

HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



HENRY DODGE
OFFICE BUILDING
HUMAN SERVICES & HEALTH DEPT.



HUMAN SERVICES & HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Becky Bell, Director

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♦ AGING & DISABILITY
RESOURCE CENTER (ADRC)
& AGING PROGRAM
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TRANSPORTATION
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♦ ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES
& SUPPORTIVE HOME CARE
(920) 386-3750
FAX: (920) 386-3245

♦ ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE
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FAX: (920) 386-3812

♦ CHILD WELFARE &
JUVENILE JUSTICE
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FAX: (920) 386-3533

♦ COMMUNITY SUPPORT
PROGRAM & COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNITY SERVICES
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♦ ECONOMIC SUPPORT
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♦ MENTAL HEALTH
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♦ PUBLIC HEALTH
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FAX: (920) 386-4011

Honorable Dodge County Board of Supervisors
Russell Kottke, Chairman
Juneau, Wisconsin 53039

February 24, 2025

Dear Chairman Frohling and Members of the County Board,

I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report. This report provides general information on each of the programs within the Department. You will also find an organizational chart to assist in understanding the structure of the Department. Services are overseen by extremely competent Division Managers and daily operations are guided by supervisors who are experts within their fields. I believe the County Board can take pride in knowing that the Human Services and Health Department offers services which are cost-effective and meet the needs of the residents of Dodge County.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Cameron Clapper and the County Board of Supervisors for extending me the opportunity to lead an excellent group of professionals in carrying out the Mission of the Department. Additionally, I would like to extend gratitude to Alyssa Schultz, Sheila Drays, and Angela Petruske as well as the entire supervisory staff, for their expertise in their respective field to ensure high quality service delivery.

Sincerely,

Becky Bell, Director
Human Services and Health Department

Human Services And Health Board

County Board Members

Jenifer Hedrick, Chair
Lisa Derr
Donna Maly
Steve Kauffeld
Larry Bischoff
Todd Ringle

Citizen Members

Jennifer Keyes, Secretary
David Godshall
Mary Rosecky

Department Administration

Rebecca Bell, Human Services and Health Department Director
Dr. Royle Eenigenburg, Clinical Director, Psychiatrist
Angela Petruske, Fiscal and Support Services Division Manager
Sheila Drays, Community Support Services Division Manager
Alyssa Schultz, Clinical and Family Services Division Manager

**All Programs and Services are Located in the
Henry Dodge Office Building
199 County Road DF
Juneau, Wisconsin 53039
920-386-3500**

www.co.dodge.wi.gov

Ground Floor:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
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| Fax | 920-386-4011 |
| ♦Public Health and WIC Program | 920-386-3670 |
| Fax | 920-386-4011 |

Second Floor:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
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| Fax | 920-386-3533 |
| ♦Adult Protective Services and
Long Term Support | 920-386-3750 |
| Fax | 920-386-3245 |
| ♦Economic Support Services | 920-386-3760 |
| Fax | 920-386-4012 |

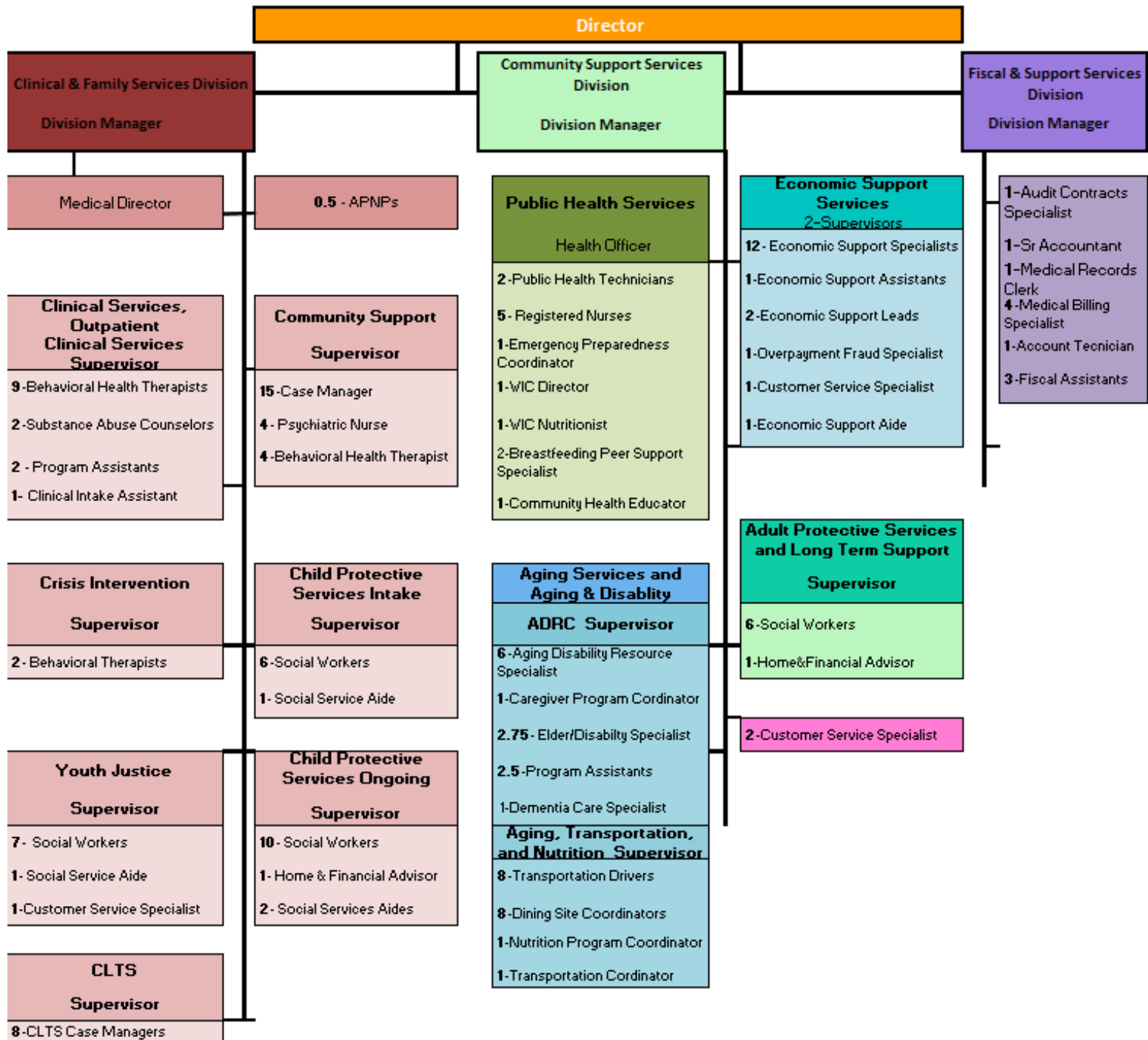
Third Floor:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| ♦Aging and Disability Resource Center | 920-386-3580 |
| Toll Free | 800-924-6407 |
| Fax | 920-386-4015 |
| ♦Transportation Services | 920-386-3832 |
| Toll Free | 800-924-6407 |
| Fax | 920-386-4015 |
| ♦AODA and Mental Health Services | 920-386-4094 |
| Fax | 920-386-3812 |

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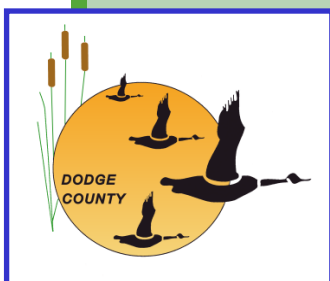
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Dodge County Board of Supervisors
Human Services and Health Board



FISCAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

Fiscal & Support Services Division Angela Petruske, Division Manager		
Audit Compliance Officer	Medical Records Clerk	Senior Accountant
C. Lagerman	B. Justmann	F. Bruyette
Medical Billing Specialist	Accounting Technician	Fiscal Assistant
L. Baumgartner C. Bunker S. Nelson K. Twardokus	C. Mayo	C. Begovatz J. Schmidt Vacant



FISCAL & SUPPORT

The Fiscal and Support Services Division provides financial and clerical support for the Human Services and Health Department. The Division consists of twelve employees.

The conscientious and efficient performance of dedicated fiscal and support staff is key to the Department's ability to: (1) create and maintain orderly files including electronic files; (2) accurately record and process billings; (3) answer, manage and route inquiries to appropriate personnel; (4) enhance customer satisfaction with prompt, courteous and professional interaction; (5) provide assistance with administration of health clinics and many other services; (6) process and account for financial transactions; (7) monitor budget and contracts and (8) meet complex and detailed reporting needs for the state as well as other agencies.

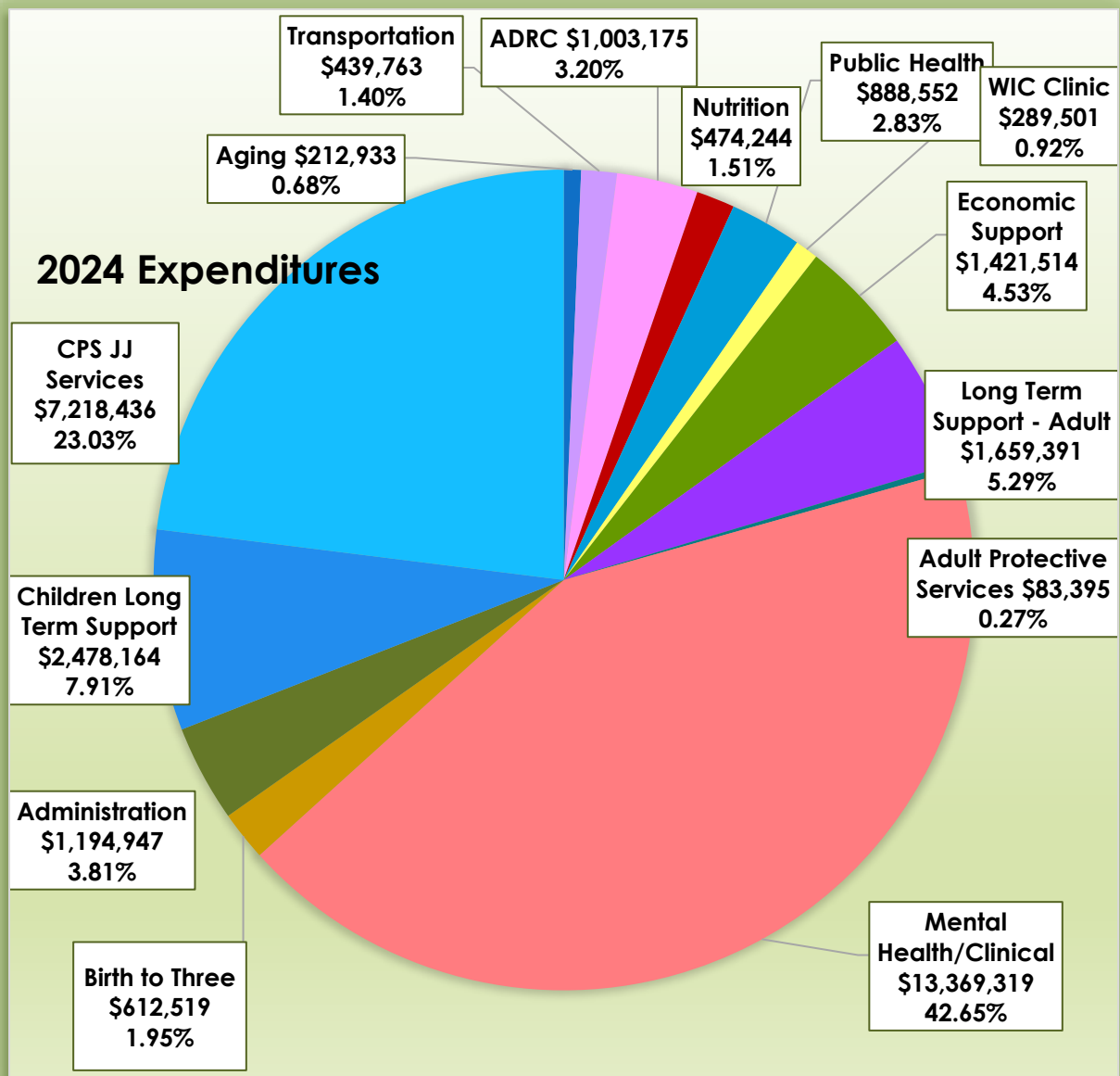
Fiscal and support staff utilize several State systems in daily operations with many of these being web-based applications. These systems are upgraded on a regular basis and are an integral piece in tracking financial and statistical information.

