

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

**Columbia
County
Department of
Health**



(518) 828-3358



www.columbiacountynyhealth.com

A Message from the Public Health Director

On behalf of the Columbia County Department of Health, I am honored to present our 2024 Annual Report. This report provides an overview of our programs and services and delves into our proudest achievements and the challenges we faced in 2024.

As we continue to strengthen our ability to provide effective and efficient public health services and programs, the Columbia County Department of Health remains vigilant in our responsibility to protect the public's health. We have navigated challenging and complex situations in 2024, and our resilience and determination will continue to lead efforts to improve the community's overall health and well-being.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my colleagues at the Columbia County Department of Health, our partner agencies working in Columbia County, the elected officials who support our critical work, and, most importantly, the community we serve. Your unwavering support is instrumental as we strive to prevent, promote, and protect the health and well-being of Columbia County residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victoria McGahan".

Victoria McGahan, MS, CHES®
Public Health Director



Public Health in Action

Confirmed Disease Cases*



2022	8685
2023	2508
2024	2102

Animal Bite Investigations



2022	102
2023	106
2024	111

Water Supplies Tested



2022	136
2023	102
2024	79

Healthy Home Visits



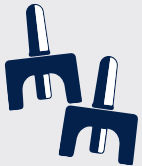
2022	138
2023	312
2024	100

Tobacco Compliance Checks



2022	70
2023	59
2024	76

Naloxone Kits Distributed



2022	905
2023	711
2024	372

Preschool Services/Transports



2022	153
2023	164
2024	201

Immunizations Administered



2022	5227
2023	2020
2024	2295

Rabies Vaccines Administered



2022	184
2023	378
2024	297

Food Service Inspections



2022	205
2023	222
2024	319

Child Safety Seat Checks



2022	16
2023	27
2024	32

Lead Care Coordination



2022	72
2023	64
2024	60

Community Sharps Collection



2022	1,232 lbs
2023	1,522 lbs
2024	1,906 lbs

Early Intervention Services/Transport



2022	159
2023	154
2024	146

**Includes diseases that meet case definition by NYSDOH only*

Highlights



- ▶ The Columbia County Department of Health welcomed Christina McKenna and Demba Keita from the New York State Public Health Corps Fellowship Program!
- ▶ Distributed a Community Health Needs Assessment and gathered feedback from **867** unduplicated individuals to evaluate the community's health status, needs and issues.
- ▶ Collected **1,906** pounds of home-generated sharps through the community sharps collection program to aid in safe disposal.
- ▶ Enhanced our social media presence, reaching **203** followers on X and **6,967** followers on Facebook with an average reach of **7,835**. Our smartphone application has also been downloaded **3,297** times.
- ▶ Hosted **87** educational events and attended **35** community outreach events, reaching an estimated **3,500** individuals.
- ▶ Conducted **5,407** communicable disease investigations and continued disease outbreak surveillance of all nursing homes and assisted living facilities within Columbia County.
- ▶ The Migrant Health Program visited **eight** farms in 2024 and were able to provide education and screenings for blood pressure and blood sugar to **197** seasonal farm workers.
- ▶ Our Community Health Worker (CHW), Spanish Speaking, had **984** migrant encounters for which she provided translation services, transportation for medical services, and assisted with access to social services. Our CHW also assisted **seven** pregnant migrant women to their appointments in 2024.
- ▶ Hosted **37** sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinics and served **75** patients with appropriate testing, medication and referrals.
- ▶ New York State launched the EI-Hub, a new web-based software, in October, 2024, which was adopted by our Early Intervention & Preschool Services staff to assist with reporting child information from referral (intake) to transition, managing provider data, claims creation, billing and payments.

Public Health Education

The mission of the Health Education division of the Columbia County Department of Health is to improve the Public's Health through education, evidence-based interventions, and effective communication. The Public Health Promotion program educates the community about how to prevent disease in order to improve health and quality of life.

The program works with organizations to develop healthy policies and environments, provides community health workshops on healthy living and disease prevention, and teams up with community partners to study the health of the community (Community Health Assessment) and conduct activities to improve community health (Community Health Improvement Plan).

