It is impossible to think of the year 2020 without recalling the events of the world’s most devastating pandemic in recorded history.

COVID-19 has changed our lives in ways that we still do not fully comprehend. This catastrophic event will shape the future of all spheres of our well being from the physical, mental, and spiritual. It has also brought to the forefront some of the most basic health disparities and most important social determinates of health that Public Health holds deeply at its core. It is with this in mind, that we recognize this year as a milestone in our effort in Palm Beach County to uphold our mission is to protect, promote & improve the health of all people in our county through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

There is no greater role the Department of Health in Palm Beach County (DOH-Palm Beach) can play than to be “the agent of change” for the community. We have seen the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) embraced throughout the county by countless community partners both small and large. This tool has been used as a compass steering our community away from silos and into united goals. The community has embraced implementing the lens of equity to eliminate disparities and break down barriers. As an agent of change, DOH-Palm Beach is bringing the issues of equity, racial disparities, and social justice to improve the health of our community. We have demonstrated that to create change we must help the community develop their own tools and skill sets to be more self-sufficient, improve their economic stability and get involved in policy changes as we progress to a new normal as the COVID Pandemic evolves.

Our future looks brighter and stronger than ever. As an Accredited Health Department by the Public Health Accreditation Board, we stand as a trusted source of information for our community leaders. The public relies on our skilled and competent work force to battle emerging communicable diseases, provide lifesaving preventive services, maintain and protect our environment, and improve and promote a healthier lifestyle to ensure that all people have full and equitable access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthier lives.

Alina Alonso, MD
Director
Florida Department of Health
Palm Beach County
Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, & community efforts.

Vision:
To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

Core Values: (I CARE)

Innovation:
We search for creative solutions and manage resources wisely.

Collaboration:
We use teamwork to achieve common goals & solve problems.

Accountability:
We perform with integrity & respect.

Responsiveness:
We achieve our mission by serving our customers & engaging our partners.

Excellence:
We promote quality outcomes through learning & continuous performance improvement.
What are Health Outcomes?
Everyone wants to experience long and healthy lives, yet places have different resources and opportunities. To understand the health outcomes in a community, we measure both length and quality of life by county within Florida.

How Do Counties Rank for Health Outcomes?
The green map shows the distribution of Florida’s health outcome ranks across counties. The map is divided into four quartiles with less color intensity indicating better health outcomes in the respective summary rankings.

What are Health Factors?
Many factors shape our opportunities to be healthy and influence how well and how long we live. Health factors represent the things we can change to improve health for all, like opportunities for quality education, good paying jobs, access to quality clinical care, healthy foods, green spaces, and secure and affordable housing. We measure four health factor areas.

How Do Counties Rank for Health Factors?
The blue map shows the distribution of Florida’s health factor ranks across counties. The map is divided into four quartiles with less color intensity indicating better health factors in the respective summary rankings. You can also learn about how we calculate health factor ranks, at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

What Do Differences Between Ranks Mean?
Counties are ordered by the health outcome rank, with a top-ranked county (rank = 1) having the best health outcome score. Ranks are easy to communicate, but they mask differences in health within counties and from one ranked county to the next. The chart next to the map shows the spread of health outcome scores (ranks) for each county (green circles) in Florida. This graphic shows the size of the gap between ranked counties. The different background colors correspond to the four quartiles used in the map.
Administration

Vital Statistics
On Mar. 23, 2020, we closed both Offices of Vital Statistics to the public and suspended in-person service until further notice to slow the spread of COVID-19.

At the same time, this agency continued to provide essential services of Birth & Death Certificates to our community, serving by online at www.vitalchek.com, by fax (561) 837-5081 and by mail: PO. Box 29, WPB, FL 33402.

The Vital Statistics opened to the public on September 2020 in the COVID-19 II phase. As the pandemic continues to affect nearly every aspect of our lives Vital Statistics continues helping the community. Even with safety measures, we find ourselves periodically understaffed due to COVID-19. Vital Statistics until now we continued to serve our community and give 100% to our clients.

Palm Beach County Births .......... 14,112
Palm Beach County Deaths.........17,223

Finance & Accounting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Funds</td>
<td>15,546,584</td>
<td>22,274,443</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Funds</td>
<td>10,268,587</td>
<td>13,279,031</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Contribution</td>
<td>19,934,737</td>
<td>19,640,266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vital Statistics</td>
<td>1,817,326</td>
<td>1,869,856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinic</td>
<td>5,034,129</td>
<td>3,756,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>2,855,718</td>
<td>3,027,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$55,457,081</td>
<td>$63,847,820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase in 2020 State & Federal funding is COVID funding
Decrease in 2020 clinical funding due to COVID closures
General Services

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and Regional Distribution Service (RDS) exercises were an excellent training experience. The Florida Department of Health (FDOH), team exercised the push receipt of materials, staging, inventory control, picking, and the distribution to both open and closed Point Of Dispensing (POD’s) for dispensing operations.

This provided the FDOH team the opportunity to experience a simulation of a complete mass dispensing plan and operation.

The success of these ongoing trainings became very apparent during Hurricane Dorian when the supplying and setup of the special needs shelters was completed efficiently and in record time. The training of FDOH staff is always varied and continuously ongoing in preparation for any event and scope that may arise.

### Fixed Asset Missing by % of Total Dollar Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reconciliation process not completed due to COVID-19

**Lakeside Hospital Western Shelter Tent - Belle Glade**

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**COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

**Epidemiology**

About COVID-19 Epidemiology in Palm Beach County.

When a new infectious disease is discovered, epidemiologists work with other scientists to find who has it, why they have it, and what can be done to mitigate the spread of disease. From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists at CDC and around the world have been working to identify the source of the outbreak. In December of 2019, COVID-19 otherwise known as SARS-COV2 was first identified in Wuhan, China.

Epidemiologists went to the area in China where the disease first appeared and conducted surveys in the community and health facilities. They collected nose and throat specimens for lab analyses. These studies showed who was infected, when they became sick, which was intended to identify a possible source. Florida Department of Health in collaboration with the CDC (Center for Disease Control) has been monitoring and tracking cases, deaths, hospitalizations, as well as the percentages of those who became ill and survived.

Palm Beach County Epidemiology keeps track of the number of COVID-19 cases and collects information on the disease from surveillance systems that report different kinds of data, such as new cases, hospitalizations, deaths, demographic information (like age, race/ethnicity, or sex), symptoms, and treatments.
This surveillance data, including information polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test results, and other kinds of studies such as antibody levels have been used, to find out more about the disease, such as how long someone with COVID-19 is contagious, risk factors for severe illness, and which medical treatments are most effective. COVID-19 has had major global impact, socially, mentally, economically in ways that could not have been predicted. Guidance has constantly changed as we have learned over time, more about the disease and how best to protect the community. Measures that have worked to slow the spread of disease: social distancing, wearing of masks, avoiding crowded areas, and good hand and cough etiquette has been the most effective way, which bought scientist time to develop effective COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccines are now available for those who are 12 years of age and older, with the hope that by the Fall of 2021 vaccines will become available for the younger population. During 2020, there were 3 major spikes in the number of COVID cases July, November, and December. It is believed to be attributed to persons gathering in close contact, dismissing the social distance guidance, and not wearing of masks during the holiday periods in these months. With vaccines now widely available, we are already seeing a decline in the number of positive cases, but still need to educate those who are still hesitant about receiving the vaccine. Education is the key.

2020 Palm Beach County Communicable Disease Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease / Condition</th>
<th>2020*</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disease / Condition</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaplasmosis, HGA (A. phagocytophilum)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenic poisoning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babesiosis - 0882</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botulism, infant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campylobacteriosis</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon monoxide poisoning</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikungunya fever</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ciguatera fish poisoning</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryptosporidiosis</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclosporiasis</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dengue fever</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ehrlichiosis, HME (E. chaffeensis)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giardiasis, acute</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. influenzae invasive disease</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B, acute</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B, chronic</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B, perinatal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B, pregnant women</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C, acute</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C, chronic</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>1103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C, perinatal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herpes B virus, possible exposure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influenza-associated pediatric mortality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead poisoning</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legionellosis</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISEASE / CONDITION (as of 06/14/2021) ---------------- 2020* 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease / Condition</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listeriosis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyme disease</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meningitis, bacterial or mycotic</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meningococcal disease</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury poisoning</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertussis</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesticide-related illness and injury, acute</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabies, animal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabies, possible exposure</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain spotted fever and spotted fever rickettsiosis</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. pneumoniae invasive disease</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonella Paratyphi infection</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonella Typhi infection</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonellosis</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scombroid poisoning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) infection</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shigellosis</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella (chickenpox)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibriosis (other Vibrio species)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibriosis (V. alginolyticus)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibriosis (V. fluvialis)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibriosis (V. mimicus)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibriosis (V. para-halodinolyticus)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibriosis (V. vulnificus)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Nile virus disease</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zika virus, non-congenital</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL | 2804 | 3837
Tuberculosis (TB) Control Program

Tuberculosis remains one of the world’s most prevalent diseases. Florida’s yearly TB occurrence has steadily declined to the current incidence rate of approximately 2.2 cases per 100,000 persons. The TB Control Program in Palm Beach County engages in the overarching effort to achieve the national goal of TB elimination with less than 1 case for every 1 million persons.

