

State Fiscal Year

2024 Annual Report

Serving Ohioans Across the Lifespan



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Mary DiOrio, M.D., MPH

Chief of Community Health Assurance

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State Epidemiologist

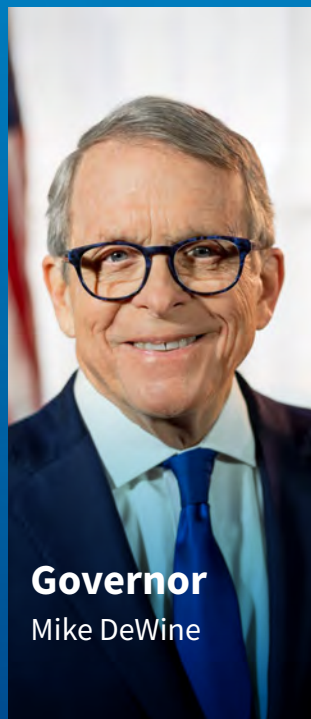
Kristen Dickerson, PhD, MSN, MPH, RN, MLT (ASCP)

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Gail Crawley



Governor

Mike DeWine



Lieutenant Governor

Jon Husted

About the Ohio Department of Health

Mission: Advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is charged with advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans. It does so through a public health system of unique partnerships and funding streams focused on continuously improving health outcomes for all Ohioans, reducing disparities, and implementing data-driven solutions to health challenges.

ODH is a Cabinet-level agency in the executive branch of Ohio's government with headquarters at 246 N. High St. in Columbus. The ODH director reports to the governor of Ohio and works with an executive team to formulate the agency's strategic policy goals and objectives. These leaders and their teams work in tandem to ensure ODH responds to the public health needs of Ohio's nearly 11.8 million residents.

ODH was reaccredited by the national Public Health Accreditation Board in State Fiscal Year 2023, a distinction validating the department's capability to provide quality public health services and improve population health.

Core Public Health Responsibilities

Our core public health responsibilities include [Foundational Public Health Services outlined by the national Public Health Accreditation Board](#) and other functions aimed at advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans.

Child and Family Health: We use proven, data-driven practices to reduce disparities and improve the health status of the maternal and child health population, including children and youth with special needs.

Environmental Health: We assess and monitor environmental factors that potentially impact public health, including air, water, soil, food, and physical and social features of our surroundings.

Health Improvement and Wellness: We aim to build healthy communities that enable Ohioans of all ages and abilities to live disease- and injury-free lives.

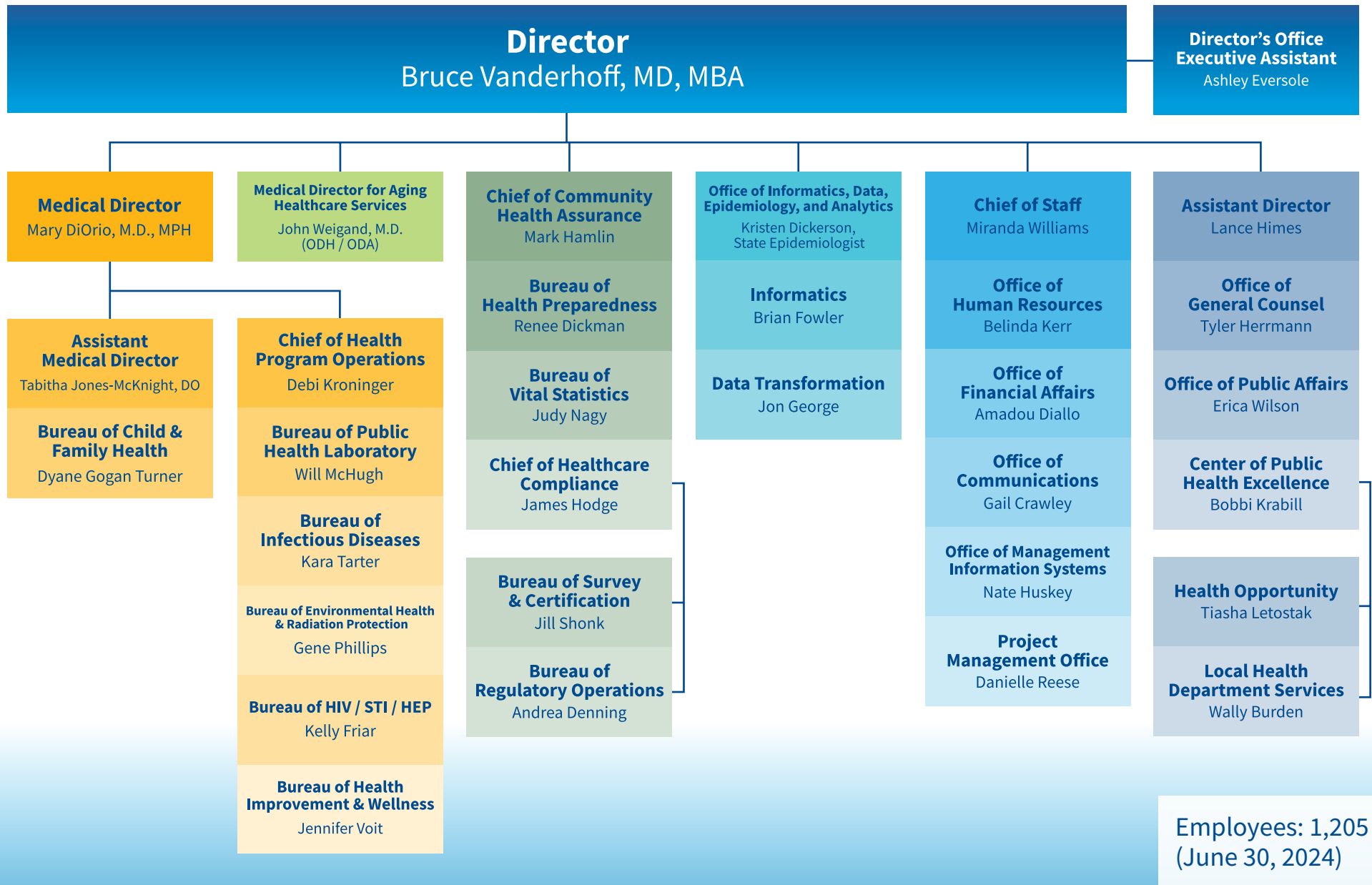
Health Opportunity: We look to improve the health of Ohioans experiencing disparate health outcomes by removing barriers to healthier lifestyles and creating opportunities for improvement in the spaces where people live, learn, work, and play.

Infectious Disease: We strive to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases.

Preparedness: We provide direction, support, and coordination in preventing, preparing for, and responding to events that threaten the public's health.

Healthcare Compliance: We work to assure quality in healthcare facilities, healthcare services, and environmental health to protect the health and safety of Ohioans.

Table of Organization Chart



Message From The Director

Dear Ohioans,

I am proud to present the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) State Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report. This year's report, "Serving Ohioans Across the Lifespan," highlights our accomplishments and ongoing work to improve the health and well-being of all Ohioans.

As the theme of this report states, we truly serve all Ohioans of every age, from newborns who benefit from potentially life-saving screenings for rare diseases to older adults residing in nursing homes. In the pages ahead, you'll find several important accomplishments in SFY24. Among them:

- Governor Mike DeWine tasked our agency with leading the Children's Vision Strike Force, an initiative he created in May 2024 to develop strategies that ensure every child in Ohio who needs glasses is able to get them.
- We became the first state in the nation to begin screening all newborn babies for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, one of the most severe forms of inherited muscular dystrophies.
- We created the Provider Resources & Education Program, an ODH team that works with providers in the long-term care industry to improve the safety and quality of life in nursing homes and other residential care facilities.
- We continued to reduce the impact of toxic lead on Ohio's children and families.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our employees, the 1,205 public servants dedicated to our mission. I'm also deeply grateful to our partners – the local health departments, hospital systems, state and federal agencies, and numerous community organizations committed to a strong public health system.

I am proud of the work reflected in this report and of all involved with advancing our mission. Together, we continue to learn, grow, and deliver in our pursuit of a stronger, healthier Ohio, where all Ohioans can achieve their full health potential.

Sincerely,

Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA
Director, Ohio Department of Health



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Together, we continue to learn, grow, and deliver in our pursuit of a stronger, healthier Ohio, where all Ohioans can achieve their full health potential.

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NEWS

EVENTS

MAJOR INITIATIVES



Ohio Department of Health Leads Governor DeWine's Children's Vision Strike Force

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine created the Children's Vision Strike Force in May 2024, naming ODH Director Bruce Vanderhoff as chair. The strike force was tasked with developing strategies to ensure that every child in Ohio who needs glasses is able to get them.

"Experts tell us that 80% of a child's learning comes through their sense of sight," said Governor DeWine. "By helping our children see their best, we also help them to read their best and learn their best."

Other task force members represent a cross-section of experts in the eye care and education fields, as well as vision advocacy leaders and state policymakers.

According to an ODH survey, more than 93,000 Ohio students were referred for a follow-up examination after receiving vision screenings at their schools in the 2022-2023 school year. Of those students, only about 17,000 reported having had a follow-up exam. It is estimated that at least 35,000 students who needed glasses did not receive them.

The ODH survey asked caregivers what kept them from providing their children with follow-up eye care. The barriers they listed included a lack of time, insurance, transportation, and providers in their area.

The strike force is tasked with overcoming those barriers, building off the successful efforts of several local organizations involved in this work – including the nonprofits Vision to Learn and Sight for All United. The strike force had its first meeting on June 3, 2024, kicking off a series of monthly meetings to study opportunities to scale these types of models to ensure a statewide reach.

For more information, visit ODH's [Children's Vision Strike Force webpage](#).



Governor and First Lady DeWine attend glasses-fitting for students at Oxford Elementary in Cleveland.

Ohio First State in the Nation to Screen Newborn Babies for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Under the direction of Governor DeWine, in April 2024, Ohio became the first state in the nation to screen all newborn babies for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), the most common hereditary neuromuscular disease and one of the most severe forms of inherited muscular dystrophies.

“Today, Ohio is the first state in the country to screen for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) in newborns,” Governor DeWine said in April. “Adding DMD to the list of screenings newborns receive ensures that parents will be able to start initiating care early for children who are diagnosed with this condition.”

