

Putnam County Health Department 2025 Annual Report



“Working toward a healthy and safe Putnam County”

Greeting

It is with great pleasure that I share with you Putnam County Health Department's 2025 Annual Report. As I review this Annual Report, I feel pride in the programs we provide as well as the employees who work hard every day to keep those programs running smoothly. Those who have heard me speak may know that I call the Health Department "the best kept secret in Putnam County". Not only do we serve all residents of our county, but we also belong to a profession that has added approximately 30 years to the life expectancy of our population.

While there are residents who come to our agency to seek services such as obtaining a birth or death certificate, receiving vaccines, and obtaining information about a well or septic system for their new home, a larger portion of our population benefits from our services without knowing that we are working behind the scenes to keep everyone healthy. We provide inspections of our pools and restaurants and monitor communicable diseases. In addition, our Health Promotion Staff lead community agencies in planning health programs for our county based on the results of our Community Health Assessment. When there are no outbreaks in the community, and when babies, children, adults and seniors are protected from preventable disease – that's public health quietly doing its job.

It is fitting that our Mission is to *Protect, promote and improve the health, safety and quality of life for **everyone** in Putnam County.* The information above provides a very small number of examples of how we serve our community. I encourage you to review this Annual Report for more information about what we have done in 2025. We are excited to present this information to you. It is our goal in 2026 to build on our successes and continue to serve our residents with the outcome of a healthier Putnam County.



Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES
Health Commissioner

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Core Values

1

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.

2

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

3

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

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.

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.

Members of the 2025 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,
Joe Burkhart, Kyle Stechschulte

Department Staff



Health Commissioner

Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES

Personal Health Services Division

Sherri Recker, RN, MSN, Director of Nursing

Allison Rosebrock, RN, BSN, Nurse Supervisor

Dunel Fry, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Dawn Schmenk, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Rachael Ruhe, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Environmental Public Health Division

Beth Skulina, M.Ed., REHS, Director of Environmental Health

Lisa Pope, Environmental Health Tech-Operational & Maintenance Program

Lori Trame, Registered Environmental Health Specialist In Training

Administration & Vital Statistics Division

Jodie Lammers, Director of Fiscal & Human Resources

Laurie Meyer, Nursing Administrative Assistant

Stacy Meyer, Administrative Assistant & Registrar

Abigail Greve, Environmental Health Administrative Assistant

Health Promotion Division

Sherri Recker, RN, MSN, Director of Health Promotion

Sarah Nsiah, CHES, CTTS, Health Educator

Andrew Burwell, MPH, Health Educator/Epidemiologist

Dolores Garcia, Community Health Worker

2025 New Employee Spotlight

Jacob Levandowski, Registered Environmental Health Specialist in Training

Carrie Pessefall, Public Information Officer/Accreditation Coordinator

Reeann Arendt, Nursing Administrative Assistant

Work Force Plan Approval



“Your workforce is your most valuable asset.” This quote by Harvey Mackay is true in any business, including your local health department. The Public Health Accreditation Board also understands the importance of having a highly effective public health team as an entire domain for our accreditation surrounds hiring and maintaining an effective workforce.

Our Workforce Development Plan is designed to help us stay on track to meet our workforce goals. Our first step to create our Workforce Development Plan was to identify our Core Competencies. These Core Competencies are skills that we feel every employee must demonstrate regardless of the division they work in or the position they hold. After determining the Core Competencies, a Training Needs Assessment was completed with the staff so that we could determine what trainings we should provide for the staff. Competencies with the lowest ranking were chosen for the training plan for 2026.

In addition to focusing on training, we also identified steps to improve employee retention. Our rate of employee retention is higher than the average for local health departments, however, this continues to be important for us. Each year, an employee satisfaction survey is completed and we develop policies and activities to help retain our employees.

The last piece of the Workforce Development Plan was to make sure that it aligns with our other plans such as our Strategic Plan and our Quality Improvement Plan. Ensuring that the plans complement each other helps guarantee that we are achieving success in moving our Health Department forward.

Years of Service



Dawn Schmenk

Kim Rieman

Allie Rosebrock

Dawn Schmenk has served the Putnam County Community for 25 years! She began as a Tobacco Prevention Educator and in 2002 transitioned to the Nursing Division where she implements all programs including vision screenings in the schools, immunization clinics, car seats, Complex Medical Help, and our new program at Brookhill. Thank you, Dawn, for your many years of service!

