

*Greetings From*



# COWLEY COUNTY



## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

**City-Cowley County Health Department**

**320 E 9th, Suite B**

**Winfield, KS 67156**

**620-221-1430**

[www.cowleycountyks.gov/departments/publichealth](http://www.cowleycountyks.gov/departments/publichealth)

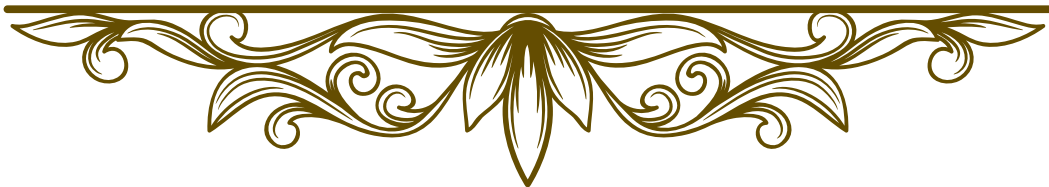
A report of activities and accomplishments  
of the Joint City-Cowley County Health  
Department for the year ended  
December 31, 2023, provided to the  
elected representatives and citizens of  
Cowley County, Kansas.

*Prevent ~ Promote ~ Protect*





*This Annual Report of Activities honors the memory of Mary Benton, who served on our Board of Health for over 30 years as a public health champion until her passing in February 2023.*



# A SPECIAL LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

There is a common belief that as you grow older time speeds up and the days, weeks, months, and years rapidly slip away. While I am certain that time is constant, I too have experienced the amazement of how rapidly the days seem to pass when your life is busy, and your days are full. Looking into the rearview mirror at the year that was 2023, I am reminded of how precious time is. Time wasted is gone forever as we are only blessed with a finite number of days, therefore I hope to safeguard the time we are allowed and get the most from it in service to our community.

Family vacations or “road trips” as my wife and kids would call them were always the days that seemed to speed away the quickest. The excitement of planning and packing, the travel to the destination, the activities and even the return journey home were always filled with special moments that became memories and milestones, so too was the journey the Health Department family took during 2023.

Sadly, we said farewell to one of our dearest friends early in the year, Mary Benton who served our community and the Health Department for over 30 years. Her passing left a sadness that I still feel, but her memory and willingness to help others was a beacon for all of us to try to emulate.

As always the Health Department family, and by that I mean the staff of the Health Department, made the road trip of 2023 the most interesting and rewarding. We adopted a tagline that we use in all our outreach that I feel always reflects upon them, “we work hard everyday to help you stay well” and throughout the year, day in and day out they absolutely did just that. I am forever grateful to be able drive the metaphorical bus that is the Health Department, but this bus would be empty and accomplish nothing without them.

You will notice that this year’s report is formatted to say less and show more. The creative thinkers on staff designed this to provide you all with a glimpse at what it is we accomplished and to detail what lays ahead on the road to come. In keeping with that directive, I will conclude. Enjoy this report and as always you are welcome to join us!

**Stay well,  
Thomas Langer  
Health Department Administrator  
County Public Health Officer**



# 77 Years of Service

## OVER 30 Health & Support Services to HELP YOU STAY WELL

### 7 CORE PROGRAMS



## CLIENTS SERVED

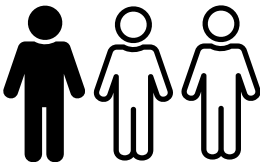
13,704 Clients Served

2,656 1st Time Clients

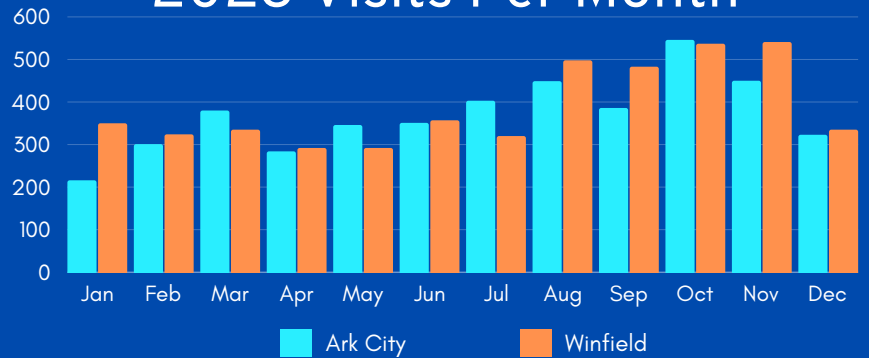
~11 new clients per business day

29,837 Appointments

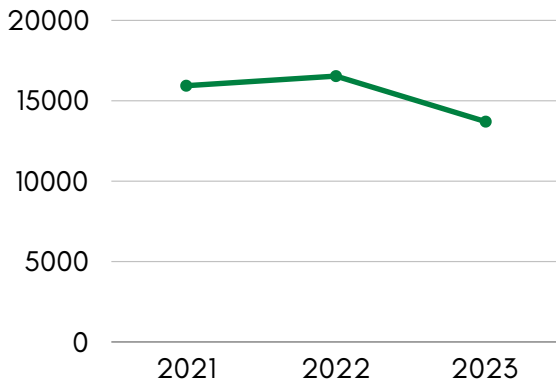
At least 1 in 3 Cowley County residents received a Health Department service.



