



# Annual Report 2023



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# Board of Health

The Elkhart County Health Department has been established in accordance with Indiana Code 16-23-2-3. In compliance with those rules and regulations, the Elkhart County Board of Health was created as the governing body for the department.

## ***MEMBERS:***

- ***Paul Shetler Fast, MID, MPH- Chair***
- ***Gordon Hughes, MD- Vice Chair***
- ***Danny Sink***
- ***Houman Vaghefi, MS, MD, PhD***
- ***Susan Stiffeny, RN***
- ***Mary Graber, MD***

The Board of Health works in concert with the Health Officer, Health Administrator, and the divisions of the Health Department to provide essential public health services to the citizens of Elkhart County.

The board's regularly scheduled meetings take place every 4th Thursday of the month at 7pm. Meetings are not held in July and November. The December meeting is on the first Thursday of the month. All meetings are open to the public.



## Message from Health Officer

Dear Reader,

As we reflect on the past year, it is with both gratitude and determination that we present the Elkhart County Health Department's Annual Report to you. This report encapsulates the efforts, challenges, and achievements of our collective journey towards better health and well-being for all members of our community.

Over the past year, our commitment to promoting and safeguarding public health has remained steadfast, even amidst unprecedented circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges that tested our resilience, resourcefulness, and compassion. Yet, it also served as a catalyst for innovation and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of unity in the face of adversity.

As we navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead, we remain guided by our core values of excellence, compassion, health promotion and safety, and development. Together, we can continue to build a healthier, more resilient community where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated team, healthcare professionals, community partners, volunteers, and stakeholders whose unwavering support and collaboration have been instrumental in helping us achieve our shared goals.

In closing, I invite you to review our Annual Report, which will also be available on our website at <https://health.elkhartcounty.com>. Your feedback, insights, and suggestions are invaluable as we strive to continuously improve and adapt to the evolving needs of our community.

Thank you for your continued trust, support, and partnership in our mission to improve the lives, health, and environment of our community.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Melanie Sizemore, DBA, MPH  
Health Officer





# Financial Report

The Administration Division is responsible for overseeing grants and the Elkhart County Health Department (ECHD) budget. This division provides valuable support to the other divisions as well. Administration is the link between the County Auditor's office and the ECHD. Daily duties include payroll, purchasing, processing invoices and claims, mailings, personnel support, scheduling, mileage claims and general accounting tasks. Some of the staff are responsible for the duplication of forms and the publication of various reports and newsletters.

Administration is comprised of the Health Officer, Health Administrator, Manager, Executive Assistant, Data Analyst, two Bookkeepers and a Receptionist.

REVENUE	2022	2023
Local Taxes	\$2,791,712	\$2,932,756
Cash Receipts	\$1,232,078	\$1,307,292
State and Federal Grants	\$2,605,527	\$2,985,319
Total Revenue	\$6,629,317	\$7,216,367
EXPENDITURES	2022	2023
Payroll	\$3,858,264	\$4,343,758
Fringe Benefits	\$1,130,761	\$1,123,452
Supplies	\$166,875	\$124,575
Other Service Charges	\$408,993	\$163,847
Capital Outlay	\$116,314	\$94,379
Total Expenditures	\$5,681,207	\$5,850,011

