



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## Schuyler County Public Health

Our **mission** is to protect and empower our community to be safe, healthy and prepared.

Our **vision** is a connected community of healthy people and safe places.



## A Message from the Director

I am pleased to present Schuyler County Public Health's 2023 Annual Report to the Board of Health and to the Community. While my first full year as Director did not come without challenges, I am so proud of our staff and all that was accomplished. This report describes the programs and services provided during 2023 by our talented team. This year focused on our recovery and rebuilding following Covid-19 pandemic response.



Photo credit: Public Health Fellows, Eleanor James and Nina Sun by Maggie Steele

With the support of the County Legislature and public health infrastructure funding we have been able to add a full-time compliance officer position to our department. Deputy Director Lorelei Wagner and I are thrilled to have this essential support to ensure compliance in all of our program areas, to ensure we continue to meet national accreditation standards and to help us focus on public health core competency development for staff.

Schuyler County Public Health, along with Schuyler Hospital, Inc. and our many community partners, began implementing our latest Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which can be found [linked here](#). The focus for this CHIP is Mental and Substance Use Disorder Prevention and Chronic Disease Preventative Care and Management. Our two fellows, Eleanor James and Ruinan (Nina) Sun, were able to implement one of the CHIP objectives related to workplace cancer screening policies and were featured during a poster presentation at a statewide public health summit.

Having used 2023 to recover and rebuild, I look forward to the promise of 2024 as we work to protect and empower our community to be safe, healthy, and prepared.

If you have any questions or if I can clarify anything in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jill L. Kasprzyk, MS, BSN, RN (pictured to the right)  
Schuyler County Public Health Director



## What is Public Health?

Public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals.”

Collaborating with the community is essential in working to improve the health of Schuyler County residents. Whether we are working with an individual one-on-one after an animal bite or partnering with a community coalition, we are always **working hand in hand with the community to prevent, promote, and protect.**



Staff from left to right: Ella James, Deborah Dalmat, Michelle Carey, Lorelei Wagner, Corie Stansfield, and Logan Valentine

## Strategic Plan for 2024-2026

Our department convened leadership, staff, community partners, and representatives from the department’s governing entity in two strategic planning sessions in 2023 to develop the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. The department selected two strategic priorities:

- Priority 1: Build and maintain trust in Schuyler County Public Health as a collaborative partner in community health improvement.
- Priority 2: Recruit and retain a high-quality, high-performing workforce.

Department Leadership will oversee plan implementation via the Performance Management Quality Improvement (PMQI) team. Strategic Plan progress will be tracked through the department’s performance management software, which will document performance measures and time-bound targets for each priority area.



## Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

We work with Schuyler Hospital and various community partners to conduct a Community Health Assessment to identify health concerns facing our county. Using the information from the assessment, we create a Community Health Improvement Plan to guide efforts to address these health concerns.

The 2023 CHIP Priorities and Focus Areas were:

- Priority Area: Prevent Chronic Diseases
  - Focus Area: Preventive care and management
    - Goal: Increase cancer screening rates
- Priority Area: Promote Mental Health and Prevent Substance Abuse
  - Focus Area: Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders
    - Goal: Prevent opioid and other substance misuse and deaths
    - Goal: Reduce the prevalence of major depressive disorders
    - Goal: Prevent suicides



Photo: Public Health Fellows, Nina and Ella at the New York State Public Health Corps Summit by Maggie Steele

## 2023 Accomplishments

- Collaborated with the University of Rochester on cancer prevention outreach by using the inflatable colon at the Waterfront Festival and the inflatable lung at the Harvest Festival.
- Implemented the paid leave for cancer screening policy project (see more on this under the chronic disease prevention program section).
- Collaborated with community partners such as MR Hess Home Works and the Rotary club to increase awareness on suicide prevention efforts in the community.
- Partnered with Schuyler Hospital, the Southern Tier Cancer Services Program, URMC Wilmot Cancer Institute, Pivotal Public Health Partnership, Common Ground Health, ProAction, VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schuyler County Social Services, Schuyler County Chamber of Commerce, Schuyler County Mental Health, Schuyler County Sheriff's Office, Schuyler County Office of the Aging, MR Hess Home Works, and Catholic Charities to implement the 2023 CHIP.