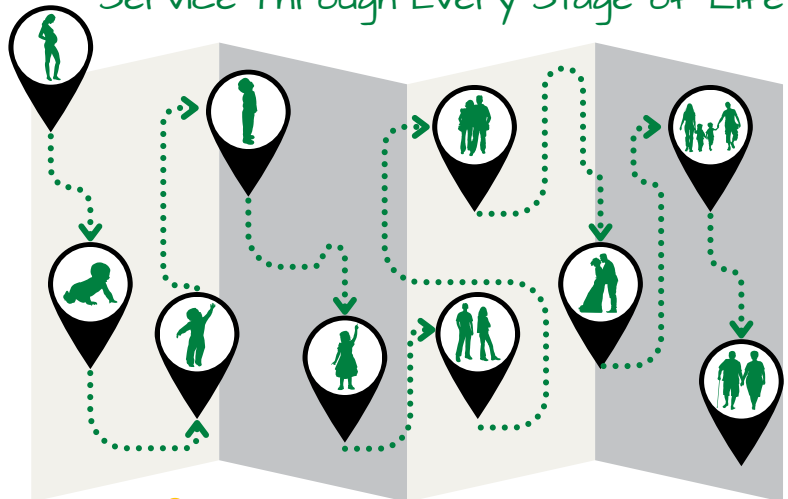
### 2023 Visits Per Month



### Clients Per Year



### Service Through Every Stage of Life



3 Days  
Youngest Client

22 YEARS  
Average Client Age

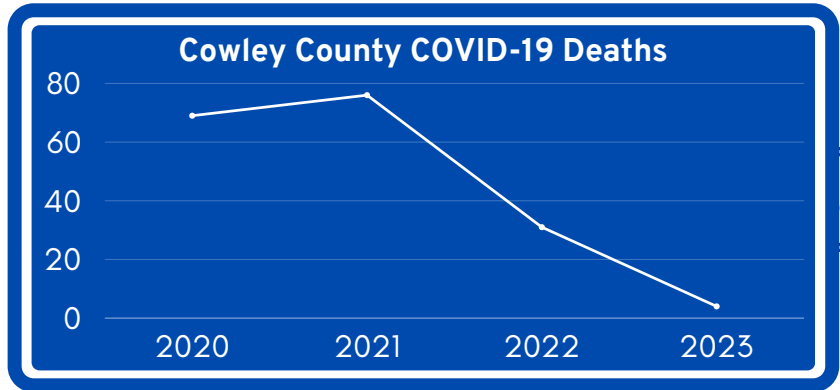
105 Years  
Oldest Client





# END OF THE PANDEMIC

Since the federal government declared COVID-19 a public health emergency in 2020, we have all experienced challenges navigating the daily life we call "normal." Let's take a look at how some of those challenges impacted Cowley County.



12,524

COVID-19 cases reported during the pandemic declaration.

180

COVID Deaths

2020

March:

COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic.

October:

Community COVID-19 testing began in Cowley County.

December:

The first vaccines for COVID-19 became available.

2021

January:

Community testing requests reached a new record high, with more than 100 requests daily.

July

Delta variant emerged causing a surge in cases

December:

The Omicron variant emerged causing a surge in cases

2022

January:

COVID-19 cases reached a new record high for a single month. More than 6,000 Cowley County residents tested positive in January!

The authority of the Cowley County Public Health Officer was challenged and brought before a court of law.

Testing supply challenges suspend community COVID-19 testing for 3 days.

August:

Bivalent vaccines were introduced, granting protection from two COVID-19 variants.

April:

Cowley County experienced a record-low number of cases reported in a single month (44) since the onset of the pandemic.

2023

May:

The Federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration officially ended.

So where are we now? The pandemic declaration has ended, but the COVID-19 virus will remain active forever. The Health Department continues to monitor illness reports and communicates with the public about information that impacts health.

4

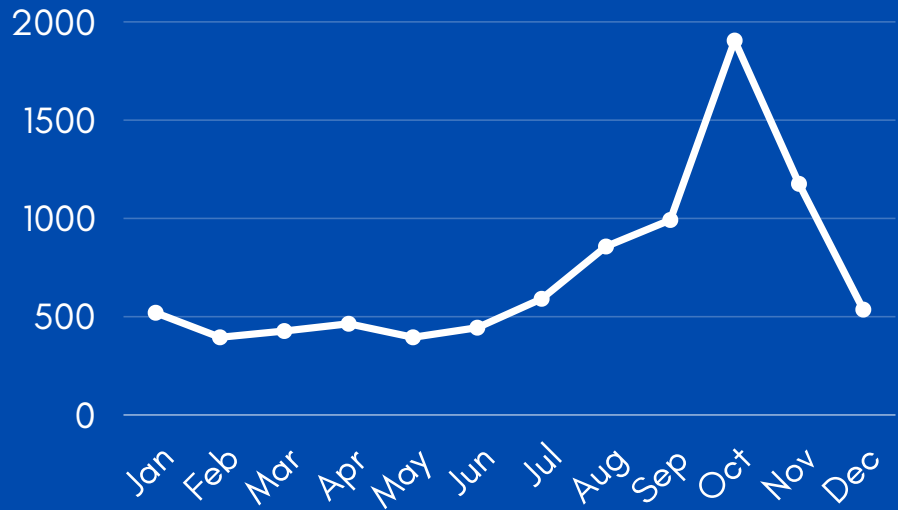


# IMMUNIZATIONS

The Health Department offers all recommended immunizations for infants, children, and adults.

