

Washburn County Public Health

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo Credit: Washburn County Tourism Association- Jay Rasmussen

OUR ORGANIZATION

OUR VISION:

Healthy People Living in Healthy Communities.

OUR MISSION:

To promote, protect, and improve the lifelong health of individuals and communities in Washburn County through the effective use of data and evidence, community-driven prevention strategies, leadership, advocacy, partnerships, and the promotion of health equity.

OUR OFFICE:

📍 304 2nd Street, Shell Lake WI, 54871

☎ 715-635-4400

✉ health@co.washburn.wi.us

📘 Washburn County Health Department

🌐 washburncopublichealth.org

WHO WE ARE:

We are your local health department and serve over 16,000 people in the cities, villages, and towns in Washburn County, Wisconsin.

Five principles guide our work at Washburn County Public Health:

- Integrity; We act with the highest standards of public health practice in our work.
- Equity; We strive to ensure that all have access, resources, and opportunities to succeed and grow
- Collaboration; We strive to create and sustain relationships with community partners to improve health.
- Prevention; We work proactively to reduce negative health outcomes and build resiliency among community members.
- Quality; We utilize data to guide programming and community-based outreach to meet the Washburn County community needs.

OUR STAFF:

Marie Schrankel, Health and Human Services Director

Cheri Nickell, Health Officer and Public Health Supervisor

Julie Erickson, WIC Director (Retired February 2023)

Elise Anderson, Public Health Specialist

Dawn Brost, Public Health Nurse

Mary Slisz-Chucka, Public Health Nurse

Joan Romanowski, Account Clerk

VOLUNTARY ADVISORS:

Kristen Dall-Winther, MD, Public Health Medical Advisor

Allen Pederson, DVM, Veterinary Advisor

OUR PRIORITIES, PROGRAMS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Washburn County Health Priorities:

2022 Community Health Assessment Top Identified Health Issues

- Substance Abuse: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
- Mental Health
- Access to Care

2023 Community Health Improvement Plan- Health Priorities

- Substance Abuse: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
- Mental Health
- Access to Care

Active Programming

2023 Grants and Mandated Programming

- Reproductive Health Programming
- MCH Early Childhood Systems
- Childhood Lead Surveillance Program
- Preparedness Planning
- WIC Nutrition Program
- ForwardHealth Community Access Point
- Childhood Immunization Program
- Communicable Disease Surveillance/Program
- Rabies Control/ Ag 13
- Human Health Hazard Investigations
- NARCAN® Distribution
- COVID Enhancing Detection

Memberships

The Washburn County Public Health is a member of the following coalitions:

- Child Death Review Team (CDR)
- Children's Coordinated Services Team (CCST)
- Continuum of Care (COC)
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Multidisciplinary Team (Includes Drug Endangered Children)
- Northwest WI Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (NWWIHERC)
- Washburn County Community Alliance for Prevention (CAP)
- Mental Health Task Force of Washburn County (MHTF)
- WI Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB)
- WI Public Health Association (WPHA)
- Preparedness Planning
- Western WI Public Health Readiness Consortium (WWPHRC)
- WI Family Planning Reproductive Health Association (WFPRHA)

WASHBURN COUNTY COMMUNITY PROFILE

Washburn County Data by the Numbers

Data provides an overview of the health of our community and can show how health is influenced by many factors. This includes our everyday surroundings such as living, learning, working, and playing. Accurate data helps us to:

- Identify and understand current and potential health problems or environmental public health issues.
- Provide reliable health information to community partners.
- Evaluate if our programs and or policy changes are making a difference.



