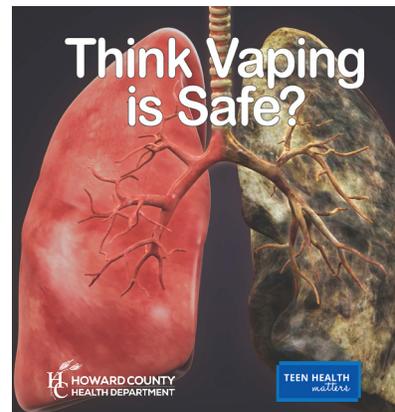
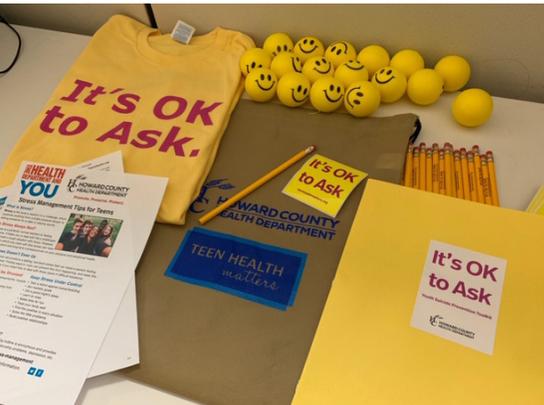


2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Promote. Preserve. Protect.

A Message from the Health Officer

Dear Howard County Residents and Partners:

The Howard County Health Department (HCHD) is pleased to present its 2019 Annual Report. Delivering high quality core public health services that promote, preserve and protect our community is a deep-seated value we embrace. On a daily basis, we conduct disease surveillance and monitor for outbreaks such as the novel coronavirus; we ensure the food we eat and the water we drink is safe; we connect our residents to critical health services and so much more. We also tackle emerging issues that arise and require action. This report highlights the Department's commitment to addressing those issues head on using innovative approaches and strong community partnerships.

In 2019, we continued to battle the opioid crisis and are encouraged by the reduction seen in opioid overdoses in our community --a testament to our partnerships and programming. We are also now implementing programs and media campaigns to address mental health challenges plaguing our County and to warn of the dangers of vaping. We continue to focus on increasing access to healthcare for our residents through insurance, school-based wellness centers and new technologies without which they cannot improve their health.

We are proud to share that our efforts have received national attention, and this energizes us to keep doing more to improve the health of our community. Be sure to follow us on social media to get an up-to-date glimpse of us in action. You can also sign up for news and alerts by visiting our website at www.hchealth.org.

Maura J. Rossman, MD
Health Officer



2019 Accomplishments

Behavioral Health

- In the last year, **reduced opioid related fatalities by 42% and non-fatal overdoses by 14%**. This was made possible by a vast network of collaborative partnerships and interagency programming.
- **Launched "It's OK to Ask," a public campaign to reduce youth suicide** by encouraging youth and adults to openly talk about suicide.
- **Launched *Sources of Strength*, a best-practice youth suicide prevention project** where peer leaders and adult advisors are trained to design and share Hope, Help & Strength-based messages with youth in the community to prevent suicide, bullying and substance use.
- **Completed construction of the new Howard House treatment site, increasing the number of beds by 7% and expanded levels of treatment provided.**
- **Expanded 24/7 substance use disorder crisis services at Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center.**



Population Health

- **Launched an anti-vaping campaign, "Think Vaping is Safe?"** in response to the national outbreak of lung injuries associated with e-cigarette use.

Improving Access to Healthcare

- During Open Enrollment, the department and partners **enrolled over 10,300 Howard County residents in health insurance.**
- **Implemented use of video conferencing technology into programs as a cost-effective and convenient strategy to improve access to services.** Now patients taking medications can be monitored remotely ensuring treatment is completed successfully and education and support is provided to breastfeeding mothers.
- **Opened a new school-based telemedicine site that included three schools, Cradlerock ES, Lake**

Elkhorn MS and The Judy Center, increasing the total number of school-based wellness sites from 9 to 12. This program increases access to healthcare for students who may face challenges accessing a physician, improves health, reduces absenteeism, and improves academic success to high need areas of the County.

Environmental Health

- **Launched a community engagement plan to help residents and business owners better navigate environmental regulations and application processes.** This includes an online toolkit and onsite assistance to aid business owners and residents in navigating environmental regulations.

National Recognition

Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Recognition

- National Accreditation was awarded to HCHD by the Public Health Accreditation Board. Howard became 1 of 8 accredited agencies in Maryland and 1 of 283 accredited health departments nationwide.



National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) Award:

- **Teen STI Awareness Pilot Program offers easy, convenient and private STI screening for teens.** They collect samples themselves and mail them to the Johns Hopkins University laboratory for screening and check their results online when testing is completed. This program aims to reduce the increased rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in youth observed within the County. (Lead Staff: *Jacqueline Douge, MD*)

National Association of Counties (NACo) Awards:

- **School-Based Telemedicine Program uses technology to increase access to healthcare for students who may face challenges accessing a physician.** This program is a partnership with HCPSS, HCGH and Community Pediatric Practices that improves health, reduces absenteeism and improves academic success to high need areas of the County. (Lead Staff: *Sharon Hobson, RN*)



- **CAREAPP project (Community Access to Resources through Enhanced Technology Applications for Providers and Public) uses a technology application to connect residents with needed resources that impact a person's well-being.** This focuses on creating a comprehensive web-based, searchable directory of resources and an online referral system. (Lead Staff: *Elizabeth Menachery, MD and team*)

New Initiatives for 2020

Increase access to recovery and treatment with expanded Peer Recovery Support staff at partner agencies, including Howard County General Hospital and the HCPSS Homewood Campus.

Partner with HCPD and Courts to launch a diversion program that redirects low-level offenders engaged in drug-related activities to community-based services instead of jail.

Expand behavioral health treatment services for rapid access placements for uninsured and underinsured residents.

Launch harm reduction program and mobile health van to improve healthcare services to persons using drugs.

Launch the Mobile Integrated Community Health (MICH) program in collaboration with County DFRS, County DCRS, and Howard County General Hospital to focus on chronic disease management of high healthcare utilizers to transform and improve health in Howard County.

Reduce health concerns by expanding diabetes prevention and management programming.

Launch health literacy campaign to empower residents to access services to manage and improve their health.

Expand CAREAPP to new programs, allowing residents to directly connect with much needed social supports and healthcare services.



2019 Health Department Statistics at a Glance

Environmental Health

Mandated Inspections	1,955
Rabies Cases Investigated	703
Pool Inspections	1,393
Building Permit Reviews	848

Access to Care

MCHP Applications Processed	23,779
MA Transports Provided	56,556

Health Services

Avg # of WIC Clients	4,071
% of Breastfed Babies in WIC	49.4%
Child Immunizations Provided	3,305
% Return to Class after SBWC Visit	99.7%
# of Individuals Served in Reproductive Health Clinics	1,651
# of Visits to HCC Clinic	124

Behavioral Health

SBIRT Screenings	1,468
Peer Overdose Response Referrals	466
Overdose Response Trainings	156
People Trained in Overdose Response	1,994

Population Health

AERS Evaluations Completed	1,258
Breast, Cervical and Colon Cancer Screenings	802
Enrolled in Smoking Cessation Classes	299
Service Hours Provided by Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers	653
Tobacco Enforcement Inspections	388
Health Events Attended	83

Community Engagement

Facebook Impressions	1,731,514
Twitter Impressions	519,000
Individual LHIC Members	384
LHIC Member Organizations	134