Kim Rieman came to PCHD in 2015 and has served 10 years as the Health Commissioner. Her responsibilities include leading the department, responding to health concerns and partnering with local organizations. She also assists in leading Putnam County Homecare and Hospice.

Allison Rosebrock has been with PCHD for 5 years and currently serves as our Nursing Supervisor. In addition to planning and evaluating our Personal Health Services and assisting the nurses in implementing the programs, she is also an active member of Putnam County's Senior Coalition. Allie is a member of our Leadership Team and helps provide guidance for the entire Department.

Finances

Balance as of January 1, 2025 \$1,332,049.27

REVENUE	
Putnam County Tax Levy	\$530,616.91
Other Local Government Funds	15,406.48
Federal/State Grants/Subsidy	606,469.95
Service Fees	670,324.54
Misc. Grants/Receipts	535,312.93
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,358,130.81

January 1 Balance + Receipts \$3,690,180.08

EXPENSES	
Administrative Costs	\$1,376,094.25
Supplies (Medical, Office, Program)	\$211,073.20
ODH Grants	\$697,535.91
WPCLF Grant	\$86,822.00
Share to State	\$39,896.16
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,411,421.52

Balance as of December 31, 2025 \$ 1,278,758.56

Personal Health Services Division

Communicable Disease

The Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-3 was revised in October 2025, effectively updating what is required by law to report to the local public health department.

There were multiple changes, including reporting only hospitalized COVID-19 cases. This change contributes to the decrease noted.

Also of note is the increase in vaccine preventable diseases such as Pertussis and Varicella, highlighting the importance of vaccination.

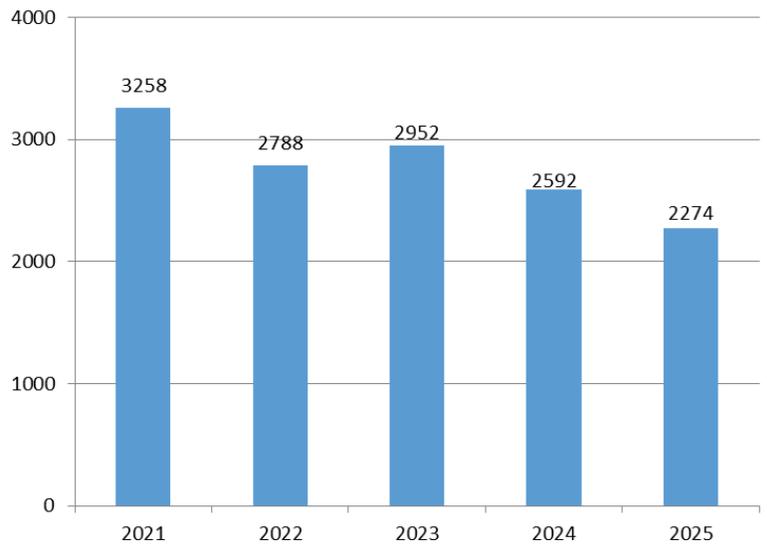
318 communicable diseases were reported in 2025.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES	NUMBER OF CASES
Amebiasis	2
Babesiosis	1
Campylobacter	17
COVID-19	170
Coccidioidomycosis	2
Chlamydia	34
Cyclosporiasis	1
E. Coli, Shiga Toxin-producing	1
Gonorrhea	11
Hepatitis A	1
Hepatitis C-chronic	2
Influenza-assoc. hospitalization	46
Legionellosis	1
Lyme Disease	5
Meningitis-viral	3
Meningitis-bacterial	1
Mumps	1
Pertussis	3
Salmonella Paratyphi Infection	1
Salmonellosis	1
Streptococcus pneumoniae - invasive antibiotic resistance unknown or non-resistant	5
Streptococcal pneumoniae-invasive antibiotic resistant/intermediate	1
Tuberculosis	1
Varicella	4
West Nile Virus	1
Yersiniosis	2

Vision Screenings

PCHD provided state-mandated vision screenings to contracted schools in kindergarten, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11th grade. Although there is a decrease in the number of births in Putnam County, the decrease noted in the chart may also be attributed to school nurses completing their school's vision screenings.

