

2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



HEALTH

ELKHART COUNTY



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Elkhart County 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 to act as the governing body for the department.

Members:

- Paul Shetler Fast, MPH, DrPH (Chairperson)
- Gordon Hughes, MD (Vice Chairperson)
- Sandra McMasters, MSW, LSW
- Houman Vaghefi, MS, MD, PhD
- Dan Sink
- Susan Stiffney, BSN
- 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 or November. The December meeting is on the first Thursday of the month. All meetings are open to the public.

Message from Health Officer

Dear Community Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,

As we look back on this past year, it is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I share our accomplishments, challenges, and vision for the future of public health in our community. This year has been a testament to our resilience, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of our residents.



Throughout the year, our department has focused on key areas such as infant mortality, mental health, and sexually transmitted infections. We have seen tangible progress in several initiatives, including granting funds that align with our key priority areas to non-profit organizations, a reduction in the infant mortality rate, and steady progress in increasing STI testing all of which have positively impacted countless individuals across our community.

Looking ahead, we are committed to advancing our mission of creating healthier lives and a healthier community. We will continue to focus on addressing health disparities, improving access to care, and strengthening our public health infrastructure. Our efforts will be guided by a commitment to data-driven decision-making, collaboration with local organizations, and empowering individuals with the knowledge and resources to lead healthier lives.

None of this would be possible without the support of our local government, healthcare providers, and community members. Together, we have made great strides, but there is always more work to be done. We are confident that, with your continued support, we will create an even stronger, healthier community for all.

Thank you for your trust and for being an essential part of this journey.

Sincerely,
Melanie Sizemore, DBA, MPH
Health Officer

In 2024, the Elkhart County Health Department was thrilled to receive \$2.498 million dollars from the State of Indiana’s Health First Indiana Fund to improve public health in our county. ECHD used these funds to strengthen our public health infrastructure, retain critical high-skill staff, and expand our outreach through key partnerships with established organizations across Elkhart County. In total, roughly \$300,000 was granted back out into the community to help us address critical Core Public Health Services. Throughout this report, four trusted community partners representing five unique programs will be highlighted to demonstrate how Elkhart County collaboratively worked to address Mental Health, Maternal and Child Health, and Communicable Diseases using HFI Funds to improve our community.

2024 Total Core Public Health Service Activities

Core Public Health Service Area	Number of Total Activities
Access and Linkage to Clinical Care	5538
Child and Adult Immunizations	2731
Childhood Lead Screening and Case Management	457
Chronic Disease Prevention and Reduction	4638
Emergency Preparedness	81
Fatality Review (Child, Infant, Fetal, Suicide, Overdose)	4858
Infectious Disease Prevention and Control	2062
Maternal and Child Health	52520
Student Health School Health Liaison	4413
Tobacco Prevention and Cessation	7700
Trauma and Injury Prevention and Education	3966
Tuberculosis (TB) Prevention and Case Management	565
Grand Total	89529

Health Administrator's 2024 Report

Dear Elkhart County Community,

For the Elkhart County Health Department, 2024 was truly a “rebuilding year.” As we stepped further away from the pandemic, our focus turned towards strengthening the department’s core capacity to serve the public by investing in workforce development, updating neglected infrastructure, and deepening our partnerships across the county.

Thanks in large part to the State of Indiana’s investment in public health, we were able to address critical systems that had languished for years; updating data platforms, modernizing our clinical spaces, and improving our facilities so that residents who received services from the Health Department could truly feel that they were receiving the best possible service.



The extremely competitive job market for high-skill staff provided unique challenges across 2024, but efforts to retain and train employees has paid dividends, as we continued to offer necessary services to the county without interruption in any of our key program areas.

2024 also saw an increased focus on collective effort and partnership building, as our goal to improve the lives, health, and environment of our community is best tackled when we work together.

These efforts have positioned the department to deliver more responsive, dynamic, and high-quality public health services to all citizens of Elkhart County, laying a foundation for continued growth and resilience for years to come.

Sincerely,
Andrew Bylsma
Health Administrator



Administration and Financial Report

The Administration Division is responsible for directing the activities of the department, setting goals for all divisions, development of budgets, overseeing grants and spending the Elkhart County Health Department’s (ECHD) tax-base allotment. Administration also provides valuable support to the other divisions and acts as the link between elected officials, the State of Indiana, the County Auditor’s office and the Health Department. Daily duties also include payroll, purchasing, processing invoices and claims, mailings, personnel support, scheduling, mileage claims and general accounting tasks.

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

REVENUE	2023	2024
Local Taxes	\$2,923,756	\$3,027,258
Cash Receipts	\$1,307,292	\$1,442,495
State & Federal Grants	\$2,985,319	\$4,635,518
Total Revenue	\$7,216,367	\$9,105,271

EXPENDITURES	2023	2024
Payroll	\$4,343,758	\$4,930,661
Fringe Benefits	\$1,123,452	\$1,370,521
Supplies	\$124,575	\$232,107
Other Service Charges	\$163,847	\$791,556
Capital Outlay	\$94,379	\$367,532
Total Expenditures	\$5,850,011	\$7,692,377

Community Health Nursing

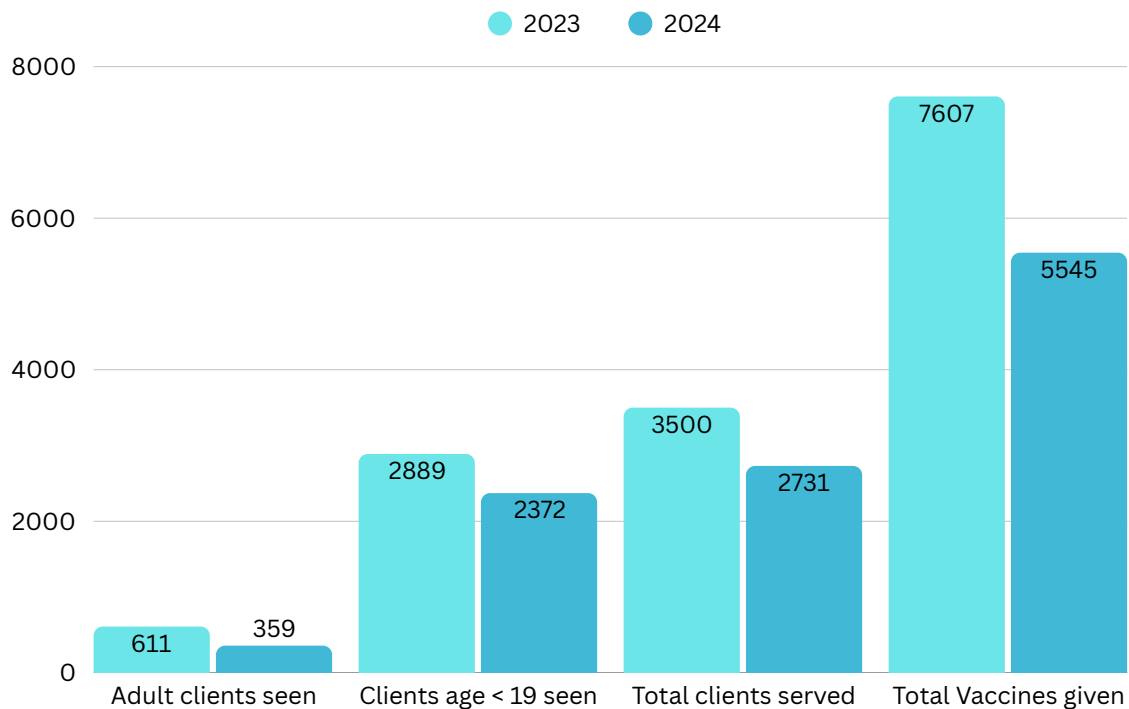
1. Immunizations

The immunization program's goal is to provide protection from vaccine preventable diseases by providing vaccines to both children and adults. 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, ages 2 months through 18 years, who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. We also offer the Adult Vaccine Program which provides publicly funded vaccines for adults who meet the financial criteria. We continue to partner with VaxCare, a third-party billing organization, to be able to offer vaccines to fully insured adults and children. In 2024 approximately 84% of clients seen qualified for federally or publicly funded vaccine and 16% were fully insured.