Economic Stability

Median household income

\$51,711

Census Bureau

County residents living in poverty

11.8%

Census Bureau

Households in poverty or who qualify as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)

27%

United Way

Monthly total for single Washburn County adult to survive

\$1,937

United Way



Population Demographics

Population

16,911

Census Bureau

Median Age

51.7

Data USA

Population living in a low population density area

83.2%

County Health Rankings

50% Female

50% Male

Census Bureau



Clinical Care

Washburn County residents that are uninsured

8%

County Health Rankings

Primary Care Physicians ratio to residents

1:980

County Health Rankings

Dentists to residents ratio

1:2,390

County Health Rankings

Mental health providers to residents ratio

1:990

County Health Rankings

Sources:

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/wisconsin/washburn?year=2023>

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/washburncountywisconsin#>

<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/washburn-county-wi>

<https://www.unitedforalice.org/>

TOP 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

To protect and promote the health of all people in all communities

The Top 10 Essential Public Health Services (EPHS) provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. The 10 Essential Public Health Services functions on the belief that everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being.

For over 20 years, the EPHS have served as a well-recognized framework for carrying out the mission of public health. The EPHS framework was originally released in 1994 and more recently updated in 2020. The revised version is intended to bring the framework in line with current and future public health practice.

Using these services to guide what we do at Washburn County Public Health (WCPH), we can work on removing barriers to optimize health for everyone in our community. Below are examples of how Washburn County Public Health puts each of the ten services into practice.



WCPH co-facilitates the Community Health Improvement plan bi-annually to monitor and assess overall health.

WCPH investigates cases of childhood lead poisoning, finding and addressing the causes.

WCPH's Public Health Specialist creates health-literate content so share to community members.

WCPH is a part of Healthy WashCo, a coalition where multidisciplinary partners work to make the community healthier.

WCPH completes the community health needs assessment every 3 years to identify health enhancing plans.

WCPH follows Wisconsin State Statute 254, protecting the public from human health hazards.

WCPH provides health literate information, and is able to provide information in languages other than English.

WCPH provides regular access to trainings and development opportunities for staff to maintain and grow upon skills.

Most programs offered through WCPH utilize a Quality Improvement process following the loop of: plan, do, study, act.

WCPH creates a strategic plan to outline objectives, staff responsible and a time frame for organizational structure.

SERVICES AT WASHBURN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan

Local health departments are required under Wisconsin Statute 251 to regularly undergo the “Community Health Improvement Process,” or the process of conducting a Community Health Assessment followed by developing and implementing a Community Health Improvement Plan. A Community Health Improvement Plan is a long-term, systematic effort to address problems based on the results of community health assessment activities and the community health improvement process. The Community Health Improvement Plan meeting was held in June 2023 in partnership with Spooner Health. The three priorities continue to be:

- Mental Health
- Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse
- Access to Care

Progress continues to be made within these priorities.



The Community Health Assessment (CHA) was completed in partnership with Spooner Health in January 2022, and is posted on the Washburn County Health Department website. The three priority areas identified include:

- Mental Health
- Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse
- Access to Care

Childhood Lead Monitoring Program

The Washburn County Health Department provides Childhood Lead Screening Surveillance and Lead Abatement under Wisconsin State Statute 254. Under this Statute, Washburn County Public Health provides lead exposure investigation and assessments for children 1 – 5 years in age. There is no safe level of lead in the human body. Even very low levels of lead can cause permanent brain damage and negatively affect health throughout life. The Centers for Disease Control defines lead poisoning as a blood lead level of 5 mcg or greater. There were 0 children with elevated blood lead levels in Washburn County in 2023.



A blood test is the best way to determine if a child has been exposed to lead.



Test your patients today.

To learn more about the dangers of lead within the human body, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/clppp-info.htm>.

