



Vilas County Public Health Department Annual Report 2014

03/30/2014

2014 Annual Report

Message from the Health Officer

The 2014 Annual Report of Vilas County Public Health Department provides a snapshot of the many ways in which our department touches the lives of Vilas County residents each and every day and provides an answer to many who ask us, “What does Public Health do?”

Although public health programs and activities may not often be visible, public health staff can frequently be found working behind the scenes on our mission to protect, promote, and maintain the health of our entire population. The 10 Essential Services of Public Health* can provide a basic description to others as to what Public Health does, and the services provided by our department.

What will help us to further describe public health in the future is the national movement of Public Health Accreditation. Through the accreditation process we will continue to formally sharpen and develop the tools and methods we need to ensure the safety and health of the population that we serve. Our health department is embarking on the accreditation process.

In summary, we can not do it alone. Providing Essential Services of Public Health requires community partnerships. While strengthening our services to provide essential public health services, we continue to develop and engage community partners to provide a healthy and safe place to live for all residents of Vilas County.

Respectfully yours,

Gina Egan, RN, BSN
Health Officer
Vilas County Public Health Department

10 Essential Services of Public Health

- ① Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community.
- ② Protect people from health problems and health hazards.
- ③ Give people information they need to make healthy choices.
- ④ Engage the community to identify and solve health problems.
- ⑤ Develop public health policies and plans.
- ⑥ Enforce public health laws and regulations.
- ⑦ Help people receive health services.
- ⑧ Maintain a competent public health workforce.
- ⑨ Evaluate and improve programs and interventions.
- ⑩ Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.

Comments from our clients

“It is so nice that that the Northwoods Dental Program comes to my kid’s school to check for cavities and to give them fluoride and sealant treatments.

-Parent of Second Grader

“The nutrition information and foods that my family receives from WIC really helps me to make healthy choices for my family”

-WIC Participant

“It is very reassuring to know that all Vilas County restaurants and lodging are inspected regularly. When I make reservations for a vacation in Vilas County I am confident those facilities are clean and up to code.”

-Visitor to Vilas County

“Coming to Vilas County Health Department for my adult shots was a very good experience. The staff are skilled professionals and answered all my questions. Now all my immunizations are up to date. Thank you!”

-Immunization Client

Since 1900, the average lifespan of persons in the United States has lengthened by greater than 30 years; 25 years of this gain are attributable to advances in public health.

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

What does Vilas County Public Health Department do for you and your community? Numerous things, but most people don't realize how many vital services they receive from their local health department. The benefits have become such an integral part of the American standard of living that most people take them for granted.

Protecting, Educating and Providing

Public Health is the science of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. Public Health focuses on improving the health of the general population (population-based) through broad-based interventions, as opposed to the health care system, which primarily focuses on the treatment of individuals. The population-based services provided by public health departments are a major contributor to the overall improvement of a community's health status.

Protects the community from health threats, the everyday and the exceptional.

Vilas County Public Health Department guards multiple fronts to defend you and our community from any health threat, regardless of the source, and works to prevent disease outbreaks. The Health Department's Environmental Health Specialists ensure the tap water that everyone drinks, the restaurant food everyone eats and the air everyone breathes are all safe. Public Health Staff are ready to respond to any health emergency—be it bioterrorism, communicable disease or an environmental hazard.



Educates you and your neighbors about health issues.

Vilas County Public Health Department provides information that allows people to make healthy decisions every day, like exercising more, eating right, quitting smoking or simply washing their hands to keep from spreading illness. Public Health Nurses provide this information through public forums in our community, public service

The mission of the Vilas County Public Health Department is protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people of Vilas County.

announcements in the media, programs in schools, health education in homes and clinics, and detailed websites. During a public health emergency, Vilas County Public Health Department provides important alerts and warnings to protect your health and our community's health.

Provides healthy solutions for everyone.



Vilas County Public Health Department offers the preventive care needed to avoid chronic disease and to help maintain health. Public Health Nursing provides flu shots for the elderly and target groups, and helps mothers obtain prenatal care that gives their babies a healthy start. Vilas County Public Health Department also helps provide children with immunizations and nutritional education to help them grow and learn.