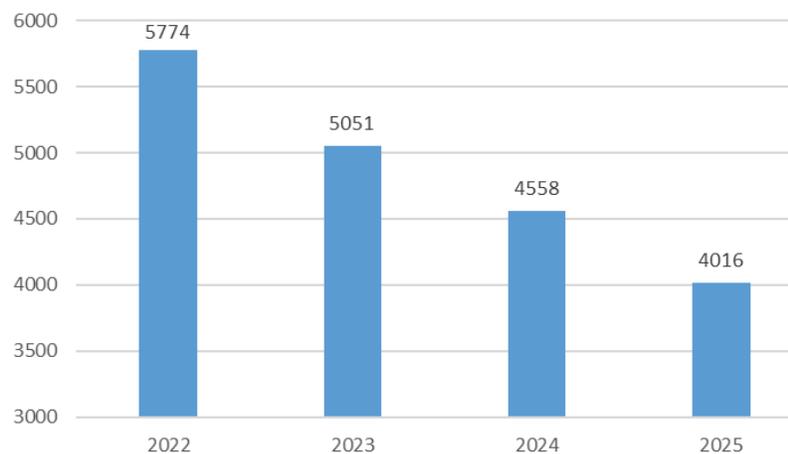
vision screenings per year



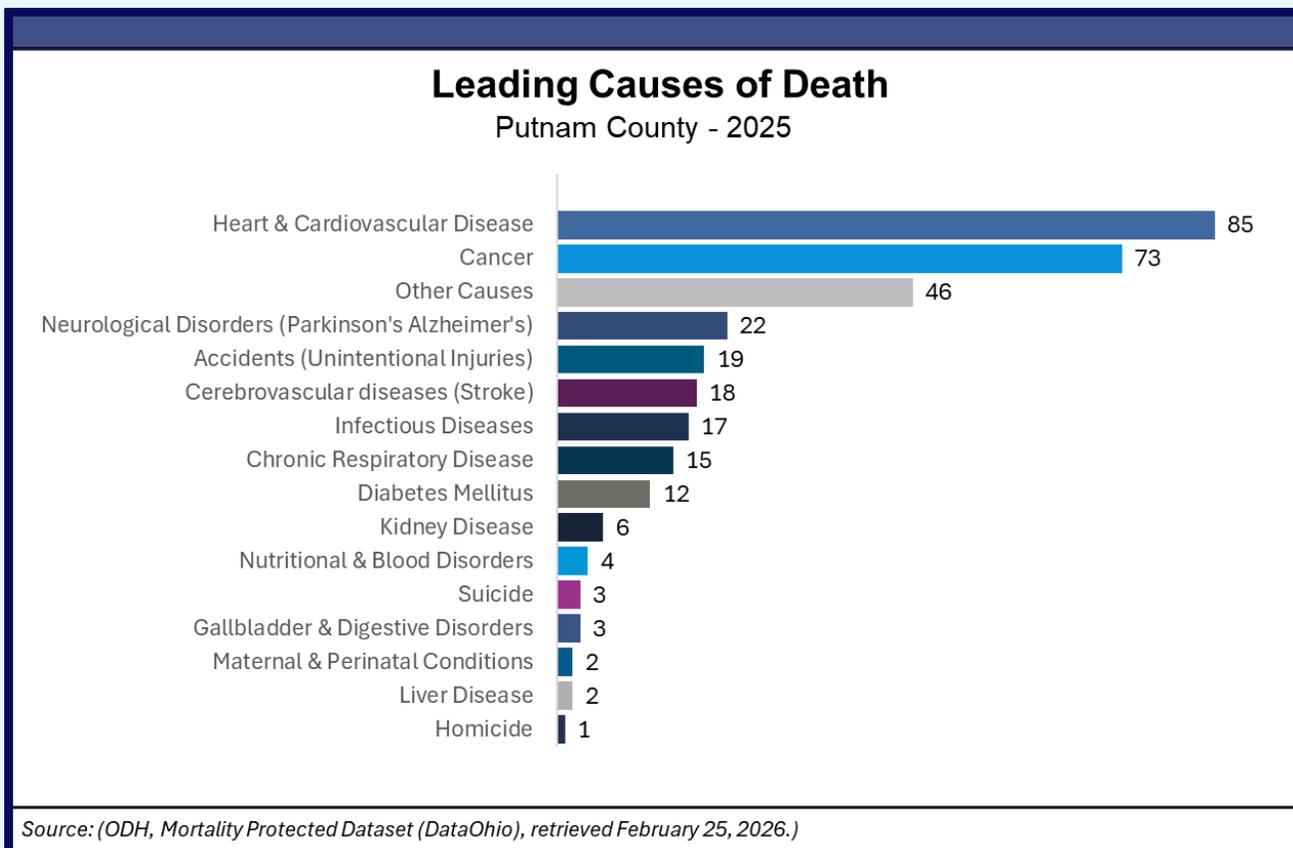
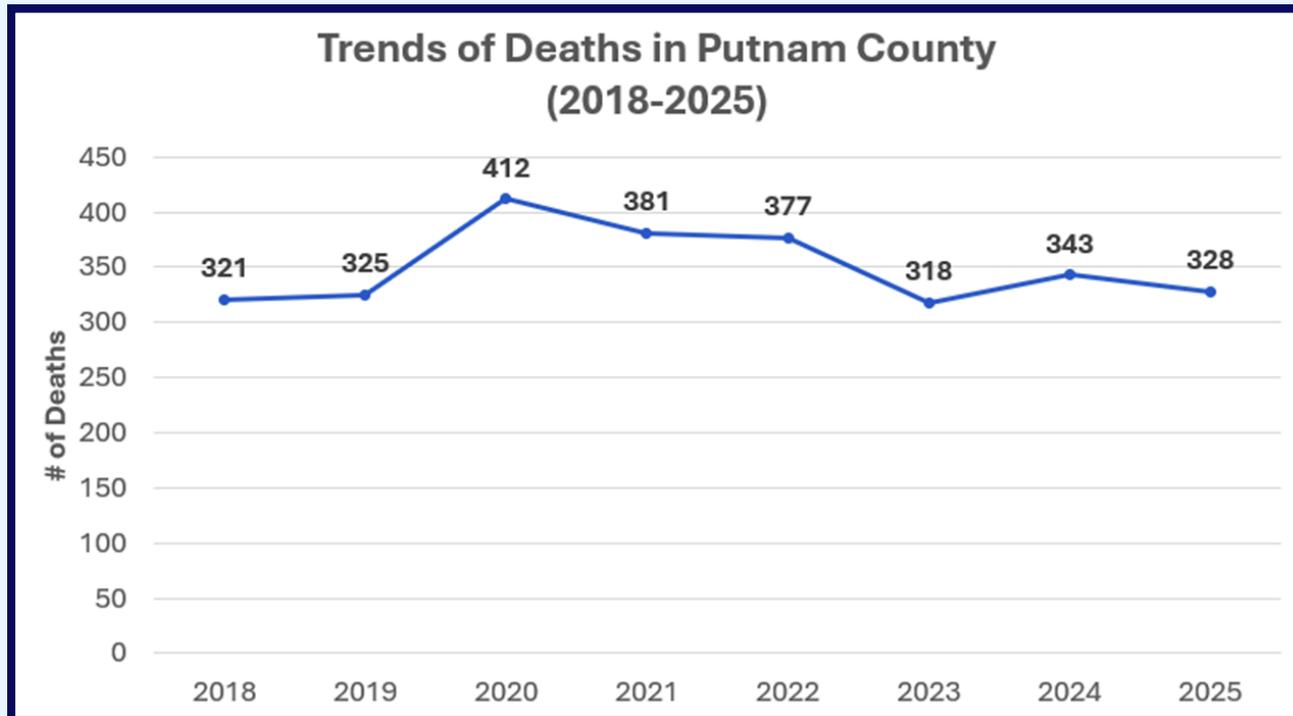
Immunizations

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 is beginning to see, it leaves residents vulnerable to vaccine preventable bacteria and viruses infiltrating our population.

Vaccines Administered Annually



Vital Statistics



Health Promotion Division



Putnam P.A.T.H. Program

A new program titled Putnam P.A.T.H (Providing Access Together for Help) Program was started with the goal of helping residents access local services needed to improve their quality of life.