We continue to offer immunization clinics at the Elkhart office at least 3 days a week and have maintained our monthly schedule at our outlying clinics. This is a slight decrease due to staffing challenges and has resulted in a decrease in clients served for 2024. Despite these challenges, we were able to participate in back-to-school events and offer walk-in clinics and extended hours during the fall. County-wide we have seen a 2% improvement in completion rates for the initial childhood vaccine series.

	2023	2024
Adult Clients Seen	611	359
Clients Age < 19 Seen	2889	2372
Total Clients Served	3500	2731
Total Vaccines Given	7607	5545

Immunizations 2023 vs 2024



2. School Liaison

ECHD initiated a school liaison program to support school wellness policies and improve student health. This first year we focused primarily on building relationships with the school nurses for the seven public school districts and learning from them what the needs are in their schools. We provided a school-based clinic for immunizations at one local high school. The school liaison also provided hearing and vision screening for the Indiana Gateway Digital Academy.

3. Animal Bites/Rabies Control

All animal bites are reported to the Indiana Department of Health and investigated to determine risk for rabies transmission. In 2024, CHN reported 502 animal bite investigations and shipped 11 specimens to IDOH lab for testing. One bat tested positive for rabies and the individual who had contact with the bat received the rabies vaccines.

Animal Bites Tracked by Year

	2023	2024
No. of Reported Cases	476	502

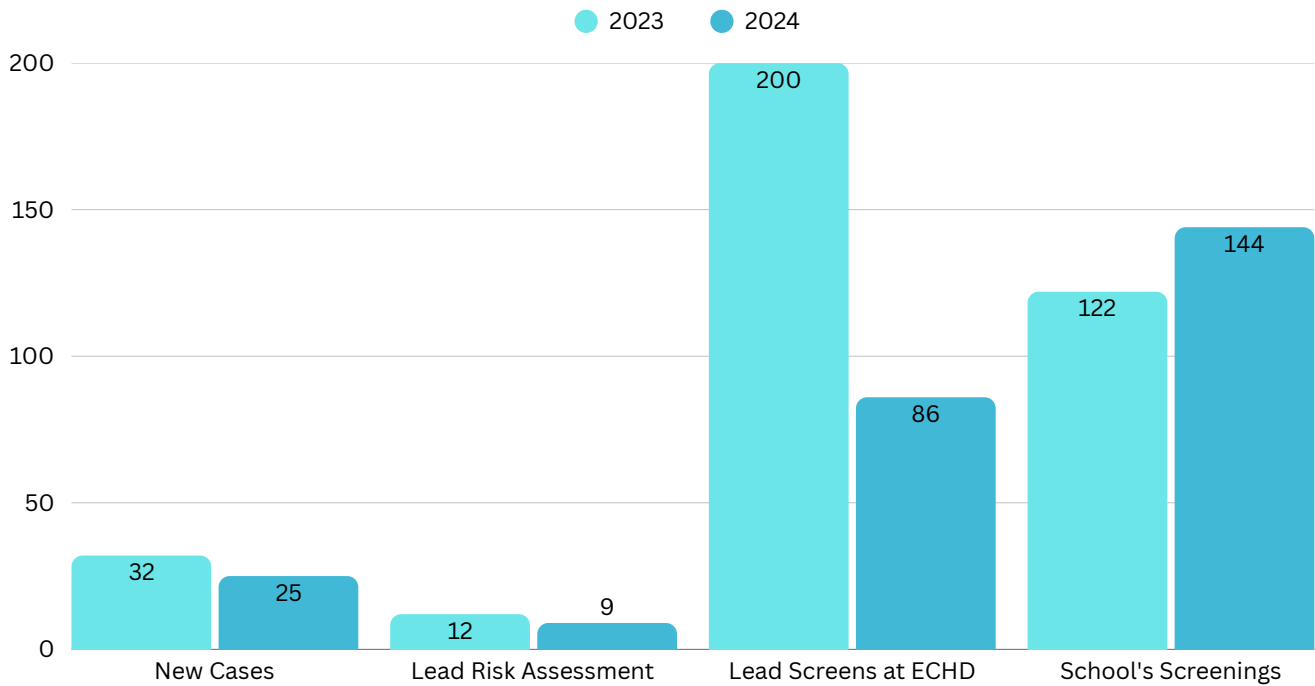
Specimens Shipped for Rabies Testing in 2024

Bat	7
Raccoon	2
Cat	1
Ferret	1
Total	11

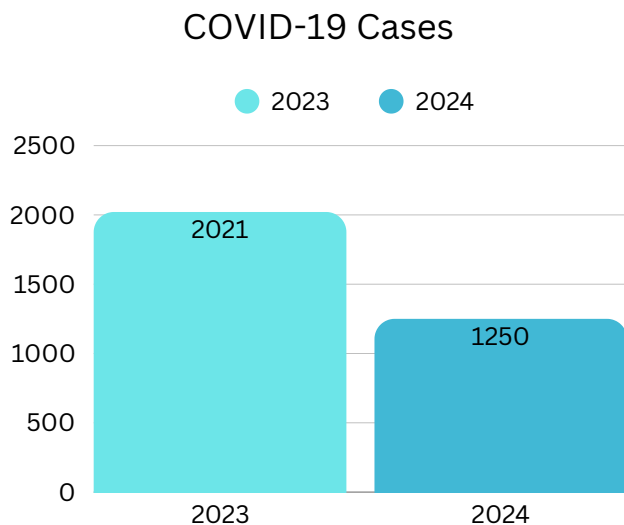
4. Childhood Lead Prevention

CHN provides case management to children who have had exposure to lead as outlined by Indiana Statute. In 2024 we had 25 new cases. All case managed children are referred to relevant resources like WIC, First Steps and Head Start. CHN provides free lead testing for children from 1 to 6 years old. We did 86 tests in 2024. We partnered with Head Start and completed 144 tests for their students. We receive reports from the State Department of Health and local PCP offices for children who have been tested for lead and had a blood lead level >3.5. This year we received 227 reports and followed up with the provider and caregiver to ensure the child was scheduled for a confirmatory test. Educational handouts about the potential sources of lead exposure are mailed to the caregivers for each child.