The TB Control Program maintains a surveillance system and is responsible for the control and prevention of TB disease throughout the county. Despite prevention and intervention efforts, the percentage of cases seen in our area continues to be higher among minority groups and those born outside of the United States.

The Florida Department of Health is committed to ensuring every individual with active disease is treated to cure and ensuring anyone exposed receives proper care by offering clinical services for screenings and evaluations, identifying contacts to cases and providing Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) for individuals receiving treatment.

Palm Beach County has the fifth highest occurrence of TB disease in the state and the TB Control Program at FDOH-Palm Beach continues to exceed state goals in performance objectives.

For additional information or to submit a report, please call (561) 803-7342 or fax the confidential line (561) 840-0171.

Sexual Transmitted Disease (STD) Program:

COVID19 disrupted many facets of everyday life, not just locally but globally. However, instead of allowing COVID19 to be an obstacle for the STD program, our members utilized it as an opportunity to make necessary improvements for whatever life throws at us. Below are the sustained adaptations implemented within the STD program in response to the pandemic.

Surveillance:
The surveillance program had several improvements implemented within the past year in response to the COVID19 pandemic. Firstly, the surveillance record book was updated from a paper format to a SharePoint Excel document, allowing the surveillance staff to access the document from any location, as well as, simultaneously work together on the document safely and remotely. Furthermore, this new electronic format has significantly improved the distribution of field records in a timely manner. Secondly, E-Fax was initiated within the STD department, replacing traditional paper faxes. An E-fax organization system was set up and has allowed for improved record keeping as well as better case communication between the surveillance staff and providers. Finally, cases were assigned based on priority, rather than area, due to the suspension of field visits on non-priority cases. As a result, priority cases were more equally distributed among DIS officers.
Daily DIS Field Work

The Field:
In lieu of in person post-test counseling sessions and interviews, meetings with patients were conducted via phone calls or Microsoft Team video calls; however, HIV cases were strictly Microsoft Teams video calls. Field visits and in person interviews for high priority cases were classified as essential and continued with strict protocols set in place, following social distancing guidelines and using PPE. Some examples of precautions being exercised due to Covid-19 include:
  • remaining in the car while talking on the phone with client vs. conversation inside car/ home
  • meeting in a large room to maintain 6ft. distance
  • temperature and symptom screening questionnaire prior to interaction with clients

The Clinics:
In response to the COVID19 pandemic, clinics were operating only essential services such as STD treatment. At the start of the pandemic, clinics began limiting the number of persons allowed inside as well as requiring a referral letter or a positive lab result to receive STD testing and treatment. Strong communication between clinics and the STD team amidst changing protocols greatly reduced obstacles for clients in receiving treatment. For instance, interdepartmental communication significantly improved with the newly developed ability to update, add progress notes, and register clients in HMS (FDOH Medical Record System). Furthermore, this newly implemented electronic system allowed for a better continuation of care throughout the Florida Department of Health programs.

Outreach:
COVID19 may have slowed down but did not halt the STD/Viral Hepatitis Outreach program. During this time, the program explored new avenues for reaching susceptible populations. Outreach locations switched from a high focus on treatment and addiction centers to areas recommended by DIS clients, areas with a history of high-risk behavior, and by zip code/demographic trends found in the 2019 STD surveillance cases. These changes increased the team’s overall test positivity rate by 12.6%.

The Future:
During the pandemic, the STD/Viral Hepatitis Program developed additional temporary work adjustments to keep workflow moving. Some of the modifications included a schedule for both home and in office arrangements, Microsoft TEAMS integration into daily tasks and communication, a 15-passenger van rental to ensure social distancing while transporting clients, and proper PPE utilization. Such changes allowed for the continuation of work during the pandemic as well as provide new and sustainable work ideas for future pandemics or natural disasters. The STD and Viral Hepatitis Team looks forward to continuing and advancing our program in order to best serve the residents of Palm Beach County.

HIV/AIDS, The Epidemic in Palm Beach County

The HIV Program in Palm Beach began implementing the “Ending the Epidemic: A Plan for America” in 2020 with a goal to reduce new HIV infections by 75% by 2025, and by 90% by 2030. The four pillars established for ending the epidemic are:
  • Diagnose: all people with HIV as early as possible after infection,
  • Treat: people with HIV rapidly and effectively to achieve sustained viral suppression,
  • Prevent: new HIV transmissions by using proven interventions, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and syringe services programs, and
  • Respond: quickly to potential HIV outbreaks to get needed prevention and treatment services to people who need them.

Through collaboration with community partners the HIV program works actively to expand its impact and reach toward our vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The situation in Palm Beach County: The table provides a summary of the impact to Palm Beach County. The most recent data available is for 2019.
The Epidemic in Palm Beach County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,442,281</td>
<td>1,458,576</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with HIV (Prevalence)</td>
<td>8,266</td>
<td>8,259</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed HIV cases</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed AIDS cases</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV-related deaths</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric AIDS cases diagnosed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perinatal HIV cases</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palm Beach had a 13.6% decrease in newly diagnosed HIV cases, a 16.7% increase in newly diagnosed AIDS cases, and a 22% decrease in HIV-related deaths. We are making significant strides with pediatric HIV/AIDS cases and perinatal HIV transmission. From 2010 to 2019, HIV diagnoses decreased among Blacks by 38%, yet in contrast, there has been a 4% increase in diagnoses among Whites, and a 26% increase among Hispanics. Blacks continue to be among the highest diagnosed in Palm Beach County. The majority of newly diagnosed HIV cases were male-to-male sexual contact (MMSC).

The Continuum of Care in Palm Beach County: The continuum of care is closely tied to the Ending the Epidemic strategy and the State of Florida’s Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan goals, which include:
- Reduce new HIV infections
- Increase access to care and improve health outcomes for people living with HIV
- Reduce HIV-related health disparities

Monitoring the continuum of care is vital to ensuring that we’re improving engagement at every stage in the continuum, and that we’re joined in striving for the global target of 95-95-95, where 95% of all persons with HIV (PWH) will know their HIV status, and 95% of all people with diagnosed HIV will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 95% of all people receiving ART will have achieved viral suppression (viral load <200 copies/mL).

Significant new and highly-advanced treatments have delivered hope and enhanced the quality of life for those who are affected; however, these considerable advancements can only help individuals if they know their HIV status and are linked into lifesaving medical care.

**PUBLIC HEALTH DENTISTRY**

The goal of the Dental Program is to reduce the oral disease burden in underserved school aged children and the adult HIV population in Palm Beach County. 2020 was a challenge due to the pandemic.

The Dental Program provides comprehensive dental services including diagnostic, preventive, restorative and surgical services for adult HIV clients and focuses on school based preventive services for children including referrals for urgent dental needs.

The HIV care program was limited to providing emergency services only from March through May due to state executive orders and Center for Disease Control (CDC) and American Dental Association (ADA) guidelines. Staff maintained access to emergency care for our HIV clients throughout this time adapting to the new infection control concerns and guidelines. Once restrictions were lifted, normal services resumed at a reduced capacity through the end of 2020.

In calendar year 2020, dental staff provided 4,735 dental services to 467 HIV clients in 1,378 dental visits.

School based services are provided by the Marjorie S. Fisher Tooth Fairy Mobile Dental Program and the School Oral Health Preventive...
Program. Access to students ended for the 2019-20 school year when schools closed in March due to the pandemic and then went virtual after reopening. The school-based staff were reassigned to COVID response, helping with building entry screening and COVID testing through the end of 2020.

In the school year ending in 2020, the Mobile Dental Program provided preventive services for second graders in 27 Title 1 elementary schools. Children were provided oral health education, an oral health assessment, fluoride varnish and dental sealants. The numbers for each are shown in the included graph.

In addition, an urgent need was identified in 133 second graders referred for emergency care. The Mobile Dental Program also provided 771 dental assessments and 751 fluoride varnish treatments for Head Start and Community Programs in Palm Beach County. Since its inception in 1997, the Mobile Dental Program has screened over 36,000 second graders and provided 94,614 sealants.

The School Oral Health Preventive Program served all grades in 7 Title 1 elementary schools in the school year ending in 2020. This program provides oral health education, oral health assessments, fluoride varnish and referrals for emergency care. The numbers are presented in the included graph. This program identified 119 children with an urgent need that were referred for emergency care.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

The Child Abuse Death Review
The Child Abuse Death Review Circuit #15 Committee reviewed 14 cases called into the Florida Abuse Hotline in 2019. The cases reviewed consisted of five (5) accidental deaths, one (1) natural death, one (1) homicide death, two (2) drowning deaths, one (1) medical condition death and four (4) undetermined deaths. Children 0-7 months had the highest death which were related to unintentional asphyxia. The CADR committee is focused on identifying the gaps, deficiencies or problems in service delivery to children and families by public and private agencies that may be related to child abuse deaths; developing strategies to bridge health disparity and equity, to continue applying health promotion and disease prevention technologies and interventions designed to improve and enhance quality of life. Participation with the community and working closely with the community on safe sleeping practices for our children are some of the action plan of the committee.