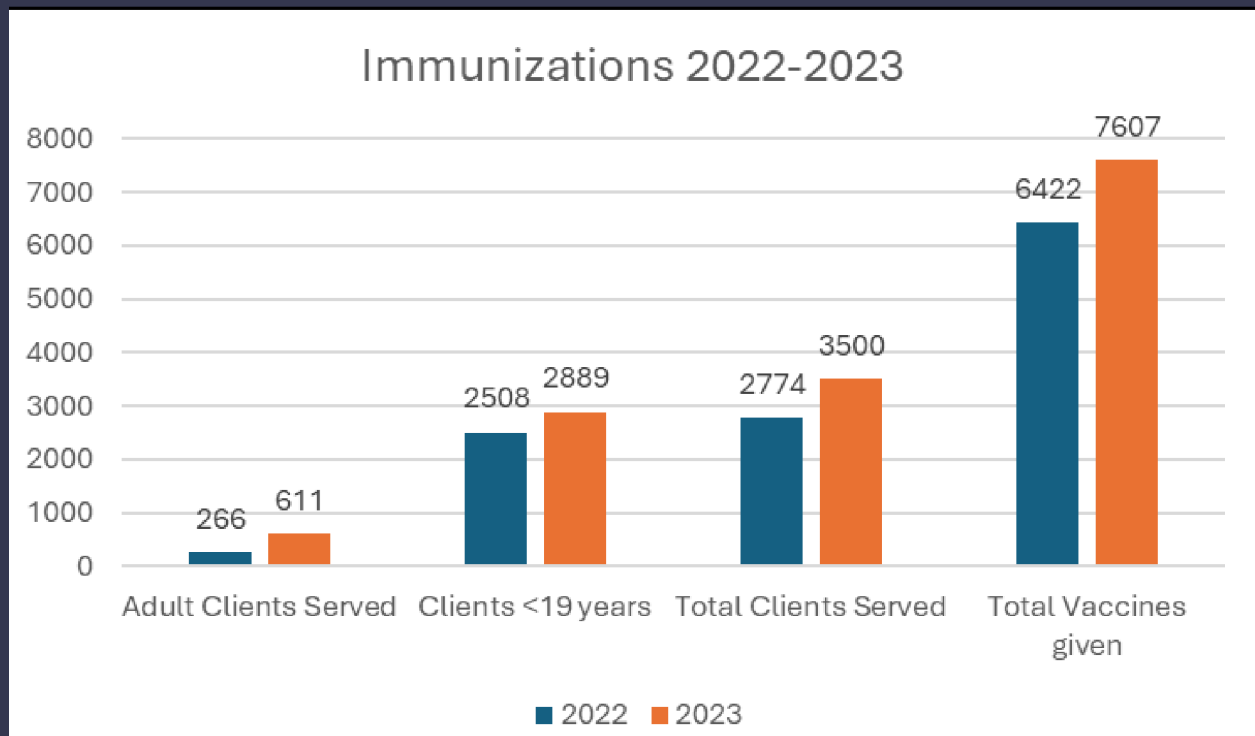
# Community Health Nursing

## 01. Immunizations

The overall goal of the immunization program is to provide vaccines to both children and adults. The primary focus is on childhood vaccines given from 2 months through 18 years of age that provide protection from 16 different diseases. We continue to administer the Vaccine for Children (VFC) program which is a federally funded program that covers the cost of the vaccines for children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. We also continue to offer vaccines through the Adult Vaccine Program (317) which provides publicly funded vaccines for adults who meet the financial criteria. In March of 2022, we partnered with VaxCare, a third-party billing organization, to be able to offer vaccines to fully insured adults and children.

One major shift in 2023 was the discontinuation of separate COVID vaccine clinics due to decreasing demand. This accounts for the large increase in adult clients seen in 2023. 77% of the clients seen in the immunization clinics qualified for federally or publicly funded programs that assist with covering the cost of the vaccines and 23% were fully insured

	2022	2023
Adults Clients Served	266	611
Clients <19 years	2508	2889
Total Clients Served	2774	3500
Total Vaccines Given	6422	7607



## 02. School Screenings for Amish Children for Vision & Hearing 2023

Community Health Nursing was pleased to offer vision and hearing screenings for Amish schools in Elkhart County. We were also able to review students' immunization records and provide the parents with recommendations.

# Schools Participated	28
#Children Screened for Vision	503
#Children Screened for Hearing	395






### 03. Animal Bites/Rabies Control

In Indiana, all animal bites to people must be reported to the local health department where the bite victim lives.

#### Animal Bites Tracked by Year

	2022	2023
No. of Reported Cases	445	476

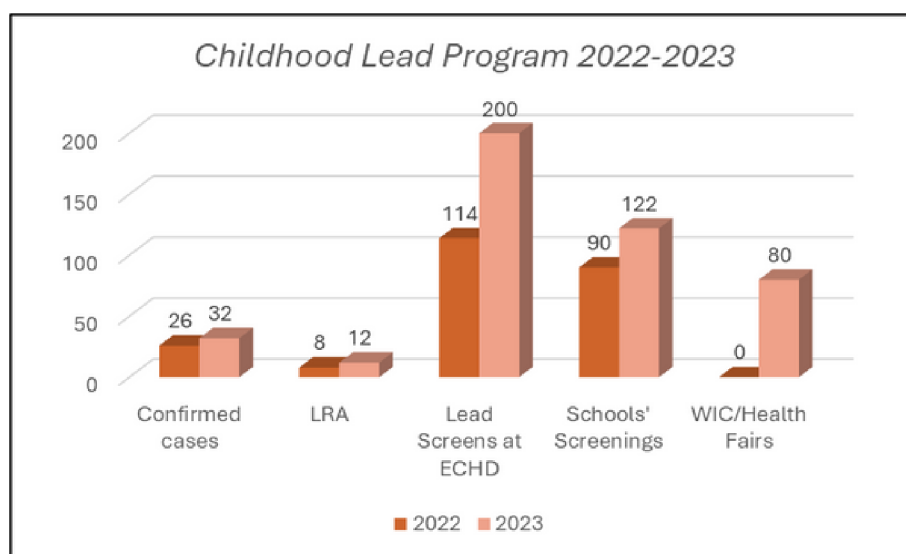
#### Specimens Shipped for Rabies Testing in 2023

Bat	6	
Raccoon	4	
Dog	3	
Cat	2	
Skunk	1	
Total	16	

## 04: Childhood Lead Prevention

We opened 32 confirmed cases of children with elevated blood lead levels in 2023 with 4 carried over from 2022. All case managed children were referred to relevant resources like WIC, First Steps and Head Start. The department follows up with them and their health care providers regularly to keep them on their testing schedule.

In 2023, we tested and provided education about lead poisoning to more than 200 children. This includes lead screens at the health department, schools, our WIC office, and health fairs. Parents are notified of the results by mail and phone call. If a child is diagnosed with an Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL), we notify Primary Care Providers to schedule a confirmatory test



