HO-CHUNK NATION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Ho-Chunk Nation

Department of Health

Annual Report 2024-2025

Contents

Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health

VISION of the Department of Health

Building a strong mind, body, and spirit together.

MISSION

To promote a high quality of life with holistic health care to those we serve with an emphasis on the traditional Ho-Chunk way of life; and to empower each individual and family to make informed decisions regarding their present and future health.

CORE VALUES

Respect

We recognize the inherent dignity of each individual and will treat each person with reverence and respect. The personal privacy and cultural diversity of each individual will be respected at all times.

Behaviors:

- Listen attentively to others
- Acknowledge and revere individual positions within the community (i.e. workplace, tribal community, etc.)
- Accept and honor personal and cultural differences

Empowerment

We support, protect and promote the rights of our patients, family members and staff, giving them opportunities to provide input toward improving the quality of their lives.

Behaviors:

- Elicit input from others in matters that relate to their wellbeing
- Advocate on behalf of our patients, families, and staff

Compassion

We are committed to treating all individuals with compassion and understanding.

Behaviors:

- Use appropriate tone, body language and words to respect individual dignity
- Be open-minded related to individual preferences
- Personalize our interactions as we navigate the processes of life and death

Stewardship

We will use fiscal, material and human resources to provide the greatest benefit to the individuals and communities we serve. We will be responsible for our use of resources and our care for the environment.

Behaviors:

- Recycle all materials appropriately
- Treat all we are entrusted with in a highly responsible and conscientious manner by assessing the fiscal, material, human resource, and environmental impact of decisions and act responsibly

Excellence

We are committed to the pursuit of excellence through ongoing training, performance measurement and self-evaluation.

Behaviors:

- Actively participate in performance measurement, self-evaluation, and improvement
- Acknowledge the importance and take personal responsibility for individual growth by completing required training on time and seeking out additional training, as needed.

Integrity

We will be honest and direct with one another, treating each other with honor in a genuine and open manner, while respecting Ho-Chunk culture and traditions.

Behaviors:

- Openly discuss issues related to each other with the appropriate individuals(s)
- Listen to each other to resolve issues at an individual and organizational level
- Acknowledge and respect the decision-making process

Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health

Behavioral Health Division

Division Director: Ruth A. Garvin

The mission of the Ho-chunk Nation Division of Behavioral Health is to provide services that promote wellness through healing the body, mind and spirit while incorporating Ho-chunk values.

Overview:

The Behavioral Health Division has been continuing in the developmental stages this fiscal year with filling needed positions in thee satellite offices, and ensuring financial responsibility, as well as identifying community needs and addressing challenging situations.

The Behavioral Health Division provides community education, outpatient alcohol, drug, and mental health services to tribal members, their children, other Nation tribal members, and employees/families of Ho-Chunk Nation. Residential treatment services are available to Ho-chunk tribal members dependent upon funds available. All office locations in Black River Falls, Tomah, La Crosse, Wittenberg, Nekoosa, Baraboo and Madison are licensed for both mental health services as well as substance abuse services. Services can be accessed by contacting Ho-Chunk Health Care Center at 715-284-9851 x 35014 or House of Wellness Clinic at 608-355-1240 x 35583.

Key Services:

Inpatient/outpatient treatment coordination
Empowering Women Program
Community Education
Peer Support Services
Telehealth Services (limited services in Minnesota)
Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)
Treatment Planning & Review
Grief Support
Fatherhood/Motherhood is Sacred
Positive Indian Parenting
Driving with Care
Moral Re-conation Therapy
Perinatal Mental Health
Mending Broken Hearts
Parent/Child Interaction Therapy
Eye Movement De-sensitization and Reprocessing Therapy
Linking Generations by Strengthening Relationships
Other services available, see Behavioral Health brochure

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- Received State Opioid Response (SOR4) Grant award in the amount of $462,490.11

- Received the Tribal Nation Opioid Abatement Effort Grant in the amount of $524,864.00
- Continued Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration Medically Assisted
- Treatment-Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction Grant award in the amount of $525,000.00 through 2026.
- Continued Urban Rural Women's Substance Use Services Grant award in the amount of $385,137.00 through December 31 2025.
- All Behavioral Health Policies and Procedures have been updated and will be continually reviewed.
- Utilizing staff more effectively in their specialty areas while using a combination of in-person and virtual services.
- Continue with Medically Assisted Treatment (Naltrexone, Vivitrol, and Suboxone) services with providers at both clinic locations.
- Increased use of Sublocade over Suboxone, which has less risk of misuse and diversion.
- Working collaboratively with medical providers at the House of Wellness and Ho-chunk Health Care Clinic-BRF to address mental health needs and substance use disorders as an Integrative Team process.
- Continue to identify agencies for residential treatment services contracting to increase bed availability to tribal members needing a higher level of care than outpatient services. Also utilizing transitional living and sober living facilities to increase the duration of sobriety for persons entering residential treatment.
- Shared Care Managers as an adjunct to the Medical providers, and support when needed to address needs of clients/patients as walk ins or in crisis situations.
- Expanded Peer Recovery Specialists to provide real-time support to clients and others struggling with substance use. In addition, these Peers can provide some crisis management, transport, education on life skills, chronic disease management, NARCAN use training, resource information, recovery management, transport for clients to Recovery Meetings and Events, such as Narcotics Anonymous or Alcohol Anonymous, as well as help with coordinating care.
- Annual Prevent Suicide Conference, November 2025, held in Wittenberg.
- Participation and presence at Public Health Block Parties events, pow wows, HCN department activities, and other community events to disseminate mental health/substance use information, and provide community education, i.e. Narcan training.
- Training completed in Moral Re-conation Therapy as an adjunct for clients participating on community corrections.
- Supporting seeking residential treatment services and sober living by collaborating with other community partners and Ho-chunk Nation programs/departments.
- Hostopi Hoci is a licensed entity, recognized as a sober living entity in Wisconsin.
- Obtained specialized training for some Behavioral Health Therapists in Youth Mental Health.
- Obtained specialized training for Behavioral Health staff in Mending Broken Hearts.

- Supported the HCN Department of Social Services and participated in the Family Healing Camp in August 2025 by presenting community education activities and interacting with community members.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- Implementation of Hostopi Hoci-Women's Recovery House, a temporary placement for persons awaiting residential treatment services. Difficulty with seeking staff due to limited applicants, or meeting criteria for the job description.
- Ensuring staff are consistent through each of the satellite offices with policies, and processes. Hiring of a Program Manager with experience in management of a Behavioral Health agency familiar with the Wisconsin statutes, client needs, and Ho-chunk Nation.
- Continue to address client needs, providing appropriate services, and timely as well. Addressing by obtaining feedback from clients, and reviewing processes on a regular basis.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

- Contract with a psychiatrist for mental health services and medication management.
- Continue to develop staff in areas of cultural awareness, AODA, mental health, and community knowledge and diversity.
- Explore options for an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for patients that are not progressing in traditional weekly outpatient treatment but do not need a higher level of care, such as residential and/or hospitalization. Primary goal is to promote and support long-term recovery through development of an ongoing plan of well-being.
- Continue to develop and implement preventative programming for children, youth, and family focusing on resiliency.
- Increase interaction in the community through education program presentations and development of support groups.
- Expand providing services to youth in the community, and other school districts for in-school counseling services.
- Expand group education in the jail settings to other locations.
- Expand Narcan training to all the Ho-chunk communities.

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

- Continue partnerships with Department of Corrections, Jackson County for Kids, Native American Fatherhood and Families Association, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Urban Population Research, and other Ho-chunk Nation Departments.
- Continue to work with billing to streamline processes and assure timely billing occurs for continued revenue. Identify revenue resources not currently being utilized.
- Seek out appropriate grants for funding purposes that align with the Behavioral Health Strategic Plan.

