

Renville County

Public Health

2024 Annual Report



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Renville County

Infectious Disease Prevention and Control

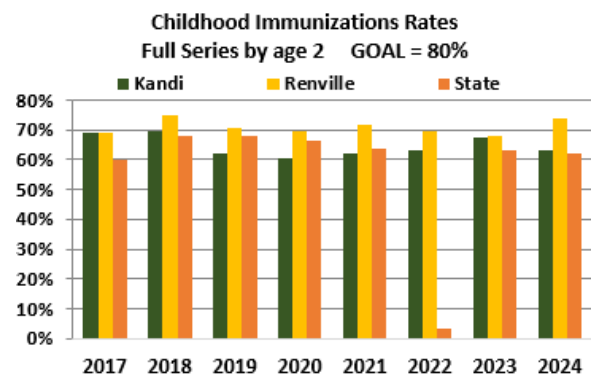
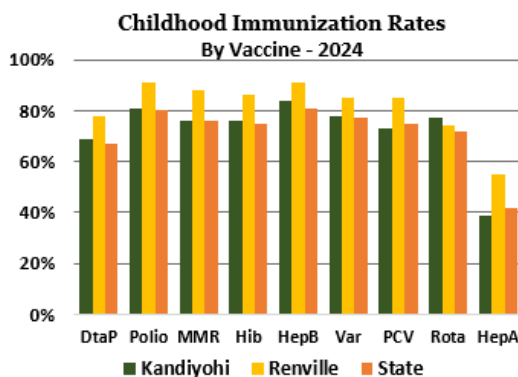
Renville County Public Health (RCPH) works with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and local healthcare providers to help stop the spread of a variety of diseases in our community. Public Health may help by checking people who are at higher risk, making sure they get follow-up tests, and meeting with sick individuals to see if they are taking their medicine correctly. Medical clinics and hospitals are notified to be on alert for diseases or conditions that affect the public's health at the local, state or federal level. *In 2024, our department stayed alert for several infectious diseases, including Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) (H5N1) and Measles. That same year, the Common Activities Framework was replaced by the Minnesota Infectious Disease Operations Guide (MIDOG). This guide explains the roles and responsibilities of local public health workers and the Minnesota Department of Health during infectious disease outbreaks and responses.*

Immunization & Immunization Registry (MIIC):

Stopping the spread of infectious disease is one of the oldest and most important jobs of public health. Vaccines play a big role in keeping people safe from these diseases. They help protect whole communities, especially children who are too young to be vaccinated or people who can't get vaccines because of health problems. Each year, RCPH gives influenza vaccinations to students and staff in local schools, as well as to Renville County employees. RCPH uses a system called MIIC (Minnesota Immunization Information Connection) to keep track of vaccine records. MIIC is a statewide program that stores vaccination records in one place. It helps people stay up to date and get the right vaccines at the right time.

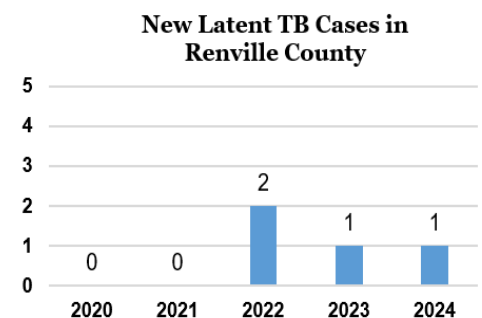
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Influenza Vaccinations Administered	349	232	208	153	140

In 2024, Renville County Public Health and Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services worked together to visit clinics in their counties as part of the Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers (IQIP) program. This was made possible through special grant funding. Important to note: There has been a concerning decline in the completion of childhood vaccine series, with a gradual downwards trend observed since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Refugee & Immigrant Health and Tuberculosis Case Management:

Public Health is a first stop for refugees and other immigrants who are new to the United States. When we get a referral, we meet with families to collect important health and immunization information. New arrivals are screened for tuberculosis (TB) and sent to local health care providers for health exams and needed vaccines. TB case management is an important part of the Infectious Disease program. This includes both latent TB infection (LTBI), which is not active, and active TB cases. *In 2024, we helped one Renville County resident by managing their TB medication. There were no active TB cases in Renville County in 2024.*



Infectious Disease Programs	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – Infectious Disease Prevention & Control	\$14,963	\$18,944	\$13,234	\$18,333	\$18,473
Expenditures – Immunizations	\$21,516	\$20,226	\$15,787	\$16,512	\$11,889
% Staff Time	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	2.0%	1.7%

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP):

Being ready for a disaster can make a big difference in how a community gets through tough times. Minnesota's local public health system needs to be ready to respond to all kinds of emergencies and help communities recover. These emergencies could include floods, tornadoes, disease outbreaks, or even manmade disasters like terrorism. Public health always plays an important role in these situations. In Renville County, our Public Health team works closely with the Southwest Healthcare Preparedness Coalition. This group includes several counties that plan and practice working together in case a disaster is too big for one area to handle alone. RCPH also pulls together a Whole Community Collaborative meeting twice each year, connecting community leaders with resources that promote the health and safety of Renville County residents.