Our staff has the expertise to answer all your questions, and registered nurses administer each dose to guarantee your safety!

## VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED



**5526**

Routine  
Immunizations

**3146**

Respiratory Immunizations  
(flu, COVID-19, RSV)

**30**

Travel Immunizations  
(typhoid & yellow fever)

## CLINICS

The Health Department provides immunizations in our clinics (Ark City & Winfield), at community events, local businesses, long-term care facilities, and unified school districts to guarantee everyone can access the care they need to stay well!

**52** Offsite Clinics





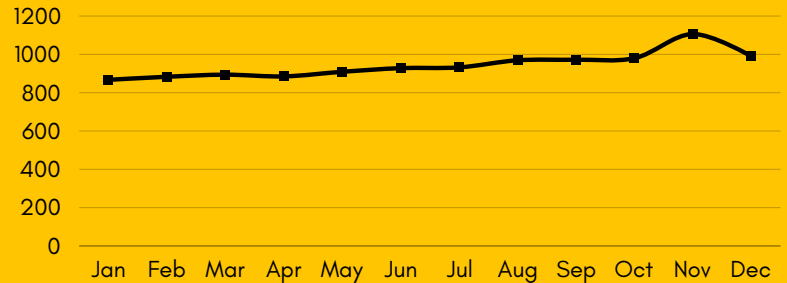
# WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC)

**935** Average Monthly Participants

**231** Infants in the Program

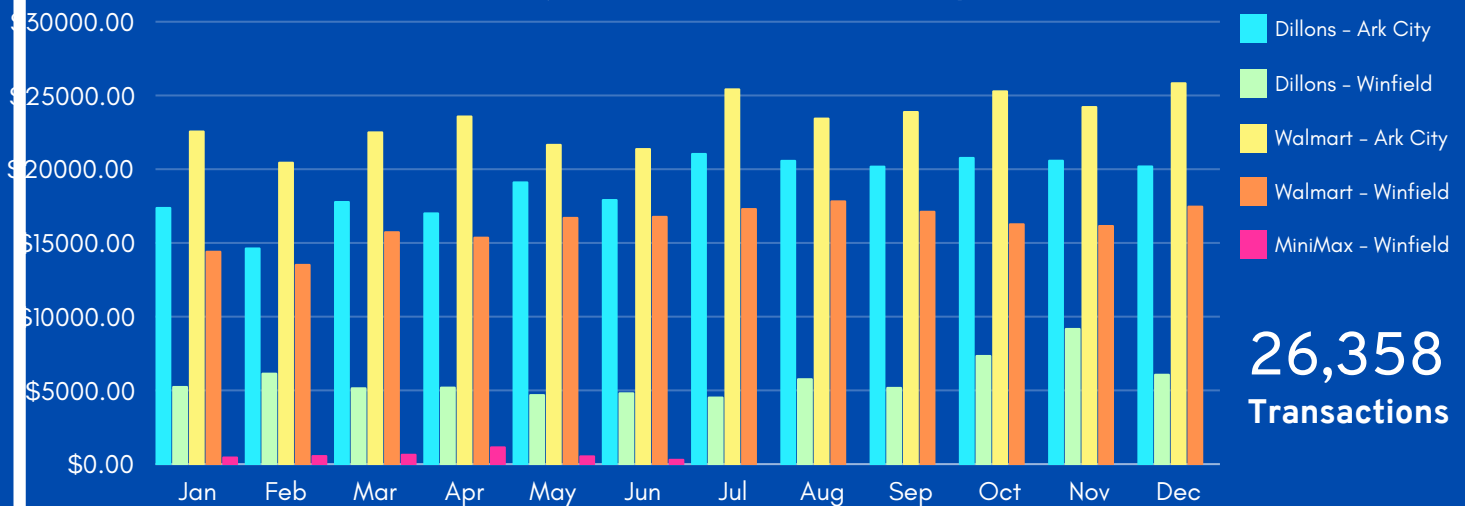
**427** New Participants

## Cowley County WIC Participants\*



\*Participation is determined by benefits expended in a month.

## WIC Dollars Spent at Local Grocery Stores



Over

**\$775K**

added to the  
local economy  
in 2023

Over

**\$250,000**

Spent in Winfield Stores

Over

**\$500,000**

Spent in Ark City Stores

*This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider.*



# MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

In 2023, the healthcare system in Cowley County experienced a reduction in services, particularly for pregnant and postpartum women.

The Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Program expanded its suite of services to meet the immediate needs of growing families.

MCH Program staff reached a record high for services provided in 2023!