Community and Client Contacts:

Peer Recovery Specialists supportive contacts: 738
Peer Recovery Specialists Community member interaction at events/contacts: 5847
Behavioral Health client contacts with providers: 3631

There was a 13% in the first six months of 2025 from the end of the six months in 2024. Behavioral Health received 91 requests for financial assistance for residential, transitional, sober living, or mental health services from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Photos:

Family Healing Camp 2024

Community Health Division

Division Director: Samantha Casey

Mission: Dedicated to preserving and promoting a healthy lifestyle while incorporating the traditions of our Ho-Chunk people.

Overview:

Community Health is comprised of three divisions community health nursing which focuses on skilled nursing and caregiver services, foot care, and health screening. Our Health & Wellness division which focuses on preventative and chronic healthcare management offering a variety of educational classes such as Balancing Your Life with Diabetes, Native Food for Life and many more. The Health & Wellness division also offers one on one nutrition and exercise physiologist appointments. The third division within community health is Food Distribution which is dedicated to providing our tribal members with supplemental healthy food packages to 17 counties throughout Wisconsin.

Community Health is honored to care for our tribal members and thank them for allowing us into their homes and lives and we look forward to continuing to provide quality care and services to our service populations.

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- The food distribution program has added a couple of new food options such as extra virgin olive oil and locally sourced wild rice.
- 43 participants in FY25 attended a Health & Wellness class (BYLD, NFFLO, and Prevent T2) and 219 patients attended one-on-one education with either a Nutritionist or Exercise Physiologist.
- Per the 2023 & 2024 annual DART report/Audit for SDPI:
    - Average weight loss of 2 pounds by class participants
    - Average decrease in A1c by .6 for class participants
- Held a variety of community events (Green Corn, Diabetes Walks, Foraging Walks, and Canoe Trip) hosting 1,302 participants for all community events.
- Health & Wellness also offers a variety of classes (cooking, canning, Youth and TAU) providing education to 1,870 participants.
- The Community Health Nursing division was able to onboard Nurses in all of our services locations. This is a huge accomplishment retaining staff to serve our tribal members. Building and maintain relationships is important and critical for the services we provide. This allows for effective communication, collaboration and personal growth for our staff and for the patients on our caseload.
- The Community Health Nursing division has been seeing consistent numbers of patients at their monthly foot clinics. this is reducing patients needing to be seen by providers and ultimately podiatry. This is saving on insurance costs with seeing specialist and co-pays associated with foot care.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- The Food Distribution Program has hit some roadblocks with being able to transition into a grocery store style concept. We have since been able to get things back on track and will hopefully be able to move forward with our plans soon. With this new concept and technology FD will be able to streamline services for our patrons.
- The food distribution program filled the Food Distribution Outreach Specialist position which was previously held by Susan Wilcox for many years. With Shelena Brown, who has proven to be a perfect addition to the team and has transitioned into the position seamlessly.
- There continues to be a decline in class participation for Prevent T2 classes, as a way to combat this the H&W division will be creating a new curriculum that will not only provide education but also opportunities for hands on activities.
- Communication between community health nursing division and other divisions within the health department had become an issue. As a corrective action to this we have initiated meetings to be conducted on a more regular basis depending on the need either monthly or bi-monthly. This has led to better communication and understanding of services provided by the Community Health Nursing division.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

- Once the Food Distribution Program is up and running in the new conceptualized store, we will look more towards the future on different services that can be provided with the switch in our software program.
- The Health & Wellness division would like to expand our services to the youth population as we primarily serve the 18 and older population. In the recent years, there has been an increase in children being diagnosed with type 2 and we would like to get a jump start on providing education and classes that will help them to live a healthier lifestyle early on. In order to be able to do this we have applied for a new grant that will help to support this endeavor.
- The Community Health Nursing division continues to look to the future and is trying to find the best path that suits not only the needs of the health department but also the needs of our people. Currently, exploring the idea of entering into a Third-Party Agreement between the State of WI, HCN, and a Managed Care Organization of our choosing. This agreement will help to widen the variety of services that the Community Health Nursing division can offer its patients that would be eligible for this program.

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

- The Health & Wellness division applied and received two grants the Healthy Foods grant that was offered through DHS and the Data Modernization grant that was wrote for in collaboration with the Health Department's QI division. These grants will be utilized to better some of our programmatic data mining issues and to renovate the community gardens that the H&W division oversees.
- The Community Health Nursing division continues to look for grant opportunities that fit the needs of the division.

Environmental Health Division (DEH)

Division Director: Rob Voss

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- DEH completed the Environmental Health digital plan review process for Phase 1 of the Beloit Casino project. This work has been a joint effort with the Department of Business and the HBG engineering firm. There are 16 aspects of Phase 1 that required Environmental Health reviews.
- DEH is the lead Division for the Department of Health Market Demand Analysis and Master Facility Planning Study to increase overall department efficiency and optimizing facility space.
- DEH held 5 community Rabies/Parvo vaccination events in FY 2025. 236 tribally owned pets received rabies vaccinations, 150 pets received parvo/distemper vaccinations, and 34 feline RCP.
- The DEH Injury Prevention program provided 310 car seats for tribal members including children enrolled in the 6 Ho-Chunk Head Start centers in FY 25. The Injury Prevention program also trained 7 Child Passenger Safety Technicians, held one car seat check event, attended three health fairs, and implemented the Buckle Bear car seat program for Head Start children at six centers. The Injury Prevention Program has 19 trained Child Passenger Technicians to cover the service population. In addition, the program trained 13 Head Start staff on school bus safety.
- The Injury Prevention program provided 42 smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to community members including education on proper installation and maintenance. The Injury Prevention program partnered with the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center and House of Wellness Clinic to distribute 22 life jackets and water safety information during well child exams. The IP program has reached nearly 2,000 individuals over social media products to provide education on Car Seats, Injury Prevention and Wisconsin State Laws.
- The Injury Prevention Program purchase and decaled a new Trailer.
- The Injury Prevention Program - Midwest Tribal Coalition provided four support meetings & Continuing Education Units (CEU's) for tribes, Local Health Departments, Hospital Staff, law enforcement, and other partners for Child Passenger Safety Technicians.
- The DEH Emergency Preparedness Program Distributed 500 Emergency Preparedness Kits & Go Bags.
- The Emergency Preparedness Program held four Tabletop Exercises for; HHCC & HOW clinics on Workplace violence, a Health Department Medical Counter Measures Exercise and a Health Department and HHCC & HOW Measles exercise.
- DEH provided 57 food facility inspections ensuring Tribally owned facilities are following Tribal Ordinance 3HCC6. The Tribal Sanitarian also provided a variety of home consultations including bed bug, rat/mice infestations, human health hazard, and

hoarding inspections. Quarterly food safety newsletters were distributed to all tribal food establishments. Food safety training was provided to 21 Head Start employees as part of the orientation process. Food safety education was provided at the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center open house education fair. During the event cutting boards and food thermometers were distributed. Food safety information was provided to the Department of Agriculture to prevent exposure to E.coli.

