

"Working toward a healthy



and safe Putnam County"

Putnam County Health Department 2024 Annual Report



Greeting

When I look back at 2024, I am pleased with the great amount of growth the Health Department has experienced in this very exciting year. We have increased the number of programs we offer to the community and have added staff to implement these important programs. In addition, it has been a year of planning for continued growth that will happen in the future so that our agency can be successful in meeting the needs of our staff and our residents.

It is with great excitement that I announce the creation of our Health Promotion Division! New funding made it possible to hire two Health Educators, focusing on adolescent mental health, youth tobacco use and healthy eating and active living. In addition, existing grant funds allowed us to bring a Community Health Worker into our agency. This staff member links individuals with needed health and social service resources. These programs are in line with our Community Health Improvement Plan and will help us reach health goals for our county. Each of these programs is highlighted later in this report.

In the last half of 2024 we completed the Strategic Planning process. All staff were included in this process and feedback was obtained from our Board of Health, community partners and the public. The completed strategic plan outlines our goals, objectives and actions in six strategic areas – Workforce, Service, Quality, Growth, Finance and Building. I encourage you to view our 2025-2027 Strategic Plan at [2025-2027-Strategic-Plan_Final-2.pdf](#).

I am pleased to present the 2024 Putnam County Health Department Annual Report. I am lucky to be surrounded by wonderful staff who care so deeply for the residents of Putnam County. In 2025 we look forward to continued growth and will strive to achieve our mission to protect, promote, and improve the health, safety and quality of life for everyone in Putnam County.

Yours in Health,



Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES
Health Commissioner

About Us

Mission

Protect, promote, and improve the health, safety, and quality of life for everyone in Putnam County.

Vision

A vibrant Putnam County where everyone lives and works in a healthy environment and has access to quality care.



Core Values

Professionalism: We demonstrate the highest standards of conduct, integrity, and accountability by displaying respect, reliability, and ethical behaviors to our partners, community, and co-workers.

Quality: We prioritize excellence and continually improve practices to ensure exceptional public health services to all.

Collaboration: We actively engage with partners, community, and co-workers, openly communicate ideas, and share expertise to foster an environment of inclusion and health.

Years of Service

In 2024, **Abigail Greve** celebrated **10 years of service** with the Putnam County Health Department. Her primary role is the Administrative Assistant of the Environmental Health Division. In addition to assisting the Environmental Staff in all of the EH programs, you can also find her following up on animal bite reports and assisting customers at the front desk. Thank you for your service Abigail. We are lucky to have you.

Lisa Pope celebrated **5 years** at the Health Department in 2024. Lisa is our Environmental Health Technician who works in our Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Program and also follows up on some nuisance complaints. When she is not in the field performing evaluations, you can find her in the office managing the challenging aspects of the program and assisting residents. Thank you Lisa. You are an important part of the PCHD Team.

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 2024 Board of Health:

Mr. Kyle Stechschulte, President
Mr. Joe Burkhart, Vice President
Mrs. Mary Kay Verhoff
Mrs. Noralu Kahle
Dr. Kent Brandeberry
Dr. Jacinta Eickholt, Medical Director



(Left to Right) Noralu Kahle, Mary Kay Verhoff, Kyle Stechschulte, Joe Burkhart
Absent from photograph: Medical Director-Dr. Jacinta Eickholt, and Dr. Kent Brandeberry

The Board of Health holds meetings on the second Wednesday evening of each month at 6:00 p.m. For more information, visit our website at www.putnamhealth.com or call the Health Department at 419-523-5608.

2024 New Employees

Sarah Nsiah – Sarah joined our team in March as a Health Educator and Public Information Officer (PIO). When she is not putting out important information on traditional and social media sites and leading our Marketing Team, she is balancing the implementation of two programs – Adolescent Health Resiliency and a Tobacco Contract. Welcome to PCHD Sarah.

Andrew Burwell – Andrew joined our team in September after graduating with his Masters Degree in Public Health. He implements our Creating Healthy Communities Grant and you will find him working with agencies and communities to encourage healthy eating and active living. When he is not working on the CHC grant, he is leading our Quality Improvement and Wellness Teams at PCHD. Welcome Andrew! We are happy you are with us.

Dolores Garcia -Dolores started with the Health Department in December as our Community Health Worker. In this new position, her role is to link young families with needed health care and social services. In addition to helping individuals in her program, she assists staff in communicating with our Spanish speaking residents to ensure that all community members are receiving much needed education and services. Thank you for joining us Dolores.

Madison Unverferth – In 2024, a grant made it possible to hire a student intern to help with Health Department projects. Working primarily in the Health Promotion office, she has assisted with some PIO activities as well as activities to help with grants in our Health Promotion Division. Madison is a student at Kalida High School and will be with us at least through June 2025. Thank you for working with us Maddy.