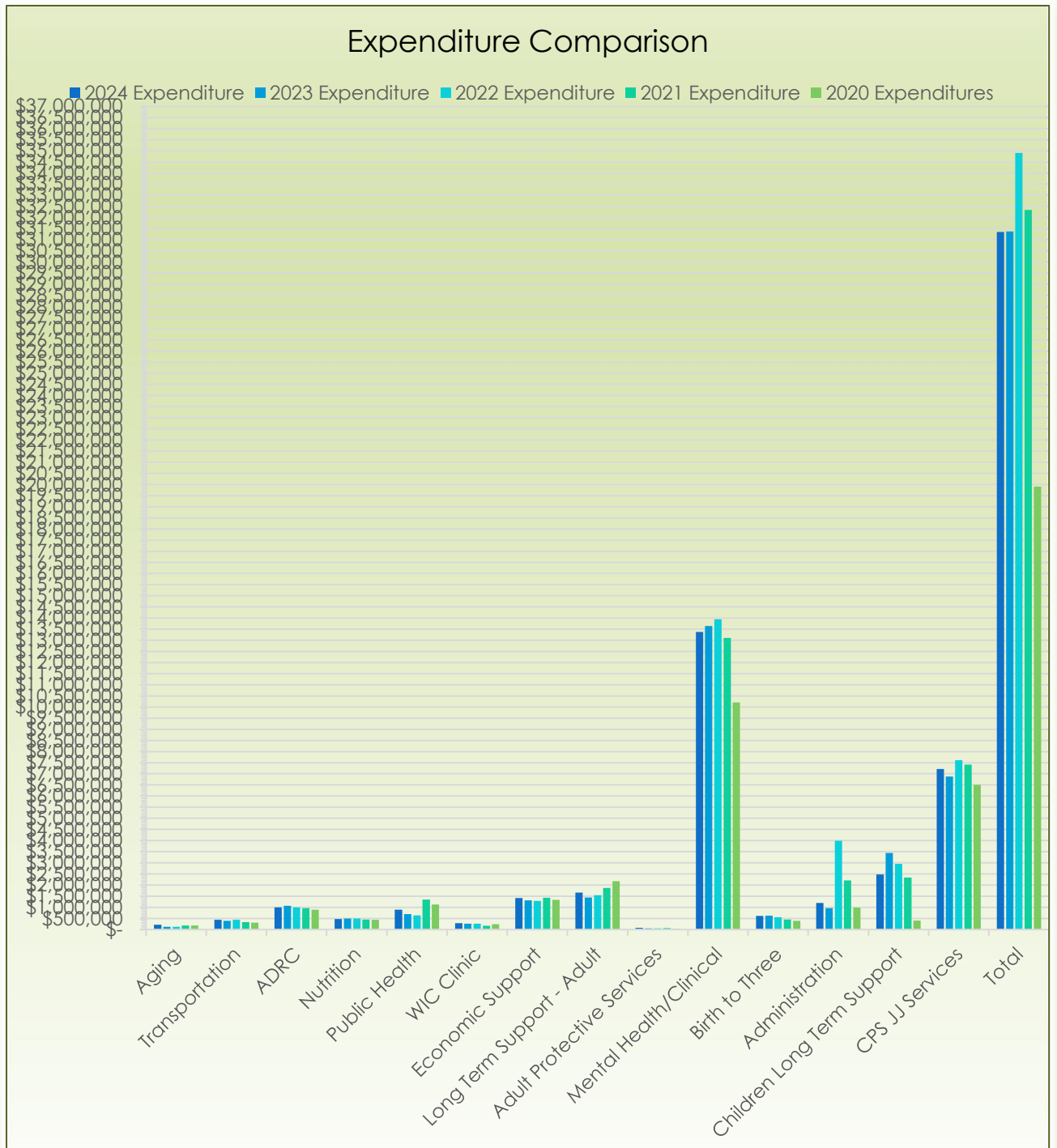
- CARES – Economic Support Database
- eWiSACWIS – Child Welfare Database
- State Data Warehouse – Human Services Reporting
- Peer Place – Aging and Nutrition Database
- GEARS – Grant Enrollment, Application and Reporting System
- Forward Health – Medicaid Program billing and reports
- SPARC – Department of Children and Families Reporting System
- PPS – Program Participation System

The Department will end the year with a surplus due to a WIMCR reimbursement. The Department is over budget in the following programs mental health institutions, foster care, foster care admin fees, and MH CBRF.

The Fiscal and Support Division seeks to provide excellent customer service to our internal and external customers and meet the complex needs of the populations served.

**Angela Petruske, Division Manager
Fiscal and Support Services
920-386-3504**





COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

The Community Support Services Division's goal is to provide essential services and resources to Dodge County residents. In meeting this goal Division staff support individuals with oversight and supervision in personal care such as, dressing, bathing, grooming, housekeeping, and shopping. The Division staff also provide services such as access to BadgerCare, Medicaid, FoodShare, Child Care, transportation, nutrition, immunizations, health education, and prenatal care. Providing these services and resources, the Division strengthens Dodge County by treating its residents with respect and dignity while helping them maintain their health and welfare in the community.

In 2024 as Division staff continued to provide these services and resources to support and maintain Dodge County residents, they also were continuing to unwind and recover from the negative impact Covid-19 had on programs, caseloads and associated workloads. This pandemic transformed the way we do work and has led to increased, more complex cases. Programs and policies were changed which had an enormous impact on Dodge County residents. This Division continues to receive restored, pre covid, policies, returning programs to where they used to be. In Economic Support (ES), we continue to see a decrease in total caseload. In Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) their caseloads continue to remain steady. Public Health is working hard and striving to get their caseload numbers back to and above what they were before Covid-19 to rebuild their image and ensure Dodge County residents are receiving the services they need.

While these units continue to rebound from Covid-19, they are also faced with challenge of transitioning to and learning new computer systems. The ADRC went from a system called WellSky and is now using a system called PeerPlace which went live on November 6th. The PeerPlace Aging & Disability database application is used to track activities conducted by Wisconsin's aging and disability resource center (ADRC) specialists, Tribal aging and disability resource specialists (Tribal ADRS), disability benefit specialists (DBS), elder benefit specialists (EBS), and dementia care specialists (DCS); and Older Americans Act (OAA) services recorded by providers throughout Wisconsin. APS went from using a system called WITS to a new system called WRAPS. This new data collection project will gather information that will be used to explore temporal, geographic, and facility type trends along with factors associated with the volumes and rates of APS events. ES's call center went to a new cloud-based platform called Genesys. It is a cloud-based call management system used by IM workers to receive, make, and transfer calls, and to listen to voicemail. It is an online platform that does not require users to download anything to their computers and is expected to make call centers more efficient. Public Health and WIC also began using a system called myEvolv. It is a web-based electronic health records system. It has a wide array of uses which include using it as an Access database to track documents and statistics, create templates, and organize patient charting.

The Community Support Services Division staff would like to thank our Director, Becky Bell, County Administrator, Cameron Clapper, the Human Services & Health Board, and the County Board of Supervisors for their support as we continue to navigate through some uncharted waters, rebounding from the COVID pandemic and the affects it has had on our staff and the work we do. It is greatly appreciated.

**Sheila Drays, Division Manager
Community Support Services
920-386-3767**

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION					
Sheila Drays, Division Manager					
Aging & Disability Resource Center	Aging Services, Nutrition & Transportation	Adult Protective Services & Long Term Support	Economic Support Services	Economic Support Services	Public Health Services
Brittany Borchardt, Supervisor		Paula Becker, Supervisor	Amy Beranek, Supervisor	Renee Lyman, Supervisor	Roman Mullen, Supervisor
D. Coulter J. Eberhardt H. Ehrlich K. Eilenfeldt J. Farmer O. Gerritson R. Griesel M. Haen A. Higgins J. Krueger M. Mata N. Osorio- Diaz K. Pieper A. Sanborn	K. Braunschweig M. Christensen E. DeBlare D. Grosenick M. Henkel J. Johnson G. Maier D. Mergener R. Ottery D. Pasewald T. Price G. Seidl M. Siegel L. Van Nocker 8 Dining Center Mgrs	A. Drumm M. Evans S. Gutschmidt A. Pearson E. Schmitz A. Schultz C. Wiersma	K. Bleecker A. Erkander K. Ganster R. Knowles M. Kirchoff H. Nunez C. Schultz K. Wegner C. Zwieg	M. Christensen E. Falcon D. Hohmann C. Liedtke A. Reidelbach M. Sassamon M. Valles N. Whitaker A. Williams	M. Bartol T. Bradley I. Carbajal C. Fissell B. Gehring O. Gerritson D. Goldman S. Gray K. Greenwald M. Puga M. Ramirez L. Rooney J. Schmidt A. Young
Commission on Aging & Disability Services	Nutrition & Transportation Advisory Committees	Adults-At-Risk Interdisciplinary Team Committee			
Ground Floor, Customer Service Support Specialist, Jessica Clyde					



Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Dodge County operates as a vital component of the Human Services and Health Department, providing a wide range of services designed to help individuals maintain their independence and live safely and comfortably in their homes. As an "information station," the ADRC offers unbiased, accurate information and counseling to individuals related to aging or living with a disability. Some of the many services offered by the ADRC include counseling on options to meet immediate or future care needs, advocacy to cut through problems with benefit programs, health insurance, housing or consumer issues, educational events for the community on dementia, support for caregivers and health promotion classes to support healthy aging.

This year the ADRC achieved several notable milestones. We successfully administered the Independent Living Supports Pilot Program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WI DHS). This initiative provides critical financial support to qualifying individuals, helping them maintain their independence and age in place. The program aims to alleviate pressure on Wisconsin's long-term care system as the population continues to age. Our Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) played a key role in organizing and collaborating with Dementia Care Specialists statewide to host the inaugural *Bringing Hope & Light Conference*. This landmark event facilitated the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and emerging trends in dementia care, strengthening the DCS network and offering invaluable learning opportunities to staff, community partners, and local residents. Our Benefit Specialists have once again been instrumental in providing support to community members, handling nearly 325 referrals for issues ranging from health insurance to income benefits. Thanks to their dedicated efforts in 2024, we secured a monetary impact of \$3,540,673 for Dodge County consumers—funds that will directly improve the lives of those in need.

A major operational accomplishment this year was the transition to a new case management and reporting software system. This streamlined platform improves data collection, enabling us to track client needs more efficiently and deliver services in a more timely and effective manner.

We invested significant effort into developing the 2025-2027 Aging Plan, which will guide the ADRC's priorities and programs for the next three years. This comprehensive plan integrates community input, data analysis, and evolving trends in aging and disability services, ensuring that our strategies are responsive and forward-thinking.

However, the year was not without its challenges. A significant hurdle was the reduction of a Resource Specialist position due to increasing operational costs and stagnant funding. This was a difficult decision that impacts our capacity to meet the growing demand for services. Despite this setback, our team worked diligently to maintain service levels and continue meeting the needs of the community.

In conclusion, 2024 has been a year of growth and resilience for the ADRC. Despite the challenges, we have successfully adapted and continued to provide essential services to those we serve. Looking ahead, we remain committed to enhancing our programs, expanding our outreach, and ensuring that all residents of Dodge County have access to the resources and support they need to live independently and with dignity. We are excited to build on this year's successes and tackle new challenges as we continue to serve our community with dedication and compassion.

Brittany Borchardt
ADRC/Aging Services Supervisor
920-386-3582

Aging, Transportation, and Nutrition Programs

Dodge County's Senior Nutrition Program

The Dodge County Senior Nutrition Program is dedicated to combating hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition among older adults, while fostering socialization and promoting overall health and well-being. By connecting seniors to essential services, the program aims to improve their quality of life. This mission is made possible through a combination of local, state, and federal funding, as well as generous contributions from program participants.

In 2024, the volunteers and staff of the Senior Nutrition Program continued their commitment to meeting the nutritional, social, and wellness needs of seniors. A significant achievement this year was the re-opening of nearly all our dining sites, allowing for the return of congregate, in-person dining. This milestone has brought many of our long-time participants back to the tables, while also welcoming a wave of new faces. At the same time, home delivered meals remained a vital service, with meal pick-ups continuing for those who needed them—though no new pick-up meal requests were added. In total, 38,267 meals were provided to seniors and eligible individuals with disabilities in 2024.

The Senior Farmer's Market Voucher Program served 219 senior households this past summer, offering participants vouchers that could be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at eligible farmer's markets. This program not only supports the nutritional needs of seniors but also provides a valuable financial boost to local farmers, fostering both individual health and community well-being.

The success of the Senior Nutrition Program relies heavily on the dedication of our volunteers, who play a vital role in packaging and delivering meals to homebound participants. In 2024, our volunteers contributed an impressive 5,207 hours of service, making a significant impact on the lives of those they serve.

Senior Dining



Fellowship, Food  Fun

Dodge County's Transportation Program

In 2024, Dodge County's Transportation Program remained dedicated in its mission to provide vital medical transportation to our community. Despite facing challenges in recruiting volunteers, both volunteer and paid drivers worked tirelessly to ensure that 7,173 rides were delivered to seniors and residents of Dodge County. Our dedicated volunteer drivers alone traveled an impressive 143,503 miles and contributed 5,986 hours of service.

Thanks to funding from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Federal 5310 grant program, we expanded our fleet with the addition of two brand-new side-load minivans, purchased through our 2023 and 2024 grant awards.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our volunteers. Their efforts are essential to the success of our Senior Nutrition and Transportation programs, which serve as lifelines for so many. To express our gratitude, we hosted a Volunteer Recognition Dinner at Old Hickory Golf Club in April. More than 100 volunteers joined us for an unforgettable evening, and we were deeply honored to celebrate such a dedicated and compassionate group of individuals.

A heartfelt thank you to all our volunteers for their service and dedication to the residents of Dodge County! Your hard work makes a difference every day.

Adult Protective Services and Long Term Support (APS/LTS)

The goals of the Adult Protective Services and Long Term Support Unit and program is to: effectively respond to the needs of older adults and adults with disabilities who are victims of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation; to prevent abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation whenever possible, to promote safety, independence, and quality of life for vulnerable adults who are being mistreated or at-risk of being mistreated and who are unable to protective themselves, and to assist individuals to remain living independently within the least restrictive environment, and to prevent, or at least delay institutionalized care for as long as possible. In addition, the APS/LTS Unit has six social workers and one Home and Financial Advisor. The APS/LTS unit provides six primary areas of services to Dodge County residents.

The first area, which is often where the Adult Protective Services Social Workers spend most of their time, is conducting allegations of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation. Types of investigations that APS social workers respond to include, self-neglect, neglect by others, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, treatment without consent, unreasonable confinement or restraint, and financial exploitation. Statutorily the Adult Protective Services Unit provides investigations for two categories of individuals. The first category is “elder adult at risk,” which is any individual “age 60 or older who has experienced, is currently experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect or financial exploitation.” § 46.90(1)(br). The second category, “adult at risk,” is any individual age 18 to 59 “who has a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs his or her ability to care for his or her needs, who has experienced, is currently experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation.” § 55.01(1e). These investigations must begin within 24 hours of receipt, not counting weekends and holidays.

The majority of investigations include individuals who are frail elder, seriously and persistently mentally ill, physically disabled, intellectually disabled, have a neurocognitive disorder, or other like incapacities and are in imminent danger of losing their life, liberty, health or property, through abuse and/or exploitation of them by others, or through their own inability to care for themselves resulting in abuse or neglect. The APS/LTS unit works diligently to balance the goals of protecting individuals from abuse, exploitation, and neglect while respecting the individual's right to self-determination. The APS/LTS unit often works closely with a wide variety of collaborative partners such as physicians, nurses, paramedics, and law enforcement. The APS/LTS unit assesses each individual's situation and needs, then develops a case plan to maintain his/her safety, health, and independence.

The APS unit is also responsible for petitioning for guardianship of individuals with intellectual disabilities and who reach the age of majority (18). The unit also petitions the court for guardianships of all other adults who become incompetent related to a degenerative brain/neurocognitive disorder, developmental/intellectual disability, serious and persistent mental illness, and other like incapacities and are unable to make their own decisions, as certified by a licensed physician or psychologist. These referrals usually involve numerous attorneys and court hearings and are coordinated with the Dodge County Corporation Counsel's Office. In addition, the APS unit is also responsible for petitioning the court for Protective Services, Protective Placements, Emergency Protective Placements, Protective Services Order for Involuntary Administration of Psychotropic Medication, and at times Individual At-Risk Restraining Orders.

