

2024 FANWOOD Annual Report

Westfield Regional Health Department



Westfield Regional Health Department

Proudly serving Chatham Borough, Fanwood, Garwood, Madison, Mountainside, New Providence, Roselle Park, Summit, and Westfield.

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Message From The Health Officer

Dear Residents,

Looking back at 2024, I am filled with pride as I reflect on the work our team has accomplished at the Westfield Regional Health Department. We have always operated with a simple yet powerful mission: to protect the health of our community and improve the well-being of every individual we serve. This mission is not just a statement—it's what drives us every day.

Your public health officials often work quietly, behind the scenes. Most people never see what goes into making sure the water they drink is clean, that a local restaurant is serving food safely, or that an outbreak of disease is contained before it ever reaches their family. But that's where we come in—doing the unglamorous but vitally important work that keeps our community safe, healthy, and thriving. This year, I have seen firsthand how our team is much more than the official titles we bear; we are educators, advocates, and the very first line of defense when health is on the line.

Our department's work in 2024 has been marked by a commitment not only to public health standards but to the people behind those numbers and regulations. We see our role as a partner to the community, whether it's helping a small business navigate health requirements, responding to the most vulnerable residents in times of crisis, or making sure new arrivals to this country feel safe and supported. We are here to bridge those gaps, to offer that helping hand, and to make sure that no one is left behind when it comes to health and safety.

This year, our registrars continued their work ensuring the security and accuracy of vital records—an extension of homeland security that most people don't think about until it matters most. Our team of nurses has responded to outbreaks like norovirus and influenza and worked hard to provide vaccines to those who needed them, regardless of their insurance status. Our inspectors are out there every day doing the work that is not always appreciated but is always essential. Our health educators are providing residents with the information they need to live their healthiest lives. I am also incredibly proud of our entire staff who demonstrate day in and day out what it means to be truly dedicated to public health. We believe in what we do, and we care deeply about this community.

To everyone we have served this past year—thank you for trusting us, for working with us, and for believing in what public health stands for. As we move forward, we will continue to be here for you, to protect, educate, and serve, and to work together for a healthier, safer future for all.

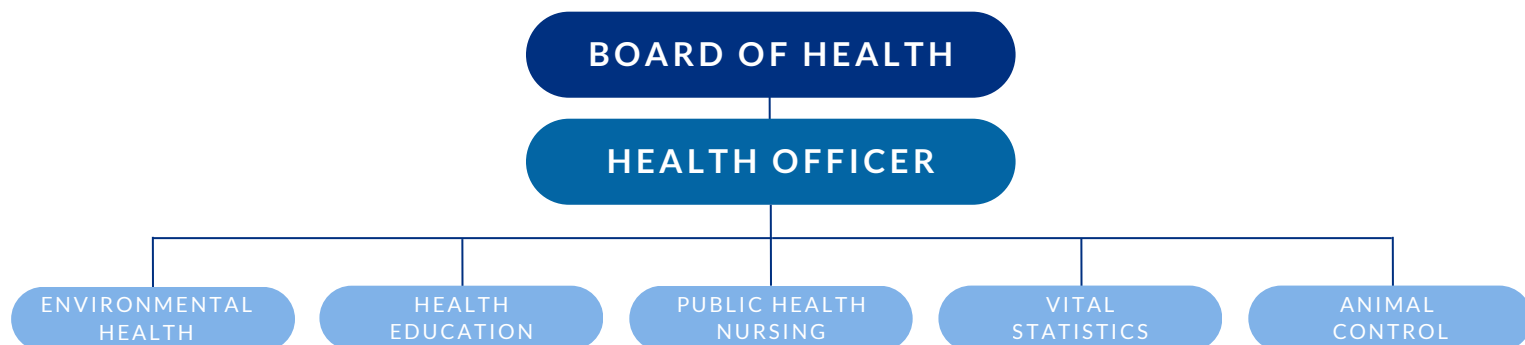
In good health,

Megan Avallone
Director/Health Officer



Health Department Overview

2024



HEALTH DEPARTMENT TEAM

ADMINISTRATIVE

Megan Avallone, MS
Nicole Rondon, MPH

VITAL STATISTICS

Loray Kozar, CMR
Lennie Annina, CMR

ENVIRONMENTAL

Helen Mendez, REHS
Giselle Alfaro, REHS
Beau Preston, REHS
Christie Calmon, REHS
George Kornias, REHS
Laura Manco, REHS

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Laura Scanlon, MS, RN
Bridget Colendenski, RN
Kathy Decker, RN

