Lake County General Health District 2025 Annual Report

A Message from the Health Commissioner: Building a Healthier Future Together

Ron H. Graham, MPH
Health Commissioner
2015 - February 2026

As we begin 2026, I want to take a moment to share the current state of public health in our community and look ahead at where we are going. Public health is often the invisible shield that protects us—ensuring our water is safe, our food is inspected, and our families are protected from disease. Today, that shield faces both familiar challenges and new, modern pressures.

The Current Landscape

Our community continues to show incredible resilience, but we are navigating several critical issues:

- **Communicable Disease Threats:** The Ohio Department of Health confirmed the state's first **measles outbreak of 2026**. While currently localized, it serves as a stark reminder of the importance of childhood vaccinations. Simultaneously, we are seeing **"Very High" levels of respiratory illness** (including Flu, RSV, and COVID-19) across Ohio, placing a significant strain on our local urgent cares and hospitals.
- **The Behavioral Health Crisis:** Mental health and addiction remain at the forefront of our work. While we have made strides in Narcan distribution, the complexity of synthetic drugs continues to impact families across all neighborhoods.
- **Chronic Disease & Affordability:** Issues like heart disease and diabetes remain leading causes of death in Ohio. Alarmingly, many of our residents are facing "health affordability" challenges, where the rising cost of basic needs, like nutritious food and housing, is directly impacting their physical well-being.

Our Future Direction (2026–2028)

Our department is not just reacting to crises; we are building a proactive roadmap for the next three years. Guided by the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), our future efforts will focus on:

- **Strengthening Community Conditions:** Research shows that only 20% of health is shaped by clinical care—the rest is determined by where we live, work, and play. We are shifting our focus toward **"Social Drivers of Health,"** partnering with local organizations to improve housing quality and food security.
- **Workforce & Infrastructure:** To serve you better, we are working towards modernizing our data systems to track disease outbreaks in real-time and investing in training a new generation of public health nurses and inspectors.

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Mission of the Lake County General Health District:
Working to prevent disease, promote equity in health, and protect our community through innovative public health practice.

Public health is a partnership. We ask that you continue to look out for one another: stay up to date on your family's immunizations, check in on elderly neighbors during this peak respiratory season, and utilize the mental health resources available in our county.

Our mission is to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to achieve their full health potential. There is much work to be done, but I am confident that by working together, we can make our community a model of health and vitality for all of Ohio.

In health,

Ron H. Graham, MPH
Health Commissioner

Vital Statistics

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Birth Certificates Issued	7,207	5,621	5,908	6,518	7,232
Death Certificates Issued	10,962	8,296	8,625	10,305	11,426
Fetal Death Certificates Issued	1	0	1	1	0
Burial Permits Issued	1,445	1,245	1,236	966	818
Free Veterans' Copies Issued	265	209	224	276	355
Affidavits Issued	179	209	207	252	319
Supplements Issued	382	413	396	586	437
Birth Certificates Filed	1,067	1,112	1,174	1,402	1,521
Death Certificates Filed	1,877	1,889	1,880	2,272	2,414

Changes to Vital Statistics

There have been many changes to Vital Statistics recently. A few highlights are below.

- The Ohio Department of Health Vital Statistics launched a new statewide program. The transition was phased in from July through December of 2025.
- Birth and death certificates took on a new look. The updated certificates now place the raised state seals in the lower left corner.
- With the launch of the new system, death certificates are now available for <u>any</u> deaths that occurred in the state of Ohio, not just for those who have passed in Lake County.

Agency Financial Report

Total Revenue
$9,919,433.58

(Transfers-in and Advances-in are not reflected in the chart.)

Total Expenditures
$9,014,147.91

(Transfers-out and Advances-out are not reflected in the chart.)

Executive Summary: 2025 Lake County Community Health Needs Assessment

The 2025 Lake County CHNA is a collaborative, data-driven initiative designed to evaluate the health status of county residents and identify pathways for improving community well-being. Led by the **Lake County General Health District** and **University Hospitals**, this assessment serves as the strategic foundation for the 2026–2028 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Purpose and Compliance

This report fulfills essential regulatory and accreditation requirements, including:

- **IRS Section 501(r)** for nonprofit hospital organizations.
- **Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)** standards.
- **Ohio Revised Code 3701.981**, mandating assessments for local health planning.

A Collaborative, Community-Led Process

Transitioning from the previous 2023–2025 improvement cycle, a Steering Committee of cross-sector partners began work in October 2024. Representing health, education, social services, and aging/disability advocates, these partners ensured the process remained grounded in health equity and community voice.