The remaining three areas are covered under Community Long Term Support are supportive services and include: Supportive Home Care, Case Management, and Home & Financial Advisor Services. All the above services are provided if an individual is not eligible for Family Care program services or during the course of an investigation to provide safety and stability until long term services can be put into place. Supportive Home Care services include light housekeeping, grocery shopping, and assistance with personal cares. These cases are monitored by the unit's social workers to determine continued eligibility for the program.

The unit's Home & Financial Advisor provides a variety of services to our adult population. These services include bill paying, assisting clients with budgeting and becoming better financial managers, meal planning, grocery shopping, teaching meal preparation, teaching and promoting healthy hygiene habits, assistance with obtaining energy assistance, food share, housing options, medical assistance applications, scheduling medical appointments, and any other services that help individuals maintain the highest level of independence and to remain living in the least restrictive setting possible.

2024 Unit Accomplishments & Trends

Interdisciplinary Team - In 2024, the Adult Protective Services Unit once again received Elder Abuse Funding through the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR) in the amount of \$29,060.00. These funds are to be used on services including, but not limited to, advocacy/legal services, community-based aids/services, adult day programming/treatment, emergency response services, medical services, housing, energy assistance, food, service coordination, placement, respite, staff training, transportation, and victim services. To receive this funding, an Elder Abuse/Adults at Risk, Interdisciplinary Team (I-Team) needs to be formed and meet at least four times per year and all reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation that are investigated are entered into the Wisconsin Reporting for Adult Protective Services (WRAPS). The purpose of this team is to provide education and resources for elder and adult at risk abuse. Furthermore, the I-Team reviews Adult Protective Services cases that need or could benefit from an interdisciplinary perspective and approach. The I-Team also discusses systems issues and other areas that team members feel can be improved and then looks for ways to approach and improve those systems. In 2024, the I-team met on February 20th, May 21st, August 20th, and November 19th.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day/Community Education – June 15th is the designated date each year to recognize and focus on our aging population and the problem and prevalence of elder abuse. It provides an opportunity for collaborative partners to come together to show a support against, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Our APS unit works throughout the year to provide education to the community regarding elder abuse and abuse of adults with disabilities. On June 7, 2024, our APS unit in conjunction with the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Dodge County promoted and highlighted World Elder Abuse Awareness Day by having local community resource fair and brat fry with WBEV Radio Station. The APS booth was well attended and numerous resources regarding abuse, neglect, and exploitation were discussed and handed out to the attendees.

Dementia Crisis Response & Stabilization: The Adult Protective Services Unit continued to support and coordinate dementia stabilization response in the community. Depending upon the crisis and service needs these teams often consisted of, or a combination of, APS Social Workers, Crisis Workers, Dementia Care Specialist, Caregiver Coordinator, and Supportive Home Care staff. When stabilization in place could not be accomplished, we worked with many community partners for placement such as, but not limited to, Clearview, Marshfield Medical Center Beaver Dam, Waupun Hospital, Aurora Hospital - Hartford, Watertown Hospital, Marvin's Manor, Bay Harbor Beaver Dam and the Larson House.

APS On-Call: Our APS unit continues to be on-call after-hours in 2024 to consult with Northwest Connections when APS related issues arose after-hours. The APS social workers rotate being on-call weekly from Friday afternoon through the following Friday Morning.

2024 Trends

In 2024, the APS/LTS unit received and responded to 464 new referrals of allegations of abuse and or neglect of Adults at Risk or Elder Adults at Risk, Supportive Home Care, outreach, and Guardianships/Protective Placements/Protective Services. The majority of these, 393, being abuse and neglect referrals. This was an increase from 2023 referrals responded to (421). The total average caseload size in 2024 was 316. In 2024, our APS unit completed nine emergency protective placements and six voluntary urgent placements for the safety of individuals. In 2024, an average of 148 individuals were under protective placement.

As in previous years, the majority of APS referrals were related to self-neglect, neglect by caregivers, and financial exploitation. Often with financial exploitation other forms of abuse were also co-occurring. While in previous years we were able to provide the percentages for each category, the Department of Health Services has implemented a new reporting system which does not currently allow us to provide those numbers. It continues to be the goal of Adult Protective Services unit to protect the elderly and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation by investigating and providing and arranging for quality services to stop and prevent further harm while respecting their right to self-determination and helping individuals to remain living in the least restrictive environment to best meet their needs.

**Paula Becker, Supervisor
Adult Protective Services and Long Term Support
920-386-3717**

Economic Support (ES)

Unit Overview:

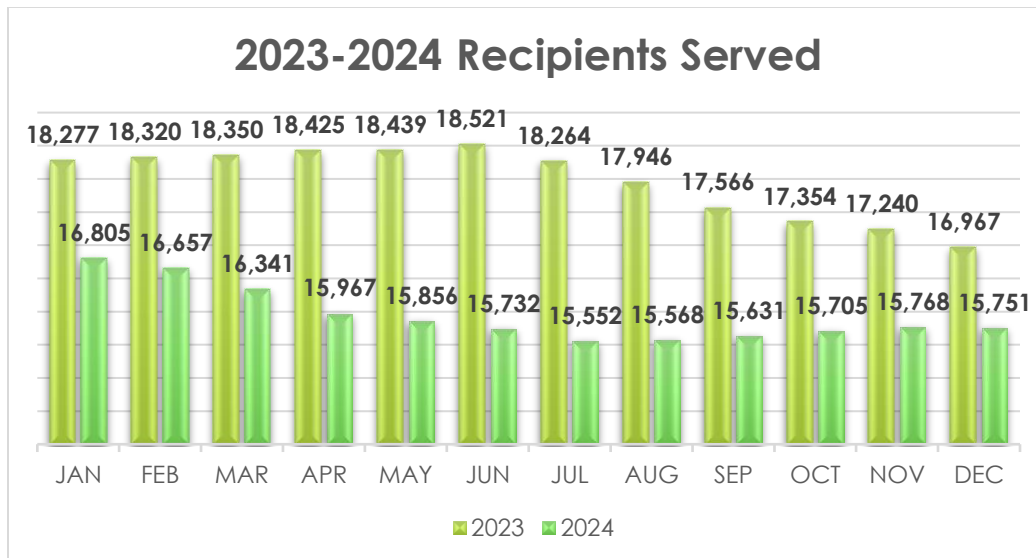
The Economic Support Unit, in partnership with Adams, Columbia, Dane, Juneau, Richland, Sauk, and Sheboygan counties (Capital Consortium), helps those who are challenged with financial hardship within our combined service area.

Economic Support staff determine eligibility and provide ongoing case management services for the following public assistance programs:

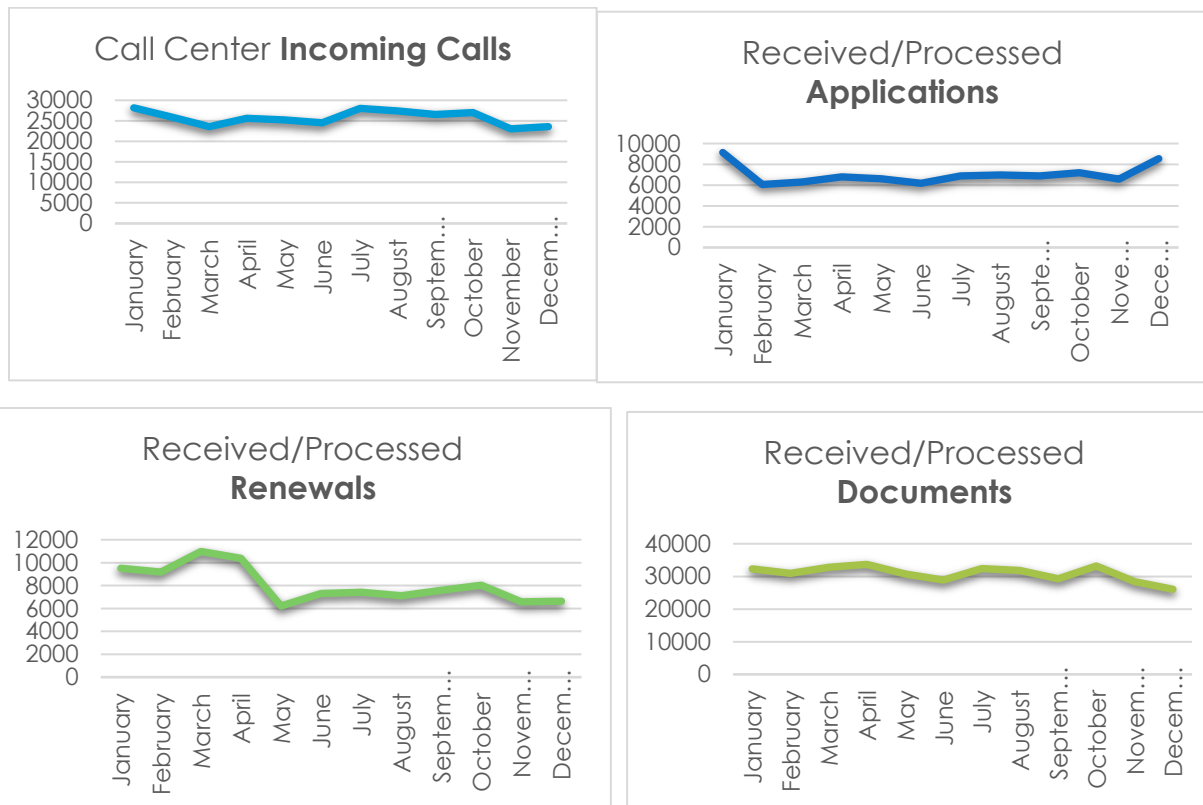
Wisconsin Shares Childcare, FoodShare, Medicaid Programs, Caretaker Supplement, and Elderly, Blind, or Disabled Medicaid Programs. The ES Unit also regulates certified childcare providers (individuals who provide in-home care for 1 to 3 children) within Dodge County.

2024 Caseload and Recipients Served Snapshot:

Capital Consortia staff managed a monthly average of about 98,000 active cases in 2024. Approximately 9,000 of those cases reside in Dodge County. Our team served an average of 15,944 Dodge County residents every month.



2024 Capital Consortia Workload Trends:



2024 Accomplishments:

- Income maintenance (IM) consortia completed the Medicaid unwinding period in June 2024 and re-determined eligibility for all Medicaid cases after the end of the federal pandemic public health emergency.
- Worked with the Department of Health Services (DHS) on policy and system changes to phase out pandemic requirements and restore regular eligibility requirements.
- Transitioned to a new Genesys call center system, a cloud platform.
- Specific to FoodShare, resumed work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) cases and implemented the revised policy regarding issuance of temporary FoodShare benefit cards.
- Specific to Medicaid, resumed the requirement for members to pay premiums for certain Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) cases.
- Specific to Child Care, implemented policy changes, including full-time/part-time authorizations and modifications to parent co-payments.

2024 Program Integrity Highlights:

- Program Integrity continues to be a focus for Economic Support. As in other program areas, there were policy changes, such as the FS Overpayment Claim Compromise (OCC) policy. This policy allows individuals who are liable to repay a FoodShare overpayment the ability to request a compromise when they feel they cannot repay what is owed. Depending on certain criteria, the amount may be reduced.

- Our Overpayment-Fraud Specialist solidified 5 Intentional Program Violations, or IPV's, and processed over \$92,000 in overpayments in 2024.
- We continue to strive to establish new relationships with the Sheriff and District Attorney offices to collaborate on field investigations, and in egregious situations, criminal prosecution.

2024 Staffing:

The Dodge County Economic Support staff is managed by Division Manager, Sheila Drays and Supervisors, Amy Beranek and Renee Lyman, and includes:

- 12 Economic Support Specialists
- 2 ESS Leads
- 2 Economic Support Assistants
- 1 Overpayment/Fraud Specialist
- 1 Customer Support Specialist

The Economic Support Unit has endured a plethora of changes through the “unwinding” of the federal public health emergency. We remain committed to providing excellent customer service to individuals and families in need throughout Dodge County and the Capital Consortium service area. We also remain steadfast and fully devoted to respecting taxpayers by making accurate eligibility determinations for Income Maintenance programs.

Amy Beranek – (920) 386-3955
Renee Lyman – (920) 386-4825
Human Services Supervisors - Economic Support

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Letter from the Health Officer

Dear Dodge County Residents,

As we close out 2024, I am reminded of the resilience of the Dodge County Public Health team and the partnerships that anchor our work. This year presented its fair share of challenges, notably in staffing, which tested our adaptability and resourcefulness. Yet our commitment to serving the health needs of Dodge County remained.

A significant milestone this year was the successful completion of our Department of Health Services (DHS) 140 review. This achievement underscores our dedication to meeting high standards of public health practice while also providing a roadmap for future improvement.

In addition to this, we sustained and enhanced critical services despite limited resources. From delivering over 900 vaccinations to implementing new maternal mental health initiatives, our work has continued to make a measurable impact. We also maintained our communicable disease response capabilities, tackling over 2,600 reported cases, and strengthened community ties through collaborative events like our second annual Community Baby Shower.

The successes of this year are a testament to the dedication of our staff and the support of our community.

As we look forward to 2025, we remain focused on fostering innovative solutions, addressing emerging health concerns, and ensuring that all residents have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

Sincerely,

Roman Mullen, MS, REHS
Dodge County Public Health Officer

Our **mission** as the Dodge County Human Services & Health Department – Public Health Unit is to promote healthy living, prevent disease and illness, and protect Dodge County residents from injury and environmental hazards by utilizing prevention services, health education, stakeholder collaboration, and coordination with our neighboring government agencies.

Our **values** are:

Respect – we treat all people with respect, compassion, and sensitivity, while recognizing the importance of diversity.



Services Chart



Foundational Public Health Areas

Access to Linkage with Clinical Care

Immunizations

Immunization is one of the most important public health victories of the 20th century. Vaccines sharply reduce and even eliminate diseases. Examples of highly successful vaccination efforts include smallpox, which has been successfully eradicated globally due to vaccination efforts, polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough), etc. When vaccination rates drop, the presence and severity of these illnesses can rapidly increase, leading to epidemics or even pandemics.

In 2024, we administered 619 intranasal influenza vaccinations for Dodge County students during school vaccination clinics. Eighteen schools around Dodge County participated in our student flu clinics, servicing ages 3-18. A total of 666 influenza vaccinations were administered by public health staff.