In 2020 eleven (11) cases were reviewed despite the pandemic three drownings, five (5) Sleep related death, one (1) homicide and one (1) case classified as other as it was unrelated to any of the above.

Sleep-related infant death rates have stagnated nationally, however, the rate of accidental suffocation or strangulation in bed has increased.

Healthiest Weight Florida
Over the next 20 years in Florida, obesity is expected to contribute to millions of cases of preventable chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. The cost for these chronic diseases is estimated to be $34 billion. The Department of Health launched the Healthiest
Weight Florida Initiative in January 2013 to address the issue of obesity and chronic diseases as an aftermath to the obesity problem.

Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and entire communities to help Florida’s children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. As of 2016, 34.5% of Floridians are at healthy weight. Florida’s current trend has predicted that by 2030, approximately 60% will be obese. In addition, six out of ten children born today will be obese by the time they graduate from high school.

According to 2016 data, Palm Beach County showed 45.6% of adults ages 18 and up with healthy weight. Healthy weight was defined as a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9. Unfortunately, 58.5% of Palm Beach County Residents reported being inactive or insufficiently activity. This percentage is slightly above the state average of 56.7%. Healthiest Weight Florida continues to work towards promoting Healthy BMIs across the lifespan.

The Healthy Community Champion Recognition Program is a program that recognizes municipalities and counties that have implemented “best practice” policies to create healthier communities. This program was revamped in 2020 and will open in 2021.

Community Health Division utilizes five strategies to promote a healthy weight. These strategies include:

1. Increase opportunities for physical activity
2. Make healthy food available everywhere; increase fruits and vegetables consumption.
3. Promote health in the worksite
4. Strengthen schools as the heart of health
5. Market what matters for a healthy life.

Our goal is to continue increasing healthy weight for all ages in Palm Beach County regardless of age, sex, race or ethnicity.

Florida Healthy Babies

Using the Florida’s Healthy Babies action plan, we partnered with many local agencies and community groups such as Florida Institute for Health Innovation, Children Services Council, Maternal and Child Health among other local service agencies to carry out project activities. Identifying health clinics and hospital protocols for providing families with qualified interpreters to ensure medical information is accurately relayed to patient; addressing health equity by working with local economic planners, attending regular scheduled meetings to participate in community events such as walk and ride your bike to school, participating in health and wellness events with Palm Beach School District Wellness Promotion Task Force, and school health fairs such as the Manatee Lagoon, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church and Northwest Community Consortium and the Town of Jupiter’s Community Center Health Fair where Safe Sleep information and promotional items were distributed. Community Health Division plans on having more educational strategies and health promotional activities to combat infant mortality, a community and social problem. The year 2020 allowed us to continue to serve Palm Beach County Residents in more creative ways: See pictures on Baby Shower.

SNAP-Ed Program and the Diabetes Prevention Program were two new programs added to Community Health in 2019.

1. SNAP-Ed: In 2019 Palm Beach County was awarded funding for the supplemental nutrition assistance education program. The program was updated in 2020 to serve residents living at or below the Federal poverty level threshold of 200%. The program is an evidence based program that helps people lead healthier lives and teaches people using or eligible for SNAP about good nutrition and how to make their food dollars stretch further. Participants also learn to be physically active. The program works by building partnerships with all types of community organizations. Communities have social marketing campaigns, hold nutrition education classes, and improve their policies, systems, and the environment of the community.

2. Diabetes Prevention Program: In 2019 Palm Beach County was awarded funding for a Diabetes Prevention Program, an evidence based lifestyle change program recognized by CDC, demonstrated to prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes among people at high risk. The program is geared to serve residents of Palm Beach County. Lifestyle Coach Training is a requirement for anyone who will be facilitating the sessions. The program is a 12-month commitment program. Sessions are weekly, bimonthly and monthly arranged based on number of sessions completed in the program as well as the timeline in the program. The 1st Cohort for the In-Person Session DPP completed their 6-month mark. This Cohort received weight scales in celebration of their 6-month completion of the DPP. The 2nd Cohort, the Virtual Session was launch in January of 2021 and has reached its 4 months since start date. Both sessions have received CDC preliminary recognition. Our Agency and division will continue to serve the residents as funding continues.
This graph depicts the number of residents who have been told they have diabetes in 2016 in Palm Beach County and the State. The graph shows Palm Beach County at 10.8% below the State (11.8%).

3. New Staffing: The division lost as well as added new staff in this reporting period.

4. Outreach Activities: Despite COVID-19 our division continue to provide outreach services to our communities. Outreach activities included health promotion and education to Western Communities; Belle Glade, Pahokee, and other West Palm Beach communities by providing informational and promotional items to residents. We completed a Drive Thru Baby Shower at the Belle Glade Health Center and will continue providing items to clients at the other DOH clinics.

**Tobacco Free Florida Palm Beach County**

Tobacco use is the leading cause of death in Florida, resulting in over 32,300 deaths annually in the state. On the other hand, the youth cigarette smoking rate in Palm Beach County reported 1.6% in 2020 according to the 2020 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS).

Tobacco Free Florida Palm Beach County seeks to improve the health of our community through policy, systems, and environmental change. In 2020 we identified 297 multiunit housing communities, 22 more than the previous year, living policies, of which 75 communities have entire grounds policies, meaning tobacco use and vaping are not allowed indoors and within 25 feet of any entrance.

Palm Beach County Tobacco program has developed relationship with the City of West Palm Beach Chief of Police and other lead agencies to spearhead a neighborhood tobacco free program. Continued partnership with the South Florida Fair by providing resource material detailing the deadly combination of tobacco use and COVID-19 is ongoing.

On Dec. 20, 2019, President Trump signed Tobacco 21 legislation, raising the minimum age to sale tobacco at 21 years of age. Based on the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, the percentage of Palm Beach County youth (11 to 17) who have ever tried e-cigarettes dropped from 11.8% in 2018 to 10.4% in 2020. On the other hand, the 2021 Counter Tool Surveys which is conducted at Tobacco Retail Licensing stores, around the state, showed that 54.5% of e-Cigarette products have no signs stating that identification is required for purchased of e-cigarettes and related products in Palm Beach County. 80.8% of the retailers sell e-cigarettes and their products, and 77.8% sell menthol flavor which we know targets specifically the African American youth and young adults. Retailers in low-income neighborhoods were more likely to be located with 1000 feet of a school or park and were less likely to have healthy food and beverage options available which is a disadvantage for the youth. Results from both surveys addressed the need to continue working on tobacco related health inequities issues.

Presentations at community centers, schools and faith-based organizations in these neighborhoods helped educate community members on the importance of tobacco prevention and cessation and raised awareness about the impact of tobacco advertising on youth initiation and cessation efforts. To learn more about the statewide and local efforts of our program visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com)

**School Health**

The Palm Beach County School Health Program is a collaborative partnership of the health department with the School District of Palm Beach County and the Health Care District of Palm Beach County. The Health Department is responsible for administrative oversight of the program. The goal of the School Health Program is to promote student health through prevention, education, early intervention, and referral for acute or chronic health problems.

Nurses train designees to provide safe medication administration in all schools when or where a nurse may not be present.

For school year 2019-2020, the School Health Program staff included 228 nurses and 10 health aides.

- There were 196,244 students in pre-k through 12th grade.
- Nearly 338,752 health room visits prior to school closure in March 2020 due to COVID-19.
- There were medications and/or procedures provided to 10,733 students.
School health services including health screenings are available to all students attending public schools in Palm Beach County. The school nurses are dedicated to promoting the well-being, academic success, and lifelong achievement and health of students. They care for students that have chronic health conditions, injuries, illnesses, or communicable diseases. They provide health counseling, referral, and follow-up of suspected or confirmed health problems.

As an effort to support the education process, school nurses from the Department of Health continued by phone to follow up with families of those having students with chronic health conditions during the spring of 2020 while students were adjusting to on-line learning.

Department School Health staff target efforts to increase immunization compliance in the county through continued monitoring, education and training of school nurses, school administrative staff, local healthcare providers and their office staff, parents and the general public on vaccine standards and school requirements.