Key Contributing Partners:

- Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve
- Lake County ADAMHS Board
- Lake County Council on Aging
- Lake County Job & Family Services
- Lake Metroparks
- Signature Health
- United Way of Lake County
- YMCA of Lake County

Methodology: Data-Driven Prioritization

To identify the most pressing health concerns, the report utilized a **relative ranking approach** to analyze **246 data measures**. Each indicator was benchmarked against four standards:

1. **Healthy People 2030** goals
2. **National** averages
3. **State of Ohio** averages
4. **Peer Counties** (matched by population size, age, and income)

Indicators that underperformed across these benchmarks were flagged as primary health concerns. This quantitative data was then integrated with qualitative insights from resident surveys, leader surveys, and focus groups to ensure the final priorities reflect the lived experiences of Lake County citizens.

Explore the Findings: Please reference the infographics at the end of this report for a visual breakdown of key data. The full, comprehensive report can be accessed online at: https://www.lcghd.org/lake-county-health-needs-assessment-plan/

Environmental Health

Wastewater Lab

Since the opening of our wastewater lab in June of 2024 the Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) has processed samples for over 4,000 household septic systems in Lake and Geauga Counties. These samples are for residential properties that have septic systems permitted under Ohio EPA's NPDES general permit under the Clean Water Act. To fulfill the requirement for the NPDES permit, each discharging septic system must be sampled once per year as a diagnostic tool to gauge system performance and need for service maintenance.

The lab also processes approximately 550 E. coli samples for our Bathing Beach program, as well as complaint investigations for failing household septic systems and illicit discharges into the county's stormwater system. The lab is set up currently to process, test, and analyze samples for E. coli, fecal coliform, total suspended solids, ammonia/nitrogen, and dissolved oxygen. The lab is equipped to process well above the number of samples needed between the two counties with Geauga having approximately 2,400 NPDES systems and Lake County having around 750 systems.

Since 2007, LCGHD has been collecting samples from Lake County NPDES household septic systems to fulfill the permit terms for homeowners. Historically we would collect the samples (a cost to the homeowner) and take them to a separate lab.

LCGHD also uses labs at Gary L. Kron Water Reclamation Facility, Geauga County Department of Water Resources, and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District for quality control validation and any sampling we can't do at the Health District lab. The lab has been successful in our efforts to keep costs manageable for the homeowner and is a valuable tool for our Household Septic Operation and Maintenance program.

Population Health and Emergency Planning

LCGHD Tests Mass Dispensing Capabilities

On March 20-21, 2025, LCGHD held a series of drills to test its capabilities to mass dispense antibiotics in case of a public health emergency. The drills conducted included notifying and deploying staff and volunteers to the designated Point of Dispensing (POD) location, notifying the facility contacts and activating the site, recording the time to set up the POD site, and conducting a throughput drill to test how quickly people could be processed through the site to complete their forms, be screened, receive their medication and medication education, and exit the POD.

All staff were notified within 48 minutes and 98.4% acknowledged their notification of the drill within the targeted four hours. In total, 95.8% of staff deployed to the POD arrived within the target timeframe. The site setup was completed in 17m20s (target = within 60 minutes). A total of 250 individuals were processed through the POD in 30m30s, well in excess and advance of the targeted throughput of 200 individuals in the first 60 minutes. Partners also assisted in assessing the POD's accessibility during the drill. Strengths and areas for improvement were discussed in a debriefing session and noted in an after-action report. Findings have been used to improve LCGHD's emergency plans and preparedness activities for the FY26 grant year.

LCGHD would like to thank the following partners for assisting with the drills with facilities as POD staff, and those who volunteered as observers and POD attendees, including Mentor Fire Department, Mentor Public Schools, Lake County Medical Reserve Corps, Lake County Volunteer Network, Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/ Deepwood, Lake County Council on Aging, Lakeland Community College EMT Program, Perry High School, and Geauga Public Health.

Lake County Disease Investigation

Table 1. *Reportable Communicable Diseases*

Communicable Disease	**2025**	2024	2023
C. auris	13	3	0
C.auris-Colonization Screening	3	0	0
Campylobacteriosis	33	35	32
Chlamydia infection	486	522	481
Coccidiomycosis	1	0	0
COVID-19*	1,537	4,409	6,010
CPO	39	33	20
Cryptosporidiosis	5	6	6
Cyclosporiasis	0	2	1
E.coli—Shiga Toxin Producing	5	13	10
Giardiasis	5	12	7
Gonococcal Infection	116	119	132
Haemophilus influenzae (invasive disease)	3	8	9
Hepatitis B-acute	2	3	0
Hepatitis B-chronic	15	26	23
Hepatitis C-acute	0	2	1
Hepatitis C-chronic	78	58	80
Hepatitis C-perinatal infection	0	0	1
Influenza-ODH Lab Results	16	22	26
Influenza-associated Hospitalization	452	207	84
Influenza-associated Pediatric Mortality	0	1	0
Legionellosis	21	13	13
Leptospirosis	0	0	1
Listeriosis	2	1	1
Lyme Disease	29	14	14
Malaria	0	0	1
Meningitis-aseptic/viral	7	7	5