An estimated 20,000 DMD cases are diagnosed each year worldwide.

The disease is characterized by progressive muscle degeneration and weakness. Symptom onset is in early childhood, usually between ages 2 and 3.

It is estimated that adding DMD screening to the Ohio Department of Health’s [Newborn Screening Program](#) will identify 35 babies with DMD in Ohio each year, helping parents avoid what often is a long journey to getting a DMD diagnosis.

[Ohio law requires newborn screenings](#) for all babies born in the state, including 127,432 born in calendar year 2023. Legislatively mandated, a Newborn Screening Advisory Council composed of volunteer experts and parents advises the ODH Director on the screening of newborn children for genetic, endocrine, and metabolic disorders.

Ohio is well-positioned to treat children with DMD. The state is home to eight Comprehensive Genetics Centers, including three designated as Certified Duchenne Care Centers by the Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy advocacy organization: Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Akron Children’s Hospital, and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center.



ODH in the News

Columbus Dispatch: Ohio sets the trend in screening newborns for rare disease. What to know about DMD.

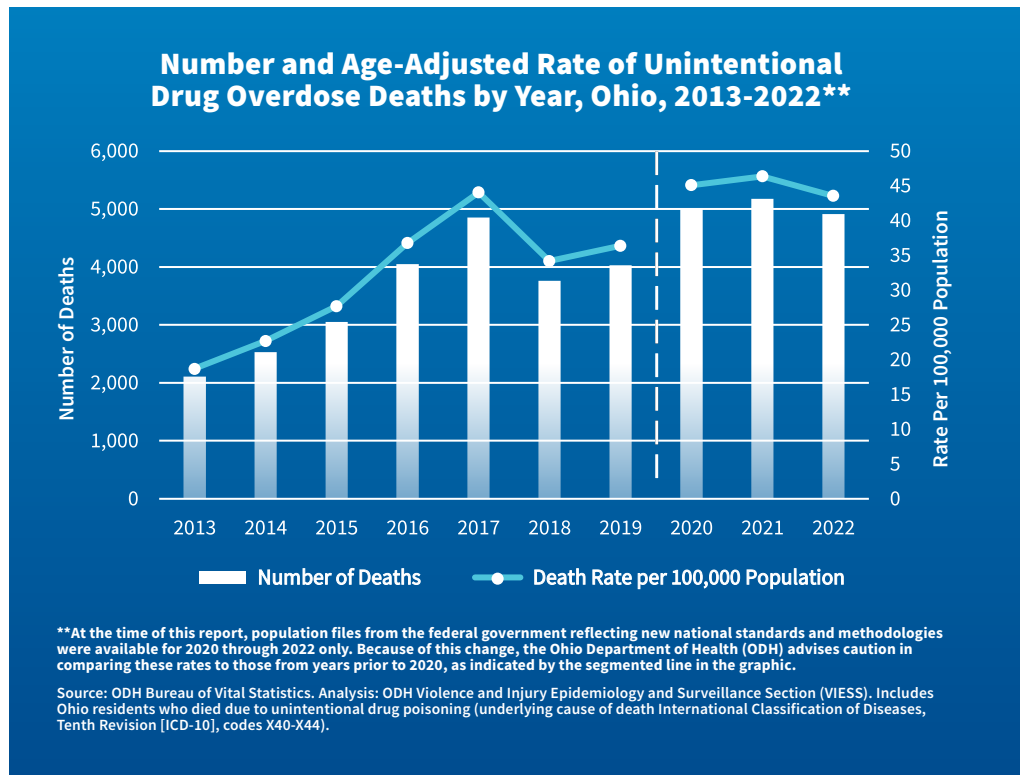
Report: Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths Fell 5% in 2022

ODH announced in December 2023 that the number of Ohioans dying from unintentional drug overdoses dropped 5% in the previous year, while the national number climbed slightly at 1%.

ODH's 2022 [Ohio Unintentional Drug Overdose Report](#) noted Ohio's 4,915 unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2022 followed the state's record total 5,174 unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2021.

Other highlights from the report include:

- In 2022, illicit fentanyl or fentanyl analogs were involved in 81% of unintentional drug overdose deaths in Ohio, often in combination with other drugs.
- From 2021 to 2022, unintentional drug overdose deaths involving heroin had the largest decrease (-43%), followed by deaths involving benzodiazepines (-16%).
- From 2021 to 2022, unintentional drug overdose deaths involving stimulant drug categories had the largest increases.



In 2022, Black non-Hispanic males continued to have the highest rate of unintentional drug overdose deaths in Ohio compared with other sex and race/ethnicity groups.

Dr. Vanderhoff and Aimee Shadwick, director of the Governor's [RecoveryOhio initiative](#), said at the time that while the numbers were certainly an encouraging step in the right direction, much work remains to be done to limit the number of overdose deaths to the greatest extent possible.

ODH's report followed [Governor Mike DeWine's announcement in October 2023 of a \\$100 million investment in federal funds to help communities fight opioid addiction and prevent overdose deaths.](#)

For more information and resources, visit:

- [Naloxone Ohio](#) provides Ohioans with a simplified process for accessing naloxone, a lifesaving drug used in the event of an opioid overdose.
- [Project DAWN \(Deaths Avoided With Naloxone\)](#) is a network of opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution programs coordinated by the Ohio Department of Health.
- [RecoveryOhio](#) is Governor DeWine's initiative dedicated to improving lives affected by substance use disorders and mental health issues in Ohio. It focuses on promoting recovery through effective treatment options, expanding access to resources, raising public awareness, coordinating efforts among various community partners, and supporting prevention programs.

ODH Launches Program to Improve Nursing Home Safety and Quality

Following the work of Governor DeWine's Nursing Home Quality and Accountability Task Force, ODH launched its [Provider Resources & Education Program \(PREP\)](#) in January 2024. The program supports nursing homes and other long-term care providers with education, training, and resources designed to improve and protect the safety, health, and quality of life for residents and others in their care.

Housed within our Bureau of Survey & Certification, PREP works collaboratively with long-term care facility leaders to enhance knowledge and skills in the delivery of person-centered, competent, and compassionate care.

"Many of our state's nursing homes are doing good work caring for our older loved ones, but others aren't meeting the standards we expect," said Dr. Vanderhoff, who also serves as vice chair of the [Ohio Governor's Nursing Home Quality and Accountability Task Force](#). "That's precisely why we created PREP. This team is dedicated to ensuring Ohioans in our long-term care facilities receive the care and quality of life they deserve."

In a related move, ODH created the Office of Health Compliance in SFY24 to develop a more robust, responsive, and strategic approach to its responsibilities overseeing nursing homes, long-term care facilities, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities.

The office oversees two longtime bureaus at ODH – the Bureau of Regulatory Operations, which is responsible for licensing, certification, and enforcement for healthcare facilities, services, and programs, and the Bureau of Survey & Certification, which conducts survey inspections to ensure healthcare providers and clinical laboratories are compliant with state and federal requirements.

National Award

The Office of Healthcare Compliance was honored in SFY24 when it received the National Quality, Safety and Oversight Achievement Award in April from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

CMS recognized the office for "high-quality work in the area of ensuring quality and safety under difficult circumstances." The work involved investigating and closing four nursing homes in 2023 that were failing to meet safety, care, and quality-of-life standards for their residents.



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I couldn't be prouder of our team and their commitment to vulnerable Ohioans.... Thanks to their efforts, the residents are in a better place today, and the owner/operators are no longer doing business in Ohio.

- James Hodge, ODH Compliance Chief

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"I couldn't be prouder of our team and their commitment to vulnerable Ohioans," said Health Compliance Chief James Hodge. "We had more than 30 staff members working days, nights, weekends, and holidays over six months investigating these facilities. Thanks to their efforts, the residents are in a better place today, and the owner/operators are no longer doing business in Ohio."

The nursing homes that were closed were located in central Ohio, Cincinnati, and the Cleveland area. All residents were successfully transitioned to other facilities through the combined efforts of ODH, the Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman at the Ohio Department of Aging, the Ohio Department of Medicaid, and others.

ODH licenses more than 960 nursing homes.



WIC 50th Celebration

WIC Turns 50!

In conjunction with the National WIC Association, the Ohio Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program celebrated its golden anniversary in April 2024.

Serving more than 178,000 pregnant and newly postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5, Ohio WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support, supplemental and nutritious foods, and referrals to healthcare and other human service programs.

“The single most important thing we can do for Ohio’s future is to ensure that all Ohio children – no matter where they live, no matter who their parents are – have the opportunity to pursue their dreams and live up to their God-given potential,” Governor Mike DeWine told the Ohio WIC team in a video greeting this spring. “This is at the heart of what WIC does every day.”

Through its efforts, Ohio WIC improves pregnancy outcomes by providing or referring eligible women to support services necessary for full-term pregnancies; reduces infant mortality by reducing the incidence of low birth weight; and provides infants and children with a healthy start in life by improving poor or inadequate diets.

One Ohioan who got a healthy start thanks to WIC is the Ohio WIC director himself, Corey Shepherd.

“My parents were in a tough spot,” said Shepherd. “WIC kept me fed in the first year of my life.”

The nation’s first WIC clinic opened in January 1974 in Kentucky. Ohio’s first WIC clinic opened in June of the same year in Lawrence County. About 10 years later, Ohio WIC became a statewide service program when the Geauga County Health Department became a subgrantee agency.

In recent years, Ohio WIC has shown its resiliency through continued service during the COVID-19 pandemic, food and formula shortages, and modernization efforts to better serve Ohioans.

For more on Ohio WIC, please visit ODH’s [Women, Infants, and Children webpage](#).

Responding to Ohio's Obesity Epidemic

ODH Creates Task Force for Healthy Eating/Active Living Strategies

Ohio has the 7th-highest adult obesity prevalence in the nation, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) report for 2022 on Adult Obesity Prevalence in the United States](#). Released in September 2023, the report noted that 38.1% of adults in Ohio had obesity in 2022. That's up from 11.3% in 1990 and 20.6% in 2000.

In response to the report, Dr. Vanderhoff immediately assembled an internal task force to examine past and current work by ODH to address obesity and to develop strategies that halt and eventually reverse this troubling trend.

"We want to create a culture of health in Ohio where being active and eating healthy is desired and achievable, where all Ohioans recognize the critical link between healthy living and the prevention and management of chronic diseases," Dr. Vanderhoff said at the time. "This doesn't mean everyone needs to live in a gym five days a week. Some simple lifestyle changes, including walking for 30 minutes a day, can transform lives."