Dolores Garcia was hired as the Community Health Worker to administer this program. The health department contracted with the Pathways HUB in Toledo who provides training for community health workers, supervisors, and billing services to make the program more sustainable.

Since this is a new program offered at PCHD, 2025 focused on partner agency and community awareness for client referrals as well as linking residents to health care, accessing insurance, and social services. We are looking forward to continued efforts to reach our most vulnerable residents and improving health for all in 2026.

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program

The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program works to make the healthy choice the easy choice for residents of Ottawa and Leipsic. Through collaboration with community members, local organizations, businesses, and civic leaders, CHC focuses on improving access to healthy food and creating safe, accessible opportunities for physical activity.

The PCHD received a grant to focus on the Ottawa and Leipsic communities related to their higher risk populations.



Over the past year, CHC advanced several initiatives aimed at strengthening community environments that support healthy living. This included continued progress toward revitalizing Ottawa Memorial Park. With the help of community volunteers, CHC conducted multiple assessments and observational studies that directly impacted the development of a long-term park revitalization plan focused on accessibility, safety, and inclusive design.

CHC also expanded efforts to improve healthy food access across the community. At the Ottawa Farmers Market, work focused on strengthening operations and expanding nutrition incentive and benefit programs to ensure fresh, locally grown foods are accessible to residents of all income levels.

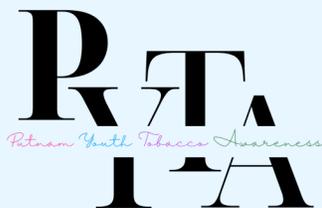
In addition to farmers market improvements, CHC is actively partnering with food pantries in Ottawa and Leipsic to support food availability and provide practical, respectful guidance that helps patrons make healthier food choices. To further connect food-insecure residents with available supports, CHC is developing a community Food Resource Guide that will compile information on local community meals, food pantries, assistance programs, and services that can be found in Putnam County. Once completed, the guide will be made publicly available to help residents more easily navigate and access food resources.

Tobacco Grant

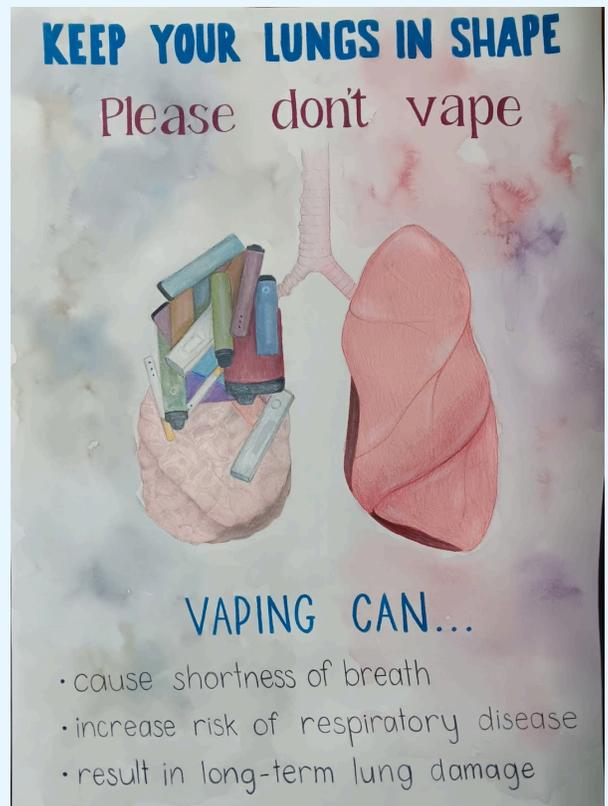
2025 was a significant year for the Tobacco Grant. As part of the Tobacco Contract in June, we conducted tobacco retailer audits throughout Putnam County to better understand how tobacco products are marketed in our community, particularly in ways that may influence youth. The audit found that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the retailers had tobacco products near toys, candy or gum which normalizes tobacco products for children. 42% of stores had ads for non-menthol cigarettes. More surprising numbers were that 20 out of the 24 tobacco retailers sold nicotine pouches along with 38% of the stores having ads for those nicotine pouches (such as Zyn.)