Table 1 *(continued)*. *Reportable Communicable Diseases*

Communicable Disease	**2025**	2024	2023
Meningitis-bacterial (not N. meningitidis)	1	1	2
Meningococcal disease-Neisseria meningitidis	0	1	0
Mpox	2	1	1
Pertussis	6	5	9
Salmonellosis	39	29	31
Shigellosis	10	12	9
Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis	1	0	0
Streptococcal-Group A-invasive	16	20	17
Streptococcal-Group B-in newborn	2	1	1
Streptococcus pneumoniae - invasive antibiotic resistance unknown or non-resistant	14	19	12
Streptococcus pneumoniae - invasive antibiotic resistant/ intermediate	2	1	1
Syphilis-unknown duration or late	7	8	11
Tuberculosis	1	3	0
Varicella	5	6	3
Vibriosis (not cholera)	0	1	1
West Nile Virus Disease	1	0	0
Yersiniosis	0	5	1
Totals	**2,975**	**5,629**	**7,057**

The Communicable Diseases listed above are reported to LCGHD for Lake County residents under the direction of Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-3.

Typically, reports are made by diagnosing physicians or laboratories, and depending on the disease, LCGHD follows up with the resident or resident's guardian or caregiver to obtain more information about exposures and contacts to prevent further spread of the illness. In some cases, such as COVID-19, individuals may also self-report. Note: COVID-19 cases are no longer reportable effective 10/1/25—only COVID-19-associated hospitalizations.

How a Communicable Disease is reported:

1. Provider reviews the Ohio Infectious Disease Control Manual for specific reporting information and educational material about the suspected disease.
2. Provider completes the Ohio Reportable Disease Form in the Ohio Disease Reporting System or faxes report to the Health Department Confidential Fax Line: (440) 350-2956.
3. Provider (or individual in some cases) contacts the Health Department Communicable Disease Investigator: (440) 350-2467 or (440) 350-2554.
4. Disease Investigator attempts to contact provider and/or patient to complete the investigation and provide information about what to do to prevent spreading the illness further.

Population Health and Emergency Planning

Creating Healthy Communities Through Collaboration

The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) grant was awarded to Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) in October 2024 and completed its first grant year in September 2025. This grant has allowed LCGHD the opportunity to interact with the community in new ways. Two projects that highlight the year's accomplishments and gathered attention from the local news include the Painesville Farmers' Market SNAP Access Program and Painesville's Huntington Park Improvement Project.

Painesville Farmers' Market SNAP Access Program

The Painesville Farmer's Market SNAP Access Program enabled SNAP recipients to use their benefits with participating vendors at the Farmers' Market throughout the summer. This program created access for SNAP recipients to purchase fresh, local produce and other SNAP eligible food items with their SNAP benefits. Two instrumental partners on this project include United Way of Lake County and the City of Painesville's Recreation Department. With United Way of Lake County hosting the Hunger Coalition and the Recreation Department's desire to provide this service in Painesville, LCGHD's CHC grant facilitated the partnerships needed to bring this program to life. By the end of the 2025 Farmer's Market Season, the SNAP program was utilized a total of 43 times with 26 different families taking advantage of the opportunity to purchase fresh, local food items. While that alone feels like success, the program also helped the local economy by bringing a total $630 in additional income for farmers and vendors at the market. The program looks forward to returning to the market in 2026.

Huntington Park Improvement Project

LCGHD partnered with the City of Painesville's Recreation Department again for the Huntington Park Improvement Project. This project began with the development of the Huntington Park Improvement Committee (HPIC) which was a group of local community members and stakeholders who worked together to provide direction on this project. The group organized a community engagement activity at Elm Elementary School Library where the students could vote on which improvement they wanted to see at their local park and acquired feedback on the activity from students and parents/guardians at a Skate Party hosted by Elm Elementary. Once the improvement was chosen and installed, HPIC scheduled a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to celebrate. The Ceremony had about 35-40 attendees with a great mix of neighborhood children and adults, city council members, and local stakeholders who gathered to celebrate the new playground equipment. Lastly, this project achieved recognition from representative, Katie Burger, from Congressman David Joyce's Office who awarded the City of Painesville with a Certificate of Congressional Recognition and Achievement in celebration of the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Huntington Park Playground.

Population Health By The Numbers

130,624 REACHED THROUGH TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMMING

1,012 NALOXONE KITS DISTRIBUTED

1,400 PEOPLE RECEIVED TOBACCO/NICOTINE EDUCATION

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Breastfeeding

The Lake/Geauga WIC Program focused on breastfeeding this year. With great success, our WIC Program was awarded the Breastfeeding Gold Award of Excellence (the highest award) through the United States Department of Agriculture. The WIC staff worked very hard to increase breastfeeding rates and educate the community about breastfeeding and Ohio's Breastfeeding Laws. Portage County also received the award.