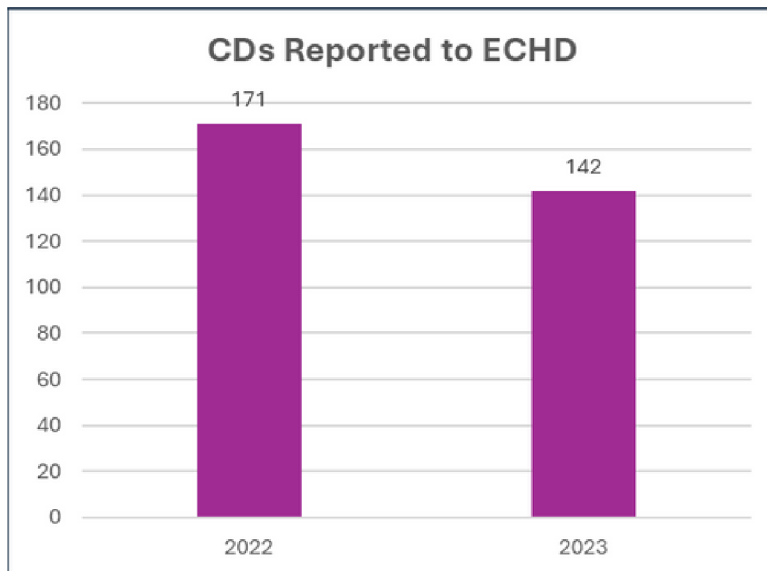
Besides the case managed children, we follow up with all those who are screened for lead at their primary care provider. We receive reports from the State and local health offices and follow up with providers to schedule a confirmatory test for those who have an EBLL at their initial screen. This year we received 245 lead screen results, with blood lead levels above 3.5 mcg/dL. We inform caregivers of a child's lead levels and help them schedule a confirmatory test with their PCP. Educational handouts about the sources and effects of lead poisoning are mailed to parents of each child.

The Health Department stays in close collaboration with our partners for example and use a referral system to connect our children with EBLL to programs and resources that they can benefit from.

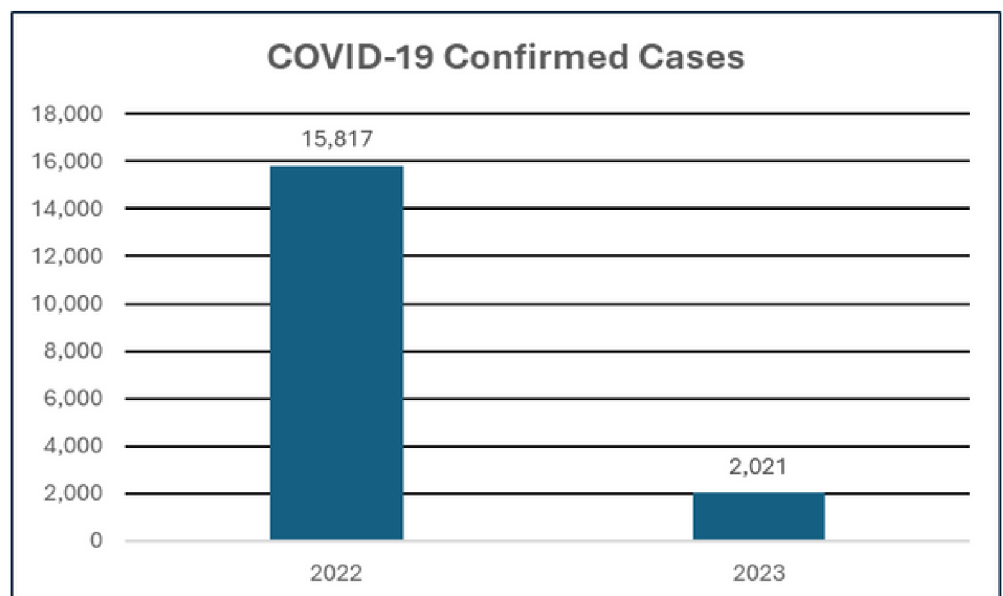
Our vision is to have Elkhart County lead-safe where all children can achieve their full potential.

## 05. Communicable Diseases

“Communicable Disease” means an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxins that occurs through the direct or indirect transmission of the infectious agent or its products from an infected person, animal, vector, plant or inanimate environment to a susceptible animal or human host. Indiana’s Communicable Disease (CD) Rule identifies a list of reportable diseases and establishes control measures to prevent or minimize transmission and spread. The local health department ensures that these control measures, which may include reporting, monitoring and preventive measures, are implemented



Reporting for COVID-19 cases has decreased with more at home tests being done. These numbers reflect laboratory confirmed cases reported to the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and IDOH use wastewater viral levels, hospitalizations and emergency department visits as well as test positivity to determine COVID-19 infection levels and community risk levels.