- DEH provided community education related to tick borne diseases. Information included: tick removal kits (250 distributed), tick identification cards, and tick exposure prevention measures.
- DEH was awarded a National Indian Health Board Climate Ready Tribe Initiative grant in FY 2025. This funding opportunity provided resources towards community climate and health education, community tools to mitigate the impact of climate change, and assessment planning/community response frameworks.
- DEH updated all Environmental Health policies this fiscal year.
- The DEH coordinated the following construction and maintenance projects in FY 25:
    - Community Health Office and Ho-Chunk Health Care Center cement sidewalk replacement project
    - Ho-Chunk Health Care Center exterior pillar and stonework project
    - Ho-Chunk Health Care Center nurses station call light upgrade project
    - Ho-Chunk Health Care Center HVAC energy wheel replacement project
    - House of Wellness Finance air handler blower replacement project
    - House of Wellness basement plumbing upgrade project
- The DEH Onsite Well and Septic Program completed construction projects through the IHS 121 grant and Health Third Party Revenue funding which included the construction of 8 wells and 7 septic systems, resolution of 42 septic system emergencies, 34 out of water well emergencies, 30 well and pressure system repairs, and educated 104 Tribal members on well, septic, and water treatment systems.
- DEH continues to oversee the operation and maintenance of 7 wastewater treatment systems and 9 community water systems. During FY 25 no major outages occurred and all facilities received top scores during the FY 25 IHS Operation and Maintenance surveys.
- The DEH has overseen the construction of water and sewer infrastructure for the Village West Development.
- DEH completed the following IHS and EPA funded water and sewer infrastructure projects:
    - BE-22-M81 upgrade/replacement of control panels for the Ho-Chunk Village Wastewater Treatment System.
    - BE-22-M82 upgrade and replacement of deficiencies within the Blue Wing Collection and Treatment System.
    - BE-21-OM1i purchase of a UTV for the completion of operation and maintenance activities for public water systems.
- Water Quality monitoring was completed on (18) tribal streams during Ho-Chunk FY25. Monitoring included chemical sampling, fish surveys, macroinvertebrate sampling and habitat assessments.

- A Water Quality Assessment Report was drafted for all tribal streams monitored during the period January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024.
- DEH drafted a Non-point Source contamination Assessment Report and Non-point Source contamination Management Plan using EPA Gulf Hypoxia Program grant funding. These documents are part of the Treatment in a Manner Similar to a State (TAS) application that will be submitted to EPA Region 5 in FY26 to establish an EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program within DEH.
- Invasive plant management actions were completed on approximately 467 acres of tribal land in Shawano County during FY25 using BIA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant funding.
- Invasive plant management actions were completed on approximately 1,100 acres of the Sacred Earth parcel in Sauk County during FY25 using BIA Invasive Species Program grant funding.
- Invasive plant management actions were completed on approximately 442 acres of tribal land in Jackson County during FY25 using BIA Invasive Species Program grant funding.
- Invasive plant management actions were completed on approximately 365 acres of the Kickapoo trust lands during FY25 using BIA Invasive Species Program grant funding.
- The Environmental Science Program Manager provided hands-on environmental education programs and field trips for (384) tribal and non-tribal youth and adults on nine occasions including U.W. Madison classes and many field trips with partner agencies and non-profits including Natural Resources Foundation, WI Master Naturalists, WI Association of Environmental Education and the National Tribal Historic Preservation Officers Conference.
- DEH completed (21) environmental reviews for development projects funded or facilitated by Indian Health Service, Housing and Urban Development, BIA Roads Program and HHCDA during the period.
- DEH submitted an EPA Inflation Reduction Act 60105(b) Continuous Air Monitor Grant application during the year and was awarded $80,785 in support of activities to replace the existing Particulate Matter monitors at the two ambient air quality monitoring stations located near Black River Falls and Tomah.
- DEH submitted an EPA Clean Air Act Section 103 supplemental funding application during the period and was awarded an additional $24,738 in support of air program activities for the period 10/1/24-9/30/26.
- DEH submitted multiple non-competitive grant applications and work-plans during the year in support of the EPA Clean Air Act Section 103, EPA Clean Water Act Section 106, EPA CERCLA Section 128 and EPA CERCLA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. These recurring non-competitive grants total approximately $268,770 in annual funding that support (3) DEH staff.
- DEH prepared BIA invasive species and BIA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant proposals and is awaiting notification on status of funding.
- DEH Brownfields Tribal Response Program completed field inventory of all tribal parcels with ingress and egress. Environmental hazards have been ranked and prioritized for clean-up as funding becomes available.
- DEH completed the primary to secondary electrical feed and metering conversion project at the Sacred Earth parcel. The project included installation of new underground service, new transformers, new panels and meters and deconstruction of the original overhead

service including lines, utility poles and pole mounted transformers which were a safety and liability concern.

- DEH completed the LED lighting upgrade project of the East and West Warehouses at the Sacred Earth parcel during the year resulting in the replacement of inefficient sodium halide and fluorescent fixtures with (178) energy efficient LED fixtures.
- DEH stockpiled and facilitated the proper disposal of (27.54) tons of railroad ties at the Sacred Earth parcel during FY25.
- DEH received notification from EPA Region 5 that the Treatment as an Affected State (TAS) Application for authorities under the Clean Air Act Section 505(a)2 and Section 105 was approved by the EPA Region 5 Administrator via a letter dated July 18, 2024.
- DEH Air Quality Program conducted (12) mold investigations and (2) radon tests during the year upon the request of Tribal members or other tribal departments. Corresponding written recommendations were sent to the homeowners and occupants.
- DEH Air Quality Program operated two ambient air monitoring stations located near Tomah and Black River Falls that are designed to quantify the levels of Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10) in the outside air. This data is being used to compare measured levels to the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for particulate matter.
- DEH replaced the two existing particulate matter air monitors at the air stations with new particulate monitors that are more reliable and less expensive and easier to maintain. These monitors were purchased by DEH after receiving an EPA grant award from the Inflation Reduction Act.
- DEH facilitated the MOU agreement between the Ho-Chunk Nation and the WI Dept. of Natural Resources regarding cooperative air monitoring under the WDNR Primary Quality Assurance Organization.
- All previously stated accomplishments are aligned with Department of Health and Division of Environmental Health goals, strategies and the Department of Health's Strategic Plan.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- Implementation of the Infor accounting system prevented DEH from accessing budgets for nearly 5 months. This made it very difficult to manage our budgets and conduct regular financial work such as paying invoices. Better planning and training would have been helpful. The implementation of Infor has also negatively impacted our ability to order supplies, specifically from Staples and Amazon.
- With the loss of the Treasury Grants Manager in March certain grant fiscal functions have not been completed in a timely manner which makes operating and closing grants very difficult. Having multiple people in Treasury trained to complete these tasks would be helpful.
- The Division of Environmental Health continues to address PFAS contamination within the Brockway Sanitary District Drinking Water System and private wells on French Island. This included supplying replacement filters for 104 reverse osmosis water filtration systems for tribal members homes and rental units affected by the PFAS contamination.
- Another challenge that DEH is facing is the increasing costs to provide water and sewer services due to inflation while having stagnant water and wastewater revenue. The revenue generated by these services fund repair and maintenance of the water and sewer systems. With a lack of funding there are concerns of funding emergency repairs that

may be needed in the future. The water and sewer rates have been studied and recommendations will be made to Legislature to consider changing the water and sewer rates through HCN ordinance updates.

- DEH has attempted a two-paygrade increase for the Maintenance Worker II-Health job description but due to the compensation and classification project these efforts were held up. Unfortunately, the compensation and classification project did not address this job description even though this upgrade is very much needed as the position is still well below industry standards. DEH will be readdressing this issue now that the job description moratorium has been lifted.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

- DEH will continue the Environmental Health comprehensive plan review for the Beloit Casino Project. This Environmental Health plan review process for Phase 1 & 2 of the Beloit Casino project will includes a digital plan review, a digital menu/service review, and as-built site visits for all food, lodging, and swimming pools.
- DEH will work with Legislature to revise the Swimming Pool Ordinance in 2026.
- DEH will work with Legislature to consider changing the water and sewer rates through HCN ordinance updates.
- DEH will complete the Department of Health Market Demand Analysis and Master Facility Planning Study for increased department efficiency.
- DEH will seek grant funding for injury prevention and environmental programming.
- DEH will continue work with HHCDA, IHS, and Heena Development to complete the Village West water and sewer infrastructure project.
- The DEH Invasive Species program will be inventorying an additional 1,000 acres of trust land in the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. This will build upon the existing inventory of over 5,000 acres.
- The DEH will continue to address remediation of environmental issues which will include the management of human health hazard homes, the removal of abandoned mobile homes, and clean-up activities at the Sacred Earth parcel.
- DEH will start implementation of the following water and sewer infrastructure projects. This will include engineering work, contracting and oversight of the projects.
    - Replacement of the Wazee Area Wastewater Treatment Plant emergency generator.
    - Completion of the Blue Wing Lift Station upgrades.
    - Completion of the Village West Lift Station
- DEH will oversee the completion of Food Distribution truck parking lot paving project.
- DEH will oversee the completion of the Food Distribution lobby and grocery store concept upgrade project.
- DEH will oversee the completion of the Wittenberg Health Office drywall repair project.
- DEH will oversee the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center HVAC control upgrade and air balancing project

