



**PIERCE COUNTY**  
*Public Health*

# 2019 Annual Report



April 2020

To County Supervisors, Board of Health Members, Colleagues, Partners and County Residents,

I am pleased to share the Pierce County Public Health Department's 2019 annual report. In 2019, Pierce County Public Health introduced a new logo and branding standards, worked hard preparing for reaccreditation in 2020, worked with community partners on setting goals and strategies for the 2020-2022 bi-county community health improvement plan, and accomplished many other successes outlined in this report.

Pierce County Public Health started 2020 working hard toward numerous goals including: a review to maintain Level III public health department status, reaccreditation, and a full-scale preparedness event in June. In March, all of Pierce County Public Health efforts abruptly shifted to focus on the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout this pandemic, Pierce County Public Health will continue to work closely with state and community partners to keep the Pierce County community as safe and healthy as possible.

I would like to thank the incredible public health workforce; made up of nurses, educators, administrators, therapists, aides, sanitarians, accountants, and nutritionists, for their dedication to protecting, promoting and preserving the health of Pierce County residents and visitors.

I would also like to express sincere thanks to the Board of Health, our medical advisor, Dr. Kerith Lijewski, and our community partners, for their hard work, support, and commitment to improving health in Pierce County.

Wishing all a healthy 2020,

AZ Snyder, MSc  
Public Health Director/Health Officer

#### TALK TO US

Phone: 715-273-6755

Fax: 715-273-6854

[www.co.pierce.wi.us](http://www.co.pierce.wi.us)

#### VISIT US

412 W Kinne St

Ellsworth, WI 54011

#### OUR MISSION

To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards

## About Us

### Mission

To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards.

### Vision

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

### Values

We are committed to:

- **Prevention:** We proactively identify and develop strategies to prevent disease and injury and ensure an environment where the healthy choice is the easy choice.
- **Respect:** We treat our team members, clients, partners, and community members with mutual respect and sensitivity, recognizing the importance of diversity. We respect all individuals and value their contributions.
- **Collaboration:** We work with partners and stakeholders to provide the community with the best service possible. We engage the public to address needs and foster involvement in public health.
- **Excellence:** The best policies and practices are evidence-informed, based on research with evidence that demonstrates effectiveness. Quality improvement comes from testing new ideas and approaches.

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# Section 1: Community Health Improvement Plan

## Healthier Together



In 2019, Healthier Together Pierce and St. Croix Counties, a community coalition led by Pierce County Public Health, St. Croix County Public Health, Western Wisconsin Health, River Falls Area Hospital, Hudson Hospital and Clinic, Westfield's Hospital and Clinic, and United Way St. Croix Valley finished work on the 2017-2019 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The priority areas for this plan were mental health, overweight/obesity, and alcohol abuse. Going forward the work that was being done in the area of obesity will now fall under the mental health action team, and alcohol abuse is now paired with substance use disorder.

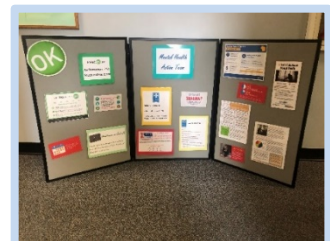
Much of 2019 was spent designing the 2020-2022 CHIP. Early in 2019, focus groups with various populations including, youth, adults over 60, the recovery community, providers, and farmers were held. Action teams were assembled and the 2020-2022 CHIP was developed over a series of meetings. The action team planning consisted of five phases:

- Phase I- evaluated the current strategies.
- Phase II -identified, evaluated, and ranked the goals the teams wanted to pursue over the next three years.
- Phase III -involved researching strategies to implement to reach the goals. Action team members were encouraged to suggest evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies whenever possible.
- Phase IV- reviewed and discussed strategies that were submitted by action team members, resulting in a final selection of strategies that were chosen to work on in 2020.
- Phase V – purpose is to complete a detailed action plan for each strategy with tasks, persons responsible for each, and target dates along with progress measures. Phase V work will continue into 2020.

## Mental Health

In 2019, The Healthier Together Mental Health action team continued working on two key strategies to improve the mental health status of residents. The team also had additional meetings to plan and prioritize activities for the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan as mental health will continue to be a priority area.

1. **Increase awareness about mental health issues and reduce the stigma of mental illness,** included two initiatives, Make It OK and Mental Health First Aid training. The Make It OK campaign is designed to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and encourage people to talk more openly about mental illnesses. At the end of 2019, Make It OK had over 5700 individual points of contact since launching the campaign in 2017. United Way of St. Croix Valley continued their support of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), and since January of 2018, 828 individuals have been trained in MHFA.



2. **Increase access to mental health services,** included work with school districts across the two counties. The mental health action team continued to host biannual Youth Mental Health Collaboration meetings with local school, county, and healthcare leaders. The action team also continued work with Baldwin-Woodville schools offering a class on resilience and coping skills for youth. A similar class was offered in Spring Valley in the spring of 2019.

In 2020, the Mental Health action team will be working on the goals in the 2020-2022 CHIP.

1. Increase healthy coping skills and stress reducing strategies
2. Support coordination of mental health care services between schools, providers, and counties
3. Increase services that promote family stability

## Alcohol Misuse

In 2019, the focus of the Healthier Together Alcohol Abuse action team combined with the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) action team to prioritize and plan activities for the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan.

In August, Healthier Together hosted staff from Cardinal Health who presented their Generation Rx program to the large group. Generation Rx is an evidence-informed prevention education and awareness program designed to educate people of all ages about safe medication practices and the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications.