Advances community health.

Vilas County Public Health Department and its governing board, the Board of Health, plays a vital role in developing new policies and implementing evidence-based practices that address existing and emerging challenges to your community's health while enforcing a range of laws intended to keep everyone safe. The Health Department is constantly working through research and rigorous staff training—to maintain its unique expertise and deliver up-to-date, cutting-edge health programs while evaluating program effectiveness. These efforts can not be done alone, but through community partnerships focusing on health priorities identified in the community.

Our 2014 Programs and Services:

Healthy People Vilas County

Healthy People Vilas County is a partnership plan developed in 2012 to focus on improving the health of Vilas County residents through the year 2017. The plan provides strategic direction for collective action with community individuals and partnership groups for the following health priority areas:

- Alcohol and Other Drug Use
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Mental Health
- Oral Health

The Healthy People Vilas County plan provides a synergy of efforts and resources by engaging a diverse group of partners in the implementation process, overall impacting the quality of life for Vilas County residents.

Successes in 2014 include:

- Maintaining our Oral Health Programs
- Participation in the Positive Alternatives Coalition, Sixth Grade Summit, and the Northwoods Tobacco Coalition to create awareness of substance abuse issues in our community
- Partnering in the Mental Health Coalition and Mental Health Summit
- Participation in the Vilas/Oneida chronic disease coalition LEAN (Linking Education Activity and Nutrition)

Disease Control and Prevention

The Vilas County Public Health Department tracks communicable disease through a channel of communications at the local, state and regional levels between public health, private physicians, hospitals, and labs. This communication channel allows for prompt investigation of possible outbreaks and unusual situations, and to implement control measures to minimize further transmission of disease to others. In 2014, Vilas County Public Health Department's disease control staff received reports of communicable diseases such as Hepatitis C, Blastomycosis and Lyme disease.

In addition to these diseases, Vilas County Public

<u>Confirmed/Probable/Suspect Reportable Diseases in Vilas County</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Lyme Disease	30	21	25	30
Blastomycosis	2	5	3	3
Hepatitis C	13	14	12	7
Chlamydia	33	28	30	28
Giardiasis	2	9	9	7
Pertussis	6	44	10	36
Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis	9	12	12	6

Health Department also investigates all animal bites to humans, to prevent and determine the possibility of rabies, as well as ensure the appropriate treatment. In 2014, Vilas County Public Health Department investigated 74 animal bites. This investigation requires a close working partnership with law enforcement, the local humane officer, area emergency rooms and veterinarians.

Public Health Preparedness

Vilas County is prepared to respond to all emergencies with a pre-determined, detailed plan of action and a system of communication with community responders.

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”
- Benjamin Franklin

This response includes **detecting** disease outbreaks; **investigating** to determine what the risks are to the public and who may have been exposed; **informing** the public and professionals of the specific disease threats and how to protect themselves and others; **managing** infected persons; **isolating or quarantining** affected individuals as appropriate; **providing medications or vaccinations** to people at risk in the population.

In 2014, Vilas County Public Health Department's preparedness efforts included testing a number of performance measures set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that helps to determine whether our agency is ready to respond rapidly to a public health emergency. Preparedness training for staff is ongoing throughout the year and includes webinars, conferences and planning and implementation tabletop and full scale exercises.

2014 exercises and planning focused on community recovery, fatality management and mass care. Through real events and exercising with community



partners, the health department tested our plans in these areas, and continued to improve our capabilities.

Preparing for a public health emergency is a process done in collaboration with our community partners. Some of our planning partners include health providers, schools, law enforcement, EMS, fire personnel, social services, human services, businesses, other county public health departments, tribal entities, service groups, church groups, state and regional health services, and community members. Through exercises and real public health events, the health department demonstrated its ability to collaborate with its community partners to develop an effective response plan.

Immunizations for Children and Adults

Immunization is one of the most important public health victories of the 20th century – defeating or sharply reducing disease such as smallpox, polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, Pertussis (whooping cough) and other diseases. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control, many organisms that cause these diseases have not been eliminated, and they could reemerge if vaccination levels drop.