Childhood Lead Program 2023 vs 2024



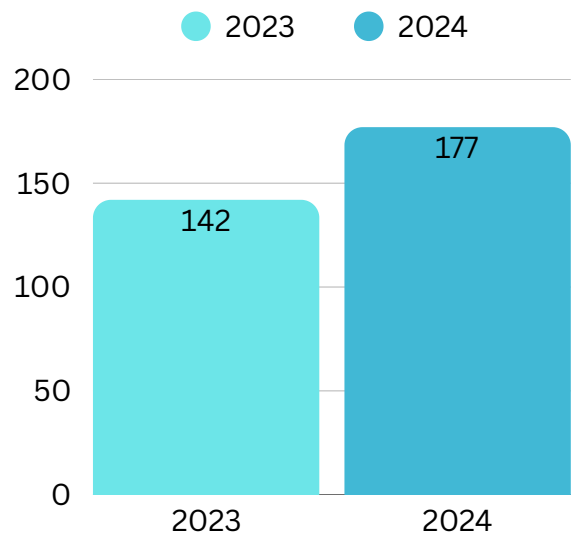
5. Communicable Disease



Numbers for COVID-19 cases 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.

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxins that occurs through 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 (410 IAC 1-2.5) 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 preventative measures, are implemented.

Communicable Diseases



TOGETHER
WE CAN
END HIV



6. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)

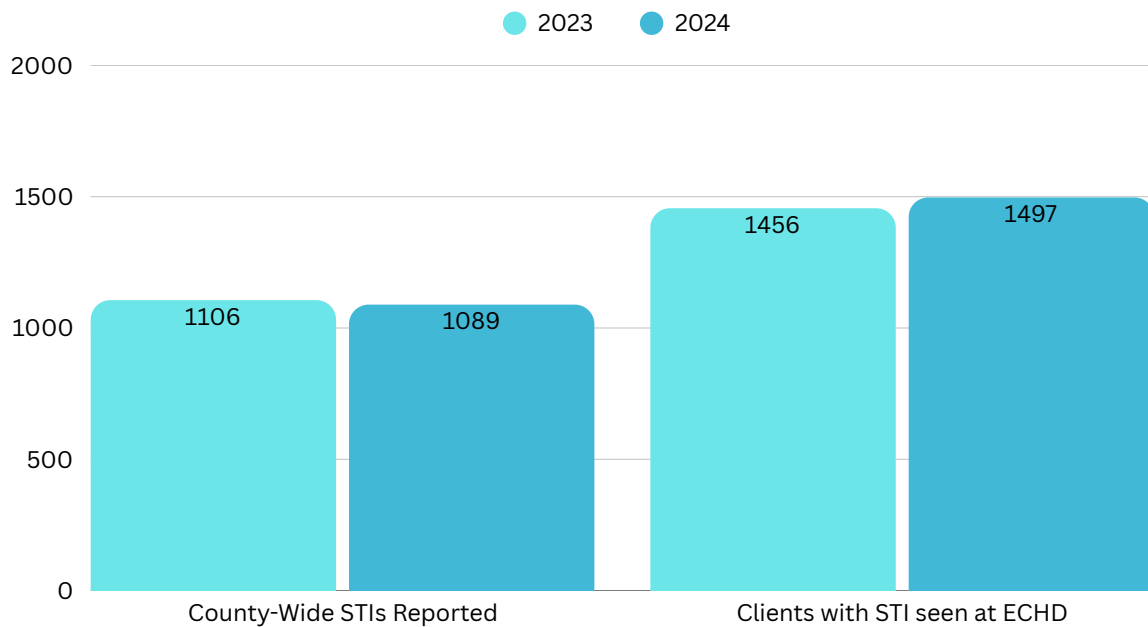
The goal of the STI program is to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases by providing cost effective clinical services aimed at minimizing physical, social, and economic barriers. The Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) provides case investigation and contact tracing for STIs as well as providing education, prevention counseling, case management and appropriate referrals to other services as needed.

June 27 is National HIV Testing Day and Greater Than HIV, a public health initiative across the country to provide HIV testing. This year our STI team partnered with the Walgreens on Lincolnway in Goshen to provide free rapid HIV testing.

County-Wide STIs Reported to ECHD

	2023	2024
Chlamydia	904	900
HIV	14	14
Neisseria Gonorrhoea	144	135
Syphilis	44	40
Total	1106	1089

Sexually Transmitted Infections

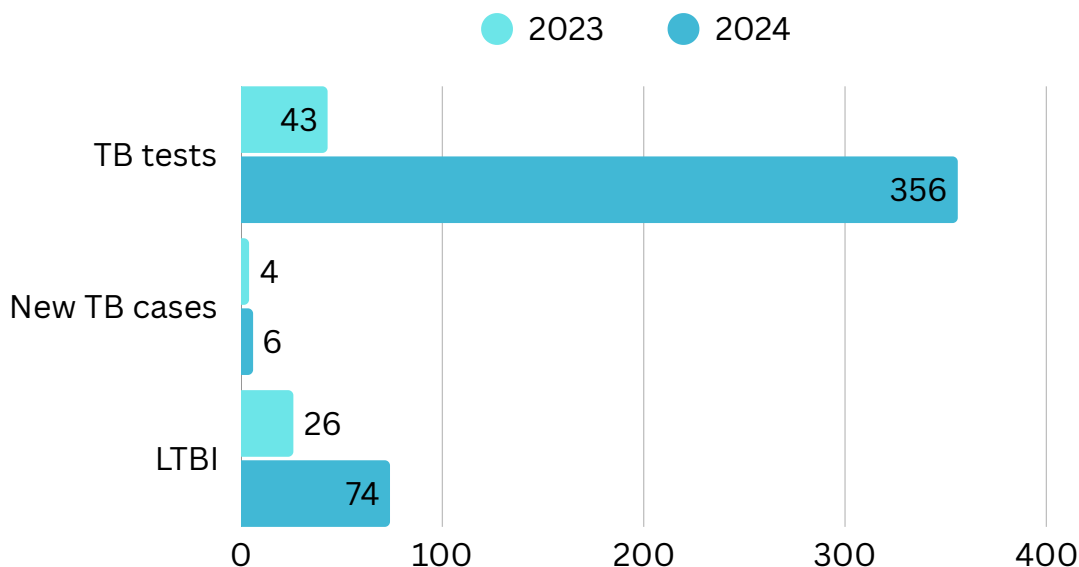


7. Tuberculosis (TB)

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.



Tuberculosis



If the pre-immigration exam has a positive TB result other than active TB disease, they are given a class B designation and are asked to follow-up with an 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. There were 6 active cases of TB in 2024, and 845 home visits and video Direct Observation Therapy sessions completed. There were 203 TB and LTBI clinic visits and 6 class B exams completed.



HFI Partner Spotlight:



Maple City Health Care Center

\$80,000 Went Towards Improving Mental Health & Addictions Access. HFI grant funding allowed Maple City Health Care Center to launch Elkhart County's first bilingual intensive outpatient addictions treatment program using the evidence-based Matrix model. The free group sessions and wraparound therapy and medical support was offered at Westend Community Health Center, conveniently located halfway between Goshen and Elkhart. This work supported Maple City's near doubling of total mental health and addictions appointments completed from 3,633 in 2023 to 6,903 in 2024. As a father who was able to stay clean for the first time through the program commented "this addictions group feels like family and if you are going through similar struggles or worse you can come and ask for help here."