## Chronic Disease Prevention Program

This program aims to reduce the impact of chronic disease in the community and increase the lifespan of County residents. We provide education on ways to improve health and reduce long term diseases in conjunction with community partners.



### 2023 Accomplishments

- Promoted the implementation of paid time off for cancer screening policies among Schuyler County employers.
  - Mailed informational packages to 75 local worksites (20% coverage) and received a 26% response rate to our survey asking employers if they have existing paid leave for cancer screening policies.
  - Expanded access to cancer screening paid leave for 52 local employees across 4 worksites that initiated and adopted the policy change.
- Received a record breaking turn out in participation and promotion of the First Day of Hike with the Friends of the Catharine Valley Trail in 2023.
- Successfully applied for the 2023 Active People Healthy Nation Walkability Virtual Academy (WVA) Request for Funding Assistance to improve walkability in the Village of Odessa. Members from Schuyler County Planning, the Office for the Aging, ARC of Schuyler, Catholic Charities, Schuyler County Public Health, and the Schuyler County Legislature attended the Virtual Walkability Academy.
  - The Virtual Walkability Academy Team received \$10,000 in grant funding to be used for the Village of Odessa to create a Complete Streets Plan.
- Ran a campaign on how to recognize and respond to strokes in English and Spanish.
- Increased the number of HEAL Schuyler newsletter subscribers.
- Tabled at the Montour Falls Festival to promote HEAL Schuyler and cancer prevention, focusing on the promotion of breast and colorectal cancer screening.
- Coordinated with the University of Rochester Medical Center's Center for Community Health and Prevention to have their Promote Health program offered to the Schuyler County community.

Photo: Graduate Public Health Fellow Ruinan (Nina) Sun tabling at an event.



## Communicable Disease Prevention Program

The overall goal of this program is to protect the community by limiting the spread of infections. We focus on the prevention of disease through surveillance, case management, screening and education. Our staff follow up on reports to ensure the patient and their contacts receive appropriate treatment to stop further spread. We also provide community members and organizations with tick removal kits, safe sex kits, and other prevention information and tools.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Emily Hoffman providing tick removal kits to community members.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Investigated and handled 197 communicable disease cases (not including COVID-19) in 2023.
- Restarted, remodeled, and expanded the weekly surveillance survey by creating a new report template to share this data with our community partners. Created an online survey using SurveyMonkey to replace the old fax survey.
- Investigated 36 STI cases, down from 61 cases in 2022.
- Shared Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) information with Schuyler County healthcare providers.

## Immunization Program

The immunization program provides vaccines to residents who qualify through the Vaccines For Children and Vaccines For Adults programs. We also provide community and medical provider outreach and education, including information on vaccines and where to get them.



Photo: Public Health Nurse Meghan Walker at the NYSACHO Immunization Conference

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Public Health Nurse Meghan Walker attended the NYSACHO Immunization Conference.
- Updated the flu shot campaign to add new staff and other community members.



## Rabies Prevention Program

Our rabies program works with the community to determine what steps are needed to ensure everyone stays healthy when an animal bite occurs. We do this by putting animals on confinement, testing animals for rabies, and coordinating treatment for residents when necessary. If you or a family member get bitten by an animal, call our office.

We also provide rabies vaccination to pets through our rabies clinics. The rabies vaccine is provided to dogs, cats, and ferrets at no charge at our clinics.



Photo: Local pets vaccinated at our rabies clinics



Scan for  
Rabies Clinic  
Schedule

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Provided rabies vaccination for 444 animals through 5 clinics, a 38% increase in clinic vaccinations from 2022.
  - 309 dogs received vaccination
  - 134 cats received vaccination
  - 1 ferret received vaccination
- Completed 112 total rabies case investigations, a 13% decrease from 2022.
- 8 animals were tested for rabies, 1 of which tested positive (11% positive testing rate).
- Authorized Post-Exposure Prophylaxis for 13 individuals, twice as many as treated in 2022.