We continue to vaccinate both children and adults who do not have insurance or are underinsured via the Vaccines for Children program (VFC) and the Vaccines for Adults program (VFA). In 2024, we vaccinated a total of 718 clients of all ages, providing 919 vaccines in total.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Children 0 - 18					
Immunizations	313	1,071	609	793	846
Clients	258	735	519	619	667
Adults 19 +					
Immunizations	229	14,189	247	154	73
Clients	218	7,539	237	140	51
Total					
Immunizations	542	15,254	856	947	919
Clients	476	8,274	756	759	718

Pregnancy Tests

We provide confidential pregnancy testing for women. Upon results of the test, a public health nurse provides proof-of-pregnancy and connects the patient to supportive resources and proper prenatal care. Four pregnancy tests were conducted in 2024.

Dental Checks

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Dental caries can affect children's growth, lead to difficulty concentrating during the learning process, and cause significant pain and infection. Access problems, due to socioeconomic disparity, present a high risk for tooth decay. Dodge County Public Health partners with Bridging Brighter Smiles to provide four services: 1) oral screening, 2) anticipatory guidance, 3) fluoride varnish application, and 4) referral to dentists. This program is offered to children and their parents who are at risk for dental caries and are also on Medical Assistance, participants in the WIC program, or those enrolled in any school in Wisconsin. In 2024, forty people received dental check services.

Health Screenings

Dodge County Public Health provides various health screenings to residents that request them, such as tuberculosis skin-tests and blood-pressure checks. In 2024, fifty-three individuals received tuberculosis skin-tests and twenty-four received blood-pressure screenings.

Birth Packets

Dodge County Public Health receives birth reports for newborns who reside in Dodge County. These reports reflect how the pregnancy went, noting any complications, how labor and delivery went, and any social-economic factors that were identified that may impact the success of the family unit. These reports are utilized to provide "birth packets" to families with newborns, which consist of brochures and information on how public health and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) can benefit their family. More specifically, we ensure that information regarding well-water sampling, car seat safety, our home visiting programs, and a milestone hand out is provided within the packets. Each birth report is reviewed by a public health nurse to identify if families are high risk – possible financial problems, complicated pregnancy or delivery, and lack of support. If they are high risk, the family will not only receive a "birth packet," but also receive a call and/or text from a public health nurse to discuss the benefits of enrolling in our TalkReadPlay program, offer breastfeeding assistance (if applicable), discuss other home visiting programs, and provide an opportunity to answer any questions that the family may have. In 2024, we sent 672 birth packets.

Communicable Disease Control

Disease Surveillance

Communicable disease reports are tracked through an electronic reporting system linking the local, regional, and state public health officials with private physicians, hospitals, and laboratories. This allows Dodge County Public Health to conduct prompt follow-up with affected individuals, as well as investigations of possible outbreaks to minimize further spread of disease. Public Health staff educate individuals about illnesses and encourage or ensure treatment (if needed). Steps are continually taken to control and reduce the spread of disease. Telephone calls, letters, and/or face-to-face contacts are used to gather and distribute information. In 2024, Dodge County Public health followed up on 2,642 cases of communicable disease.

HIV Partner Services: This program provides counseling and referrals for individuals with HIV; staff assist with medical resources, notifications, and testing of sexual and needle sharing partners. This is a comprehensive public health strategy for reducing the spread of HIV. Four partner services cases were evaluated by Dodge County Public Health staff in 2024.

Rabies control program: As a public health unit, we provide follow-ups for all known animal bites and potential exposures. If a domestic animal has bitten a resident, the animal will be placed under quarantine by either the Dodge County Sheriff or local Police Department, a veterinary service, or our public health team. During an animal's quarantine, the animal must be visited three times by a licensed veterinarian to analyze the animal for potential symptoms of rabies. The resident who was bitten, can coordinate with their doctor and our public health team to determine if a series of rabies vaccinations is appropriate, which is very circumstantial. If the owner of the domesticated animal does not wish to quarantine the animal, then the animal must be euthanized and tested for rabies at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. These measures are taken to prevent fatal cases of human rabies; after the onset of symptoms, rabies is nearly 100% fatal. In 2024, 145 animal bites/exposures were reported to our public health team, and 30 rabies specimens were submitted to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene.

Tuberculosis (TB) program: Dodge County Public Health provides education, case management, and medications (through the state TB Program), to prevent and control infection and disease caused by tuberculosis bacteria. Anti-tuberculosis therapy is provided to persons with tuberculosis (latent) infection, suspect or confirmed tuberculosis (active) disease, and close contacts of a person with active tuberculosis. In 2024, we investigated five suspected active TB cases, followed up on 13 suspected latent TB cases, and managed 18 confirmed latent TB cases, including 3 individuals who received directly observed medication and case management for 12 weeks through Public Health.

Top Reporting Disease - Dodge County Public Health Jurisdiction	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Sexually transmitted Infections (STI)					
Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection	135	195	153	148	141
Gonorrhea	27	33	13	22	27
Food/Water Borne Illness					
Campylobacteriosis	11	18	21	21	33
Cryptosporidiosis	10	8	10	8	6

E-coli, Shiga Toxin-Producing (STEC)	3	12	4	13	8
E-coli, Enterotoxigenic (ETEC) *not tracked	*	*	*	6	6
Giardiasis	8	4	5	4	8
Salmonellosis	17	17	14	17	21
Vaccine Preventable (Except Hep C)					
Influenza-associated Hospitalization	37	1	57	30	44
Hepatitis A	0	1	1	0	99
Hepatitis B	5	2	9	1	185
Hepatitis C	30	36	16	19	88
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	0	1	0	0	463
Varicella (Chickenpox)	1	2	2	3	20
Other					
Lyme Disease (B.Burgdorfer)	17	8	6	2	3
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	28	13	25	13	16
Legionellosis	3	2	1	0	3
Tuberculosis Disease - Active	2	1	1	1	5
Tuberculosis Infection - Latent	13	18	22	17	18
Coronavirus, Novel 2019 (COVID-19) *newly reportable in 2020	8,868	9,062	9,508	1,667	623
Streptococcal Invasive Disease *not tracked	*	*	16	13	17

Maternal Child and Family Health

Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC)

Prenatal care coordination is also known as *Health Beginning+*. In this home-visiting program a public health nurse conducts monthly home visits for those that are pregnant to provide them with support and services they need to promote a successful birth and a healthy baby. During these visits, we provide extra education on fetal development, information about labor and delivery, breastfeeding information, and information on the expectations of birth. These topics are just a few of many educational materials we can discuss during a home visit; they are intended to be very open to what the family will benefit from or what they would like to learn. During these visits, we identify possible pregnancy or newborn outcome risk factors before delivery, and we collaborate with their providers to address any concerns. In 2024, we completed 63 *Health Beginning+* home visits.

Infant-Child Home Visits

Our infant-child home visits are also known as the TalkReadPlay program. Our target population is birth to three. During these visits we focus on the child's intellectual, language, social, and physical development by using the *Parents as Teachers* curriculum. Our intent is to promote education to the family and identify any early child developmental delays. We use ASQ-3 and ASQ-2 screening tools to help the family and parents' educator identify any delays in communication, fine motor, large motor, personal-social, and problem-solving skills that the infant may be behind in. At these visits, a public health nurse measures the height and weight of the infant, reassures families that their child is developing appropriately, and teaches them how to promote their child's learning. We can then refer and update their providers along the way.

Finally, during these visits, the nurse assists and answers any questions the parents may have regarding breastfeeding. In 2024, we completed 61 TalkReadPlay home visits.

Breastfeeding Home Visits

Breastfeeding not only provides the best nutrition for newborns, but it also saves the family money during difficult times. Three of our public health nurses are Certified Lactation Specialists (CLS). With this training, they can conduct home visits to those breastfeeding in the community who need extra help with breastfeeding. Dodge County WIC promotes and supports breastfeeding through our active breastfeeding program. Research shows there is no better nutrition than breast milk for our first year of life. Breastfeeding provides health, nutrition, economic, and emotional benefits to both mom and baby. In 2024, our public health nurses conducted 17 breastfeeding home visits.

Maternal Mental Health

In 2024, our maternal child health program focused on maternal mental health for the first time. Over the course of the year, we developed a survey to identify maternal mental health barriers within our community. We collected 95 completed surveys (85 in English and 10 in Spanish) and used the findings to implement changes in the community.

We partnered with the Beaver Dam Library and The Open Door Coffeehouse to host monthly parent support groups. These groups facilitated open conversations driven by the families' priorities and the challenges they faced. This supportive environment allowed participants to feel heard, share strategies that worked or didn't work, and connect with others to combat feelings of isolation.

We also emphasized education about maternal mental health, including its prevalence, significance, and treatment options. A maternal mental health policy was created to guide our home visiting staff on topics such as screening frequency and providing education. Additionally, we developed a Dodge County Maternal Mental Health Resources Guide, which was shared with the families we served.

Community Baby Shower

In 2024, Watertown Family Connections partnered with Dodge County Public Health to host Dodge County's second annual community baby shower. Fifteen expecting mothers and their support persons were invited to this two-hour event, which provided essential supplies and resources to support their baby's healthy development and learning.

During the baby shower, families received a gift basket, enjoyed lunch, and learned about various community resources designed to connect parents with local family and early childhood services. Attendees also received information about maternal mental health and participated in hands-on CPR and Heimlich maneuver training.

This event not only provided support for the attending families but also highlighted that they are not alone in their parenting journey.

Jefferson-Dodge Breastfeeding Coalition

The Dodge and Jefferson County Health Departments collaborated to establish the Jefferson-Dodge Breastfeeding Coalition, with a mission to empower all mothers to breastfeed and achieve their breastfeeding goals.

A Dodge County Public Health nurse co-chaired the coalition, organizing and facilitating monthly meetings that brought together partnerships to support the coalition's mission. Together, we developed a strategic plan addressing suggestions from 2022 survey responses.

The coalition's primary objectives included creating a breastfeeding policy template, supporting breastfeeding support groups in Dodge and Jefferson Counties, and expanding community outreach. Over the past two years, both health departments established their own monthly support groups within their communities. Community outreach efforts increased through participation in local events and social media promotions highlighting the coalition and available breastfeeding resources.

Additionally, we created breastfeeding spaces at both county fairs, providing private areas for mothers to breastfeed or pump during public events. The coalition is currently developing an educational handout to inform local businesses about breastfeeding laws.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. The program assists income-eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who have had a baby within the past six months, and infants and children up to five years of age who are at health risk due to inadequate nutrition. The purpose of WIC is to promote and maintain the health and well-being of its participants by providing nutrition education and increasing access to healthy foods. WIC also bridges the gap in needed resources for participants through referrals to other assistance programs, public health services, and healthcare providers. WIC continues to partner with Medicaid and local providers to recruit eligible participants and ensure they are informed of their eligibility. In 2024, the average monthly WIC enrollment in Dodge County was 831.

In 2024, Dodge County WIC maintained hybrid services, allowing families to attend remote appointments or visit the WIC office in person. Wisconsin WIC enrolled in the USDA waiver, which permits the physical presence requirement for WIC participants to be waived until September 2026 for all appointments. This waiver supports a hybrid service model that benefits participants by continuing to allow remote services when needed. Remote services have removed barriers such as transportation challenges, lost wages from missing work to attend appointments, and have improved health equity. Federal offices are currently researching the effects of virtual services on WIC participants, with the hope that the waiver of the physical presence requirement will become permanent.

The USDA is piloting other modernized services in select states, including online grocery shopping for WIC foods and streamlining access to anthropometric measurements obtained during well-child checks and prenatal visits. These advancements are anticipated to improve WIC services for our community in the coming year.

Dodge County WIC consistently receives positive feedback from participants through a state-designed survey available via the Wisconsin MyWIC mobile app. Here are a few testimonials from participants:

- "It is very helpful and helps me and my son eat healthier."
- "They are very helpful in so many ways."
- "It's extra help to take some of the financial load off. Especially with formula. It is so expensive and goes so quick."
- "It helps me not have to worry about feeding my daughter, changed my life."

In 2024, the USDA released a final food rule updating food benefits for WIC participants. States have until April 20, 2026, to implement these changes. Key updates include:

- The increased dollar amount of the fruit and vegetable Cash Value Benefit (CVB) will remain at \$26 for children, \$47 for pregnant and postpartum women, and \$52 for breastfeeding women. Fresh herbs are now included in the CVB.
- The amount of juice will be reduced, with the option to substitute juice for \$3 in CVB.
- The amount of milk will be reduced, while yogurt options will increase. Soy-based cheese and yogurt choices will also be included.
- For infant foods, families may substitute these foods for an increased CVB value of \$10 (for half the foods) or \$20 (for all the foods).
- Whole grain options will be expanded to allow for more variety.
- Canned fish will now be available to all WIC participants.
- Legumes and peanut butter can be substituted for additional egg benefits, and nut and seed butters will be available as an alternative to peanut butter.

Looking ahead to 2025, several potential changes to WIC policies are being considered at federal, state, and local levels, including:

- Making remote options more permanent for participants facing barriers to in-person visits.
- Extending WIC eligibility, such as postpartum mothers for up to two years and children up to six years.
- Increasing flexibility in the foods covered by WIC to align with updated nutrition recommendations, accommodate dietary restrictions, and reflect cultural preferences, along with increased value in food packages.
- Allowing families to redeem WIC benefits through online ordering and curbside pickup.

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Each summer, the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is available for eligible participants from June 1st to October 31st. In 2024, each eligible participant was provided \$40 vouchers to purchase local fruits, herbs, and vegetables from WIC-approved farmers. The WIC FMNP program encourages participants to shop locally for produce, while increasing their access to fruits and vegetables. In 2024, Dodge County WIC families spent \$9,024 at local farmers' markets and farm stands. This was a 35% redemption rate, similar to the 34% redemption in 2023.

WIC Breastfeeding Support

Every pregnant and breastfeeding mother who enrolls in Dodge County WIC has access to our breastfeeding peer counselors, as well as our Certified Lactation Specialist (CLS). Our breastfeeding peer counselors are moms with experience in breastfeeding, who can provide support and mentorship to other moms on their breastfeeding journey. Breastfeeding incidence rates of Dodge County WIC participants consistently exceed the state average year after year, as do the rates for breastfeeding duration to one month, three months, six months, and twelve months. These rates also exceed the state's breastfeeding goals for duration to one month and three months.