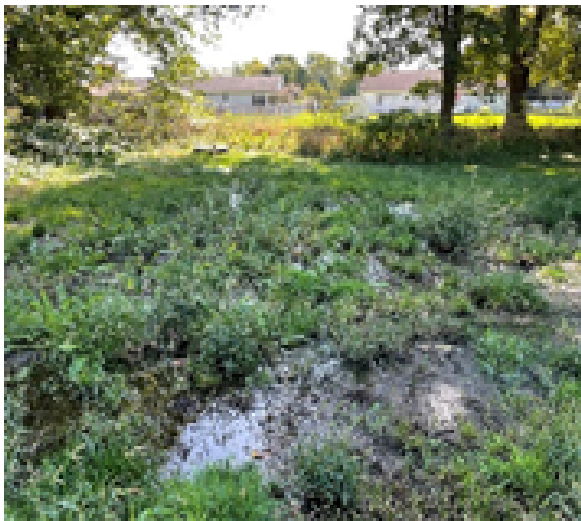
\$50,000 Went Towards Expanding Prenatal Care. HFI grant funding allowed Maple City Health Care Center to significantly expand its prenatal and OB capacity and access to services by over 50%, moving from less than 10 deliveries per month before the program to 15 deliveries per month after. The program allowed Maple City to restart centering pregnancy and centering parenting groups, bringing back a low cost, high quality, model of care to the community which had ended during COVID. As one mother in the program stated, "I had felt so alone and scared about my pregnancy before coming to Maple City. But thanks to God and the team, I am now blessed with a healthy baby boy!"

Environmental Health Services

Environmental Health continues to safeguard the public through a variety of inspection, licensing and testing activities across the county.

1. Septic Program

There has been an meaningful increase in the number of septic and well permits issued over the 2023 totals. Sewer installation work was almost completed in several large developments (Southwest, Foraker and Tecumseh Acres) to address a number of failing septic systems in those areas. This was a solution to 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 water to the City of Nappanee began construction in the spring of 2023. This is a critically needed solution to a problem that has existed for decades in the county.



Failing Septic Field

Septic Permit Type	2023	2024
New Residential	191	215
New Commercial	11	27
Repair Residential	160	186
Repair Commercial	5	2

2. Well Program

The Drinking Water Well program continues to benefit the community by preventing the installation of wells into areas with contaminated groundwater and ensures that wells are not installed too closely to other sources of contamination. Drinking water well permits remained fairly steady for 2024.

Well Permit Type	2023	2024
New Well Permits	202	230
Replacement Well Permits	206	192
Abandonment Well Permits	23	38

3. Food Program

The food team continues to have high demand for the licensing and inspecting of temporary events. The team performed over 1300 licensing and re-inspections on temporary units which is an addition of 95 inspections over 2023.

There were 278 events for the year with 241 of those events taking place over the 214 days between April 1st and October 31st. That is an average of 7.8 events per week which is a slight increase for the same time period in 2023. Unfortunately, this decreases the available time to perform routine facility inspections. Plan reviews for new facilities and remodels remained steady for 2024 after almost doubling from 2022 to 2023. The food program issued 1191 regular food service licenses for the 2024 licensing period up from the 1129 issued in 2023.

Food Establishment Activity	2023	2024
Food Service Inspections	1134	1071
Retail Inspections	197	132
Temporary Units Licensing and Re-inspections	1252	1347
Mobile Unit Inspections	124	51
Complaint Investigations & Follow-ups	173	193
Plan Reviews	88	87



Unlicensed food service operating out of a home garage

4. Public Pool Program

Public Swimming Pool Activity	2023	2024
Number of Inspections	153	167
Number of Re-inspections	31	27

The public swimming pool program licenses over 100 public swimming pools in the county. Re-inspections due to facilities needing to have corrections verified fell from 20% to about 16%.

5. Groundwater Protection Program

The groundwater team performed 1066 facility inspections under the groundwater Protection Ordinance which is a slight decrease of inspections from the previous year. They also performed 63 facility re-inspections and 264 field visits in an attempt to perform an inspection. The Groundwater Team also worked closely with the EPA to coordinate additional work on 3 of our 7 Superfund sites across the county. The Groundwater team is also tasked with working with lead-exposed families, vector testing, surface water inspections and a majority of the complaints our office receives.



Leaking Underground Storage Tank

6. Lead Program

The groundwater team performed 9 lead risk assessments and 27 lead clearance exams this year. This is a decrease from 2023, which saw a massive increase in new cases due to the lowering of Blood Lead Levels that a child may have before case management is instigated. This decrease is likely from families declining the Lead Risk Assessment due to requirements to remediate any lead hazards found. These repairs can be quite expensive and the families may not have the means to address them. They also completed 23 initial family meetings to fill out questionnaire paperwork prior to performing the full lead risk assessments.

Lead Program Activity	2023	2024
Lead Risk Assessments	15	9
Lead Clearance Exams	25	27

7. Vector and Surface Water Programs

The groundwater team is also involved with the vector program and the surface water sampling program. With the help of the summer vector technicians almost 20,000 adult mosquitoes and larva were collected as well as 290 surface water samples being collected.



8. Complaints

Environmental Health received and addressed a total of 260 complaints and performed 700 follow-up visits. The food team investigated over 130 complaints, many of which were related to unlicensed food services being operated out of private homes. These complaints require a great amount of time and detective work from the department to bring vendors into compliance and end illegal food production activities in Elkhart County..

Complaints are investigated, violators are given directions for correction and then are checked for compliance during follow-up visits. Violators are given multiple opportunities to come into compliance before 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, and dead animals. We refer these complainants to other county/city jurisdictions, state agencies or corporate entities depending on the type of complaint.

Complaints	2023	2024
Food service	135	135
Septic	29	31
MS4	24	24
groundwater Facility	13	12
Spills	13	16
Housing	31	28
Open Burning	8	5
Mosquito/Vector	6	7

HFI Partner Spotlight:

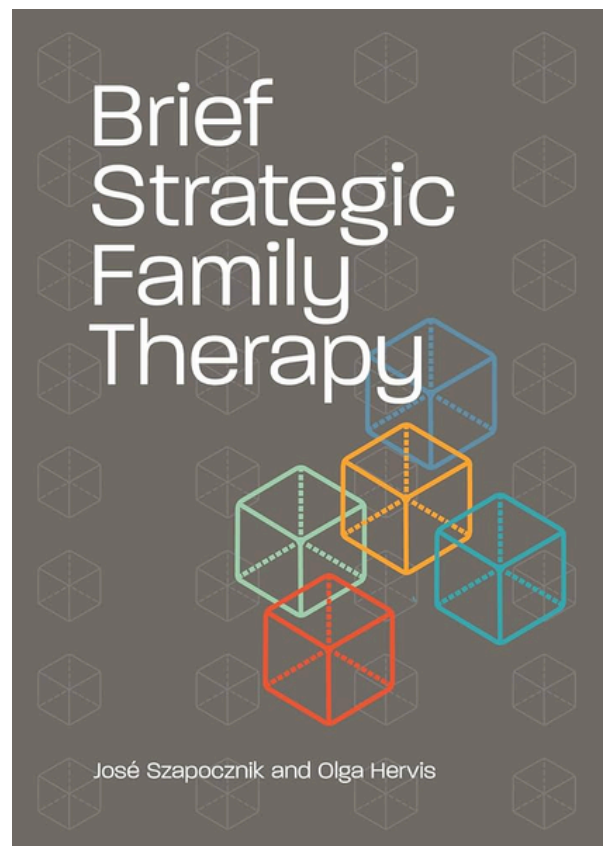


OAKLAWN

\$25,000 Towards Supporting Families Going Through

Mental Health Crisis:

With funding from the Elkhart County Health Department's Health First Indiana Grant, Oaklawn began training and implementation of the Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) as part of their new treatment offerings. BSFT uses family therapy to help young people who struggle with emotional challenges like depression and anxiety along with behaviors, like acting out or substance use. BSFT means helping the child within the context of the family, strengthening the whole family to support child well-being. BSFT is a leading evidence-based practice that is effective across serious child issues that may involve youth with school discipline concerns, child welfare and the juvenile justice system. The grant funded leaders from Elkhart County Department of Child Services, Juvenile Detention and Probation and Oaklawn to come together to collaborate on referrals, care of families and accessing this service. This high-level intervention requires extensive training including weekly consultation and a yearlong process to reach full certification, making Oaklawn the first certified BSFT site in Indiana. The three trained child and adolescent therapists, including two who are bilingual in English and Spanish, are now working with Elkhart county families decreasing mental health symptoms and risky behavior while strengthening family communication and relationships.