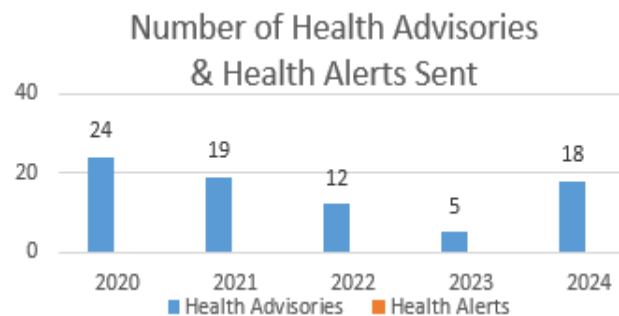
Samantha Best, PHEP Coordinator, & Mike Hennen, Emergency Manager, at Mexican Independence Day Celebration in Renville on September 14, 2024

Along with our ongoing work to respond to COVID-19 (see the Public Health Emergency Response section), we also maintained situational awareness for a number of events including Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) (H5N1) and Measles. Staff from our team participated in a full-scale tornado drill in Renville with Emergency Management and our local partners. In October 2024, all of our staff participated in a preparedness training exercise.

We also received a new grant called the Response Sustainability Grant. This is a state investment into public health emergency preparedness and response, and helps us to improve how we prepare for emergencies. It allowed us to increase hours for our Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. We were also able to host a booth with preparedness materials for community members at the Mexican Independence Day celebration in Renville; make emergency "go bags" for public health staff and WIC families; attend the deBeaumont Communications workshop in Mankato; and provide more training opportunities for our staff.

Health Alert Network (HAN):

The Health Alert Network (HAN) is a system that quickly shares important and reliable information when a disease or other event threatens the health of Minnesotans. It helps public health workers, hospitals, clinics, emergency managers, and others groups stay informed and ready to respond. Renville County Public Health is responsible for reading the messages sent by the Minnesota Department of Health and passing them on to the right local partners -like hospitals, clinics, and emergency management. We must send the messages right away and expect a response from our partners within one hour for alerts and within 24 hours for advisories.



MNResponds:

MN Responds is a national network of local volunteers dedicated to improving public health, emergency response, and community resilience. Public Health manages MN Responds, a group of volunteers who are trained, enrolled, and certified to help with Public Health emergencies or other needs in their communities or regions. Through this system, our volunteer coordinator conducts call-down drills and sends quarterly newsletters to keep registered volunteers active and informed.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures - PHEP	\$34,738	\$45,506	\$60,959	\$44,246	\$53,337
Expenditures - Response Sustainability	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$71,483
% Staff Time	1.7%	2.3%	3.7%	2.7%	4.4%

Public Health Emergency Response – COVID-19:

Public Health continued to respond to COVID-19 by communicating with the public, answering questions, connecting people to resources, and providing over-the-counter COVID-19 test kits. Thanks to grant funding, we were able to support several community projects to help build resilience and offer support. These included distributing Calm strips to schools and community partners, hosting a Bridges Out of Poverty training for community partners, and promoting immunization education through postcards, billboards, radio ads, and social media. It also provided a number of training opportunities for our staff.



Billboard in Hector, MN – October 2024
(Billboard was also in Franklin, MN and Olivia, MN)

<i>Public Health Emergency Response</i>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures - PHER	\$231,330	\$172,779	\$52,659	\$35,719	\$63,444
Expenditures – Workforce Development	n/a	\$660	\$12,855	\$12,653	\$39,571
% Staff Time	10.6%	8.5%	2.9%	1.4%	3.2%

Environmental Health

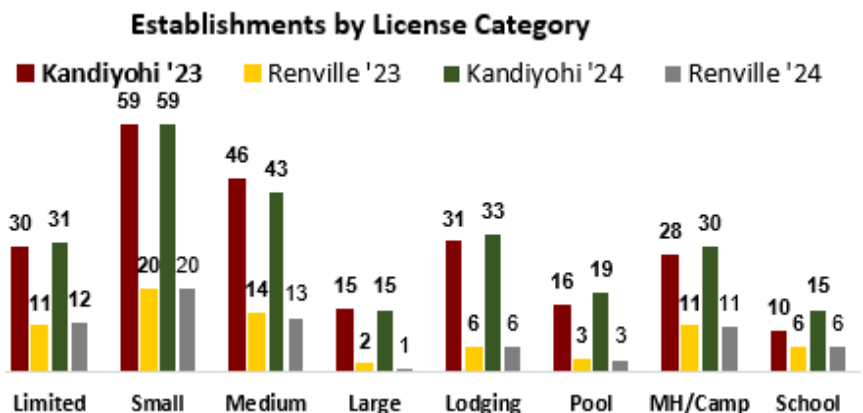
Environmental health covers important areas like clean air, clean water, safe food, good sanitation, healthy communities, and being ready for emergencies. The Environmental Health Program is managed by the Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board. This program licenses and does inspections for places like restaurants, hotels, manufactured home parks, campgrounds, swimming pools, and spas. It also reviews and approves food stands at special events and mobile food trucks.

Environmental Health Specialists respond to complaints about public health problems, issues with rental homes, and overall home conditions. They also teach and give advice to the community about topics like cleaning up meth labs, pest problems, water safety, lead, mold, radon, and other environmental health concerns. Renville County has an Environmental Health Ordinance to help guide this work.

Food, Pools, and Lodging Licensing & Inspection:

A delegation agreement with the Minnesota Department of Health allows our local program to license certain businesses. Kandiyohi and Renville counties work together to run this program. Staff do regular inspections of all licensed businesses, following state statutes and rules. After each inspection, they write a report and share it with the business manager. Teaching during inspections and following up on any problem are important parts of this program.

