014 Benton County Public Health Annual Report includes a summary of all services and programs that were provided to fulfill the six responsibilities of Public Health.

Public Health
Annual Report



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Benton County Human Services

Public health's historical role has been monitoring the health status of the population and promoting health policy through action and advocacy. This is critical when social, economic, environmental and physical determinants for health pose significant threats to population health. Responsibilities for health promotion and protection are shared with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) as outlined in Minnesota Statute 145A. Local Public Health works in tandem with the MDH to fulfill public health responsibilities. The system is an efficient and effective model of assuring community needs, designing appropriate programming to meet local health needs and directing limited resources.

In Minnesota, Public Health is responsible for *Six Areas of Local Public Health Responsibility*:

1. Assure an adequate public health infrastructure.
2. Promote healthy communities and healthy behaviors.
3. Prevent the spread of infectious disease.
4. Protect against environmental health hazards.
5. Prepare for and respond to disasters, and assist communities in recovery.
6. Assure the quality and accessibility of health services.

Assure Local Public Health Infrastructure

This public health responsibility describes aspects of the public health infrastructure that are essential to a well-functioning public health system including, assessment, planning and policy activities that enhance the overall health of communities.

Minnesota's Local Public Health Assessment and Planning Process (LPHAP) was developed through a state-local partnership process and is based on recommendations from the State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC). The various elements of the LPHAP allow Community Health Boards (CHB) to meet state requirements and are aligned with national public health standards from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

Community Health Assessment

A Community Health Assessment provides the foundation for improving and promoting the health of a community. A thorough and valid Community Health Assessment is a customary practice of public health, and is also a national standard for all the public health departments. Since the passage of the Local Public Health Act in 1976, Minnesota CHBs have been required to engage in a community health improvement process, beginning with a Community Health Assessment. As part of Minnesota's LPHAP, every Minnesota CHB will be required to submit to the MDH a list of the 'Ten Most Important Community Health Issues'.

The Benton County Health Assessment data collection and analysis began in spring 2013. The survey was developed in partnership with local public health departments throughout Benton, Stearns, Mille Lacs, Sherburne and Chisago along with Albany Area Medical Center and the CentraCare Health Foundation. Benton County saw a return of 517 surveys. One of the goals of the survey was to help public health agencies better understand and address the health needs of our residents in agency and policy development. It also serves as an educational tool, highlighting our overall health practices and perceptions of our communities. Data books were created using compiled data from the various sources by the Wilder Foundation. Survey book information is available on the Benton County Webpage. Additional data was compiled from sources such as the County Health Tables and Vital Statistics Reports (MDH) and the Minnesota Student Survey (MN Dept. of Education). This document contains a summary of selected data.

Promoting Healthy Communities and Healthy Behaviors

This public health responsibility addresses the promotion of positive health behaviors and the prevention of adverse health behaviors in populations across the lifespan and includes activities that enhance the overall health of communities.

Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

Benton County Public Health was awarded a Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) award starting October 2013 to October 2015. SHIP works to prevent disease before it starts by helping create healthier communities that support individuals seeking to make healthy choices in their daily lives. In



Minnesota and nationally, the two largest causes of chronic disease and premature death are obesity, caused by poor nutrition and insufficient physical activity, and commercial tobacco use. In 2014 we transitioned to the implementation phase.

Highlights in 2014:

- Benton, Stearns, Sherburne and Wright Counties collaboratively engaged in pooling funds to hire a contractor to develop an Active Living Plan for the region. The plan is expected to be completed in 2015 and available for communities to use.
- Benton SHIP is partnering with Catholic Charities to lead the efforts for the Healthcare Strategy. Collaboration among the Central MN Council on Aging, University of Minnesota Extension and Catholic Charities is underway with the goal of developing a comprehensive approach and access to Evidenced Based Health Programs available for our senior and at risk populations.
- Local farmer, community members and organizations are forming partnerships to make Healthy Food in our Community more accessible and affordable. New partnerships have formed. One of the community gardens started with SHIP funds provided over 150 pounds of produce to Catholic Charities food programs and to the local food shelf.



Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)



Women, Infants and Children is a nutrition program that provides nutrition education and support for breastfeeding. WIC provides healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain cereal, bread and tortillas, low fat milk and baby foods. WIC is for pregnant, postpartum and nursing women as well as for infants and children till age five for those who qualify. WIC WORKS! It has been proven to

promote healthier pregnancies, healthier birth outcomes and healthier children. Every dollar spent on pregnant women in Minnesota WIC saves \$4.21 in Medicaid costs for newborns and their mothers or an average of \$636 per prenatal participant.

Highlights in 2014:

- There were an average of 1294 unduplicated WIC participants in the 2014 fiscal year, with a monthly average of 827 participants. Of that number, 207 were qualified women, 217 were infants and 402 were children.
- WIC issued vouchers totaled \$663,905.

Goal for 2015:

- Improve Public Health's capacity to meet customer needs by continuing to train support staff and routinely schedule the back up staff to certify.
- Explore the use of text reminders for client appointments.
- Complete the on-line application format and begin utilizing in early 2015.
- Dedicate time for monthly meetings to work on the Nutrition Education Plan.

Breastfeeding Benefits

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends women breastfeed their infant for the first year or longer. Breastfeeding education and promotion is provided at WIC clinics. Public health nurses also make home or office visits and telephone follow up for breastfeeding support, assessment and teaching. You do not need to be a WIC client to receive breastfeeding support! Benton County employees are also being supported with the addition of the "Privacy Room" in the Human Services building. Breastfeeding or lactating mothers are given priority to use the room and new policy has been implemented. The "Privacy Room" accommodations were provided by SHIP grant funds, Worksite Wellness Strategy.

Highlights in 2014:

- Over 116 hours were dedicated to breastfeeding promotion and education at the WIC clinic.

Goal for 2015:

- Improve our breastfeeding initiation rates by 5 over the next 3 years in WIC.
- Employees will feel supported to initiate and continue to breastfeed in the workplace.

Follow Along Program (FAP), early identification, assessment and referral

The Follow Along Program provides periodic monitoring and screening of infants and toddlers from birth to four years old. The program provides helpful information to families on an on-going basis about how their child is developing and helps them understand the developmental stages of their child. Families



are sent age appropriate activities that encourage parents to interact with their children in a positive manner. This program is free and offered to all families that are interested. Nurses make referrals to appropriate community resources when needed to provide early intervention and improve outcomes. www.helpmegrowmn.org

Highlights in 2014:

- FAP had 55 new clients and 223 active clients in the program.
- Nurses directly referred 9 infants/children to Help Me Grow.

Goal for 2015:

- Improve the use of the program software.
- Number of new referrals will not decline.
- Monitor child find activities by actively participating in the IEIC

Maternal Child Health Programs (MCH)

Family home visiting provides support to first time mothers and those that may need support in having a healthy pregnancy, supporting their child to maintain healthy development and learning, as well as empowering families to meet their goals for education and self-sufficiency. Public health nurses (PHNs) reach out to all known pregnant and postpartum women. Phone calls are made to those at high risk and letters are sent to all others. PHNs made home visits to high risk pregnant women with the goal to improve pregnancy outcomes. Postpartum home visits are offered to all new mothers and their infants to provide assessment and education, including breastfeeding education and support. PHNs reach out with information and support to bereaved families who have experienced the sudden death of an infant from any cause.

	Referrals	Families Served	Visits
Infants	35	31	57
Children	7	7	14
Children with Special Health needs	55	12	33
SIDS	1	0	0
Prenatal	301	54	127
Postpartum	663	59	62
Parenting	19	28	95
		(13 continued from 2013)	
*PRO screens (Prenatal Risk Overview)	-	32	-
*PPRO screens (Postpartum Risk Overview)	-	29	-

*Family/Client had an office visit, including a standardized screening-tool evaluation.

Goals for 2015:

Continue to improve capabilities for reporting and data collection.

Increase number of visits for Parenting, offering more intense programming for the target population.