## Watershed Protection Agency

Our Watershed Protection Agency provides water quality monitoring services and property transfer inspections for Schuyler residents. They lead the Lamoka-Waneta Lakes Wastewater Treatment Inspection Program and the Cayuta Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District Inspection Program.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Completed 978 water samples
- Provided 56 new septic construction permits
- Provided 49 new well construction permits
- Replaced 26 septic tanks
- Upgraded 5 septic tanks
- Completed 3 septic conversions
- Completed 48 field consultations
- Inspected 60 septic systems in the Cayuta Lake area

## Injury Prevention Program

Our injury prevention program aims to reduce injuries in Schuyler County. Some examples of injury prevention strategies include the use of bicycle helmets, suicide prevention efforts, fall prevention, and substance use prevention.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- 9 educational social media posts were provided to the community.
- Participated in the Fall Prevention Seminar hosted by the Schuyler County Office for the Aging.
- Attended the first Annual Harm Reduction Symposium organized by NYSACHO.



Photo: Public Health Specialists Deborah Dalmat and Emily Hoffman at the Harm Reduction Symposium

## Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program

The Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs program serves as a resource and provides referrals for families and individuals with special health care needs (ages birth to 21). We also collaborate with area organizations to address child health in the community.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Worked on connecting families with services and family groups in the community.
- Promoted the program at the Harvest Festival and worked on expanding outreach to the community.
- Participated in the Early Childhood Coalition.
- 71 children received services through the Preschool Special Education Program in the 2022-2023 school year.



Photo: The Schuyler County Public Health float for the 2023 Italian American Festival parade

## Early Intervention (EI) Program

Our Early Intervention program staff oversee service coordination of care and link families with eligible infants and toddlers (age 0 – 3) to needed services to address developmental delays. Services may include speech, physical, and occupational therapies, and special education.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- 20 children were referred for evaluation for services in 2023.

## Reproductive Health Program

This program focuses on addressing the reproductive health of Schuyler County residents. Our work aims to prevent unintended pregnancies and to promote optimal birth spacing and outcomes for families. We also work with community partners to provide education and identify needs in the community.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Assembled safe sex kits and placed them in the community at local healthcare provider offices, county departments, and local establishments.

## Maternal Child Health Program

Our Maternal and Child Health program provides education and resources to parents in Schuyler County before and after birth. We can also provide health information and support for infant feeding needs. These services are offered in families' homes at no charge.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- 1 staff member successfully became a Certified Lactation Consultant (CLC).
- Increased the number of Maternal Child Health visits and referrals.
- Shared educational information on safe sleep practices and breastfeeding tips with the community.

## Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Our lead poisoning prevention program monitors elevated blood lead levels of children in the County. When a child has an elevated lead level, we work with the family and the NYSDOH Hornell District Office to identify the lead exposure risks and create a plan to lower lead levels.

We also provide education to community members on how to prevent lead poisoning and common ways people may be exposed to lead such as lead paint or soil around their home.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Created and sent out a "Routine Lead Testing for Children" quick guide to all medical providers in the county. This quick guide includes information on local resources.
- 1 staff member became a Lead-Safe Certified Renovator who can assist the Director of Labor Studies at Cornell University with training local contractors, landlords, property owners, and managers on the Environmental Protection Agency's Renovate Right Program (RRP). Our Lead-Safe Certified Renovator may assist with initial and renewal classes.



Photo: Public Health Nurses Logan and Katie tabling at the Harvest Festival by Deborah Dalmat



## Emergency Preparedness Program

This program helps the community prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health emergencies. We work with first responders, businesses, community members, and our MRC Volunteers.

Our MRC is made up of both medical and non-medical community members who have a passion for community service. They can help out in a variety of ways, such as:

- Helping with rabies clinics,
- Taking part in emergency drills, and more!



Photo: MRC Volunteers tabling at Village Christmas

## 2023 Accomplishments

- 100% of state deliverables met.
- 100% of Public Health staff attended Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) trainings.
- 6 outreach presentations completed.
- 7 new MRC volunteers joined.
- Developed a multimodal MRC recruitment campaign.
- Several emergency plans updated.
- Participated in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), national MRC workgroup, Watkins Glen Central School District Emergency Planning Committee, and the Finger Lakes Public Health Alliance.