## PRIMARY MCH SERVICES



Support



Education



Nutrition



Reproductive Health



Safe Sleep



Healthy Homes



Prenatal Vitamins



Blood Pressure



Birth Plan

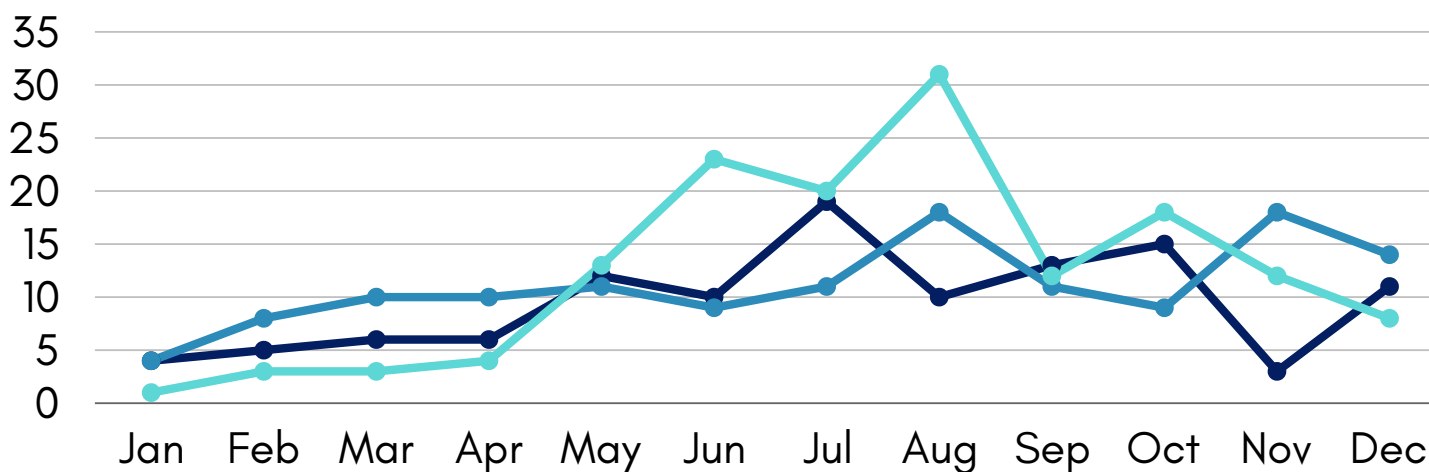


## SERVICES BY MONTH

■ Prenatal Visits

■ Postnatal Visits

■ Intakes

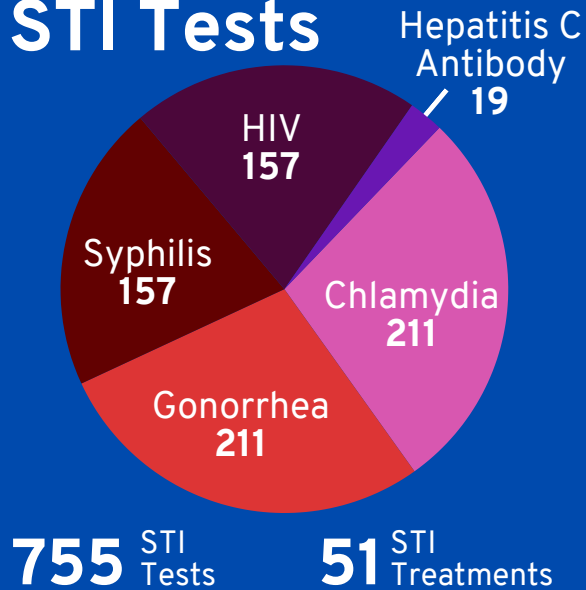




# REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Reproductive Health Services are crucial for maintaining a healthy reproductive system for men and women. Regardless of age and financial status, any individual can receive reproductive health services at the Health Department. All reproductive health services are confidential and offered on a sliding fee scale.