Our delegation agreement with MDH requires inspections of Food, Pools and Lodging establishments be conducted by a Registered Sanitarian (RS), or by an eligible candidate of registration while under the supervision of a RS and must become registered within 2 years of appointment. After a year of training and preparation, our Renville County Environmental Health Specialist is prepared to take the RS exam this Spring.



The Numbers (KaRe)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Licensed FPL Establishments	267	274	273	279
Inspections Completed	359	340	331	351
FPL Complaints	4	7	5	7
FPL Complaints which required enforcement action	0	2	2	5
Special Events Licensed	390	332	368	437

Food Violations Issued (KaRe)	2022	2023	2024
Priority 1	317	249	218
Priority 2	200	192	175
Priority 3	394	333	332
<p><u>Priority 1 violations:</u> items that directly impact hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury (such as cooking, reheating, cooling, and handwashing).</p> <p><u>Priority 2 violations:</u> items supporting Priority 1 items (such as personnel training, documentation, and labeling).</p> <p><u>Priority 3 violations:</u> item that relates to good retail practice (such as cleaning frequency, operational controls, equipment management and general maintenance).</p>			

Tobacco Licensing and Compliance Checks:

Following our Renville County Tobacco Licensing Ordinance, unannounced compliance checks are completed annually to retailers of tobacco to determine if they are selling to persons under age 21. Education is required of all establishment employees annually and upon new hire; this is attested upon renewal of their license each year.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Pass Rate	n/a	21/21	17/21	19/20	17/20

Renville County Public Health also administers a Tobacco Educate & Congratulate program. This is funded through the Department of Human Services. Staff complete unannounced visits to retailers of tobacco to determine if they are selling to persons under age 21. There is no penalty associated with these checks. If an establishment passes, they are presented with a congratulatory certificate; if they fail, education is provided.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Pass Rate	n/a	n/a	21/21	19/19	18/19

<i>Environmental Health Programs</i>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – Environmental Health	\$78,684	\$95,392	\$93,776	\$79,103	\$77,764
Expenditures – Healthy Housing	n/a	\$827	\$4,437	\$11,518	n/a
% Staff Time	4.4%	5.4%	6.0%	5.1%	4.6%

Adult Health

Case Management:

Renville County administers a county-based Medical Assistance program through PrimeWest Health to provide a high-quality, accessible and cost-effective health plan. Case management is provided to targeted groups – such as elderly, individuals in nursing homes, and those with special needs (including mental illness, chemical dependency, or complex health issues) – through a best-practice dual-case management model involving Nurses in Public Health and Social Workers in Human Services. These services are available to individuals enrolled in PrimeWest Health plans and to Renville County members receiving state-funded waiver services. RCPH staff do not provide case management services for Blue Plus members; those services are handled exclusively by Human Services. Preventative and primary care are emphasized, with consultation and monitoring in place to ensure the quality of care. *All assessments are completed in MnCHOICES 2.0, along with components of the PrimeWest care plan.*

PrimeWest County Case Management	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Average Number of Members Receiving Services	175	204	214	220	180
Long Term Care Consultations/ Health Risk Assessments/ Skilled Nursing Facility Assessments Completed	173	211	155	112	147
Contacts Made by RN Case Manager	1,486	1,440	1,303	1,354	1,461
Medication Reconciliation Visits Made by RN	11	10	17	11	5

State-Funded Waiver County Case Management	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Average Number of Clients Eligible for State-Funded Waiver Programs	62	66	56	62	76
Case Management Contacts Made by RN	514	488	449	534	472

MnCHOICES Assessments:

Staff are trained and certified as MnCHOICES assessors. Nurses – working in conjunction with a social worker – evaluate client needs and determine service levels for a variety of community-based placements and services, including home care, nursing homes, adult foster care, assisting living, Community First Services and Supports (CFSS), and traumatic brain injury services.

MnCHOICES 2.0 has been fully implemented for all assessments. The Personal Care Assistant (PCA) program has been replaced with CFSS; while the assessment remains the same, case management for CFSS is provided by Human Services.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Screening Assessments Completed	115	109	131	158	185

Home Health Care:

Renville County Public Health operates a Medicare-certified home health care service, in place since May 1977. Nurses provide a range of services, including monitoring health conditions, assisting with medical equipment and supplies, educating individuals and families on medications, meal planning, wound care and dressing changes, and managing lifestyle changes due to illness. They also coordinate overall care. Home Health Aides assist with personal care needs such as bathing, exercises, meals, laundry, and light housekeeping. Therapy services may be ordered for individuals who are homebound and qualify for the service. While some clients are acutely ill, the majority have chronic health conditions and require support to remain in their homes and communities – ultimately saving taxpayer dollars by preventing or delaying nursing home placement.