Department Staff

Health Commissioner

Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES

Personal Health Services Division

Sherri Recker, RN, MSN, Director of Nursing

Dunel Fry, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Dawn Schmenk, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Rachael Ruhe, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Allison Rosebrock, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse



Environmental Public Health Division

Beth Skulina, M.Ed., REHS, Registered Environmental Health Specialist

Lisa Pope, Environmental Health Tech-Operational & Maintenance Program

Lori Trame, REHSIT, Registered Environmental Health Specialist In Training

Administration & Vital Statistics Division

Jodie Lammers, Director of Finance/HR- Registrar

Laurie Meyer, Nursing Office Manager/Duputy Registrar

Abigail Morman, Vital Statistics/Receptionist

Stacy Meyer, Vital Statistics/Receptionist

Abigail Greve, Environmental Health Office Manager

Health Promotion Division

Sherri Recker, RN, MSN, Director of Health Promotion

Sarah Nsiah, CHES, CTTS, Health Educator/Public Information Officer

Andrew Burwell, MPH, Health Educator

Trae Gulgin, Epidemiologist

Dolores Garcia, Community Health Worker

Personal Health Services Division

Communicable Disease

One of the ten essential public health services is to diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community. We saw a decrease in sexually transmitted infections such as Chlamydia and Gonorrhea. We also saw a decrease in COVID-19, as the reporting guidelines changed significantly.

Vision Screenings

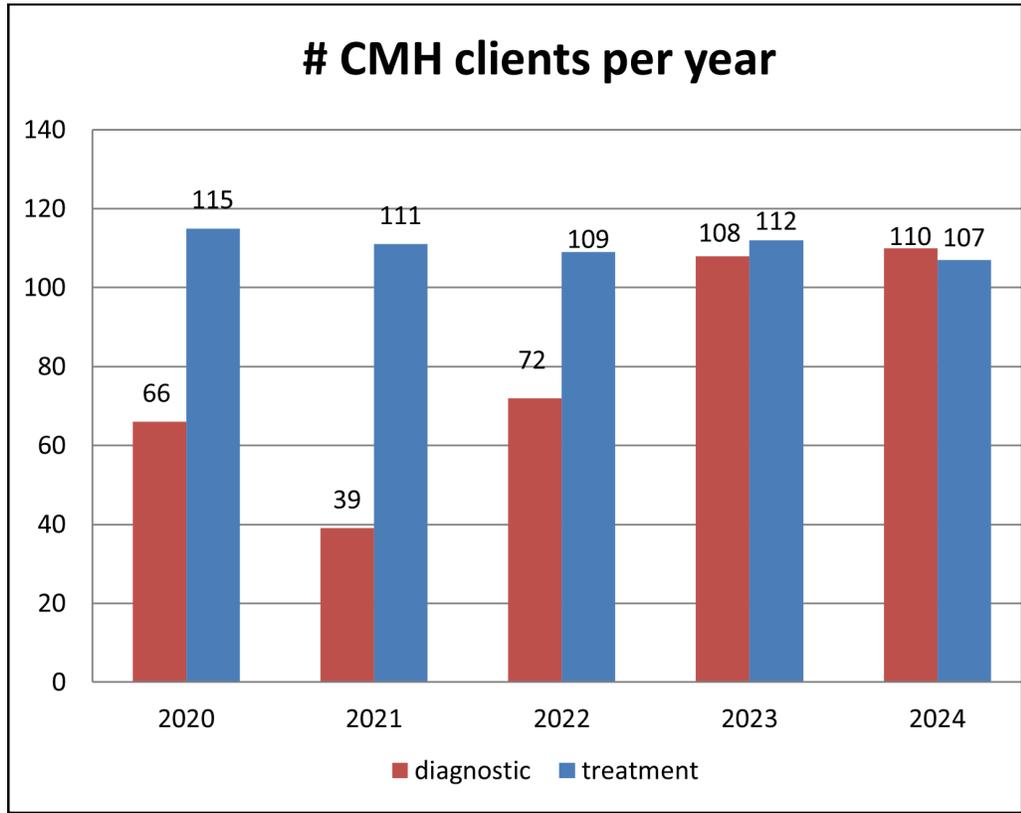
PCHD provided state mandated vision screening in the schools at Kindergarten, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11th grade for a total of **2,592 screenings**.



| 2024 Reportable Disease | Total Cases |
|--|-------------|
| COVID-19 | 559 |
| Chlamydia | 39 |
| Influenza-assoc. hospitalization | 35 |
| Campylobacter | 16 |
| Gonorrhea | 6 |
| Salmonella | 6 |
| Carbapenemase-producing organisms | 5 |
| Hepatitis C-chronic | 4 |
| Giardia | 3 |
| Streptococcal pneumoniiae-invasive | 3 |
| Hepatitis A | 2 |
| Shigellosis | 2 |
| Candida auris | 1 |
| Cryptosporidiosis | 1 |
| Coccidiomycosis | 1 |
| E. Coli, Shiga Toxin-producing | 1 |
| Hepatitis B-chronic | 1 |
| Lyme Disease | 1 |
| Meningitis-viral | 1 |
| Meningitis-bacterial (not N.menigitidis) | 1 |
| Mumps | 1 |
| Streptococcal-Group B-newborn | 1 |
| Streptococcal-Group A-invasive | 1 |
| Tuberculosis | 1 |
| Varicella | 1 |
| Vibriosis | 1 |
| Yersiniosis | 1 |