## STI Tests



**203**

Pregnancy Tests

**61**

Well-Woman Exams

## CONTRACEPTIVES

**3000+**

Condoms

**318**

Depo-Provera

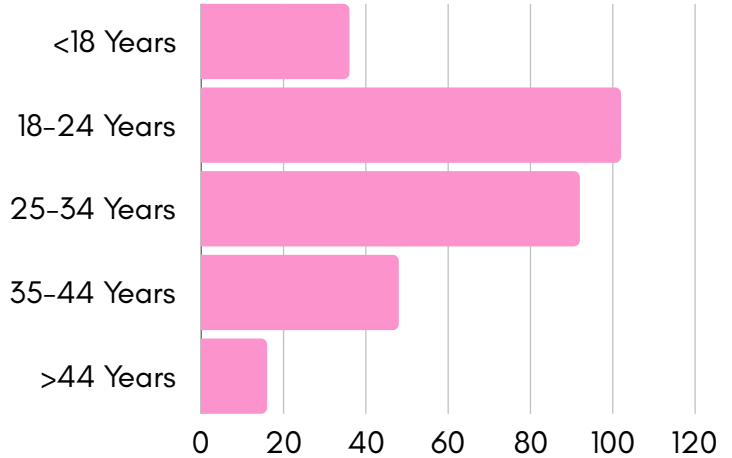
**233**

Oral Contraceptives

**24**

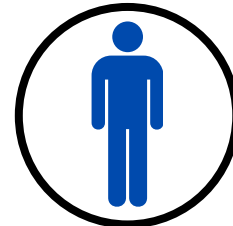
Nuvaring

## CLIENTS BY AGE

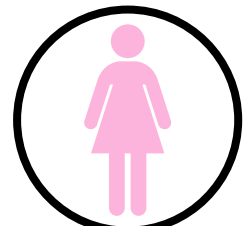


**294**

Total Participants

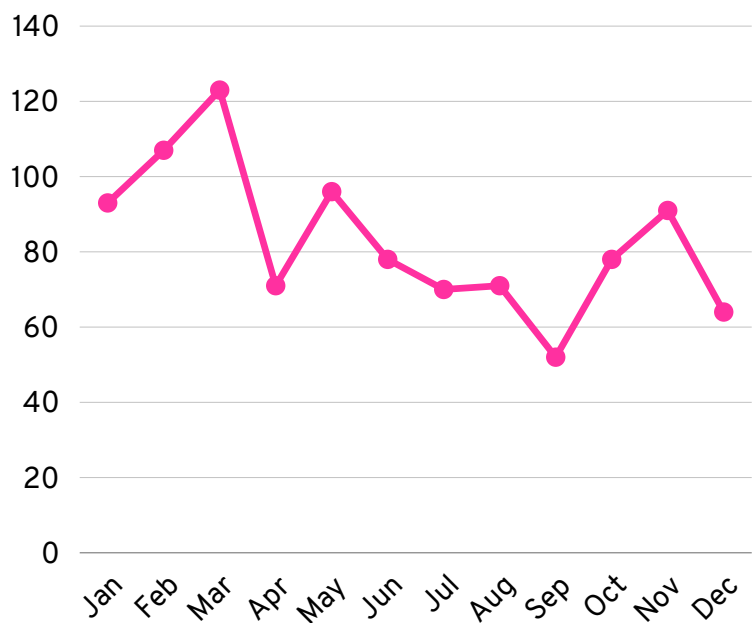


42



252

## Client Visits



**8**

Reproductive Health Services are confidential regardless of age.



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Keeping our community prepared for emergencies is another important aspect in our mission to help you stay well.

## Health & Safety Fair

This annual event presents a unique opportunity to promote health and safety to the greater community as well as connecting individuals with community resources.

Hundreds of community members attended the 2023 fair at the Winfield Fairgrounds. This past year saw the fair return to the Winfield Fairgrounds. This year's event hosted excellent attractions including the Data Walk, CPR demonstrations, educational sessions, & fitness classes.



## MESSAGING

Equipping citizens with the knowledge and resources to prepare for disaster is a key part of developing overall community readiness.

In 2023, we used our communications channels to highlight safety topics, resources, and educational opportunities to help citizens prepare for emergencies



## LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Alongside community partners like Emergency Management and first responders, the Health Department plays a pivotal role in local emergency response.

Through these strong partnerships, we continue to refine our preparedness strategies and help improve overall community readiness.



## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP



We play a central role in regional leadership. Partnerships with adjacent counties ensure that emergency response is strong and that the Health Department is always ready for disaster.





# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Protection of our environment and water resources has never been a more important issue. We provide inspections, screenings, and proper installation guidance to help you and our environment stay well.

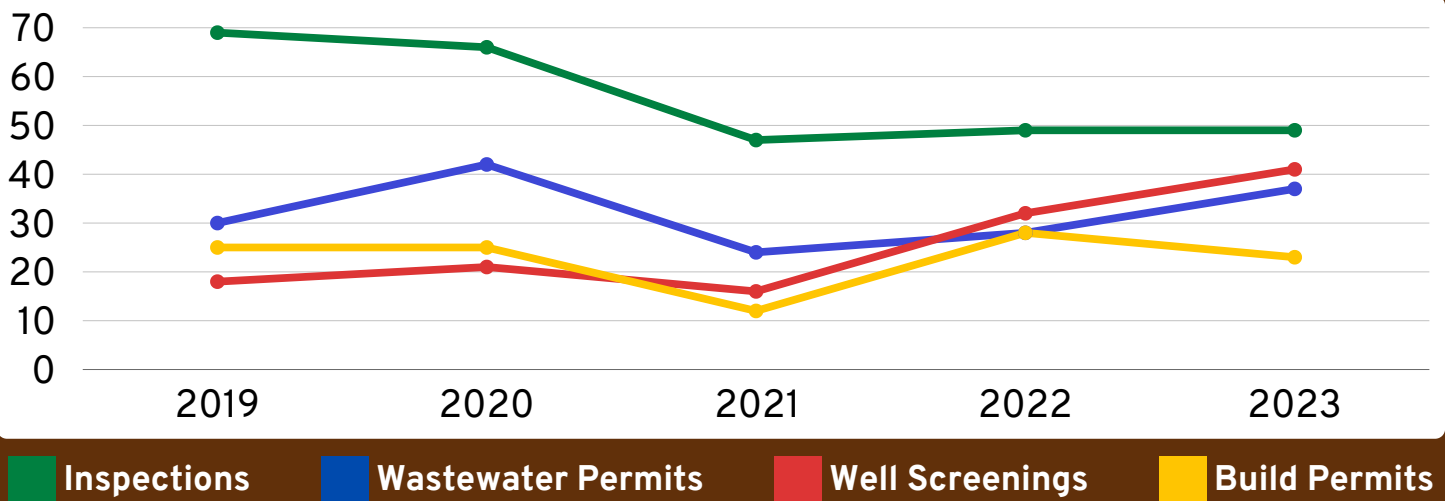
**49** Residential Inspections Conducted