SERVICES AT WASHBURN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

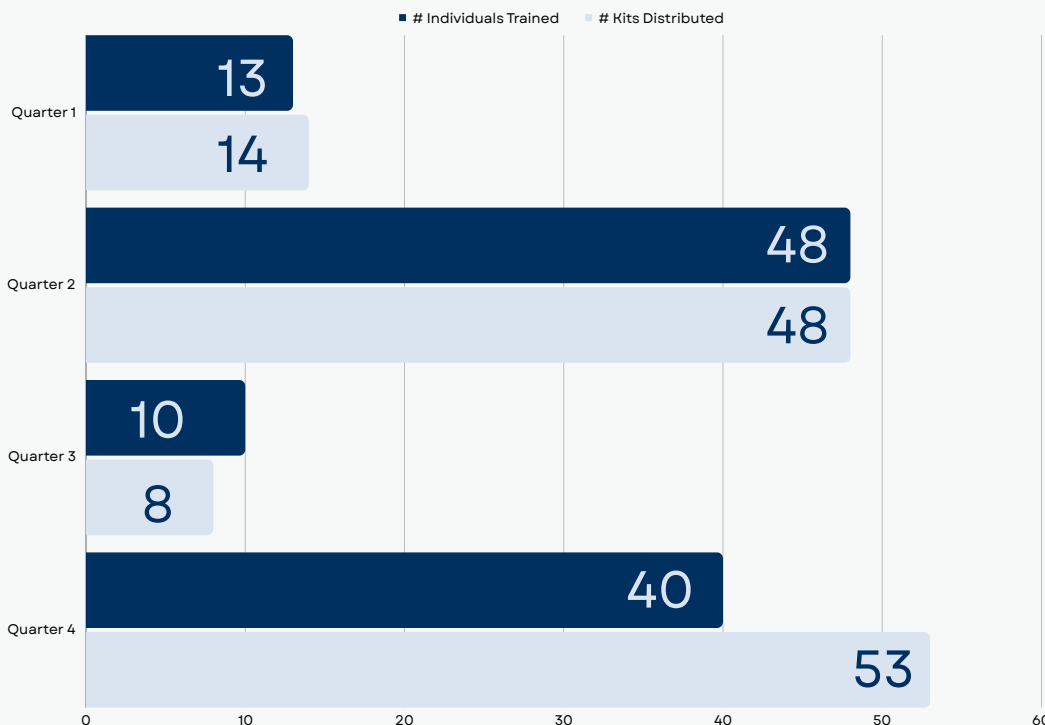
NARCAN® Direct Program

In 2023, the Washburn County Health Department continued to be a participant in the NARCAN® Direct Program. This program provides free NARCAN® to the Health Department for community distribution. Through this program, Washburn County Health Department was able to provide NARCAN® and education to individuals and organizations within the County upon request. Addressing opioid overdose in Washburn County is an important public health practice, as more people die of opioid overdoses in Wisconsin yearly than car crashes, according to the WI DHS: Dose of Reality.

The Health Department offered community-based training upon request as well as walk-in trainings. The Health Department is working on developing a partnership with the Washburn County Jail to begin training inmates on NARCAN® administration before being released to re-enter the community. During each training, individuals learn about the basics of opioids, the difference between prescribed and illicit opioids, how Narcan® works, how to administer Narcan®, resources on safe medication disposal, and recovery resources. In 2023, 9 community trainings were held, and 93 individuals were trained during group training. 18 Washburn County community members received individual-based training during 2023.

In 2023, efforts to engage with individuals who use opioids were more successful than in past years. Throughout 2023, pharmacies continued to distribute educational material for us to customers getting opioid prescriptions. In 2023, NARCAN® training efforts led primarily by the Department's Public Health Specialist were successful and 111 Washburn County community members received training. 123 kits (246 doses of NARCAN®) were distributed to Washburn County community members.

To learn more about the Narcan® Direct Program, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/safer-use.htm#Narcan> For resources on safe medication disposal, visit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/safe-disposal.htm>



SERVICES AT WASHBURN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

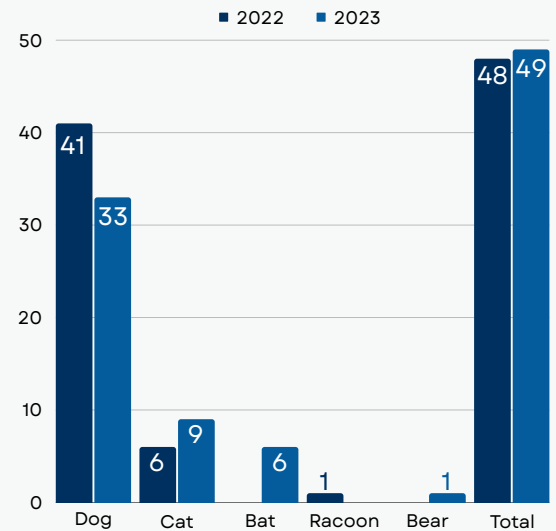
Rabies Control

State Statute 254 requires that the Health Department investigate all animal bites/exposures involving humans. Rabies is almost always fatal unless post-exposure prophylaxis (treatment) is given.