Continue to explore an evidenced based parenting program in Public Health.

Child Passenger Safety (CPS)

In 2014, Public Health had 7 Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. One service that Public Health offers is car seat checks. These are 30 minute appointments where clients can ask questions regarding child safety seats and get their car seats checked, at no cost to the residents of Benton County. Another service offered through CPS is distribution classes. These 90-minute classes offer the education on proper installation and use child safety seats as well as distributing reduced-cost or free car seats to the qualified clients who attend. Technicians can do individual classes for those who cannot attend the class dates. In addition, technicians provided childcare provider classes to instruct the providers on proper installation and use of child safety seats as well. Staff partner with Gold Cross and surrounding counties for car seat clinics at Gold Cross Ambulance garage.

Highlights in 2014:

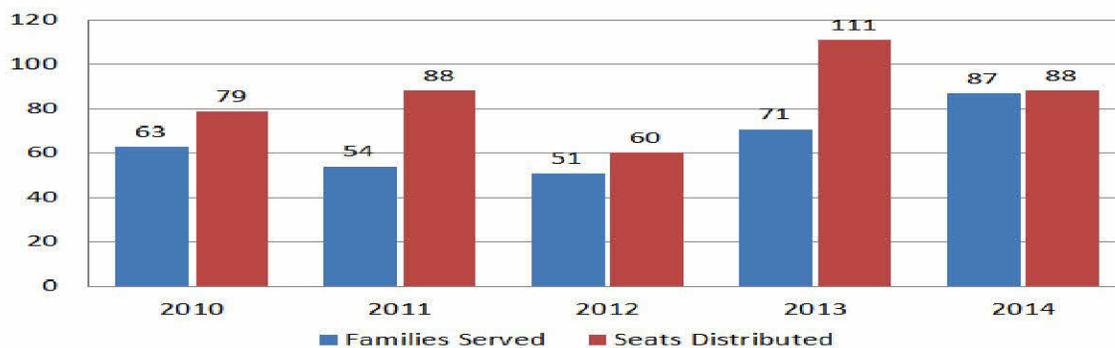
- Educational activities included: 16 car seat check appointments, 50 class and individual distribution activities, and 2 child care provider classes.
- With seat distributions, 87 families were served and 88 seats were distributed.
- Staff participated in 2 car seat clinics at Gold Cross Ambulance garage and 1 with Sherburne County Public Health.
- 20 providers were trained in the 2 child care provider classes (CARS) that were offered.

Goals for 2015:

- Health educators will be instructing all monthly classes and offering 2 classes a month in response from our consumers.
- Health educator will be working towards training to provide CARS curriculum (Foster care and Day care training).

Seat Distribution GRAND Totals

(Class & 1:1)



Child and Teen Checkup Outreach Program (C&TC)



The Child and Teen Checkup (C&TC) Program is a preventative health care outreach program for children under 21 years of age who are enrolled in Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare.

Outreach intent is to highlight the importance of regular well-child exams and may consist of phone calls, letters, meeting one-on-one, attending health fairs and presenting to populations who may

qualify for this benefit. Many families received assistance with referral follow up, finding dental and medical providers, and transportation and interpreter services.

Highlights in 2014:

- 3814 children were eligible for medical and dental outreach services, 4484 is the actual number of active children.
- Outreach consisted of 7359 outreach activities: 1069 phone calls and 5707 letters.
- There were 4693 screenings recorded in the system.
- Public Health was able to participate in 6 outreach events.
- Benton County's participation rate in 2012 was 70%; this was among the top 10 in the state. The state average is 68%.
- 203 Lead tests were done as part of the C&TC outreach activities.

Goals for 2015:

- Utilization of Benton County Public Health Facebook website and social media for conveying C&TC information to clients.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of subcontracting the outreach calls.

Health Promotion Activities

Public health engages in numerous activities to promote healthy lifestyles and behaviors as well as educates the community on current health and safety issues.