Our department fully implemented Electronic Visit Verification (EVV), as required by the Department of Human Services. EVV ensures that home care staff clock in and clock out of visits using GPS coordinates linked to a client's home location. RCPH utilizes HHAeXchange, a free software solution, to meet this requirement. In February 2024, RCPH increased its home care service rates following authorization from the 2023 Minnesota Legislature, which approved rate and budget increases of 18.52% for home health aide, skilled nursing, and physical, occupational, and speech therapy services, and 28.84% for home care nursing services.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Average number of Home Care Clients	68	72	60	68	72
Nurse Visits Made	2,325	1,925	1,112	2,249	1,638
Home Health Aide Visits Made	1,686	1,423	1,180	1,211	1,213
Therapy Visits Made (PT, OT, SLP)	518	144	223	287	504

Adult Health Programs	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – Waivered Services	\$250,755	\$234,539	\$225,255	\$231,765	\$279,068
Expenditures – Home Health	\$568,492	\$489,341	\$493,821	\$548,513	\$665,877
Expenditures – Home Health Aide	\$80,148	\$72,920	\$72,862	\$85,118	\$51,978
% Staff Time	44.1%	42.3%	42.4%	48.5%	46.2%

Family Health

Car Seat Education:

Public Health has trained Car Seat Technicians who provide one-on-one help with installing car seats and teaching families how to use them safely. We also offer car seat education for foster care providers and daycare staff.

In 2024, the Child and Restraint Systems (C.A.R.S.) training program was updated and renamed the Basic Education for Safe Travel (B.E.S.T.) program. In this new program, participants complete an online course and then an in-person, hands-on skills evaluation. Car seats are available to PrimeWest and Blue Plus members, and to others who may qualify through a grant. Minnesota's car seat law changed in August 2024. The new law focuses on a child's age and requires children to ride in a rear-facing seat until at least 2 years old; to stay in a forward-facing seat with an internal harness until at least 4 years old; and to remain in a booster seat until at least 9 years old and able to pass a 5-step seat belt test.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Car Seats Given	61	61	44	85	67

Child & Teen Checkup Outreach (C&TC):

RCPH offers outreach activities for the Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program, helping families connect with medical and dental providers, as well as other programs and services. C&TC is a comprehensive health program for children and teens from birth through age 20 who are enrolled in a Minnesota Health Care Program. *In 2024, dental care kits which included a QR-code to an educational video were given to kids as part of this program.*



Billboard in Fairfax, MN – January 2024
(Billboard was also in Renville, MN)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Phone Calls Made	1,026	349	89	56	34
Total Letters Sent	2,531	2,710	2,541	2,268	2,107
Face-to-Face Contacts Made	302	582	561	520	388

Child Care Consultations:

According to Minnesota Administrative Rules, child care centers must have a health consultant who reviews the center's health policies and practices and certifies that they are adequate to protect the health of the children in their care. RCPH employs licensed public health nurses who are qualified to provide early consultation services. These services include annual and monthly site visits, phone consultations, and training sessions as needed. *Throughout 2024, RCPH provided health consultation services to The Learning Funhouse in Bird Island, Little Stangs Learning Center in Buffalo Lake, and Cedar Mountain Cougar Cub Child Care Center in Franklin. Cedar Mountain ended their contract in October 2024 due to their internal staffing changes.*

Early Childhood Screening & School Health:

Early Childhood Screenings is a program that offers comprehensive health and developmental checks following Department of Education rules. The screening includes a health history review, nutrition assessment, immunization review, and hearing and vision screening. *In 2024, RCPH contracted with two school districts, BOLD and RCW, to complete these screenings.*

	2022	2023	2024
Number of Screening Completed	92	47	80

EHDI/BHDI – Early Hearing Detection / Birth Defects:

Agency nurses receive referrals from the Minnesota Department of Health for infants born in Renville County who have been diagnosed with a birth defect. A Public Health Nurse then contacts the families to help them connect to community resources and coordinate care as needed.

In 2024, Krabbe disease (globoid cell leukodystrophy) was added to the list of birth defects. Krabbe disease is a genetic disorder that affects the nervous system. Symptoms usually appear within the first few months of life and can include irritability, fussiness, developmental delays, muscle weakness and stiffness, seizures, vision and hearing loss, blindness, and problems with balance and coordination. Krabbe disease is a fatal condition, and most children with it do not live beyond the age of 2. There is no cure, but treatments like stem cell and bone marrow transplants may slow the progression and improve quality of life.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Children Served	5	7	7	14

Follow Along Program (FAP):

Family Health offers the Follow Along Program to help parents of children from birth to age 3 learn about their child's healthy growth and development. The program helps parents see if

their child is playing, talking, growing, moving, and acting like other children the same age. Parents who join the program receive Follow Along questionnaires when their child reaches 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 30, and 36 months old. A Public Health Nurse reviews the responses and follows up with parents if there are any concerns about the child's development. *In 2024, our Family Health team's Administrative Assistant serviced on an advisory committee to explore creating an online platform for the Follow Along Program.*

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Children Served	394	333	128	112	117

Universal Contact:

A Public Health Nurse contacts all mothers of newborns in Renville County to offer a home visit. During the visit, the nurse visits with the family about the baby's weight, sleep and eating patterns, breastfeeding, and normal newborn behaviors. Other topics include well-child check-ups, immunizations, car seat safety, bonding with the baby, and how to comfort a fussy or crying baby. This program also serves as a "gateway" to many other community services, based on the family's needs.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Families with Newborns who Received a Home Visit	22	46	37	39	34

Family Home Visiting:

Home visits are provided to pregnant women, newborns, toddlers, and preschool children with physical or developmental conditions, using the Growing Great Kids curriculum. The goal of the Family Home Visiting program is to support healthy beginnings. These visits often continue long-term, with nurses visiting the child and parents until about age two. Referrals can also be made to Help Me Grow, where infant and toddler intervention staff help families set up an appointment to find out if the child qualifies for services through an evaluation process.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Infants and Children Served	761	904	712	733	599
Number of Home Visits Made	736*	727	632	664	475

*mostly telephone/ video visits in 2020

Supporting Hands Nurse Family Partnership (SHNFP):

Renville County, along with twenty other counties, comes together in a Joint Powers Board to offer this program. SHNFP is an evidence-based home visiting program that helps improve the lives of first-time pregnant women. Visits start during pregnancy and continue through the child's second birthday, providing education and support throughout. RCPH provides referrals to SHNFP for qualifying families, and SHNFP makes referrals to RCPH as well. Renville County Public Health serves as the fiscal and billing agent for this collaboration.

