

**PUTNAM COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

COVID-19 EDITION



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COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PUTNAM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE

Kim Rieman, Health Commissioner

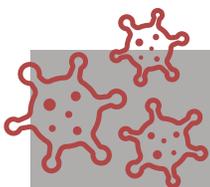
2020 has been a difficult year as many struggled through the physical, emotional and financial tolls of the first pandemic the world has seen in over 100 years. At the Health Department, we began the year with plans to celebrate 100 years of Public Health in Putnam County, but we soon found ourselves in the midst of a pandemic response that will continue well into 2021. Public Health in Ohio began as a response to the 1918 Spanish Influenza outbreak. While those in the public health profession have been preparing for pandemics and other public health emergencies, it became clear very quickly that it is not possible to be completely prepared for everything that occurs during this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Our response began well before the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in our county with multiple planning conversations with key partners such as the Putnam County EMA, local businesses and school superintendents. While we were planning to address cases, including issuing isolation and quarantine orders and providing the vaccine to our residents, we were not prepared to enforce the large number of public health orders issued by the State of Ohio beginning in March 2020, which affected how businesses were able to operate. We quickly learned how these orders would also affect personal events such as weddings and holiday parties. The response required time and effort of all of our staff, especially during the period when our county had the highest rate of COVID infections in the state.

During this year, I have been reminded of some things that I have known to be true about our staff and our community:

1. We have a very hard working, talented staff. While we are small in number, we are dedicated to our community and to our jobs of promoting the public's health. While I have thanked our staff for their tireless efforts, I would also like to take this time to thank them publicly for working through what hopefully will be the toughest time in their careers.
2. We have amazing community partners. The Putnam County EMA and other Putnam County offices, our medical professionals, our schools and our local businesses are just a few examples of partners who have been great to work with during our response. A bright spot during this time has been the strong partnerships we have built with these agencies and organizations.
3. Our residents are wonderful. During the difficult times of enforcement of isolation and quarantine of individuals or enforcement of public health orders, we have had individuals call us to thank us for our work during this response. We have also had individuals offer to volunteer with contact tracing and COVID-19 vaccination clinics. We are very thankful for all who have offered kind words or assistance during this time.

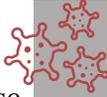
The Health Department staff are thankful for the opportunity to serve our residents during this pandemic. We will continue to do all that we can to promote the health and the safety of Putnam County residents during this pandemic and into the future.



Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea

NURSING Sherri Recker, Director of Nursing



To help decrease the rate of infection, the following strategies were implemented:

One of the Ten Essential Public Health Services is to diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community. In 2020, this became an all-encompassing service requiring the help of all the staff at the health department as Coronavirus (COVID-19) became a household word.

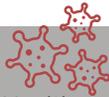
When the virus was identified in Ohio in early 2020, Putnam County was one of the last 4 counties in the state to have identified cases. Testing was limited, so anyone who was feeling sick was told to stay home and isolate from others. Contact tracing and quarantining of contacts of positive cases was often difficult. COVID-19 can spread quickly because the virus is transmitted to others as long as 48 hours before the positive person begins to show symptoms.

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others, whenever possible.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer
- Avoid crowded indoor spaces. In general, being outdoors and in spaces with good ventilation reduces the risk of exposure to infectious respiratory droplets.
- Stay home and isolate from others when sick.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

COVID-19 is a Class A reportable disease. This means that it must be immediately reported to the Ohio Department of Health requiring the health department's public health nurses to work 7 days a week for many, many months to ensure that cases were reported in a timely manner. The nurses, and then later many of the health department's other staff members and volunteers, worked tirelessly to contact the positive cases as soon as possible. This was done in an effort to curb the spread of the disease by discussing isolation of the positive case and quarantine of their contacts.

In addition to the regular illnesses that require investigation, there were 3,295 positive COVID-19 cases in Putnam County in 2020. This spike in disease investigation is 20 times the usual amount of investigations completed by our nurses each year.