Challenges exist to improving compliance rates that include: an increase in parents seeking religious exemptions for their children and education of school administrative staff and principals on state statute. During the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the greatest challenges is obtaining health records while students attended school remotely. To avoid delays in registration and education interruption, School Health staff transcribed out-of-state immunization records and obtained immunization records from the state registry for students to remain in compliance for school attendance. During school year 2019-2020, a review of 11,930 student school health records from K-12 found 95.86% meeting state health requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH
The Community Sanitation Program
The Community Sanitation program includes the fundamental activities of community environmental health. Highlights of these activities include:

- Inspections, licensing, monitoring, and enforcement activities in food service operations in schools and colleges, assisted living facilities, adult day care, group homes, and residential treatment facilities, civic/fraternal organizations, stand-alone bars, and detention facilities.
- Investigation of reports of food borne illnesses in restaurants, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, schools, childcare facilities, and other food service establishments.
- Inspections and monitoring of sanitation and safety at schools and colleges, adult family care homes, assisted living facilities, group homes, and other residential facilities.
- Inspections, licensing, and monitoring of sanitation and safety at mobile home parks, recreational vehicle parks, migrant labor housing and migrant labor camps.
- Investigations of complaints from the public regarding allegations of sanitary nuisances and other health related issues across the county.
- In 2020, community sanitation program staff performed 1,961 routine inspections in 1,645 facilities.

Many of the facilities the community sanitation program inspects were affected by pandemic related closures and visitor restrictions in 2020. Staff continued providing on demand services such as inspecting school sites preparing “to-go” meals for students during school campus closures, completing migrant labor housing pre-licensure inspections and requested inspections. Program staff continued investigating complaints alleging sanitary nuisances and foodborne illnesses. Inspections in residential group care facilities were arranged when possible to protect the safety of staff and residents.

Child Care Licensing Program
Since 1959, the local County Health Department has administered the Child Care Licensing program for the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners (sitting as the Child Care Facilities Board). The purpose of the child care licensing program is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the children of Palm Beach County and promote their emotional and intellectual development and care. This makes child care licensing an important public health function.

During 2020 many child care facilities were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in related closures, service reductions,
and operational changes. Despite these challenges, child care licensing staff donned personal protective equipment and continued to provide on-demand inspection and licensing services, responded to complaints, collaborated with other state and local agencies, and provided related information and technical assistance.

The child care licensing program quickly adapted to the effective use of virtual platforms to meet, communicate, and provide services. Of the 10 public monthly meetings of the Child Care Advisory Council held during the year, 7 were virtual meetings organized and hosted by the program. Child care licensing staff worked closely with the Health Department’s Epidemiology Program and child care providers to respond to the many reports of COVID-19 cases related to child care facilities and family child care homes; and provided information and technical assistance for prevention and response measures.

Highlights of the activities performed by the Child Care Licensing program staff in 2020 are summarized in this table.

The Child Care Licensing program of regulation, monitoring, and enforcement activities helped to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of children by:

- Reducing risks related to COVID-19 and other communicable disease outbreaks, as well as injuries due to unsafe physical environment.
- Protecting children from various forms of harm due to unfit or unqualified caregivers.
- Preventing inadequate supervision, child abuse and neglect, and other general inappropriate and harmful treatment of children.

**Water and Wastewater Section:**
In 2020, staff completed 16,562 inspections, issued 4,652 permits, investigated 365 complaints, and initiated 226 enforcement cases.

**Healthy Beaches Program**
A total of 611 samples and 20 re-samples were collected and analyzed. Based on the data, beach 54 advisories were issued for a total of 110 days during the year. For the 13 beaches, the water quality was considered good to moderate 97.4% of the year. Due to the pandemic, beaches were closed two weeks in March and May and the entire month of April.

**Well Surveillance Program**
This program identifies and monitors areas in Palm Beach County where groundwater contamination is suspected and may pose a threat to public health. The division was assigned two well surveillances and collected from 31 samples for analysis by the Florida Department of Health’s Laboratory in Jacksonville.

**Drinking Water Program**
- The division completed a total of 1,527 permit reviews including 527 water wells; 427 Safe Drinking Water Act (water treatment plants and distribution), and 18 Limited Use Systems. Staff also conducted 183 facility inspections, including 20 sanitary surveys; investigated 22 complaints and initiated 43 enforcement cases.
- The State delegated Safe Drinking Water Act Program scored 100% on the Annual State Audit.
Domestic Wastewater Program
Monitors for compliance the collection, transmission, treatment and disposal of domestic wastewater.
- Issued 1,251 permits for the construction, repair and modification of septic tank systems, issued 1,008 letters of no objections, conducted 6,419 construction and operating inspections, performed site evaluations, issued investigated 125 complaints and initiated 70 enforcement actions.
- In addition, under the delegated DEP program, 267 permit applications were processed, 789 private lift stations inspected, 183 complaint/spill response investigations conducted and 65 enforcement actions initiated.

Public Pools and Bathing Places Program
The division monitors compliance with the health and safety regulations for public pools and bathing places.
- Processed 154 initial operating permit applications or new or modified pools, conducted 8,754 inspections and re-inspections, investigated 35 complaints and initiated 8 enforcement actions.
- The EPH division was required to close 1,870 pools for violations of a health or safety requirement or both.
- Coordinated the placement of dozens of “Caution” and “Health Alert” signs for Blue-Green Algae & other harmful algae blooms (HABs).

Air Pollution Control
Air & Waste Section processes and issues permits for air pollution sources within the County for compliance with State and Federal regulatory requirements. The County has 197 regulated facilities including 178 minor and 19 major facilities. Staff conducted 244 facility inspections, reviewed 162 air pollutant tests and 262 visible emissions tests, and reviewed 317 compliance reports such as, continuous monitoring reports, annual operating reports, and statement of compliance reports. The Program issued 17 air pollution permits including construction, Operation and Title V Operation permits.

The Program monitored 278 regulated demolition/renovation asbestos projects and conducted 513 compliance inspections at these projects. 95 air pollution related complaints were investigated. 12 open burning sites, for land clearing activities associated with residential and non-residential land clearing, were authorized, and inspected. The Program collected $1,400.00 from 10 enforcement actions, which were resolved through consent agreements.

Ambient Air Monitoring
The Palm Beach County Ambient Air Monitoring network monitors the concentrations of Ozone (O₃), and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ & PM₂.₅) in ambient air. The air quality is reported via an air quality index (AQI) that correlates to the concentrations of seven designated priority pollutants. These monitoring stations are located in Royal Palm Beach (O₃, PM₂.₅), Lantana (O₃), Belle Glade (PM₂.₅), and Delray Beach (PM₂.₅, PM₁₀). In 2020, air quality was reported ‘good’ for 318 (87%) days, ‘moderate’ for 46 (13%) days. There were no days reported as ‘Unhealthy for Sensitive Persons.’ AQI forecast can be obtained at www.airnow.gov.

Solid Waste
The Solid Waste Program regulates construction and demolition (C&D) debris recycling facilities, yard trash processing facilities, landfills, and waste tire processing facilities. Groundwater is sampled and analyzed at some of the regulated facilities to evaluate the impact, if any, on groundwater quality from those operations. In 2019 the Solid Waste Program monitored 58 regulated facilities. Staff conducted 63 facility inspections and responded to 24 solid waste related complaints. Department issued 4 solid waste permits including closure and operating permits.

Disaster Debris Management Sites
Disaster Debris Management Sites (DDMS) function as an intermediate staging area between the initial removal and the disposal or recycling of the debris (such as vegetative debris, construction and demolition debris, white goods, and vehicles & vessels) during storm events. In 2020, 41 pre-authorization disaster debris management sites were reviewed and inspected.

Biomedical Waste
Functions to minimize the risk from potentially infectious medical waste to health care workers, environmental services and treatment personnel, transporters, and the general public. The section regulates all aspects of the biomedical waste program as it relates to segregation, packaging, storage, transport, and treatment at permitted facilities. The programmatic staff conducted 2482 routine inspections and processed 553 applications, 383 of them are for new facilities. Staff also responded to 11 complaints related to biomedical waste in the community.
Hazardous Waste
Provides oversight of the generation and management of hazardous waste in Palm Beach County. Commercial facilities such as automotive body and repair shops, dry cleaners, laboratories, and hospitals generating hazardous waste are inspected for compliance and permitted through County Ordinance 97-58. 599 routine inspections were conducted on permitted facilities and 39 applications processed. Staff also responded to 4 hazardous waste complaints during the year.

Body Art
Encompasses both the body piercing and tattooing programs and is intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public from the spread of infectious diseases. The regulation of these establishments and the education and licensure of tattoo artists can reduce not only the occurrence of infection of the procedure site, but also the incidence of transmission of blood-borne pathogens such as Hepatitis B and C and other communicable diseases. 259 routine inspections were conducted on new and permitted tattoo establishments and body piercing salons. 127 new tattoo establishment applications were processed and 629 tattoo artist applications processed; 244 of these are for new artists in 2020. In addition, staff investigated 9 body art complaint investigations.

Tanning Facilities
Establishes comprehensive and uniform procedures to ensure that new and existing tanning facilities are operated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. These facilities are regulated, not only to reduce the threat of over exposure to non-ionizing (ultraviolet) radiation, but also to prevent the occurrence of communicable diseases associated with the lack of sanitary operation of the facility. Routine inspections were conducted at all permitted facilities with 6 new applications received for 2020 and 1 complaint investigation.

