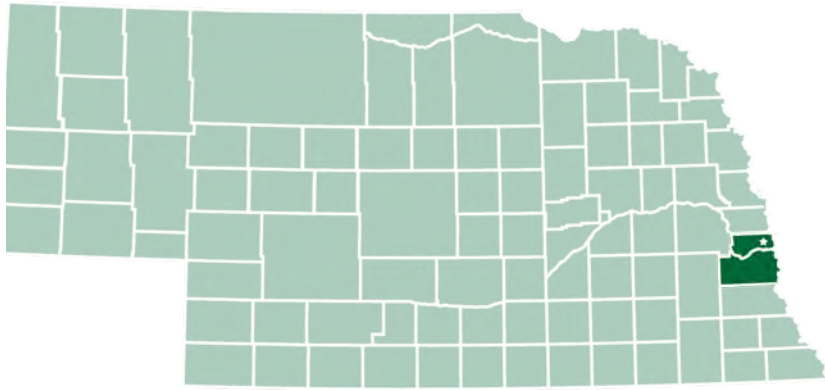


SARPY/CASS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Sarpy and Cass Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

This annual report covers the time span of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. Every day in the 365 days included in this period was dedicated to promoting and protecting the health and well being of the residents in Sarpy and Cass counties as communities endured the COVID-19 pandemic. The department had its fair share of ups and downs throughout the year in review with one constant – the resolve of department staff to do what needed to be done to support residents.

Sarpy/Cass Health Department (SCHD) staff conducted 24,000 communicable disease investigations this year, including 23,619 COVID-19 investigations. During the height of the pandemic SCHD was responsible for conducting nearly 1,500 disease investigations a week in late November. The COVID-19 investigations required extensive contact tracing for each positive case to help slow the spread of illness within our community. Timely communication of public health recommendations to positive residents and their close contacts was instrumental in the responses. Therefore, the disease investigation process occurred seven days a week.

Additionally, the health department hosted 125 COVID-19 vaccination clinics during this time. This year the health department and community partners vaccinated over 106,000 Sarpy and Cass County residents. To help ensure that residents had ample opportunities to access the COVID-19 vaccine, existing partnerships were expanded and new partnerships were established. Vaccine was provided via 125 separate public vaccination clinics, in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, schools, private worksites, and through in-home visitation.

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SARPY/CASS
Health Department

A wide-angle photograph of the Sarpy/Cass Health Department building. The name "SARPY/CASS Health Department" is mounted in large, raised, grey letters on the light-colored facade. The building has large windows and columns. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent grey filter.

SARPY/CASS Health Department

SARPY/CASS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



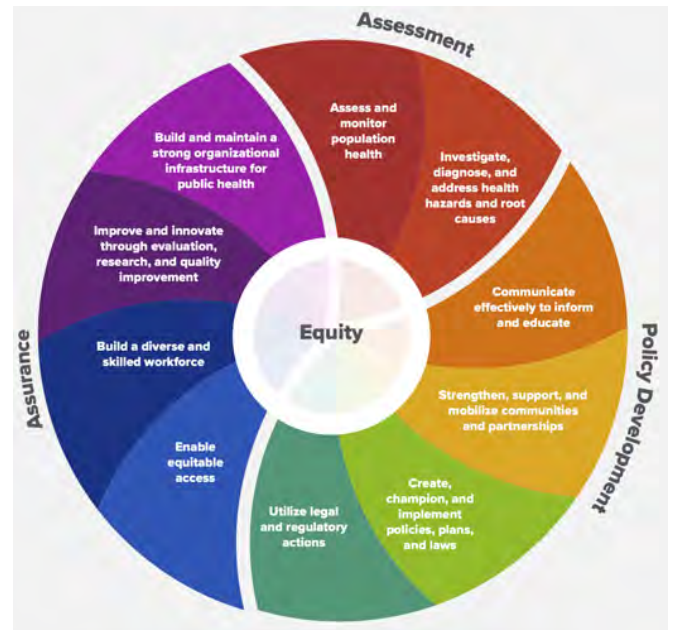
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

SCHD uses the community health assessment (CHA) process to ensure that health and behavioral needs of residents in the jurisdiction are met. Since 2008 the health department has participated in a collaborative planning process that results in a regional CHA that includes Douglas, Sarpy and Cass counties in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County in Iowa.