Complex Medical Help

The nurses provide case management for children seeking a diagnosis for a medical condition and those diagnosed with a qualifying medical condition. A Putnam County parent said ***“CMH is beneficial with our CMH nurse that comes from our local Dept of Health. She is available for questions and guidance at every renewal, new treatment, and medication plans.”***



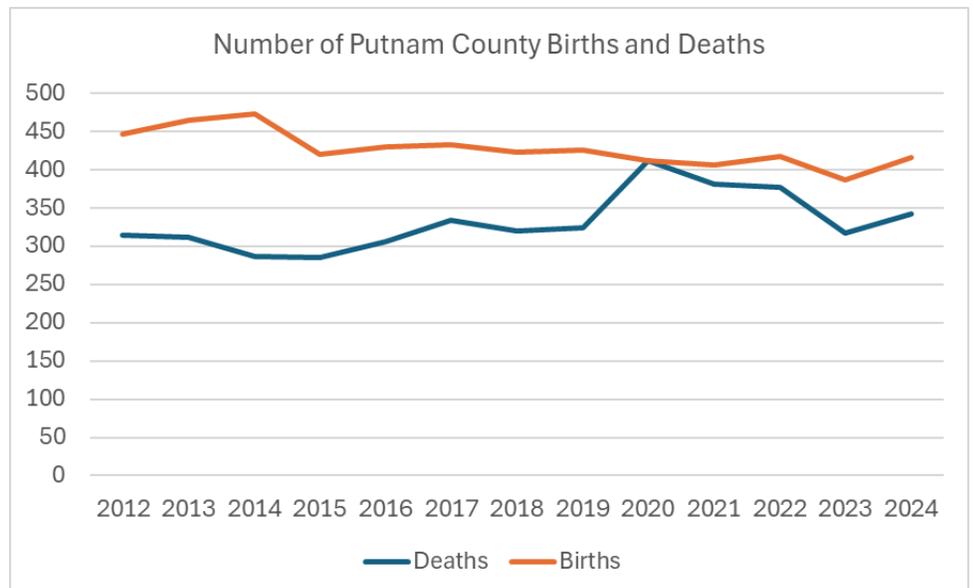
Vehicular Safety

Certified child car seat and adult Car Fit technicians performed car seat checks and provided new car seats to qualifying families. PCHD hosted a combined event where families could have their child’s seat checked for proper installation and older adults could have a free safety assessment.



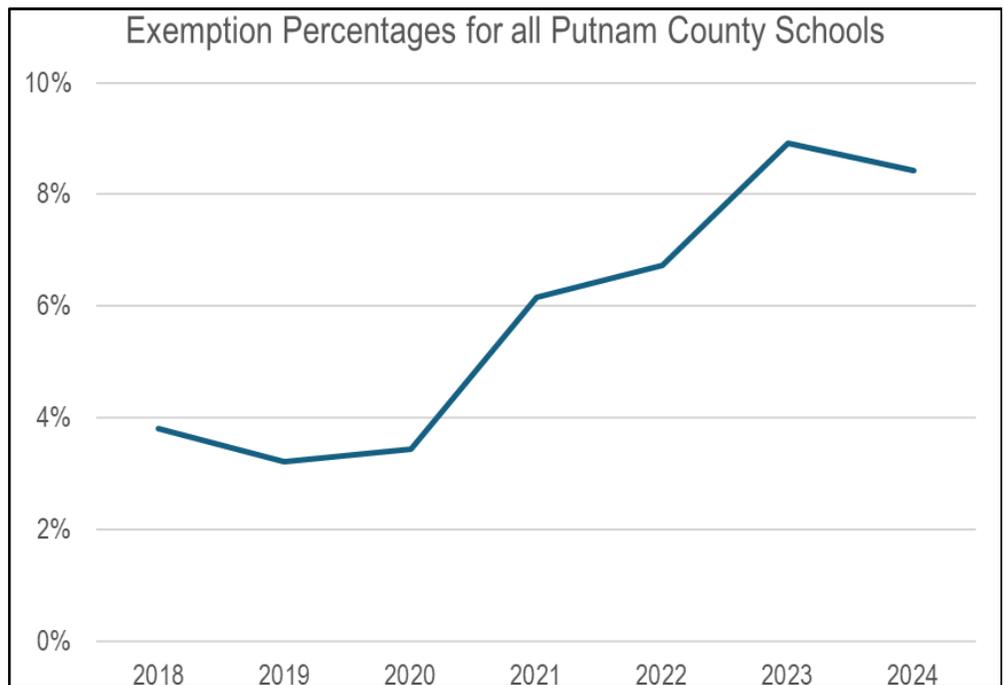
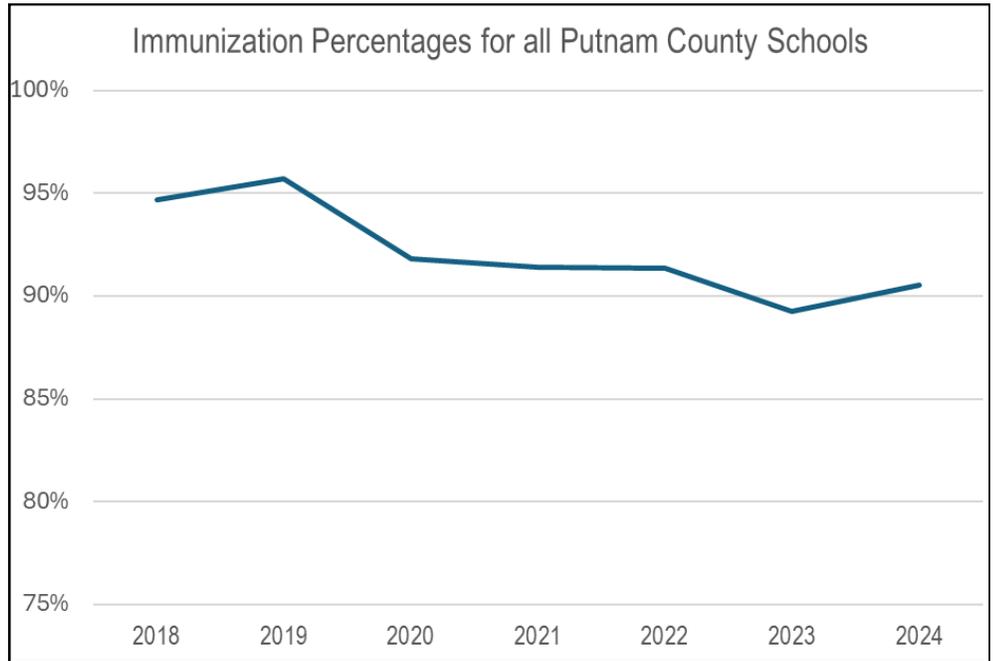
Birth And Death Numbers