**41** Private Well Health Screens Conducted

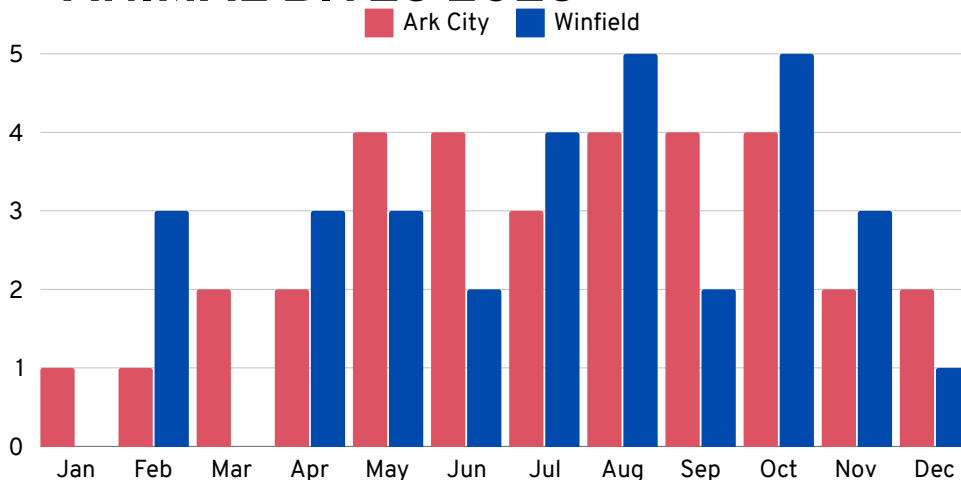
**37** Private Wastewater Permits Issued

**23** Development Permits Issued

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BY YEAR



## ANIMAL BITES 2023



**64** Total Animal Bite Reports

**54** Reported dog bites

**9** Reported cat bites

**1** Reported bat bite

**33** Reported bites in Ark City

**31** Reported bites in Winfield

Zoonotic diseases are illnesses that can spread from animals to people. When someone is bitten by an animal, the Health Department works with local law enforcement and medical professionals to investigate the incident and provides guidance on what to do next.

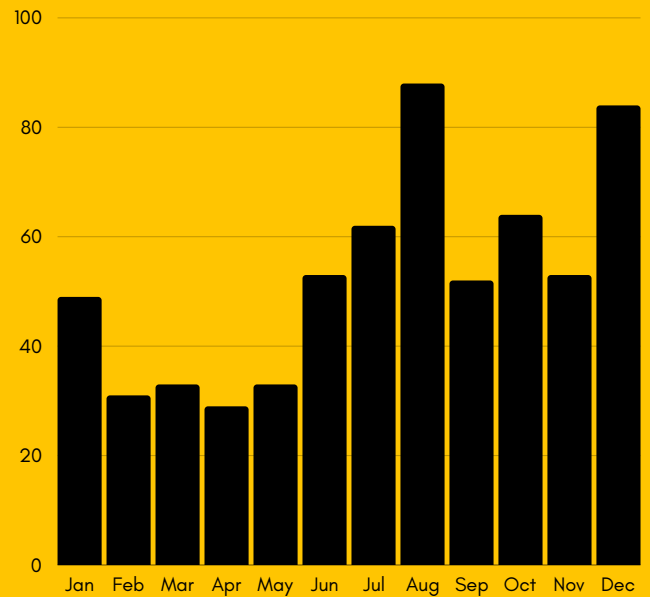


# LEAD POISONING PREVENTION

Lead poisoning in children causes lifelong health impacts such as brain damage. Testing is the only way to identify lead poisoning. Children are most commonly exposed to lead in older homes.

*"Cowley County children aged 0-5 years are at high risk for lead poisoning due to the abundance of families living in older homes that were built prior to 1960, when lead-based surface coatings were commonly used in residential properties."* -Thomas Langer, Cowley County Public Health Officer

## BLOOD LEAD TESTING



# CHILDCARE FACILITY LICENSING

This program guarantees that Cowley County daycares comply with state regulations to protect the health and safety of children in attendance. In the county, a shortage of providers who will accept infants exists.

- 5** Childcare Centers
- 5** Integrated Childcare Groups
- 53** Childcare Homes (Residences)
- 80** Surveys Performed





# COMMUNICATIONS

## OUR TOOLS



Newspaper



Website



Newsletter



Radio



Mobile App



Social Media



Podcast

In 2023, the Health Department continued to refine and expand our communications strategies.

Streamlining our communications efforts and adopting new media allowed the Health Department to communicate more effectively with the Cowley County community.

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT PODCAST

The Health Department launched its podcast *For The Health Of It: Cowley County* in June of 2023.

This semi-monthly podcast has enabled the Health Department to provide deeper insight into public health issues within the community. The podcast is available on all major podcast platforms and YouTube.