SHNFP	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – SHNFP	\$49,744	\$48,291	\$77,903	\$66,269	\$68,392
% Staff Time (SHNFP)	3.0%	2.8%	4.6%	4.2%	3.7%

Talking is Teaching

This campaign started in Renville County in 2018. It is a collaborative effort between many organizations to support early brain and language development in young children by educating and encouraging parents and caregivers to find daily opportunities to "talk, read, and sing" with their children. With the help of grants, nurses hand out Family Toolkits during new baby visits. They also give Milestone Boxes to families enrolled in our Family Home Visiting program. The boxes are designed for specific ages and include activities that promote healthy development.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a nutrition and breastfeeding program for pregnant women, breastfeeding and postpartum mothers, infants, and children up to age five. Eligible families receive nutrition counseling, food prescriptions to improve and maintain health, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health and other social services. *In June 2024, some federal guidelines for WIC participation were updated. Changes included revised food packages with more emphasis on fruit and vegetable consumption, expanded access to whole grains and other foods, and reducing allowances for juice and milk; and updated income guidelines. Also in 2024, the WIC program switched its documentation system from HuBERT to WINNIE, with all WIC staff receiving extensive training to help implement the new system.*

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Estimated Value of Food Prescriptions	\$59 per child, \$70 per pregnant mom, \$133 per fully breastfeeding mom *per month	→	\$78 per child, \$112 per pregnant mom, \$170 per fully breastfeeding mom *per month	→	→
Number of Participants Served	547	547	582	543	unavailable
Average Monthly Participants	374	364	380	420	394

PACT for Families:

PACT For Families Collaborative (Putting All Communities Together) is a partnership across five counties that works as both a Children's Mental Health Collaborative and a Family Services Collaborative. Renville County Public Health nurses support PACT and take part in their meetings and projects. *The Renville County Public Health Director also serves on the PACT Executive Board as the public health representative and is a member of the agency's Human Resources subcommittee.*

<i>Family Health Programs</i>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – Family Health	\$39,834	\$41,613	\$32,212	n/a	n/a
Expenditures – C&TC	\$42,368	\$53,038	\$41,785	\$39,304	\$41,110
Expenditures – School Health	\$93,682	\$78,932	\$9,189	\$2,824	\$3,019
Expenditures – WIC	\$84,711	\$93,924	\$110,771	\$107,861	\$97,733
Expenditures – MCH Prenatal	\$283,629	\$331,796	\$286,641	\$292,016	\$321,111
Expenditures – Follow Along	\$6,751	\$4,953	\$3,479	\$3,766	\$3,792
% Staff Time (except SHNFP)	27.6%	28.9%	27.0%	25.6%	21.5%

Health Promotion

Community Health Education:

Renville County Public Health works to support the health and wellness of everyone who lives, works, and spends time in Renville County. We offer free blood pressure checks and host foot care clinics. We also provide health education and help connect people with local resources. *In 2024, we added a Community Health Educator to our team. This staff member helps share important health information with different groups in our community. Some of their work so far has included giving presentations in schools, sharing tips on social media, and sending postcards with health information. Topics have included measles, immunizations, safe sleep for infants, and substance use prevention, among others.*

Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP):

The Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) supports community-driven efforts to help people live healthier lives. SHIP focuses on expanding opportunities for active living, healthy eating, tobacco-free living, and overall well-being. Through a health equity lens, SHIP works to improve policies, systems, and environments to support better health for everyone. Strong community partnerships are a key part of this.

Over the last four grant periods (2020-2024) SHIP has awarded \$194,870 in partner grants.

Renville County partners included:

- Active Living Plans in the cities of Olivia, Renville, and Buffalo Lake
- Community Gardens in Franklin and Fairfax
- Renville County Food Shelf SuperShelf transformation
- BLHS, BOLD, Cedar Mountain, GFW, and RCW Schools
- Renville County Parks trail projects
- Dakota Wicohan
- Farmers Markets in Bird Island, Buffalo Lake, Fairfax and Olivia -along with Renville County EDA
- Renville County Masters Gardeners and UMN Extension
- ACTS (Adult Client Training Services)
- Tobacco projects with RAPAD, Educate & Congratulate and Tobacco Free Parks initiatives



Jeff Filipek, SHIP Coordinator (far right), with community partners at the Renville County Food Shelf ribbon-cutting ceremony, celebrating its re-opening as a SuperShelf on October 29, 2024

The Community Health Strategist also provided technical assistance to these groups:

- ACEs Coalition
- Kandiyohi-Renville CLT (Community Leadership Team)
- Feeding Renville Coalition
- BOLD Community Education Board
- Renville County Food Shelf Board
- RAPAD Coalition
- City of Olivia Park & Rec Board
- Island HUB Board
- Renville County Wellness and Housing committees
- Transportation Groups- CCT Board of Directors, MMRTCC and ATP-SW Transportation Partnership
- Renville County Pickleball Group
- PACT for Families
- Educate & Congratulate licensed tobacco store checks

In 2024, a Counter Tools Point-of-Sale audit was conducted of tobacco retailers in Renville County. The purpose of the audit is to complete store observations to collect data and monitor tobacco product marketing and availability.