Health Education

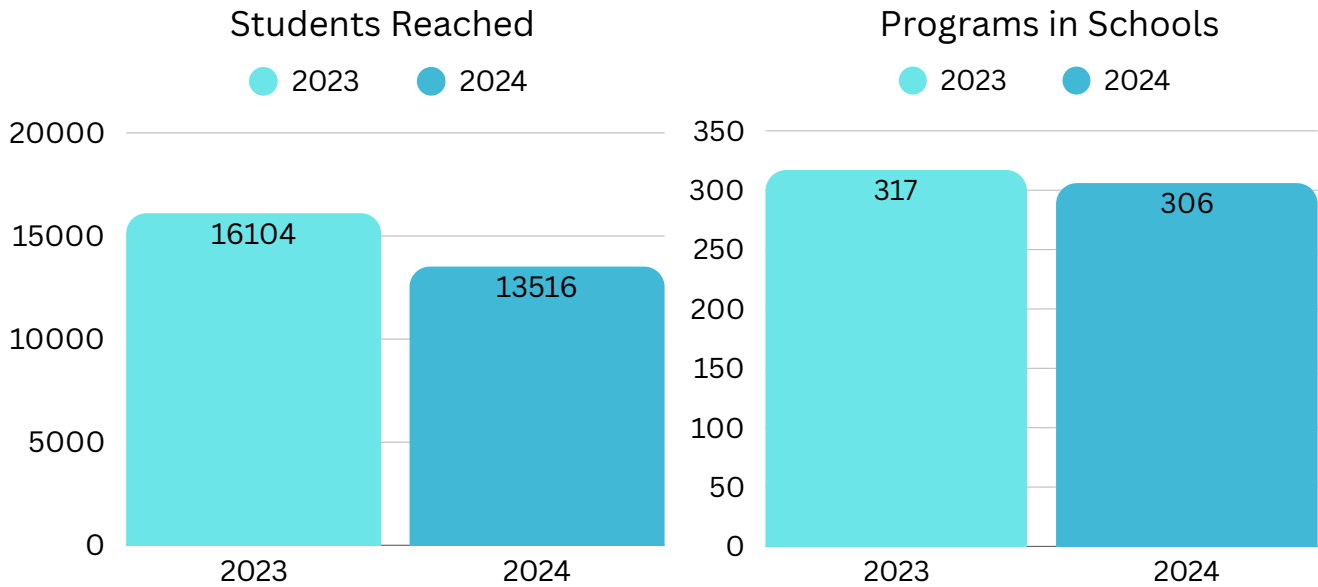
In 2024, our Health Education initiatives have demonstrated remarkable growth and resilience, reflecting our commitment to enhancing health and community well-being. This year has been distinguished by the strengthening of partnerships with returning collaborators, as well as the successful expansion into new regions. These developments have not only enriched our programming but have also allowed us to reach a broader audience, ensuring that vital health education resources are accessible to more individuals than ever before.

We successfully engaged a total of 32,723 community members through our comprehensive initiatives in three key areas: school programming, community health programming, and community events. This achievement reflects our commitment to fostering meaningful connections and enhancing the overall well-being of our community.

For 2025, Health Education is redesigning and developing new programs to better support local businesses, organizations, and community members. New evidence-based certifications and tools will allow effective education that will help address social determinants of health and improve our community's well-being.

1. School Programming

In 2024, health education staff provided 306 school programs reaching a total of 13,516 students in all seven school districts and several private schools across the county. The five most requested programs were Growth and Development, Healthy Heart Series, Tobacco, Wheel and Pedestrian Safety, and Dental. In total School Programming accounted for 49% of our community reach.



2. Community Health Programming

In 2024, we provided 113 presentations to our local community. Topics ranged from Mental Health, Injury Prevention, Nutrition, Tobacco Cessation/Prevention, Chronic Disease, and Emergency Preparedness. In total we served 2015 individuals. A notable success was training 222 individuals in Adult/Youth Mental Health First Aid.



3. Tobacco Control of Elkhart County

Tobacco Control of Elkhart County has seen lots of successes for 2024. In the first quarter of we performed the Tobacco Retailer Surveys. Over 170 retail locations were surveyed for tobacco promotions, cost, products, and this was the first year that alcohol and nutritious products were included. TCEC is now engaged in sharing the results of these surveys to the local community, board of health, and other leaders.

Drug Free Partnerships

TCEC applied for and was awarded funds to support Elkhart County’s Youth VOICE program. The funds will be used for local youth programs and initiatives and will enable TCEC to host a countywide tobacco cessation summit.

VOICE Elkhart County

2024 also saw one of the Elkhart County’s VOICE participants being selected to the State Youth Ambassador Council for tobacco prevention and cessation. This honor will be for the 2024-2025 school year, and they will be involved in local student initiatives.



HFI Partner Spotlight:



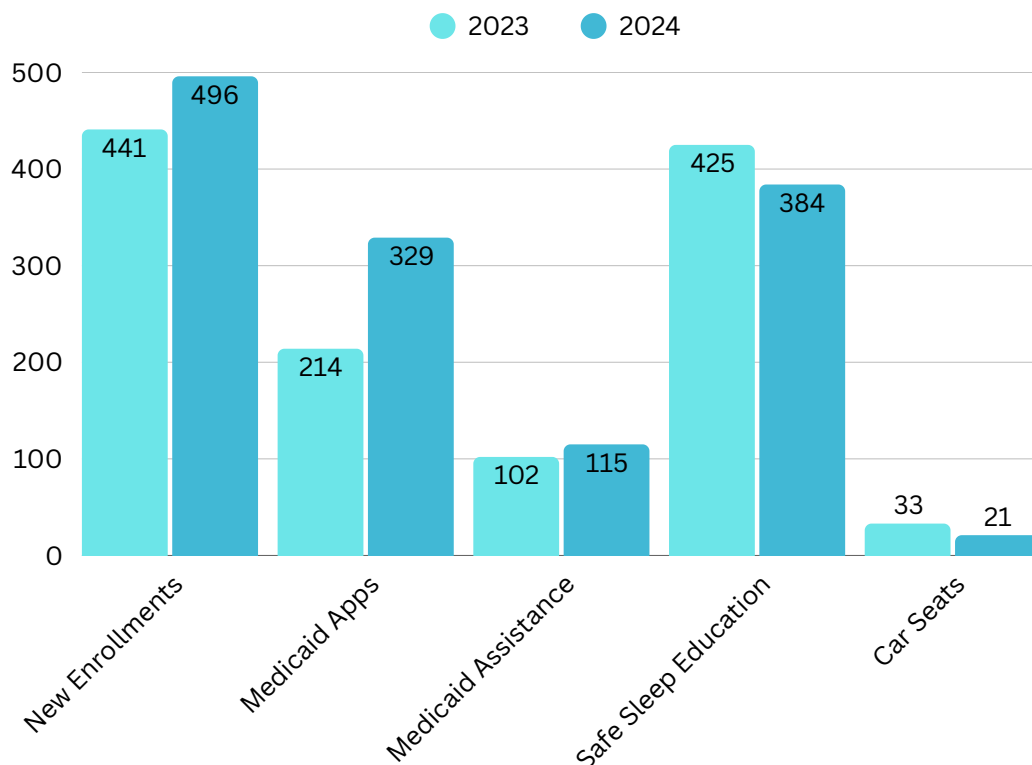
\$26,000 Went Towards Reducing Suicide Rates: Funding from HFI enabled CAPS, in collaboration with the William J. Shaw Center for Children and Families at Notre Dame, to develop and implement a tailored suicide prevention program. This initiative equipped CAPS staff with evidence-based suicide prevention techniques, emphasizing mental wellness, stress management, and self-regulation skills to enhance their support for families. As part of the program, staff participated in 10 mental health training sessions and consultation groups covering topics such as “Introduction to Adult/Child Mental Health Conditions,” “Trauma, Complex Trauma, & PTSD,” and “Responding to a Mental Health Emergency.” A total of 93 participants engaged in these sessions, ultimately strengthening support for the more than 2,000 adults and children they serve.