In November, the Youth Mental Health Collaboration group partnered with Hudson Police officer, Ryan Bleskey, on substance impairment training. This training is intended for school staff and others who work with youth to recognize substance use in students and other individuals, and to find needed resources. Topics included testing for alcohol/drugs, signs and symptoms of drug impairment, drug indicators, examples of drug paraphernalia, and common hiding places.

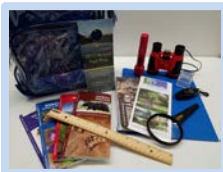
In 2020, the Substance Use Disorder action team will be working on the goals in the 2020-2022 CHIP.

1. Advocate for policies that increase access to substance use treatment
2. Increase early intervention, education and prevention services related to substance use in the community
3. Increase coordinated youth prevention work, providing education, healthy activities and resilience training

## Overweight/Obesity

The Healthier Together Obesity action teams continued work on the two key strategies to decrease the percentage of the population that is overweight or obese in Pierce and St. Croix counties.

1. **Increase physical activity through changes to policy, systems, environment and community support**, included exploring ways of connecting kids with nature, as time spent in

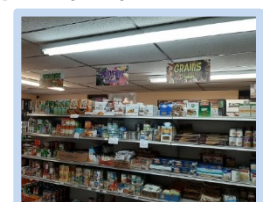


the outdoors is essential to children's healthy development. Regular active outdoor exploration reduces stress, fights obesity, increases creativity, and improves school performance. Adults who accompany children on these explorations also benefit. The action team submitted grant proposals and secured funding to provide Outdoor Adventure Backpacks to libraries in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. The packs provide tools and ideas for

outdoor exploration and can be checked out at participating local libraries. In 2020, two backpacks will be distributed to each of the Pierce County Public Libraries and will include a park pass for Nugget Lake.

2. **Decrease food insecurity and improve nutrition through changes to policy, systems, environment and community support**, included supporting

collaboration of community programs and agencies with the joint mission of fighting hunger. One such collaboration was between our public health Fit Families Program and the UW-Madison Extension staff from Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix counties in promoting the "Safe and Healthy Food Pantry" model. In a joint effort, staff supported the Plum City Food Pantry in adopting environmental changes that prompt clients



to select healthy foods. Such changes included reorganizing the pantry giving healthy options prominent shelf space at eye level to highlight and encourage selection of healthy fruits, veggies, protein, grains, and dairy foods.

## Section 2: Departmental Strategic Plan

In 2019, Pierce County Public Health implemented their new 2019-2021 Strategic Plan.

The purpose of the Pierce County Public Health Department Strategic Plan is to:

1. Unite department staff around priority areas we all agree are important to improving our ability to serve the public.
2. Clearly establish realistic goals, measures and strategies consistent with our mission - in a defined time frame and within the organization's capacity for implementation.
3. Effectively communicate our priorities to the Board of Health, partners and the community.
4. Ensure the most effective use of organizational assets by focusing resources on key priorities.
5. Provide framework for evaluating progress and making informed changes.

The planning process began in 2018 to develop the priority areas for the updated plan. This process involved staff and stakeholder participation through presentations, SWOT Assessment (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), workshops, brainstorming, and the ranking of the priority areas. The Strategic Plan priority areas include:

- Supporting the Workforce to Meet the Future of Public Health (Workforce Development)
- Branding Public Health to Build Trust (Branding)
- Strengthening Linkages Internally and Externally (Linkages)

An internal structure was organized to support the Strategic Plan. This involved developing a priority team for each priority area: Workforce Development, Branding, and Linkages. These teams are responsible for the implementation, tracking, and evaluation of the strategies under each priority area. To ensure the implementation and progress is measured, the performance management system was revised to structure appropriate monitoring of the plan. The priority teams are also responsible for updating their strategies annually, while considering the Community Health Improvement Plan. The Health Officer approves these changes and presents them to the Board of Health annually.

The Strategic Plan links to both the Performance Management and Quality Improvement Plan and Workforce Development Plan.

### Workforce Development

The Pierce County Public Health Department has been dedicated to formal workforce development planning since the 1980's. Over the years, the process has changed from providing general trainings to in 2011 developing and maintaining a formal Workforce Development Plan based on a set of nationally recognized competencies, eight Domains within the council on Linkages and the 15 CDC Preparedness Capabilities. In 2012, a workforce development team (WDT) was formed to address competency identification, selection, and implementation into an agency wide workforce development plan. In 2019, to align with our Strategic Plan goal, staff feel empowered and prepared to meet the challenges of a changing public health environment, and Public Health 3.0, the department changed how competencies were selected for staff. The management staff reviewed the core competencies and selected ones that relate to the departments strategic plan and with the changing public health landscape. Staff prioritized the competencies and selected three to work on over the next two years. The management then researched and chose trainings for the competencies and presented these options to at an All Staff meeting.

## Branding



In 2019, the Pierce County Public Health Department established a branding team. This team is responsible for creating a strong, visible brand to help build community, partner, and funder confidence in the Public Health Department and increase public awareness of public health's value, programs and services. The first strategy of the branding team was to determine the official name the department would use as there were inconsistencies across programs and documents. In May, the Board of Health approved the team's recommendation to formally be Pierce County Public Health Department with Pierce County Public Health being an acceptable format for the logo and other shorthand uses. The branding team then established a new logo and created the Branding Standards

Guide.

The quality improvement project completed by the branding team in 2019 was to improve Pierce County Public Health physical branding in community locations around Pierce County. This was accomplished by creating audience-specific handwashing signs including the Pierce County Public Health logo to be distributed. Team members reached out to community partners and offered signs to be displayed in their bathrooms. In total, 205 signs were distributed to 36 different locations around the county.