SHIP Coordinators Jeff Filipek (Renville County Public Health), Brittany Schmalz (Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services), Hannah Maanum and Ashlie Wubben (Countryside Public Health) receiving the Spirit of Collaboration Award from PACT for Families on March 13, 2024

ACEs Coalition:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events that happen before a person turns 18. These can include things like abuse, neglect, or seeing violence. ACEs also include growing up in a home where there is mental illness, drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence, a parent in jail, or parents who are separated or divorced. Research shows that these early experiences can have long-lasting effects on a person's health and well-being. The goal of this work is to help more people understand how ACEs can affect individuals throughout their lives and impact the whole community.

In 2024, the Kandiyohi-Renville ACEs Coalition created 10,000 copies of a "Youth Connections" magazine. Thanks to their partnership, the magazines were shared across the PACT for Families service area.

Kandiyohi-Renville Suicide and Mental Health Action Coalition (KR-SMAC):

KR-SMAC is a group of local community partners working together to raise awareness about suicide and mental health. They also help create and share resources to support people's mental well-being. *In May 2024, the group hosted a free community event that featured a showing of the film "Angst," followed by a panel discussion about anxiety and mental health.*

Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention:

In 2024, we received a new grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to focus on preventing cannabis and other substance use. The funding will be used to develop prevention, education, and recovery programs, with a focus on preventing substance misuse and supporting treatment options. A key goal is to stop substance use before it starts, and the programs must include specific cannabis-related initiatives. Although the grant was awarded in 2024, work will begin in 2025.

Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs (RAPAD):

The RAPAD Coalition is a group of individuals and organizations—like volunteers, parents, students, law enforcement, businesses, local government, schools, healthcare providers, media, spiritual and community groups—who work together to prevent underage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Renville County Public Health supports RAPAD and takes part in their meetings and activities.

Opioids Settlement:

Renville County began receiving money in 2022 from a nationwide Opioid Settlement. Local Public Health is tasked to help decide how to best use this funding to support our communities in dealing with opioid-related problems. *In 2024, Public Health staff and a Public Health Corps member held informational presentations, listening sessions, focus groups, and key informant interviews. These events helped educate the public and gather input on what the community needs. Sara Benson and Sheriff Scott Hable also spoke with the Associated Press about the importance of these funds. One example they shared was using the money to buy a body scanner for the Renville County Jail. The scanner has been very successful in helping reduce harm to inmates and staff.*

<i>Health Promotion Programs</i>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – Health Promotion	\$9,371	\$25,172	\$24,224	\$22,608	\$34,744
Expenditures – SHIP w/Projects;	\$129,494	\$136,759	\$109,926	\$142,714	\$106,065
Expenditures – SHIP w/out Projects	\$80,162	\$72,619	\$72,616	\$75,193	\$80,455
% Staff Time	5.0%	5.2%	6.2%	6.0%	6.0%

Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board

In Minnesota, public health is a shared responsibility between state and local governments, as outlined in the Local Public Health Act (Chapter 145A). This system works as a partnership. Locally-governed Community Health Boards (CHBs) oversee local health departments, which work closely with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to carry out public health work. This partnership is called the Community Health Services (CHS) system. It allows local and state governments to combine resources to meet public health needs in a smart and cost-effective way.

The public health departments of Kandiyohi County and Renville County are joined together under one Community Health Board. In this partnership, Renville County Public Health serves as the CHS Administrator, and Kandiyohi County Public Health serves as the fiscal host.

- Local public health is funded by a mix of local, state, and federal dollars, along with fees and reimbursements. This funding is essential for responding to public health threats and improving the health of Minnesotans. The CHS system is flexible, which helps meet the unique needs of different communities and allows for fast, clear communication between state and local health departments. The success of the system depends on strong partnerships and shared goals. One part cannot work well without the other.
- The CHS Administrator for the Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board manages all public health grants for both counties. This includes applying for grants, submitting required reports, and making sure each health department follows state updates from MDH. The Administrator also oversees the local public health assessment and planning process, approves annual reporting for the Local Public Health Act, and leads Community Health Board (CHB) meetings. They make sure the CHB meets its responsibilities, have the authority to sign routine documents, and take part in state-level meetings and workgroups through the State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC).