Breastfeeding Incidence and Duration					
	Incidence	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months
Dodge County WIC 2023	84.9%	85.2%	77.7%	53.4%	36.1%
Dodge County WIC 2024	89.6%	78.9%	72.9%	50.0%	40.6%
Wisconsin WIC 2024	76.1%	80.7%	66.4%	46.4%	25.3%

The largest decrease in breastfeeding rates occurs between three and six months. This may be related to most mothers having to return to work after two to three months of maternity leave, which can be a barrier for continued breastfeeding. This is an area that the Dodge County WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator plans to address alongside Public Health staff and the Jefferson-Dodge Breastfeeding Coalition in 2025.

Some areas that we would like to focus on include identifying barriers to breastfeeding and increasing awareness of the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, supporting the development of breastfeeding-friendly employers, and implementing the changes to breast pump access through WIC. The new program for breast pumps provided by WIC was designed by the State Breastfeeding Coordinator, and was rolled out in 2023, making the process more flexible and efficient for mothers participating in the WIC program. Medicaid expanded their breast pump coverage to allow for the issuance of a personal breast pump to be issued to expecting mothers in their third trimester instead of issuing pumps after babies were born. This expansion will hopefully bridge the timing gap and help increase breastfeeding durations for our WIC mothers.

Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

Car Seat Program

We have four of our staff members trained and certified as Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST). The CPSTs provide education on the proper use of car seats, booster seats, and seat belts to help save lives and prevent injuries and death of children. Properly installed car seats decrease the risk of a fatal injury by 71% among infants and 54% among toddlers. As part of this program, we offer car seat safety inspections for families that request one. During these inspections, CPSTs check the expiration, history, recalls, and installation requirements on the installed car seats/boosters. Additionally, our CPSTs provided Child Protective Services (CPS) with car seat training so families, in coordination with CPS, can safely choose and install car seats/boosters. Funding has been received for several consecutive years from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to purchase car seats that can be dispensed to families in need that meet specific income eligibility criteria.

In 2024, we hosted three Dodge County Car Seat Events at the Beaver Dam Fire Department. We offered car seats/boosters to those who were eligible, completed safety checks, and provided education on the safe and proper use of car seats/boosters.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Car Seat Inspections	14	25	4	62	63
Car Seats Distributed	21	18	8	95	82

Safe Sleep

As a Cribs for Kids® partner, we provide education and Pack N Play cribs to families to prevent infant sleep-related deaths. During home visits with families, videos, handouts, and questionnaires are used to educate parents and caregivers on the importance of safe sleep for their babies. Pack N Play cribs are purchased with grants or donations from local organizations and distributed to families who need them. In 2024, twelve families were provided with safe sleep guidance and a new crib.

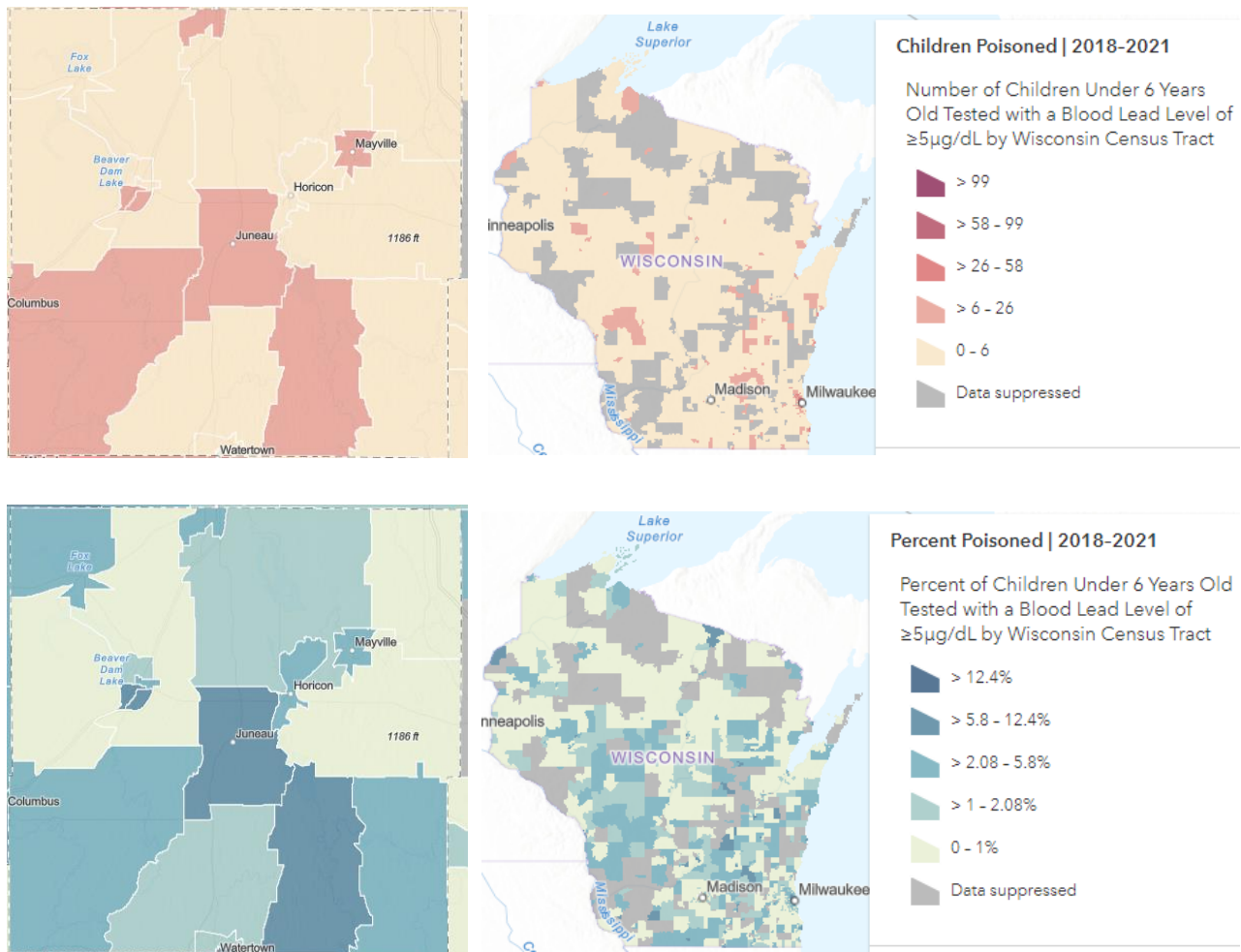
First Breath

First Breath is a referral program that provides resources and support for tobacco cessation to expecting mothers, those who recently gave birth within the last six months, and primary caretakers of a child. Since 2022, this program merged with the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation's "My Baby and Me" program, which expands the resources and support of cessation to mothers and caregivers struggling with alcohol and drugs. If one would accept this service, a First Breath Health Educator would reach out to the participant by offering high intensity support, low intensity support, caregiver/family support, and long-term engagement to help them make a change to their tobacco, alcohol, and substance use. In 2024, we made three referrals to the First Breath program. Statewide in 2023, 868 pregnant, postpartum, and caregiving individuals were referred to the First Breath program.

Blood-lead Screening and Follow-up

Lead based paint and varnish exists in many of the Dodge County homes built before 1978. Lead is a toxin, and there is no safe level of lead in the human body. Lead exposure is especially dangerous for children and adolescents. An acute-lead exposure is enough to cause permanent brain damage and negatively affect health throughout a child's life; especially those who are between the ages of one and six years old. To identify exposure levels, children are screened using a capillary sample (finger-stick). Once elevated blood-lead levels are confirmed, a public health nurse monitors the condition of the child by taking a venous sample (blood sample) every three months. Based on the results of laboratory testing, the nurse provides education and recommendations on lifestyle changes that can assist in reducing the child's blood-lead level. With continued elevated blood-lead levels, public health nurses will conduct an at-home lead assessment to determine if the living conditions within the family's home are contributing to the measured lead levels in the child's blood. In severe cases, the child will be removed from the home until the lead conditions can be remediated. In 2024, 68 elevated lead levels were reported, which resulted in 25 home visits by either a public health nurse and/or a lead hazard investigator.

Given our older infrastructure and homes, Dodge County has a high prevalence of lead-poisoned children when compared to other areas around Wisconsin.



Sharps Disposal Program

With our Sharps Disposal Program, we exchange full sharp containers with empty ones for free. We then dispose of the full sharp's containers in a proper manner for the entity or person that is dropping them off. This program is utilized by both the community and our own department. Diabetes, vitamin deficiencies, and blood disorders are just a few conditions that would require families to utilize sharps containers on a regular basis. This program allows the community to dispose of their sharps in a safe, convenient way. In 2024, we disposed of 92 sharps containers and provided 27 new sharps containers to those who needed one.

Health Education

At Dodge County Public Health, we have a Community Health Educator who is responsible for performing work involving planning, coordinating, assessing, and implementing public health programs. These programs may include communicable and chronic disease, nutrition, health promotion, and other health and wellness topics. In 2024, our Community Health Educator partnered with the Aging and Disability Resource Center to provide health and wellness workshops throughout Dodge County. A total of 45 participants attended these workshops, which included Living Well with Chronic Conditions, Healthy Living with Diabetes, Healthy Living with Chronic Pain, and Mind Over Matter; Healthy Bowels, Healthy Bladder. They also provided 10 one-hour sessions on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse to over 100 local 6th graders.

Health education was provided during local community events, such as the Dodge County Fair, where our Community Health Educator coordinated a personal safety-based education theme for fair attendees, mainly children, to participate in. Other community events included Family Fest, three Car Seat Events, as well as a presentation at the Parent Resource Center. Day-to-day, our Community Health Educator develops health education material that gets posted on our Facebook page and our website, this includes a Dodge County Public Health Quarterly Newsletter as well as a Weekly Wellness education initiative. Overall, Dodge County Public Health staff participated in 37 health education events throughout 2024.

Environmental Health

Environmental Complaints

We assist residents with a wide variety of environmental concerns or issues that arise within the county. We receive calls and notifications for consumer concerns, nuisance complaints, housing issues, and water quality concerns. Public health staff provides resources and education to those who notify us of a concern. Each instance will look different in terms of the remediation efforts and follow-up procedures that may be required. In complex scenarios, we will seek help from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) or the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). In 2024, public health followed up on 96 environmental-related calls.

Radon Test Kits

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that we can't smell or taste. It can get into any type of building, new or old, including our homes, offices, and schools. Radon is second only to smoking as a leading cause for lung cancer. Testing is the only way to know if you are at risk of exposure to radon. We receive free radon test kits from the Watertown Radon Information Center to dispense to our Dodge County residents. Testing is easy and free. If radon is detected, there are ways to lower the level to acceptable standards. In 2024, we distributed 217 kits to our residents.

Well-Water Testing

More than two-thirds of Wisconsin residents use groundwater as their drinking water source and more than 40% of residents rely on a private well. Contamination of private wells occurs all throughout Wisconsin. Safe, clean water is the most essential resource for healthy communities. We rely on clean water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning. Municipal water systems test their water regularly to ensure it is safe, but it is up to private well owners to test their own well water. Dodge County Public Health, with support from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, helps private well owners by distributing well water test kits to families with children under the age of six and pregnant women, of whom are among the most vulnerable groups if exposed to contaminated water. We are committed to 1) encouraging regular well water testing, 2) ensuring a confirmation sample has been taken if levels are high, 3) providing advice about appropriate water use, and 4) recommending actions to reduce exposure if levels are high. In 2024, 32 kits were given to families, and 28 follow-up sessions were conducted with subsequent education.

Lead Assessments

A home lead assessment involves the evaluation of a residence to identify potential sources of lead exposure. This assessment is crucial for various reasons, particularly in ensuring the safety and well-being of occupants, especially children. Lead, a toxic metal, can have serious health implications, and a home lead assessment helps to mitigate the risks associated with lead exposure. When a child presents high blood-lead levels, our trained and certified Lead Hazard Investigator will conduct a lead assessment of a families dwelling.

The purpose of the assessment is to investigate areas where the child has potential of ingesting lead. For example, if a child is consuming paint chips while at home, and the home is identified to have lead-based paint, the investigator may determine that the lead-based paint is contributing to the child's high blood-lead level readings. The investigator will then recommend remediation efforts to remove the lead-based paint or recommend that the family finds alternative dwelling options to reduce the child's blood-lead levels. In 2024, two lead assessments were conducted.

Foundational Public Health Capabilities

Assessment and Surveillance

Assessment and surveillance are key to keeping our community healthy. They help us understand how diseases spread, how common they are, and who is most at risk. By tracking health trends, we can see what's working and make better decisions to protect everyone's well-being.

Surveillance systems are like early warning signals, helping us spot outbreaks quickly so we can act fast to control them. Assessments also help us find out which groups in our community might need extra help, so we can create programs that meet their specific needs.

Community Partnership Development

Building strong community partnerships is a key part of public health. These partnerships bring together health professionals, community leaders, and residents to tackle health issues and improve everyone's well-being. By working with local groups and tapping into their knowledge, we can make sure our programs are relevant, effective, and welcomed.

When communities are involved, trust grows, and people feel empowered to take part in activities that promote health and prevent disease. Partnerships also give us access to resources like local networks, volunteers, and facilities, helping us make a bigger impact. When communities help make decisions, they take ownership of the solutions, which makes health programs more successful and long-lasting.

In 2024, Dodge County Public Health worked with the Dodge Jefferson Healthier Community Partnership (DJHCP) to create a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This group includes health departments from Dodge County, Jefferson County, and the City of Watertown, as well as Marshfield Medical Center Beaver Dam, Watertown Regional Medical Center, Fort Healthcare, the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation, and Rock River Community Clinic.

Together, we conduct a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and update our CHIP every three years. Based on the 2022 CHA, we decided to focus on four big issues: safe, reliable transportation, youth mental health, childcare, and affordable housing. To address these problems, we brought together local stakeholders for regular discussions. These monthly focus groups helped us share ideas, build partnerships, and create strong, united plans to improve our community.

Equity

Equity means making sure everyone has a fair chance to be as healthy as possible. In public health, this means sharing resources, opportunities, and healthcare in a way that helps everyone, no matter their race, income, gender, or where they live.

To improve health for everyone, we work to break down the barriers that cause unfair differences in health. This includes making sure all people have access to healthcare, prevention programs, and reliable health information. By focusing on equity, public health becomes more inclusive, meeting the unique needs of different groups in our community.