## Linkages



In 2019, the linkages team was established to increase collaboration with healthcare entities to establish new community partnerships and strengthen existing ones in order to improve community health. It was determined there is a lack of low-cost health care and other resources in Pierce County, especially for those without insurance or the underinsured. People are often not aware of services that are available, including services and programs offered by public health. When residents contact the department for referrals to services, it is necessary that we are able to provide appropriate referrals.

The goal of the linkages team is for community members to leave the Public Health Department with accurate and helpful information regarding available services and programs. The following strategies will be implemented to support this goal:

1. Support the new 211 system managed by United Way.
2. Have ways to support access to care outside of 211.
3. Network with other departments, agencies and health care providers to understand available services and promote department services.
4. Maintain an understanding of service gaps in Pierce County.

Success will be measured by:

1. Number of formal education sessions provided to other county departments, providers or community partners (2020 Target: 5).
2. Number of current outreach activities revised to promote Public Health as a whole, in addition to program specifics (2020 Target: 2).
3. Number of referrals to the department from the new 211 system (2020 Target: TBD after all 2019 data received).
4. Number of Pierce County residents that called the 211 system (2020 Target: TBD after all 2019 data received).



## Section 3: Communicable Disease Control and Prevention

Communicable disease reports are tracked through an electronic reporting system linking local, regional, and state public health officials with private physicians, hospitals, and labs. This allows for prompt investigation of possible outbreaks and unusual situations, and to implement control measures to minimize further spread of disease to others.

In 2019, Pierce County nursing staff received 487 reports of communicable diseases, which was 19% less than in 2018. Most notable trends were a decrease of 49% in Hepatitis B, as well as a decrease of 72% in Pertussis and 67% of Parapertussis cases. Negative results are input into the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) and require Public Health follow-up. However, the Wisconsin Division of Public Health is no longer requiring follow-up on negative Pertussis and Parapertussis cases. Additionally, in 2019 there were a few infrequent diseases reported as outlined in the table below.

Frequency of Reportable Diseases	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Anaplasmosis/Ehrlichiosis	6/*4	11/*7	20/*9	25/*13	19/*15	11/*5
Arboviral Illness, West Nile, non-neruroinvasive	1/*1	3/*3	1	1/*1	2/*2	0
Arboviral Illness, Zika	NA	NA	2/*2	3/*3	1/*1	1/*1
Babesiosis	0	1	4/*3	1/*1	3/*2	4/*3
Campylobacter	10	12	15/*1	19	19	13
Chlamydia	133	145	148	144/*1	134	135/*1
Cryptosporidium	3	3	1	4	7	2/*1
E-Coli	3	1	6	9	25/*1	21
Giardia	2	4	3/*1	3/*1	2	5
Gonorrhea	14	15	6	21	25	18
Haemophilus Influenza, Invasive Disease	2/*2	1/*1	0	1	1/*1	2/*1
Hepatitis A	1/*1	0	0	2/*2	0	0
Hepatitis B	2	2	2/*2	20/*17	49/*47	25/*25
Hepatitis C	8/*1	26	16/*3	29/*8	33/*29	36/*23
Hystoplasmosis	NA	NA	1	1	2	0
Influenza-Associated Hospitalizations	14	8	6/*1	26/*5	64/*44	79/*69
Lyme Disease	33/*7	55/*12	59/*9	56/*12	41/*12	37/*7
Measles/Mumps	3	8/*8	1/*1	0	7/*7	3/*3
Mycobacterial Disease	2	1	3	0	8	1
Pertussis	2/*1	0	13/*9	35/*26	65/*47	18/*17
Parapertussis	NA	NA	NA	18/*17	49/*49	16/*15
Salmonellosis	4	4	2	9	4	7
Streptococcal Disease, Invasive	5	5/*1	5/*3	5/*2	12/*9	17/*7
Tuberculosis, Latent	6	9/*1	6	11	5	9/*4
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	4/*3	5/*3	13/*8	11/*10	13/*9	8/*5
Yersiniosis	NA	NA	2	0	2	0
Additional Infrequent Diseases Reported in 2019:	Bordetella Holmes II				NA	1/*1
	Coccidioidomycosis				1	1
	Carbon Monoxide Poisoning				NA	1
	Chemical Pneumonitis				NA	3
	Plesiomonas				NA	3/*3
	Silicosis				NA	1
	Syphilis (State HD does follow-up)				1	3
Shigellosis				NA	2	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>487</b>

\* = number of cases “not a case” by WI-DHS case definition

## St. Croix Valley Immunization Coalition



Pierce County Public Health provides leadership to the St. Croix Valley Immunization Coalition with the mission to improve immunization rates among both public and private vaccine providers.

This was a revitalization year for the coalition. Attendance at meetings had decreased and was mainly Public Health Department staff and drug company representatives. Contact was made with local providers to assess their needs as far as location, time, and content. The last

quarterly meeting of 2019 was held at a clinic and attendance more than doubled. Meetings for 2020 are being planned at local providers' locations.

## Immunizations for Children and Adults

Immunization is one of the most important public health victories of the 20th century – defeating or sharply reducing disease such as smallpox, polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough) and other diseases. However, many organisms that cause these diseases have not been eliminated, and are reemerging as national vaccination levels drop.

In 2019 public health nurses gave a total of 1788 immunizations to 1692 individuals.

The Public Health Department works with local clinics to improve the percentage of Pierce County children who are up-to-date with immunizations by their second birthday. In 2019, 76% of Pierce County children who turned 2 years of age during the year received all required immunizations as reported in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR).