Obesity is connected to some of the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems in Ohio and across the country, impacting the health, wellness, and economic vitality of families, communities, and our state as a whole.

According to [Obesity's Impact on Ohio's Workforce](#) by the Buckeye Institute, obesity:

- Keeps more than 32,000 Ohioans unemployed.
- Reduces potential state income tax revenues by nearly \$20 million per year.
- Costs Ohio Medicaid hundreds of millions per year (March 2023).
- Doubles the number of workers' compensation claims filed per year.
- Drives medical costs seven times higher.
- Workers miss 13 times more workdays due to injury or illness.

Working with local health districts and community partners, ODH employs multiple strategies across the state that are shown to foster healthy eating and physical activity, thus preventing or reducing the incidence of obesity. (See [Health Promotion](#) and [Creating Healthy Communities](#) in this report.) While their funding sources require that these strategies primarily target vulnerable populations, Ohio continues to work toward bringing these same strategies to as many Ohioans as possible.

Dr. Vanderhoff challenged the task force to develop strategies that have a broad statewide reach, perhaps involving other state agencies and numerous partners across public health and the healthcare arena.



Facts and Figures – Obesity and Chronic Disease in Ohio

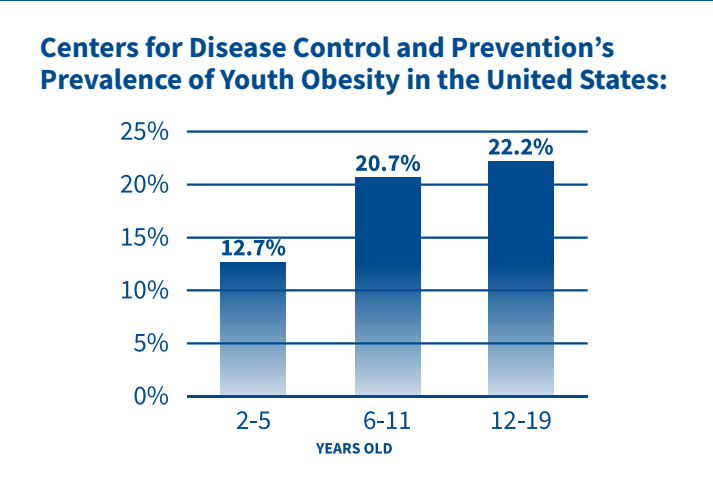
CHILDREN Childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States, putting children and adolescents at risk for poor health.

Obesity-related conditions include:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Joint Problems
- Breathing Problems
- Asthma
- Sleep Apnea

According to data from the 2021 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey,

18.8% of high school students (grades 9-12) had obesity.



16% did not participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on at least 1 day in the past 7 days.

Ohio adolescents in the lowest-income households are

2x AS LIKELY to be obese as those in the highest-income households. (National Survey of Children’s Health, 2020-2021.)

ADULTS Obesity can lead to chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and many cancers.

7 in 10 ADULTS

were overweight (32.8%) or obese (38.1%) in 2022. Ohio has the 7th highest prevalence of obesity among the U.S. states and District of Columbia.

In 2022, Ohio adults (age 18 and older) had a higher prevalence of:

Diabetes	Cancer	Heart Disease	Stroke
13%	12.6%	8.4%	4.3%

when compared with adults in the United States.

Adults in Ohio with obesity are:

2.4 x MORE LIKELY to be diagnosed with diabetes (20.5%) than adults without obesity (8.5%).

40 % MORE LIKELY to be diagnosed with heart disease (10.5%) than adults without obesity (7.5%).

Being overweight or having obesity is linked with a **higher risk of getting 13 types of cancer**, including cancers of the breast, colon and rectum, stomach, kidney, and liver.

Preparing for Emergencies

ODH regularly participates in preparedness drills to test our readiness and ability to respond to public health emergencies. These drills are designed to model a real-world emergency to allow ODH and partners to test plans and processes in a safe environment, evaluate readiness, and identify improvements to better protect Ohioans.

Such was the case in October 2023 when ODH participated in a three-day, statewide exercise with local, state, and federal partners. The exercise focused on distributing simulated antibiotics to eight regional drop sites across the state where they were then distributed to each county. The first day of the exercise took place at the Historic Crew Stadium. Partners included the FBI, Ohio National Guard, Ohio Emergency Management Agency, local health departments, and others.

Instrumental in this work is our **Bureau of Health Preparedness (BHP)**. This bureau's focus is preventing, preparing for, and responding to health and safety threats. BHP maintains an all-hazards approach in response to natural and man-made disasters, acts of bioterrorism, and other emergencies that impact public health.

Thanks to the work of this bureau, ODH was recognized in March as a top-tier performer in emergency preparedness in the Trust for America's Health report, [Ready or Not 2024: Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism](#).

The report measures states' preparedness to respond to a spectrum of health emergencies and to provide ongoing public health services based on nine key indicators. It gives federal and state policymakers actionable data to improve emergency readiness. Based on the nine indicators, the report tiers states and the District of Columbia into three readiness levels: high, middle, and low. The report placed Ohio among 21 states and DC in the high-performance tier, 13 states in the middle-performance tier, and 16 states in the low-performance tier.



ODH in the News

Statehouse News Bureau:

Statewide simulation prepares Ohio agencies for possible anthrax attack.

ODH Continues Progress Developing New State Health Assessment

As part of ODH's vision to make Ohio a model of health, well-being, and economic vitality, in SFY24, ODH's **Center of Public Health Excellence** worked alongside Ohio University, 15 other state cabinet agencies, and multiple partners in the public health space to continue its progress developing Ohio's next State Health Assessment (SHA).

The SHA is a comprehensive overview of the state of health and well-being in Ohio. It will guide development of the next State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), a blueprint for improving the health of all Ohioans.

The newest version of the SHA will document the progress made in several key target areas since the 2020-2022 SHIP. It also identifies trends that have persisted over the years and introduces newer issues that have emerged since the previous SHA in 2019.

With more than 1,600 Ohioans contributing to the information in the SHA, as well as feedback from 111 local health departments, 126 hospitals, and 26 focus groups, final results are still being tabulated. However, our progress to-date provides several key insights into the current landscape of health and well-being in Ohio.

Top Takeaways

For overall health and well-being, results are mixed. The COVID-19 pandemic, as expected, yielded a significant decrease in the state's overall life expectancy due to the large number of pandemic-related deaths. At the same time, however, the percentage of Ohioans with good health is increasing and surpassed the 2022 SHIP target.

Ohio Experienced Positive Momentum Across Several Measures:

- Physical activity rates have increased.
- Youth vegetable consumption has increased.
- Alcohol and marijuana use by high schoolers has decreased.
- Ohio has seen a decrease in the number of children experiencing two or more adverse childhood experiences.
- Rates of harmful lead exposure among children have decreased.
- While rates of diabetes have increased statewide, there has been improvement in this area for Black Ohioans.

Several Challenges Persist, Including:

- Mental health and substance misuse.
- Insufficient access to healthcare and health insurance.
- Low health literacy.
- Shortages in healthcare providers.
- Maternal and infant wellness.

Some health issues that worsened since 2019 include diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and hypertension. Among new and emerging issues, vaccination rates among school-aged children are down, chronic absenteeism and behavioral health issues among K-12 students are up, and there are growing concerns about the availability of resources for older Ohioans.

SHA contributors noted disparities in health outcomes continue across different demographics. They called for continued work to reduce these disparities. They also echoed calls from the 2019 SHA for focused attention on the underlying drivers of health, especially poverty, housing, transportation, food access, and community violence. Attention to these factors is needed to make sustainable progress on prioritized health outcomes.

Other News

New Infectious Disease Dashboard Increases Data Available to Public

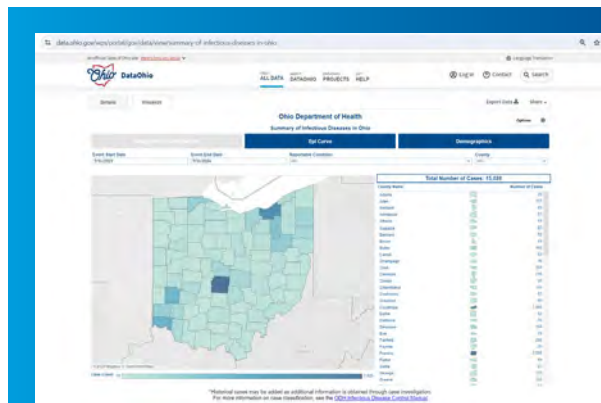
As part of the agency's overarching efforts to prevent disease and injury in Ohio, ODH launched a user-friendly dashboard in March 2024 to keep Ohioans up-to-date on infectious-disease activity in their communities.

The [Summary of Infectious Diseases in Ohio dashboard](#) is located on the state's [DataOhio Portal](#). It includes data from more than 100 infectious diseases that can be easily filtered by county, timeframe, and demographics, such as age, sex, race, and ethnicity.

"I am pleased that ODH can offer Ohioans access to much more information about infectious diseases," Dr. Vanderhoff said at the launch of the dashboard. "We hope this helps people better understand disease activity in their community and statewide, both historically and currently."

Data from 2001 to present is updated weekly. The interactive dashboard replaces an annual report on diseases that was not available until about 18 months after the close of a year.

Diseases on the dashboard include measles, legionellosis, and Lyme disease, as well as cases of illnesses that can be food-borne, such as Salmonella and E. coli infections. The dashboard does not include information on COVID-19 or influenza, as ODH maintains separate dashboards for those viruses.



ODH Adds Mobile Medical Unit to Toolkit

When a Norfolk Southern freight train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, in February 2023, a rented mobile medical unit proved a valuable tool for ODH as it responded to a community threatened by hazardous chemicals that spilled into its air, water, and ground.

Prompted by the lessons learned in that experience, ODH acquired its own mobile medical unit in late SFY24.

"This mobile unit allows us to better support any community in their time of need," said Dr. Vanderhoff. "From a tornado to a train derailment, the mobile unit gives ODH the ability to pack up supplies and be there for our communities in crisis, supporting them with public health experts and essential resources during natural or man-made disasters."