## Performance Management Quality Improvement (PMQI)

The PMQI Committee works to improve the performance and quality of the services Schuyler County Public Health provides to the community. The committee gathers and analyzes performance data, including community feedback from surveys. The Committee also sets goals for programs, selects QI projects, and reviews program audits to ensure Schuyler County Public Health is providing effective and efficient programs and services to the community.

### 2023 Accomplishments

Performance Management:

- The performance management system was fully rebuilt using new software called Clear Impact.
- Program staff were able to enter their own Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 performance measure data with minimal issues. 86% of programs/scorecards had performance measures reported for Quarter 4.

Quality Improvement: There were six quality improvement projects underway during 2023.

They were related to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our:

- Time recording for state aid and grants (completed March 30, 2023).
- Department orientation process (completed December 21, 2023).
- Shared files organization and usage.
- Emergency communications with staff and volunteers.
- Communications Directory.
- Case Files and Medical Records management.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Emily Hoffman and MRC Volunteer Mike Mize tabling at a Veterans event.

## Accreditation

Public Health Accreditation is awarded by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to health departments that meet nationally recognized standards. Schuyler County Public Health became an accredited health department in 2020.

In 2023, our department successfully completed our Annual Accreditation Report for which we completed a Reaccreditation Readiness Assessment. The process helped us identify our current strengths and some areas for improvement. This will help our department focus on the identified opportunities for improvement as we prepare for reaccreditation.



## Community Coalitions

Our department works with community coalitions such as SCCUDD and SAFE to help combat some of the biggest health problems facing the county.

## Suicide Awareness for Everyone (SAFE)



Suicide Awareness For Everyone (SAFE) is devoted to connecting people to prevention, intervention and recovery by providing education, support, and advocacy to reduce the suicide rate in Schuyler County.

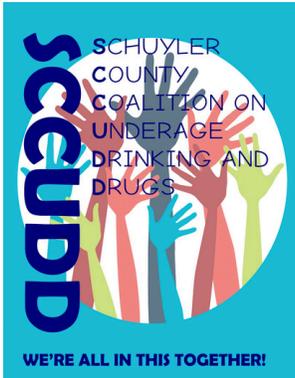
### 2023 Accomplishments

- Completed 5 outreach events in the community.
- Raised over \$680 at the Waterfront Festival.
- The 988 rock in the HOPE garden was completed and other rocks were painted by coalition members for placing around the community.
- SAFE's new bylaws were created.



Photos: Public Health Specialist Emily Hoffman providing information about 988. Public Health Fellows Ella James and Nina Sun painting rocks with messages of hope and 988 information.

## Schuyler County Coalition on Underage Drinking and Drugs (SCCUDD)



SCCUDD is a group of dedicated community members, businesses, and agencies that work to prevent, reduce, and delay the onset of substance use among Schuyler County youth by collaborating with our community partners, promoting prevention education and substance-free activities, and implementing environmental strategies.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Started their tenth and final year of Drug-Free Communities Support Grant funding.
  - In Quarter 4, 75% of grant action plan activities were completed or worked on, up from 22% in Quarter 1.
- Took a variety of steps to ensure the sustainability of the coalition and its activities after the grant ends including revising bylaws to allow administrative and fiscal services to be provided by Public Health and the County Treasurer's office, respectively.
- Partnered with the Sheriff's Office on two prescription drug and tobacco take back events, compliance checks for alcohol retailers, and on the "Don't Let Underage Drinking Snowball" winter campaign.
  - 499 pounds of prescription drugs were collected by the Sheriff's Office through take-back events and drop boxes in 2023, up from 440 in 2019.
- Tabled at a variety of events including the Harvest Festival's Fit Zone and Village Christmas.
- Completed the 2023 alcohol retailer stick shock campaign and the K-6 and Prom/Graduation billboard contests.
- Provided education and resources on a variety of drug prevention topics, including underage drinking prevention, tobacco cessation, and safe prescription drug disposal.
- Partnered with SAFE to disseminate DisposeRx drug disposal pouches to community members.
- Partnered with FLACRA to provide naloxone training.



Photo: Tabling at the Drug Take Back Day event.



## Staff Appreciation

Thank you to all our MRC volunteers and our Watershed volunteer for your dedication to public health and our community. Your efforts elevate the services we are able to provide to the community and we are beyond grateful for all of you!