Healthy Beginnings

1. Healthy Babies Prenatal Care Coordination

The Healthy Babies Prenatal Care Coordination Program provided services to over 400 women and their infants during 2024. Our staff walks beside these families from early pregnancy through to the baby's first year of life; facilitating connections to public assistance, linkage to OB care providers, education on prenatal and infant development, and emotional support. We offer services to individuals through appointments offered either in the office or home, as desired by the client. We also offer Mom Groups in English and Spanish, providing education and support from our Care Coordinators, and mom-to-mom connections.

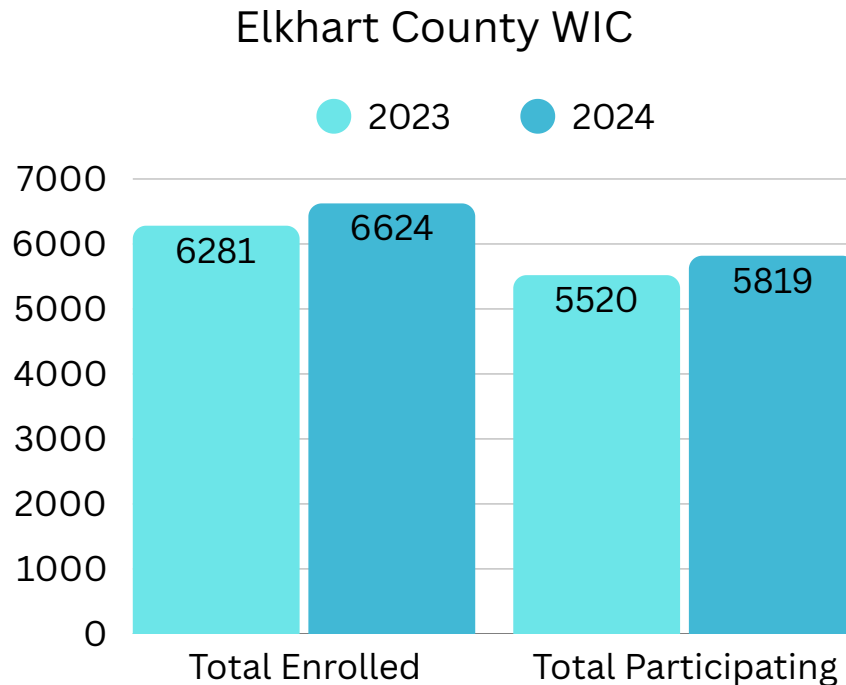
Healthy Babies Prenatal Care Coordination



2. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The WIC program helps 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 income guidelines or are income-eligible based on participation in other programs like Medicaid, SNAP or TANF. WIC participants must be at nutritional risk like underweight, overweight, anemic or nutritionally deficient in any form.

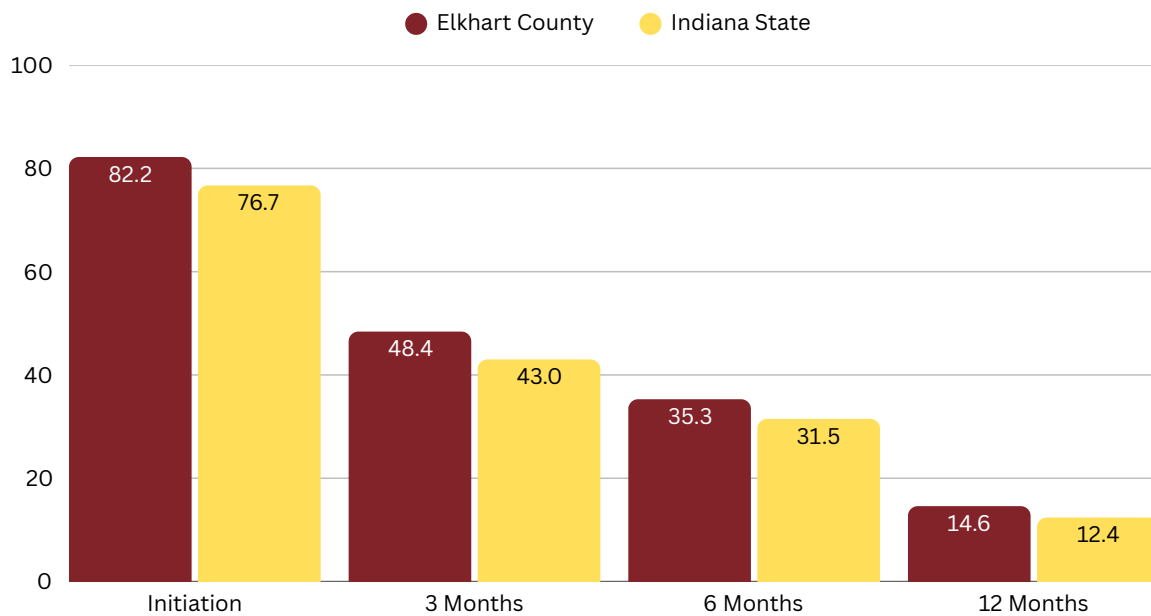
In 2024, Elkhart County WIC provided services to an average of 5819 clients a month, which is an increase of 5.4% over FY23. The rate of participants who enrolled but did not redeem benefits was 4% higher in FY23. IDOH funded for a caseload of 5392/month. Elkhart County WIC has served on average 400 more clients every month than the assigned budget despite being short staffed. \$5,510,663.18 in WIC benefits were redeemed on food items at participating stores in Elkhart County in 2024.



3. Breast Feeding

WIC promotes breastfeeding as the best source of infant nutrition. We have three certified lactation consultants and qualified peer counselors who assist WIC mothers with breast feeding initiation and maintenance. WIC loans out breast pumps to mothers who plan to return to work after childbirth.