HEALTH ACCESS DIVISION
Highlights:
The Health Access Division includes seven clinic locations throughout Palm Beach County. It also includes comprehensive Nutrition and Laboratory Services, Community Immunization Services, Family Planning (Title X) Services, Volunteer Services, Centralized Scheduling (Call Center) and a host of additional support services.

Medical Care is provided by highly skilled physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, licensed dietitians and technicians. These staff perform their tasks with integrity and respect. Bi-lingual staff communicate in Spanish, French and Creole. Programs are designed to meet the individual needs of each patient. Services that are available in our clinics include:

- Family Planning
- Family Planning Waiver Program
- Sterilization Referrals
- Gynecology Services
- Maternity prenatal and postnatal
- HIV/AIDS Testing and Medical Care
- Sexually Transmitted Disease Screening & Treatment
- Tuberculosis Screening and Treatment
- Teen Clinic
- Immunization Services (Adults & Children)
- Nutrition Services (Dietary Counseling)
- Volunteer Services
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children) on site
- On site Laboratory Services

Number of People Served in 2020
- Clients = 23,004
- Visits = 75,161

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<th>Delray</th>
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Other Services
- Maternal Child Health 561-671-4140
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children) 561-357-6007 or 877-493-6703
HEALTH ACCESS – COUNTY HEALTH CENTERS

The Florida Department of Health in Palm County’s Health Access Division offers residents of Palm Beach County a variety of public health services including but not limited to pre-natal and post-partum maternity care, Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women (PEPW/SOBRA) temporary emergency Medicaid, family planning, women’s health, sexual health, teen clinic, HIV/ADAP, refugee, tuberculosis, health education, nutrition, laboratory, and routine & overseas immunizations. These specialized services are provided in six health centers located throughout Palm Beach County in the cities of Delray Beach, Lantana, West Palm Beach, Riviera Beach, Jupiter, and Belle Glade.

C.L. Brumback Glades Health Center

Due to the barriers of COVID-19 and with the assistance of our IT and coding departments, the C.L. Brumback Health Center was the first center to successfully implement the “Telehealth/Telework” process for both patients and staff that were unable to appear in person. We used the Microsoft TEAMs platform audio/visual conferencing to order medications/labs, perform sexual health screening, maternal reassurance, HIV services, family planning and nursing triage assessments. As a safety measure, we reduced our clinical service capacity to 50%, but continued to provide a full range of onsite medical services to those who presented to the clinic. Regarding the nurse triage assessments, we collaborated with the call center and assumed control of all incoming clinic telephone calls to conduct nurse triage assessments under the nurse’s protocols. Our volunteer service department was also instrumental and assisted the nutritional service department staff by providing Therapeutic Nutritional Treatment (TNT) bags to patients that aided in providing healthy nutritional foods. The Volunteer Service department also managed the screening/temperature check points, and ensured patients and staff maintained social distancing. With these measures, we were able to limit our exposure to the COVID-19 virus and ultimately found strength in each other through teamwork by keeping ourselves, family, and patients safe and our center remained opened and fully operational the duration of the pandemic.

Delray Beach Health Center

2020 was a year to remember! Delray’s dedicated staff came to work every day ready to provide the essential clinical services to our community. Telehealth visits were offered; however, a surprising number of patients opted to come into the clinic.

Thankfully four of our colleagues in Dental Health joined our efforts and ensured screening of all patients, visitors, and staff prior to entering our two clinic buildings. This allowed our staff to continue their work, uninterrupted.

In the early evening of September 16th Delray experienced a fire in the main clinic that destroyed the main medication room while sprinklers flooded the entire East corridor offices and exam rooms. For several days a large area of the clinic was affected by water damage, residual smoke smell and limited exam room access. Plans were quickly made to accommodate patients the following day and services were uninterrupted even during the remediation period that went on for several weeks.

Delray was able to offer a colposcopy clinic twice a month thanks to an APRN’s eagerness to complete the colposcopy training and certification. We purchased new state of the art equipment to re-establish this service. Because of this, several of our patients diagnosed with abnormal PAP results were able to obtain the next phase of diagnosis - the colposcopy exam.
Delray’s office of Volunteer Services was able to continue the tradition of distributing toys to children during the Christmas season. Our kind and generous Florida Atlantic University pediatric medical students purchased over $400 worth of toys and $50 gift cards that were donated to patients in-need.

Designated as “essential services” in Public Health, the Delray Beach Health Center staff remained open for services the entire 2020 year. Thankful for the continued opportunity to serve the community and address patients’ needs during this pandemic year, they celebrated the end of 2020 with a “COVID safe” holiday lunch and a festive decorating contest.

**Lantana Health Center**

The Lantana Health Center continued to operate the largest maternity program of any Department of Health Center in Palm Beach County. The continued success of this maternity program can be attributed in part to the health center’s strong, long-standing partnership with the Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc. and The Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County. Through this joint effort, the Lantana Health Center continued to offer patients a COVID-19 modified version of the Centering Pregnancy Model that incorporated virtual visits and socially distanced in-person visits. This program is an internationally recognized, evidence-based model of group maternity care that effectively addresses the complex social determinants of health. This unique, evidenced-based, comprehensive model of care not only includes the clinical/medical aspect of pregnancy but also provides education, social support, and health promotion to participants in a group setting. By bringing patients out of the traditional exam room and into a group setting, patients are more likely to develop skills and confidence to take control of their own health and achieve better health outcomes.

**West Palm Beach Health Center**

The West Palm Beach Health Center continued the care of patients during the pandemic ensuring patient access to medical treatment in Sexual Health, Family Planning, Maternity, and Infectious Disease. The West Palm Beach Health Center provided telehealth services when possible in all clinics. The West Palm Beach Health Center suspended the late-night Sexual Health Clinic due to the pandemic. In collaboration with the Belle Glade Health Center Administrator the West Palm Beach Heath Center continued the Saturday once a month GYN clinic maintaining the continuity of care in Women’s Health for the County.

**Northeast Health Center**

The Northeast Health Center administers health assessments, vaccinations, and medical entry to care for refugees fleeing persecution, threats, or repression under the federal Refugee Resettlement Program. The refugee program helps to eliminate health-related barriers and protect public health in the U.S. All patients regardless of their immigration status are seen within 90 days of arrival. The Northeast Health Center is the introduction of health care in the U.S. for many of the refugee patients residing in Palm Beach County. Due to the strict time limitations of the Refugee program the Northeast Health Center continued services to the Refugee patients ensuring they received all services within the program’s timeframe. The Northeast Health Center also continued children immunizations during the pandemic.

**Jupiter Health Center**

The Jupiter Health Center suspended services in April of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff working in the Jupiter Health Center were reassigned to other Health Centers to maintain continuity of care. Patients requesting services at the Jupiter Health Center were offered Telehealth visits and accommodated at the West Palm Beach Health Center.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic did initially reduce the total number of patients who
were willing to seek care at our county health centers during the year. Despite this challenge, the health centers remained open and continued to operate as normally as possible while strictly observing Centers for Disease Control guidelines related to constant mask usage for all staff and visitors, social distancing, staff use of personal protective equipment, and personal hygiene. The health centers also implemented strict screening procedures for all patients entering our buildings for elevated body temperatures, symptoms of COVID-19, and travel & possible exposure history. Finally, additional measures such as regular disinfection of high-touch surfaces, modifications to waiting and exam rooms, and extensive use of virtual visits were utilized to ensure an effective, yet safe, patient experience. Many of the health centers were also proud to serve as COVID-19 testing sites for Palm Beach County residents, First Responders, and other government personnel.

Despite the slight reduction in patient volume due to COVID-19 at the beginning of the year, the Palm Beach County Health Centers finished the year 2020 strong by completing over 80,000 patient visits in 11 essential public health disciplines across 6 health centers in Palm Beach County. Like previous years, these visits were concentrated in three main areas that accounted for approximately 69% of all health center business. The largest of these, maternity services, accounted for approximately 33% of the total patient visits to county health centers during the year 2020. Additionally, HIV/AIDS services and family planning services accounted for 22% & 14% of patient visits respectively.

**Community Immunization Services**

With the rise of COVID-19 cases in 2020, Community Immunization Services (CIS) at the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County (DOH) has been supporting COVID-19 mitigation efforts, in addition to its normal role in providing outreach and vaccination services to the underserved or uninsured.

The Immunization program staff and nurses are committed to protecting the residents of Palm Beach County. Immunizations are important to receive to decrease the incidence of disease and prevent community spread of various diseases. In 2020, CIS provided 3,934 total services including 5,398 immunizations. In addition, 162 outreach events were performed throughout Palm Beach County. The vaccine program components are: PC 01 (Vaccines for Children- 18 years and younger); PC 17 (Vaccines for Adults- 19 years and older who are uninsured or underinsured); PC 17.02 (Vaccines for Adults- Hepatitis A) PC 17.04 (COVID-19) and PC 18.01 (Refugee Clinic- Adults 19 years and older).