HEALTH EDUCATION

Amy Lewis, MCHES
Samantha Austin, CHES

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Karen Schulhafer

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Ellen Shelley, DNP
Denise Rizzolo, PA-C

Communities and Services

2024

WE PROUDLY SERVE:

- Westfield
- Chatham Borough
- Fanwood
- Garwood
- Madison
- Mountainside
- New Providence
- Roselle Park
- Summit



OUR MISSION

To prevent disease and promote physical and mental well-being through policy development, disease detection, prevention, education, and enforcement; to do so in a culturally competent manner that ensures the highest quality of life for all of the residents served.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE:

PROTECTS THE COMMUNITY FROM HEALTH THREATS

The Westfield Regional Health Department (WRHD) is committed to preventing disease outbreaks and ensuring the availability of safe drinking water, food, and clean air. Moreover, it stands prepared to address any health emergency, ranging from global pandemics or emerging environmental hazards.

EDUCATES THE COMMUNITIES ABOUT HEALTH ISSUES

The WRHD actively promotes wellness by advocating for nutrition, managing chronic illness, preventing substance abuse, supporting mental health, and prioritizing disease prevention through a variety of community-based initiatives and educational programs. In times of public health crises, the WRHD issues crucial alerts and advisories to ensure the protection of community health.

PROVIDES HEALTHY SOLUTIONS

The WRHD offers preventative care to avoid disease and maintain the highest level of health. By offering a variety of adult vaccinations and providing children with regular routine care and vaccinations, community members have better access to the health services and resources they need to live a healthy life.

ADVANCES COMMUNITY HEALTH

The WRHD develops new policies and standards to address existing and emerging challenges in the community. WRHD delivers cutting-edge health programs by enforcing a range of laws to advance research and staff training.

10 Essential Public Health Services

2024



WRHD ADMINISTERS THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES:

- 1 Monitors outbreaks, health concerns, environmental hazards, etc.
- 2 Diagnosing, investigation, and monitoring reportable diseases, such as tickborne illnesses.
- 3 Educating and empowering individuals to make informed decisions about various health conditions through health education programs.
- 4 Leveraging community relationships across all 9 towns such as the Public Libraries, Public Schools, Senior Centers, Municipal Alliances, Coalitions/Committees, and more.
- 5 Updating ordinances to increase compliance and promote health and safety of the population.
- 6 Enforcing laws and regulations related to retail food establishments, and implementing Tobacco Age of Sale Enforcement (TASE)
- 7 Providing child and adult health clinics to uninsured and under-insured while providing other free services to aid low-income and disproportionately affected populations.
- 8 Assuring competent workforce through an improved Workforce Development Plan.
- 9 Evaluating health services, outreach efforts, vaccine clinics, and health education programs through evaluation surveys.
- 10 Taking the steps needed to obtain accreditation.

9 Towns, One Healthy Mission

2024

The Westfield Regional Health Department prides itself on providing superior public health services to the nine communities we serve. We are here to help residents live their healthiest life possible.

CLINICAL AND PREVENTATIVE CARE

We provide well child care physicals and vaccinations across the life span free of charge to residents who are non-insured or under-insured .

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE AND OUTBREAK RESPONSE

We investigate communicable diseases and outbreaks to identify sources, contain spread and protect community health. We work with our partners at schools, child care centers and long term care facilities to ensure outbreaks are contained quickly.

COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION

Public health education programs are essential for empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions, prevent disease, and promote healthier communities. The substance misuse programs we hold are crucial for preventing addiction, providing treatment and recovery support, and reducing the social and health consequences of drug and alcohol misuse within communities.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental health is so much more than restaurant inspections and regulatory compliance. We protect the community by ensuring safety standards are being adhered to. These inspections help prevent foodborne illness, reduce environmental health risks, and promote safety in businesses and public spaces. Our proactive oversight and enforcement of regulations plays a critical role in maintaining community trust.

LEAD SAFETY & REMEDIATION

There is no safe level of lead. Through education to both parents and pediatricians we are helping to make lead poisoning a thing of the past.

RABIES PREVENTION & ANIMAL CONTROL

Rabies prevention is vital to public health. We rely on pet vaccination, public education and prompt response to animal bite incidents to stop the spread of this deadly but preventable disease.

Public Health Nursing

2024 Clinical Services

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES

Are crucial in advancing community health through their provision of clinical and preventive care, which collectively work to address disparities, improve healthcare access, and enhance overall well-being across the community.