Breast Feeding Rates

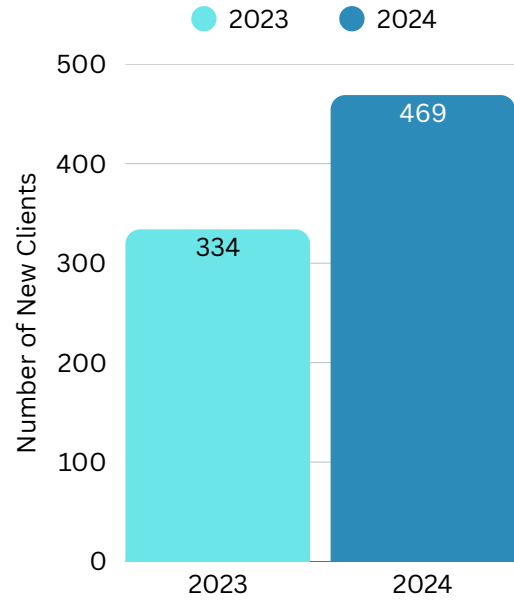


4. The Robbins Dental Clinic

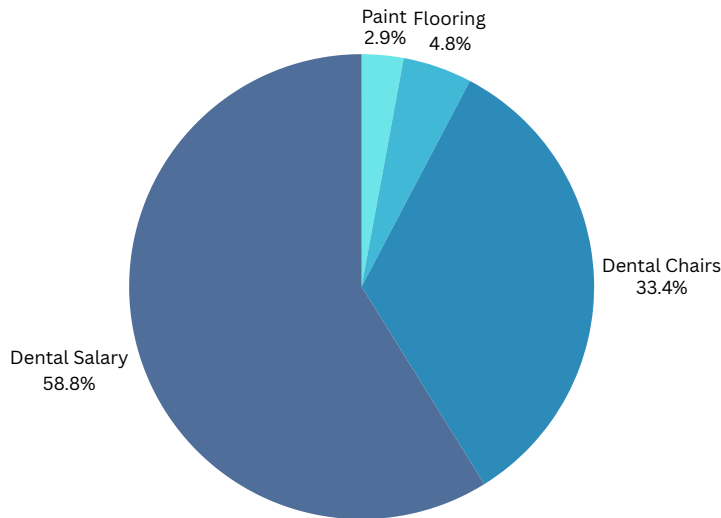
The dental clinic continues to offer preventative services and restorative work at cost effective rates. In order to qualify patients must be under 220% of the federal poverty level. In 2024 the clinic saw 489 new patients and completed over 4000 visits for returning patients and over 2500 restorative procedures. Dr. Caselberry and the dedicated staff continue to provide vital dental care to pediatric patients in Elkhart County.



In 2024, the clinic experienced significant growth, with new clients increasing by 46%, from 334 in 2023 to 489, adding 155 clients. This surge, combined with over 4,000 returning patient visits and 2,500 restorative procedures, underscores the rising demand for the clinic's services. To support this expansion and maintain high-quality care, the clinic received targeted funding to enhance its infrastructure and staffing, ensuring it could meet the community's growing needs.



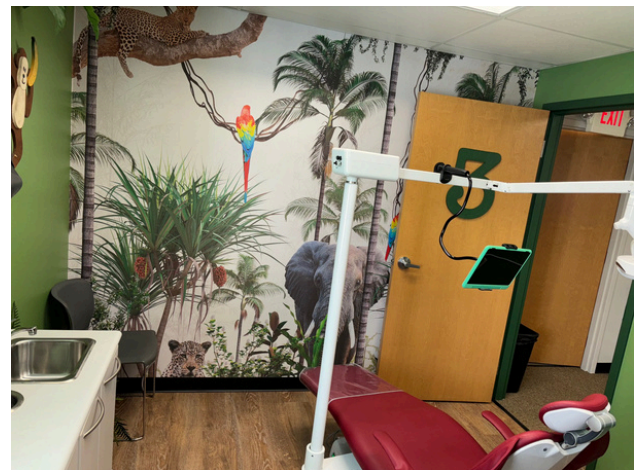
The 2024 HFI funding for the dental clinic totaled \$254,895.80, strategically allocated to address the increased patient load. The largest portion, \$150,000 (58.84%), was dedicated to a dentist's salary, reflecting a commitment to securing skilled professionals to manage the growing client base and high procedure volume. Additionally, \$85,240.80 (33.44%) was invested in new dental chairs and operatory cabinets, expanding treatment capacity to accommodate the 46% client increase and support the 2,500+ restorative procedures. Smaller allocations of \$12,261 (4.81%) for flooring updates and \$7,394 (2.90%) for paint and wall coverings enhanced the clinic's aesthetic appeal, creating a welcoming environment for pediatric patients.





The funding allocation aligns closely with the clinic's operational demands and growth. Investments in staff and equipment, comprising 92.28% of the budget, ensure the clinic can handle increased patient volumes –evidenced by the 4,000+ visits and 2,500+ procedures—without compromising care quality. Aesthetic upgrades, though minor at 7.71%, likely boost patient satisfaction and retention, fostering a positive experience. However, the high salary cost should be monitored to confirm its value, and equipment installation must be efficient to avoid disruptions.

Overall, the funding is purposeful and well-targeted, with no evident wasteful spending, positioning the clinic to sustain its growth and continue serving Elkhart County effectively.



5. FIMR Program

The Elkhart County Health Department relaunched its Fetal Infant Maternal Review program (FIMR) after a five-year pause. This important initiative is being reestablished to understand better and address the factors contributing to fetal and infant deaths in our county.

FIMR is a nationally recognized program that brings together a team of health care professionals, social workers and community members to review de-identified cases of fetal and infant loss. The goal is to promote community based actions that support healthier outcomes for mothers, babies and families.

Currently there are 28 members on the Case Review Team (CRT). Meetings are held on the second Monday of every other month at the CAPS conference room. At an average 3 cases are discussed at every meeting and recommendations are sent to the State Health Department. These recommendations have been incredibly helpful in enhancing our understanding of our community and the specific needs of birthing people in Elkhart County. The insights gained from the cases have guided us in identifying key areas of improvement and have fostered a more inclusive approach to our services.

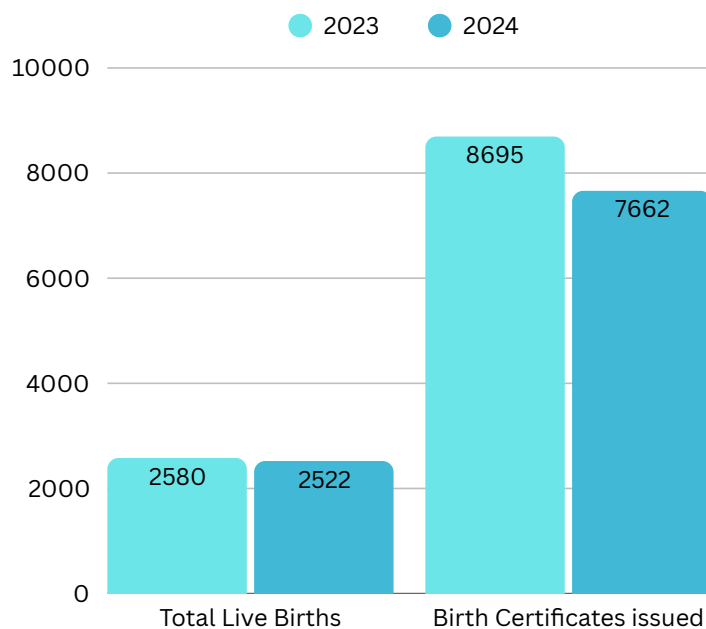
We look forward to re-engaging past partners and welcoming new collaborators in this critical effort. By building a more comprehensive and responsive maternal and infant care system, the FIMR program aims to reduce fetal and infant mortality, ensuring more infants survive and thrive with their families in Elkhart County.