The seasonal Influenza immunization clinics held during the fall of 2019 resulted in 1610 immunizations given. The public health department continued to offer school flu clinics at all schools in Pierce County in an attempt to reach more students. A total of 1166 influenza immunizations were given to school age children at Pierce County schools, an 88 dose increase over last season and a 142 dose over 2017.

This year we stated a new grant objective designed to work more closely with school nurses to assure their knowledge of the school immunization laws and with community organizations to increase knowledge of immunizations and reliable immunization resources.



## Section 4: Public Health Emergency Preparedness



Pierce County Public Health Department is a member of a regional consortium known as the Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortium (WWPHRC). Established in 2003, with funds from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the WWPHRC was established to develop core expertise and preparedness in response to bioterrorism, infectious disease outbreaks, and other public health threats. This is

accomplished through networking, coordinating, standardizing, and centralizing our resources and planning efforts among the fifteen local public and tribal agency partners in Western Wisconsin.

Pierce County is also a part of the Minnesota Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI). The CDC's CRI is a federally funded program designed to enhance preparedness in the nation's largest population centers, where nearly 60% of the population resides, in order to effectively respond to large-scale public health emergencies needing life-saving medications and medical supplies. The Minnesota CRI includes 11 Minnesota counties, as well as Pierce and St. Croix counties in Wisconsin. Every five years, the CRI plans a Full-Scale Exercise which tests emergency plans and the ability to dispense medical

countermeasures to our entire population. In 2019, planning began for this Full-Scale Exercise that is scheduled to take place on June 17, 2020.

In 2019, the department exercised our ability to deliver emergency medical countermeasures through mass flu vaccination clinics. Our Public Health Specialist completed training offered by the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), in Anniston, Alabama. Training was on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as well as Point of Dispensing (POD) which is a place where vaccines, antibiotics, and other medications/supplies can be quickly dispensed to a large number of people.



## Section 5: Environmental Health

### Food Safety and Recreational Licensing

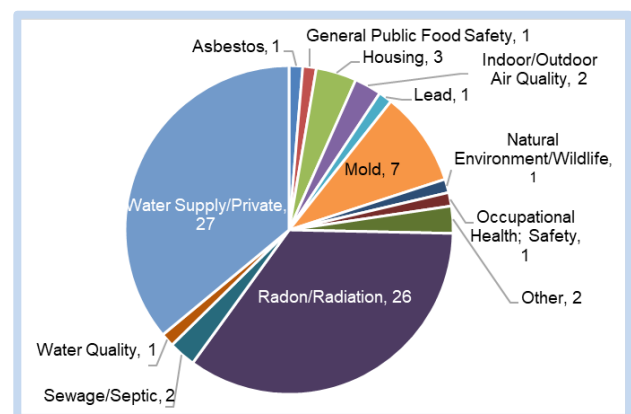
Environmental Health Specialists protect the public's health through enforcement of sanitation regulations and educating about sanitary practices in restaurants, hotels, tourist rooming houses, bed and breakfast establishments, public swimming pools, campgrounds, recreational & educational camps, body art establishments, and school food service facilities. In 2019, only one establishment required a second re-inspection. No citations were issued this year. The table below shows the July 1, 2018- June 30, 2019 inspections that were completed in an effort to reduce communicable diseases for our residents and visitors. Inspection reports can be found online at:

<http://healthspace.com/Clients/WI/Pierce/Web.nsf/home.xsp>

Type of Facility	Establishments	Inspections	Re & Pre-inspections	Complaints
Retail Food Establishments/Restaurants	192	176	117	3
Temp Restaurants & Special Event Camp Including some facilities with state permits	42	45	0	0
Lodging Establishments	41	28	18	1
Pool and Whirlpool Facilities	7	4	4	0
Body Art Facilities	4	6	1	0
School Food Service	14	28	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>4</b>

### Human Health Hazards

In order to protect and maintain the health, safety, general welfare and environment for the people and communities, Pierce County Public Health investigates complaints with the potential to have an impact on human health. Enforcement of the "Human Health Hazard" ordinance, is the role of the Pierce County Board of Health, the Health Officer, and the Environmental Health Specialists. If a human health hazard is found, the Public Health Department works with those involved to ensure the hazard is resolved. In 2019, the department investigated 10 complaints



related to human health hazards, resulting in 12 onsite visits. Enforcement orders were written for one case.

An additional 75 inquiries were received regarding a variety of general environmental health issues. The table provides a visual breakdown of the types of environmental issues addressed by the program staff. There was a major increase in contacts regarding private water supplies in 2019, largely due to an event held in partnership with Pierce County Land Conversation.

## Vector-Borne Diseases



Almost everyone has been bitten by a mosquito or tick. When a mosquito or tick (or other animals) spread pathogens (germs), it is called a “vector.” When a person gets bitten by a vector and then becomes sick, that person has a “vector-borne disease,” which include infections like dengue, Zika, and Lyme disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control, between 2004 and 2016 more than 640,000 cases of these diseases were reported, and nine new pathogens spread by bites from infected mosquitoes and ticks were discovered or introduced in the US. State and local health departments and vector control organizations are the nation’s main defense against this increasing threat.

In 2019, PCPHD applied for and was awarded a Medica Foundation Grant that assisted in the development and purchasing of community education materials describing how to protect oneself from mosquito and tick bites, and how to safely remove a tick if it is embedded. These materials included vertical retractable banners, educational brochures and tick-prevention supplies such as bug spray and tick removers. These items were distributed at events including the River Falls Days Parade, National Night Out-Ellsworth, Spring Valley Community Safety Day, and the Pierce County Fair.