In addition to emergency response, ODH will use the unit to partner with local health departments and others in various community outreach efforts, including immunizations, health screenings, and chronic disease prevention.

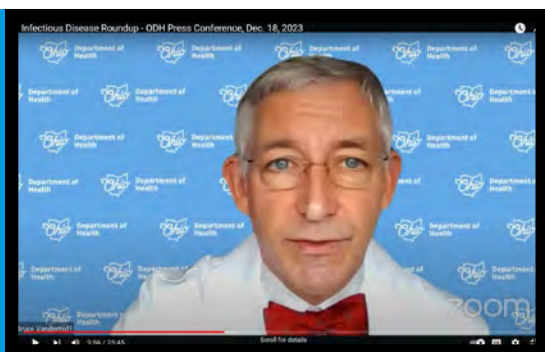


Keeping Ohioans Informed, ODH Director Hosts Monthly News Conferences

ODH Director Bruce Vanderhoff began hosting regular monthly news conferences in SFY24 to keep Ohioans updated on pressing health issues, as well as steps they can take to prevent injury and illness and improve their health.

“News organizations continue to play a critical role in informing the public about important issues of the day, including infectious diseases, troubling health trends, and other issues in public health,” said Dr. Vanderhoff. “By increasing our availability to the media, we’re raising awareness about the work we do at ODH and telling Ohioans, ‘We’re here for you.’”

Conducted virtually via Zoom, the press conferences are livestreamed and archived on [the Ohio Department of Health’s YouTube channel](#) under the Live tab. Direct links are below.



“

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Back-to-School Immunizations

July 20, 2023



Lung Health

February 22, 2024



COVID-Flu-RSV Vaccines

August 17, 2023



Eclipse Eye Safety

March 28, 2024



Tobacco / Nicotine Dangers / E-cigarettes

October 19, 2023



Rising Colorectal Cancer Rates

April 24, 2024



Obesity / Healthy Choices

November 16, 2023



Mental Health and Substance Use

May 30, 2024



Infectious Disease Status Roundup

December 18, 2023



WIC Farmers’ Markets

June 27, 2024



Supporting and Strengthening Local Health Districts

In SFY24, our Center of Public Health Excellence continued to help local health districts (LHDs) across Ohio achieve accreditation by the national Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), a distinction validating a health department's capability to provide quality public health services and improve population health. The center supports LHD accreditation efforts by providing a statewide performance management system, coordinating learning communities, and providing technical assistance.

Eight LHDs were newly accredited by PHAB in SFY24, bringing the total to 93 LHDs accredited or reaccredited by PHAB. This means 95% of Ohioans are served by an accredited LHD. Ohio has 111 LHDs.

PHAB supports accredited health departments through education, technical assistance, research, and evaluation.

Bureau of Maternal and Infant Health Moves to New State Agency

ODH reorganized its maternal and infant health initiatives into a new Bureau of Maternal and Infant Vitality in SFY23 to focus and expand efforts to improve infant mortality rates and health outcomes for new mothers and babies, longtime high priorities of Governor DeWine. The important work of this bureau continues, but now at the new [Ohio Department of Children and Youth](#) (DCY), whose mission is to promote positive, lifelong outcomes for Ohio youth through early intervention, quality education, and family support programs. Governor DeWine created DCY in 2023 to focus on the efficient and effective delivery of services to Ohio's children and their families.



**Department of
Children & Youth**



INSIDE ODH

Key Areas of Focus



Child and Family Health

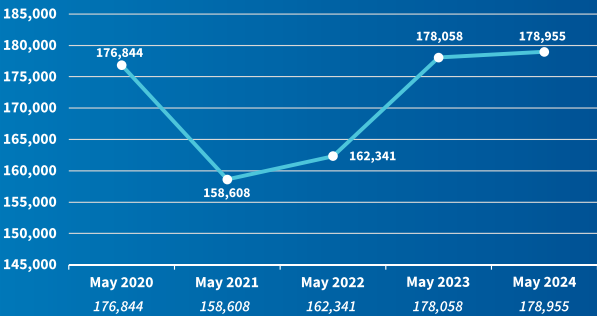
The Bureau of Child and Family Health works to reduce health disparities and improve the health of the maternal population and child population – including children and youth with special healthcare needs and their families. Using proven, data-driven practices, the bureau supports direct services, connections and referrals, education, monitoring and quality oversight, and policy and systems development.

Ohio WIC – Providing Nutrition Services to Vulnerable Ohioans

Vital to a young child’s life and healthy development is proper nutrition and breastfeeding, a major focus behind our partnership with the federal government is the Ohio Women, Infants, and Children program, or Ohio WIC, as it’s commonly known.

Ohio WIC serves more than 178,000 Ohio women, infants, and children. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, its immediate and long-term benefits are many. The evidence shows us that WIC services reduce fetal deaths, infant mortality, and the risk for obesity; they improve diets and overall health (physical and mental) and reduce healthcare costs.

WIC Enrollment 2020-2024



Breastfeeding Support

ODH implements statewide initiatives to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding in Ohio. ODH funds a 24/7 Breastfeeding Hotline that is operated by live, trained lactation professionals and is available free of charge to all callers. As of June 2024, the hotline has served 40,000 callers since opening in 2020. Breastfeeding initiatives are also underway in hospitals, worksites, and childcare facilities.

Women who participate in WIC’s Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program tend to have higher rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration, providing important health benefits to the baby and mom alike. In SFY24, breastfeeding initiation rates rose to 65.5% among women participating in the WIC program. Those who breastfed their babies for at least six months, as recommended by ODH and the American Academy of Pediatrics, remained steady in SFY 24 at 29%.

WIC Life-changing for Northwest Ohio Mom



“

Besides the cost savings, convenience, and the larger food package I obtained on the program, I learned from WIC that breastfeeding was about more than just feeding your child – it was about providing the ultimate nutritional and growth value to my sons that couldn’t be replicated with formula. Our lactation journey was a transformative experience that strengthened my bond with my boys, empowered me to discover newfound confidence within myself, helped me achieve my pre-pregnancy weight, and reduced my risk for certain types of cancer.

WIC also changed my career path. Today, I’m a certified lactation specialist and breastfeeding peer counselor at the Paulding County WIC Clinic.

- Andrea S.

”

Farmers' Markets a 'Win-Win' for Ohio

One exciting area of growth in Ohio WIC is its partnership with farmers in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This program provides nutritionally at-risk women and children fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets.

The vouchers WIC provides its participants for farmers' markets expands the frequency and awareness of farmers' markets in our communities and helps farmers grow their business. In calendar year 2023, the program included 170 Ohio farmers who participated in 55 markets and 109 roadside stands. **A total of 21,173 WIC participants from 68 counties spent \$576,000 at Farmers' Markets.**

"This is an incredible 'win-win' for Ohio," Dr. Vanderhoff said during a virtual news conference in June. "First, we of course are getting more fresh produce into the hands of people who need it. Second, we are supporting Ohio farmers, many of whom are running relatively small and perhaps family-owned businesses. This is a way to boost the local economy while also honoring Ohio's rich agricultural heritage."



Walking the WIC Farmers Market



Interview with a Farmer



Experience the Farmers Market



School-Based Health Centers

Serving youth in vulnerable communities so they can learn, reach potential.

ODH supports School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) in high-need urban and rural school districts in 18 counties and 31 school districts across the state. These centers provide vital health resources and services that might otherwise not be available or easily accessible to children, staff, and others in these communities. This includes primary healthcare, well visits, immunizations, sports physicals, behavioral health, oral healthcare, vision care, care coordination/case management, and referrals. During the 2023-2024 school year, ODH-funded SBHCs served 11,676 students, provided 31,043 services, and conducted 2,795 well visits.

With the strong support of Governor DeWine, Ohio is adding SBHCs in communities all across the state. In March 2024, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted [announced an investment of \\$64 million](#) through the Appalachian Children's Health Initiative to support the creation or expansion of SBHCs, plus the launch of healthcare-focused workforce development programs and more. The announced round of projects is expected to benefit 61,000 students and 375,000 residents in 20 counties.

Last fall, an SBHC serving the Tuscarawas Valley School District illustrated the value these centers provide their communities. In November 2023, a multi-vehicle crash on Interstate 70 killed three high school students, a teacher, and two chaperones on a field trip. Demand for mental health and behavioral healthcare for students and staff was high in the immediate aftermath and through the remainder of the school year. ODH worked with the school-based health center and its behavioral health partners to allocate an additional \$150,000 in funding to sustain those services through June 2024.

In another example, the family of a 6th-grader in Knox County shared with ODH how an SBHC helped transform their child's behavior and academic performance. After finding no answers outside the classroom, the family turned to the SBHC. Within weeks of their first appointment, the child was diagnosed with ADHD, one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood. Thanks to treatment and convenient access to the SBHC, the child started succeeding in school, with teachers noting a striking turnaround. They described the student as more thoughtful, focused, and collaborative with his classmates.

Children with Special Healthcare Needs

Our Complex Medical Help (CMH) program continued to serve Ohio's children, youth, and young adults through age 23 with special healthcare needs. The program serves approximately 40,000 Ohioans through various programs aimed at diagnosing, treating, and managing medical conditions.

CMH partners with more than 12,000 healthcare providers across the state to provide access to care for this medically fragile population. Partners include hospitals, physicians and other health professionals, pharmacies, and durable medical equipment companies, as well as the Ohio Department of Medicaid. CMH also supports public health nurses in local health departments throughout Ohio.

“

*You have been so helpful! I feel like after almost four years I have hope! And that (my child) will get some things that he needs!!!! I also feel like I have some knowledge about how things work in OH!!!! You literally made my day! Thanks again for being so sweet, knowledgeable, and helpful!
With a grateful heart,*

- Email to ODH from Defiance County parent, February 2024

”

Health Improvement and Wellness

The Bureau of Health Improvement and Wellness includes programs that address chronic diseases, prevent and reduce injuries, promote access to healthcare, and reduce health disparities. Program initiatives include the promotion of healthy eating and active living, as well as the prevention of chronic diseases, tobacco use, child injuries, sexual assault, domestic violence, and drug overdoses.

Overdose Prevention and Harm Reduction

In calendar year 2022, the most recent full year of verified data on record, 4,915 Ohioans died from unintentional drug overdoses – a 5% decrease from 2021. This marked an encouraging sign in Ohio’s long battle with the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders. Preliminary data for 2023 is even more encouraging. As of June 30, 2024, the number of unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2023 appeared to indicate a 9.4% decrease from 2022.