This chart, to the right, demonstrates that the number of births are greater than the number of deaths in the county nearly every year. From 2020-2022, we saw a rise in the number of deaths in the county which coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic to nearly match the number of births.



Immunizations

Vaccination remains a primary prevention strategy for communicable diseases. We have seen a decrease in the number of immunizations provided which coincides with an increase in parents opting to complete exemption forms for school instead of being vaccinated. When community vaccination levels decrease, such as what Putnam County is beginning to see, it leaves residents vulnerable to vaccine preventable bacteria and viruses infiltrating our population.



Tai Chi

PCHD began offering the Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention program in 2024 with great public interest. Tai Chi is a slow, rhythmic, and graceful exercise that promotes overall wellbeing. It can improve strength, flexibility, balance, memory/focus/and sleep. It's one of the many ways PCHD is helping adults stay healthy and prevent falls. More classes are planned in 2025, visit our website for more information.



Vital Statistics

Cause of Deaths

The table to the right displays the leading causes of death for Putnam County residents in 2024. There were a total of 343 deaths in Putnam County. Heart Disease continues to be the number one cause of death for our residents.

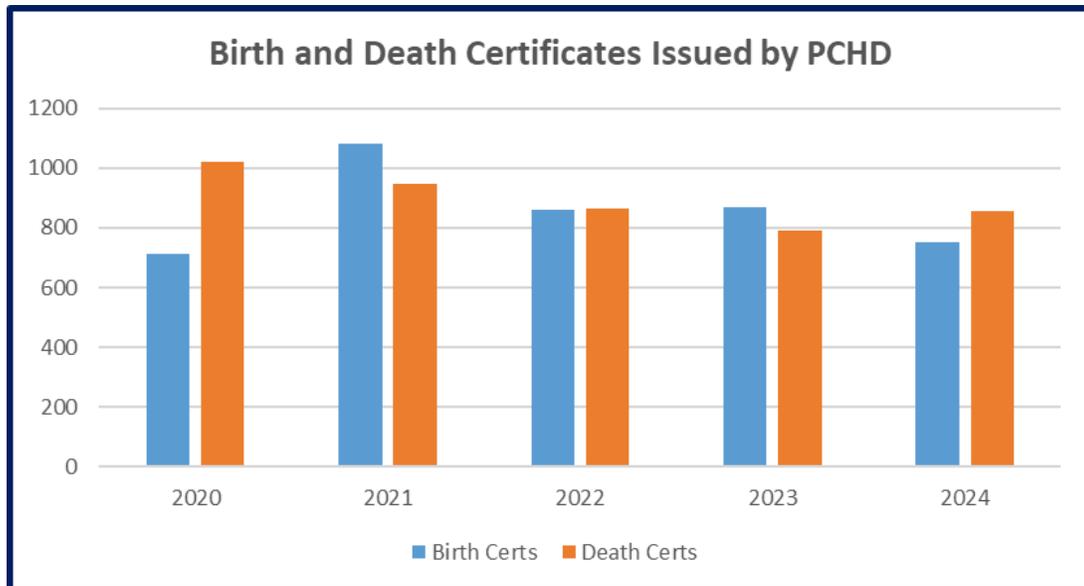
Life Expectancy

The life expectancy in Putnam County is **80.6** years and is higher than that of the State of Ohio.