## Possible Rabies Exposure

Animal bite exposure follow-up is conducted to prevent potentially fatal cases of human rabies. In 2019, exposures involving forty-seven dogs, nine cats, two bats, and one raccoon were reported. Fifty-nine orders of quarantine were issued and completed. It is significant that seven of these were vet clinic quarantines, which are required when the animal is not current with vaccinations, and are more difficult to enforce because of the cost. It can also be difficult to find a vet clinic that has the proper facilities to quarantine. Twelve rabies specimens were submitted to the State Lab of Hygiene; eleven had negative results and one was unable to be tested.

## Radon

You can’t see, smell, or taste radon, but it is a problem in many Pierce County homes. Radon comes from the natural (radioactive) breakdown of uranium in soil and rock, and can contaminate water and air in any type of building. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today behind only smoking. Testing your home is a simple low-cost way to determine your risk. Low cost test kits are available at Public Health to anyone wanting to test.

In 2019, Pierce County Public health distributed twenty-four combined short-term and long-term radon test kits. Twenty-three test results were reported, twelve of these results were at or above the EPA recommended action level of 4.0 pCi/L. Promoting testing along with educating the public regarding health risks from radon, methods to fix the problem in homes, and building radon-resistant new homes are the key focus areas of Public Health radon activities. In collaboration with the Dunn County and St. Croix County Public Health Departments, we had a vendor booth at the St. Croix Valley Home Builders

show where over 125 individuals, realtors, and builders received radon materials or had radon questions answered.

## Water Quality

Safe, clean water is one of the most important substances in our lives - for drinking, cooking, bathing and cleaning. Municipal water systems test their water regularly to ensure safety, but it's left to private well owners to test their well water annually.

Through a contract with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 72 facilities in the county that qualify as a Transient Non-community Water System were tested, and 20 of those wells were inspected to ensure safe and dependable water for the public. Six facilities were found to have bacteriologically unsafe water and eight facilities currently post a public notice as they are operating with nitrate levels between 10mg/L and 20mg/L. A thorough, onsite inspection of the facility's water system is conducted annually to determine a cause, if any, of potential sanitary defects.

Private well water was tested for four families who received services through Public Health. Of those tested, one had unsafe bacteria counts, one exceeded recommended nitrate levels of 10mg/L, and all four had fluoride levels below 0.3mg/L. Education was provided to these families.

Pierce County Land Conservation and Pierce County Public Health conducted coordinated well-water testing for 245 residents in the townships of Clifton, Oak Grove, and River Falls to better understand the overall quality of wells and groundwater in Pierce County. To explain the results of the tests, a free community education event was held in which nearly 70 residents participated. Kevin Masarik, a groundwater education specialist from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's Water and Environmental Analysis Lab, spoke to residents about their well water results.



- The average nitrate level for the Clifton, Oak Grove, and River Falls townships was 5.8mg/L, the state average is 3.6mg/L. The standard safe level of nitrates in the water supply is less than 10gm/L.
- Forty-four wells, or 17%, tested exceeded 10mg/L. The state average is 14% of wells exceeding 10mg/L.
- Twenty-seven percent of wells tested positive for coliform bacteria. The state average is approximately 25%, but this percentage is highly variable as it is season and weather dependent.

## Child Blood Lead Testing



There is no safe level of lead in the human body as lead exposure can affect nearly every bodily system. Even very low levels of lead exposure can cause permanent brain damage and negatively affect health throughout the child's life, especially between 6 months and 6 years of age. The primary source of lead exposure in Wisconsin is lead in paint or varnish in household dust and lead-contaminated soil. Lead in water and air and other products, including traditional home remedies and cosmetics, can contribute to a child's lead exposure. Lead hazards are commonly present when homes built pre-1978 are being remodeled.

The CDC defines a reference level of 5 mcg/dL to identify children with elevated blood lead levels. Pierce County Public Health Department can provide follow-up and consultation by a Public Health

Nurse for those children with elevated blood lead levels (5mcg/dL or greater). Follow-up may include phone calls, home visits, consultation with the primary health care provider, and a home lead risk assessment by a Lead Hazard Investigator. The ultimate goal is to reduce environmental lead exposure and lead poisoning.

In an effort to stay current and maintain a highly competent work force, our Lead Environmental Health Specialist and a Public Health Nurse attended the annual Wisconsin Lead Conference in September 2019.

### Blood Lead Testing as Reported in WIR

Of the 366 blood lead tests done in 2019, 100 were done at Pierce County WIC clinics.

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Total Tests</b>	393	356	332	385	370	366
<b>5-9 mcg/dL</b>	8	2	3	2	1	1
<b>10-19 mcg/dL</b>	1	1	1	0	0	1
<b>≥ 20 mcg/dL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Section 6: Access to Care

In October 2013, the Pierce County Public Health Department became a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) designated Certified Application Counselor (CAC) organization. Currently, there is one employee who has received CAC training. The CAC is expected to provide information to consumers regarding quality health plan options and insurance affordability programs, as well as assist with applications and enrollments in the Federal Marketplace (Healthcare.gov).

Starting with the 2019 plan year, the Shared Responsibility Payment no longer applies which means that individuals will not be fined for not having health insurance.

The open enrollment for the 2020 benefit year was November 1, 2019 - December 15, 2019. During the open enrollment period, the CAC had nine office visits with consumers seeking assistance and received approximately 35 phone calls with Marketplace questions.