From April through June of 2020, CIS shifted the focus of its staff to support the DOH’s COVID-19 mission; CIS staff began to fully assist the Epidemiology Division with contact tracing, allowing COVID-19 outbreaks to be more easily tracked and stopped before getting out of hand. From July through October of 2020, CIS utilized a Point of Dispensing structure in the 45th street Health Department’s special needs room to vaccinate children in a safe-from-COVID-19 environment. This was accomplished by having parents walk up to register their children and stay
in their cars until called for an appointment; once inside, social distancing and PPE were followed to ensure COVID-19 would not invade the facility.

In November and December, CIS returned to the community setting, continuing its role of providing immunization services. In addition to this role, CIS prepared for the receipt of COVID-19 vaccines. Just-in-time trainings were given to fire rescue and other municipalities in Palm Beach Counties to ensure they could enter information into Florida SHOTS; technical assistance was also given to fire rescue agencies in regard to storage and handling of COVID-19 vaccines. Once COVID-19 vaccines arrived at the DOH, CIS redistributed vaccines to the Health Care District as well as fire rescue agencies.

With the remaining vaccines, CIS began two vaccination efforts. The first was the 800 Clematis POD started December 28, where first responders, healthcare workers, and DOH employees were vaccinated. On December 30, first doses at the Kings Point POD were accomplished. The Kings Point POD was a 55+ community and the first state-run COVID-19 vaccination site in Palm Beach. At the Kings Point POD, CIS nursing staff administered over 400 first dose Moderna vaccines to Palm Beach County seniors.

If you are in need of vaccinations, please contact the Florida Department of Health Palm Beach County Appointment line at 561-625-5180 to schedule your appointment. Follow all immunization activities in Palm Beach County at: http://palmbeach.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/clinical-and-nutrition-services/immunizations/index.html
Visit: https://www.noshotsnoschool.com/ to review school requirements today.

Comprehensive Nutrition Program
The Comprehensive Nutrition Program of the Health Access Division serves clients at the health centers and within the community. Registered and licensed dietitians provide medical nutrition therapy for clients in the maternity, Infectious Disease Clinics, including HIV/AIDS and TB, family planning and women’s health clinics. Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is a plan of care that focuses on the nutrition assessment, counseling, treatment and evaluation and continued monitoring of a client.

COVID19 pandemic changed the way we worked and provided services. Our goal during the pandemic was to provide services while keeping providers and clients safe. The program followed the CDC guidelines which include social distancing, wearing mask and washing hands. Here the steps taken to provide services:

1) Client were contacted and informed not to come to clinic
2) Clients were rescheduled into COVID19 Telehealth appointment slots
3) Nutritionist teleworked from home from July to September 2020
4) Nutritionist started to work at the Centers as of October 2020 but continued to provide counseling by phone as well as in- person visit for clients with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus.

The Nutrition Program also suffered reduction in staffing. In September 2020, Lorna Dubinsky, Senior Public Health Nutritionist of 30 years retired. With telehealth, providing coverage was unique. Telehealth enabled the nutrition team to provide coverage without having to travel to another site.

The disadvantage to telehealth was that the number of nutrition counseling decreased due to clients not being available at the time calls were made; Client re-scheduling; Overwhelmed staff; Not seeing the clients for visual assessments; and insurance denial of payment for services.
On the positive side, we provided 54 Centering classes through Zoom and collaborated with the Community Health Program as instructor/coach for the type 2 Diabetes Prevention Program - Nutrition provided 12 sessions (virtually and in – person). (See the table below)
The table below provides details comparing services provided in 2020 to services in 2019. Total number of counseling services provided decreased by 21%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Year 2019</th>
<th>Year 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Assessment/ Counseling</td>
<td>3,648</td>
<td>2,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated number of clients</td>
<td>2,469</td>
<td>2,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Management</td>
<td>5,480</td>
<td>4,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Centering Classes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Presentations (virtual and in person)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food security is a chronic problem in Palm Beach County and the Therapeutic Nutrition Treatment (TNT) Food Pantry program addresses this issue. TNT provides healthy foods tailored to the therapeutic dietary needs of the HIV/AIDS. COVID 19 has caused a high rate financial hardship in many households. As per the Census Bureau’s Center for Budget and Policy Priorities Special Series: COVID Hardship Watch (May 20, 2021), 9% of adults in the country reported not having enough food to eat because they could not afford to buy more food as oppose to 3.35% in 2019. Palm Beach County HIV/AIDS clients were offered therapeutic food when they came to lab appointments and doctor’s appointment since the nutritionist was not available. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS program approved the distribution of $90.00 worth therapeutic food monthly. The TNT program is funded by Part B of Ryan White and is maintained by the registered dietitian. The TNT program is viewed as a best practice by the Bureau of HIV/AIDS. In 2017, the Prudential Productivity Team Award was given to the Comprehensive Nutrition Program staff along with staff from the HIV/AIDS Program and the 1050 Service Center. The following is the number of HIV clients served during the year 2019 compared to the Year 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV Nutrition Assessment and Counseling</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>1048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNT Foods provided</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In FY 2018-2019 the Comprehensive Nutrition Program nutritionists teamed with the Maternity and Family Planning Clinics to increase nutrition referrals for prenatal and anticonceptual women. Providers were encouraged to refer all maternity clients to the nutritionist for medical nutrition therapy. As a result, the number of clients that were provided medical nutrition therapy services increased by 84% in 2019. However, in 2020 a slight decrease by 7% was noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternity Clinic</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>778</td>
<td>1434</td>
<td>1327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Nutrition Program also serves the Teen Clinic. However, all groups were cancelled because of the pandemic. The Nutrition team also attempted to reach Boys and Girls Club Teens and Families to provide nutrition classes. Classes were unattended because lack of knowledge of the Zoom technology.

The Nutrition Team serves as preceptors to Pasco County Dietetic Interns. While hospitals locked down and did not allow students to perform rotations. Palm Beach County Nutrition Program provided the much-needed preceptorship to 7 Dietetic Interns as opposed to 4. Palm Beach county Health Department Medical Residents also received their Nutrition Rotation from our Dietitians on staff.

The availability of MS Teams during the pandemic has opened doors to new way of providing nutrition services. Whether it's a consult, a class, or preceptorship, virtual technology has maintained our available to provide services. It cannot take the place of in-person visit, however. As clients become more knowledgeable and the technology improves nutrition services will reach the unreachable.

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**FDOH Palm Beach Laboratory**

Located on second floor of the West Palm Beach Health Center, The Main Laboratory is Federally licensed by CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) as a highly complex laboratory as required by Federal Law. Successful participation in proficiency testing for all testing specialties is also required, in addition to State Licensed technical and testing personnel. Federal licensure inspections are performed biannually with our last successful inspection completed December 2020.

The Laboratory Program supports the Clinic Programs in all Health Centers County-wide by offering testing services to their clients with satellite lab locations in all the Health Centers, providing phlebotomy services and CLIA waived testing to include Urine Screens, Pregnancy Tests and Glucometer Glucose testing. We also provide testing services to the County’s Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Home, RPICC and several Community Based Organizations (CBO’s), with plans to expand services to additional CBO’s. Our laboratory also provides HIV Ag/Ab confirmatory testing for CBO’s performing Rapid HIV tests throughout the County.

Due to the unprecedented COVID Pandemic in 2020 our testing volume decreased due to decline in clients seen in the various Health Centers and approximately 354,514 tests were processed through The Main Laboratory, Satellite labs and Contractual Laboratories. Testing for COVID Antibodies was implemented mid-2020 to test clients for possible exposure to the virus.

Test orders are generated through the Clinical Health Management System (HMS) and sent electronically to our LIS (Laboratory Information System). After testing is completed, results are released from the LIS reported back to HMS electronically so they can merge into patient’s medical record for provider to review. Florida Statute requires Electronic Laboratory Reporting of certain test results to the different surveillance
systems that include STARS, Merlin and e-HARS. Testing in the Main Lab is performed by State licensed Medical Technologists and Medical Technologist Supervisors.

2020 was a challenging year having to continue to be 100% operational during the pandemic with all Laboratory staff required to work on-site to remain crucial in our role of assisting providers in diagnosis and treatment of clients through laboratory testing. Several of the Laboratory staff were instrumental in assisting the Organizations Epidemiology Department in the initial contact tracing of Positive Covid cases in Palm Beach County. In the later part of 2020, a few of the Lab Team members assisted in Covid Vaccine Scheduling for the residents of Florida.