When we prioritize fairness, we not only improve individual lives but also make our communities stronger and more resilient. Equity isn't just a goal—it's the foundation for building healthier, more just communities for everyone.

Organizational Competencies

In public health, having the right skills and tools is essential for planning, running, and improving programs that keep our community healthy. These skills—called organizational competencies—include things like strategic planning, leadership, analyzing data, clear communication, and working with different groups to tackle challenges.

When an organization is well-prepared, it can quickly respond to new health concerns, use resources wisely, and adapt to changing needs. These competencies also help ensure that public health decisions are based on solid research and real data, making our programs more effective.

At Dodge County Public Health, we're committed to continuously improving and learning so we can serve our community better. By building strong organizational skills, we make a bigger impact and achieve better health outcomes for everyone.

Communications

Good communication is key to sharing information, raising awareness, and helping people make healthier choices. Whether it's about preventing disease, promoting wellness, or responding to emergencies, clear and simple messages are essential.

When public health messages are easy to understand and respectful of different cultures, they build trust between health officials and the community. This trust encourages people to take informed steps to protect their health. During crises, timely and honest communication is especially important to clear up confusion, correct misinformation, and coordinate responses.

Good communication also helps gain support for health policies and programs. It inspires people to work together and participate in public health efforts. By focusing on clear, open communication, we can close knowledge gaps, encourage healthier habits, and improve the well-being of our community.

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Being ready for emergencies is a top priority in public health. Whether it's a natural disaster, a disease outbreak, or another health crisis, quick and effective action can save lives and reduce harm.

At Dodge County Public Health, we work hard to create strong emergency plans. These plans help us respond to sudden increases in health needs, manage resources, and provide fast, effective care. Acting quickly and working together during a crisis helps stop the spread of disease, protect people, and maintain public trust.

Our preparedness efforts include training healthcare workers, setting up clear communication systems, and keeping essential supplies on hand. By staying ready, we can lessen the impact of emergencies and recover more quickly. Being prepared means we're better equipped to protect the health and safety of Dodge County residents.

Accountability & Performance Management

Performance management is about constantly checking and improving how we do things. By tracking and evaluating our programs, we can use data to make smarter decisions and find areas that need improvement.

This process helps us use our resources wisely, ensure our actions are based on evidence, and meet our goals at Dodge County Public Health. Holding ourselves accountable and focusing on performance makes our public health efforts more effective. In the end, this leads to better health outcomes and higher-quality services for our community.

Policy Development & Support

Good policies set clear rules and standards that guide public health efforts, helping us stay consistent and focused on our goals. These policies play a big role in creating healthier environments, shaping behaviors, and addressing the factors that affect health in our community.

By developing and supporting strong policies, our public health team ensures that the programs we create are effective and long-lasting. These efforts make a real difference in improving the overall health and well-being of Dodge County residents.

**Roman Mullen, Public Health Officer
Public Health and WIC Programs
920-386-3674**

CLINICAL AND FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION

The Clinical and Family Services Division of the Human Services and Health Department offers a wide variety of services to the children and families of Dodge County, including services for mental health counseling and psychiatry, alcohol and drug assessments and counseling, opioid-specific treatment services, crisis services, community-based case management programs, child protective services, foster parent licensing services, home and financial counseling, supervised visitation services, youth justice services, services to children with disabilities, restitution services, Birth-to-Three services, and independent living skills services. In 2024, this Division was comprised of eighty-nine (89) staff members, including seventy (70) providers, five (5) psychiatric prescribers, four (4) nurse case managers, three (3) support staff, six (6) unit Supervisors, and one (1) Division Manager.

2024 was a year of changes and growth. We continued to work diligently to find appropriate and least-restrictive treatment and placement options for both children and adults in the face of decreasing resources statewide. We also introduced an exciting new resource to the county, that of a contracted Crisis Co-Responder position to work in conjunction with our Law Enforcement and other community partners serve our residents in crisis at their time of greatest need.

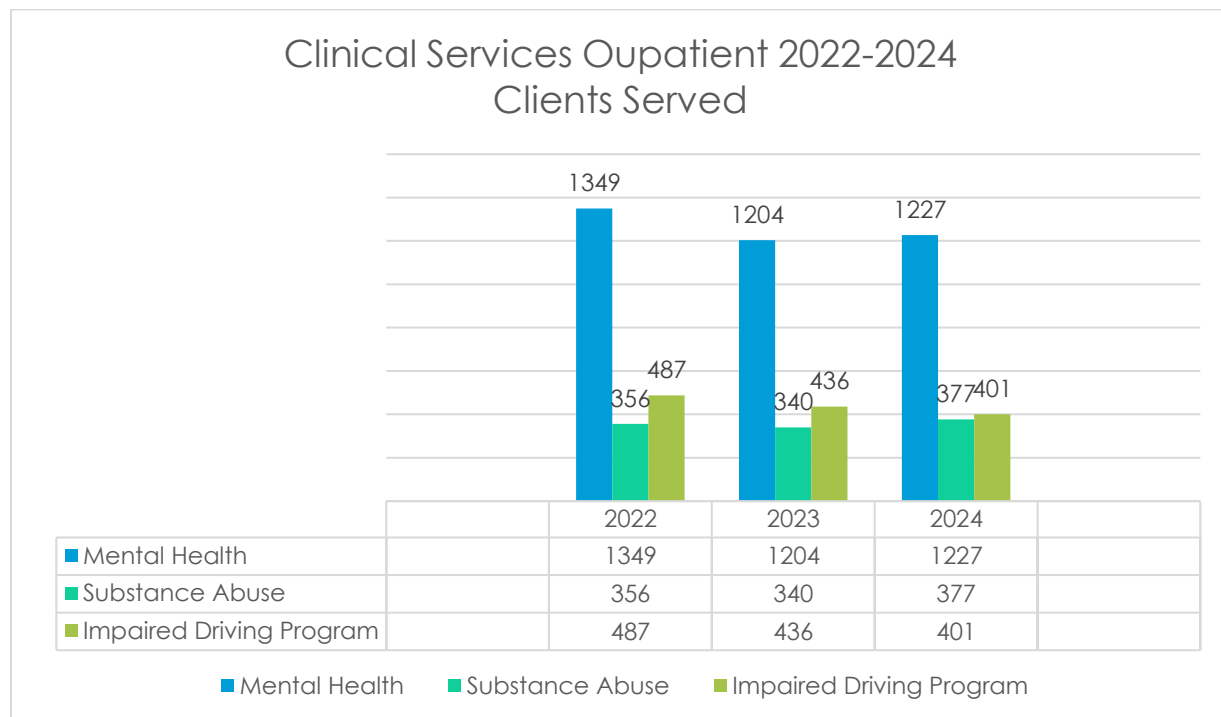
We continuously strive to maintain and improve the quality of services we provide to the residents of Dodge County, while adjusting to the increasingly complex needs of consumers and families, and the challenges of fiscal restraints and a changing economy. Throughout 2024, we have worked to strengthen the collaboration among units and with community partners built over the years. Now more than ever, we recognize the importance of building a team to support the children and families who are struggling in Dodge County during these unpredictable and difficult times. The staff members' dedication to serving the residents of Dodge County, their creativity, resilience, and willingness to keep looking for solutions and finding ways to meet needs, as well as their ongoing support for one another, is truly humbling and inspirational. I am grateful to serve them in the capacity of a manager. I also appreciate the guidance and support given by the Dodge County Board of Supervisors and the Human Services and Health Department Board, which allows us to fulfill our mission of providing high-quality services and supports to the residents of Dodge County. Continued development of new resources, prevention, and early intervention programming remain our focal points. I am grateful for the high-quality work and dedication that all employees demonstrate each day, as well as their professionalism. I look forward to seeing the continued positive direction this agency is moving towards, and proudly share their work with you in these next unit reports.

Alyssa Schultz, Division Manager
Clinical Services Division
920-386-3492

CLINICAL SERVICES UNIT

Dodge County Clinical Services Outpatient programming provides a wide range of treatment options for the residents of Dodge County. The Clinical Services Outpatient unit consists of mental health and substance abuse services. These combined programs are aimed at providing outpatient counseling, case management, and psychiatric services, as well as referrals to detoxification services, inpatient hospitalizations, residential treatment, and partial hospitalization programs. Programming within Clinical Services is facilitated by the following providers: 1 Medical Director, 1 Nurse Practitioner, 1 Contracted Child Psychiatrist, 1 Contracted Adult Psychiatrist, 4 Mental Health Therapists, 5 Dually Licensed Therapists, 1 Intoxicated Driver Program Assessor, and 2 Nurse Case Managers.

The Clinical Services unit continues to remain focused on providing counseling and psychiatric services to the residents of Dodge County. Clinical staff work in coordination with other Human Services units as well as community partners including local school districts, hospitals, law enforcement and other stakeholders, to provide necessary treatment interventions to maintain a consumer within the community safely. Such collaboration continues to be critical due to the chronicity of mental health and substance abuse issues encountered and barriers with resources faced at times within a rural community.



In 2024, Clinical Services remained focused on the implementation of evidenced-based practices to address the ongoing needs of consumers presenting with trauma-related disorders. Therapists have been trained in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy) and Brain Spotting which are both aimed at supporting consumers presenting with trauma symptoms. The expansion of evidenced-based trained therapists has allowed Clinical Services to broaden its scope of practice in the treatment and case management of consumers presenting with trauma-related disorders.

Clinical Services maintained its provider status as a Narcan Direct Program and a Fentanyl Test Strip site in 2024. Trained staff provided ongoing education and training on the administration of Narcan and Fentanyl Test Strips to consumers, providers and other community members as requested. Narcan and Fentanyl Test Strips were provided free of charge with interested individuals being trained by staff in how to administer Narcan and use Fentanyl Test Strips. As trainers, Clinical Services staff can administer Narcan to any individual presenting with a life-threatening opioid overdose to reverse the overdose to save lives. Over 230 boxes of Narcan were distributed in 2024.

Clinical Services also continues to operate the Impaired Driving Program (IDP). The Impaired Driving program is monitored under the community substance use services standards within DHS 75. Program Services are facilitated by the Intoxicated Driver Assessor who completes assessments, referrals and case management services for anyone referred for an impaired driver's assessment.

Clinical Services remains to be a significant resource for Dodge County residents in meeting their substance abuse and mental health needs. Service delivery options included both in-person and telehealth treatment. Having flexibility in service delivery allows consumers, who otherwise would not have received treatment if not physically present, to maintain critical treatment services.

In 2024, 1227 consumers received outpatient mental health services, 377 received substance abuse services, and 401 were referred to the impaired driving program. There were 27 placements made for substance use disorder residential programming, with over half of those placements occurring due to alcohol-related reasons.

In summary, Clinical Services remains focused on providing the best care possible to consumers in Dodge County while simultaneously ensuring that programs are running effectively and efficiently with available resources.

**Sara Gaska, Supervisor
Clinical Services Outpatient
920-386-3490**

CRISIS SERVICES UNIT

The Dodge County Crisis Services Unit continued to provide supportive crisis response services to the residents of Dodge County throughout 2024. As in previous years, the crisis unit was composed of a Crisis Supervisor and two master's level Behavioral Health Therapists serving as Crisis Response Workers. Crisis staff provide all crisis response services during normal business hours, whether individuals are reaching out by phone or in person, or calls are received through contact with collaterals such as law enforcement or hospitals. Crisis staff facilitate crisis intervention counseling, follow-up and linkage services, safety planning, hospitalizations, and emergency detentions as needed. Outside of normal business hours and on holidays and weekends, these same crisis services are provided under contract by staff from Northwest Connections, with follow-up of all contacts by Dodge County Crisis Staff and oversight provided by the Crisis Supervisor.

A new initiative in 2024 resulted in the creation of a Contracted Crisis Co-Responder position within the Department. The purpose of this position is to partner with and provide additional support to our law enforcement partners in the community to successfully address mental health and substance abuse concerns as they arise. The Crisis Co-Responder position began in November 2024, and works 1:00-9:30 pm, Monday thru Friday, housed at Sheriff's Office. Her main role is to go out with law enforcement or where needed in the community to conduct face to face assessments and response and provide needed support.

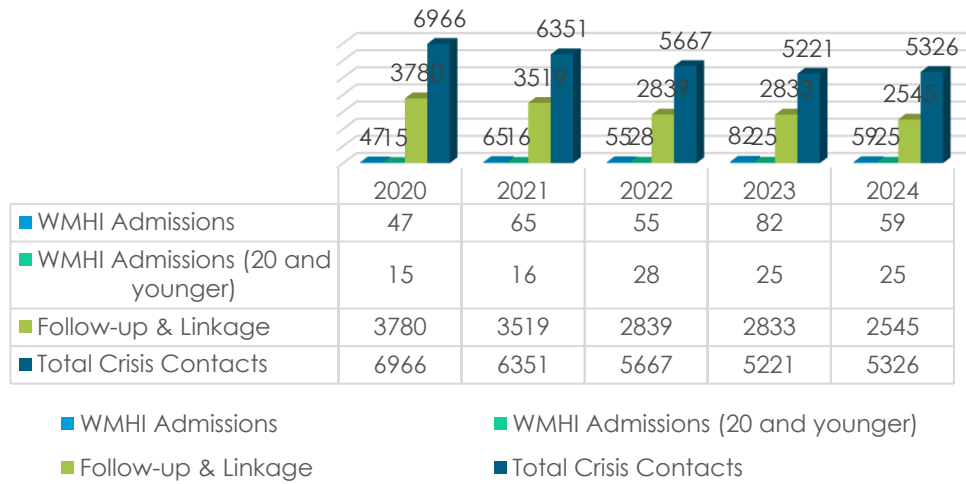
This year the crisis unit saw an overall increase in the number of crisis contacts from the previous year. In 2023, there were a total of 5,221 crisis contacts, and in 2024, that number rose to 5,326. Of these contacts, the number of follow-up and calls after a crisis, and linkage calls to connect individuals to resources was 2,833 in 2023; and 2,545 in 2024. The 3-digit National Suicide Prevention Hotline (988) continues to be an impactful resource as well, providing individuals with another option for reaching out in times of crisis.

This year brought an increase in the number of crisis contacts with our youth population, but a decrease in emergency detentions for youth. The total number of crisis contacts with youth increased by 9% from 661 in 2023 to 720 in 2024. Youth accounted for 26% of the total initial crisis contacts in 2024. Alternately, the number of emergency detentions for youth decreased by 25% from 36 in 2023 to 27 in 2024.