This regional assessment is a systemic and data-driven approach to determining the health status, behaviors, and needs of residents in the four county Omaha Metropolitan area. In the fall of 2020, planning began for the 2021 assessment. The CHA is sponsored by a coalition of local health departments, health systems, federally qualified health centers, and non-profit agencies. Information is gathered through resident and key informant surveys that were completed throughout the spring and summer of 2021.

CHIP PRIORITIES: The Sarpy/Cass Health Department is continuing to partner with the other health departments across the Omaha Metro Region and the Wellbeing Partners to address mental health, the health priority identified during the last community health needs assessment (see more in *Additional Activities*, below)

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

This year the health department and community partners vaccinated over 106,000 Sarpy and Cass County residents. Partnerships were created and expanded to provide vaccination opportunities to as many residents as possible. Vaccines were provided via 125 separate public vaccination clinics, in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, schools, private worksites, and through in-home visitation. COVID-19 testing was also provided during this time to employees of nursing homes and other healthcare facilities in an effort to help identify possible outbreaks.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

SCHD has engaged in several chronic disease control and prevention strategies and activities this year. As a founding partner of Share Our Table, a coalition focused on food security, SCHD continues to explore opportunities to increase residents' access to healthy foods. The health department's Active Aging program provides one-on-one support and education to seniors with a goal of keeping aging residents in their homes. This year nurses conducted 100 wellness clinics, which provided foot care, blood pressure screening, individualized health information and referrals to over 600 individuals. These same services were also provided to 130 seniors as part of the home visitation program.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

SCHD staff conducted 24,000 communicable disease investigations this year, including 23,619 COVID-19 investigations. These investigations also required extensive contact tracing for each positive case to help slow the spread of illness within our community. Additionally, SCHD hosted 125 COVID-19 vaccination clinics during this time. Weekly school surveillance, which is monitoring the rate of illness to identify possible disease outbreaks, was completed for all area schools.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

This year staff provided childhood lead poisoning prevention education and necessary follow-up to 20 families with a child whose blood lead level was greater than five micrograms/deciliter. Under the guidance of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) Swimming Pool Program, SCHD staff inspected 77 swimming pools for compliance with Nebraska Regulation Title 178 Chapter 2. As part of SCHD's arbovirus surveillance program, staff collected 30 mosquito traps throughout Sarpy and Cass counties and submitted those to NE-DHHS for identification and West Nile Virus testing.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass is a childhood injury prevention program within SCHD. While staff focused on the COVID-19 pandemic response this year, we relied on community partners to continue injury prevention efforts within our communities. The Sarpy County Sheriff's Department child passenger safety seat technicians provided seat installations for Sarpy and Cass County residents; SCHD was able to provide grant-funded seats for those residents in need.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

SCHD continued to partner with the Douglas/Sarpy County WIC Program to support women and children enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provided basic breastfeeding information, positive reinforcement to pregnant and postpartum women.

SCHD nurses created a Community Breastfeeding Advocate training aimed toward those who interact regularly with pregnant and breastfeeding women in the community, such as home visitors, medical office staff, early childhood professionals, and anyone with a desire to gain knowledge about breastfeeding to provide appropriate supportive messaging to breastfeeding moms.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Sarpy/Cass Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Through a partnership with Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, SCHED began creating a community-based prevention program aimed at addressing underage drinking and marijuana prevention among persons aged nine to 20 in Cass County. The Community Health Planner recruited Cass County influential community members from law enforcement, school, government, business, religious and youth organizations. These key leaders recruited additional residents from across the county to participate in the community board. This board will be directly involved with the assessment, prioritization, selection, implementation and evaluation of substance abuse prevention programs, policies and practices. This community action model utilizes a systematic, public health approach to community building which ultimately leads to positive health outcomes.

In other work and related to our CHIP priority, a mental wellbeing stigma reduction campaign was launched in May of 2020. As of December 2020, 53 testimonial stories have been shared on WhatMakesUs.com with more than 350,000 impressions of the media on Instagram and Facebook. A baseline survey was taken in April of 2020 and the post survey in May 2021 will indicate progress to date on cultural acceptance of mental health at work, among social groups, and among family members. A Spanish-based site was also launched, with testimonials and articles linked on an ongoing basis.

More than 269 partners elected to receive monthly campaign communications. Evaluation results include a statistically significant reduction in mental health stigma behaviors repeated within workplace, familial and friend groups. Also, the campaign achieved 3.9 million impressions across the metro and had 350 thousand engagements via social media.