Over

4,200

Facebook followers

Over

8,000

Facebook page visits

29,700

Facebook page reach

Over

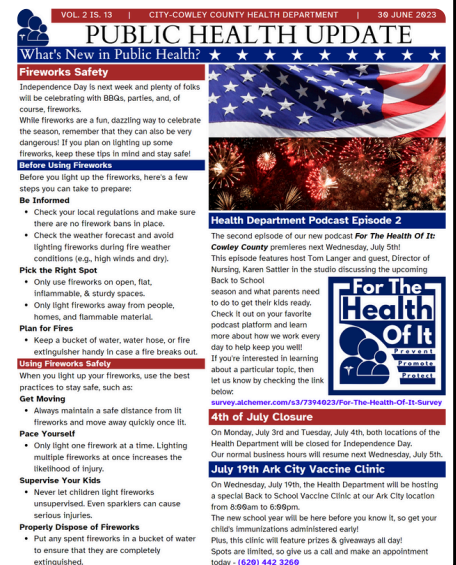
13,000

X/Twitter post impressions

## PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE VOL. 2

The Health Department released 26 issues of this bi-weekly newsletter over the course of 2023.

This publication has played a pivotal role in keeping Cowley County residents informed about public health issues within the community.



# DOWN THE ROAD

2  
0  
2  
4

## COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) is a strategic process to collect data from residents about their perceptions of the community resources that impact health. The next CHNA will kick off in the spring of 2024. The data is used to develop a three-year improvement plan called the Community Health Improvement Plan.



## HEALTH & SAFETY FAIR

The Health & Safety Fair returns to Ark City on May 18th!

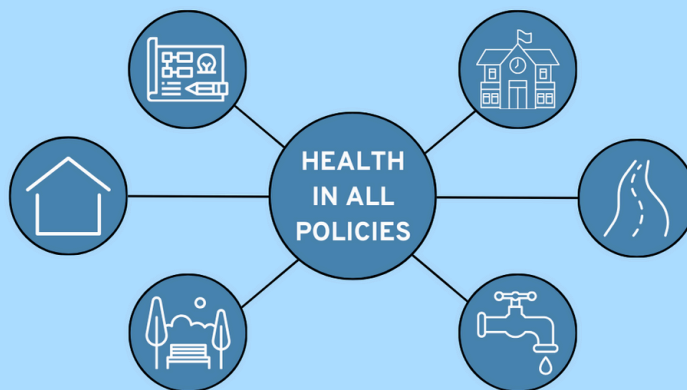
Mark your calendars and be sure to join us at the Agri-Business Building for another fun-filled educational event!

**Health**   
**Safety Fair**  
Cowley County

## HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

Health in All Policies is an approach that emphasizes health impacts in the decision-making process.

The Health Department is championing this work to improve health outcomes.



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# BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health is assembled by nine appointments made from local governing bodies. The Cowley County Commission appoints three at large members, one physician, and one dentist. The cities of Arkansas City and Winfield each appoint one member. Unified School District Boards #462 and #471 each appoint one member. Once appointed, members of the Board serve three-year terms. The Board annually elects a Chair and Vice-Chair in January. The Health Department's Administrator serves at the pleasure of the Board as Secretary-Treasurer. A Licensed Physician is contracted to serve as a Medical Consultant to advise the Public Health Officer/Administrator on medical matters. The Board maintains two offices, one in Winfield and another in Arkansas City.

## 2023 Joint Board of Health Members

## Appointed By:

K.C. Colvin - Chair	USD #471 Board of Education
Mary Benton - Vice-Chair	Arkansas City Commission
Anita Judd-Jenkins	Cowley County Commission
Melinda Current, RN, MSN, DHSc	Winfield City Commission
Ed Trimmer	Cowley County Commission
John Seitz, DDS	Cowley County Commission
Rick Shaffer	USD #462 Board of Education
Sandra Jirak, BSN, RN	Cowley County Commission
Physician Vacant	Cowley County Commission
Thomas Langer, MPA - Secretary-Treasurer	Health Department Administrator

# HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF

Thomas Langer, MPA	Administrator/Public Health Officer
Allyson Payne, MPH	Assistant Administrator/Epidemiologist
Karen Sattler, RN	Director of Nursing
Kelli Waggoner, RN, BSN	Public Health Nurse/WIC Coordinator
Karen Hardin, RN	Public Health Nurse
Kathy Broce, RN	Public Health Nurse
Tara Finuf	Fiscal Accounts Manager
Teri Bruner	Medical Services Accounts Coordinator
Tanner D. Langer	Environmental Health Officer/PHEP
Daniel Vildasol	Public Information Officer/PHEP
Josephine Olivarez	Maternal & Child Health Home Visitor
Jean Tapia	Maternal & Child Health Home Visitor
Patricia Wimmer	Child Care Licensing Surveyor
Danielle Day	Office Assistant
Aleashia Tanner	Office Assistant
Ashley Leighty	Office Assistant
Carmelyna Andres	Community Health Worker

