Dear Community

Website (nwhealth.org)
Facebook (nwhealthdepartment)
Instagram (healthdeptofnwmichigan)
X (nwhealthorg)
YouTube (hdnw)
800-432-4121

Protecting the Environment
Keeping Our Water Clean
Partnering with Body Art Businesses

Supporting the Community
Preparing to Start School
Youth Substance Use Prevention

Investing In Families
Help with Breastfeeding
Five-Year Communicable Disease Report

Working With Neighbors
Grants & Community Support

Magnifying Efficiencies
2023 Financial Information

Meeting Dental Needs
Expanding Services
Regional Map

Working With You
Powerful Partnerships
Community Connections Referrals

Recognizing Achievements
2023 As A Team

Our Vision:
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Our Mission:
To serve our entire community and to achieve health equity by promoting well-being, preventing disease, and protecting the environment through partnerships, innovation, and excellence in public health practice.
Dear Community:

Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report. We trust your time catching up with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) is rewarding. As a staff, we worked hard throughout 2023 to tailor our programs to best meet residents' needs and to modernize how we communicate with you.

First, we launched a new website that's much easier to use. We are using social media to provide timely updates on beach advisories, upcoming clinics, school-based activities, and more. We have produced four short videos to explain how we impact daily lives — all while maintaining community-based care through our Family Health, Community Health, Environmental Health, and regional programs. We continue to share key health-related information with healthcare providers quarterly.

HDNW provides public health services to about 109,000 residents living throughout Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. We value your input and endeavor to include you in our planning processes and to suggest adjustments along the way.

Reach out. We want to hear from you. While we welcome you though our doors and to contact us via email, phone, and through social media channels, we also maintain multiple community groups. There are Youth Advisory Committees, Community Advisory Committees affiliated with our school programs, and a Citizen Advisory Committee which involves residents from all four counties. Each group gives you, our residents, a voice in regional public health.

Public health considers everyone — whether they have no insurance, insufficient insurance, or excellent insurance. In the pages ahead, you'll learn about how we do that. Each step of the way, HDNW provides information and support to improve our lives and communities. Afterall, we're one community — HDNW and you.

Daniel R. Thorell, MS, RS
Health Officer

Joshua Meyerson, MD, MPH
Medical Director

DID YOU KNOW?

We focus on these…

- Protecting food & water
- Ensuring proper sewage disposal
- Providing hearing, vision & dental screenings
- Preventing sexually transmitted infections
- Offering immunizations
- Controlling infectious diseases

so you can focus on these…

Learn More About HDNW

CONNECT WITH US

CALL US LOCALLY 800-432-4121
VISIT OUR WEBSITE nwhealth.org
Keeping Our Water Clean

Permitting and septic system maintenance essential to public health

One of the wonders of living in Northwest Michigan is being near clean, freshwater. We see it driving to work, hiking the trails, and shopping along many downtown streets. Beyond the views, the water is our playscape. We enjoy swimming, fishing, boating, and more.

One way to protect our local rivers, lakes, and streams is to properly handle sewage. Septic systems are used to treat wastewater for more than 1.3 million homes and businesses in Michigan. These systems are abundant in our area because many residents and businesses cannot connect to municipal sewer systems.

While HDNW implemented a high-level, local code in 2017, some statewide legislators are looking to pass a statewide septic code to align Michigan’s 45 different codes as determined by individual health departments. With House Bills 4479 and 4480 being discussed, HDNW Health Officer Dan Thorell joined a statewide workgroup in 2023 to represent the needs of rural Northern Michigan.

Currently, wording in the Bills requires all septic systems be inspected every five years — which could create a financial burden for residents and a severe staffing shortage for local health departments. Thorell and other Northern Michigan representatives are asking for a modification that will call for less frequent inspections but at a level that still protects the region’s water supply.

“We while a unified sanitary code will simplify the permitting process and allow contractors to follow one standard as they work in a variety of areas, we also know that there just aren’t enough inspectors employed in the state to carry out the inspections as the Bills currently state,” says Jeremy Fruk, HDNW Environmental Health Director. “While we aren’t pushing for a statewide septic code, it is important that we’re involved in communicating with lawmakers about creating a code that works for everyone.”

The Process

Prior to installing a septic system, HDNW works with the property owner to evaluate the site and issue a permit. A final review provides assurance that the system will operate as intended.