Highlights for 2014:

Many outreach events were attended by staff. The Benton County Fair focused on an Immunization Exhibit that really got community members to interact with the staff. It was also supported by the rest of the Human Service staff who highlighted the work they do for the community. Two Traveling Health Fairs were attended where information was given for the senior population on immunizations. We participated at the Foley Area CARE health fair where we provided free meningococcal and Tdap vaccines for student in Benton County. Staff participated in Bike Rodeos held in Foley and Rice. Sauk Rapids Middle School Cultural Fair was attended by Public Health where we focused on early screening and wellness exams for that population. Education was provided to an adult foster care provider group on HIV. Public Health has collaborated on

the ACT on Alzheimer's grant for the city of Sauk Rapids, working to prepare Sauk Rapids to be a dementia friendly city. Health Educators collaborate with TZD (Toward Zero Death) on safety strategies for the region. They also worked to improve the Health and Wellness program here at the county, focusing not only on physical health but also mental health.

Goals for 2015:

- Continue to build partnerships with the community and increase the visibility and mission of Public Health.

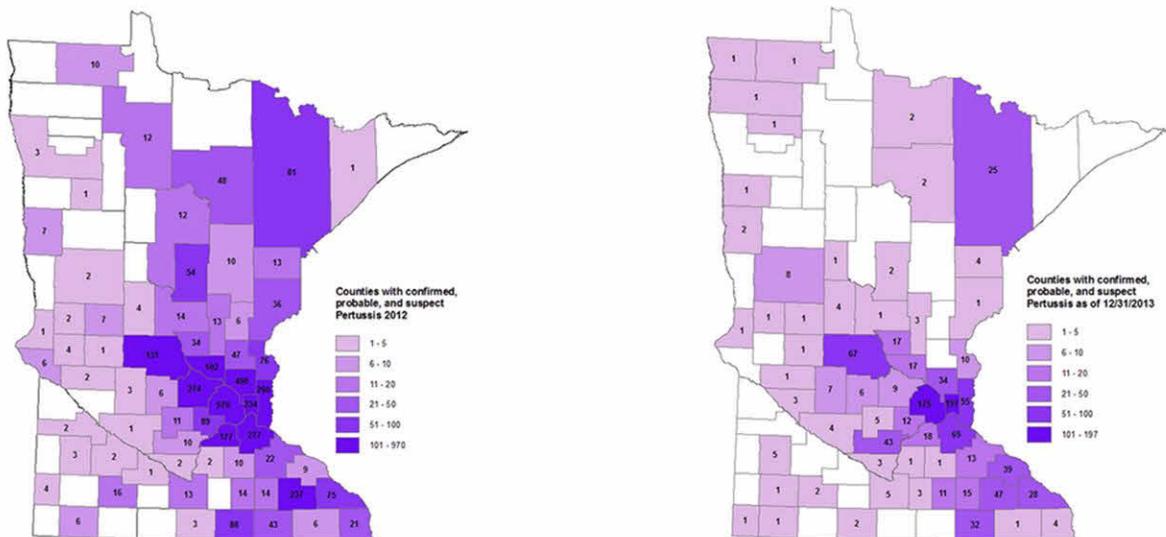
Prevent the Spread of Infectious Disease

This public health responsibility focuses on infectious diseases that are spread from person to person. It includes public health activities to detect acute and communicable diseases, prevent the transmission of disease and implement control measures during communicable disease outbreaks.

Highlights in 2014:

- Benton County's pertussis rates were 16 in 2011 and 34 in 2012. Pertussis reports decreased in 2013 with 17 cases noted. 2014 had 19 cases.

Pertussis Cases 2012 & 2013



BC 2012: 34

BC 2013: 17

We offer immunizations for those that qualify. The Minnesota Vaccines for Children Program (MN VFC) offers free or low cost immunizations to children 18 years of age and younger. The Uninsured and Underinsured Adult Vaccination (UUAV) Program offers free and low cost immunizations to uninsured or underinsured adults 19 years and older in Minnesota who meet eligibility guidelines. Nurses provide accurate education to the community regarding the recommended schedules, safety and efficacy and resources available.