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

- The DEH is managing 37 grants totaling approximately $9.67 million and has not had any budget or programing auditing issues. These grants include funding for wells, septic systems, emergency repairs, clinic maintenance and improvement funding, community water and sewer upgrades, injury prevention, emergency preparedness, climate change/community resilience, invasive species, wildlife habitat protection, and EPA programs such as clean air, clean water, general assistance, Brownfields, and sustainability. Funding partnerships include IHS, NIHB, BIA, CDC, USDA, and the State of Wisconsin.
- The DEH is continuously seeking new grant funding sources and will continue to do so in the future.
- The DEH oversees 10 additional budgets which include NPD, Health third party revenue, and 6 restricted accounts. In total, DEH oversees 47 budgets totaling approximately $14.4 million annually.
- DEH continues to actively participate in partnerships with local public health programs, Indian Health Service, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Safe Kids Coulee Region, Midwest Tribal Child Passenger Safety Technician Coalition, Wisconsin Indigenous Public Health Network, WI Climate & Health Action Together Coalition, Wisconsin Indigenous Public Health Network, Wisconsin Environmental Health Association, the Badger Oversight Team, Badger Restoration Advisory Board, WI Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, Monroe Co. Invasive Species Working Group, National Association of Wetland Managers Tribal Advisory Committee, EPA Region 5 Tribal Wetland Working Group Advisory Committee, and the WDNR Air Monitoring and Management Advisory Group, as well as partnerships with all granting agencies.

Photos:

Village West Lift Station 1

Village West Lift Station 2

Grant Funded Injury Prevention Trailers #1 and #2

CPS Techs and new trailer

CPS Tech classroom training

Buckle Bear and CPS Techs

CPS Tech Instructor

Air Station Monitor Upgrade Project

Ho-Chunk Village West Waterline installation

Health Information Systems Division

Supervisor: Kateri Killian-Lambert

Overview:

Maintain core Information Technology systems along with collecting, storing, managing and transmitting patient electronic medical records (EMR). Research and implement new technology hardware and software. Network tracking & monitoring, oversee email services, remote support, maintain software as a service programs, troubleshooting and technical support.

The Health Information Systems (HIS) Division demonstrated remarkable adaptability and technical leadership over the past fiscal year, supporting nearly every operational and clinical component of the Department of Health, through support tickets, significantly enhanced infrastructure, cybersecurity, and project management systems.

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- Successfully transitioned to a new firewall with routing optimization for security and performance
- Conducted core network upgrade at multiple sites including House of Wellness, Nekoosa, and the Black River Falls clinic, with the introduction of Patchbox cabling systems for improved patch management
- Onboarded IT Security and HIS Training personnel
- Developed a new hardened workstation image and prepared for deployment
- IVR installation (subsequently, use was discontinued after 6-month period)
- Per Mar panic buttons moved to cellular connections for alarm system
- Kiosks and tablets installed for time and attendance
- Implemented DNA Center and ISE port security for all Health facilities
- Multiple staff trained in CompTIA A+, M365 Administration, NextGen system workflows, device imaging protocols as well as continuing education in other IT disciplines for the advancement of Health Information Systems.
- Maintained prompt service response time and completed 4,240 service tickets for 238 employees/end users in the Department of Health.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- Inconsistent network performance at HOW was resolved entirely through inspection and configuration of network devices, connections, and routing
- Lack of communication between Medical Services and HIS team was addressed by creating a biweekly Med Services meeting to promote communication and improve EHR functionality
- Underpowered switch closets at remote health offices improved with new UPS hardware

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

- Began planning of SD-WAN system for network and internet redundancy
- Began migration of NextGen EHR to cloud hosting
- NextGen Mobile implementation with eventual move to Ambient Assist for medical record dictation
- Implement Population Health Module in Nextgen for advanced quality reporting and patient outreach
- Upgrade NextGen electronic medical record software from 6.2021 to Version 8.0
- NextGen SQL Reporting installation and configuration to supply additional care quality reports for medical providers
- Migration to Windows 11 and Office 2024
- Intune Device Management
- Upgrade of PRC module for RPMS
- Upgrade of Orchard lab software for security purposes and additional functionality

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

- IHS grant funding covers salary for 50% of HIS staff

Medical Services Division

Division Director: Rebecca Shawley

Overview:

The Medical Services Division provides comprehensive health care to the Ho-Chunk Nation at two ambulatory clinics, in Black River Falls and Baraboo, WI, and is committed to improving the health outcomes of our patients and, through collaboration with other divisions, the rest of the Nation. We offer full spectrum primary care, including prenatal, pediatric, and adult medicine; podiatry; dental; optical; and recently radiology services. We manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as acute illnesses. The Division is led by the Director of Medical Services, who focuses on logistics and operations of both clinic sites, and the Medical Director, a physician who provides care to patients and focuses on efforts to improve quality of care and on leading and supervising the clinical teams.

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

Transitions within Medical Services

- The Director of Medical Services assumed the additional responsibility of Acting Executive Director of Health in a dual role capacity on July 29, 2024.
- New Executive Director of Health, Penny Ybarra confirmed in October, 2024. New Director of Medical Services, Rebecca Shawley.
- New positions created to add administrative support and to ensure the highest quality of care for our patients. All of these positions have been filled and include:

  Referral and Prior Authorization Specialist-to improve the consistency and speed of access for the next level of care for our patients.

  Registered Nurse Quality Coordinator-to address gaps and barriers to care and to ensure we are meeting benchmarks and standards of care goals for clinic patients.

  Optical Manager-To address administrative and Optical store work at both clinics to ensure Optometrists more direct patient care time.

- Best wishes for Dr. Kevin Gilmartin, Pediatrician who resigned in November, 2024.
- Medical Services onboarded new dental hygienist Dena Ortgies-Nakamura at the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center in January 2025, dramatically increasing access to dental care for patients in the Black River Falls area.
- Director of Medical Services attended AAI twice yearly meeting with UW-Wisconsin Madison regarding preceptorship of medical students at HHCC with Dr. Cox in December 2024. Two more students are lined up for preceptorship with Dr. Cox in the Spring.

- The AAAHC accreditation survey was completed January 6 & 7th at the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center and the House of Wellness Clinic. This was a multi division effort and a huge undertaking. Congratulations to all for earning another 3-year accreditation.
- Medical Services onboarded two new Radiology Tech II's. The Rad Tech for House of Wellness started in May 2025 and the Rad Tech for the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center started in July 2025. These positions have been open for a long time partially due to a shortage of radiology techs in the job market. We are happy to resume radiology services in-house at both clinics.
- Family Nurse Practitioner Christine Seguin retired 6/30/25 after over 25 years of service to the Ho-Chunk Nation department of Health. We wish her all the best.
- Sarah Staff, Family Nurse Practitioner was hired to fill the vacancy. Sarah comes to us with many years' experience from Black River Memorial Hospital. Welcome Sarah!