Certified Birth and Death Records

In 2024, the Putnam County Health Department issued **753** birth certificates and **855** death certificates. See chart below.

| Leading Causes of Death for Putnam County Residents 2024 | |
|---|------------|
| Heart Disease | 99 |
| Cancer | 74 |
| Pulmonary Disease/Pneumonia | 27 |
| Neurodegenerative Disease (Dementia, Alzheimer's) | 33 |
| Diabetes mellitus | 11 |
| Accidents (Motor Vehicle, Accidental Drowning, Unintentional Deaths, Etc) | 17 |
| Cerebrovascular diseases (Stroke) | 18 |
| Failure to thrive | 0 |
| Suicide | 5 |
| Renal Failure | 0 |
| Digestive Diseases | 8 |
| Infectious Diseases | 7 |
| Other Causes | 41 |
| Pending | 0 |
| Maternal and Perinatal Conditions | 3 |
| Total Deaths for Putnam County Residents in 2024 | 343 |



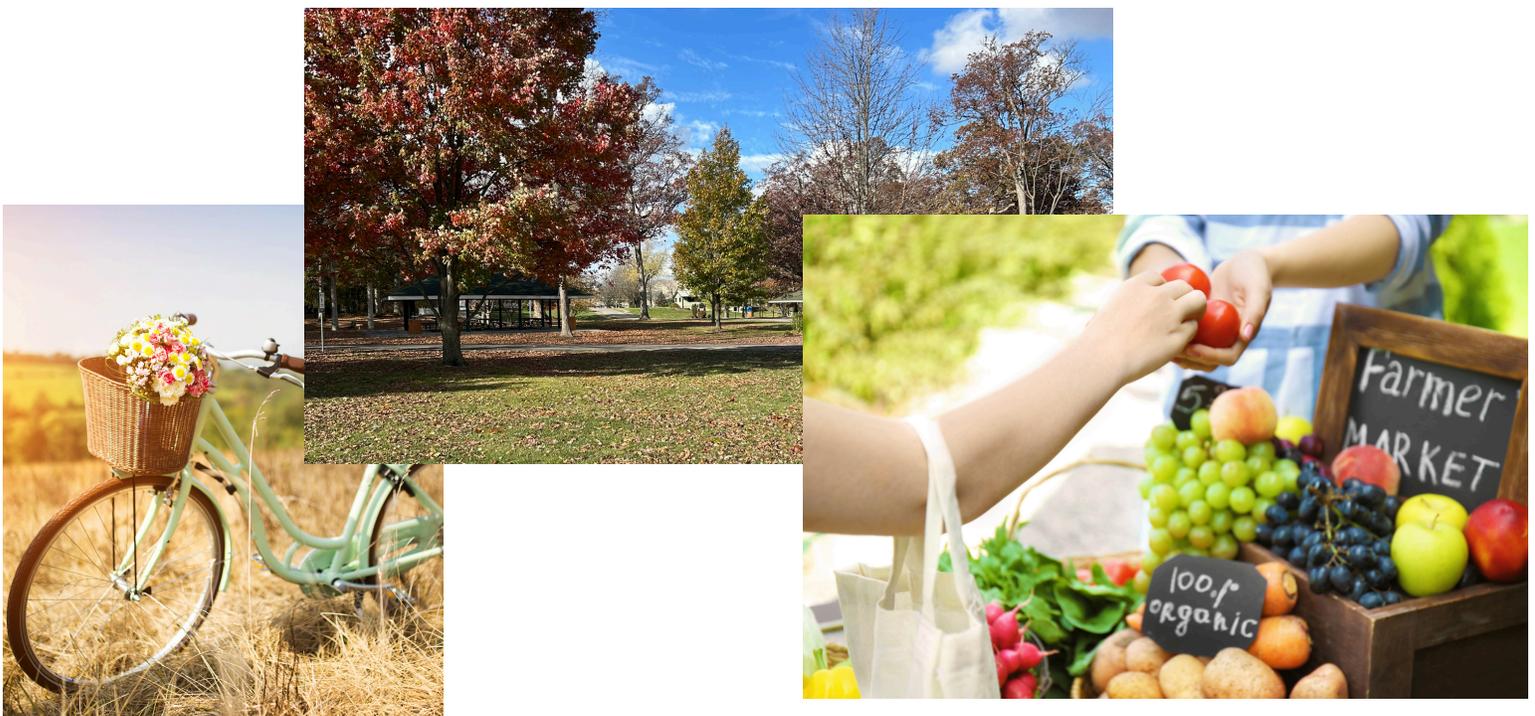
Health Promotion Division

Creating Health Communities Grant

The Creating Healthy Communities Grant began in October 2024 with a focus on community engagement to promote active living and healthy eating. Proposed initiatives include the Ottawa Bike Rack Project, which aims to install artistic bike racks in local parks to encourage cycling and reduce car use and paving the Memorial Park walking path to improve accessibility for both walkers and cyclists, enhancing local recreational spaces.