2024 Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board (CHB) Governing Members:

- Commissioner Greg Snow, Renville County – Chair and SCHSAC Alternate
- Commissioner Dave Hamre, Renville County
- Commissioner Steve Gardner, Kandiyohi County – Vice-Chair and SCHSAC Representative
- Commissioner Roger Imdieke, Kandiyohi County
- Pat Berg, Kandiyohi County Community Member
- Julie Remer, Renville County Community Member
- Chery Johnson, Community Member At Large

Staff Ex-Officio and Other Members:

- Sara Benson, Renville County Public Health Director and CHS Administrator
- Caroline Chan, Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Director and Fiscal Agent
- Lisa Herges, Renville County Administrator
- Kelsey Baker, Kandiyohi County Administrator
- Dr. Thomas Gilles, Renville County Medical Consultant
- Dr. Mary Amon, Kandiyohi County Medical Consultant
- Kelsie Kingstrom, Renville County Attorney
- Shane Baker, Kandiyohi County Attorney
- Kristin Erickson, Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Systems Consultant
- Leah Jesser, Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Systems Consultant

As part of a Community Health Board team, we hired a Public Health Planner to help with our assessment and planning work -funded by a COVID-19 Workforce Development grant and a CDC Infrastructure grant. In August 2024, we completed an updated Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Assessment (CHA). We held sessions with community members to review the CHA and chose the top 10 – and then the top 3 – health priorities for our communities. The top 10 included: Access to Care, Adolescent Health, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Aging Population, Childcare Access, Chronic Disease, Food Security, Housing Stability, Mental Well-Being*, and Substance Use*. (Starred items were chosen as the top 3 priorities). In 2025, we will begin creating an action plan to address these top health concerns.*



Public Health staff from Renville and Kandiyohi Counties attending a joint training session on March 12, 2024

Also in 2024, we began updating our Community Health Board's Strategic Plan. In July, select staff, community members, and County Commissioners came together to start the process. We will be updating our mission, values, and vision, and creating a work plan to help us track progress.

In March 2024, we submitted our required report to the Minnesota Department of Health (for the 2023 calendar year). This report included information on 24 performance measures, which help show how well we are meeting the core responsibilities of public health. We also submitted our annual staffing and finance report.

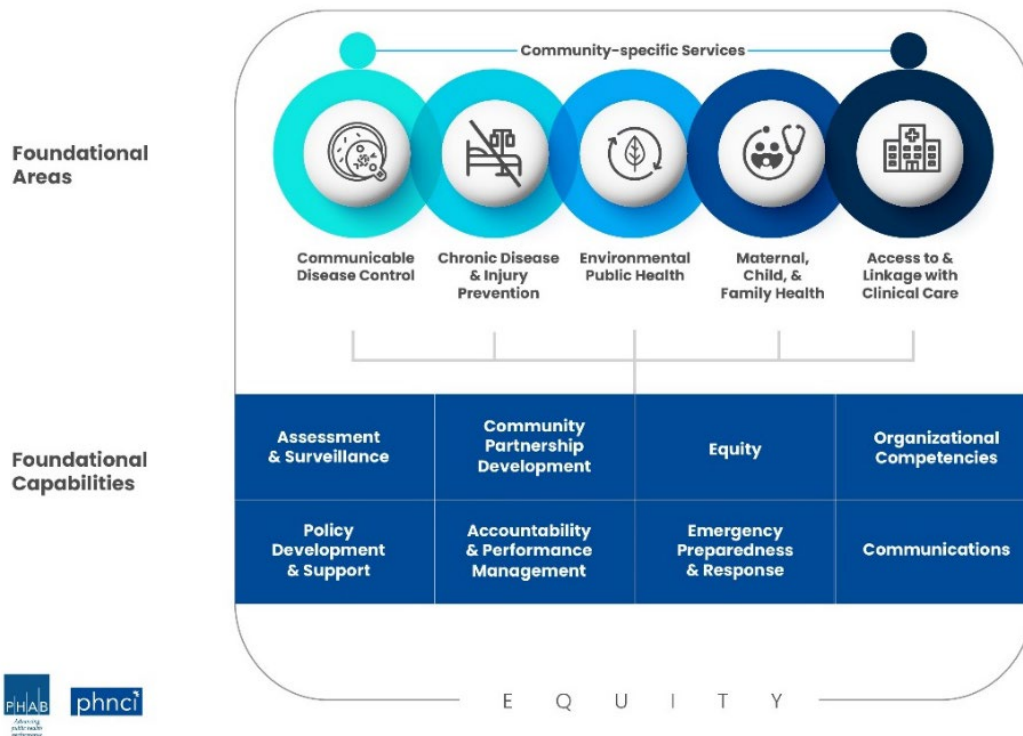
<i>CDC Infrastructure</i>	2024
Expenditures – CDC Infrastructure	\$39,933
% Staff Time	2.6%

<i>CHS Program</i>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures – CHS Admin	\$68,549	\$88,244	\$116,489	\$89,837	\$142,627
% Staff Time	2.3%	3.1%	5.9%	4.4%	4.7%

Renville County Public Health Services

In 2024, Renville County Public Health gained new funding and partnership opportunities. We received a Foundational Public Health Responsibilities grant, which helps us build our skills and strengthen our ability to meet the core public health requirements set by MDH.

Foundational Public Health Services



February 2022

<i>Foundational Public Health Responsibilities</i>	2024
Expenditures – FPHR	\$22,563
% Staff Time	1.3%

We joined a partnership through an Innovation Grant from MDH, led by Faribault-Martin Health & Human Services. This project created the [Collaborative for Rural Public Health Innovation \(CRPHI\)](#). Sara Benson represents our department in this group. Leadership includes local public health leaders from 25 counties in South Central and Southwest Minnesota, along with representatives from MDH and the Department of Applied Science at Minnesota State University – Mankato. The collaborative is working to find new ways to improve how rural public health services are delivered. In addition to finding ways to share resources, one of its goals is to explore how students and faculty can support local public health agencies with important work like health communication, data collection, and data analysis.