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- Recruitment and retention have been a problem for many divisions within the Health Department. To that effect, many Health department directors began having monthly meetings in December 2024 to address recruitment and retention issues. Through this collaboration and the pooling of resources, many positions within the department of health have been filled. With the success of filling vacant positions, these meetings will continue, both to fill any upcoming vacancies and to address retention of current employees.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

In December 2024, health directors met with Action Strategy and Wipfli to close out the current 3-year strategic plan and to begin planning the strategy for the next 3 years for the department of health. A large effort from Medical Services in the new strategic plan will to implement more Ho-Chunk language and culture into the department. We have begun by inviting tribal members to present on Ho-Chunk culture at our monthly clinic staff meetings. In the future we would like to bring language classes or an instructor into the clinic to make it easier for clinic staff to attend.

A feasibility study was conducted by Wipfli and involved all the directors of health, to take a look at our physical space, processes, and data to see where and how we can expand our services and to show us what our priorities should be in doing so. The survey completed in July 2025 and we are anxiously awaiting results.

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

Continue partnership with Black River Memorial Hospital, Mayo Health Systems, Gundersen Health Systems, Marshfield Clinic, St. Clare Hospital, and other local health facilities.

Photos:

Ho-Chunk Health Care Center

Rebecca Shawley
Director of Medical Services

Laura Pattison, M.D.
Medical Director

Neil Cox, M.D.
Family Physician

Alex Kivimaki, M.D.
Family Physician

Shannon Sullivan, M.D.
Pediatrician

Sue Christopherson, FNP
Family Nurse Practitioner

Sarah Staff, FNP
Family Nurse Practitioner

Danielle Peterson, DDS
Dentist

Rachel Lundberg, O.D.
Optometrist

Charmaine Brandt
Lab Supervisor

Joshua Van Ruden
Radiology Tech.

Amanda Erickson
Nurse Supervisor

Courtnay Blackdeer
Clinic Office Manager

Starlyn Pettibone
Pat. Services Supervisor

Ho-Chunk Nation

House of Wellness

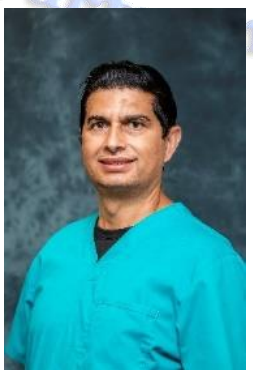
Amy Delong, M.D.
Family Physician

Mary Sabourin, M.D.
Family Physician

Katie Peper, FNP
Family Nurse Practitioner

Kiana Beaudin, PA
Physician Assistant

Tom Zirkel, M.D.
Podiatrist



Ram Rizal, DDS
Dentist

Lisa Peterson, OD
Optometrist

Kali Rice
Radiology Tech.

Patrician Houghton
Medical Services Coord.

Nicole Olson
Nurse Supervisor

Weeta Montelongo
Pat. Services Supervisor

Jodel Greendeer
Clinic Office Manager

Pharmacy Division

Division Director: Eileen Romasanta

Overview:

The Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN) Pharmacy Division consists of pharmacy operations located at the Health Care Center in Black River Falls, WI, and the House of Wellness in Baraboo, WI. Each location provides pharmacy services to distinct patient populations, which include Native American/American Indian enrolled members of any Federally Recognized Tribe, non-Tribal HCN Employees, and any person presenting with a valid prescription. In addition, within the Pharmacy Division, several pharmacists serve a dual role, both working in the pharmacy and also working in a clinical capacity, serving as provider extenders. Clinical pharmacists provide office visits, educating, treating, and managing patients with a variety of health conditions, including psychiatry, smoking cessation, hormonal contraception and diabetes. This innovative and complex pharmacy model creates a special opportunity for revenue generation, enhanced clinical pharmacy services, and the highest level of health care.

Key Services:

- Prescription mail-out services, when requested, for patients across the country
- Medication synchronization, by request, to receive medications at the same time and to promote medication adherence
- Pharmacy technology integration through the mobile app, RxLocal, as well as texting notification
- Patient-centered diabetes management, including medication and non-medication management and continuous glucose monitoring education, and follow-up
- Narcan training and availability to promote community opioid overdose response
- Psychiatric clinical services and medication management, including nutritional psychiatry
- Nicotine Treatment Services
- Hormonal contraceptive management
- Non-Tribal Member Prescription Co-Payment Incentive: zero co-pay for most generic medications

- Comprehensive medication reviews to review timing of medications, any side effect concerns, review medication list for any similar medications or best medications for guidelines.

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- The pharmacy dispensed 10.6% more prescriptions compared to last year. In addition, we served 10% more Tribal members this year compared to last year.
- Revenue increased by 20% compared to last year. The increase in revenue is a result of Tribal members having insurance, so the pharmacy can get reimbursed for prescriptions, as well as Tribal members utilizing our health clinics so the pharmacy can purchase medications at a discounted price. In addition, efforts by the pharmacy to follow insurance preferences for medications continue to provide revenue to the tribe.
- Added a pharmacy clerk to the House of Wellness location, that has allowed for a more efficient workflow, allowing pharmacy technicians and pharmacists to process prescriptions, provide clinical review and answer questions more effectively.
- The pharmacy division is fully staffed at both locations, for the first time in at least 4 years. Having a fully staffed division allows for more efficient workflows, increase services offered and improve compliance with pharmacy rules and regulations.
- Pharmacy moved from USPS to UPS as the preferred mail-out service. Moving to UPS has improved mail-out prescription turnaround time, as well as decrease the number of lost prescriptions.
- Expanded Medication Assisted Treatment options by adding Sublocade as a medication option at House of Wellness. Sublocade is only allowable as a clinic administered medication.
- Our clinical pharmacists and advance practice pharmacists provided a total of 414 visits in diabetes, hormonal contraception, smoking cessation and psychiatry. While this is a decrease by 28%, in total visits offered, the clinical pharmacist psychiatric visits increased by 13%. Ho-Chunk Health Care Center pharmacy is fully staffed with pharmacy technicians.
- Secured 2,400 free Narcan doses for the Nation through state of WI Narcan Direct program. In the last 12 months, Pharmacy has worked with Behavior Health and Public Health to provide Narcan and Fentanyl education, as well as Narcan kits to employees and community members across the Nation. Pharmacy provided doubled the amount of Narcan training events provided.
- Competed a Quality Improvement study on antibiotic prescribing. The purpose of the study was to measure the impact of prescriber feedback and guideline education on antibiotic prescribing. As a result of this study, pharmacy was able to partner with Ferris State University to utilize their CHARM prescribing dashboard. This dashboard allows the better data reporting on antibiotic prescribing patterns and how prescribing practices compare to guidelines.

Accomplishments related to division FY 2024/2025 goals and strategies

- Goal 1: Decrease turnaround time for prescription dispensing. Objectively this goal was met as prescriptions with no issues are processed within 24 hours.
- Goal 2: Improve patient medication adherence by reaching out to patients by day 10 of prescription being ready. This goal has been met as automatic text messages are sent not only when prescriptions are ready, but also on day 5 and a phone call is made by day 13 if a prescription hasn't been picked up.
- Goal 3: Align employee goals with overall pharmacy division strategic plan. Individual development plans were completed to support staff goals and professional development while also improving the pharmacy division as a whole.