All specimens collected in satellite locations are sent to the Main Lab via courier for processing and testing. The following is an overview of in-house testing offered:

- **Hematology**: CBC with or without Automated Differential, Manual Differential, Sed Rates, Retics, Protime (PT) and Partial Thromboplastin (PTT) and Hemoglobin Electrophoresis for screening all Maternity patients for abnormal Hemoglobins like Sickle Cell.
- **Immunology**: RPR for syphilis, General Immunology, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, Differentiated Herpes Simplex Virus 1 & 2 and QuantiFERON (IGRA) to test for exposure of Tuberculosis.
- **Blood Bank**: ABO and Rh Group and Antibody screening on all maternity patients for detection of possible antibodies that can cause Hemolytic Disease of Newborn.
- **Microbiology**: Bacteriology like Urine, Throat and GBS cultures, Mycology, Parasitology and FIT testing for colorectal cancer screening. Checking for functionality and performance of autoclaves used in the Dental Program by testing for spores to ensure sterility of dental instruments.
- **Molecular Biology**: T Cells for CD4 monitoring of HIV patients, HIV Viral load by PCR for detection of amount of HIV virus in blood. GC/Chlamydia on Urine or provider collected samples, HPV testing for 16, 18 and other high-risk genotypes.
- **Processing/Sendout**: Receives all samples delivered to Main Laboratory. Packages and ships for transport following DOT/IATA rules and regulations of samples collected in the field due to investigations conducted by the Tuberculosis Program for testing of AFB Cultures.

### Maternal Child Health Division

The Maternal Child Health Division (MCHD) provides no cost voluntary home visiting programs for pregnant women and families with newborns in Palm Beach County. These programs are managed though the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County and are funded by the Healthy Start/Healthy Beginnings Coalition of Palm Beach County and the Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach. The Healthy Beginnings Coalition of Palm Beach County Inc., also known as the Healthy Beginnings Coalition, was created to provide a cohesive system of care in the county. Healthy Beginnings seeks to improve birth outcomes by providing access to direct health and social services for pregnant women whose chances of having a healthy baby are hampered by such risk factors as poverty, limited access to health care, poor nutrition, age, substance abuse, homelessness, domestic violence and more.

Public Health Registered Nurses provide health education, care coordination, case management, screenings and interventions, referrals and linkages to needed services, anticipatory guidance and ongoing support to participants who have risk factors associated with an increase in preterm delivery, low birth weight delivery and infant mortality. Nurses help families identify and mitigate the risk factors that can lead to maternal mortality and morbidity and conduct comprehensive nursing assessments to identify concerns that could lead to poor health outcomes.

Our three nurse programs, Healthy Beginnings Nurses, Nurse-Family Partnership and Women’s Health Initiative are designed to meet the individual needs of each family by actively engaging with them, listening to their needs, understanding their strengths and advocating on their behalf.

Program goals are to:

- Improve pregnancy outcomes
- Improve child health, development and safety
- Improve life-course development by promoting pregnancy planning, educational achievement and employment
- Promote supportive relationships among family and friends

The COVID 19 pandemic presented many challenges which included the discontinuation of in-person home visits. However, with the support of Nurse Home Visitors (NHV) and Family Support Workers (FSW) that provide interpretation services, many clients were able to receive virtual
visits. NHV’s and FSW’s assisted clients to set up email accounts and virtual web conferencing, so that all clients had the opportunity for virtual face to face visits. Many clients express that the visits were a source of comfort during the shut-down. No contact delivery of educational materials was implemented to ensure clients received items deemed necessary to support health education and child development. Virtual teleconference services were implemented to support ongoing multidisciplinary case conferences and programmatic meetings.

**Healthy Beginnings Nurses Program**

The Healthy Beginnings (HB) Nurses is a home visitation program offering a wide range of services to high risk pregnant women at any gestational age, newborn to one year old, and women of childbearing age that have experienced a pregnancy loss. There are 3 sub programs offered by the Healthy Beginnings Nurses Program: Prenatal Plus, Nurse Supporting Families Prenatal and Infant, and Interconception Care for women that have experienced a pregnancy loss. Services include case management, nutrition and breastfeeding guidance, and psychosocial referrals. Program services are coordinated to support the family by addressing their risk factors to improve birth outcomes, improve child development, improve child safety, and build healthy relationships.

**Nurse-Family Partnership Program**

The Nurse-Family Partnership Program (NFP) is an evidence-based nurse home visitation program for first time mothers in Palm Beach County. Specially trained Registered Nurses provide home visits to pregnant moms-to-be prior to 28 weeks and continues to serve the families through the child’s second birthday. Moms-to-be receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy; everything from safely caring for their child to how to provide a stable, secure future for their families.

**Women’s Health Initiative Program**

Women’s Health Initiative (WHIN) is a home visitation program for Black families in specific zip codes in Palm Beach County (33401, 33403, 33404, 33407) during any stage of their gestation, newborns through their first birthday, and moms that has experienced a pregnancy loss. Case management services are provided through a team approach with services from a Registered Nurse, Nutritionist, and a Mental Health Counselor. Services are provided through a trauma-informed lens as well as the realities of racism and the impact of toxic stress on moms-to-be during pregnancy and child rearing years. The WHIN program also provides monthly community education through partnerships with other Children Services Council of Palm Beach County Grant-Funded Programs.

**Maternal Child Health Program - April to December 2020**

- Clients: 1,450
- Virtual Visits: >4,500
- Educational Activity Items Delivered: >6,000
- Masks Delivered: >6,000

**WIC 2020**

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unique challenges to the traditional model of providing benefits. WIC has adapted swiftly to provide new service delivery models that continue to support new and existing participants throughout the pandemic.

**WIC Shifts to Remote Support**

For over 40 years, WIC participants have mostly interacted in-person at WIC community-based clinics. Families go to WIC offices to enroll, receive EBT benefits for healthy foods, nutrition education and breastfeeding support. But in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic made in person visits unsafe. One of the first COVID-19 relief packages, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, enabled WIC services to be provided in new ways. For example, the physical presence requirement for WIC certification has been waived.

Palm Beach County WIC along with other agencies implemented effective remote services and curbside services that reduce in-person contact while continuing to meet participant needs. Also, in response to the shortages of staple foods and beverages at grocery stores the approved foods for WIC were expanded and WIC partnered with manufacturers and retailers to address disruptions.

Although the circumstances vary dramatically from person to person, WIC continues to pivot to meet new challenges and continues to be extremely helpful to families who rely on the program for access to healthy food, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, and referrals. The flexibilities provided to WIC families during the pandemic have been a game changer. The waivers provided to WIC by the initial COVID-19
relief packages are working. The WIC waivers were initially set to expire September 2020 but were extended through the declared national public health emergency. WIC has been a shining example of how a program can effectively adapt to meet a crisis.

In 2020 WIC
- Partnered with 29 independent and 113 chain stores
- Provided $32,713,626 worth of nutritionally appropriate foods to Palm Beach County WIC Participants
- 81% of WIC Infants Initiated Breastfeeding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIC 2020</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>32,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Potential Eligible</td>
<td>30,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Clients</td>
<td>% Eligible Served</td>
<td>44,499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage by Client Type**
- Breastfeeding: 10%
- Children: 52%
- Infants: 24%
- PG: 8%
- NPP: 6%

**Public Health Preparedness**

The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) response to COVID-19 was immediate and multi-faceted; as such, the Office of Public Health Preparedness (PHP) also played a large role in the response. Through activation at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and collaboration with various organizations, PHP supported the COVID-19 mitigation effort throughout 2020.

In March of 2020, PHP began the mission to curb County-wide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortages. These efforts coincided with PHP’s activation at the EOC as part of the Health and Medical Unit. Organizations receiving PPE included long-term care facilities (LTCFs), hospitals, first responders, and Federally Qualified Health Centers. PHP created straightforward PPE requests for facilities; Using the requests, the need for PPE was evaluated for each organization and distributed accordingly from the South Florida Fairgrounds’ staging area and the DOH in Palm Beach County’s warehouse.

As PPE distribution was in full effect, the DOH began receiving testing kits. PHP collaborated with county emergency management personnel to redistribute testing kits to organizations. PHP also organized homebound testing and popup testing sites through PBC Fire Rescue. Collaboration between PHP and the Office of Epidemiology (Epi) provided testing kits to LTCFs; Epi was also sought for infection control guidance by PHP through 2020. Additionally, the Lantana Health Department was prepared as a testing site for first responders in the county, testing throughout 2020. PHP conducted audits at state testing sites and gave feedback to the DOH.

Aside from PPE and testing, the DOH, Region 7 distributed remdesivir to hospitals and other counties in a 52-day mission started on 5/22/2020. At the direction of the State Pharmacy Director, Health and Medical delivered approximately 17,308 courses of remdesivir to 56 acute care hospitals in 18 Florida counties. Shipments of remdesivir were delivered daily to the Broward Department of Health by truck and chartered air. During the mission, the Fusion Center and Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) Law Enforcement supplied intelligence and situational updates on social unrest; DOH staff routed drivers through these areas of social unrest. Drivers and Health and Medical staff worked at all hours to ensure deliveries arrived on time.