“We’re encouraged to see these numbers decline, and we’re hopeful this trend continues,” said Dr. Vanderhoff. “That said, each one of these deaths is a tragedy, and we have a long way to go.”

Ohio continues to work diligently in this area to reduce unintentional drug overdoses. This included a rule change in SFY24 requiring emergency departments to report non-fatal drug overdoses to ODH, a move applauded by Governor DeWine.

“We must continue to work tirelessly to address the overdose crisis, to support those in recovery, and to encourage wellness to prevent addiction in the first place,” [Governor DeWine said in a March 25 news release](#).

The new rule gives state officials a more accurate and current view of non-fatal overdoses in Ohio, enhancing public health’s ability to identify trends, such as repeat overdoses, and to develop strategies and allocation of resources. It will also allow for faster identification of populations or geographic areas disproportionately affected by non-fatal overdoses.

“We believe that having this new data will help us reduce the number of drug overdoses, lessen the burden on families and communities, and most importantly, save lives,” said Dr. Vanderhoff.



**Find More Resources
at RecoveryOhio.gov.**

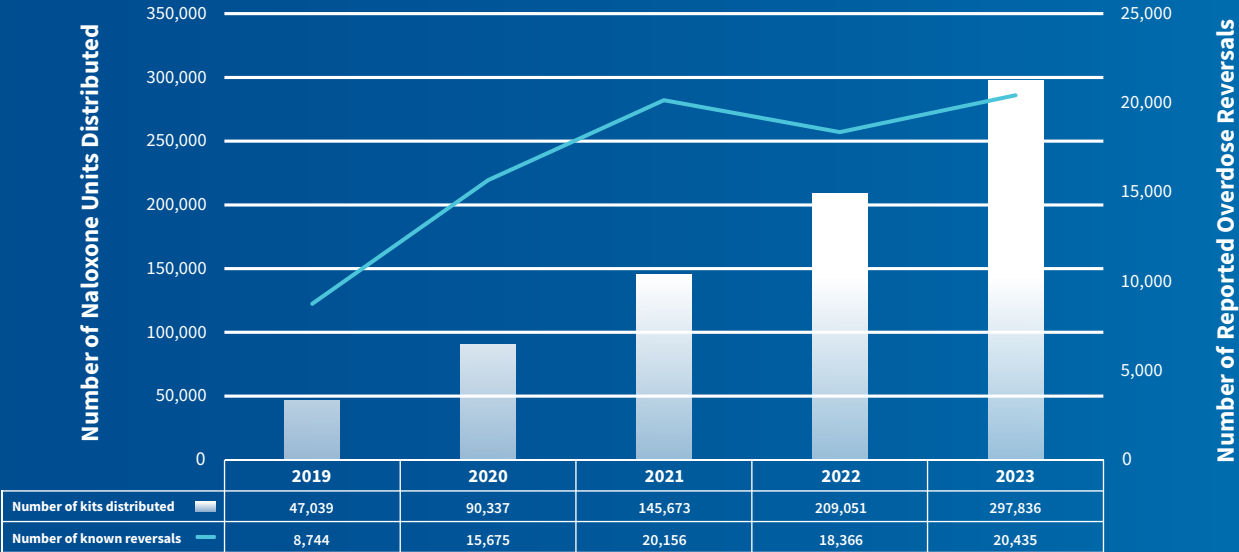


Project DAWN

A critical tool in this fight is Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone), a network of overdose education and naloxone distribution programs coordinated by ODH. Project DAWN programs are located across a variety of settings, including local health departments, emergency departments, medical centers, treatment and recovery organizations, correctional facilities, and other community organizations.

Collectively in calendar year 2023, Project DAWN distributed **297,836** naloxone kits, educated **136,670** people on naloxone use and signs and symptoms of overdose, and reported **20,435** overdose reversals from naloxone use.

Annual Project DAWN Naloxone Distribution and Overdose Reversal Data 2019-2023



Also key to ODH’s coordinated efforts to reduce overdose deaths is the **Emergency Department Comprehensive Care Program**, a collaborative statewide initiative designed to enhance Ohio’s response to the opioid crisis by creating a comprehensive system of care for patients who present in emergency departments with opioid addiction. Established in 2018 and funded by ODH, the program has been instrumental in linking Ohioans to needed substance use disorder services. In SFY24, 31 emergency departments in Ohio were participating in the program.

	2023	Total since 2018
Patients Screened	300,435	831,632
Patients Transitioned to Care	3,118	19,337
Prescribers and Staff Trained	5,548	14,515
Patients Receiving Naloxone Kit	3,240	8,511

Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation

Because of Ohio's tobacco prevention and cessation efforts over the years, our state's adult smoking rates fell from 25.5% in 2011 to 17.1% in 2022. It remains higher than the U.S. rate of 14%, however. More than one-in-four Ohioans (25.9%) still use some form of tobacco.

Cigarette smoking remains the No.1 cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States, according to the CDC. It contributes to numerous health challenges, including cancer, heart disease, and stroke. Disparities in cigarette use or tobacco-related health impacts remain across groups, including race/ethnicity, income, and those with poor mental health, with users often having worse health outcomes compared to the rest of the population.

E-cigarettes / Vaping

Ohio and the nation as a whole have seen a significant rise in overall youth tobacco and nicotine use in recent years, driven solely by the increase in youth use of e-cigarettes/vaping products.

The liquid in e-cigarettes can be harmful, especially to young children, who can be poisoned by swallowing the liquid, taking a puff, or absorbing it through their skin or eyes. The ingredients can include nicotine, THC (the psychoactive ingredient in the cannabis plant), synthetic cannabinoids, and flavors that may entice, and possibly addict, potential new users.

As evidence of its growing threat to public health, the number of annual e-cigarette exposures reported to Ohio Poison Centers more than tripled from 2015 to 2023, from 130 in 2015 to 422 in 2023. The overwhelming majority of those exposures – 80% – involved children ages 5 and younger.

While younger children are being poisoned by these products, our older youth and young adults are being targeted by tobacco manufacturers to create the next generation of tobacco users, particularly by the marketing of flavored tobacco products. According to researchers in the public health arena:

- Nearly 81% of youth ages 12 to 17 who had ever used a tobacco product reported that the first product they used was flavored.
- Among students who reported they were currently using a tobacco product, 72.8% of high school students and 59.6% of middle school students reported using flavored products.
- Among young adult non-cigarette tobacco users (ages 18-24), 83.5% report that they use a flavored product.

Despite the concerning data spanning the past decade, there have been some encouraging signs in more recent years that vape use is waning. Data in the 2021 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey – the most recent data available – shows that vaping use dropped substantially between 2019 and 2021.

The number of students who reported currently using a vape product fell among middle schoolers (grades 6-8) from 11.9% to 9%. For high schoolers (grades 9-12), those who reported current vape use fell from 29.8% to 20%.

While it is encouraging to see this decline, youth vaping remains a significant public health issue that has the potential to impact lifelong health of Ohio's youth.

Prevention Tools

ODH employs a variety of strategies aimed at reducing youth tobacco use, including:

- Enhancing prevention activities and providing accessible cessation services.
- Funding opportunities for community-driven youth prevention engagement projects.
- Increased checks to improve compliance with Ohio's Tobacco 21 law.
- Promoting policies that limit accessibility and availability of tobacco to youth.
- Youth-centered media campaigns.
- Data monitoring and evaluation to understand trends in youth use of tobacco and vaping products and continuous release of emerging tobacco products, often marketed toward youth.



Ohio Tobacco Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW)

The Ohio Tobacco Quit Line has proven to be successful in reducing tobacco use in Ohio. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-in-10 smokers who make a quit attempt each year are successful at quitting. Participants in our Ohio Tobacco Quit Line are three times more successful. Our six-month quit rate stands at 30.8%.

Ohio has enjoyed national recognition in recent years by counterparts in other states as an innovator in Quit Line operations. Changes have included additional incentives for pregnant women, a young adult special protocol, and a behavioral health protocol.

Other Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program Accomplishments in SFY24 Include:

Of Ohio's more than 600 school districts,

74
SCHOOLS
IMPROVED

their tobacco-free
policies this
past year.

13
ADOPTED
COMPREHENSIVE
POLICIES

that now include
an alternative-
to-suspension
component.

**NEARLY
53,000
STUDENTS**

are receiving
additional
protection as
a result.

ODH partners and contractors completed nearly
3,000 CHECKS
for compliance with Ohio's Tobacco 21 law.

ODH funded
44 LOCAL COMMUNITIES
for tobacco cessation/prevention work.

ODH local grantees completed:

**MORE THAN
940
ACTIVITIES**

focusing on
community
outreach /
engagement.

**114
LOCAL MEDIA
CAMPAIGNS**

to increase calls to
Ohio Tobacco Quit
Line, promote
point-of-sale efforts,
and educate around
youth tobacco use.

**25
YOUTH
ENGAGEMENT
PROJECTS**

reaching over
30,000 community
members.

ADULT TOBACCO USE IN OHIO



NEARLY 1 IN 4

Ohio adults (25.9%) used some form of tobacco, a 3.9% increase from 2021.



APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 5

adults (17.1%) currently smoke cigarettes.

Cigarettes are the most used tobacco product among Ohio adults (age 18+). However, for the 18-24 age group (young adults) e-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product and is the age group with the highest prevalence of e-cigarette use.



OVER 2 IN 5

adult cigarette smokers (43.2%) smoke a pack or more of cigarettes a day.



APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 4

(28.7%) adult cigarette smokers in Ohio made at least one attempt to quit smoking cigarettes in the past year.



OHIO ADULTS WITH THE LOWEST INCOME (40.5%)



THOSE WHO DID NOT GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL (35.4%)

have the highest prevalence of current cigarette smoking.



OHIOANS WHO REPORT FREQUENT POOR MENTAL HEALTH HAVE REPORTED SMOKING AT ALMOST TWICE THE RATE (28.4%) of those who do not report frequent poor mental health (15.3%).

Tobacco use is associated with 12 types of cancer and 30% of all cancer deaths.

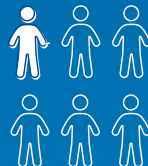
Source: The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2022, Centers for Disease Prevention and Control.