- Goal 4: Reduce medication spend by creating a preferred medication list for uninsured or when insurance doesn't cover medication. This goal has been partially met. While there are some instances where another medication may be offered as an alternative, it is not consistent and at this time, does not hold true for all medications and people. Hold prescription turnaround time to within 24 hours, when there are no external factors preventing the pharmacy from processing the prescription.
- Goal 5: Improve productivity of the pharmacy leadership team and move forward with goals and strategic priorities. With the pharmacy being fully staffed, pharmacy is able to move forward with items that have been on hold. Leadership team able to meet regularly and staff able to take improve day to day workflow, as well as take on projects they had not been able to do in the past.
- With the pharmacy being fully staff, there has been a focus on ensuring a strong workflow foundation and focus on staff training and ensure staff are trained in all pharmacy workflows.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- How information is reported and how data is pulled has been a barrier for identifying how we are doing on goals related to prescription turnaround time and adherence. In addition, the multiple softwares used by pharmacy and the clinic do not "talk", making it a lengthier process to pull reports. While workarounds have been identified, efforts are being made to make these processes more efficient.
- Despite now being fully staffed, the continuous increase in volume, as well as increased time to focus on compliance and training has caused intermittent availability in pharmacy services. Pharmacy is continuously reviewing staffing needs, as well as services provided to identify if services need to be paused or pulled back. In addition, reviewing what services provided overlap with other divisions of Health and how to best coordinate these services.
- Pharmacy has outgrown the space at both clinics, but especially at House of Wellness. Limited space has made it difficult to keep proper medication stock, shipping supplies and has led to errors. A feasibility study for the Health Department was conducted and results of that study will identify priority areas and how best to expand services and space.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

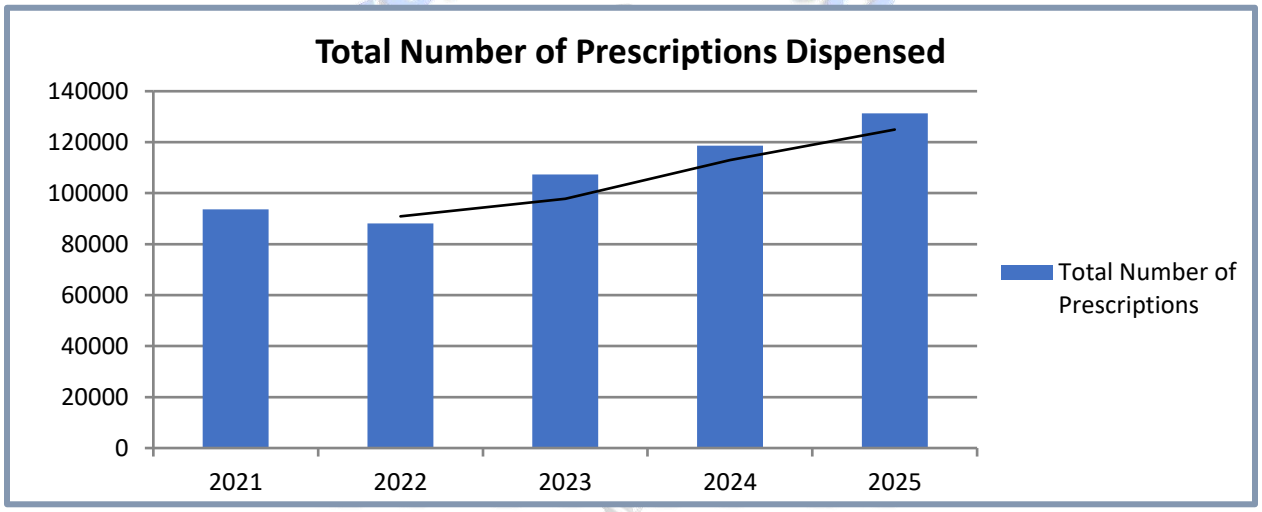
- Focus in the next fiscal year centers around improving patient health and outcomes. Pharmacy plans to provide comprehensive medication reviews in the community, work with the health team to improve diabetes outcomes as well as collaborate in care for other health conditions, and focus on Narcan training and harm reduction education.
- Improve communication to patients regarding pharmacy programs and services by increasing social media presence, utilizing the Hocak Worak and distributing more information out into the community.
- Focus on 340B compliance to meet regulations by Health Resources and Services Administration, as well as ensure pharmacy can continue to benefit from the 340B program. The 340B program allows pharmacy to purchase medications at a discounted cost to support financial sustainability. Ability to use 340B medications is dependent upon patients being cared for by our providers.

- Increase pharmacist recruitment and pharmacy intern recruitment by contracting with more schools, as well as research options for student housing.
- Incorporate Ho-Chunk language into pharmacy workflow by having staff learn introductory greetings and phrases, incorporate language into the voicemail greeting and add signage incorporating language.

Total Prescriptions Dispensed and Revenue Generation:

Total Prescriptions Dispensed:

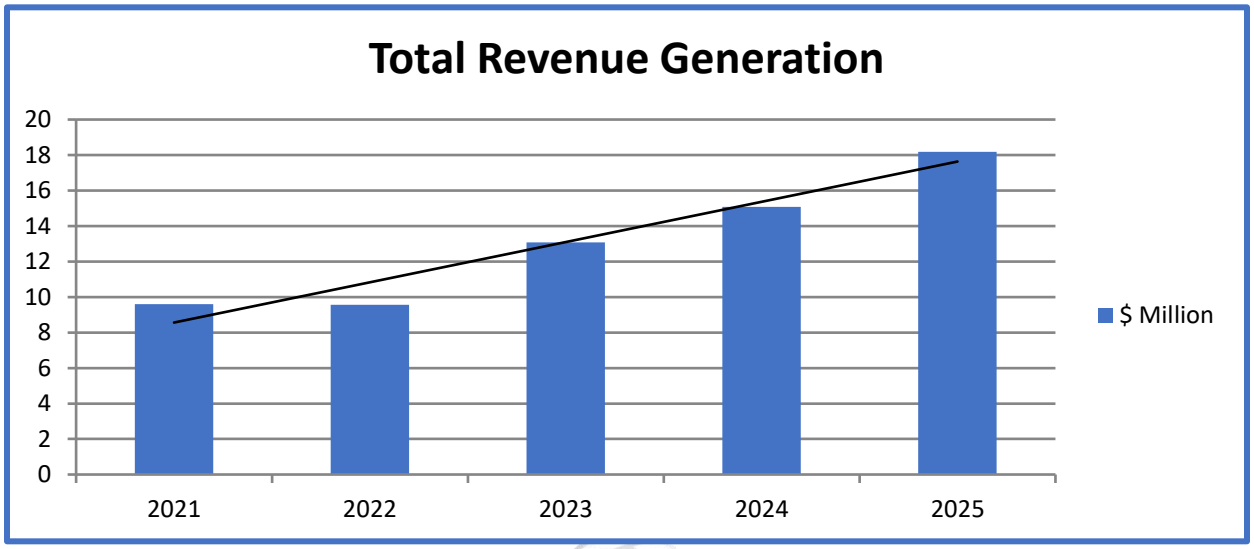
- F.Y. 2021 – 93,647
- F.Y. 2022 – 88,170
- F.Y. 2023 – 107,339
- F.Y. 2024- 118,642
- F.Y. 2025- 131,258



Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health

Total Revenue Generated:

- F.Y. 2021- $9.60 Million
- F.Y. 2022- $9.56 Million
- F.Y. 2023- $13.07 Million
- F.Y. 2024- 15.08 Million
- F.Y. 2025- 18.18 Million



Photos:

Pharmacy Division at Health All Staff Meeting

General Council 2024

Celebrating Halloween. After passing out candy to Head Start

Purple for National Epilepsy Awareness Month in November

Public Health Division

Division Director: Kandyce Dunlap

Overview:

The Division of Public Health is a comprehensive program the strives to provide primary and secondary prevention for the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health service population. We provide disease prevention and monitoring, connecting community members to health resources, providing health education and skills, assessing community needs, implementing prevention programs, and Public Health Accreditation. These are implemented through Public Health Nursing, Public Health Workers, Public Health Specialists, and a Public Health Director.