Staff continue to make it a priority to decrease utilization of Winnebago Mental Health Institute (WMHI) for involuntary admissions whenever possible and contact in-network insurance providers prior to admission to WMHI, however this is not always possible due to acuity of symptoms and bed availability. There were 59 admissions to WMHI in 2024 (both Emergency Detentions and consumers returned to a more restrictive level of care), which is a 28% decrease from 82 admissions in 2023. Staff continue to utilize other hospitals that consumers' insurance covers or other county facilities. In 2024, 25 consumers admitted to WMHI were 20 years of age or younger, the same as in 2023.

Overall, the crisis unit had a diversion rate of 86% for 2024, which is slightly decreased from 87% in 2023. Diversion represents the number of crisis contacts that did not result in a hospitalization. This number will continue to be tracked to measure relative success within the crisis unit. In 2024, the crisis unit facilitated an increase in client placement in crisis stabilization facilities within the community as an alternative to hospitalization for individuals in crisis, or as a step-down from hospitalization for individuals transitioning back home.

Crisis Intervention Services and WMHI Admissions 2020-2023



**Lindsay Radloff, Supervisor
Crisis Services
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COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS UNIT

The Community-Based Programs provide an array of services for individuals with mental health and/or substance use issues aimed at increasing independence and overall functioning, and supporting individuals in the community. Staffing for these programs in 2024 included 17 service facilitators, 3 therapists, 2 nurse case managers, 3 contracted service facilitators, and the Community Programs Supervisor.

The Dodge County Community Support Program (CSP) provides comprehensive mental health and case management services to individuals diagnosed with a severe and persistent mental illness. Services provided address the management and reduction of psychiatric symptoms (through counseling and psychiatric/medication services), as well as the individual's full range of unique personal, social, and economic needs. Services are provided almost exclusively in the community, through weekly home visits by a case manager assigned to work with each consumer. The primary goals of the program are to assist clients in gaining and/or maintaining their highest level of independence in the community, and to promote their ability to live successfully outside of restrictive environments such as hospitals and group homes, in the least restrictive environment possible.

The CSP program has continues to see low numbers due to assessing all consumers to determine if their needs meet the level of CSP programming, which is more intensive than other community-based programming. Consumers continue to be able to transfer into less restrictive programs if CSP is no longer needed. Though the CSP numbers are lower, there is still a need for some individuals with severe and persistent mental illness to become involved in CSP to ensure independent living, rather than being placed in a hospital and/or group home setting. In 2024, 2 consumers were served.

The Dodge County Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) Program is a community-based psychosocial rehabilitation program designed to provide a wide variety of case management services, as well as assistance in accessing a variety of other community services and supports through contracted community providers. The program is available to individuals of any age with a diagnosis of a mental illness or substance abuse disorder, who receive Medical Assistance, and who meet enrollment criteria through a state-approved functional screen. Most importantly, the focus is on empowering consumers to take an active role in their own treatment and recovery process, rather than the professionals solely determining what needs are present and how to address them. Services are intended to be consumer-centered and consumer-directed, meaning that the consumer has a choice in the selection of their recovery team, what services they receive, and who provides these services.

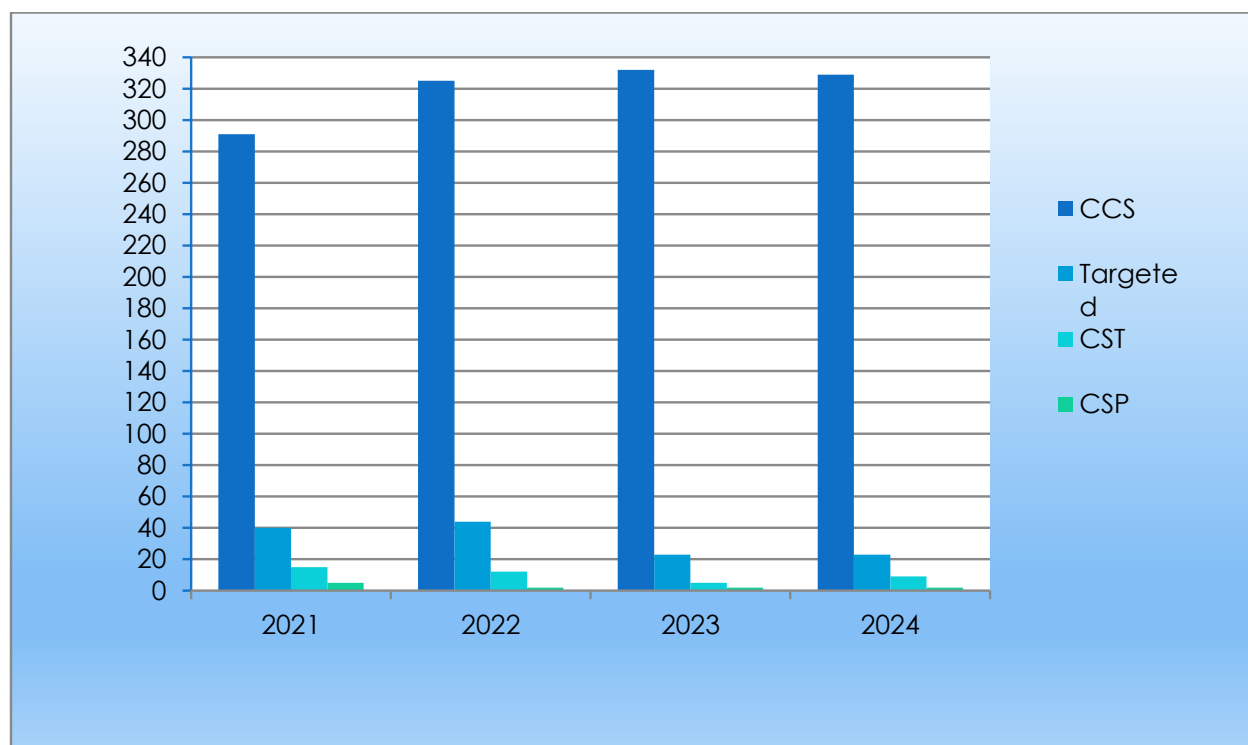
The CCS program continues to serve many individuals with mental health and/or substance use concerns, with a growing percentage of children and adolescents served. In 2024, we continued a partnership with Sirona Recovery to dually enroll eligible participants of the grant-funded Opioid Treatment Center program into CCS as well, to provide additional mental health and substance use services and support where needed. Overall, the CCS program served a total of 329 consumers in 2024, as compared to 332 in 2023 and 325 consumers in 2022. This program continues to operate as part of the Lakeshore Recovery Collaborative under a shared services model with Washington and Ozaukee Counties.

The Targeted Case Management (TCM) program is a community-based program to help consumers become connected with resources in the community that they may be unable to access on their own. Case management includes gaining access to or coordinating Medicaid or Badger Care Plus services as well as access to energy assistance, housing, legal advocacy, social services, setting up home care workers, and helping to ensure continued independent living. In addition, targeted case management services follow individuals who are in long-term care group homes to continue to monitor services offered and progress.

The Targeted Case Management (TCM) program continues to serve consumers who remain relatively stable, and continuously assess individuals who have been receiving services for many years to assure they are receiving the appropriate level of care. At times, this means transferring individuals from CSP or CCS to TCM if they no longer require more intensive services, and when appropriate, transferring individuals from TCM into basic outpatient services. In 2024, 23 consumers were served within TCM.

The Coordinated Services Teams (CST) Program, also called the Dodge County Wraparound program, has been active in Dodge County since 2008. In 2024, the CST program served a total of 9 youth and their families, as compared to 4 in 2023. The CST program provides services and supports to children and families who are not eligible for the CCS program because they do not have Medical Assistance. Dodge County funds the CST program through state block grant dollars.

2024 Data - Total number of consumers served as compared to previous 3 years:



**Kim Kunz, Supervisor
Community Based Mental Health Services
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CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES – INTAKE UNIT

The philosophy of the Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake Unit is ensuring the safety of children while strengthening the family unit. Per Wisconsin State Statutes, children have specific basic needs which must be provided for, including: adequate food, clothing, and shelter; freedom from physical, sexual, or emotional injury or exploitation; the ability to develop physically, mentally, and emotionally to their potential; and the need for a safe and permanent family. Unborn children have certain basic needs as well, which are to develop physically to their potential and to be free from physical harm due to the habitual lack of self-control of their expectant mothers by their use of alcohol or drugs. Initial assessment social workers assess for and ensure these basic needs are being provided. The unit balances its responsibilities in ensuring child safety while simultaneously strengthening and empowering the family. To meet this goal, services need to be available in the form of safety services and treatment services to these families. If these services are not available to meet the needs of the child or the family, the child may need to be placed outside of the home for their protection. The removal of a child from their home is the last option pursued when there is no option to ensure and control for child safety within the family home.

The Dodge County Child Protective Services Intake Unit consists of one Access Social Worker who primarily answers phones when referrals are called in, or meets with people in person if they come into the agency to make a report. The Access Social Worker may refer the person to other community service providers, other Dodge County departments, or other services within the Human Services and Health Department. All CPS referrals are written up by the Access worker and provided to the Unit Supervisor, who will either initiate an assessment by screening the report in and assigning the case to a CPS Intake Social Worker or screen the case out. Cases that are screened out may also be referred to the Community Response Program depending on the information in the access report. The unit has five full-time CPS Intake Social Worker positions, and one full-time Social Services Aide who works at developing relationships with community-based services to assist those families that do not meet the threshold for a CPS response, but may need assistance with locating and accessing services. Screening decisions are based on identified safety issues as they are described to the Access Worker. When a referral is screened in, an initial assessment of the family and the circumstances surrounding the referral is completed. At this point, safety issues are identified which then dictate what type of action, if any, this agency will need to take. The assigned social worker may also make arrangements for services based on the identified needs of the family or work with collateral agencies to assist the family.

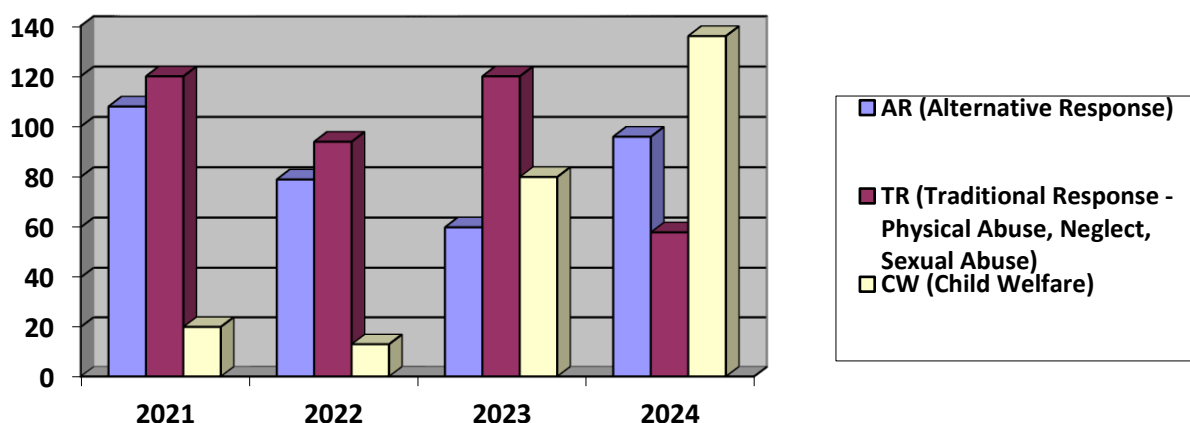
The CPS Intake Social Worker may make the necessary arrangements for placement services if it is determined that a child is in an unsafe situation or safety conditions are identified through the safety assessment which cannot be managed in the family setting. They work closely with law enforcement agencies, the Dodge County Corporation Counsel's office, and the Dodge County District Attorney's office, as a means of using the legal system to provide safety for the children involved. These social workers may also work with the mothers of unborn children who are at risk due to the mother's habitual use of controlled substances or controlled substance analogs.

The CPS system is primarily designed to protect children from abuse or neglect. This is achieved through interventions that provide for the management of threats to the child's safety and through ongoing service provisions that address the changes necessary to ensure that children are safe and families are strengthened and able to protect the children without CPS intervention.

In 2024, the Child Protective Services Intake Unit received a total of 844 reports of child abuse and/or neglect and of that, 154 reports were screened in and an assessment was conducted.

Breaking down the total number of reports that were screened in, 95 were alleging neglect, 45 were alleging physical abuse, 21 were alleging sexual abuse, 7 were alleging emotional damage/abuse, and 1 was alleging unborn child abuse. This total number decreased from 2023 when 180 reports were screened in. It should also be noted, referrals can include more than one form of maltreatment explaining why maltreatment types are higher than total investigations completed. Of these 154 referrals, 96 were provided services through the Alternative Response model. A total of 58 were provided services through the Traditional Response model.

In 2024, there were also 136 child welfare reports, otherwise known as service reports. Service reports are being utilized to engage families for prevention services. There are times the reports may involve situations where no specific allegation of abuse or neglect was made; however, there were concerns or issues present that warranted some involvement by this agency. Service reports are heavily utilized by the CPS Intake Unit when connecting families with county and community supports.



Throughout 2024, the CPS Intake Unit continued operation of the voluntary Community Response Program (CRP) started in 2019, which is designed to help strengthen families, prevent child abuse, and neglect, and reduce re-referrals to CPS. CRP is a short-term voluntary prevention program that includes such things as case management, home visits, collaborative goal setting, and comprehensive assessment which helps to identify immediate needs and assist families in connecting to formal and informal resources to meet these needs. The intention of this is to mitigate risk factors while also identifying and building protective capacities of parents and other caregivers. The family plays a key role in identifying their critical stressors as well as the goals they would like to work towards. In 2024, of the 136 reported child welfare reports, 79 of them were made to the Community Response Program. In the effort of prevention, where there is no specific allegation of abuse or neglect, families are offered outreach, education, and supportive resources to reduce the likelihood of future CPS contact and referrals.

The State of Wisconsin continues to focus on the Families First Act which targets keeping more families together and reducing the use of out-of-home care. This does not change the responsibility of the Child Protective Services Intake Unit's primary goal of ensuring the safety of children. This focus supports creative brainstorming and supportive services to keep families together while providing intensive services to promote behavioral change and the safety of children.

**Jenifer Eilert, Supervisor
CPS Intake Unit
920-386-3635**

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES – ONGOING UNIT

The programs in the ongoing unit consist of Ongoing Child Protective Services, Foster Care Coordination and Licensing, Home and Financial Advisor services, Independent Living services, Restitution services, Parenting services and Supervised Visitation services.