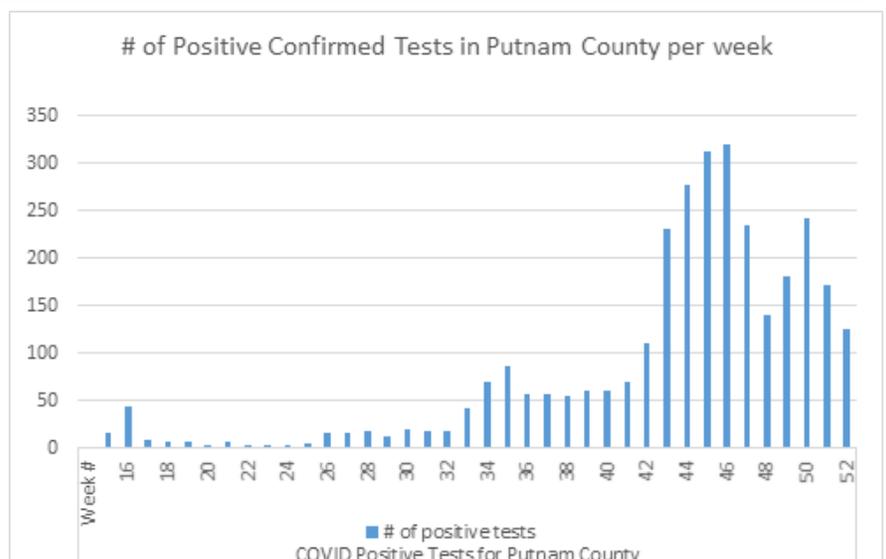
COVID-19 Pop-Up Testing Held



On December 6, 2020, the Putnam County Health Department and Putnam County Office of Public Safety sponsored a Pop-Up COVID-19 Testing Site at the Putnam County Fairgrounds. The Ohio National Guard helped with planning and conducted the testing. Of the 334 people tested that day, 103 were positive (68 of the positive cases were from Putnam County). St. Rita's Mercy assisted with contacting those that were positive. It was truly a group effort that made this available in our community.

December brought some much needed hope to the health department as we began administering the COVID-19 vaccine. Much planning went into beginning the vaccination campaign. In late December, we began administering vaccine to healthcare and EMS workers, home care staff, and developmentally delayed individuals who live in group homes. Pharmacies in the state began vaccinating residents and staff in nursing facilities and assisted living centers. Providing COVID-19 vaccine in the community will be an ongoing campaign and focus of 2021.

The first outbreak of COVID-19 cases in Putnam County involved a nursing home facility. That is the initial spike seen at Week 16 (April) on the graph. Cases stayed relatively low until another spike occurred around week 33 (August). After a small decrease in cases in early fall, a significant increase of cases occurred in November and December. At times, over 70 cases were reported to the health department in a single day. Every village and all populations were affected by COVID-19 in 2020. While still high, cases began to decrease slightly by the end of 2020.





2020...What a year!

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the work load changed significantly for the Environmental Health staff. Immediately following the Governor of Ohio and Director of Ohio Department of Health's public health orders, health departments and EH staff across the state were tasked with the responsibility of enforcing the mandated orders. It was a very unique time because staff were working with facilities, such as salons, spas and gyms, that are not commonly under the health department jurisdiction.

The enforcement of the COVID orders were complaint based only, meaning our agency was not required to, nor did conduct, spot checks on any facility in the county for compliance. We only followed up when a complaint was reported. As the pandemic progressed, and cases in our county continued to rise, the EH staff members were called in to assist with case investigation, planning, and vaccine clinics.

Due to the circumstances, the Ohio Department of Health waived the inspection frequency requirements for licensed food facilities. With the state closing many food establishments, and with the EH staff working in other areas of the COVID response, it proved impossible for inspections to occur.

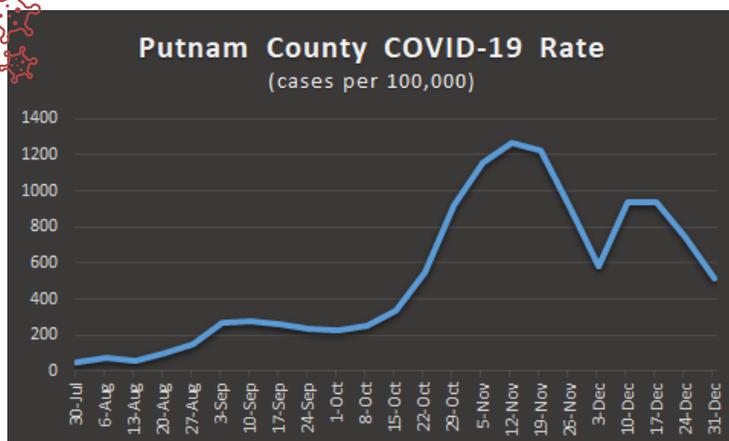
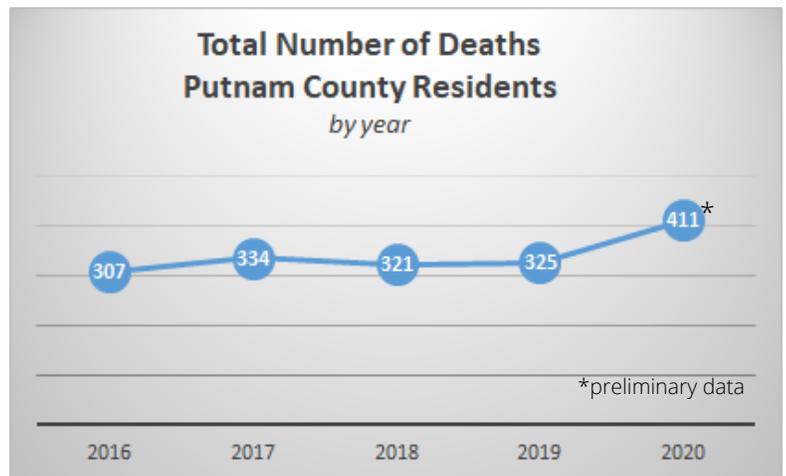
Although much time was committed to the pandemic, Environmental Health staff continued to issue sewage and water permits, performed final inspections and implemented the Operation and Maintenance program.