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- Implemented our Tribal Health Assessment to host 10 community conversations to get feedback on factors that help our people and their families to be healthy and things that make it harder to be healthy.
    - Analyzed qualitative data from the sessions to develop main themes
    - Developed Tribal Health Assessment Report that will be launched in FY 2026
- Implemented half of the Community Health Improvement Plan prioritization sessions to gather feedback on what priorities the Health Department should begin with.
- Connected community members to resources and education to meet their whole health needs including mental, emotional, social, and preventative health needs
    - 2024 Summer Block Parties during FY2025 were Tomah, Nekoosa, Madison, Black River Falls reaching 690 individuals
    - 2025 Summer Block Parties during FY2025 were Wittenberg and Tomah totaling 265 individuals
    - Provided 115 referrals for services.
- Provided suicide prevention training to staff and community members: 14 virtual and in person sessions
- Implemented virtual education series to address awareness of services, connection to culture, and promotion of resources to meet health needs
    - 3 Native American Heritage Month sessions
    - 23 Ważookį Woo'ehi sessions
- Implemented Mental Health Wellbeing day for youth as a kickoff to Prevent Suicide Hosto with activities for overall mental, emotional, and spiritual health for youth, reaching 193 individuals
- Partnered with Wisconsin Tribes in the Wisconsin Indigenous Public Health Network to attend one forum and host one forum at D1CC with representation from 10 of the 11 Wisconsin tribes.
- Update and standardize job descriptions to align with public health foundational areas

    - Transitioned CHRs to Public Health Workers to better align with foundational public health practices and prevention
    - Hired and onboarded 2 new PHWs
- Public Health Workers provided health education, prevention events, safe sleep, child passenger safety for 2,609 individuals.
- Improve Public Health Core Competencies for Public Health staff
    - Implemented individual development plans for all PH staff to identify areas for core competency improvement. This is also in alignment with accreditation and our workforce development plan
- Engage stakeholders
    - Developed 8 communicable disease MOUs with key county partners to increase access to communicable disease follow-up and better population-level monitoring
- Conducted population-level monitoring of childhood immunizations
    - Transitioned to focus on the crucial immunizations form 0-2 years old
    - Provided phone call reminders and post cards for those not up to date, averaging benchmark analyses of 1,139 reviews every month
- Improve and expand maternal and child health (MCH) program to provide perinatal resources, education, and skills
    - Trained 3 additional staff as certified car seat passenger safety technicians to provide car seat safety education and car seats from the Environmental Health program
    - Hired 1 additional staff to assist with maternal, child, and family health nursing
- Improved access to and promotion of breastfeeding
    - Implemented scavenger hunt to promote lactation spaces during Indigenous Milk Medicine Week in collaboration with Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
    - Added additional resources to lactation rooms for individuals to safely store expressed milk
- Helped host a Career and Resource Fair for Youth in partnership with Marshfield Clinic and NTC.
- Develop and implement coordinated messaging/education campaigns across the health department through the Health Promotion Committee
    - Began a pilot of coordinated messaging for monthly health topics across the whole Health Department to ensure consistent messaging for prevention education
- Hired 1 Public Health Specialist to guide health communications, community health assessment and improvement plans, and provide health education.
    - Additional PHSP being hired in FY 2026
- Implemented vaccine clinics for COVID-19 and seasonal influenza at community clinics, providing 557 immunizations.

- Developed and implemented process and partner evaluations for events to provide guidance for process workflows and partnership development.
- Partnered with Tutor Services to provide health resource backpacks for 300 youth.
- With funding from WI DHS, working with DPH worked with Behavioral Health and Pharmacy to secure 3 Health Vending Machines to provide access to prevention and harm reduction materials. The rollout of these machines and official launch will be in FY 2026.

Accomplishments related to division FY 2024/2025 goals and strategies:

All accomplishments above are aligned with the Division of Public Health and Department of Health goals, as outlined by the strategic plan and monitoring and evaluation performance form (MEPF). They are also aligned with granting objectives for the respective grants.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- Space for public health staff is an issue. Building the division to provide the necessary services will require additional staff members and space for current staff is already limited.
    - One solution to this thus far has been having staff share an office and rotate days of the week that they work in the office.
- The transition to in the Infor system caused delays in being able to access budget amounts Action: worked with treasury to get training on the new system

Grant reporting to state and federal agencies has been delayed since April 2025. This has caused significant issues with continuation funding from the federal agencies. Suggest having multiple people in the Grants Manager role in treasury to ensure essential services are provided during transitions.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

- Hire an additional Public Health Specialist to assist the Department of Health with health communications.
- DPH will work with Legislature and DOJ to update the Isolation and Quarantine Ordinance in FY 2026.
- DPH will continue expansion of prevention and health education events through the Public Health Workers.
- DPH will continue to monitor and address communicable disease threats, outbreaks, and response to cases.
- DPH will oversee community vaccine administration for seasonal vaccines, and provide monitoring and outreach for childhood vaccines.
- DPH will continue to seek grant funding for those funding sources that will be ending.
- The Health Department is planning for Public Health Reaccreditation in 2027. DPH will continue to work with other divisions in the Health Department to document

demonstration of PHAB standards and measures. This also includes submitting annual reports to the accrediting body.

- Working within the DPH to identify and develop top areas of need for training/improvement as guided by the workforce development plan and individual development plans and that are in alignment with foundational public health areas and competencies.
- Develop and implement rollout of a Communication and Branding Guide for the Department of Health to provide consistent health education and promotion across the health department to ensure that DOH continues to be a trusted source of information.

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

- Public Health manages 10 state and federal grants for programming totaling over $2.5 million dollars
- Public Health has secured additional grants in this fiscal year through Indian Health Service, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center, and the CDC.
- Public Health has secured and deepened partnerships with Local/County Health Departments including:
- Jackson County
- Sauk County
- Monroe County
- Madison-Dane County
- Wood County
- Shawano-Menominee County

Photos:

Alcohol Awareness Day event at House of Wellness

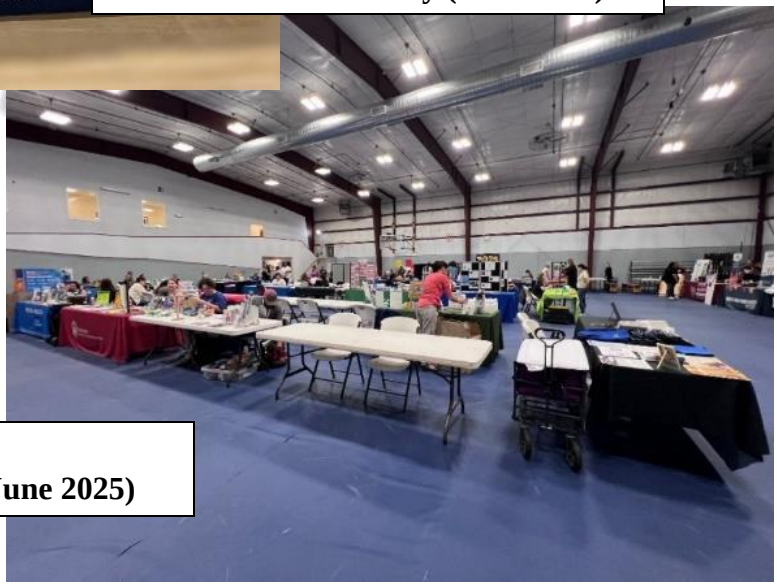
Andrew Blackhawk Memorial Day Powwow tabling (May 2025)

Black River Falls Summer Block Party (August 2024)

Programming at TAU gardening event (Wittenberg, Spring 2025)

Collaboration at tree planting events (Wittenberg)

Wittenberg Summer Block Party (June 2025)



Tomah Summer Block Party (June 2025)

Quality Improvement Division

Division Director: Daniel Libke

Overview:

Since the creation of the Quality Improvement Division, the Department of Health has continually strived to achieve a higher standard of quality care by measuring the performance of all health programs. The purpose of Quality Improvement is to enhance the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of all health care processes by continiously evaluating the performance of services delivered to our patients through qualitative and quantitative methods, ultimately resulting in lower business costs and increased quality of care. Quality Improvement identifies areas of opportunity, creates plans for improvement, and monitors those plans through completion. Plan-Do-Check-Act, the PDCA Model, is the credo of the program. We *plan* projects that will address areas of needed improvement; we *do* the project as a research study; we *check* the results of the program to see if the improvement did take place. We then *act* to adopt, adapt, or abandon our strategy to ensure improvement.