Although 30% of Northwest residents use septic systems, many are unaware of the lifespan and maintenance needs. The agency’s sanitarians also perform residential site and time-of-transfer evaluations to determine if the systems continue to operate properly and safeguard our community and natural resources, including drinking water.

We will continue to communicate about the progression of these Bills throughout 2024 with our Board of Health and residents.

Coming Up!

The Northern Michigan Regional Lab in Gaylord is expanding its services to provide a faster turnaround time on our beach water testing. Follow our socials for the results at your favorite beaches and campgrounds.
Beach Monitoring evaluates the water quality throughout Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. HDNW issues public beach advisories if a water sample comes back with bacteria higher than is safe for partial- or full-body contact to protect the public.

Residential Water Testing allows residents to pick up kits and return water samples to be tested in our lab in Gaylord for bacteria and some chemicals. Stop by any of our offices to pick up test kits and learn more about your water.

Food Safety helps ensure the proper handling of food served to the public. HDNW inspects restaurants, festival food booths, and mobile food vehicles. The local team also investigates foodborne illness complaints and outbreaks, provides food safety education, and reviews plans for new or remodeling food businesses.

DID YOU KNOW?

HDNW works with body art businesses to ensure that hygiene practices decrease the risk of transmitting bloodborne diseases.
Preparing to Start School

Back-to-school care now includes dental assessments with vision and hearing.

Oral health goes hand in hand with overall health. Healthy teeth and gums help reduce the risk of tooth decay, which is the No. 1 cause of childhood disease and a leading cause of children missing school.

To promote oral health awareness and reduce absences, Michigan passed a law in 2023 that helps children attending their first year of school receive an oral health assessment. The Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Program is a free service provided by local health departments. The assessments are scheduled during back-to-school events like kindergarten roundups.

HDNW recognizes the effort needed to prioritize children’s dental health. By working together, we can ensure that every child in our area grows up with a healthy and confident smile.

“Building good oral health habits as a child is key to a lifetime of healthy mouths,” says Dawn Marie Strehl, HDNW Regional Oral Health Coordinator and Registered Dental Hygienist. “We encourage parents, guardians, educators, and community members to work together to make dental care a regular part of every child’s daily routine.”

Rounding Out Care

HDNW supports families with oral screenings and fluoride varnish applications for children from 6 to 35 months who are enrolled in our WIC program and/or are eligible for Medicaid. Led by registered nurses, this initiative complements regular dental care and is helpful for those at high risk of cavities and gum disease. Applications can be done up to four times a year. The goal is to prevent tooth decay and encourage regular dental care.

The local SEAL! Michigan program offers dental sealants and oral health education to older students in school-based settings. Contact your local school district to see if they participate in this program.

Finally, our seniors. HDNW staff holds Senior Smiles events over the summer in partnership with area coalitions on aging. As seniors visited meal sites in 2023, the staff provided education to 391 seniors and performed 54 oral health assessments. This is always a highlight for staff, as the seniors enjoy visiting during the events.

The community health services provided by HDNW meet you where you’re at — in the community. We can meet you in-person, online, over the telephone, in local schools, at a senior center, or even at a school board meeting.

“Community Health is all about investing in you,” says Kathleen Jakinovich, Community Health Director. “From the blender bike to school nurses to helping students try new fruits and vegetables, we enjoy working within our communities.”

Coming Up!

Watch your school newsletters to stay updated on the educational events our team will lead or participate in for you and your children.
2023 SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

DID YOU KNOW?
There are youth-led substance use prevention coalitions in schools in all four of our counties. RISE Otsego Substance Free Coalition and SAFE in Northern Michigan (Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet) gives students a chance to positively impact their peers with substance use prevention messages and events.

By the Numbers

7,000 PEOPLE REACHED DURING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

>1,700 HEALTH EDUCATION AND ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

126 SAFE & RISE STUDENT PARTICIPATION

3,333 UNIQUE USERS OF SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

>4,800 STUDENTS REACHED WITH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION MESSAGING

Featured Programs & Video

Empowering Youth Today Program, a positive youth development program for youth grades 5-8th that engages youth with the family, school and community, while promoting the benefits of delaying sexual activity and other risky behaviors.