In July 2025, the Putnam County Health Department was awarded the Tobacco Grant by the Ohio Department of Health. The goals of the Putnam Youth Tobacco Coalition are to impact tobacco policies within the schools, and at the village level to help protect and support youth.



As part of bringing awareness to our community, students from 9 Putnam County Schools participated in a county-wide Anti-Vaping Art Contest in the Fall. The students did an amazing job and learned how addictive and harmful the nicotine in vapes can be. One student said “The most memorable thing I learned during this anti-vaping art contest was learning all about vaping. I never knew how bad it was till I had to do research for the project.”



Environmental Health Division

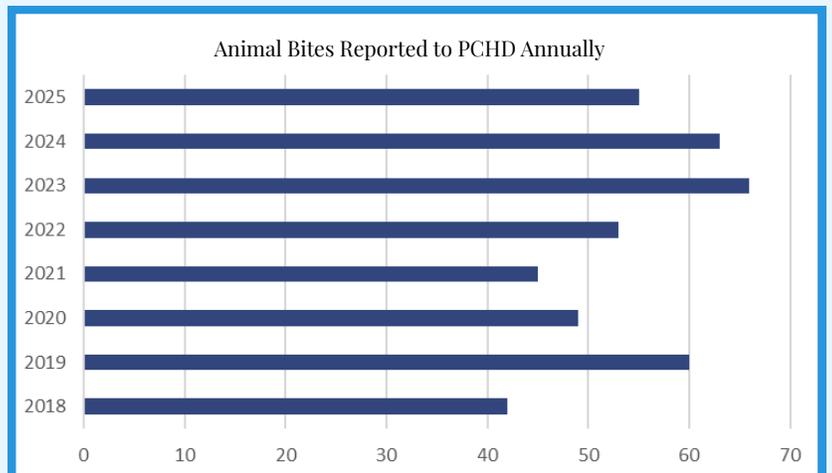
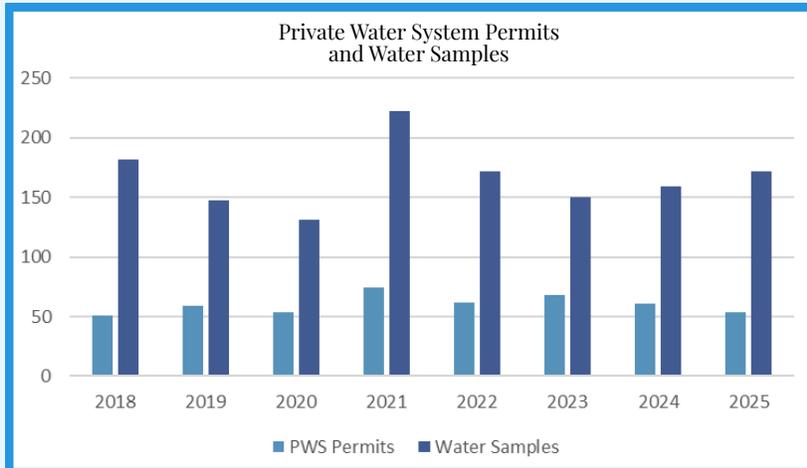
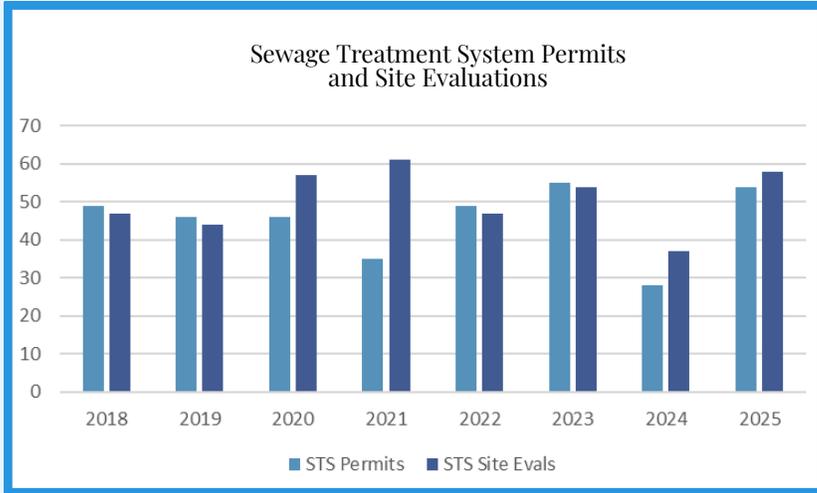
The Environmental Health Division plays a critical role within Putnam County by protecting the public from environmental factors that can negatively impact health, safety, and quality of life. While many people associate public health primarily with clinical services, environmental health focuses on prevention—addressing risks before they cause illness or injury.