Additionally, PCHD is collaborating with Go Ottawa and the Ottawa Farmers Market Manager to gather feedback on improving the Farmers Market, including expanding vendor variety and accepting SNAP/WIC benefits. To support these efforts, steering committees are being formed in both Leipsic and Ottawa to conduct food and active living assessments, helping identify community needs and develop programs like community gardens, improved parks, and better walking/bike paths.

If you'd like to get involved in either steering committee or for more information, please reach out to Andrew Burwell at 419-523-5608 ext.121.



Adolescent Health Grant

The Adolescent Health Grant focuses on providing adults that work with youth a training program, developed by Nationwide Children’s Hospital, called Building Resiliency with Youth: A How-To Guide for Safe Adults. The Adolescent Health Advisory Committee has been working to identify priority adults in our community to train, plan a training event and explore future youth focused projects. The Northwest Ohio Resilient Youth Project is a multi-county project working with other counties to provide this training.

Community Engagement



The Health Promotion Division also represents PCHD at various community events and health fairs. In August 2024, we had a booth at the Kids Fest at Ottawa Memorial Park where parents received health education and children played educational games promoting physical activity and nutrition.



Youth Tobacco Contract

The Youth Tobacco Contract is focused on youth driven goals around tobacco prevention and cessation for youth in Putnam County. After spending 2024 planning, the Putnam Youth Tobacco Awareness coalition is moving into the action steps of those goals for 2025. The goal of the coalition is to “increase the community’s awareness of health concerns around cigarettes and electronic cigarettes to prevent new nicotine users and to help support existing nicotine users.” For the full Action Plan, and to learn how you can get involved, visit our website at putnamhealth.com/PCyouthprojects.



Contact Sarah at the PCHD at sarah.nsiah@putnamhealth.com to learn more about these youth focused projects.

Environmental Health Division

The Environmental Health Division works to address environmental issues that affect the overall population. Our food inspectors play an important role in educating and ensuring food safety. The private water program works to verify that water from private sources such as wells and ponds is safe to drink and poses no risk of contamination. The sewage program helps to minimize the impact of the wastewater generated in our environment. The sewage Operation and Maintenance program helps to ensure nuisances caused by sewage management systems are identified and minimized. Through inspecting public recreational water, schools, campgrounds, body art facilities, health nuisances, and overseeing the rabies surveillance program, we strive to achieve a healthy and safe Putnam County.

Trends of Environmental Health Programs

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| FSO/RFE Licenses | 316 | 344 | 331 | 261 | 305 | 304 | 250 | 307 |
| Inspections of FSO/RFE | 507 | 595 | 641 | 377 | 457 | 502 | 536 | 507 |
| Violations Cited * | 868 | 1258 | 2007 | 1053 | 1179 | 1592 | 937 | 463 |
| Pools and Spas Licenses | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Campgrounds Licenses | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| School Inspections | 30 | 28 | 28 | 3 | 10 | 17 | 35 | 25 |
| STS Permits + | 49 | 49 | 46 | 46 | 35 | 49 | 52 | 28 |
| STS Site Evaluations | 56 | 47 | 44 | 57 | 61 | 47 | 54 | 39 |
| Operation Permits | 50 | 629 | 651 | 828 | 803 | 1070 | 1330 | 1130 |
| PWS Permits | 50 | 51 | 59 | 54 | 74 | 62 | 68 | 61 |
| Water Samples | 180 | 182 | 147 | 131 | 222 | 172 | 150 | 159 |
| Animal Bites | 42 | 42 | 60 | 49 | 45 | 53 | 66 | 63 |
| Nuisances | 12 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 11 | 13 |