Public Health Nurses provide education regarding the need for human medical evaluation. They also order and enforce animal quarantine or rabies testing. All domestic animals, including dogs, cats, and ferrets, must be quarantined for 10 days following a bite or other exposure to a human.

If an animal has a current rabies vaccine, they may be allowed to be quarantined at home. Unvaccinated animals must be quarantined at the Washburn County Area Humane Society at the owner's expense, which is approximately \$300.

Wild animals involved in a bite to either humans or pets are humanely euthanized and tested for rabies. In 2023, 49 animal bites/exposures were reported and investigated. 38 animals were quarantined: 29 home quarantines and 9 facility quarantines. 0 animals tested POSITIVE for rabies.



Environmental Health

As part of efforts to enforce laws and regulations to protect health and safety, the Washburn County Health Department investigates environmental hazards as they are reported. Environmental complaints are only investigated if they are human health hazards.

Under Wisconsin Statute 254, the Health Department is responsible for the investigation and abatement of immediate Human Health Hazards to the public. Washburn County Health Department conducted 1 immediate Human Health Hazard investigation in 2023.

This investigation involved a probable blue-green algae bloom and was referred to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).



Factors contributing to an algal bloom growth include warm weather, sunlight, large rain events, and nutrient runoff.

Recreational water users should avoid water with visible scum or algae present. All natural surface waters contain bacteria, algae, viruses, and other pathogens, which, if consumed may pose health risks to humans, pets, and other domestic animals. The chance for health effects is greater if you or your children participate in water-related activities such as swimming, wading, water or jet-skiing, or windsurfing.

If you're unsure about the water quality, don't jump in.

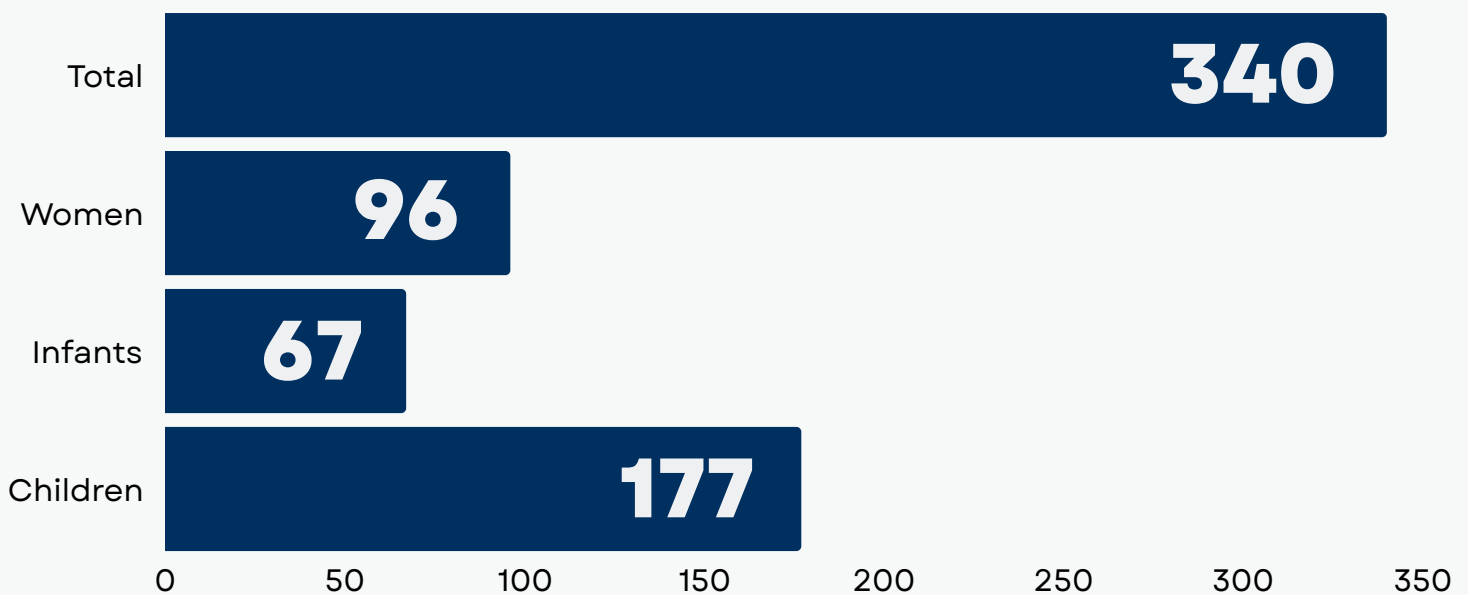
To learn more about blue-green algae and guidance recommendations from the State of Wisconsin Department of Health, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/algae/defined.htm>