## Section 7: Maternal and Child Health

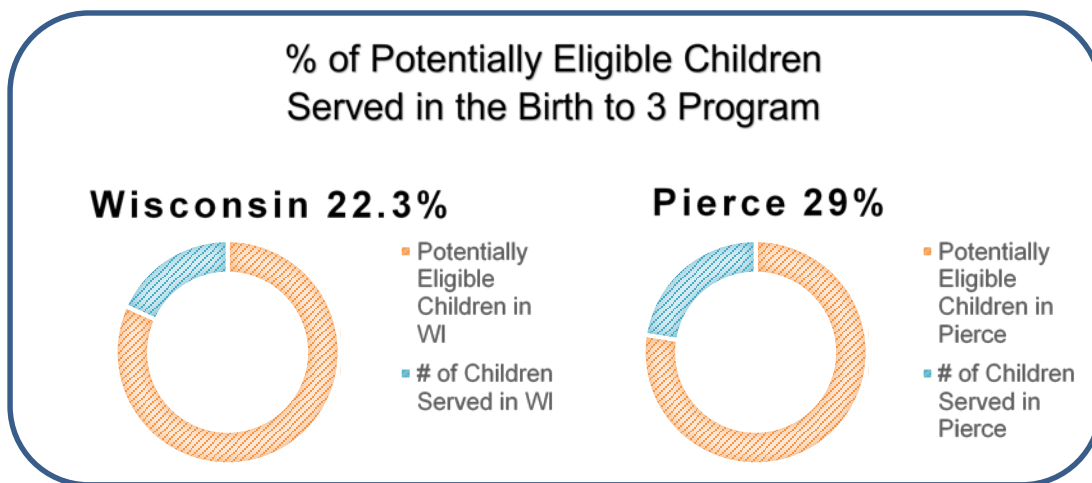
### Birth to 3

Pierce County Birth to 3 supports interested families of eligible children, by offering family-focused learning opportunities in their child’s natural learning environment. Assigned primary coaches assist in building upon each family’s knowledge, skill and abilities to meet their child’s needs.



To be eligible for the Birth to 3 Program, a child must be between birth and 36 months of age and either have a physician-diagnosed condition with a high probability of developmental delay, atypical development, or a 25% delay in at least one of the five following developmental domains: Cognitive, Motor, Self-Help, Social and Emotional, and Communication.

According to the Bureau of Children’s Services, approximately 28% of all children under 3 years of age have a delay in at least one of the five, above-noted developmental domains. The State of Wisconsin estimated that from 2017, of the 1,194 children under 3 in Pierce County, 334 children may have a developmental delay, and of those, Pierce County served 29%, in comparison to the State of Wisconsin, who served 22.3%.



In 2019, Pierce County Birth to 3 was able to serve 146 children. We received 97 new referrals, and of those referrals, 73 developmental screenings were conducted, 48 children received further developmental evaluation; ultimately enrolling 31 new children into the program. Birth to 3 also provided 99 Individual Family Service Plan meetings (IFSP) last year; 31 being initial IFSP’s and 68 being IFSP review meetings.

When eligible children in Birth to 3 approach the age of 3, Service Coordinators work with the six Pierce County School Districts to ensure children and families have a smooth transition to Early Childhood Special Education. We coordinated 18 Transition Planning Conference meetings and discharged 107 children from the program in 2019. Such a large caseload of clients in the program has made it difficult for one service coordinator to maintain, so we look forward to having two full-time service coordinators in 2020, to continue to meet the growing needs of the children and families in our county.

## Breastfeeding Peer Counselors



The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program provides breastfeeding promotion and support through an extension of the WIC Program. Peer counselors add a critical dimension to WIC’s efforts to help women initiate and continue breastfeeding. In 2019, a third breastfeeding peer counselor was added to the team. The peer counselors are passionate about encouraging and supporting other moms. They provide an outlet for moms to connect and chat about “mommy-hood,” their breastfeeding journeys, and share information so each mom can make the best-informed decisions for her family. Breastfeeding incidence for Pierce-Pepin WIC participants in 2019 was 81.7%, 9% above the state rate of 72.4%.

In 2019 the peer counselors also sponsored a “Baby Shower” breastfeeding support group event. Participants met the Breastfeeding Peer Counselors and shared breastfeeding stories. The peer counselors also promoted World Breastfeeding Week by putting up breastfeeding displays at all the libraries in Pierce and Pepin Counties.

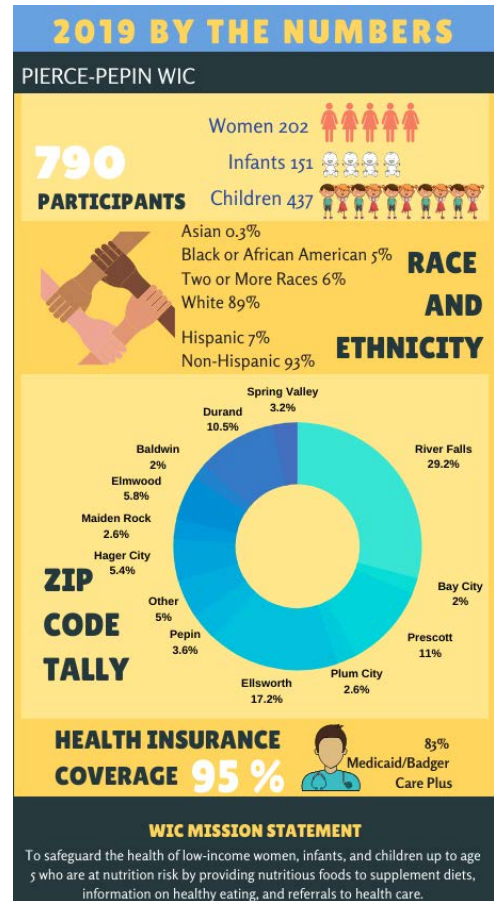
## Pierce-Pepin WIC Program

The Pierce-Pepin Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) helps parents give their children a healthy start by providing service including nutrition and breastfeeding education, health and social services referrals, and healthy foods. WIC focuses on preventing nutrition-related health problems and improving the health status of participants. Studies have shown that WIC reduces the incidence of low birth-weight and increases breastfeeding rates among participating families.