Key Responsibilities:

- Administer immunizations
- Conduct communicable disease control and outbreak investigation
- Child & adult health clinics
- Immunization audits
- Disease prevention/health promotion

CHILD HEALTH CLINICS (82 total)	
0	Physicals provided
7	Immunizations administered
ADULT HEALTH CLINICS (53 total)	
7	Immunizations administered
4	Home visits
OTHER SERVICES	
1108	Covid test kits distributed
19	Flu & Covid clinics
1	Outreach event
0	Blood pressure screening

Public Health Nursing

2024 School Services

Public health nurses work alongside school nurses and child care center directors to ensure that children are up to date with required immunizations and that communicable diseases are prevented. Public health nurses also educate students on hand washing, helmet wearing, and nutrition.

PEDIATRIC SERVICES	
0	Eye exams
0	Tuberculosis screenings (PPD)
0	Lead screening
0	Referrals made to specialists

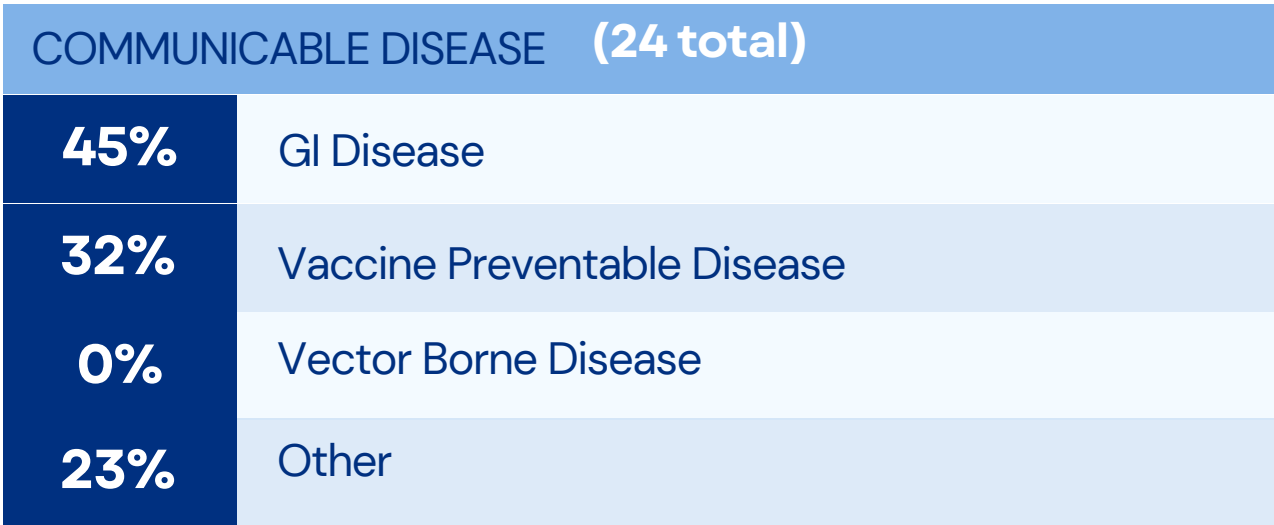
SCHOOL SERVICES	
4	Immunization audits
402	School charts reviewed
3	School nurse trainings
24	Helmets distributed

Public Health Nursing

2024 Communicable Disease Investigation

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES

Public health nurses track disease outbreaks by monitoring data, investigating cases, and tracing contacts to prevent further spread. Through education, collaboration, and resource management, they work to mitigate the impact of communicable disease and protect community health.



Health Education






2024 Programs Implemented

HEALTH EDUCATORS

Empower communities by providing knowledge and resources to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent diseases, and improve overall well-being by implementing programs and initiatives within the community.

Key Responsibilities:

- Disease prevention
- Implementing health programs
- Providing resources/support
- Promoting preventative measures
- Creating health material
- Addressing health disparities

	PROGRAM	DETAILS	OUTCOME
51 Total Participants	Take Control of Your Health (CDSMP) 	6-week intervention for people with a chronic illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased self-management of chronic illness. • Increased healthy habits. • Increased knowledge on how to manage chronic illness overall.
70 Total Participants	Healthy Bones 	24-week exercise and education program for those with or at risk for osteoporosis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved strength, balance, and flexibility. • Reduced risk of bone fractures. • Increased knowledge on how to keep your bones healthy.
7 Total Liquor Stores	Sticker Shock 	Warn adults about the risks and penalties of supplying alcohol to underage individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student empowerment. • Underage drinking prevention. • Education to retailers about NJ laws.
4 Total Schools	Footprints for Life 	2nd and 3rd grade students learn decision-making and resistance skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful conflict resolution skills. • Increased decision making skills. • Cultural competency.
80 5 th grade Students Reached	Don't Get Vaped In 	Nicotine prevention and education program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase knowledge of the risks of using electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). • Prevent the initiation of nicotine use among youth. • Identify resources for intervention services available for tobacco cessation.