School-Based Health Centers extend the implementation of health strategies within school settings. Partnered with training, resources, and staff support, partner schools can proactively foster the well being of all students.

Learn More About How We Support the Community
Help with Breastfeeding

*HDNW receives national recognition*

The breastfeeding team at HDNW achieved Premier Award status with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence in 2023. After several years of being awarded Gold, HDNW became one of only two programs to receive Premier designation in the Midwest — and the only agency in Michigan. The Midwest region includes seven states.

“Danica and Kylie are extremely passionate about supporting breastfeeding families and are continuously looking for ways to keep improving,” says Kristina Fox of USDA Food and Nutrition Services Midwest Regional Office during an online presentation. “The breastfeeding program continues to grow, and during COVID the support never wavered.”

In 2023, the USDA awarded 17 Gold Awards and 2 Premier Awards in the Midwest. The award program was established to recognize local WIC agencies that have provided exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support.

The intent is to provide models to encourage other local agencies to strengthen their support activities and, ultimately, increase breastfeeding rates among WIC participants.

**Stepping Up Again**

Along with the recognition, Premier status came with a $1,000 prize. To best benefit area residents, Parents Pit Stops were set up at local fairs in Emmet/Charlevoix and Otsego counties. It was the first outreach of its kind for HDNW. The tents offer space for a breather, diaper change, feed the family, and a chance to regroup during the excitement.

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2023 INVESTING IN FAMILIES

By the Numbers

1,090 PRESCHOOLER VISION SCREENINGS
6,825 SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN VISION SCREENINGS
556 KIDS REFERRED TO A PHYSICIAN FOR VISION

1,270 PRESCHOOLER HEARING SCREENINGS
3,430 SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN HEARING SCREENINGS
129 KIDS REFERRED TO PHYSICIAN HEARING

10,556 IMMUNIZATIONS ADMINISTERED
9,159 IMMUNIZATIONS DISTRIBUTED TO OTHER PROVIDERS

Featured Programs & Video

Children’s Special Health Care (CSHCS) helps families who have children with more than 2,700 chronic health conditions. We help qualified individuals with chronic health problems by providing coverage and referrals, family centered, community-based, culturally competent, and coordinated services.

Childhood Immunizations provides immunizations to children regardless of the ability to pay. A fee may be charged, or a donation requested for everyone who is immunized. Medicaid and private insurance are also accepted. Call 1-800-432-4121 to schedule an appointment.

DID YOU KNOW?
We track disease trends in our four counties. If you would like to review what’s happening, scan the QR code. The report is updated regularly and can always be found on our website.

Learn More About Our Family Services
A heartfelt thank you to the many partners who support HDNW’s staff and initiatives.

**2023 HDNW**

**GRANTS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

- Antrim County High Tea
- Beaver Island Community Schools
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Boyne City Schools
- Centers for Disease Control
- Central Lake Public Schools
- Charlevoix County Community Foundation
- Charlevoix County Probate Court
- Charlevoix Emmet ISD
- Cheboygan Otsego Presque Isle Educational Service District
- Delta Dental Foundation
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- East Jordan Public Schools
- Elk Rapids Schools
- Ellsworth Community Schools
- Gaylord Community Schools
- MI Assoc for Local Public Health
- MI Center for Rural Health
- Michigan Department of Agriculture
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy

- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
- Michigan Fitness Foundation
- Michigan Health Endowment Fund
- Michigan Oral Health Coalition
- Michigan Primary Care Association
- Michigan Public Health Institute
- Munson Healthcare
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- Northern Michigan Health Consortium
- Northern Michigan Regional Entity
- Otsego Substance Free Coalition
- Petoskey Public Schools
- Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation
- Prevention Network
- Rotary Charities of Traverse City
- Share Our Strength
- The University of Michigan Adolescent Health Initiative
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Ward & Eis Gallery

**2023 Dental Clinics North**

**GRANTS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

- Benzie County Commission on Aging
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Healthy Kids Dental
- David & Linda Wiseley
- Delta Dental Foundation
- DentaQuest
- East Jordan Family Health Center
- Father Fred Foundation
- Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
- NW MI Community Action Agency Head Start
- Leelanau County Senior Services
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services
- Shawono Center
- Veterans Affairs
MAGNIFYING EFFICIENCIES
MAGNIFYING YOUR TAX DOLLARS

HDNW’s Administrative Services and Finance team makes it all work. They assist the public, keep the numbers straight, and find ways to match grant opportunities.