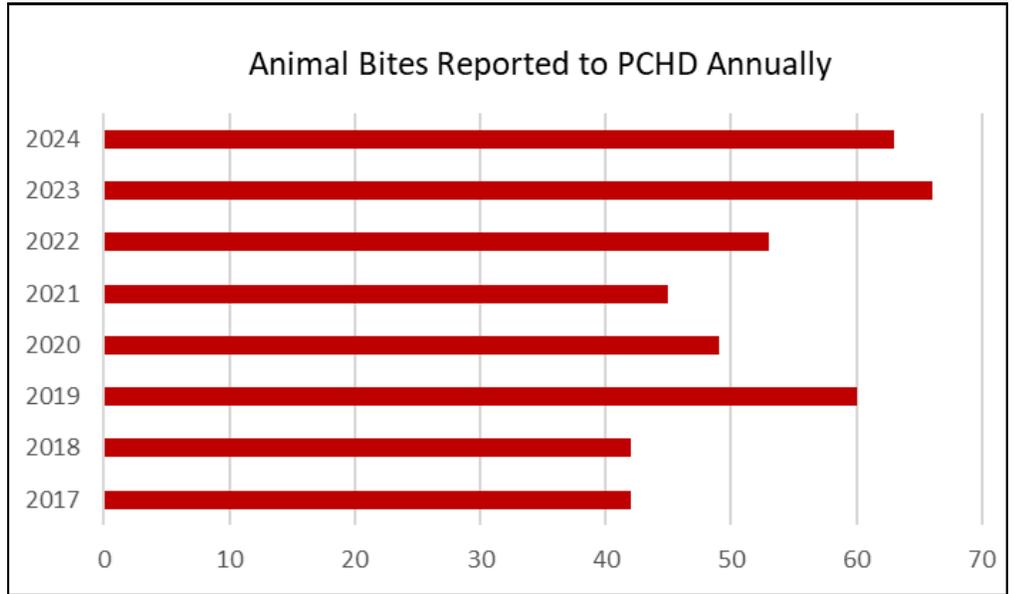
*The number of violations does not include temporary food facilities. +The number does not include sewage treatment systems abandonment permits.

Operation and Maintenance Program

Through sewage rules that became effective January 1, 2015, the Ohio Department of Health mandated that each homeowner with a septic system obtain a permit through the Putnam County Health Department to ensure each septic system is properly operating and being regularly maintained, which is critical to its longevity. 2024 began the 7th year of the program with 1,130 Operation and Maintenance Permits being issued. While the program continues to be challenging, most residents recognize the importance of helping Putnam County care for Ohio's waterways.

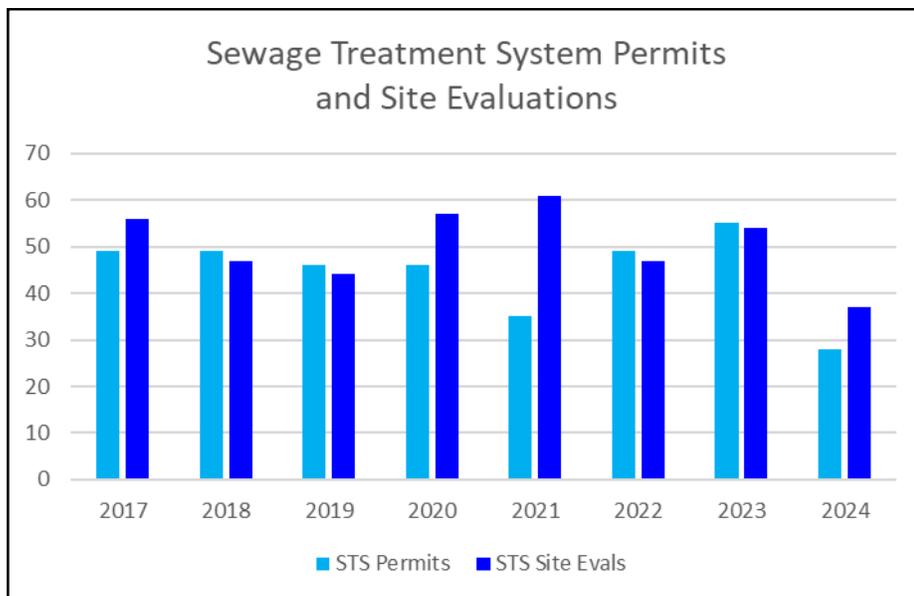
Rabies Surveillance Program

In 2024, the health department followed up on 63 reported animal bites, working with physicians, veterinarians, and animal owners to follow up on quarantine requirements. In July 2024, Putnam County received a call about 2 dogs who were exposed to a bat. The bat tested positive for rabies, resulting in our staff issuing a quarantine for the exposed dogs for 4 months, ensuring they were vaccinated, and making sure a veterinarian examination confirmed they were not exhibiting rabies symptoms prior to quarantine release.