Highlights in 2014:

- 59 children served received a variety of vaccinations under the MN VFC program.
- 18 adults were served through the UUAV program receiving Hep B and Flu shots.
- We reviewed our Isolation and Quarantine policy and other infectious disease protocols in light of the risk of Ebola in Minnesota. We continue to follow recommendations for monitoring.

Goals for 2015:

- Maintain partnership with the Circle of Health on new initiatives for 2015.

Communicable Disease Follow Up

Local health departments work collaboratively with the MN department of health and the medical community to ensure that communicable disease are reported, investigated, receive effective and timely treatment and that measures are taken to prevent the spread of disease. Public Health interventions may include: disease surveillance, assessment, case management, Directly Observed Therapy (DOT), contact investigation, consultation, education and service coordination.

Highlights in 2014:

- Public health was involved with new latent and active tuberculosis cases. There are two phases of tuberculosis. The first phase is called Latent TB infection. The TB germs in your body are not making you feel sick nor can you spread the infection to others. The second phase is active TB disease. The germs can multiply in the body and damage tissue. TB most often affects the lungs, but almost any part of the body can be affected. TB germs from the

lungs can be spread to others by spraying into the air when the sick person cough's, shouts or sneezes. Both phases can be treated with medicine.

- Public Health provided case coordination and management for Latent TB to 22 individuals, for a total of 124 home visits. Some of the clients were transfers from other locations or transferred out of Benton County before completing their full medication regime. Those leaving Benton County are referred for follow up in their new county of residence if known.
- Public Health consulted with community partners and MDH on one individual with Active TB Disease. The individual was not compliant with treatment and the Commissioner of Health enacted the Health Threat Act. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=4605.7075>. Public Health also conducted contact investigation for this case. The spread of the infection was kept to a minimum.
- Hepatitis B is a germ (virus) that gets into the body and attacks the liver and may lead to liver cancer. It is passed by contact with the blood or other body fluids of someone who has the virus. The virus can be passed on to a baby during birth if the mother has the virus. Public Health is notified by the Minnesota Department of Health when an infected mom is pregnant. Benton County had 3 referrals for Hep B which were followed during 2014. We provided education about Hepatitis B to mom, identified household and sexual contacts and assured that the newborn received recommended immunizations and blood work in a timely manner.

Goals for 2015:

- Maintain collaborative efforts with MDH and community partners to reduce the spread of disease.

Refugee Health

Each year, 10 to 15 million people seek political asylum or become refugees in various parts of the world. Most of these displaced persons are from developing countries. Since the mid-1990s, refugees have been arriving to Minnesota. When refugees arrive, they have unique health care needs. Newly arrived refugees may have received little or no medical care for prolonged periods prior to resettlement. Often, they arrive from camp living situations in which mal-nutrition and illness due to crowding and deficient sanitation were rampant. Benton County Public Health assists refugees in establishing care with a medical

provider for a complete medical exam. This thorough exam includes screening for Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, sexually transmitted diseases, lead screening for children, immunization, and assessing other health problems such as diabetes, heart problems, etc. The exam is an important tool. Healthy individuals are more likely to look for jobs and attend school. We want to assure their health and to also protect the health of the community.

Highlights in 2014:

- Public Health helped 11 refugees obtain medical appointments for the refugee health exam and provided 3 home visits.
- We partnered with clinics and were able to schedule appointments for the refugees within 90 days of their arrival date for the majority of those visits.

Goals for 2015:

- Appointments will be scheduled for >50% of the referrals within the recommended 90 days.
- Continue to work with a recently established Refugee Collaborative that includes Benton and Stearns Public Health, CentraCare, Health Partners, St. Cloud Medical Group, and Lutheran Social Services.

Prepare for and Respond to Disasters, Assist Communities in Recovery

This public health responsibility addresses activities that prepare public health to respond to disasters and assist communities in responding to and recovering from disasters. Benton County's Public Health Emergency Preparedness team attended meetings coordinating with the St. Cloud Hospital's Preparedness committee as well as presented to the hospital's long term care sub committees on closed points of dispensing. They also met with Good Shepherd to discuss Points of Dispensing (PODs). Benton County Public Health is in the process of opening communication lines with the rest of the Human Services department to have a more collaborative role in the event of an emergency.

Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)



Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a partnership that integrates local, regional and statewide volunteer programs to assist our public health and healthcare systems during a disaster. It is part of the federal initiative that requires every state to implement

Emergency Systems for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP).

Highlights in 2014:

- 71 volunteers are registered in Benton County.
- Public health participated in the new MRC Volunteer Orientation alongside of Stearns County.

Goals for 2015:

Continue to be an active part of MRC with an increase in the number of volunteers in Benton County.

Health Alert Network (HAN)

Minnesota's Health Alert Network under the direction of the Minnesota Department of Health enables public health staff, tribal governments, health care providers, emergency workers, as well as others who protect the public to exchange information during a disease outbreak, environmental threat, natural disaster, or act of terrorism. Public Health continues to maintain 24/7 coverage for the health alert network.

Highlights in 2014:

- 18 HAN responded to by distributing alert information rapidly to health care providers and others in our local jurisdiction.

Goals for 2015:

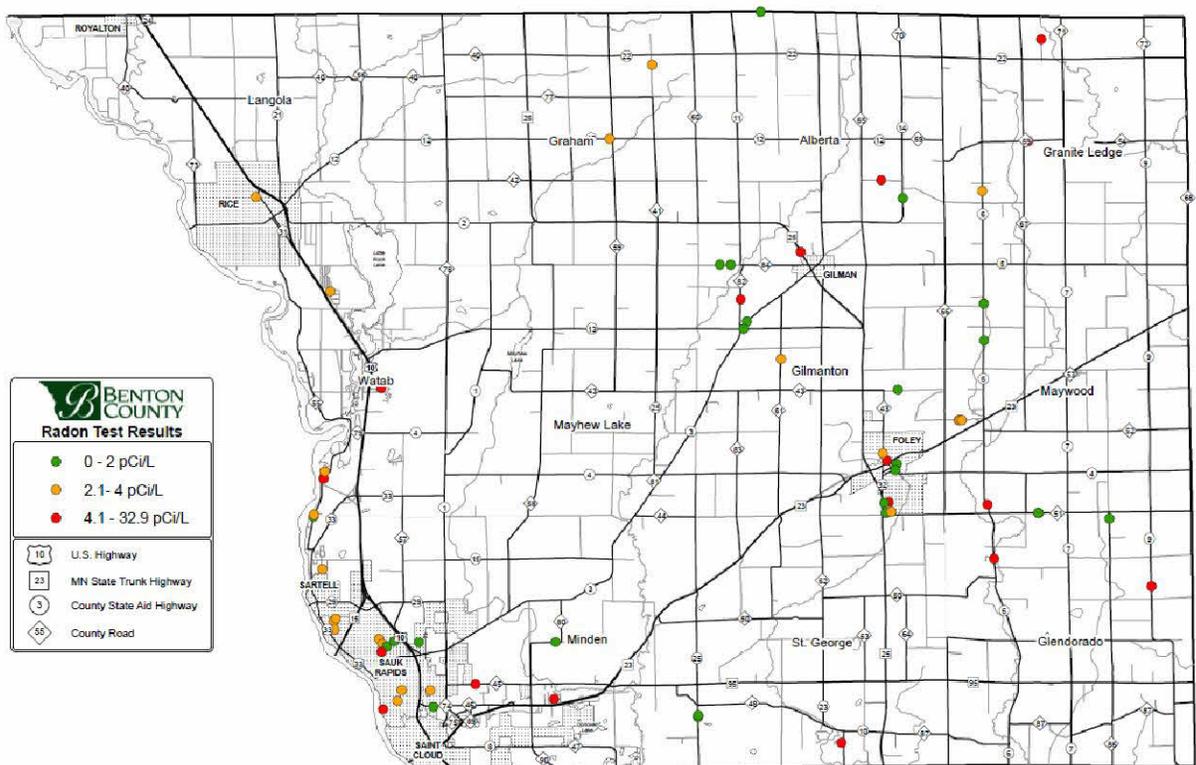
Continue to maintain good communication with the community partners.