SERVICES AT WASHBURN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The WIC Program is a Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC helps income-eligible pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five years who have a health risk due to inadequate nutrition. The Washburn County Health Department's WIC Director retired in February 2023. This led to Polk County managing the Washburn County WIC program in early 2023.

The WIC program works to improve pregnancy outcomes, reduce infant mortality and provide infants and children with a healthy start in life by improving poor or inadequate diets. In 2023, 340 participants received nutrition education and food benefits. WIC food benefits support our local businesses. In 2023, redeemed food benefits generated \$123,338.18 in revenue at grocery stores throughout Washburn County.



Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

Through the WIC FMNP, participants are provided food benefits to be redeemed at local farmers' markets. The WIC FMNP benefits both WIC participants and local farmers. In 2023, WIC FMNP redeemed benefits that totaled \$2,100. In the summer of 2023, every eligible family member was offered \$30 to spend at local farmers' markets. In the recent past, the allotment had been \$25-35 per family.

Since March 23, 2022, USDA has continued to extend waivers to allow 1) non-physical presence for certifications, 2) local agency monitoring to be done without file reviews required, 3) local agency monitoring to be done without an on-site visit, and 4) no on-site visits for vendor authorizations.

SERVICES AT WASHBURN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Immunizations

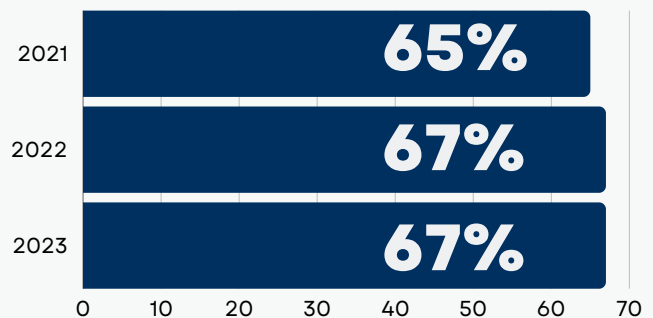
Under Wisconsin Statute Chapter 252 and in conjunction with the Vaccine for Children Program and the Wisconsin Immunization Program, The Health Department offers recommended childhood vaccines to children 0-18 years who meet program guidelines (no health insurance, have health insurance that does not cover all vaccines, have or are eligible for Medicaid, are American Indian or Alaskan Native or Pacific Islanders). Additionally, a limited selection of vaccines are available to adults without insurance coverage.

As part of our chronic and communicable disease surveillance duties, we monitor the immunization records and send vaccine reminder letters quarterly to the parents of all Washburn County children under the age of three.

In 2023, 897 total letters were sent to parents.