YOUTH TOBACCO USE IN OHIO



TOBACCO USE DECREASED AMONG OHIO YOUTH.

Specifically, 39% among middle school students and 43% among high school students between 2019 -2021.



APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 6

(16.4%) Ohio youth currently use at least one type of tobacco product, compared with 9.3% nationally.



ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS ARE THE MOST POPULAR TOBACCO AMONG OHIO YOUTH

with an overall prevalence of 15.7%, followed by flavored tobacco (6.0%).



AMONG OHIO YOUTH WHO USE E-CIGARETTES, 42.6% REPORTED USING FLAVORED TOBACCO

and about half (49.3%) also use cannabis.



35.1% OF OHIO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE USED A E-CIGARETTE AT LEAST ONCE, compared to 16.6% of Ohio middle school students.



CURRENT E-CIGARETTE USE AMONG OHIO YOUTH WHO REPORT POOR MENTAL HEALTH IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER (30.5%) than those who reported never having poor mental health (6.5%).

Other Achievements Inside the Bureau of Health Improvement and Wellness

Health Promotion

Our Health Promotion Program works at the state level to implement nutrition and physical activity strategies across Ohio. It works collaboratively to leverage state investments, partnerships, and other resources to address health disparities related to poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and obesity. The work crosses several sectors, including agriculture, transportation, education, healthcare, parks and recreation, business, and housing.

In SFY24, Health Promotion was awarded a \$4.4 million, five-year State Physical Activity and Nutrition Grant from the CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. Because of its demonstrated need and achievements with previous funding in this space, Ohio was just one of 17 states to receive the funding.

With its first-year share of the grant, Health Promotion provided funding for 17 additional local health departments to implement Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) strategies in Ohio Health Improvement Zones. (Health Improvement Zones are Census tracts identified by ODH for focus and investment because of their vulnerable populations, high levels of risk and need, and poor health outcomes.)

Efforts undertaken by grant recipients included the implementation of Complete Streets Policies, Active Transportation Plans, and Food Service Guidelines.

- **Complete Streets** refers to a systematic policy to improve all public streets, through design, construction, operations, and/or maintenance, so that the right-of-way can serve everyone.
- **Active Transportation Plans** focus on improving specific streets or networks so that active transportation (bicycling and walking) is safe and comfortable.
- **Food Service Guidelines** help to ensure that healthy foods are available at worksites and community settings.

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC)

Within Health Promotion is our Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program. In calendar year 2023, CHC worked with 22 county-level local health departments to implement 40 active living and 30 healthy eating initiatives across the state, leveraging \$28 million in additional grants, donations, and volunteer time, impacting nearly 1.7 million Ohioans. Initiatives included improvements to parks and playgrounds, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, multi-use trails, community gardens, farmers' markets, and many others.



ODH Feature Story

[Community Gardens Plant Seeds for Healthy Nutrition, Healthy Life](#)



Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and many cancers are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems in both the United States and Ohio. Chronic disease is associated with reduced quality of life, poor health outcomes, increased healthcare needs, and higher healthcare costs.

SFY24 highlights of our [Chronic Disease Program](#) include the important work of our Breast and Cervical Cancer Project. This project provided breast and cervical cancer screenings to 8,300 Ohioans in SFY 2024. Of those, 126 were diagnosed with cervical cancer or pre-cancer and 131 were diagnosed with breast cancer. The screenings enabled these Ohioans to get into treatment and improve their health outcomes.

The project also received a \$500,000 WISEWOMAN grant from the CDC. WISEWOMAN is a CDC program that extends preventive health services to achieve optimal cardiovascular health for women aged 35-64 who participate in the CDC-funded National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. ODH will use the grant dollars to target this population in southeast Ohio, offering health screenings and referrals, education, coaching, and other resources.

Cancer Program

ODH's role in cancer prevention and control is seen in several areas throughout the department, making it truly a comprehensive approach. Together with a variety of partners inside and outside ODH, including the [Ohio Partners for Cancer Control](#), the cancer program works to reduce the burden of cancer in Ohio.

Part of ODH's [Cancer Program](#) includes production of the Ohio Annual Cancer Report, a summary of cancer incidence (new cases) and mortality (deaths) for the state of Ohio, with a focus on cancer diagnoses and deaths. Public health professionals, policymakers, researchers, and others use the report to develop, implement, and evaluate cancer prevention and control activities, support cancer-related research, and inform Ohioans of the cancer burden in the state.

Key takeaways from the latest [Ohio Annual Cancer Report 2024](#) include:

- In Ohio, 71,925 new invasive cancer cases were diagnosed in 2021, increasing to near 2019 levels after fewer cases were reported in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The most diagnosed cancers in Ohio in 2021 were prostate cancer for men and breast cancer for women.
- In 2021, cancer remained the second most common cause of death in Ohio and the United States, accounting for nearly one of every five deaths.
- Cancer claimed the lives of 25,054 Ohioans in 2021.

Prevalence

- An estimated 606,406 Ohioans are currently living with or have had cancer during the 25-year period 1996 to 2020.

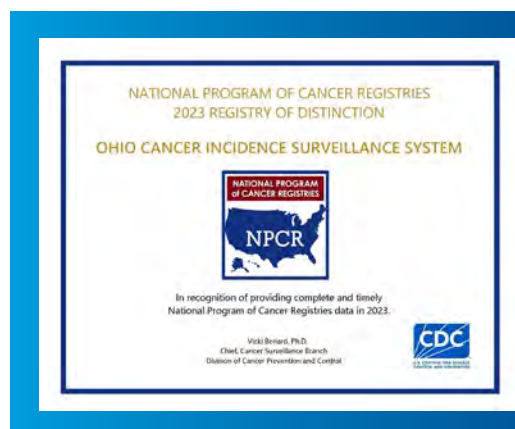
Survival

- Estimated five-year relative survival for all cancers combined was nearly 69% in Ohio.

National Distinction

In June 2024, the CDC identified ODH's Ohio Cancer Incidence Surveillance System (OCISS) as a Registry of Distinction for its completeness, timeliness, and quality. Data in the registry is used to plan and evaluate cancer control programs, conduct research, and monitor cancer trends.

"Each central cancer registry is crucial to the success of cancer surveillance in the United States," stated a letter sent to ODH from the CDC's National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR). "Many advances in cancer surveillance in the United States would have been impossible without the tireless efforts and many achievements of NPCR Central cancer registries. ... Congratulations on receiving this well-deserved recognition and thank you for your commitment to high-quality cancer surveillance."



Booster Seat Campaign

Our Violence and Injury Prevention Section launched a booster seat awareness campaign in August 2023 called, "Boost Your Child's Odds of Staying Safe." ODH engaged child passenger safety partners across the state in the campaign, distributing 61,000 printed materials and netting 71 million impressions on social media, with 15.5 million delivered to Hispanic audiences. The campaign led to more than 78,000 visits to ODH's [Child Passenger Safety webpage](#).



Environmental Health

The focus of our Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation Protection is the assessment and control of environmental factors that can potentially affect health, including protection from radiation and lead poisoning. Work within this bureau is targeted toward preventing disease, reducing exposures to contaminants, and creating health-supportive environments.

Protecting Children from Lead

Lead is a toxic element found in homes built before 1978 with lead-based paint, drinking water, and elsewhere. It can damage nearly every system in the human body, harming adults and children. Lead is known to cause developmental delays in children, with children younger than 3 at the greatest risk.

Given lead's serious threat to public health, ODH manages the **Ohio Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**, the state's primary lead abatement and lead poisoning prevention program. With input and guidance from the [Ohio Lead Advisory Council](#) and partners across the state, this program assists family members, care providers, and other community members in decreasing or preventing lead exposure in children from birth through age 6 through three primary strategies:

- Blood-lead testing and data surveillance.
- Investigation and case management, including enforcement of lead hazard control orders and lead hazard control.
- The licensure of lead contractors and inspectors and the accreditation of lead training providers.

Ohio law requires healthcare providers to test children for lead who are at risk for lead exposure. Ohio law requires healthcare providers to administer blood lead tests to children at ages 1 and 2, or up to age 6 if no previous test has been completed based on the following criteria: the child is on Medicaid, lives in a high-risk ZIP code, or has certain other risk factors. Results are reported to ODH. New in SFY24, Ohio lowered the threshold for elevated blood-lead levels in children that trigger enhanced intervention services from state and local health departments. As recommended by the CDC and consistent with recommendations by Governor DeWine's Lead Advisory Committee, ODH lowered the threshold from **5 micrograms** of lead per deciliter of blood to **3.5 micrograms** per deciliter.

In SFY24, 161,928 children were tested for lead. Of those, 4,506 were found to have elevated blood-lead levels and 1,070 with lead poisoning (a blood-lead level of at least 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter). Because of the new threshold, ODH and local health departments were able to reach an additional 2,116 children across Ohio with the following:

- Educational information on ways to reduce lead exposure and information about available health services.
- A home visit by a public health professional for testing and additional information. (Home visits are offered where children test for elevated blood-lead levels and required where children test for lead poisoning.)
- Awareness of environmental intervention options available from local, state, and federal lead hazard control and rehabilitation programs.
- Links to the Lead Abatement Tax Credit Program, early intervention services, Help Me Grow programs, and other resources.

ODH provides lead hazard control services to properties occupied by low- and middle-income families using a blend of state and federal dollars, including \$20 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars awarded for SFY24 and SFY25. It partners with local communities to implement primary prevention activities in high-risk areas of the state.

Following another recommendation from Governor DeWine's Lead Advisory Committee, ODH subsidized training, licensure, and examination fees to grow Ohio's licensed lead professional workforce in SFY24. By the end of year, this workforce stood at 1,611, a 15% jump over the previous year.



Making Homes Lead Safe

In Warren County, two siblings were hospitalized in late 2023 after routine well-child visits with their pediatrician revealed lead poisoning; a threat to their cognitive development and future success. After medical experts removed lead from their bloodstreams, public health removed it from their home. Thanks to financial assistance and support from ODH's Ohio Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, their home underwent significant lead remediation and repairs. Today, the home is lead-safe for the entire family.

Ohio Winning War with Lead

Beginning in 1999, when ODH began collecting reliable data on blood lead testing, Ohio had nearly **9,000 children** diagnosed with lead poisoning.*



By 2022, the number of children who were diagnosed with that same blood-lead level had fallen to 841 – a 91% decline.