## Contracted Professionals:

*Medical Officer:*  
Adam Keesling, MD

*Family Planning:*  
Rebekah Ross, MD  
Ginger Bahruth, PA

*Consulting Pharmacist:*  
Renee Price, PharmD

*WIC Nutritionist:*  
Alicia Ramey, RD



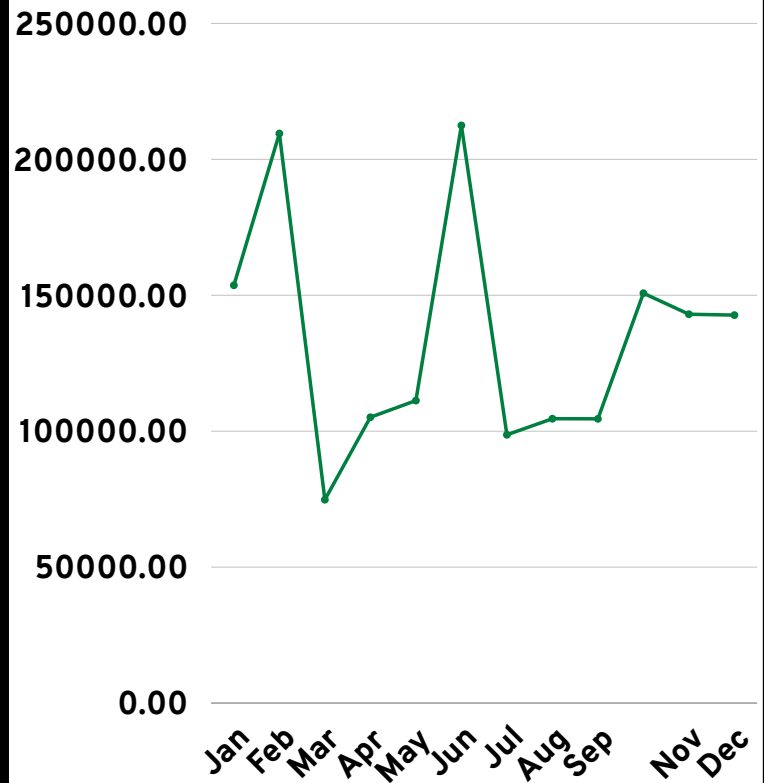


# FINANCIAL REPORTS

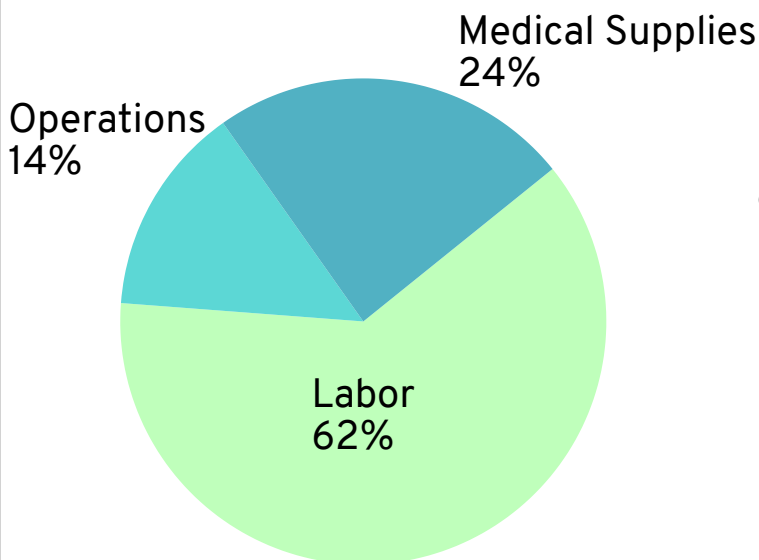
We are dedicated to responsible financial management to provide excellent services to the residents and visitors of Cowley County. As a result, the Health Department's financial condition is stable, allowing us to continue to assess community needs and adapt our services to improve health in the area.

In 2024, we will prepare for our annual budgetary audit to ensure that our financial practices align with accepted accounting principles for governmental entities and public law. We do not expect any issues since we regularly submit state-required reports and provide accounting reports to the Joint Board of Health (JBOH). The JBOH frequently reviews our fiscal status to ensure that our operations meet the requirements of our clients and local, state, and federal governments.

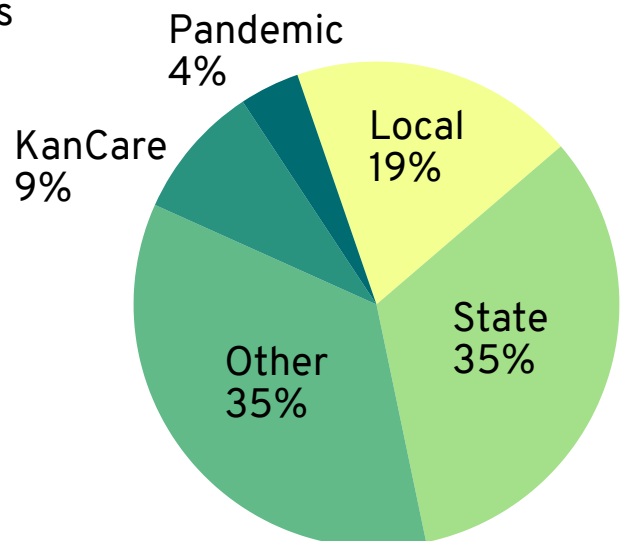
## REVENUE BY MONTH



## 2023 HD EXPENDITURES BY TYPE %



## 2023 HD REVENUE BY SOURCE %



# Wish You Were Here!



**CITY-COWLEY  
COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

## OUR VISION

Cowley County residents enjoying healthy lives,  
exercising personal responsibility for their health  
and the health of their family members.

## OUR MISSION

The City-Cowley County Health Department  
works to promote excellent health, prevent  
disease, and to protect the environment to  
benefit all our citizens.

## OUR VALUES

Prevent ~ Promote ~ Protect