In January of 2025 both the Ho-Chunk Healthcare Center in Black River Falls and the House of Wellness in Baraboo, hosted the ***Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare, Inc.*** (AAAHC) for site surveys. Following these surveys, the clinics achieved the full three-year accreditation. This will next be up for renewal in February 2028. Accreditation by AAAHC reflects a high standard of care and an ongoing commitment to improve the delivery of our standards of care to the patients we serve. The Quality Improvement division works to maintain and support accreditation standards in our ambulatory facilities.

The Quality Improvement Division has also assisted other Health Department Divisions in achieving public health accreditation through the ***Public Health Accreditation Board*** (PHAB). The purpose of this accreditation is to improve the quality and standardization of public health practice and performance~~;~~ develop leadership, and strengthen relationships essential to public health services. The Department of Health attained PHAB accreditation in October, 2022, with direct support from the QI Division in maintaining and updating a Quality Improvement and Performance Management Plan, encompassing both clinical and public health quality measures, a Workforce Development Plan to increase human capital in our public health workforce, and further developing our Strategic Plan to meet our public health accreditation goals.

Major Accomplishments in 2024-2025:

- AAAHC Accreditation Achievements:
    - Achieved a full three-year term of accreditation for both clinic sites
    - Hosted AAAHC for onsite clinic survey at both sites
    - Facilitated the review and approval of policies and procedures submitted to the Health Accreditation Board
    - Verified licensing credentials for Health Department staff as needed

- Facilitated the activities of the Quality Improvement Committee in the review and monitoring areas of the QI Plan including; Safety, Infection Control and Policies and Procedures committees
- Vetted Health Dept. employees with background checks, either FBI or name only state checks
- Supported and monitored quality improvement projects and peer reviews
- Conducted annual audits of our programs
- Completed the annual comprehensive Infection Control Risk Assessment and Plan
- Collected and reviewed vaccination records for all Health Department employees to ensure health of employees and patients
- Tracked and reported all infectious and communicable diseases within the Health Department, including developing internal focused surveillance reports
- Continued a robust infection control surveillance program including all infectious and communicable diseases, hand hygiene, surgical site infection, and sterilization
- Created and disseminated staff notifications and education related to infection control and prevention
- Continued implementing the Infection Control plan to encourage prevention activities and reduce risk
- Continued developing the Infection Control program to address changing communicable disease needs; this includes increased collaboration with the Public Health Division, expanding surveillance capabilities, and routine data sharing and education about infectious diseases with the community.
- Developed several standardized skills competency checklists related to infection control
- Continued to coordinate standardization infection control policies and practices across Health Department Divisions
- Conducted patient satisfaction surveys twice and shared results with the Health Accreditation Board for continuous quality improvement
- Continued to review Patient Complaints to ensure patient health care satisfaction
- Monitored patient complaints and incident reports to ensure that concerns are addressed to meet employee and care of patients' concerns
- Continued to review incident reports to ensure they are dealt with promptly
- Created a new incident report data base that can show real time data on a dashboard accessible to all staff and improve accountability with tracking automations

- PHAB Accreditation Achievements:

  - Completed QI Studies in Public Health (Childhood Immunization Reminder/Recall), QI (Client Satisfaction Surveys), and began QI Studies for Pharmacy (Concordant Antibiotic Prescribing) and QI (Improving Sterilization Knowledge)

- Continued the development and dissemination of the Public and Environmental Health Annual report which includes Ho-Chunk data like population, death, ER/hospitalization statistics, community conditions, and health outcomes like maternal/child health, STIs, asthma, water quality and more. Continued a growing partnership with the Office of Enrollment.
- Participated in the annual report for PHAB accreditation
- Updated the Health Department Workforce Development Plan (PHAB centered)
- Supported the Public Health Division in PHAB reaccreditation, including technical assistance, guidance, and data visualization reporting on the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
- Provided a central point for two-way communication between tribal, local and state health departments in WI
- Participated in numerous meetings to prepare for the Community Health Improvement Plan.
- Continued to update the Health Dept. Performance Measures with each Health Dept. division
- Conducted the annual employee satisfaction survey to assess employee satisfaction among the Health Dept., an integral component of performance management – with improvement from previous years
- Conducted the annual employee satisfaction survey, distributed results with staff, and supported the Department in implementing findings and solutions

- Achievements Impacting both AAAHC and PHAB Accreditation:
    - Updated/consolidated Performance Management/Quality Improvement Plan (PM/QI Plan – required for AAAHC and PHAB accreditation)
    - Continued to meet with the Health Board of Directors, as well as quarterly meetings with the Health Accreditation Board
    - Continual update of Health Dept. Organizational Chart
    - Created two new job descriptions for the QI Division – Quality Improvement Specialist and Healthcare Quality Data Manager – QI Specialist replaces the QI Compliance Officer job description

Accomplishments related to division FY 2024/2025 goals and strategies:

- The Department of Health's Strategic Plan includes the Quality Improvement Division. The accomplishments listed above are all aligned with both the Department of Health and the Division of Quality Improvement's goals and strategies.

Problems and Corrective Actions:

- Implementation of the Infor accounting system created barriers for the QI Division to access the budget for nearly five months. This caused difficulties the management of our budgets (HNPD and IHS) and resulted in the cancelation of several monthly QI/Finance meetings. Once the access to our budgets was reinstated the monthly meetings resumed.

- There have been some issues with grants and getting them set up in the system so that they can be utilized. The GLITC grant that QI shares with Community Health has a very short time to be spent out (Aug. 2025) and when the line items were entered to begin using the grant they were entered under Public Health. This caused further disruption and confusion with both divisions as well as Health Finance as the Senior Grants Manager, who was only able to share the line item with QI/CH on July 11, 2025.

Future Goals for 2025-2026:

- Continue to update the Health Dept. Performance Measures with each Health Dept. division
- Continue to verify licensing credentials and background checks for Health Department staff as needed
- Continue to implement expanded functions in HealthStream (checklists, tracking and individualized training)
- Continue to vet Health Dept. employees with background checks, either FBI or name only state checks
- Post for and hire Healthcare Quality Data Manager
- Transition QI Compliance Officers to Quality Improvement Specialist – possibly hire one more if budget allows
- Continue to support and monitor quality improvement projects and peer reviews
- Continue to conduct annual audits of our programs
- Continue to review Patient Complaints to ensure patient health care satisfaction
- Continue to review incident reports to ensure they are dealt with promptly
- Conduct the annual employee satisfaction survey, distribute results with staff, and support the Department in implementing findings and solutions
- Develop and disseminate updated 2025 data measures for the Annual Public Health & Environmental Health Report, in collaboration with other Ho-Chunk Departments and divisions such as GIS and the Office of Enrollment.
- Continue active participation in the Safety, Infection Control and Policies and Procedures committees as well as Quality Improvement Committee
- Continue to verify licensing credentials as necessary
- Create and disseminate staff notifications and education related to infection control and prevention
- Continue implementing the Infection Control plan to encourage prevention activities and reduce risk
- Continue developing the Infection Control program to address changing communicable disease needs; this includes increased collaboration with the Public Health Division, expanding surveillance capabilities, and routine data sharing and education about infectious diseases with the community.
- Infection Prevention Nurses will attain the Certificate in Infection Control (CIC), a designation which highlights the highest level of care, knowledge, and practice in infection control and prevention.
- Obtain Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality certifications for QI Director and QI Specialists

- Support the Public Health Division in PHAB reaccreditation, including technical assistance, guidance, and data visualization reporting on the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
- Continue to comply with AAAHC standards

Alternative Funding Sources and Partnerships:

- Applied for and received the GLITC Data Modernization Grant to enhance the development and implementation of our data collection efforts
- Continue to search and apply for grant opportunities, relevant to QI functions
- Continued collaboration with Wisconsin Public Health Association
- Continued collaboration with tribal clinic Quality Improvement team