Sewage Treatment System

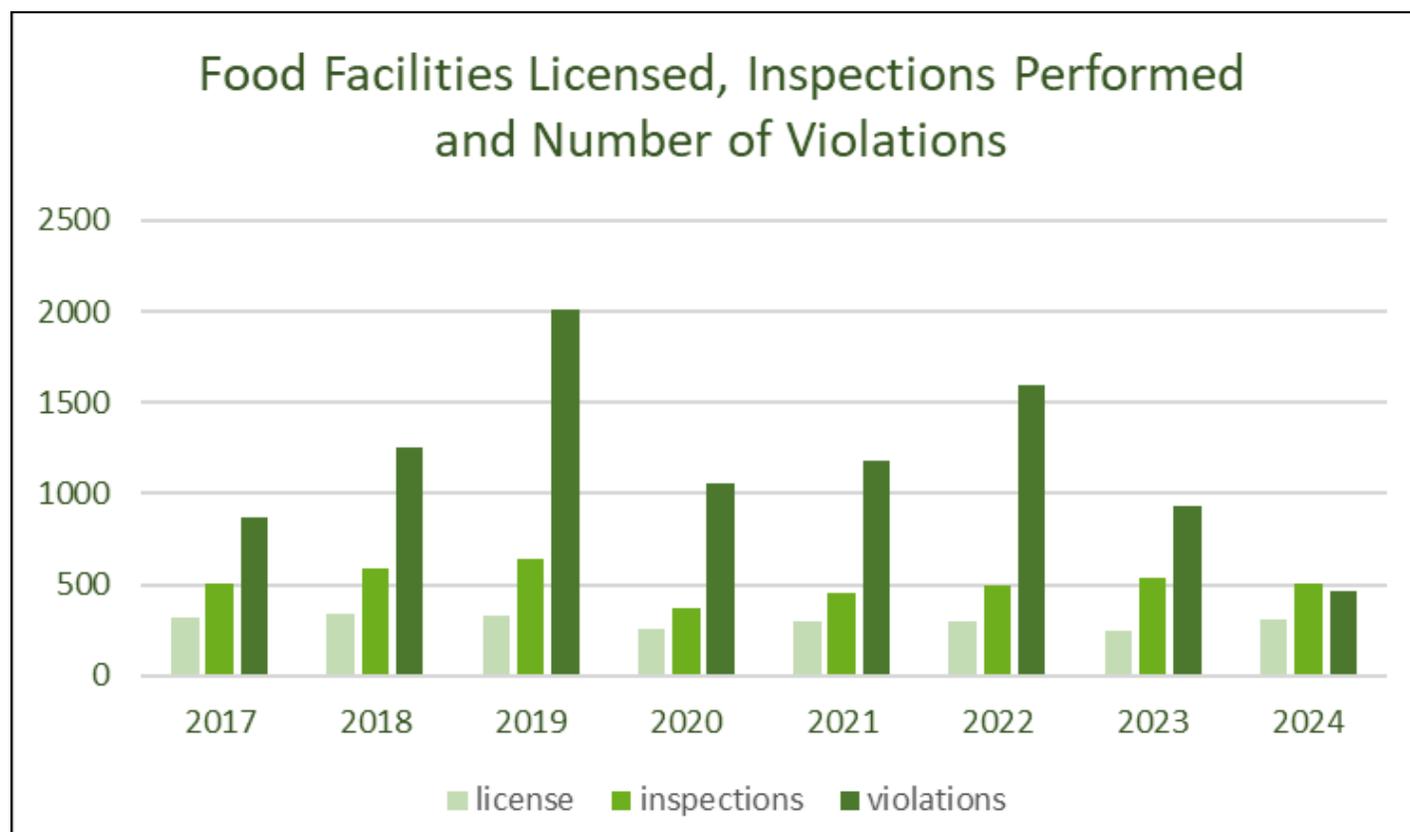
The Putnam County Health Department was recently awarded \$150,000 by the Ohio EPA’s Water Pollution Control Loan Fund, which assists low-income homeowners with the repair or replacement of failing sewage treatment systems. An application must be completed to determine eligibility. If the applicant qualifies, funding may be awarded to cover 50%, 85% or 100% of the repair or installation cost of a sewage treatment system. This program depends on registered Sewage Treatment Installers to bid on each project.



There were 28 Sewage Treatment System permits issued and 39 site evaluations completed in 2024. In December, Putnam County worked with Paulding County to provide a Sewage Contractor Training, for contractors to obtain required education hours to remain registered with the PCHD.

Food Safety Program

In 2024, changes were made to the Food Code regarding the requirement to identify, in writing, food items containing common food allergens such as dairy, peanuts, and tree nuts among others. This rule applies to all licensed food service operations (FSOs) and retail food establishments (RFEs) that offer unpackaged foods, including temporary and mobile FSO's and RFE's. Staff notified facilities of the changes and provided example templates to best ensure compliance.



The Environmental Health Division completed a Quality Improvement project in 2022 which focused on the reduction of violations at food facilities. The most frequently cited violations were identified, and educational materials were also created and distributed to each facility by our staff to specifically target issues causing these violations.

After providing these materials to the facilities the results indicated a 40% reduction in the top 10 most cited critical violations at Risk Level III and IV food facilities between the 2022 and 2023 license years. Decreases in these violations continued into 2024 as shown in the chart above, identifying a 3-year trend in the reduction of critical violations.

Private Water Systems

All newly constructed and altered private water systems require a permit from the health department before work on the system begins. Water samples are collected for each new or altered private water system. Water samples are also collected from citizens, such as individuals needing tests for foster care, adoptions, or local businesses by request.

61
water
Permits
Issued

159
Water
Samples
Collected

Staff Wellness

Through 2024, staff participated in activities to improve their own personal wellness including educational sessions and participating in the O.G. Run Walk Club event (pictured below).



Contact Us

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Ottawa, Ohio 45875
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Learn More

Website:
www.putnamhealth.org
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/PutnamCountyHealthDepartment
Instagram:
[putnamcohealth](https://www.instagram.com/putnamcohealth)