At the start of Fiscal Year 2019, Pierce County Public Health entered into an agreement with Pepin County Health Department to merge the two counties' WIC services. Pierce County WIC, now Pierce-Pepin WIC, manages the services, staff, and budget. This has optimized use of limited financial resources, improved efficiencies, and improved customer service to clients.

2019 was highlighted by efforts to increase participation choices, to improve recruitment, and increase retention of participants. On-line and telephone nutrition education options were promoted and encouraged as a way to make WIC easier for busy and commuting families. Cooking Matters, a two-day cooking class hosted by our partners at UW-Madison Extension, was offered as an alternative way to meet nutrition education requirements.

In an effort to meet the changing needs of WIC participants, Pierce-Pepin WIC opted to join the statewide Creative Marketing outreach co-op. This outreach campaign developed a social media campaign and other outreach materials to be used for promoting WIC.



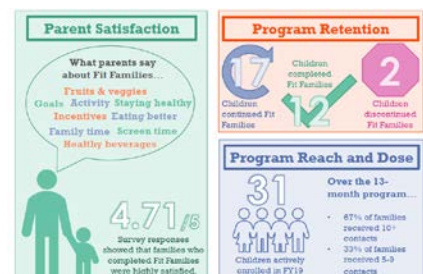
## Farmers' Market Nutrition Program



The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) continues to be a strong supporter of the farmers' market community. In 2019, \$35, an increase from \$30 in 2018 and \$24 in 2017, was available in WIC vouchers to each eligible WIC family for the purchase of fresh locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs at area Farmer's Markets. Staff assisted participants in navigating the River Falls Farmer's Market to promote full use of the benefits. With outreach efforts, redemption rates of vouchers continue to increase. In 2019, voucher redemption rate was 46%, up from 35% in 2018, and 28% in 2017.

## Fit Families

Fit Families is a 13-month nutrition education program targeting families of two to four-year old children enrolled in WIC. Fit Families empowers families to adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors through in-person and phone/text coaching. Fit Families strives to prevent childhood obesity, and runs from October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 31<sup>st</sup>. Two cohorts of families participated in the program during calendar year 2019.





In addition to working directly with enrolled children and their families, Fit Families projects are tasked with building community partnerships to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes to help make the healthy choice the easy choice. In 2019, partnerships were formed with the Hudson YMCA, UW-Extension of Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties, and the local food pantries. In the summer, a Swim and Gym event was hosted in collaboration with our partners for families with children enrolled in Pierce County and St. Croix County's Fit Families programs. The event included activities promoting the core messages of the program including open gym time, a food demonstration, DIY game building activities, information on positive parenting, education on sugar sweetened beverages, and open swim time.



## Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC)

Pierce County Public Health Nurses provide outreach, physical and emotional assessments, care plan development, care coordination and monitoring, health education, contraceptive supplies, and nutrition counseling to pregnant women who are considered high-risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes through our Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC) program. In 2019, 55 women received PNCC services.

Each client enrolled in PNCC also receives up to four Families First visits in the first nine months of her baby's life to provide age specific curriculum including infant growth, developmental milestones, safe sleep practices, and immunization information. The nurse is available to address any specific concerns a parent might have and can refer the family to other community resources as needed. Eight postpartum PNCC clients received Families First visits in 2019.



In 2019, in conjunction with PCPHD's Maternal Child Health Program, an assessment was completed to better understand the needs of the new and expecting parents in Pierce County. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were held with clients and providers. The results of this assessment will be used in 2020 to make any necessary changes to our PNCC program.

## Oral Health

In past years, fluoride mouth rinse was provided each week to 159 students (approximately 80% of student enrollment in eligible grade levels) in the Elmwood and Plum City schools due to the non-fluoridated community water supply. The department has offered fluoride varnish, a protective coating to prevent cavities, to children under the age of 5 at WIC clinics over many years. However, in 2019 due to Wisconsin state regulations, the decision was made to discontinue the service. 119 applications of varnish were provided through January 1- April 30, 2019.

## CARES Coalition



Pierce-St. Croix County CARES (Creating A Responsive and Effective System for Protecting and Promoting our Children's Well-being) is a coalition aimed at assisting in making evidence-informed decisions to promote child well-being and prevent child maltreatment. After the initial summit of the CARES coalition, a steering committee, along with input from summit attendees, decided to focus on the social-emotional well-being of our counties' youth.

CARES hosts an annual summit featuring a more in-depth look at a specific topic related to social-emotional well-being. Past summits focused on Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs), Trauma Informed Care, a Trauma Informed Care "Train the Trainer" event, and Resiliency and Relationships: Strategies for Promoting our Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing.

The 2019 summit focused on mindfulness for professionals including overcoming compassion fatigue and self-care.

In partnership with Healthier Together Pierce and St. Croix Counties, the CARES coalition worked with Spring Valley School District to offer a resilience class to students in the spring of 2019. The current goal is to offer this class to interested school districts and assist the school in becoming self-sustaining in facilitating this class.



In the fall of 2019, CARES was chosen as one of the groups to participate in the Healthier Wisconsin Leadership Institute (HWLI). Nine leadership members of CARES are participating in HWLI through early summer 2020 to build our coalition capacity with a focus on sustainability.