To continue the accolades, Hadassah Wengert received her certification for the Certified Lactation Specialist (CLS) through the Lactation Education Consultants.

Also, every quarter, a Physician's Newsletter was distributed to all family physicians', OB/GYNs', and pediatricians' offices in Lake and Geauga counties. The main purpose of the newsletter is to educate the offices about the changes in WIC and breastfeeding updates.

Another accomplishment established this year was providing an Infant Feeding Class in Spanish once a month. A translator was present for every class.

Upgraded Communication System

The One Call Now system is a communication system that STATE WIC provided to local WIC programs at no cost. This system sends out appointment reminders, notifications of closings, and other messages such as "Don't forget to spend your Farmers Market coupons!". Our program continues to send out reminder postcards and utilize the One Call Now system. Our show rates have increased with the use of One Call Now.

Community Health Services

Childhood Immunizations

The Childhood Immunizations program provides protection against vaccine-preventable childhood diseases through the administration of the appropriate vaccines to children.

- In 2025, 9 Child Immunization Clinics were held vaccinating 110 children.
- These immunizations were given through the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Vaccine for Children Program (VFC). This immunization program is for children who are enrolled in Medicaid, uninsured, or whose insurance does not cover certain vaccinations.

Adult Immunizations

The Adult Immunizations program provides appropriate vaccines to the adult population for vaccine-preventable communicable diseases.

- In 2025, 2 adult vaccinations were held at LCGHD. 10 adults were seen at these clinics, and a total of 17 immunizations were administered.
- These immunizations were given by LCGHD through the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Adult Immunization Program (317). This immunization program is for adults who are uninsured, with Medicare Part B, or whose insurance does not cover certain vaccinations.

Complex Medical Help Program (CMH)

CMH is a health care program in the Ohio Department of Health assisting children from 0 to 25 years of age who have special medical needs. Approximately 300 children in Lake County were on the program in 2025.

Tuberculosis Control Program

A Communicable Disease Nurse receives reports of suspected and confirmed cases of active Tuberculosis (TB) for contact identification and follow-up.

- 4 confirmed TB cases were reported in Lake County for 2025, and case management services were initiated and carried out for these cases.

Child Fatality Review Board

The goal of the Child Fatality Review Board is to reduce the incidence of preventable infant and child deaths in Lake County. In Lake County, there were 15 childhood deaths that were reviewed from 2025. There were also 4 other deaths that were reviewed from previous years.

Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Board

The goal of the Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Board is to reduce the incidences of preventable deaths. In 2025, there were 48 total suicide and overdose fatalities. 23 deaths were a result of overdoses, and 25 deaths were a result of suicides.

This Is Public Health

Below Is a Listing of Services Provided by Your Health Department

Administration **440-350-2455**

Community Health Services **440-350-2554**

- Complex Medical Help Program
- Immunizations (Child, Adult, & Seasonal Flu)
- Lead Testing Clinic and Education
- Tuberculosis Skin Testing, Case Management, and Preventive Medicine

Environmental Health Services **440-350-2543**

- Air Pollution Control
- Food Protection
- Food Safety Education Classes
- Mosquito Control
- Nuisance Complaints
- Open Burning
- Pharmaceutical Drug Disposal
- Private Water Supply (Wells)
- Rabies Prevention
- Radiological Health
- Recreational Programs (Camps, Bathing Beaches, Pools, and Spas)
- School Inspections
- Sewage Treatment Systems, Operation and Maintenance
- Smoke-Free Workplaces
- Solid and Infectious Waste Disposal
- Storm Water Management
- Tattoo and Body Piercing

Population Health & Emergency Planning **440-350-2939**

- Creating Health Communities
- Disease Investigation
- Emergency Preparedness
- Epidemiology/Health Data
- Health Promotion
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Medical Reserve Corps
- Potassium Iodide (KI)
- Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Naloxone)
- Public Health Accreditation
- Public Information
- Safe Communities Coalition
- Tobacco Use Prevention & Education

WIC - Women, Infants, & Children

- Breastfeeding Counseling and Peer Support
- Nutrition Screenings, Education, and Counseling Referrals
- Supplemental Foods

WIC Painesville	**440-350-2552**
WIC Madison	**440-428-2003**
WIC Willoughby	**440-306-8269**
WIC Chardon	**440-214-9440**
WIC Middlefield	**440-251-6522**

Vital Statistics **440-350-2549**

- Birth Certificates - Statewide Issuance
- Death Certificates - Statewide Issuance

Lake County General Health District

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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