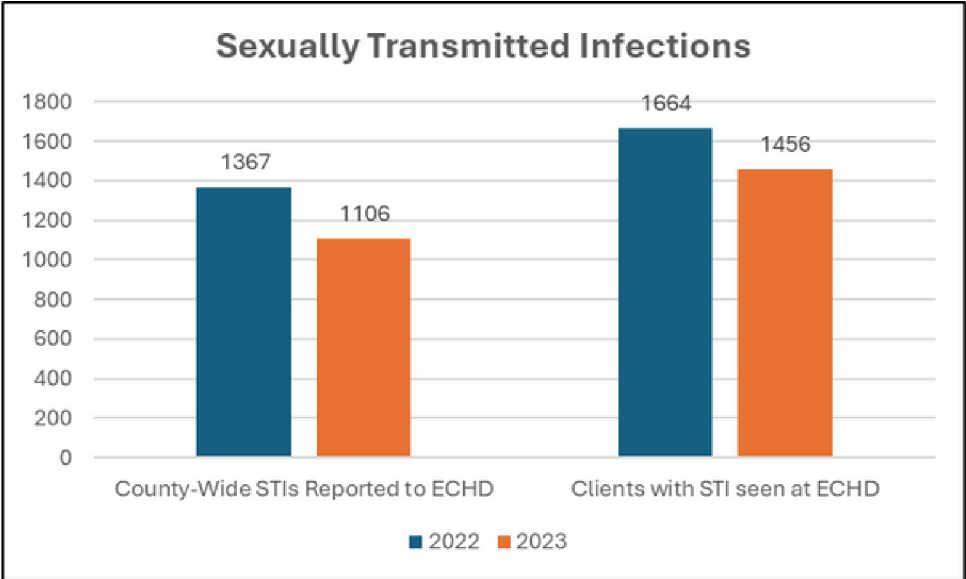




# 06. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)

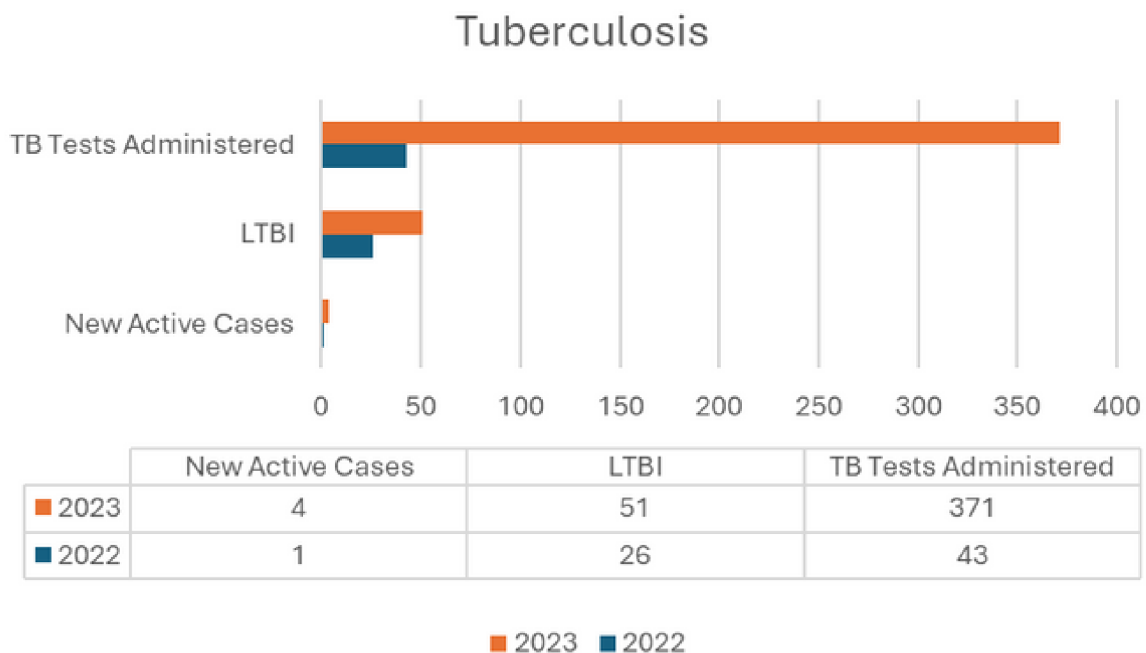
The goal of the STI program continues to be to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases by providing cost effective clinical services. The Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) provides education, prevention counseling, case management and makes appropriate referrals for to other services as needed.

County-Wide STI Reported to ECHD	2022	2023
Chlamydia	981	904
HIV	12	14
Neisseria Gonorrhea	334	144
Syphillis	40	44
total	1367	1106



## 07. Tuberculosis

The goal of TB control is to reduce the morbidity and mortality caused by TB by preventing transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (*M. tuberculosis*) from persons with active (contagious) forms of the disease to uninfected persons and to prevent the progression from latent TB infection (LTBI) to TB disease. The priority of TB control is early identification of persons with active TB disease and to ensure completion of treatment through Direct Observed Therapy (DOT) which involves a CHN nurse observing the patient take their TB medication every day either in person or through a secure video link. The second priority is to identify untreated individuals who have LTBI and offer treatment. All immigrants and refugees coming to the U.S. are required to have a medical exam to rule out TB. If the pre-immigration exam has positive TB results other than active TB disease, they are given a class B designation and they are to have a follow-up evaluation within 30 days of arriving in the U.S. ECHD provides that follow-up for persons arriving in Elkhart County. These exams are scheduled in the TB clinic and conducted by the Medical Officer.



# Environmental Health Services

Environmental Health continues to see a significant number of activities as the country moves past the Covid pandemic.

## 01. Septic Program

There has been a slight decrease in the number of septic and well permits over the 2022 totals due to a slow in construction. Installation work began in Southwest, Foraker and Tecumseh Acres to address a number of failing septic systems in those areas with implementing a solution for the problem of numerous lots that are too small for the installation of replacement septic systems. The installation of a collection system to send effluent to the City of Nappanee began construction in the spring of 2023. This is a critically needed solution to an on-going problem that has existed for several decades.



Installation of an unpermitted septic system 2023

Septic Permits	2022	2023
New Residential	220	191
New Commercial	19	11
Repair Residential	179	160
Repair Commercial	8	5

## 02. Well Program

The Drinking Water Well program continues to be beneficial to the community by preventing the installation of wells into areas of contaminated ground water and ensuring that wells are not installed too close to other sources of contamination. Drinking water well permits have seen a decrease this year with the issuance of just over 430 permits.

Well Permits	2022	2023
New	271	202
Replacement	201	206
Abandonment	22	23

## 03. Food Program

Food Establishments	2022	2023
Food Service Inspections	1103	1134
Retail Inspections	138	1134
Temporary Units Licensing and Re-inspections	945	1252
Complaint Investigations & Follow-ups	172	173
Plan Reviews	47	88



**Unlicensed Food Vendor Set up in Parking Lot  
8/2023**

The food team continues to have high demands on their evening and weekend time with temporary events that need to have temporary food services licensed and inspected. We performed over 1200 licensing and re-inspections on temporary units which is a 25% increase over 2022. There were 274 events for the year with 231 of those events taking place over the 214 days between April 1st and October 31st. That is an average of 7.5 events per week which is an increase over the 231 events for 2022. Unfortunately, this decreases available time to perform routine facility inspections. Plan reviews for new facilities and remodels almost doubled with an increase from 47 to 88 plan submittals for the year. The food program issued 1129 regular food service licenses for the 2023 licensing period up from the 1105 issued in 2022.