In 2014, Vilas County Public Health Department gave a total of 1,607 immunizations, with 82 of these given to children and 1,525 given to adults. Through the state of Wisconsin Vaccine for Children’s program, the health department provided vaccines at no charge to Vilas County citizens age birth to 19. In addition to children’s vaccinations, we offer shots for adults, such as Tetanus, Hepatitis B, Shingles and Pneumonia vaccine.

2013 Vaccinations

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>
Seasonal Influenza	1167	1146
Tetanus/Pertussis	183	302
Pneumonia	13	20
Shingles	67	47
Hepatitis B	16	16

Mother, Child and Family

Infant mortality is an important measure of a community’s health. Our prenatal and postnatal programs aim to help families support their children’s healthy growth and development. Research indicates that families participating in these programs have healthier babies, improved their parenting skills, developed positive community relationships, children

have less behavior problems, and there is a reduction in tobacco exposure and alcohol use.

Prenatal and Postnatal Care



Vilas County Public Health Department provides information and resource referrals from a public health nurse to assist families after the birth of their baby whether it is their first baby or they already have other children. Mothers receive support and education, baby weight checks, health teaching on parenting and child development and referrals to community services.

Vilas County Public Health Department provides access to medical, social, educational and other services to pregnant women who are considered high risk for adverse pregnancy outcome through our Prenatal Care Coordination program. Although Prenatal Care Coordination is targeted by the state at those who receive Medicaid, Vilas County Public Health Department makes the program available to all high risk pregnancies. The components of these programs are outreach, physical and emotional assessments, care plan development, ongoing care coordination and monitoring, and health education and nutrition counseling. A total of 8 women participated in PNCC in 2013.

Injury Prevention Program

Injuries are a significant public health problem in Vilas County, Wisconsin, and the nation, causing needless pain and suffering as well as emotional and financial stress. Each year, injury accounts for about 54,077 hospitalizations in Wisconsin and 347 in Vilas County. The five leading causes of injury deaths in Vilas County are falls, poisoning, motor vehicle traffic crash, firearms, and suffocation.



Injury prevention education is integrated in public health services provided to families and children. In 2014, Vilas County Public Health Department was an active participant on the Snowmobile Safety Committee, Keeping Kids Alive Initiative, Child Death Review Team and Highway Safety Committee.

Nutrition WIC

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC helps income eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who recently had a baby, infants and children up to five years of age who are at health risk due to inadequate nutrition. The program improves pregnancy outcomes by providing or referring to support services necessary for full-term pregnancies; reduces infant mortality by reducing the incidence of low birth weight (infants under 5 ½ pounds are at greater risk of breathing problems, brain injuries and physical abnormalities) and provides infants and children with a healthy start in life by improving poor or inadequate diets while saving long-term medical costs.

Vilas County Public Health Department had 307 WIC clients in 2014, with the caseload averaging 192 clients per month.

The Vilas County Health Department has two nurses who are also Certified Lactation Specialists. Both are members of the Northwoods Breastfeeding Coalition. The lactation specialists provide specialized breastfeeding education, encouragement and support to pregnant and breastfeeding women and their infants. The lactation specialists also assist participants with breast pump use and provide outreach to hospitals and physicians on breastfeeding services.

Oral Health

Oral health is essential to the general health and well-being of all Wisconsin residents and can be achieved by all. Virtually everyone will have some sort of dental problem during his or her life, but regular dental care can prevent minor problems from becoming major ones. In children, the immediate consequences of poor oral health can result in psychological and social stressors, self-esteem, difficulty eating, swallowing, and speech. Lack of access to dental care may be caused by lack of finances or transportation, as well as limited Medical Assistance providers.