## Section 8: Reproductive Health



The Reproductive Health program aims to decrease unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections by providing high-quality, yet affordable care. Barriers to receiving care are minimized by focusing on the following priorities:

- Providing contraception in advance of physical exams
- Providing emergency contraception and condoms in advance of need
- Providing same-day contraception following a negative pregnancy test

In 2019, 567 clients received family planning and reproductive health services. Fifty-two percent of these clients are returning clients. The 2019 satisfaction surveys revealed that 95% of clients chose “very satisfied” as the overall rating of their visit. In addition, 100% were “very satisfied” with the education/information provided as well as how well the providers answered their questions. 100% would recommend Pierce County Reproductive Services to another person.

Ninety-five urine pregnancy tests were completed in 2019. Women with positive tests are linked to a variety of services to ensure a healthy pregnancy and birth. Those seeking pregnancy receive pre-conception education to improve health prior to pregnancy. Among the 95, 82% of those with negative pregnancy test results received contraceptives at their visit. Out of the 491 female clients seen in 2019, 421 (86%) are on a moderate (birth control pills) to highly effective (IUD/IUS, Nexplanon) form of birth control.

In addition to providing both pregnancy and contraceptive services, PCRH strives to reduce Pierce County STI rates. A large portion of clientele visits are strictly for STI screening, as many clients present already using a form of hormonal birth control or with long term birth control methods already in place (e.g., IUD, Nexplanon). In 2018 the following specimens were collected for testing:

Test	Chlamydia	Gonorrhea	Trichomonas	HIV	Syphilis
<b>Individuals Tested</b>	500	475	159	46	40
<b>Positive Results</b>	40	6	2	0	1

All clients that are screened and test positive for STIs are educated and treated following the CDC Treatment guidelines by PCRH staff.

PCRH continues to provide health education regarding birth control methods, sexual and reproductive health, breast and cervical cancer and communicable diseases in Pierce County School districts, as well as the University of Wisconsin- River Falls. To help support reproductive health educational

sessions PCRH staff have applied for and been awarded the Hugh J. Andersen Foundation grant bringing in \$20,000 over the past two years (i.e., \$10,000 annually) and are hopeful for another award for 2020. Staff hopes to continue to conduct outreach and seek opportunities that will further enhance family planning program sustainability.

## Section 9: Home Care

Since 1970, the Home Care program had provided access to quality healthcare for all Pierce County citizens needing skilled nursing, therapy and aide services in the privacy of their own home. The program served vulnerable elderly and disabled citizens of Pierce County.

In May, the Board of Health made the difficult but necessary decision to discontinue the Home Care program at the end of 2019. This came after considering increasing costs and reductions or stagnation in reimbursement rates. The Board determined in home care services provided by the department were no longer feasible, and market data demonstrated home care services are available from other providers in the community. The decision in no way reflected against the high standards of service that have been provided to clients over the course of the program by the Home Care staff.

Clients were assisted with the transition to other providers in the county over the entire year. The needs of the clients as well as the providers were all taken in to consideration when deciding on transition timing.

There were four home care staff members at the time of the decision. One staff member retired at the beginning of the transition period, one left to pursue a previous career path, one took a different position within the department and the last retired at the end of the year.

## Section 10: Injury Prevention

### Child Passenger Safety



Area families and care providers in Pierce County have been educated by explaining and demonstrating best practices for installation and use of child passenger safety seats.

In 2019, eight infant and child car seats were checked, including five seats that were given to Pierce County residents in need. During every seat check, problems concerning installation and placement issues, next steps, and other safety issues are discussed.

Corrections are made when necessary.

Issues found when checking a car seat can include the seat not being secured in the vehicle, harness straps that are loose and/or

not adjusted correctly, retainer clips not positioned in the right location, moving a child to the next stage of car seat, or using a seat belt before the appropriate age. Any of these problems could result in injury to the child in the event of a crash.

### Farm Safety Day



UW-Extension, the Emergency Management Department, Pierce County, 4-H, and Public Health again partnered this year to co-facilitate the Pierce County Farm and Rural Safety Day. It was held September 25 and 26 at the beautiful Pierce County Fairgrounds and was attended by 437 fourth graders from Pierce County schools.

The program is aimed at fourth graders to help supplement local education curriculum on Wisconsin, and to show the connection to agriculture and

rural life issues. The day consists of students attending eleven 15-minute sessions at various locations in the fairgrounds.

The program brought in educational demonstrations from the Ellsworth Ambulance service, Western WI Ag Supply, Ellsworth Fire Department, local FFA chapters from Plum City, Ellsworth, Spring Valley, Elmwood and River Falls, Pierce-Pepin Cooperative Services, Pierce County UWEX Master Gardeners, Pierce County Sheriff's Department, Public Health, and 4-H volunteers.

## Section 11: WI WINS Tobacco Compliance Checks



The Wisconsin Wins (WI Wins) campaign is a science-based, state-level initiative designed to decrease youth access to tobacco products. WI Wins uses positive reinforcement to reduce illegal tobacco sales to minors. It congratulates local clerks who do not sell tobacco to youth, while educating those who do sell.

In 2019, Pierce County completed 31 compliance checks at tobacco retailers throughout Pierce County. Of these 31 checks, 4 retailers sold to minors, resulting in a 13% sales rate. We will continue to conduct approximately 31 compliance checks in 2020.

County	Sales Rate
Barron	7%
Buffalo	28%
Burnett	14%
Dunn	17%
Pierce	13%
Polk	24%
Rusk	13%
St. Croix	12%
<b>Average</b>	<b>16%</b>

Data from 2019 compliance checks is presented in the table below. Note that “sale rate” refers to the percentage of stores that sold to underage customers. Our goal is to have all counties below a sale rate of 10%.