Thank you to our support staff, past and current (Dianne Thomaris, Corie Stansfield, Michelle Carey, Molly Dunham, Sharon Stadelmaier, Jesse Dilly, Paula Johns, and Katie Roush) for all your “behind the scenes” work. You are a vital part of our department and its accomplishments.



Photo: Staff participating in the sweater contest

Thank you to our program staff and fellows, past and present (Elizabeth Watson, DeAnn Bianco, Emily Hoffman, Deborah Dalmat, Ward Brower, Meghan Walker, Logan Valentine, Brook Heichel, Katie Kelly, Kayla Smith, Ella James and Nina Sun) that have worked diligently this year, many of whom have changed roles or taken on additional responsibilities to ensure the success of our department. We could not have accomplished everything we did without each of you.

## Staff Accomplishments



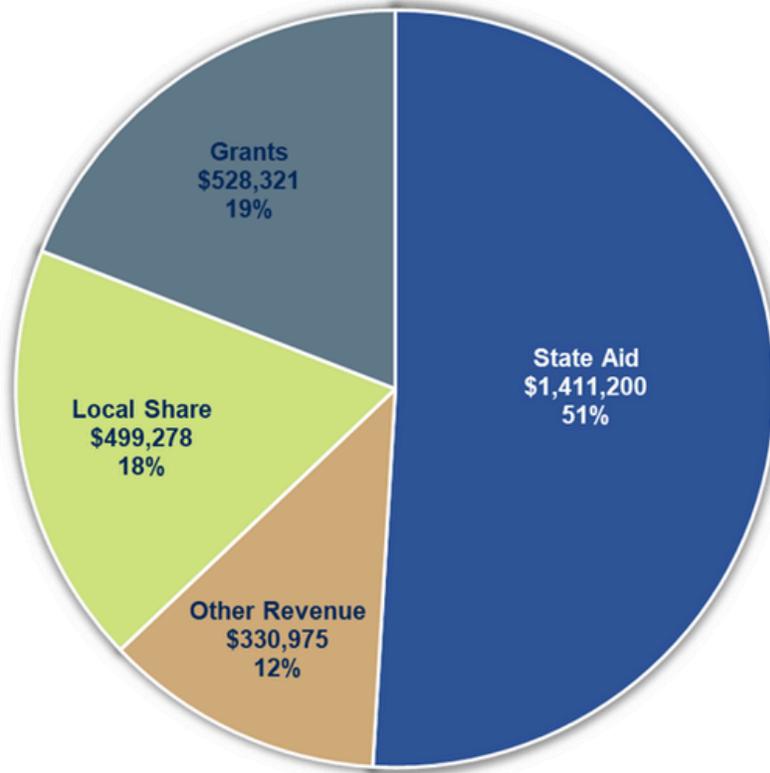
Photo: Public Health Fellow Eleanor James with her Cornell University Public Health Essentials certificate

- Deborah Dalmat was promoted to Public Health Compliance Officer
- Public Health Fellows Ruinan Sun and Eleanor James presented the findings of their paid leave for cancer screening project at the 2023 New York State Public Health Corps Summit in Albany
- Logan Valentine became a Certified Lactation Consultant
- Eleanor James completed the Cornell University Public Health Essentials Certificate and University of Miami's Building Expertise in Administration and Management certificate.
- Meghan Walker and Katie Kelly completed the Cornell University Public Health Essentials Certificate.
- Emily Hoffman attended the 2023 Public Health Partnership Conference.
- Ruinan (Nina) Sun attended the 4th Annual CCAC Retreat.