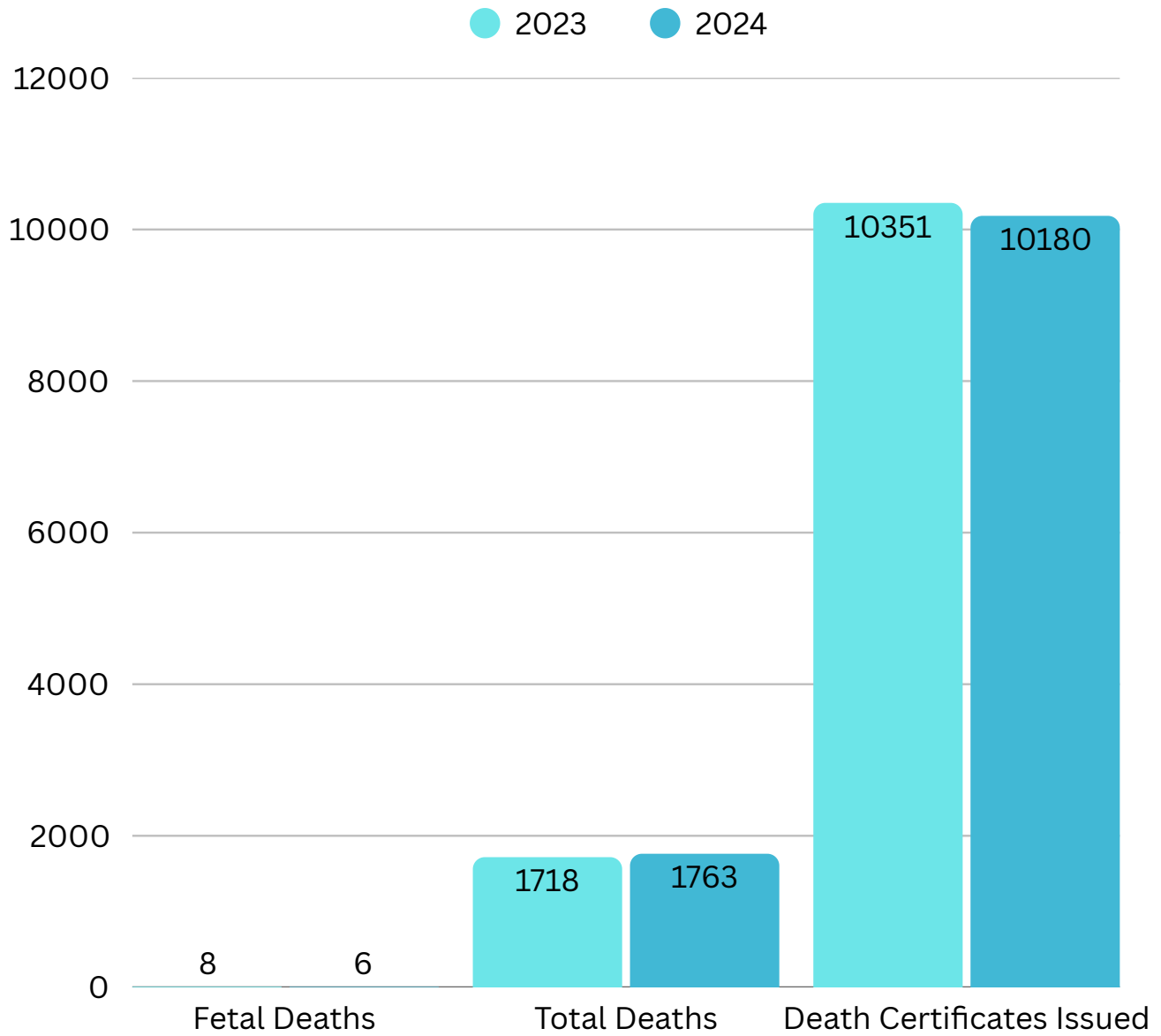
Vital Records

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



Deaths and Death Certificates



HFI Partner Spotlight:



\$120,000 Went Towards Improving the Lives of Residents with Mental Illness: Cora Dale House and Lexington House, Elkhart County’s Local Clubhouses, received an HFI grant in 2024 to support their work of reaching out to adults with a history of mental illness (our members), encouraging them to reduce their social isolation and join a community of support. This grant also went to ensuring our members had access to what they need to increase their stability, particularly in regard to medical, psychological, pharmacological, housing, education, and employment resources.

When Angelica first came to Cora Dale House in 2023, she had a lot of issues that she was struggling to deal with on her own. She just recently had a major brain surgery, which left her socially isolated, depressed and experiencing difficulties with many activities of daily life. Although she was living with her father, she did not have a place of her own, and was unemployed, all while her medical care was under threat as she wasn't able to get herself to appointments consistently.

The Cora Dale House was a major support during this time. Our clubhouse gave her a reason to get out of the house and simultaneously engage in meaningful and productive work. Clubhouse also gave Angelica the opportunity to reduce her social isolation by integrating into the community, making new friends, and building informal social support. Clubhouse was able to provide transportation to her appointments and help her apply for government support such as disability. Due to the support from the Cora Dale House, Angelica now has consistent medical, psychiatric, and psychological care and is able to thrive. She has used her skills to improve the Clubhouse’s data tracking system and streamline otherwise tedious tasks. She also enjoys writing for the newsletter and helping build our social media presence. She is actively seeking employment with the assistance of the Clubhouse and given the skills and confidence she has received from working at the Clubhouse, this is much more of a possibility now than it was a year and a half ago.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S CONCLUSION

2024 has brought many medical challenges for Elkhart County Health Department, for instance our record high numbers of latent and active TB patients to contact trace and treat. Education, prevention, and treatment of many infectious diseases is a very important work of the health department to make our greater community healthier and protected. These measures and our preparedness for the next health challenges that may come has kept our staff on their toes, researching and connecting with state and national entities to make sure we are always abreast of the latest health threats.



Threats to our health can come from many sources, from the environment, our food, water, people we encounter, and the animals around us. Educating and ensuring we are observing best practices and interventions is an ongoing work for our staff at Elkhart County Health Department. Often this work is silent and behind the scenes but none the less vitally important to our communities.

It is our hope that we will all strive to continue this critical work to the best of our abilities in the years to come being sensitive to the many different people we serve in Elkhart County.

Richard Hostetter MD FACS
Medical Officer

Locations

Health Department

Main Office

608 Oakland Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516
574-523-2283

Environmental Health

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

Healthy Beginnings

Elkhart Office

1400 Hudson St.
Elkhart, IN 46516
574-522-0104

Community Health

Nursing

608 Oakland Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516
574-523-2127

Health Education

608 Oakland Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516
574-523-2116

Healthy Beginnings

Goshen Office

117 N. 2nd St.
Goshen, IN 46526
574-535-6765

Vital Records

608 Oakland Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516
574-523-2109

Robbins Dental Clinic

1400 Hudson St.
Elkhart, IN 46516
574-522-6702

Healthy Beginnings

Nappanee Office

109 Market St.
Nappanee, IN 46550
574-522-0104

health.elkhartcounty.com