### 2023 Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HDNW</th>
<th>DENTAL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fees &amp; Collections</td>
<td>$3,767,591</td>
<td>$14,430,097</td>
<td>$18,197,688</td>
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<tr>
<td>State &amp; Federal Funds</td>
<td>$10,369,431</td>
<td>$306,915</td>
<td>$10,676,347</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Donations</td>
<td>$3,847,647</td>
<td>$303,162</td>
<td>$4,150,809</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriations from Local Units of Government</td>
<td>$1,127,537</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,127,537</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td><strong>$19,112,206</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,040,174</strong></td>
<td><strong>$34,152,381</strong></td>
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### 2023 Expenditures

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<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel Services</td>
<td>$14,706,537</td>
<td>$984,482</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$1,465,543</td>
<td>$1,406,446</td>
<td>$2,871,989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contractual &amp; Professional Services</td>
<td>$892,771</td>
<td>$9,713,954</td>
<td>$10,606,725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>$131,381</td>
<td>$62,735</td>
<td>$194,116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$362,074</td>
<td>$10,948</td>
<td>$373,022</td>
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<td>Office Space</td>
<td>$398,534</td>
<td>$566,715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$95,290</td>
<td>$67,062</td>
<td>$162,352</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td>$646,656</td>
<td>$1,321,325</td>
<td>$1,967,982</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,698,786</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,133,667</strong></td>
<td><strong>$32,832,454</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NET BALANCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>$413,420</strong></td>
<td><strong>$906,507</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,319,927</strong></td>
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### Graphs

- **Pie Chart 1**: Revenue Distribution
  - Fees & Collections: $18,197,688
  - State & Federal Funds: $10,676,347
  - Grants & Donations: $4,150,809
  - Appropriations from Local Government: $1,127,537

- **Pie Chart 2**: Expenditure Distribution
  - Personnel Services: $15,691,019
  - Supplies: $2,871,989
  - Contractual & Professional Services: $10,606,725
  - Communications: $194,116
  - Travel: $373,022
  - Office Space: $965,249
  - Equipment: $162,352
  - Other Expenses: $1,967,982
Dental Clinics North takes pride in having a caring and experienced staff that provides quality dental care to its patients.

Expanding Services

Public health dentistry assigned more services at state level

It’s hard to get an appointment at a dental office. And it’s even harder if you have Medicaid insurance. In 2023, Dental Clinics North (DCN) had more patient visits than ever—60,355.

DCN exists to improve access to dental care. HDNW partners with DCN to operate nine offices throughout North Michigan. The clinics provide a dental home for families, as each office has dedicated dentists, hygienists, and other staff.

The busy offices juggle waiting lists, calling patients who want to be seen at any cancellation. They work hard to get people in as soon as possible.

"DCN has a caring and experienced staff that provides quality dental care," says Jeremy Moye, DCN Director of Operations. "We offer a wide range of dental treatments for all age groups, no matter the kind of insurance or income level. The team will thoroughly check the health of your teeth and gums to make sure you are on track for your next appointment."

With recent Medicaid expansions, more services have been added for patients 21 years and over, allowing DCN to add services such as:

- Sealants
- Deep teeth cleanings
- Root Canals
- Crowns
- Care to keep your gums healthy

"These services help patients keep their teeth healthy," says Holly Campbell, HDNW Deputy Health Officer and DCN Liaison. "A large percentage of DCN’s patients are children—a need which was a major contributor to DCN being founded in 1991 by a small group of concerned and committed dentists. Today, DCN employs about 28 dentists throughout Northern Michigan."

Always Improving

April Heavner is just one example of how the DCN staff works to better themselves. She earned her Registered Dental Assistant certificate—the highest level of career growth that dental assistants can achieve in 2023. As a result, she expanded her role at DCN’s Traverse City office. She can now work on silver fillings and temporary crowns.

"Getting this certificate is an important goal for me," Heavner says. "As a single mom of three girls, it was important for me to show them that, no matter where you’re at in life, you can always go back to school and finish."

At 36, April juggled raising her girls, a full-time job, and taking advantage of DCN’s employee benefit to pay for professional advancement. She completed a state-approved course that involved clinical training and a written and timed 130-question exam.