Putnam County Health Department was awarded Water Pollution Control Loan Fund and H2Ohio monies for 2021. These funds are used for the replacement and repair of household sewage treatment systems for homeowners who meet income guidelines to qualify for the programs.

VITAL STATISTICS

The PCHD records and monitors causes of death of Putnam County residents. Usually, the number of deaths of county residents is approximately 300-350 each year. In 2020, unfortunately, the number increased significantly to 411 deaths recorded.

Preliminary data shows that 86 of these deaths were related to COVID-19, which has afflicted many in our community, especially the elderly and those who are medically fragile.



ODH calculates the rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 for each county in the state by determining the number of cases identified in the prior two weeks and adjusting it for the county's population. On July 31, 2020, Putnam County's rate was 50.21. The rate began to steadily rise until late October, when it soared to 915.51, which is 9 times the rate used by the CDC to identify severe community spread. The county's rate rose to 1266.94 in November, then began to slowly decrease to 516.82 by the end of December.

PCHD 2020 FINANCIAL REVIEW



Balance as of January 1, 2020 **\$918,936.19**

REVENUE	
Putnam County Tax Levy	\$415,916.39
Other Local Government Funds	48,299.72
Federal/State Grants/Subsidy	680,997.59
Service Fees	612,351.00
Misc. Grants/ Receipts	184,871.32
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,942,436.02
January 1 Balance + Receipts	\$2,861,372.21

EXPENSES	
Administrative Costs	\$1,118,044.09
Supplies (Medical, Office, Program)	252,687.97
ODH Grants	121,805.65
WPCLF Grant	43,950.00
Share to State	41,395.34
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,577,883.05
Balance as of December 31, 2020	\$1,283,489.16

The final 2020 revenue and expenses were very different than what was budgeted at the end of 2019. Our revenue increased because of Federal and State grants provided to local health departments to respond to the pandemic, but service fees decreased as some activities such as temporaries for festivals were not obtained. We also provided fewer childhood vaccinations, thus lowering some of our program income.

There was an increase in administrative costs as many of our employees worked overtime to respond to the pandemic. In addition to the increase in staff time, ODH grant funds were used to improve infrastructure that helped our response. As the response to the pandemic continues into 2021, we expect that the budget will vary again this year. The leadership will continue to monitor the budget carefully.

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

The Putnam County Board of Health serves as the governing board for both the Putnam County Health Department and Putnam County HomeCare and Hospice. Members of the 2020 Board of Health include:

Mr. Kyle Stechschulte, President
Mr. Matthew Herman
Dr. J. Stephen Sandy

Dr. Kerri Knippen, Vice-President
Mr. Joe Burkhart

A special Thank You is extended to Dr. Knippen and Dr. J. Stephen Sandy who resigned from their positions on the Board of Health. We appreciate the time you dedicated to our agencies and the residents of Putnam County!



**Pop up COVID
testing with Ohio
National Guard on
December 6, 2020
at the Putnam
County Fairgrounds**



PCHD STAFF

Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES
Jacinta Eickholt, MD
Sherri Recker, RN, MSN
Brandi Schrader, M.Ed., RS
Joan Kline, CHES
Angela Recker, EMT
Dawn Schmenk, RN, BSN
Dunel Fry, RN, BSN
Rachael Ruhe, RN, BSN
Allison Rosebrock, RN, BSN
Beth Skulina, M.Ed., RS
Dainna Raye, RS
Lisa Pope
Laurie Meyer
Abigail Greve
Terri Rayle

Health Commissioner
Medical Director
Director of Nursing
Director of Environmental Health
Health Educator, Accreditation Coordinator
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
Public Health Nurse
Public Health Nurse
Public Health Nurse
Public Health Nurse
Registered Sanitarian
Registered Sanitarian
Environmental Health Technician
Office Manager, Deputy Registrar
Registrar, Clerk Receptionist
Fiscal Clerk

Public Health Nurse Patty Jerwers resigned in July 2020. We would like to thank her for her service!

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE AWARDS

Dawn Schmenk, RN, BSN – Dawn celebrated 20 years with the Health Department in 2020 and is a very important part of the Nursing Division. In addition to providing nursing services such as school screenings, immunizations, car seat installations and working with Children with Medical Handicaps, she has also provided health education to various groups, including school age children.

Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES – In 2020, Kim celebrated 5 years with the Health Department and 26 years in Public Health. While Ms. Rieman serves as the Health Commissioner, she has experience in Health Education, Nursing and Epidemiology.