Protect against Environmental Health Hazards

Radon

Radon test kits are available to Benton County residents to determine the need for mitigation of high levels of radon gas in the home to minimize their risk of developing lung cancer or other health conditions. Roughly 150 short term radon tests were distributed to county residents. About 70 of those tests have been properly completed. GIS Mapping has been done and will continue to be updated to determine if there are any patterns of radon levels in Benton County. Kits are still available from Public Health.

Highlights in 2014:



Goals for 2015:

Continue to offer test kits at a reduced price.

Lead poisoning

Too much lead can harm children. No one knows exactly how much lead it takes to cause health problems. Many times there are no symptoms until the

health problems are very serious. Blood lead testing is provided to at-risk children through the Child and Teen Checkups program during WIC. Screening is recommended at 12 and 24 months of age for all children receiving Medical Assistance or up to six years of age if not previously tested.

Highlights in 2014:

- 284 lead tests were performed in 2014.
- Of those tested, 17 came back above the normal level and were followed-up by public health.

Goals for 2015:

Continue to offer lead testing as part of the WIC clinic with timely follow up for any elevated levels.

Public Health Nuisance

Per Minnesota Statute 145A, "Public Health Nuisance" means any activity of failure to act that adversely affects the public health. "If a threat to public health such as a public health nuisance, source of filth, or cause of sickness is found on any property, the board of health or its agent shall order the owner or occupant of the property to remove or abate the threat within a time specified in the notice but not longer than ten days."

Highlights in 2014:

- 2 potential public health nuisance complaints were investigated. Those investigations included suspected mold in an apartment building and conditions of a property in the Foley area. Investigation results concluded that none of the complaints met the statute for a public health nuisance. They were referred to other community partners.

Goals for 2015:

- Continue to develop community partnerships to address any public health nuisance concerns.

Assure the Quality and Accessibility of Health Services

Public health assesses health care capacity and access to health care, they address identification and reduction of barriers to health services and describe public health activities to fill health care gaps, reduce barriers and link people to needed services. This includes direct care services such as emergency medical services, correctional health, health care services and hospice care.

Home and Community Based Services

Personal Care Assistance (PCA) services help a person with day to day activities in their home and community. PCAs help people with activities of daily living, health-related procedures and tasks, observation and redirection of behaviors. PCA services are available to eligible people enrolled in a MN Health Care Program. With the development of MNChoices, PCA services will be assessed in a new format starting some time in 2015. The PHN did move to the adult services unit in July of 2014.

Highlights in 2014:

- A total of 75 assessments were completed the first half of 2014.

Community Health Information Program (CHIP)

This program focuses on our Senior and disabled population in Benton County. A nurse will assess the feet, trim toenails and give tips on how to keep feet healthy. The client has the opportunity to ask questions in regards to health conditions, medications, diet, or living situations. The nurse will take a blood pressure reading upon request and make referrals as needed.

Highlights in 2014:

- Each month there are 3 clinics held where CHIP serves about 32-35 people in 4 different locations around Benton County.
- Referrals are made to podiatry and other clinics/clinicians as appropriate.

Goals for 2015:

- Continue to be able to offer 3 clinics at various locations.

Early Hearing Detection Intervention and Birth Defects (EHDI & BD)

This program was new to public health in 2014. We partner with the MN Department of Health to ensure all children in Minnesota have the support and services they need to be healthy in regards to early hearing detection and birth

defects. We contact families to connect them with local resources or assist them in scheduling additional appointments or services.

Highlights in 2014:

- A total of 13 cases were referred to us. Of those 1 was for hearing loss follow up and 12 were for birth defects.
- Birth defects were varied: spina bifida, cleft lip/palate and heart murmurs to name a few.
- Over \$4000 was collected for our efforts to follow up with the families.

Goals for 2015:

- Continue to provide timely follow up with families identified and connect to community resources.