If you are having difficulty getting in to see a dentist, call 877-321-7070 to schedule an appointment.
2023
MEETING YOUR DENTAL NEEDS

DID YOU KNOW?
We accept most insurances, including Medicaid, Delta Healthy Kids, MiChild, as well as low-income and uninsured people.

OUR CLINIC LOCATIONS:
Alpena
100 Woods Circle, Suite 600
Beaver Island
37304 Kings Hwy.
Cheboygan
810 S. Main St., Suite #4
East Jordan
603 Bridge St.
Gaylord
95 Livingston Blvd., Suite C
Harbor Springs/Petoskey
3434 M-119, Suite G
Mancelona
205 Grove St.
Traverse City
2600 Lafranier Rd., Suite B
West Branch
628 Progress St.

DCN CLIENTS IN:
Alpena 4,298
Beaver Island 241
Cheboygan 5,609
East Jordan 4,861
Gaylord 9,806
Harbor Springs 51
Mancelona 6,702
Petoskey 6,223
Traverse City 14,109
West Branch 7,306
Total 59,381

MEETING YOUR NEEDS

Featured Services

Oral Exams • Sealants • Dentures • Fillings • Cavity Treatments • Fluoride Treatments
Powerful Partnerships

Sometimes getting medical care is much more involved than calling your provider and making an appointment. There’s transportation, stable housing, and even access to food. If these basic needs aren’t met, appointments with the doctor, dentist, or mental health provider become distant realities.

Determinants of Health, and launches initiatives that focus on specific areas such as behavioral health. The layered approach gives residents a voice in finding regional solutions to better align how our healthcare systems — all of which transforms lives.

Behind it All

The Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance formed and continues to lead the CHIR. The Alliance is a team of healthcare agencies and providers in 31 local counties that work to improve individual and community health across the region. Monthly meetings bring health officers and deputy health officers from each of seven local health departments together to share resources and work collaboratively to solve health-related problems.

By working together, we make the most of our resources and collective experiences. It really does take a village, in this case a local public health village, to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote health.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can refer yourself or someone else who needs help accessing community resources, like food, navigating insurance, or transportation to appointments.
RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENTS

RECOGNIZING YOU

The staff at HDNW is a special group. Individually, they bring compassion to their jobs. They are learners and go-getters. Allow us to share just some of our accolades and awards.

2023 As A Team

With little time and great innovation, the Family Health team created Parents Pit Stops at county fairs to provide young families a place to change diapers, breastfeed, access helpful information, and meet our staff.

Dawn Marie Strehl was awarded a full scholarship to the Oral Systemic Educator Certificate Program and is now a proud graduate.

Recognitions

Our school-based Ironmen Health Center (IHC) in Mancelona received a Bronze Certification from University of Michigan's Adolescent Health Initiative for minimizing barriers to health and improving care for kids.

Nichole Flickema earned a certificate for Master Certified Health Education Specialist.

Achievements

With the help of the community, we far exceeded our expectations to support the needs of Up North Adoptive & Foster Closet, a nonprofit which provides backpacks with personal items to children and youth who are removed from where they’re living, sometimes without the opportunities to pack their belongings.

We modernized a conference room in Gaylord to better accommodate meetings and training for our agency and partner organizations.

Employees donated $5,795 to local charities in our four counties. The money is donated by staff who give $5 a month to wear jeans to work on Friday.

We received approval from county commissioners in Emmet and Antrim counties to digitize land use records for public access. The process has begun.

All four of our locations were recognized by the Michigan Breastfeeding Network as a Michigan Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace and Outpatient Awards!

We successfully reached nearly 90,000 individuals on Facebook alone. Additionally, HDNW connects with over 3,000 individuals through email, further extending its outreach to the public.

The Gaylord Blue Devil Wellness Center staff turned their “trunk” into a Halloween display during the Harvest Fest at E-Free Church.

Our finance team updated our purchasing and billing software to increase efficiency.

As part of giving back over the holidays, we partnered with the community to collect and donate items to Toys for Tots.

At the request of the community, staff packed up our coolers, immunizations, and supplies to offer 13 community, 14 senior, and 12 business-based clinics.

FEATURED VIDEO

Learn How Your Zip Code Impacts Your Health
For digital access to this annual report, use this QR code.