Another large collaborative effort in 2020 was the non-congregate shelter (NCS). The NCS is a county-run facility for individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and cannot safely isolate at home. To admit a patient to the NCS, patients undergo a vetting process: Facilities recommend individuals for the NCS; Epi interviews the individuals and sends their profiles to PHP; PHP reviews the cases and sends accepted individuals to Mass Care in the Human Services branch at the EOC; after final processing, the individuals are admitted to the NCS to isolate.
By the end of 2020, COVID-19 vaccines were ready for distribution. PHP coordinated Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) to vaccinate first responders; six MOAs encompassing 11 fire departments were approved for vaccine distribution. On December 30, 2020, the Point of Dispensing (POD) at Kings Point, a 55+ community, became the first state-run COVID-19 vaccination site in Palm Beach County. The POD was coordinated between the governor’s office and Kings Point, with Governor DeSantis attending and speaking at the mission. PHP successfully kept the peace at Kings Point while providing personnel, leadership direction, and other essential vaccination resources. Community Immunization Services provided nursing staff to vaccinate clientele. The Kings Point POD paved the way for the very successful 2021 vaccination PODs across the county; over 400 residents received their first doses.

PHP will continue working diligently to vaccinate individuals against COVID-19 in 2021. As the vaccination effort winds down, PHP will shift some focus to training in preparation for hurricane season.

Performance Improvement: Reaccreditation
Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Accreditation is a nationally recognized standard of performance, validating that accredited health departments demonstrate the capacity, capabilities, and the initiative to achieve the highest possible quality of public health service. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a specific set of nationally recognized, practice-focused, and evidence-based standards. The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people in the communities they serve. The Florida Department of Health Integrated Public Health system, including DOH-Palm Beach, achieved PHAB Accreditation in 2016 and are seeking reaccreditation in 2021.

PHAB reaccreditation builds on initial accreditation. Both the requirements and the process for reaccreditation are designed to ensure that accredited health departments continue to evolve, improve, and advance, thereby becoming increasingly effective at improving the health of the populations they serve. For reaccreditation, all CHD’s including DOH-Palm Beach submitted six foundational documents for review. These are a Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, Strategic Plan, Performance Management and Quality improvement Plan, Emergency Operations Plan, and a Workforce Development Plan.

In addition, PHAB selected 15 county health departments to submit additional documentation to their capacity to deliver essential public health services. DOH-Palm Beach was selected as one of the 15 representative departments and was required to submit documentation that covered 90 topic measures. During 2020, The Palm Beach Reaccreditation Team along with colleagues, department-wide worked diligently to gather the evidence required. Along with the mandated foundational documents, the team produced 78 additional documents, including policies, narratives of practices and processes, and other examples. By participating as a representative county health department, DOH-Palm Beach contributed quality documentation that demonstrated the capability, capacity, and initiative of a highly functioning department. During 2021, PHAB will review all documentation submitted and decide on the accreditation status of the Florida Department of Health and County Health Departments in early 2022.
Preventive Medicine Public Health Residency Program

The Preventive Medicine Public Health Residency has a Continued Accredited Status in accordance with the governance of ACGME and is the only General Preventive Medicine Public Health Accredited program in the State of Florida. Established by Founder Dr. Carl Brumback in 1956, it is one of the oldest Preventive Medicine Residency programs in the nation. Nestled within the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County (Sponsoring Institution), this program plays a reputable role in preparing outstanding Physicians and Health Officers for leadership in the practice of Public Health and Preventive Medicine.

The 2020 academic year had significant vicissitudes to the Residency Program with Leadership peculiarities. Dr. James Howell, MD, MPH, Assistant Dean of Professional Relations Professor, Public Health at Nova Southeastern University and Former Secretary, Florida Department of Health took on the mantle of responsibility in capacity of Residency Program Director with the professional and astute assistance of Ms. Cynthia Oxley, BAS, AA, FCCM – GME Program and Institutional Review Coordinator & Contract Manager, and Merlene Ramnon, PhD, MPH, MSN, RN - Designated Institutional Official, respectively. Presently, Dr. Denise Josey, MD, MPH, MS, one of the program’s Alumni was confirmed by ACGME as Residency Program Director.

Over the many years, graduates of the Residency Program, who were first time ABPM Board test takers achieved a 100% pass rate; however, some were successful on exams retake of boards. Alumni’s, Dr. Tasha Alexis, and Dr. Farhat Shireen respectively, both efficaciously graduated in June 2020 and attained remarkable positions out-of-State.

As the nation and world face the emergent COVID-19 global pandemic, ACGME granted a significant degree of flexibility to Accredited Sponsoring Institutions and Residency Programs to realign their Resident workforce to meet the increased clinical demands created by the pandemic. This flexibility with expectations is consistent with the ACGME’s high commitment to Patient Safety and Resident Safety. The trajectory of Resident rotations was modified upon official communication and advisory notification from the Participating Site Directors and the “Stay at home/work from home policy” Executive Order from the State level. The Residents participated in COVID-19 activities which was advantageous for research opportunities and helped with EPI Curve/Visual Display of illness onset among cases associated with COVID-19 outbreak.

COVID-19 & New Way for Residency Program

COVID-19 has ushered us into a new era and had a tremendous influence on the Residency Program. Residents were encouraged during this shift which includes a strong focus on essential rotation assignments; however, the critical focus was on burnout, stress, and crisis management.

Emphasis was placed on health protocols, proper mask wearing, and the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE). The Residency program in its flexibility became even more accommodating in the structure. Like many Graduate Medical Education (GME) institutions, we faced the challenges of continuing the program digitally and in a socially distant fashion. The Residency program moved online almost overnight and adjusted its systems for Residents (and Faculty) who were no longer able to enjoy weekly in-person Didactic/Board Review, Committee Meetings, or Clinical Sites. We surveyed the Residency Program Staff, Residents, and Faculty to determine the types of technology needed, and utilized this information as a guide to transition the learning activities to a virtual world.
SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis steered the project, and kudos for the creativity and we are invaluable input and appreciation for the Information Technology Department that helped navigate the program path in the virtual space reality in the rapidly changing environment.

The current Senior Residents were involved with the COVID-19 Vaccination initiative at the Point of Distribution (POD) site under the leadership of key FDOH Nursing Director and Staff, joined the TB Weekly Statewide Conference Call directed by with Dr. Ashkin, Medical Director TB Section- Bureau of Communicable Diseases, participated in Telehealth Clinical Training within FDOH Clinics, attended the Division of Community Health Promotion monthly CADR meetings, and Wellness Team active contributed. The Residents advanced in the program and PGY-3 Resident - Dr. Jean Dominique Morancy commenced his research in “The Impact of Face Masks and Other Control Measures on Influenza Mortality During the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020”, his graduation is scheduled for June 2021. The PGY-2 Residents, Dr. Kingsley Anurugwo and Dr. Thaint Naing are effectively on the pathway in meeting all competency requirements, also conducted COVID research at the VAMC and are transitioning adeptly in rotations. The incoming PGY-2 additions to the Residency Program for the Academic year 2021-2022 are Dr. Nikhil Gupta and Dr. Moses Braimoh.

Undoubtedly, this has been a tremendously challenging time to provide Graduate Medical Education (GME) Residency Program, but it has also been extremely rewarding. The Residency program is proud of its student-centric model of education and is focused on tailoring rotations for the required core competency education in the most effective manner possible.

Volunteer Health Services Program

Volunteers and public/private partnerships are an integral part of the Department’s efforts to increase access to quality health care for Florida residents through volunteerism. This report summarizes the contributions and donations made to the Department by various volunteers and donors, as defined in Chapter 110, Part VI, Florida Statutes.

Services Provided: Medical and Support Staff, Auxiliary Services i.e. Sponsorships, Food Pantry, Food Gift Cards, Diaper Assistance, Maternity Incentives, Clothing Closet, Holiday Giveaway and Annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

- Total Number of Volunteers: 51
- Total Number of Volunteer Hours: 2,012
- Value of Donations and Services: $265,281

Diaper Assistance Program

Volunteer Services collects and distributes diapers and other diaper related products to clients. Since 2011, Volunteer Services has worked with local diaper banks and donors to help babies and toddlers have access to clean diapers and other basic necessities required for them to stay dry, clean, and healthy.

One diaper may seem like a small thing, but not having enough can subject a baby to adverse health conditions like dermatitis and urinary tract infections. Diaper need can result from poverty, unexpected life hardships, natural disasters, and so much more. Volunteer Services is helping families secure this basic need of clean and dry diapers for babies and toddlers.

Holiday Giveaway 2020

Christmas and the holiday season is a stressful time of the year for many families who struggle with everyday expenses. Volunteer Services operates an annual holiday toy distribution event with the help of generous donors and volunteers. This Holiday giveaway is meant to serve the neediest families with small children during the Christmas season. Families who struggle month to month, have recently lost work or who are undergoing an emergency need of some kind can get help through our program. With help of dedicated donors and volunteers, Volunteer Services was able to distribute toys to over 530 children. Donations received from the 2020 holiday giveaway valued at $14,278