One of the most visible responsibilities of the environmental health division is the regulation of food service operations. By enforcing the Ohio Administrative Code related to food safety, environmental health professionals help prevent foodborne illnesses that can lead to outbreaks, hospitalizations, and even deaths. Routine inspections, education of food service workers, and enforcement actions ensure that restaurants, schools, and institutions maintain proper food handling, temperature controls and sanitation. These efforts protect residents while supporting public confidence in local food establishments.

The Environmental Health Division also oversees private water systems and sewage treatment systems. Proper design, installation, and maintenance of wells and septic systems are essential for preventing contamination of drinking water and surface water. By conducting site evaluations, issuing permits, and responding to complaints or failures, environmental health staff help reduce the risk of waterborne diseases and protect Ohio's natural resources.

The Environmental Health Division is a cornerstone of Putnam County's public health system. Through education, inspection, regulation, and collaboration, environmental health professionals prevent disease, protect natural resources, and enhance the overall well-being of Putnam County residents. Our work often goes unnoticed when it is done well, yet it is fundamental to creating safe, healthy communities within Putnam County.

Environmental Health Program Numbers



Tips From Environmental Health

Sewage Treatment System

Maintaining your septic system is essential for protecting your home, health, and the environment. A well-functioning septic system safely treats wastewater, preventing contamination of groundwater and nearby ecosystems. Neglecting maintenance can lead to costly repairs, foul odors, and even hazardous sewage backups.

Routine inspections and pumping—typically every 3 to 5 years—keeps the system operating efficiently. Overloading the tank with water or flushing non-biodegradable items can disrupt the balance of bacteria that break down waste, leading to clogs and system failure. Using septic-safe products and conserving water helps extend the life of your system.

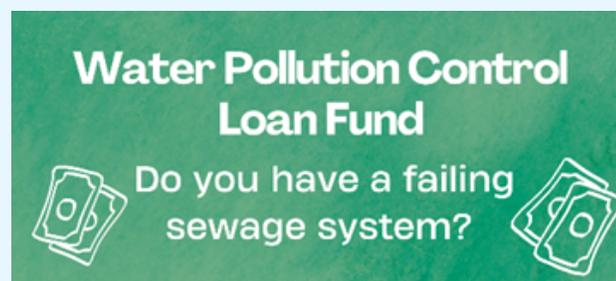
Proper care also safeguards public health. Untreated wastewater can carry harmful pathogens and pollutants, posing risks to drinking water sources, wildlife, and recreational waters. By investing in regular upkeep, homeowners not only avoid expensive emergencies but also contribute to a cleaner, safer community. In short, a little attention goes a long way. Treat your septic system like the vital infrastructure it is—because when it fails, the consequences are anything but pleasant.

Operation and Maintenance Program

2025 completed the eighth year of the ten-year implementation plan of our Operation and Maintenance (O&M) program required by the Ohio Administrative Code. 1269 O&M permits were issued in 2025. Each O&M permit includes terms and conditions for maintenance of a sewage treatment system. An O&M permit does not allow the existing sewage treatment system to be connected to a new or altered dwelling, or allow alterations to existing sewage treatment systems

WPCLF

In 2025, the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) program provided \$150,000 to repair or replace twelve failing sewage treatment systems. PCHD is accepting WPCLF applications for 2026 funding. Please contact the Environmental Division at 419-523-5608 to have an application sent or go to putnamhealth.com, Environmental, Sewage section for more information.



Contact Us



419-523-5608



www.putnamhealth.org



www.facebook.com/PutnamCountyHealthDepartment



256 Williamstown Road
Ottawa, Ohio 45875



[putnamcohealth](https://www.instagram.com/putnamcohealth)