**Confirmed blood lead levels of at least 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood.*

Public Campaign Raises Lead Awareness

ODH launched a statewide lead-awareness marketing campaign in SFY24 involving multiple delivery vehicles, including social media, YouTube, radio, billboards, and ads on streaming channels. Early measures of the campaign's effectiveness far exceeded expectations. For example, our campaign strategists expected 68 million impressions, or "ad views," from October through December. We received 80 million. The campaign ran through June 30.

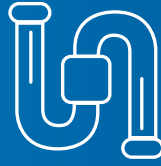
ODH deeply appreciates its many partners across the state who are dedicated to protecting Ohioans from toxic lead. Among the many, they include:

- The Ohio Lead Advisory Council.
- Ohio's 111 local health departments.
- The Ohio Healthy Homes Network.
- The Ohio Housing Finance Agency.
- The Ohio EPA.
- The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services.
- The Ohio Department of Medicaid.
- The Ohio Department of Development.
- The Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

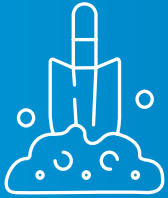
Lead Can Be Found In a Variety of Sources:



Paint in homes and buildings built before 1978.



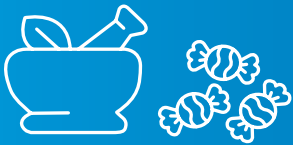
Water supplied through pipes or plumbing fixtures that contain lead.



Soil contaminated with lead from exterior lead-based paint, car exhaust, and factories.



Some products such as toys and jewelry.



Some imported foods and medicines.



Certain jobs and hobbies.

Take These Tips to Make Your Home Lead-Safe:

Talk with your child's doctor about a simple blood test. If you are pregnant or nursing, talk with your doctor about exposure to sources of lead.

Talk with your local health department about testing paint and dust in your home for lead if you live in a home built before 1978.

Renovate safely. Common renovation activities (like sanding, cutting, replacing windows, and more) can create hazardous lead dust. If you're planning renovations, use contractors certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Visit the U.S. EPA's [lead webpage](#) for more information.

Remove recalled toys and toy jewelry from children and discard as appropriate. Stay up-to-date on current recalls by visiting the [Consumer Product Safety Commission's website](#).

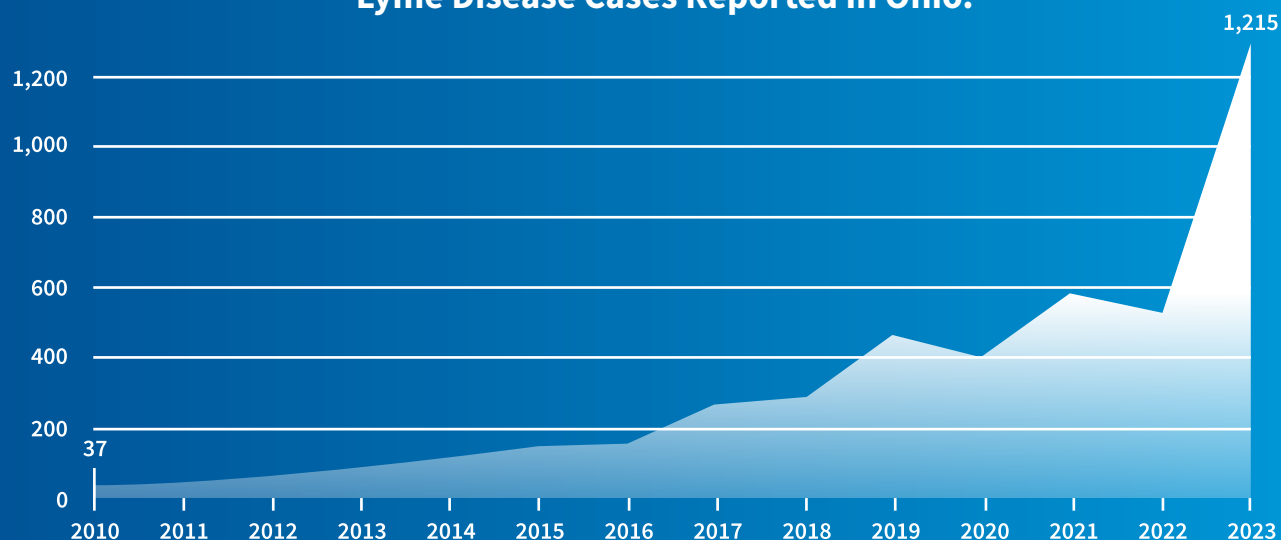
Infectious Diseases – Prevention & Protection

The Bureau of Infectious Diseases (BID) works to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases, foodborne outbreaks, healthcare-associated infections, waterborne outbreaks, zoonotic diseases, and more in close coordination with Ohio's 111 local health departments, healthcare providers, and laboratories.

Lyme Disease Growing Threat

Lyme disease is an emerging disease in Ohio, with cases rising substantially over the past 13 years, from 37 cases in 2010 to 1,283 cases in calendar year 2023. This increase coincides with the spread of the blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) throughout the state.

Over the Past 13 Years, There Has Been a 35-Fold Increase In Lyme Disease Cases Reported in Ohio.



In response to the growing threat of Lyme disease, our Bureau of Infectious Diseases (BID) has expanded its active tick surveillance efforts and is collaborating with The Ohio State University Infectious Disease Institute to test collected ticks for diseases.

To raise public awareness, ODH launched a statewide “Be Tick Smart” media campaign from May through September 2023. The campaign was seen on social media platforms, billboards, radio, audio streaming, and more to deliver over 200 million impressions to Ohio outdoor enthusiasts on how to stay healthy and prevent tick bites.

For more information, visit [Tickborne Diseases in Ohio](#) and [Lyme Disease](#) on the ODH website.



RSV, Flu, and COVID-19 Vaccines

Also in SFY24, BID worked in the face of high demand and limited supply to distribute newly approved Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccines to primary care providers for eligible children. Newborn infants, pregnant women, and older adults were among the three different high-risk groups recommended to receive this new vaccine.

The bureau's Immunization Program distributed nearly 24,000 RSV vaccines to Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers for newborn infants and a limited number of high-risk children during the respiratory season (October 2023 through March 2024). Two other high-risk groups, pregnant women and older adults, received the new vaccine through private pay networks. The program also successfully coordinated the distribution of more than 400,000 new seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccines to immunization partners to prevent seasonal respiratory diseases.

As Meningococcal Disease Strikes Community, Public Health Responds

In December 2023 and January 2024, 11 cases of meningococcal disease were reported in northern Jefferson County, along the Ohio-Pennsylvania border. All 11 cases involved children, most of them under the age of 5. All were hospitalized.

Although the numbers were small, immediate attention, control, and prevention measures were critical, as meningococcal disease can be fatal and one-in-five survivors will have long-term disabilities, such as brain damage, deafness, loss of limbs, and nervous system problems.

The outbreak occurred in an under-vaccinated community that doesn't routinely engage with traditional healthcare providers. The Jefferson County General Health District worked closely with the community, ODH, the CDC, local hospitals, pharmacies, and others to conduct an outreach clinic in mid-December.

In a community of fewer than 175 individuals, the clinic provided antibiotics to 140 individuals and an initial dose of meningococcal vaccine to 160 individuals. More than 130 individuals also received a seasonal flu vaccine. A second clinic in March provided over 95 second doses of meningococcal vaccines, focusing on children impacted by the outbreak.

According to the CDC, this marked the first time meningococcal B vaccine had been recommended in the United States as an outbreak-control measure to children under the age of 10. The experience will help inform investigation guidelines in other meningococcal disease outbreaks across the nation. In addition, public health now has a trusting relationship with this community, an important component for potential public health interventions in the future.



Bureau of HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis

The Bureau of HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis (BHSB) strives to respect, protect, and improve the health of Ohioans who are impacted by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and Viral Hepatitis. The bureau works to decrease infections, promote healthy outcomes, and enhance quality of life.

Combating Syphilis, Protecting Newborns

A major focus for this bureau in SFY24 was its continuing battle against the nationwide resurgence of syphilis and congenital syphilis. Ohio had 4,969 cases of total syphilis in 2023, a 146% increase over 2019's numbers, according to the most recent data available. More troubling was the rise in cases spread from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy and at birth. In 2023, Ohio had 75 congenital syphilis cases, a 295% increase over 2019.

Health experts attribute the rising numbers to a variety of factors, including changes in sexual practices, a lack of intervention to properly diagnose syphilis in a timely fashion, and a lack of medicine to treat people.

"Everyone should be aware of the increasing prevalence of syphilis and pay particular attention to the danger of congenital syphilis," Dr. Vanderhoff said. "Congenital syphilis can cause a miscarriage, premature birth, and lead to stillbirth. Infants can suffer a host of complications and lifelong disorders, from deformities to brain and nervous system issues, such as blindness and deafness."

On average, compared with hospitalizations for other conditions, infants hospitalized with congenital syphilis have nearly four times longer hospital stays and more than four times the healthcare cost. (See: [Cost of congenital syphilis hospitalizations skyrockets with increase in cases.](#))

Fortunately, every case of congenital syphilis is preventable with timely and appropriate prenatal care. To that end, as well as to reduce syphilis' overall impact on Ohioans, the Bureau of HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis works with other ODH programs and state, local, and federal partners on multiple strategies.

In late SFY24, the bureau launched **Aware**, a project that provides free at-home testing for syphilis, HIV, hepatitis C, chlamydia, and gonorrhea to anyone over the age of 16 who resides in Ohio. The priority population includes persons who are pregnant, women of reproductive age, and high-risk individuals who are not engaged in care or will not physically go to a testing location. The testing technology allows ODH to provide confirmed diagnoses, enabling individuals to seek treatment as soon as possible, and differentiate between active and historical infections.

In SFY24, the bureau continued to work closely with ODH's Reproductive Health and Wellness Program on outreach, prevention, and intervention strategies related to syphilis. This included education and training for program directors and clinical staff of ODH-supported Title X Family Planning Clinics, as well as testing, education, and counseling for clinic clients.

ODH received \$3.1 million from the CDC in SFY24 to address syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections. Specific syphilis activities supported by the funding included:

- Syphilis and congenital syphilis surveillance – collecting, managing, analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating data and following up with healthcare providers.
- Responding to outbreaks, developing and maintaining outbreak capacity plans.
- Conducting health department disease investigation and intervention for pregnant and reproductive-age women with syphilis and for men with syphilis.
- Promoting CDC-recommended screening, diagnosis, and treatment in high priority populations.