## 04.Public Pool Program

Public Swimming Pools	2022	2023
# Inspections	144	153
# Re-inspections	6	31

The public swimming pool program licenses over 100 public swimming pools in the county. There was a notable increase in re-inspections in 2023 due to the increase in facilities needing to have corrections verified.

## 05. Ground Water Protection Program

The ground water team performed 1163 facility inspections under the Ground Water Protection Ordinance which is an increase of 200 inspections over the previous year. They also performed 54 facility re-inspections and 352 field visits in an attempt to perform an inspection. This team is also tasked with working with lead, vector, surface water and a majority of the complaints our office receives.



Damaged and Leaking Chemical Tank in



## 06. Lead Program

Due to the lowering of the blood lead level requirements the ground water team also performed 15 lead risk assessments and 25 lead clearance exams which is a doubling and an 8 times increase for each respective category from 2022 due to the rule change that took place mid-2022. They also added an initial meeting to fill out questionnaire paperwork prior to performing the lead risk assessments completing 23 of those meetings this year.

Lead Program	2022	2023
Lead Risk Assessments	8	15
Lead Clearance Exams	3	25

## 06. Vector and Surface Water Programs

The ground water team is also involved with the vector program and the surface water sampling program. With the help of the summer vector technicians almost 13,000 adult mosquitoes and larva were collected as well as 260 surface water samples being collected.



**Gravid trap used to collect**

## 07. Complaints

Environmental Health received and addressed a total number of 259 complaints and performed 700 follow-up visits. The food team investigated over 130 complaints, many of which related to unlicensed food services being operated out of private homes. These complaints require a great amount of time and detective work to figure out who they are as most of them are reported from advertising seen on social media.

Complaints are investigated, given directions for correction and verified as corrected prior to being closed. We continue to receive a far greater number of complaints that we have no jurisdiction over such as landlord issues, code enforcement/building department issues, bed bugs manure, dead animals and various other issues. We refer the complainants to other county/city jurisdictions, state agencies or corporate entities depending on the type of complaint it is.



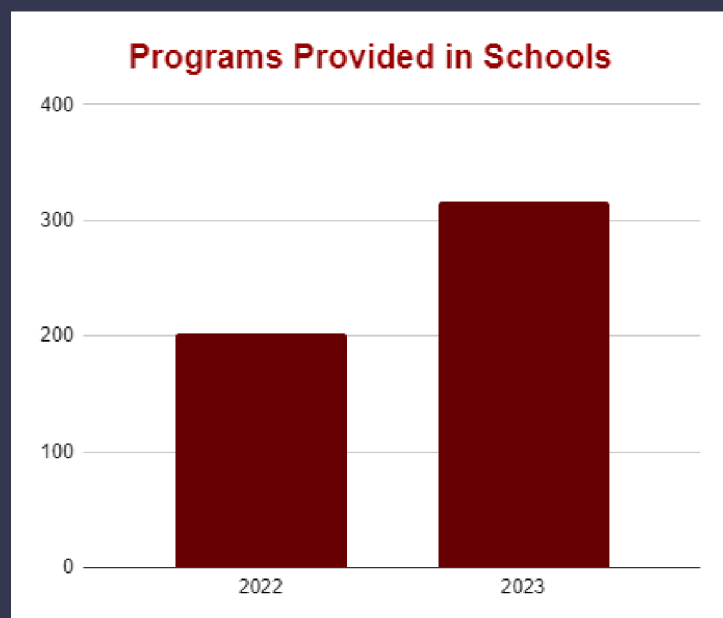
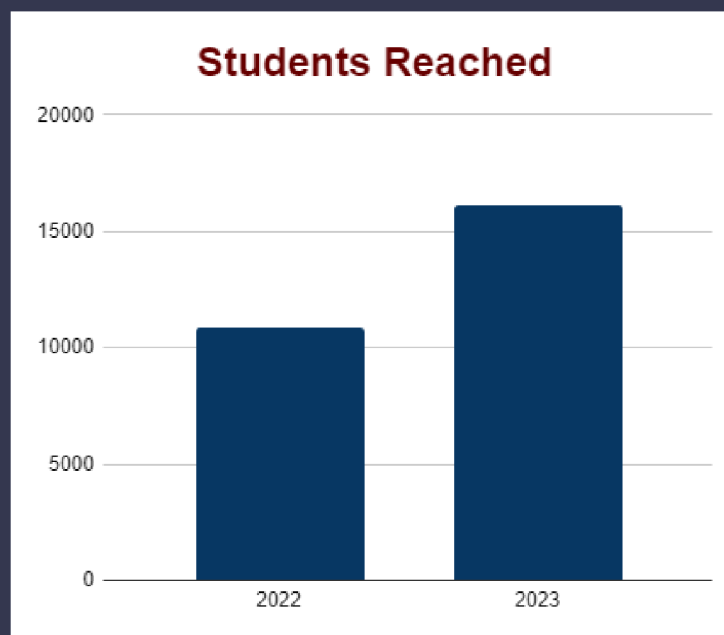
# Health Education

2023 has had continual growth in programming in all areas of Health Education. Our efforts to re-engage old partners and developing new ones has yielded great success.