In 2014, Vilas County residents received preventive oral health screening and programming, through the Northwoods Dental Project, an oral health partnership with Vilas, Oneida, Forest and Florence Counties. Public schools in Vilas County with a non-fluoridated water supply can participate in a weekly fluoride rinse program. Children 6 months through 5 years of age can receive fluoride varnish, a protective coating that is painted on teeth. The purpose of the fluoride varnish is to help prevent cavities, as well as help stop cavities that have already begun. Varnish was applied to 875 children at Early Head Start, Head Start and 4K programs in 2014. Dental Sealants are a protective coating that is applied to the grooved surfaces of the first and second molars to protect against cavities. The Seal-A-Smile Program applied sealants to children in area schools in 2014. In total, 1,050 children received oral health education, 918 received oral health exams, and 611 received sealants. Toothprints, a dental identity tool, were offered to all children participating in the dental sealant programs

The Northwoods Dental Project also provides oral health screenings to WIC and PNCC clients, food pantry participants, and senior citizens. Education as well as resource and referral information is provided for all individuals participating in the screenings.

Wisconsin Well Women Program

The goals of the Wisconsin Well Women Program are to improve access to preventive health services and eliminate preventable death and disability from breast and cervical cancer. Vilas County provides women ages 45-64 with little or no health insurance coverage, with preventive health screening services. Well Woman pays for mammograms, Pap tests, certain other health screenings, and multiple sclerosis testing for women with high risk signs of multiple sclerosis. In 2014, we provided services to 22 clients, through this program.



Community Human Health Hazards

To protect the health of the citizens of Vilas County, Vilas County Public Health Department investigates situations with the potential of a human health hazard and brings health hazards that are not regulated by other governmental agencies to resolution. In 1996, the Vilas County Board of Supervisors ordained the

"Human Health Hazards" ordinance. Enforcement of the Human Health ordinance is the role of the Vilas County Board of Health and Health Officer.

If a human health hazard is found, the Health Department works with the owner to ensure safe removal of the hazard. If an owner does not comply with removal of the hazard, a citation may be issued.

In 2014, 34 Human Health Hazard Investigation cases were managed by the Vilas County Public Health Department for such issues as air quality, mold, garbage and hoarding.

Water Quality Issues

Safe, clean water is one of the most important substances in our lives - for drinking, cooking, bathing and cleaning. Municipal water systems test their water regularly to ensure it is safe, but it's up to private well owners to test their well water annually.

Through a contract with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, transient non-community water supply systems and wells were tested and inspected in the county, ensuring safe and dependable water to the public. In 2014, 350 transient non-community water supply systems were sampled, with none requiring monitoring and/or correction. 518 private wells were sampled.

Vilas County also conducts beach water monitoring at several locations throughout the summer swimming season. The monitoring starts Memorial Day weekend and ends over Labor Day weekend each year. The beaches



are monitored for fecal coliforms and *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) as indicators of more hazardous bacteria.

Through a partnership between UW-Oshkosh and the Vilas County Public Health Department, Vilas County beaches have been monitored since 2003. In 2014, 18 Vilas County beaches were tested once weekly for 15 weeks. Results are posted at the Vilas County Public Health Department website.

Vilas County Public Health Department also provides pregnant women or families with children age 1 or less with free water testing kits. The testing kit measures the amount of bacteria, nitrates and fluoride levels in the water sample. In 2013, 10 water test kits were distributed to these families in Vilas County.

Food Safety and Recreational Licensing

The Vilas County Public Health Department is contracted as an agent of the State of Wisconsin to provide public health inspections and licensing for a variety of establishments. Under our agent agreements with the State, we are required to conduct a minimum of one annual inspection; pre-inspections for compliance prior to issuing a permit; and any necessary follow up inspections such as complaints and re-inspections to ensure proper compliance.

At the end of the calendar licensing year for 2013-2014, 1054 licenses were issued for public facilities such as taverns, restaurants, temporary food stands, hotels/motels, tourist rooming houses, bed and breakfasts, recreation and education camps, campgrounds, swimming pools, retail food stores (grocery and convenience), and body art facilities.

Our sanitarians act as a resource for these licensed facilities, serving in a consulting role and assisting them to meet the regulations. Ensuring that the regulations are met helps to keep our community safe and healthy.