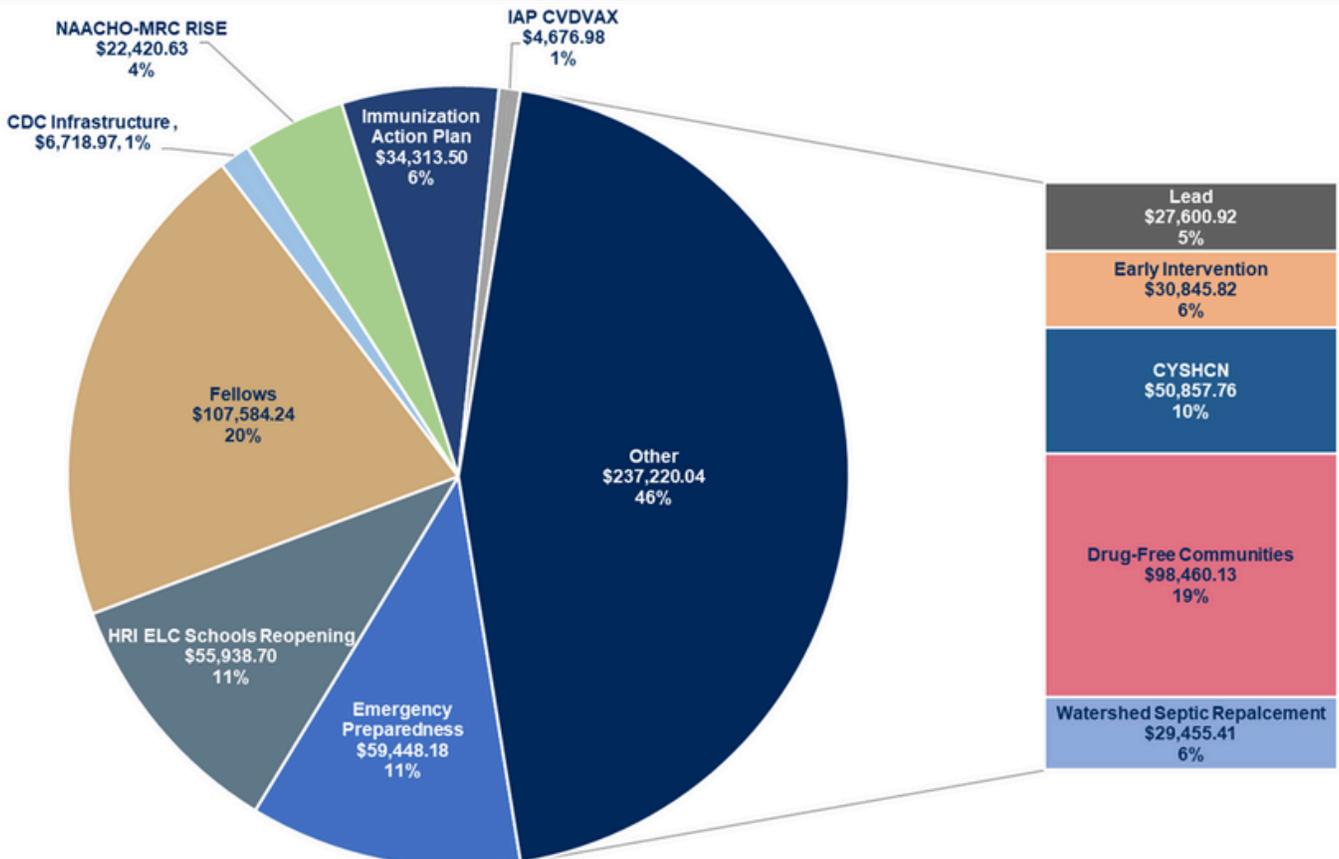


## Budget

### Revenue



### Expenses



## Environmental Health Services

Schuyler County Public Health is a partial service county, meaning that much of the environmental health efforts in Schuyler County are completed by the New York State Department of Health's District Office in Hornell. The Hornell District Office protects the health of the public through a variety of programs including those that ensure that food and indoor air quality are safe in locations like restaurants and hotels.



**Department  
of Health**

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**JAMES V. McDONALD, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Commissioner