## 01. School Programs

Programming in schools and in the community has continued to trend towards a preference for in-person. Our interactive and multimedia educational programs have been widely appreciated by school staff and community organizations.

In 2023, Health Promoters provided 317 school programs reaching 16,104 students in all seven public school and a number of private school systems across the county. This is a 57% increase in number of programs and a 49% increase in total students reached compared to 2022 program totals.





## 02. Community Events

Community events have increased year over year, a trend that has continued over the last 2 years. Health Education doubled the number of community events compared to last year, 214 fairs/community events compared to 106 in 2022. These additional events help us reach 21,719 individuals across Elkhart County, a 30% increase from the prior year.

The Health and Resource fair, organized by Health Education, was another success in 2023. Over 400 attendees and 38 local organizations participated in the second annual "Community Block Party." During the event Community Health Nursing provided 265 vaccinations which were helpful for parents as they got students ready for school.

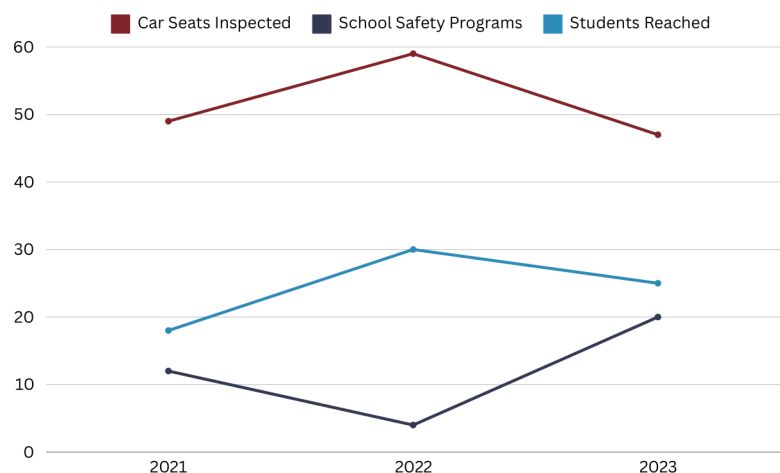
## 03. Tobacco Control of Elkhart County

Tobacco Control of Elkhart County is dedicated to decreasing tobacco use in the community. 2023 saw improvements in youth involvement, local collaborations, and better interactions with policymakers and stakeholders on legislation to protect children and adolescents from nicotine products.



## 04. Safe Kids of Elkhart County

Safe Kids of Elkhart County's goal is to reduce accidental death and injury amongst children. SKEC provides injury preventions, bike, and pedestrian safety programs in schools, and car seat inspections across the community.

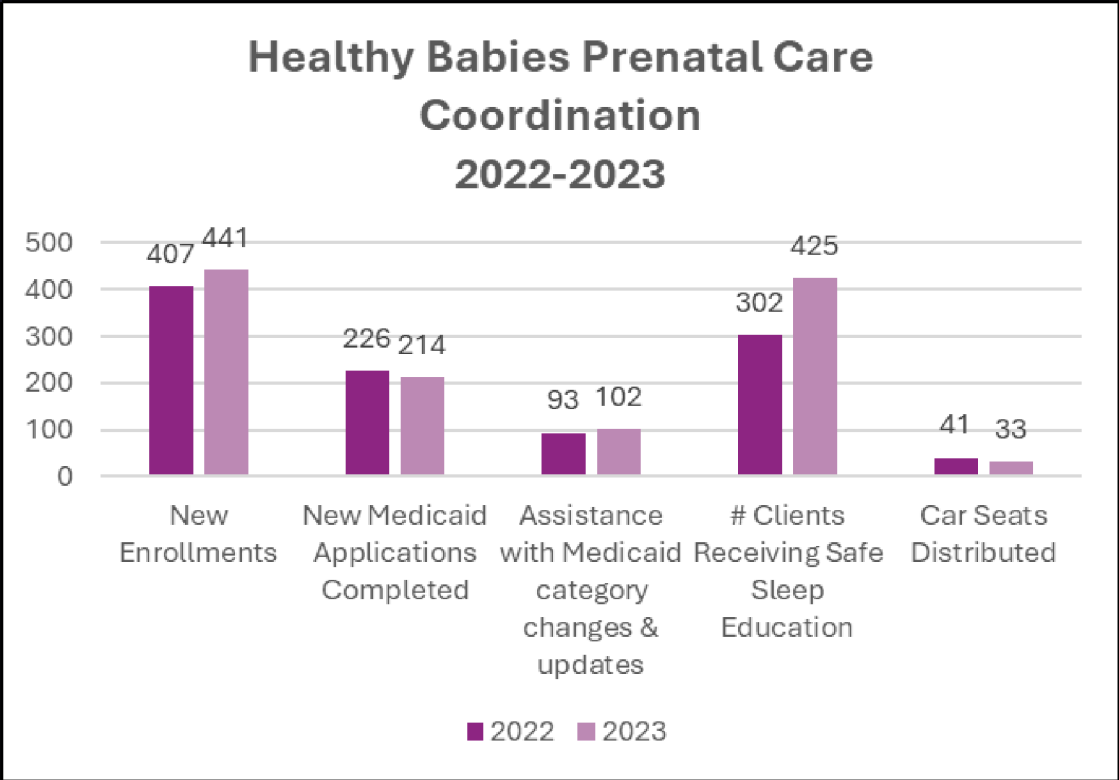


# Healthy Beginnings

## 01. Healthy Babies Prenatal Care Coordination



The Healthy Babies Prenatal Care Coordination Program provided services to over 400 women and their infants during 2023. Our staff walks beside these families from early pregnancy through the first 6 months of baby’s life, facilitating connection with public assistance, linkage to OB care providers, education on prenatal and infant developmental topics, and emotional support. We have begun offering education / support in a group setting for Spanish speaking moms and are hoping to do the same with English speakers in the future. The group setting offers mom-to-mom connections as well as ongoing support from the Prenatal Care Coordinators.