Tickborne Disease

In 2024, the Health Education Division was awarded grant funding to increase their climate and health adaptation efforts. Since Columbia County has consistently outnumbered other NYS counties (excluding NYC) in rates of tickborne disease, the division focused their efforts on tick prevention and management. With this funding, they were able to create educational materials and **997** tick kits for distribution throughout the community. They also released a survey to assess community knowledge of tick-related information and to determine areas where efforts should be focused. **201** Community members responded to the survey. The division attended **12** events and partnered with local farms, libraries, conservation areas, parks and historic sites to deliver resources and education to the community at sites where they work and play outdoors!





Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA)

The Columbia County Department of Health is tasked with enforcing Article 13-F: Regulation of Tobacco products, Herbal Cigarettes and Smoking paraphernalia; Distribution to minors of the Public Health Law in the State of New York. Under this law, program tasks include underage compliance checks at all retailers licensed to sell tobacco products, field visits to ensure compliance with Article 13-F regulations and enforcement of these laws through our legal hearing process. In 2024, there were **66** active facilities that sell tobacco products in Columbia County. In 2019, New York State passed legislation to change the legal buying age for tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age. With the passing of this law, CCDOH started completing compliance checks with underage inspectors between the ages of 18-20. In 2024, there were **five** compliance checks completed by adults and **71** by minors. **Two** registered tobacco retailers illegally sold products to underage inspectors employed by this office, enforcement was upheld by a legal hearing and fines were collected.

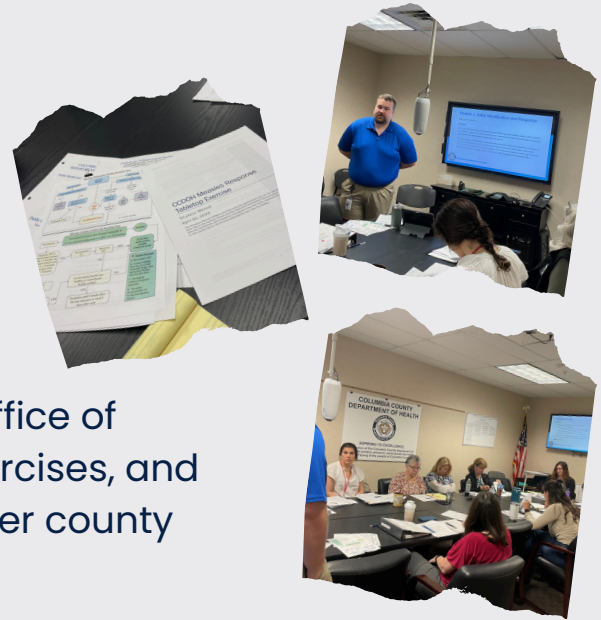
In 2020, New York State made the sale of flavored vapor products illegal under Article 13-F regardless of age. This office has been tasked with enforcing this ban and it has been an uphill battle for four years. Tobacco retailers make large sums of money from selling flavored vapes and are now concealing them in locked cabinet and hidden boxes. CCDOH has no authority to seize illegal products at this time, however all enforcements and fines for these items being offered for sale in facilities have been upheld through legal hearings. There were **731** illegal flavored vapes found with fines totaling **\$17,647.00** for all Article 13-F violations in 2024.



Emergency Preparedness

The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Program strives to build the capacity of the health department to prepare for, respond to, and recover from various emergencies. The PHEP program also serves as a resource to emergency services agencies for subject matter expertise as it relates to public health.

The PHEP Program also coordinates with the office of emergency management to support trainings, exercises, and events to support the preparedness efforts of other county departments and the community.



Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers who help make their communities stronger and healthier during disasters and every day. The Columbia County MRC is organized and sponsored by the Columbia County Department of Health. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals as well as community members without any healthcare background or experience.

MRC activities include:

- Point of Dispensing (POD) operations
- Emergency Shelter operations
- Training opportunities including CPR, Stop the Bleed, and more!
- Specialised teams (Mental Health, Animal response, etc)

Scan here to complete the MRC Interest Form!



Visit our website
(<https://columbiacountynyhealth.com/volunteer-during-emergencies/>) or call
(518) 828-3358 for more information.