<i>Type of Facility Inspected</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>
Restaurants	229	246	244	252
Campgrounds	27	30	28	28
Recreational Camps	13	13	13	13
Pools	32	33	33	33
Bed and Breakfast	6	6	6	7
Tourist Rooming Houses	395	414	426	441
Hotels/Motels	224	226	211	208
Schools	7	8	8	8
Retail Food Establishment	70	67	68	72
Temporary Food Stands	26	40	39	40
Tattoo/Body Piercing	1	2	1	0

Radon Testing

Radon is a cancer-causing natural radioactive gas that you can't see, smell or taste. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in America. The US Surgeon General and EPA recommend that all homes, schools and other buildings be tested for radon. Radon testing kits for the home are available through the Vilas County Public Health Department. 89 radon test kits were distributed to Vilas County residents in 2014. 8 of these radon tests showed elevated radon levels.

Childhood Lead Testing

There is no safe level of lead in the human body; even very low levels of lead exposure can cause permanent brain damage and negatively affect health throughout the child's life, especially those between 6 months and 6 years of age. Many lead hazards still exist in homes and the environment, including paint, vinyl mini-blinds, chalk, candlewicks and others. These hazards are commonly present during painting and remodeling of pre-1978 housing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines lead poisoning as a blood lead level of 10 or greater. In Vilas County, children with a lead level of 10 or greater are provided with follow-up and consultation by a Public Health Nurse. Follow-up may include phone calls, home visits, consultation with the primary health care provider and a home lead risk assessment by the Health Department's Environmental Health Specialist. The ultimate goal is to reduce environmental lead exposure and lead poisoning. 59 children enrolled in the Vilas County Public Health Department WIC program were tested for blood lead in 2014, and none of these children had an elevated blood lead level.

School Health

The health, well being and safety of children in the school district are a top priority for the Health Department. Public Health collaboration with school nurses assists each student to achieve and maintain optimal health. Healthy children are successful learners.



In addition to immunizations and dental preventive programming, the Vilas County Public Health Department also assists with screenings related to vision and hearing, lice checks, and kindergarten readiness in public and private schools in Vilas County.

Vilas County Public Health Department also acts as a resource and referral agency for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs in the schools and within the community.

Strong Women Strong Bones

In 2014, the Vilas County Public Health Department began to offer Strong Women Strong Bones, an evidenced based fitness program for women. The mission of the Strong Women Program is to increase the number of women participating in safe and effective strength training programs throughout the United States. Our goal is to improve the health and well-being of middle aged and older women in Vilas County by increasing access to this structured, safe and effective strength training program. In 2014, we offered two programs. One that ran January through March and another that ran April through June. By Fall of 2014, four additional instructors were trained and we were able to partner with the Northland Pines Wellness Center and the Lakeland Senior Center to offer two additional classes. In 2014, 72 women enrolled in the Strong Women Strong Bones Program. Classes are ongoing throughout the year with a goal to reach new towns each year.

What's New for 2015:

- **Collaboration with State and Regional Partners to Work Towards Public Health Department National Accreditation**
- **Implementation of a Vilas County Public Health Department Performance Management Plan to assist us with maintaining the highest quality services for our community**
- **Monthly Health Education Outreach to Vilas County Town Halls and Senior Mealsites**

*Vilas County Public Health
Department Staff*

**Gina Egan, RN, BSN
Director/Health Officer**

**Laurel Dreger, RN, BSN, CLS
Asst Director/Deputy Health Officer**

**Pam Pedersen, RN, BSN
Public Health Nurse**

**Lori Bergum, RN, CLS
Registered Nurse**

**Kelley Moran, RDH, CDHC, BS
Program Coordinator
Northwoods Dental Project**

**Amy Springer, RS, BS
Environmental Health Supervisor/
Public Health Sanitarian**

**Brian Jorata, RS, BS
Public Health Sanitarian**

**Wendy Budde
Administrative Secretary**

**Anna Kessro
WIC Clerk**

**Barb Garrett
Dental Program Assistant**

**Mary Sikora Petersen, RD, CD, CDE,
WIC Dietician**

**Abbey Dall Lukowski, MAEd, IBCLC
Breastfeeding Peer Counselor**

Visit our website at
www.vilaspublichealth.com

**Information Sources: National
Association of County and City Health
Officials, Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention, WI Department of
Health Services**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.