Numbers represent a total from the 9 towns WRHD serves.

Future Programs: Wellness Initiative for Seniors (WISE), Strengthening Families Program, HealthEASE, We're Not Buying It, teen Mental Health First Aid, and Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Environmental Health

2024 Environmental Health Complaints

Complaint Investigations Include:

- Food complaints
- Garbage and pollution
- Insect issues
- Lack of heating
- Noise disturbances
- Rodent infestations
- Poisonous plants/poison ivy

The WRHD assists residents in the resolution of quality of life questions, concerns as well as conducts investigations to prevent conditions of properties that interfere with neighbors' enjoyment of their own properties or endanger life, health or safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLAINTS BY THE #'S



41

Total Complaints



0

Garbage/Solid Waste



4

Nicotine Products



3

Insects



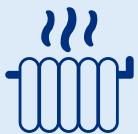
0

Noise Pollution



8

Animals



0

No Heat



0

Housing/Property Maintenance



7

Food Surveillance



14

Rodents



1

Sewage/Septic



0

Unsanitary Conditions



0

Hazardous Waste/Spills



0

Poison Ivy/Ragweed



4

Miscellaneous/Other

Environmental Health

2024 Food Safety/Food Inspections

Food Inspections Include:

- Regulatory compliance
- Food safety/hygiene
- Quality assurance
- Kitchen inspection
- Sanitation and cleanliness
- Training and education

WRHD works collaboratively with the food industry, consumers, and healthcare providers to reduce foodborne illness in your communities and ensure your favorite restaurants are in compliance with food safety regulations.

RETAIL FOOD INSPECTIONS BY THE #'S

53

Pre-operational Inspections: Total number of temporary and fixed establishments that needed pre-operational inspections.

6

Plan reviews: Total number of plans for new establishments that were reviewed and approved.

37

Retail Initial Inspections: Total number of establishments that required an initial inspection.

7

Total Retail Re-inspections: Total number of establishments that required an additional inspection because of noncompliance.

10

Total Walk in Inspections: Establishment is checked for compliance of a specific issue or checked after a complaint is received.

12

Recall Inspections: Whenever the FDA or other agency orders a food recall inspectors check establishments to ensure the recalled products are pulled from the shelves.

5

Temporary Event Inspections: Event that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration, including carnivals, fairs, festivals and other events.

0

Mobile Food Establishments: Establishment that is a movable motor driven or propelled vehicle, or portable structure that can change location.

Environmental Health

2024 Retail Food Establishment Ratings

Food Inspections Include:

- Regulatory compliance
- Food safety/hygiene
- Quality assurance
- Kitchen inspection
- Sanitation and cleanliness
- Training and education

WRHD works collaboratively with the food industry, consumers, and healthcare providers to reduce foodborne illness in your communities and ensure your favorite restaurants are in compliance with food safety regulations.

RETAIL FOOD RATINGS BY THE #'S

101

Total number of inspections that received health department ratings.

94

Satisfactory: The establishment is operating in substantial compliance. Food service personnel demonstrate that they are aware of and are practicing the required sanitation and food safety principles.

5

Conditionally Satisfactory: At the time of inspection, the establishment was found not to be operating in substantial compliance and in violation of one or more required provisions. Due to the nature of these violations, an unannounced full reinspection will be scheduled.

2

Unsatisfactory: Whenever a retail food establishment is operating with one or more violations that constitute gross insanitary or unsafe conditions, which pose an imminent health hazard, the health authority shall issue an unsatisfactory evaluation. The health authority shall immediately request the person in charge to voluntarily cease operation until it is shown on reinspection that conditions which warrant an unsatisfactory evaluation no longer exist.

93

Percentage of retail food inspections that resulted in Satisfactory ratings.

4

Percentage of retail food inspections that resulted in Conditionally Satisfactory ratings.

1

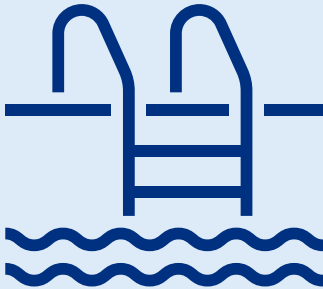
Percentage of retail food inspections that resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings.