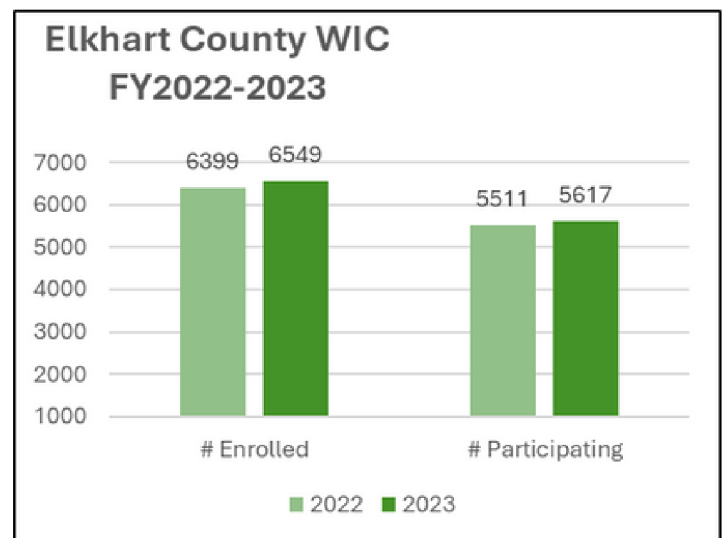
## 02. Women, Infants and Children (WIC)



WIC is an integral part of ECHD. For more than three decades, Elkhart County WIC program has helped expectant mothers, new parents and children acquire healthy foods, nutrition education and community resources. Women and children are eligible for the program if they meet statutory income guidelines or are income-eligible based on the participation in other programs like Medicaid, SNAP or TANF. In addition, WIC participants must be at a nutritional risk like underweight, overweight, anemic, or nutritionally deficient in any form.

In 2023, Elkhart County WIC provided services to more than 5500 clients every month which was an increase of 1.9% seen in FY2022. The total number of participants who enrolled in the program but did not redeem benefits was 2.3% higher in FY2023

Additionally, ISDH funded for a case load of 5395/month. Elkhart County WIC has proudly served 200 more clients every month than the assigned budget, despite being short staffed and helping La Grange County with appointments for six months.

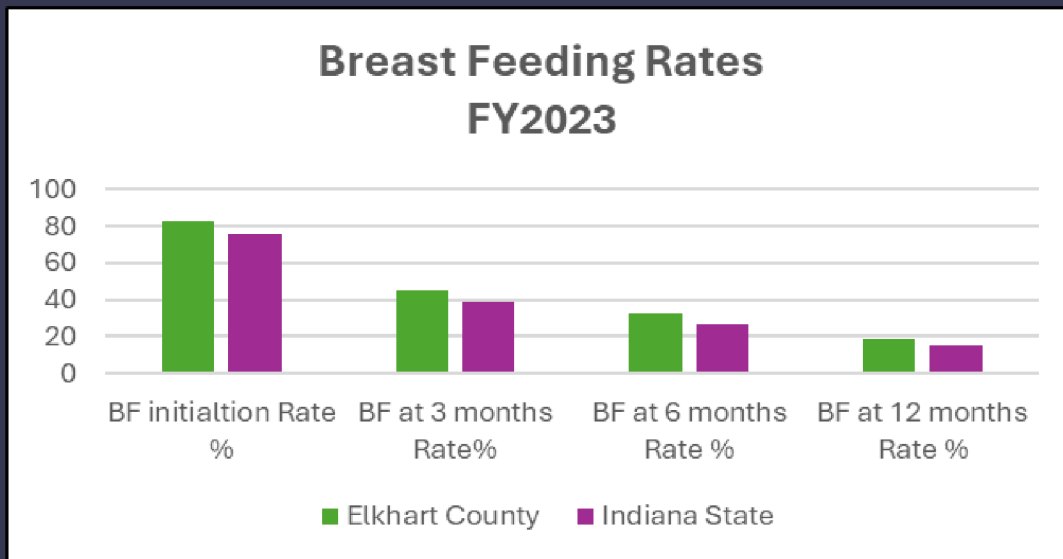


During FY 2023, \$5,140,148 were redeemed in Elkhart stores which is 20.5% more than the previous year. In addition, Elkhart County WIC partners with many famers and farmers' markets by providing checks to participants that they can redeem according to their families' needs.

## Breast Feeding

WIC promotes breast feeding as the best source of infant nutrition. We have qualified peer-counsellors who assist WIC mothers with breast feeding initiation and maintenance. We loan out high quality breast pumps to moms who plan to resume work after childbirth. Elkhart County breast feeding rates have exceeded that of Indiana State as can be seen by the graph below.





Our performance was recognized with the ***Breast Feeding Premier Award*** for 2023 by USDA.

WIC saves lives and improves health. In 2024, Elkhart County WIC will continue to provide nutritional and breast-feeding assistance to members of the community who are at risk and need it the most.