In 2023, 65% of all Washburn County 2-year-olds were up-to-date, with 67% considered late up-to-date (completed by age 3), a 0% increase from 2022, and a 2% increase from 2021. Nationally, on-time vaccination rates have declined as parents have delayed seeking care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Washburn County's up-to-date rate is well below the 75%-95% required rate for herd immunity (depending on disease and vaccine), which is of concern as it means Washburn County is at risk for a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak, such as measles.

Late Up to date Vaccination Rates in Washburn County



Communicable Disease Prevention

Wisconsin Statute 252 requires that medical providers report communicable diseases to Local Health Departments for investigation and surveillance. Preventing the spread of disease remains a public health priority.

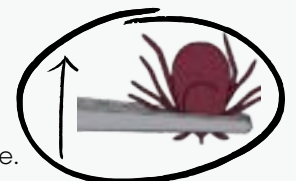
Tick-borne diseases, including Lyme, Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasma, and Babesiosis, continued to account for more than one-third (1/3) of the reported diseases.

Tick Prevention

- Use repellants that contain 0.5% permethrin or 20%-30% DEET on exposed skin and clothing.
- Wear light colored, long-sleeve clothing (including pants and socks) to help you spot ticks easily.
- Perform full body tick checks after being outdoors in areas where ticks are present.

Tick Removal

- Use tweezers, grab the tick close to the skin and pull upwards (away from the skin).
- Do NOT twist, yank, or burn the tick during removal.
- Clean the bite site and hands with soap and water after removal. Apply antiseptic to bite site.



To learn more about the importance of preventing tick-borne diseases, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/fight-bite/index.htm>.

SERVICES AT WASHBURN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Public Health Emergency Preparedness

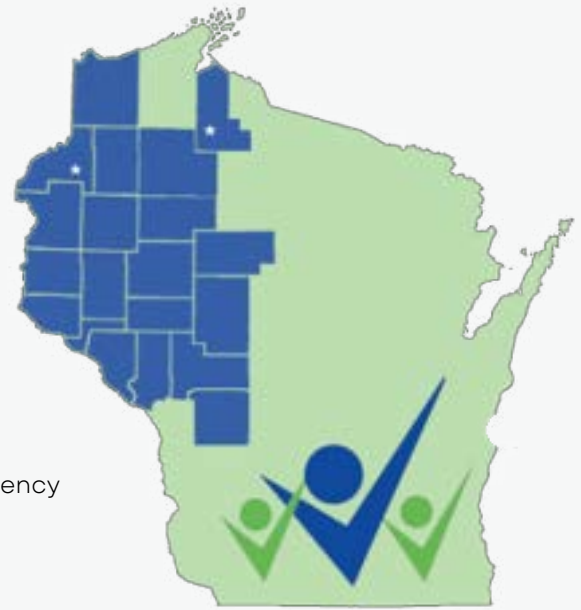
Washburn County Health Department engages in a continuous planning process with community partners in preparation to respond to public health emergencies, from large-scale disease outbreaks to acts of bioterrorism to ice storms.

The Health Department is a member of the Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortia (WWPHRC), a multi-county coalition that supports public health emergency preparedness. The WWPHRC has managed to remain a model and resource for member agencies, Wisconsin, and the country in the area of exceptional public health preparedness planning, training, exercising, and response since 2003.

Currently, the WWPHRC has 20 local public health agencies and 2 tribal public health agencies as members,

working hand in hand with the Northwest Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition and the multiple sectors it represents. This seamless approach provides a foundation for alignment of planning, efficiency of resources, removal of redundancy, and exceptional information sharing before, during, and after exercises and real events.

For more information on the Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortia (WWPHRC), visit <https://www.wwphrc.org>.



Triangles denote Tribal Health members:
St. Croix Tribal Health Clinic,
Bad River Health & Wellness Center

Thank you for taking the time to review our 2023 Annual Report. Washburn County Public Health is committed to supporting and sustaining safe and healthy communities within Washburn County so that residents can learn, work, and play as healthy as possible.

Your Partners in Health,

Washburn County Public Health