Working with Incarcerated Ohioans, Saving Tax Dollars

State and federal prison systems, as well as local and county jails, are generally responsible for providing healthcare services to all individuals incarcerated in their facilities, a tremendous pressure on their budgets. When it comes to incarcerated individuals living with HIV, BSHS provides budgetary relief through Ohio Ryan White Part B Programs – the HIV Client Services Program (HCS) and the Ohio HIV Drug Assistance Program (OHDAP).

Backed primarily by federal funding, both programs provide HIV medications to incarcerated individuals and provide some resources and links for continued healthcare upon release to the community. Thanks to this service, HCS saved the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction more than \$11.8 million between July 2021 and June 2023.

The bureau launched OHDAP as a year-long pilot project with the Butler County Jail in January 2023. The program allowed jail staff the opportunity to order HIV medications directly from CVS with the cost covered by the program. In the end, the program saved the jail over \$130,000 and helped more than 60 individuals receive HIV medical services. By the end of SFY24, more than 50 county jails in Ohio were participating in the program.



OTHER KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Office of IDEA (Informatics, Data, Epidemiology, and Analytics)

The Office of IDEA marked its one-year anniversary in June 2024. Established to oversee and implement ODH's Data Modernization Initiative, the office noted several achievements in SFY24 aimed at helping ODH staff, our partners, and the public better understand, access, and utilize public health data. Among them, the office:

- Transitioned the ODH Public Information Warehouse to the [DataOhio Portal](#) in April to better align with Ohio's strategy of hosting a single data platform for the public and external partners.
- Completed a project to share Ohio immunization data with healthcare providers in Ohio via CliniSync, Ohio's statewide health information exchange, and with other states via the nationwide eHealth Exchange. Because of this project, clinicians will have access to a more complete vaccine history for their patients.
- Consulted with ODH programs, healthcare providers, and other external entities to recommend the use of CliniSync to collect nonfatal drug overdose visits to emergency departments. The use of CliniSync to automatically collect this information saved countless hours of hospital staff manually reporting data to ODH.
- Continued to oversee the modernization of the Ohio Disease Reporting System, adding electronic case reporting as an option for reporting conditions in an automated fashion.
- Created the ODH Epidemiology Advisory Council to support improving epidemiological methods, data use, and data analysis across the agency and Ohio to ultimately provide information to policy and decision makers on issues related to improving population health.

Bureau of Public Health Laboratory

The ODH Public Health Laboratory services are available to the citizens of Ohio, clinical laboratories, and state and local agencies in support of initiatives designed to protect the health of all Ohioans. Services include microbiology, radiation chemistry, alcohol and drug testing, genome sequencing and newborn screening services and other testing. The laboratory provides timely, accurate, and quality laboratory data, assistance in outbreak investigations and public health emergencies, and identification of disease causes to aid in treatment and prevention.

The laboratory's Newborn Screening Program screened 126,528 newborn babies in SFY24 for certain rare, but serious, health conditions. This includes Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, [a new addition to its screening panel this year](#). This brings the total number of disorders screened for all babies born in the state to 40.

On average, ODH's Newborn Screening Program identifies approximately 3,000 abnormal results per year, with 10% later receiving a confirmed diagnosis and recommendations for necessary interventions to improve health outcomes. Newborn screening leads to early treatment and significant reductions in morbidity and mortality, giving babies the best chance for a healthy life.

The laboratory's **Microbiology Program** works with local health departments, hospitals, and other medical professionals in providing laboratory testing services and providing educational opportunities to increase testing knowledge for laboratorians across Ohio. ODH's laboratory is the only testing location within Ohio for testing services such as rabies and bioterrorism. In SFY24, the program provided:

- **9,704 general microbiology tests**
(e.g., outbreak testing for E.coli, Salmonella, listeria).
- **1,417 special microbiology tests**
(e.g., tuberculosis).
- **5,296 virology tests**
(e.g., rabies, influenza, measles, and COVID).
- **9,259 wastewater tests**
(e.g., COVID, influenza).
- **12,000 arbovirus tests**
(e.g., West Nile virus).
- **4,207 whole genome sequencing tests**
for infectious disease samples.

The laboratory's **Alcohol and Drug Testing Program** provides training and oversight related to the testing, enforcement, and adjudication of suspected impaired-driver cases, critical services in keeping our roads safer for all Ohioans.

The program trains police officers in breath testing, and it oversees toxicology laboratories that analyze blood, urine, and oral fluid samples collected from suspected impaired drivers. Program staff support law enforcement and courts, routinely providing expert testimony in impaired-driving cases.

In SFY24, the program conducted 155 breath-test training classes and issued more than 1,275 breath-test permits to police officers. It also issued 292 permits to laboratory analysts at 13 laboratories across Ohio. A major focus in SFY24 involved training law enforcement officers in the use of two new evidential breath alcohol testing instruments.

For more, visit the [Bureau of Public Health Laboratory](#).

Center of Public Health Excellence

Established in 2023, the Center of Public Health Excellence works with Ohio’s 111 local health departments and others to be a force for a strong public health system and improved health outcomes across Ohio.

In SFY24, the center’s **Office of Health Opportunity** (OHO) continued its work with 735 Ohio Health Improvement Zones – census tracts identified by ODH for focus and investment because of their vulnerable populations, high levels of risk and need, and poor health outcomes. OHO invested \$560,000 in 26 local health departments to target health equity training and development at the community level.

OHO also invested an additional \$450,000 to expand the **High School Healthcare Preceptor Pilot Program** in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. Funded through a grant from the CDC, the program aims to increase the number of low socioeconomic status ethnic minority and rural students entering Ohio’s healthcare workforce. It provides paid work experiences with mentors in the healthcare industry, creating pathways for further education and career development.

Vital Statistics

The Bureau of Vital Statistics registers and maintains an index for Ohio birth, death, and other vital records.

In SFY24, the bureau partnered on a plan with Governor DeWine’s office and [Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library](#) of Ohio to deliver free books to babies shortly after they’re born. As research shows, there’s indisputable evidence that the earlier children are exposed to reading, the better their chances for success in school and life.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, the worksheet that parents of newborns complete to create a birth record will include a section to enroll in the Imagination Library. Starting the program at birth allows the child to receive an age-appropriate book delivered monthly until their 5th birthday, totaling 60 books. All of it free of charge, regardless of income.

The Bureau of Vital Statistics is located in Columbus, where it maintains more than 15 million birth records and seven million death records.

Ohio Births & Deaths 2021 - 2023			
	2021	2022	2023
Births	130,366	128,751	127,432
Deaths	147,581	138,157	128,028



ODH Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff, center, and members of his leadership team pose with Vital Statistics staff in front of the bureau’s oldest birth certificates on file. The records date back to 1908.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP



Financial Management and Stewardship

The Office of Financial Affairs manages all financial matters for ODH. It includes six units – Accounting, Budget, Revenue & Cash Management, Grant Services, Grant Resources, and Procurement Services.

In SFY24, the bulk of ODH’s near \$1.2 billion in revenue came from the federal government – at nearly \$765 million. Expenditures totaled \$981.3 million, with \$626.9 million (or 63.9%) derived from federal funds and \$149.2 million (or 15.2%) derived from state general revenue funds.

Of total expenditures, ODH disbursed \$630.7 million in subgrants and subsidies to local communities. Using capital funds and federal grants, ODH invested \$12.5 million in modernizing its information technology systems for grants management, warehouse inventory management, and the Bureau of Survey & Certification.

SFY 2024 Revenue by Fund Group

Fund Group	Amount	Percentage
Federal	\$764,862,593	65.09%
Dedicated Purpose	\$187,423,706	15.95%
General Revenue	\$158,540,475	13.49%
Internal Service Activity	\$55,452,036	4.72%
Capital IT Funds	\$8,389,047	0.71%
State Highway Safety	\$200,000	0.02%
Holding Account	\$149,883	0.01%
Grand Total	\$1,175,017,740	100.00%

SFY 2024 Revenue by Program

Program	Amount	Percentage
Women, Infants, and Children	\$224,550,163	22.88%
Infectious Diseases	\$134,654,670	13.72%
Children with Special Needs and Maternal and Child Health	\$105,752,731	10.78%
HIV/AIDS, STD, and Hepatitis	\$90,600,252	9.23%
Program Support	\$90,589,870	9.23%
Maternal and Infant Vitality	\$59,496,669	6.06%
Public Health Excellence	\$54,091,381	5.51%
Health Care Facility Survey and Certification	\$43,695,137	4.45%
Injury Prevention/ Drug Overdose	\$42,108,982	4.29%
Public Health Preparedness	\$27,791,087	2.83%
Environmental Health and Lead	\$26,442,060	2.69%
Local Health Department Support	\$22,673,362	2.31%
Chronic Disease	\$17,775,870	1.81%
Public Health Laboratory	\$11,558,434	1.18%
Rural Health/Primary Care	\$10,795,331	1.10%
Radiation Protection	\$8,508,115	0.87%
Vital Statistics	\$7,976,240	0.81%
Alcohol & Drug Testing	\$1,428,164	0.15%
Informatics & Data Management	\$804,543	0.08%
Grand Total	\$981,293,060	100.00%

SFY 2024 Expenditures by Fund Group

Fund Group	Amount	Percentage
Federal	\$626,871,622	63.88%
Dedicated Purpose	\$165,825,140	16.90%
General Revenue	\$149,207,188	15.21%
Internal Service Activity	\$37,923,668	3.86%
Capital IT Funds	\$1,416,551	0.14%
Holding Account	\$48,891	0.00%
Grand Total	\$981,293,060	100.00%

CONNECT WITH US!

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

246 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43215



<https://odh.ohio.gov/>

Additional ODH Locations:

Laboratory

8995 E. Main St., Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068

Vital Statistics

42 Surface Road, Columbus, Ohio 43228

Warehouse

900 Freeway Dr. N., Columbus, Ohio 43229

Akron District Office

Oliver R. Ocasek Government Office Building
161 S. High St., Suite 400, Akron, Ohio 44308

Toledo District Office

Michael V. DiSalle Government Center
1 Government Center, Suite 1320, Toledo, Ohio 43604





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