To help keep our staff safe, we added the KATANA safety application for home visiting staff. This included 12 nurses and 1 nursing assistant who work in home care, case management, and family home visiting programs. A device attached to the back of the employee's phone can trigger a silent alarm with GPS tracking if needed.

Working with Renville County Human Services, we received a PrimeWest Health Community Reinvestment Program County Support Grant. To learn what people needed most, we created a survey for PrimeWest members to give their input. Based on the responses, we put together and delivered wellness bags to 168 members. Each bag contained cleaning wipes, laundry detergent, toilet paper, toothpaste/toothbrush kits, and snacks. Some bags also included baby wipes or bus tokens, depending on the person's needs. We also mailed every PrimeWest Health member living in Renville County a packet with a local mental health resource list, a dental clinic resource list, a mini book called "How to Stop Freaking Out!", and a sensory strip.

Student Nurse Experiences:

We partner with colleges to offer Student Nurse Experiences. Our staff mentor helps each student create a schedule filled with a variety of public health experiences.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Students	3	2	6	3	3
Number of Student Hours	168+	150+	170+	71+	72

Public Health Corps:

We were fortunate to host Public Health Project Coordinators through the AmeriCorps program. These service members helped strengthen our agency and worked on a variety of projects, including: creating materials for opioid settlement presentations and information sharing, organizing wellness bags and mailers for PrimeWest Health members, updating our department's orientation PowerPoint, raising awareness about chlamydia during STI Awareness Month in April, and working to improve childhood immunization and well-child check-up rates.

Communications:

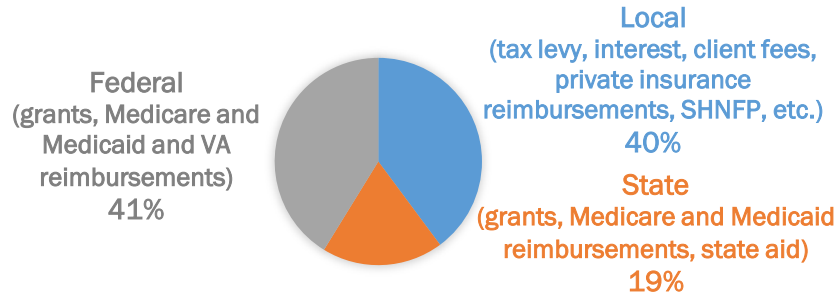
In 2024, we created a new Communications role within our department. This staff member also serves as the Community Health Educator. They manage the department's social media accounts, design and distribute mailers and flyers, and help promote events and services. The Communications staff member works to share important health information, raise awareness about health issues, and encourage positive changes in the community through individual and community action.

Funding:

Renville County Public Health is funded through several sources. In addition to county tax levy funding and reimbursements from billable services, a total of 18 grants (and 1 pass-through) were administered in 2024. Most of the grants are specific to the programs they support.

- **Infectious Disease Prevention & Control:** Eliminating Health Disparities; Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers Consultant
- **Emergency Preparedness & Response:** Federal COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation, COVID-19 Public Health Workforce Supplemental Funding; Public Health Emergency Preparedness; Response Sustainability
- **Family Home Visiting:** Child & Teen Checkups; Children and Youth with Special Health Needs; Maternal Child Health -Title V; Follow Along Program; Perinatal Hepatitis B; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Women, Infants and Children; Strong Foundations (pass-through to Supporting Hands Nurse-Family Partnership agency)
- **Health Promotion:** Statewide Health Improvement Partnership; Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention
- **Public Health General:** Local Public Health Grant; Foundational Public Health Responsibilities; CDC Federal Infrastructure

FUNDING SOURCES



<i>All RCPH Programs</i>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Expenditures	\$2,189,214	\$2,055,818	\$1,858,261	\$1,817,208	\$2,213,999
Staff Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's)	20.88	19.71	18.56	18.16	19.82

Credit to Renville County Public Health Staff in 2024:

- Amy Agre, Medical Accounting Technician
- Polly Ahrens, Public Health Nurse
- Taylor Amsden, Home Health Aid
- Sara Benson, Public Health Director & Kandiyohi-Renville CHS Administrator
- Samantha Best, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- Britany Egge, Public Health Nurse
- Chelsey Elfering, Administrative Assistant
- Kim Erickson, Administrative Assistant
- Jeff Filipek, SHIP Coordinator
- Cindy Firme, Adult Health Supervisor
- Darcy Klingelutz, Public Health Nurse
- Stacey Larson, Public Health Nurse
- Pam Leach, Registered Nurse
- Carol Loftness, Licensed Practical Nurse
- Melanie Netland, Public Health Nurse
- Kaylee Padnos, Public Health Nurse
- Kendra Rigge, Public Health Nurse
- Jen Scharfencamp, Finance Officer & Office Support Supervisor
- Krista Schneider, Administrative Assistant
- Katie Slagter, Family Health Supervisor
- Joey Steidl, Environmental Health Specialist
- Avi Sukhwal, Public Health Planner
- Sami Swanson, Administrative Assistant
- Tara Wertish, Licensed Practical Nurse
- Lacy Zeitz, Registered Nurse



Renville County Public Health staff – October 7, 2024