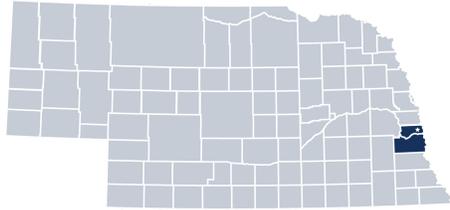


SARPY/CASS HEALTH DEPARTMENT

*Serving Sarpy and Cass Counties*



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020





# SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19

January 27, 2020 marked the official start of the Sarpy Cass Health Department's (SCHD) journey through the global pandemic, COVID-19. On this day the Department's Public Health Coordination Center (PHCC) was activated and set in motion several activities. The Department's core PHCC team consisted of the Health Director, Assistant Health Director, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Public Health Nurse - Disease Surveillance. This core team utilized the Department's continuity of operations plan, and set primary objectives that included communication, quarantine and isolation, epidemiology, and administrative functions. The Department has responded to the needs of the communities in the jurisdiction in a variety of ways since that last Monday in January. From coordinating drive-thru testing sites to providing public health recommendations to thousands of COVID-19 positive residents and many more activities in between.

While the Department's mission is to promote and protect the public's health, one specific population that has garnered special support from the onset of this journey has been the staff and residents of long-term care facilities (LTCF) and skilled nursing facilities (SNF) in our jurisdiction. A positive COVID-19 individual within this higher-risk population requires quick and immediate action to slow down or stop future spread of illness.  
*(Continued)*

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## CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19

In March 2020, an individual with multiple chronic medical conditions was admitted to a local SNF and soon after arrival began exhibiting signs of COVID-19. Testing for COVID-19 was ordered and the individual did, in fact, test positive. As our Department, with assistance from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the facility, began to identify exposures and stratify risk, it was important to develop a plan to ensure the health and wellbeing of the other facility residents as well as staff. Over 40 staff members were identified as having close contact with the positive individual and 10 were at the highest risk because of the care provided. Due to the large-scale exposures that had occurred, the Department staff quickly allocated the resources needed to facilitate a drive-up testing site in the Department's parking lot within less than 48 hours. Of the exposed staff that were tested no positives were identified. The Department continues to support our community partners that protect our aging population in LTCFs and SNFs by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies.



**SARPY/CASS HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts of **Sarpy/Cass Health Department** to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



**Assessment:** Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



**Policy Development:** Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



**Assurance:** Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.

## Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

The Sarpy Cass Health Department (SCHD), in conjunction with health systems and community partners across the Metro Area Region (Douglas, Cass, Pottawattamie and Sarpy counties), implements a regional Community Health Assessment every three years with the most recent assessment occurring in the Fall of 2018. Through a number of prioritization activities that engaged nearly 3,500 community members, mental health issues emerged as the number one health concern. In July 2019, the Department adopted a resolution to adopt mental health as the sole priority area for the 2019-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Due to the transient nature of residents in the Metro Area Region it was decided by all of the local health departments in the Metro Area that we would collectively address this main priority in an effort to maximize impact on the health and well-being of residents.

**CHIP PRIORITY:** Mental Health

# AREAS OF WORK

## ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.



The Department's Health Hub program provides evidence based strategies (i.e. health coaching), behavioral/education supports (i.e. blood pressure cuff) and referrals to primary care providers for cancer screenings. Residents who enroll in the Every Woman Matters program at their primary care provider's office are linked to the Health Hub program and navigated to appropriate services by Department staff. This year, a dozen health coaching calls were made to women in the program.

## CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.



The Department has engaged in several chronic disease control and prevention strategies and activities this year. As a founding partner of Share Our Table, a coalition focused on food security, the Department continues to explore opportunities to increase residents' access to healthy foods. The Department's Active Aging program provides one-on-one support and education to seniors with a goal of keeping aging residents in their homes. This year nurses conducted 100 wellness clinics, which provided foot care, blood pressure screening, individualized health information and referrals to over 600 individuals. These same services were also provided to 130 seniors as part of the home visitation program.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).



Department staff conducted 1,719 communicable disease investigations this year, including 1,234 COVID-19 investigations. These investigations also required extensive contact tracing for each positive case to help slow the spread of illness within our community. Additionally, weekly school surveillance, which is monitoring the rate of illness to identify possible disease outbreaks, was completed for all area schools. Department nurses provided case management and education for two residents with Tuberculosis, which included collection of sputum samples, Direct Observation Therapy (DOT) appointments, coordination of care with infectious disease specialists, and contact investigations.

# AREAS OF WORK

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.



This year staff provided childhood lead poisoning prevention education and necessary follow-up to 30 families with a child whose blood lead level was greater than five micrograms/deciliter. Under the guidance of the Nebraska



DHHS Swimming Pool Program, staff inspected 75 swimming pools for compliance with Nebraska Regulation Title 178 Chapter 2. As part of the Department's arbovirus surveillance program, staff collected 47 mosquito traps throughout Sarpy and Cass counties and submitted those to DHHS for



identification and West Nile Virus testing.

## INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.



Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass is a childhood injury prevention program within the Department. The Department's certified child passenger safety technicians installed over 80 child passenger safety seats this year and provided 26 seats for no cost to families in need. The Safe Kids program provided safety presentations to over 500 adults and children, with topics including child passenger safety, handwashing, fire prevention and planning, home safety, poison prevention, and bike safety.



## MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).



In the Fall of 2019, the Department partnered with the Douglas/Sarpy County WIC Program to begin holding monthly clinics for women and children enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). The Department continues to support breastfeeding mothers through numerous activities including; WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, Baby Café, home visitation, and one-on-one lactation support. Additionally, the creation of the Douglas/Sarpy County Breastfeeding Coalition helps to ensure consistent messages and resource availability to breastfeeding mothers in the metro area.



# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Sarpy/Cass Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Mental health was identified as the number one health concern of the Metro Area Region in the 2019-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan. With one in five Nebraskans reporting experiencing mental illness within the past year, the Department invests in programs aimed at educating about mental health and suicide prevention. Through a partnership with the Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (NALHD), the Department provided QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training to community partners representing public health, family service, faith-based, military, first responders, and medical professionals.

In an effort to address substance abuse in our communities, the Department began implementation of the five-year Communities that Care process. This year the Department leveraged the existing partnerships established by the Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass Coalition to facilitate expansion of an auxiliary Coalition with strengthened capacity and infrastructure to include prevention support, along with education and awareness of substance abuse (i.e. alcohol and/or marijuana) prevention efforts in Sarpy and Cass County youth. Communities that Care uses a five-phase process that would facilitate this new coalition through a strategic prevention planning process. This community action model utilizes a systematic, public health approach to community building which ultimately leads to positive health outcomes.