**JOHANNE E. MORNE, M.S.**  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

The Hornell District Office is responsible for protecting public health and safety through the delivery of core environmental health programs and services and through the enforcement of environmental health regulations in Schuyler and Steuben Counties. Duties & responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing permits to the following types of regulated facilities:
  - Food Service Establishments
  - Temporary/Mobile Food Service Establishments
  - Children's Camps
  - Temporary Residences (Hotels, Motels, etc.)
  - Campgrounds
  - Mobile Home Parks
  - Mass Gatherings
  - Agricultural Fairgrounds
  - Public Swimming Pool and Bathing Beaches
  - Recreational Aquatic Spray Grounds
  - Tanning Facilities
- Conducting plan reviews and approvals for:
  - All Regulated Facilities
  - Public Water Systems
  - Realty Subdivisions
  - Alternative Residential Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Conducting inspections/sanitary surveys/complaint investigations at:
  - All Regulated Facilities
  - Public Water Systems at NYS Agriculture & Markets Licensed Facilities
  - Public Water Systems at Licensed Day Care Facilities
- Conducting investigations of:
  - Drownings at Regulated Facilities
  - Food & Waterborne Illness Outbreaks
  - Injuries and Illness Outbreaks at Children's Camps
  - Environmental Conditions linked to Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels

## Hornell District Office Report Continued

- Overseeing tobacco prevention programs
  - ATUPA (Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act)
  - CIAA (Clean Indoor Air Act)
- Providing emergency response at incidents presenting biological, chemical or radiological exposures/hazards and at natural disasters
- Distributing and enforcing the Commissioner of Health's Summary Orders (i.e. bath salts, synthetic cannabinoids, etc.)

### New York State Department of Health Hornell District Office Contribution to the Schuyler County Public Health Department 2023 Annual Report

In 1921, legislation was enacted that empowered New York State counties to create county health districts. The purpose of a county health district was to consolidate local authority for the oversight of public health work at the county level rather than having public health activities dispersed to the constituent county cities, towns and villages. Counties were not required to create such health districts and as time passed, it became evident that many rural counties (including Schuyler) that had not formed a county health district would face increasing logistical and financial challenges that coincided with expanding public health needs and requirements. County health departments that operate in counties without county health districts are known as “partial services” county health departments.

As a matter of policy, not law; the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) addressed the need to maintain a baseline of environmental health programs/activities in partial services counties by creating District Offices. Nine district offices currently operate in New York State, and in Schuyler County, it is the NYSDOH Hornell District Office (HDO) that provides core environmental health programs and services to County residents and visitors. In partnership with Schuyler County Public Health Department and other state and local agencies, the HDO enforces environmental health regulations and oversees a variety of programs that are designed to protect public health and safety. The attached document provides a summary of HDO's duties and responsibilities and the services provided in Schuyler County and in Steuben County - the other county that is located within the HDO's jurisdiction.

Highlights of the HDO's activities in Schuyler County during the 2023 calendar year included the following:

- Conducted 208 inspections at the county's regulated facilities. Of those inspections approximately 152 permanent food service operations and 56 inspections at temporary food service operations.



## Hornell District Office Report Continued

- Conducted 5 sanitary surveys (enhanced inspections) at community water systems (primarily municipalities and mobile home parks) and 47 sanitary surveys at other regulated facilities with onsite water supplies.
- Conducted 22 student aide compliance visits to tobacco retailers to ensure compliance with the Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA).
- Investigated 6 complaints alleging sanitary code violations at regulated facilities.
- Worked with Schuyler County Public Health to conduct lead-based paint risk assessments of private Schuyler County residences in response to referrals of children with elevated blood lead levels. There were 4 assessments in 2023.
- One inspection was conducted at the County's only tanning operation (each tanning facility must be inspected within a two-year period).
- Initiated 10 formal enforcement action (Administrative Tribunal Hearings) to address NYS Sanitary Code violations at regulated facilities.

From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2023, four of the owners of tobacco retail outlets in Schuyler County illegally sold tobacco products to individuals under the age of eighteen/ twenty one during the HDO's compliance checks (2020-3 sales, 2022-1 sale, 2023- 2 sales).

From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2023, HDO initiated formal enforcement actions (Administrative Tribunal Hearings) against public water suppliers for failure to submit monthly water operation reports within the required timeframe (2013 – 0; 2014 – 2; 2015 – 0; 2016 – 1; 2017- 1, 2018-4, 2019-4, 2020-3, 2021-0, 2022-1, 2023-0).

No trends or patterns were identified during the reporting period in any aspect of the District's delivery of its core environmental health programs and services, including compliance and enforcement.

Prepared by  
Michelle Donovan  
District Director  
Hornell District Office  
February 9, 2024