## 03. The Robbins Dental Clinic

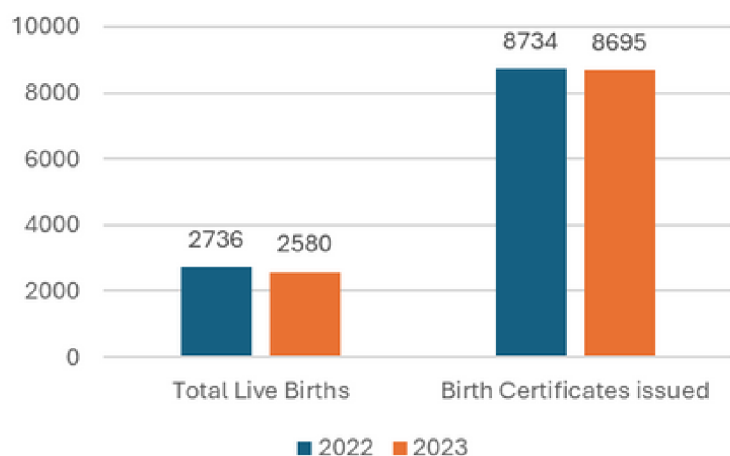
The Robbins Dental Clinic continues to offer routine preventative services and restorative work at cost-effective rates. All patients must financially qualify for services at or below 220% of poverty. Allyson Caselberry, DMD joined the clinic as a full-time dentist in August.



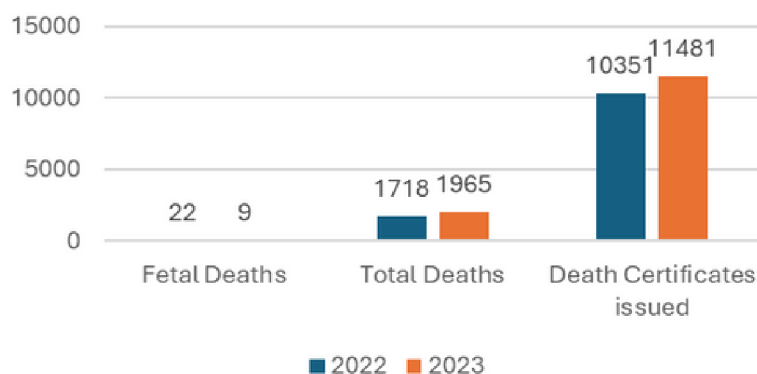
# Vital Records

The mission of the Elkhart County Vital Records office is to provide friendly, courteous, and accurate service in issuing birth and death records. The office holds records from 1882 to the present for births and deaths that have occurred in **Elkhart County only**. Vital Records can amend records with approved documentation to support the change(s) requested. We also schedule paternity affidavit appointments for births that need to have the father attached to the birth certificate when was not added at the time of birth. We work closely with local hospitals and birthing centers in Elkhart County to get a birth registered in a timely manner. We also work closely with funeral homes and county coroners when a death occurs in the county. We strive to serve Elkhart County with integrity and compassion with the records that we are entrusted to keep

**Births and Birth Certificates  
2022-2023**



**Deaths and Death Certificates  
2022-2023**





## Message from Health Administrator

Elkhart County Residents,

As we step into 2024, the Elkhart County Health Department remains focused on our mission of nurturing and improving the health and well-being of our community. Our dedication to understanding and meeting the diverse health needs of Elkhart County's residents grows stronger, while we continue to be inspired by the resilience and community spirit that define our county. We're eager to build on these strengths in the year ahead.

Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities within our community is central to our work. We believe in an approach to public health that is as dynamic as the people we serve, emphasizing preventive care, education, and equitable access to health services. Our aim is not just to respond to health issues as they arise but to work proactively with community partners to prevent them, ensuring a healthier future for all.

In 2024, we are focused on expanding our outreach and enhancing our services to better serve Elkhart County. This means listening to you, learning from our experiences, and continually adapting our strategies to meet evolving health needs. Together, we can create a healthier, stronger Elkhart County. We look forward to serving you and achieving our shared health goals in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Andrew Bylsma  
Health Administrator



# Medical Officer

A special thank you to Dr. Richard Hostetter who continues to serve the people of Elkhart County in his new role as the Medical Officer! In this role, Dr. Hostetter has applied his extensive medical knowledge and leadership skills to oversee a range of public health initiatives and clinical interventions that are vitally important to our county. His commitment to public health excellence has not only enhanced the well-being of Elkhart County's residents but has also set a high standard for medical and public health practice within the community. Dr. Hostetter's efforts exemplify the critical role of medical officers in advancing public health goals and responding to the diverse health needs of their communities.



**The mission of the Elkhart County Health Department is to improve the lives, health and environment of our community.**

# Locations

**Main Office**  
**608 Oakland**  
**Avenue**  
**Elkhart IN 46516**  
**574-523-2283**

Environmental  
Health  
4230 Elkhart Road  
Goshen, IN 46526  
574-971-4600

Healthy Beginnings-  
Elkhart Office  
1400 Hudson Street  
Elkhart IN 46514  
574-522-0104

Community Health  
Nursing  
608 Oakland  
Avenue  
Elkhart IN 4616  
574-523-2127

Health Education  
608 Oakland  
Avenue Elkhart IN  
46516  
574-523-2116

Healthy Beginnings-  
Goshen Office  
117 N.2nd Street  
Goshen IN 46526  
574-535-6765

Vital records  
608 Oakland  
Avenue Elkhart IN  
46516  
574-523-2109

Robbins Dental  
Clinic  
1400 Hudson  
Street  
Elkhart IN 46516  
574-522-6702

Healthy Beginnings-  
Nappanee Office  
109 Market St.  
Nappanee IN 46550  
574-522-0104