The MRC is always looking for people who want to make a difference in our community!
Want to learn more or get involved? Find more information below!





Scan to
schedule an
appointment at
our Flu/COVID
or STD clinic!

Immunization

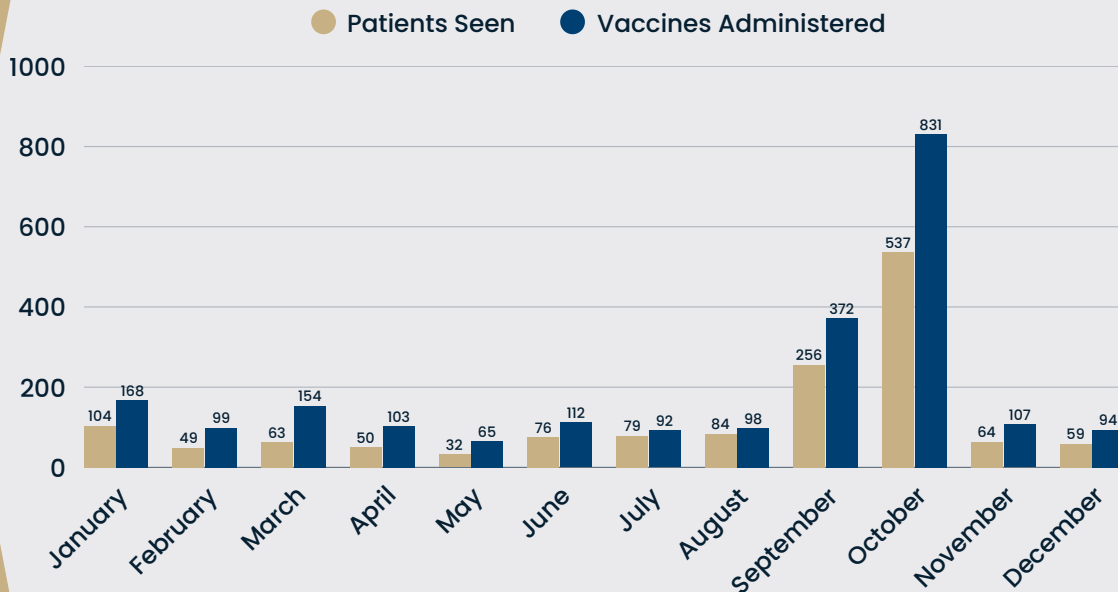
Vaccines are the foundation of Public Health, and have been used to prevent more than **30** life threatening diseases and illnesses. They have saved more lives than any other medical intervention. Immunization services are provided to infants, children and adults for school, work, and travel. Over the past decade, Immunization has seen many changes and advancements. Columbia County has been busy keeping up with these changes to offer up to date care for the residents of the county. Some examples include the over **25,000** COVID vaccines administered since the pandemic started in 2019. Over **875** Rabies vaccines have been provided to residents to prevent the life threatening rabies virus since 2015. CCDOH continues to work with local fruit farms to provide medical care and immunizations to migrant seasonal workers. We have provided over **1,950** vaccines since 2015 to help minimize disease in this community.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the population in the county, which has put more of a demand on staff requiring an increase in services, such as vaccine administration, records translation and referral to other medical resources. We continue to work with our community partners, including local pharmacies, to provide vaccine services to the public. Relationships have strengthened between this agency and others, like doctor's offices, school districts, and children's camps through site visits and educational opportunities in order to provide the best level of care. The Immunization program works closely with NYSDOH to ensure that local healthcare providers are in compliance with State regulations.

In 2024, there were **140** immunization clinics held at CCDOH, serving **652** individuals!

The Immunization Program also hosted **50** community immunization clinics and served **781** individuals!

2024 Immunizations



The spike in Sept-Oct is attributed to seasonal respiratory virus vaccines

Staff Development

The Columbia County Department of Health held their annual Staff Development Day on October 3, 2024! On this day, they welcomed Christie VanHorne, M.Ed., MPH, who presented on health equity and provided equitable community-based solutions that staff can put into practice! Afterwards, staff enjoyed lunch and finished the day by participating in evidence-based programs that are aimed at improving health outcomes!