Environmental Health

2024 Environmental Inspections

Pool inspections are necessary to prevent waterborne illness by ensuring proper disinfection. Inspections save lives by identifying safety hazards like faulty drains and ensuring that staff are properly trained for an emergency.

INSPECTIONS BY THE #'S



0

Recreational Pool Inspections

Body art facility inspections are vital to prevent the spread of infections like Hepatitis by ensuring proper sterilization and hygiene practices. Regular inspections also help build public trust by confirming these establishments are safe and sanitary.

INSPECTIONS BY THE #'S



0

Youth Camp Inspections

OTHER INSPECTIONS:

0

Septic

0

Pet Shop/
Kennel

0

Tanning

Tobacco Age of Sale Enforcement (TASE)

2024

TASE Inspections Include:

- Regulatory compliance for age
- Regulatory compliance for products sold
- Establishment education

WRHD works collaboratively with the local youth peer leadership groups and local retailers of regulated products to ensure that there is compliance with nicotine and electronic smoking device regulations.

TASE INSPECTIONS BY THE #'S

66

Total TASE Inspections for all WRHD service area.

4

Local TASE Inspections: Total number of establishments locally that were inspected for TASE compliance.

0

Number of Violations: Number of establishments that sold nicotine or electronic smoking device products to minors under the age of 21.



Lead Prevention Program

2024

LEAD INSPECTION IMPORTANCE



Lead is a naturally occurring heavy metal that is toxic to humans. Lead exposure can have various health effects in children including damage to the nervous system and kidneys, as well as learning disabilities. Prior to 1978, lead was used as an additive in paint. Deterioration of this paint from peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking can create dust or chips that can cause lead exposure and resultant health effects.

LEAD CASES BY THE #'S

2

Case management to lead burdened children

1

Abatement required

Rabies Control

2024

Authority:

New Jersey law requires that whenever a dog, cat, or other animal has been known or suspected to have been bitten by an animal known or suspected to be affected by rabies, the owner of the animal or any person with knowledge of the incident shall notify the local health department with jurisdiction where the animal is located (N.J.S.A. 26:4-78). The Health Officer has the authority to serve notice on the owner of the animal requiring euthanasia or confinement for up to 6 months and observation for the emergence of clinical signs of rabies (N.J.S.A. 26:4-83). The New Jersey Department of Agriculture has authority over livestock animals (cattle, horses, etc.) that may be infected with or exposed to rabies.

ANIMAL CONTROL BY THE #'S

1

Submissions
for Rabies
Testing

Following an exposure, rapid and accurate laboratory testing of the infected animal is required for appropriate preventive treatment in humans.

0

Positive Tests

Infected animals can become aggressive and may attack humans, pets, or other animals without provocation. If left untreated, rabies is fatal in humans and animals. If the animal tests positive or is showing signs of rabies, the animal should be euthanized immediately.

4

Dog Bites

All reported dog & cat bites require the animal to be quarantined and show proof of rabies vaccine and pet licensure.



WRHD held several free rabies clinics in 2024

- 138 total dogs vaccinated at clinics
- 27 cats vaccinated at clinics



PUTTING PUBLIC HEALTH INTO ACTION

2024

During 2024, the communicable disease team identified an increase in infant botulism cases and the public health team sprung into action. We heard from parents that delayed diagnosis was a key issue and we collaborated with state and federal partners to understand the gap. We visited all pediatricians and urgent care centers in our service area to raise awareness and ensure botulism was considered earlier in the diagnostic process.

This activity exemplifies how the WRHD puts public health into action. We were able to **protect** our most vulnerable by bridging knowledge gaps, supporting healthcare providers by **promoting** an important message and we were able to **prevent** further harm through timely intervention.



Closing Message

2024

As we conclude our 2024 Annual Report, the Westfield Regional Health Department reflects on a year marked by dedication, resilience, and significant progress in public health. Our achievements in clinical services, disease surveillance, health education, environmental health, and community partnerships underscore our unwavering commitment to the well-being of our residents.

These accomplishments are the result of collaborative efforts among our dedicated staff, community partners, and the trust placed in us by the public. Together, we have navigated challenges and seized opportunities to enhance health outcomes across our region.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to protect and promote public health. The WRHD is committed to advancing equity, fostering innovation, and strengthening our services to meet the evolving needs of our community.