Healthy Neighborhoods Program



SCAN ME



Scan to request
a home visit!

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) is a **FREE** service that is funded by the New York State Department of Health which aims to improve the health, safety, and environmental living conditions for **all residents in Columbia County**. HNP specialists work with residents to reduce asthma triggers and indoor air pollution, and increase fire safety and radon testing in their homes. There are no income or age requirements to be eligible for the program; however, a **home visit is required**. During the home visit, HNP specialists may identify safety or health hazards and provide information and free materials to help improve the area of concern. All renters and homeowners in Columbia County are encouraged to participate! Visit our website (www.columbiacountyhealth.com/healthy-neighborhoods-program/) or call (518) 828-3358 for more information.

Programs & Services



Early Intervention & Preschool
Immunization Clinic
Communicable Disease
STD/STI Clinic
Arthropod Illness
Pool & Beach Regulation
Campgrounds & Children's Camps
Child Passenger Safety
Chronic Disease Interventions
Food Service Inspection
Lead Case Investigation &
Lead Poisoning Prevention
Migrant Labor Camps
Temporary Residences
Mobile Home Parks
Water Supply Safety
Sewage Disposal
Opioid Prevention
Walk With Ease
Bingocize



Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention
Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention (ATUPA)

Rabies Prevention & Control
Nuisance Complaints
Realty Subdivisions
Public Health Preparedness
Healthy Neighborhoods
Maternal Child Health
Public Health Education
Public Health Fellowship
Migrant Farm Worker Program



Patricia Abitabile

Tara Becker

Marsha Bishop

Samantha Black

Melissa Blass

Adrienne Burger

Alyssa Conn

Edward Coons

Emily Crimmins

Luci Cunningham

Martin DeGennaro

Irish Falkner

Pamela Ferber

Alejandro Fernandez

Brenda First

Kristy Frederick

Emily Haigh

Demba Keita

Luanne Kline

John Mabb

Rajkumarie Matthiesen

Christina McKenna

Colleen Melino

Chloe Meltz

Donna Monska

Timothy Moore

Elizabeth Neale

Christina Nelson

Cailey Nieto

Anna Papadakis

Marissa Pappalardi

Emily Quist

Chelsea Rice

Cheryl Ronsani

Yuleiva Rosa-Brown

Tisha Rothvoss

Joshua Ryder

Amy Schober

Miranda Utterback

Management Team

Victoria McGahan

Elizabeth Galle

Lauren Clark

Magnolia McBroom

2024 Staff



Special Acknowledgements

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Elizabeth Galle

Jennifer DePew

Pamela Ferber

Kristy Frederick

Jack Mabb

Victoria McGahan

Elizabeth Neale

Welcome & Farewell

New Staff in 2024!

Lauren Clark
Martin DeGennaro
Demba Keita
Christina McKenna
Tisha Rothvoss



Farewell!

Anna Papadakis
Patricia Abitabile
Luci Cunningham



What's Next in Public Health?

While the future presents continued challenges in all healthcare, The Columbia County Department of Health Immunization Program will continue to strive to promote vaccines to prevent diseases and illness to protect the people of Columbia County.

Kristy Frederick, RN, Immunization Coordinator

The landscape of public health is changing rapidly. The challenges rise before us: decreased funding, the spread of previously eliminated infections, and our continued work to communicate high-quality information and rebuild trust. But we have fought before, and we will stand strong now, with our consistent mission in sight: to protect, preserve, and promote the health of the people of Columbia County.

Emily Crimmins, PHN

The past several years have proven extremely challenging in the Early Intervention and Preschool programs, largely due to soaring transportation costs, provider shortages, the increased need for services and the rollout of the EI-hub. Looking ahead, our dedicated team will continue to adapt our programs to best serve the most vulnerable of Columbia County residents.

Lauren Clark, RN, BSN, Director of Children with Special Needs

The 2025-2030 Prevention Agenda recognizes that a wide range of factors influence the health of communities, including economic stability, social and community context, neighborhood and built environment, health care access and quality, and education access and quality. The inclusion of the social determinants of health is a necessary step to effectively address and reduce health disparities in our local community.

CCDOH Education Division