The Ongoing CPS team consists of seven social work positions. Staff work within state and federal statutes and standards to coordinate and provide services to families where safety concerns or present danger threats have been identified, placing a child or children at risk of abuse and/ or neglect. CPS Ongoing social workers partner with Dodge County Corporation Counsel, Law Enforcement, schools, families and service providers to support safety for children who have been a victim of neglect and/or abuse.

The Foster Care program includes two Foster Care Coordinators (also social workers) whose role is to recruit, license, support and train all foster parents and homes licensed by Dodge County. The Foster Care Coordinators ensure that foster parents receive a variety of services and supports, both internally and externally. Foster Care Coordinators work to spread the word in the community about the importance of foster care, and to recruit new families interested in providing this valuable resource to children in need of care.

The Home and Financial Advisor assists families with budgeting and money management, self-care and home management, and other activities of daily living skills. The Home and Financial Advisor also provides individual parenting services through the Incredible Years Program, implemented in 2019.

The Independent Living Coordinator provides pre-employment, daily living skills, money management and other skills training services to meet the needs of youth and young adults age 14-21 who have been placed in out of home care for at least 6 months since the age of 14. Services are provided both individually and in a group setting, and are intended to help prepare youth for independent functioning as adults.

Two Social Service Aides also provide parenting services through our Incredible Years Parenting Program, which was implemented in 2019 and is part of our effort to expand prevention services. These aides also provide assistance with supervised visits between children and parents.

2024 Accomplishments

In 2024, CPS continued to focus considerable efforts on implementing the State of Wisconsin's Family First Initiative, which is guided by the tenet of using teaming and services to prevent removal and promote reunification of children with their family. Three parenting groups were completed in 2024, with the added component of Protective Parenting, along with one-on-one parenting for individuals who could not attend group. There were 40 referrals made to parenting with 21 successfully completing the class. The Independent Living Coordinator continued to offer the "Adulthood 101" skills training class for teenage youth. In 2024, there were 2 IL groups, one over the summer at Horicon School, every day of the week for 3 weeks, and the other at Beaver Dam School during school once a week during the Spring. In the realm of Foster Care, the focus for 2024 continued to be on recruitment and advertising. Foster Care continued with the mentorship program for new foster homes. New homes are teamed with more seasoned foster homes, so that they feel more supported. Additionally, "Breakfast with Santa" was implemented this year for foster families, and was very well received.

Foster parent support groups were also held bi-monthly and attendance varied from month to month, but overall response was very positive.

	Total number of families served in CPS Ongoing unit	Total number of kids in out-of-home care
2023	140	66
2024	137	59

Over the course of 2024, the number of children placed in out of home care in Dodge County has decreased, as a result of continued efforts toward meeting the needs of family and the State's Family First Initiative. In 2024, 3 Termination of Parental Rights cases and 3 Guardianship cases were processed in Dodge County. The CPS Ongoing unit meets regularly with the Dodge County Corporation Counsel to ensure that cases are processed promptly, and permanence is achieved for children unable to return home to their families.

2024 Trends

Dodge County continues to see a high number of cases with CPS involvement due to parental substance use, 50 % in 2024. Additionally, in 2024, staff continued to have trouble finding residential facilities to admit children in need of this level of treatment, due to increased demand for beds statewide, and a decrease in bed availability across the state because of rate-setting changes at the State level. This challenge is not unique to Dodge County, but consistent throughout the state of Wisconsin. We are, however, fortunate to not have had to place any children in residential care outside of the state of Wisconsin in 2024, as had happened in previous years. Another challenge is the rising number of children entering the system with behaviors that parents are unable to control, due in part to the child's significant mental health issues. Working to provide resources and support to these families in their time of need requires continuous discussion, creative thinking and planning, and collaboration with partners.

**Lisa Grycowski, Supervisor
CPS Ongoing Services
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CHILDREN'S LONG-TERM SUPPORT / BIRTH TO THREE UNIT

Children's Long-Term Support Unit

The Children's Long-Term Support Unit is comprised of eleven case managers who work with children with disabilities and their families to provide information and referral assistance, as well as services through the Children's Long-Term Support Program (CLTS) and the Children's Community Options Program (CCOP). Both CLTS and CCOP are Medicaid waiver programs that serve children up to the age of 22 who have a developmental or physical disability or a severe emotional disturbance. To qualify for either CLTS or CCOP, children must have substantial functional limitations in at least two areas: self-care, receptive/expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, or economic self-sufficiency. CCOP funds are used by families of children with severe disabilities to purchase allowable goods or services not funded through other sources, which will enable children to reside with their parents, reduce stress in the family, and avoid out-of-home placement. The case managers determine eligibility for CLTS and CCOP by using a state functional screen. All services for children receiving funding are managed on an ongoing basis by the case managers as long as the children remain eligible for services, which in many cases is the circumstance until a child's eighteenth birthday. If a child needs services beyond his/her eighteenth birthday, the case managers assist with transitioning to the adult services system. If the child is ineligible for adult services but they continue to be eligible for services through the CLTS program, they can continue receiving services until their twenty-second birthday.

Eight of these eleven case managers work with only CLTS eligible children, while the other three case managers work with children who are eligible for both CLTS and the Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) program. Due to high caseloads and the increasing number of referrals, the Department added one case manager position for this program in 2024, who was hired in October. The Department also added a CLTS supervisor position in 2024, whereas in the past this unit was supervised jointly with the Youth Justice team. This new supervisor started in November and came to our agency with 20+ years of experience in CLTS.

Since 2018, the program has grown substantially. The dramatic increase in the number of children served in CLTS and CCOP has required the addition of eight case managers since 2018, including the three case managers for children enrolled in both CLTS and CCS. The ability to add new staff to meet the growing needs of the program allowed for the elimination of the CLTS waitlist in December 2024, keeping Dodge County in line with the expectations of the State of Wisconsin.

The Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program is expanding across the state, leading to significant changes at the state level starting in 2025. The Bureau of Children's Services will begin eliminating service contracts with providers at the county level in January 2025. This change aims to provide families with more service provider choices, allowing them to select from a wider range of options beyond the local county-contracted providers. By removing the existing contracts, the goal is to encourage more agencies to become CLTS program providers.

	2023		2024	
	CCOP	CLTS	CCOP	CLTS
# Served	55	357	84	356

Birth to Three

Birth to Three is a statewide, federally mandated program for children ages 0-3 who are significantly delayed developmentally or have a physical or mental condition that is likely to result in delayed development. Birth to Three programming provides screening, evaluation, and intervention services. Areas of delay may include cognitive development, physical development (fine motor, gross motor, or vision/hearing), speech, language and communication development, social and emotional development, and adaptive behaviors in self-help development. With oversight by Dodge County Human Services and Health Department, the Dodge County Birth to Three program is administered by Green Valley Enterprises, a division of Opportunities Incorporated in Beaver Dam, WI.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2023	141	137	147	161	148	162	143	157	150	147	146	141
2024	148	132	149	151	148	137	147	141	137	143	150	143

In 2024, the Birth to Three Program in Dodge County continued its dedicated service to young children, with a slight decrease in the average monthly number of children served, dropping from 148 in 2023 to 144 in 2024. The program, which consists of four service coordinators and a program manager, works collaboratively with Rehab Resources, which provides Speech/Language, Occupational, and Physical therapies.

This year, the team participated in professional development opportunities, including training on Conscious Discipline, which focuses on social-emotional learning for infants and toddlers. Additionally, the program has been working closely with Early Intervention in Wisconsin (EIWI) to reevaluate the assessment tool used to determine eligibility for the program, ensuring that children who qualify for and benefit from the services continue to receive them. Service coordinators also attended the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health Conference in October 2024 to further their understanding of infant mental health and strengthen their expertise in supporting young children's development.

The ongoing focus on professional development, collaboration with EIWI, and commitment to providing comprehensive services highlight the program's efforts to continuously improve the quality of service and support for children and families in Dodge County.

**Crystal Weber, Supervisor
Children's Long-Term Support
920-386-3688**

YOUTH JUSTICE UNIT

In the Youth Justice unit, seven (7) licensed social workers (one position currently vacant) provide assessment and case management services for youth aged 5-17 who are involved or at risk of involvement with the youth justice system or have been found to be habitually truant. These workers partner with law enforcement, the Court, the District Attorney's Office, schools, families, and service providers to support accountability, community safety, and positive youth development through the implementation of individualized case plans designed to address criminogenic needs and encourage future success.

The Youth Justice unit saw a twenty-nine percent (29%) decrease in delinquency referrals in 2024, from 172 referrals in 2023 to 122 in 2024. This number represents the lowest recorded number of delinquency referrals in at least 20 years. Alternately, there was a slight decrease in the number of truancy referrals received from 37 in 2023 to 32 in 2024. This was the lowest number of truancy referrals since 2020 when the Department received 28 referrals.

Removing instances of duplicate referrals for the same youth, the Youth Justice workers served a total of 84 individual youth in 2024. Twenty-nine percent (29%) were females and seventy-one percent (71%) were males. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the delinquency referrals received were for youth who had never had contact with the Dodge County Youth Justice system before, as compared to thirty-nine percent (39%) in 2023.

While the number of referrals has decreased, there has been an increase in the severity of offenses committed by Dodge County youth over the past several years. The Department believes that this trend may reflect an encouraging shift in thinking. Referrals are more often based on the severity of behavior and risk to public safety, whereas historically more referrals were made based on behavior that was inappropriately labeled delinquent and instead may have been an indicator of the impact of increased stressors on youth in need of support.

For the past several years, the State of Wisconsin has been encouraging local counties to provide a more thorough assessment of both a youth's needs and strengths, risk factors and protective factors, through a consistent assessment and planning tool. The focus of Youth Justice services statewide has been to reduce the risk of harm to the youth and their community, but also to address the need for resources, support networks and services that build strength and resiliency in each unique youth and family to reduce rates of recidivism and avoid out-of-home placements. The Youth Justice team often works in collaboration with other units of the Department such as Clinical Services, Community Programs, Crisis, Children's Long-Term Support, Economic Support, and Child Protective Services, among others, to offer as many supports and services as possible to the youth and family.

Total Number of Referrals	2023		2024			
Delinquency	172		122			
Truancy	37		32			
2023 Demographics						
	AGE					
	5-9	10-12	13-14	15-16	17	
Delinquency	4	27	42	53	0	
	5-7	8-9	10-12	13-14	15-16	17
Truancy	5	6	8	7	5	1

Alyssa Schultz, Division Manager
Clinical Services Division
Acting Supervisor
920-386-3492

TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES AND DIVERSION (TAD)

Dodge County continues to utilize Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD) to reduce the negative impact of impaired driving and alcohol and drug addiction in the community. Both Drug Treatment Court (DTC) and Impaired Driving Court (IDC) were established in Dodge County in 2015 with a program design based on the National and Wisconsin Drug Treatment Court Models which have proven to advance public safety, reduce crime, and improve the health of individuals and the community. Both programs promote recovery through a coordinated response to participants who are dependent on drugs and alcohol. These goals are achieved through a team approach and Dodge County continues to achieve success through the collaboration and cooperation of the Dodge County Circuit Court Judge's, the Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement, the District Attorney, the Public Defender's Office, Human Services and Health Department, the Department of Corrections, and many other community stakeholders. Currently, The Honorable Judge Kristine Snow presides over DTC and The Honorable Judge Martin DeVries presides over IDC.

The DTC Program accepts offenders with nonviolent charges who are assessed to have a high probability to reoffend and a drug or alcohol use disorder. IDC accepts offenders with third and fourth OWI convictions. Participants engage in integrated, evidence-based treatment and intensive case management services to address substance use and individual issues such as mental health, employment, financial and familial needs, and criminal thinking. Their progress toward sobriety and other program goals are strictly monitored through regular court appearances, case management meetings, and random drug testing. Participants on probation are required to meet regularly with their agents.

The goal of these programs is to positively impact and change the behaviors of persons who are illicit substance dependent and who are cycling in and out of the criminal justice system. Many of these individuals have served traditional jail, prison, and probation sentences in the past which have been proven to not be effective in helping the person address those underlying issues that led to their criminal behavior.

In 2024, DTC had 6 participants successfully complete the program and IDC had 18 participants successfully complete. The programs take approximately 14 to 18 months to complete. At the time of completion, participants will have been subject to up to 180 drug screens, engaged in 30 or more case management visits, 30 or more probation visits, and have completed up to 24 weeks of treatment or more. All these graduates have demonstrated stability in their sobriety from drugs and alcohol, are employed and/or financially stable, have sober and stable living conditions, and have a recovery support network in the community.

Both programs undergo continuous review through the Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC) formally adopted by Dodge County in August of 2016. The Dodge County CJCC has direct authority over both programs. The Council chairperson is currently Dodge County Sherriff, Dale Schmidt. In addition to direct oversight from the CJCC, the WI Department of Justice and WI Department of Health Services, both of which primarily fund these programs, provide oversight, guidance and serve as resources. Program performance is continuously monitored, and this data is used to make specific program improvements and policy changes.

Since 2015, Dodge County has contracted for case management services with Justice Point, a Milwaukee based non-profit organization which provides evidence-based solutions to criminal justice system concerns. Program staff includes three case managers and one Program Director who manage approximately 45-75 program participants per year. The Case managers assess and identify appropriate candidates for the program through screening tools that indicate risk of recidivism and treatment needs. Participants work with case managers to appropriately identify top needs that will then result in referrals to treatment as well as additional provided resources. Dodge County Human Services provides participants with a high level of care, and

they are afforded counseling and treatment tailored to their individual needs, including residential, outpatient, and relapse prevention treatment. Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is also available.

Dodge County has received The Treatment Alternative to Prison (TAP) grant through the Wisconsin Department of Human Services (DHS) since 2015. TAP is another alternative to prison program designed for justice involved individuals who have a substance use disorder (SUD). The program continues to screen all arrestees in the Dodge County Detention Facility for treatment needs and connect these individuals to community treatment. In 2024, 326 individuals were seen in the Dodge County jail within 24-48 hours of arrest, 112 were referred for AODA or mental health treatment and the remaining individuals were left with resources based on reported needs or declined services. In 2024, 2 individuals successfully completed the TAP program and has remained stable in the community without any further arrests or charges. Additionally, all arrestees are given information about the Opioid Treatment Center (OTC). If the person identifies as an opiate or stimulant user, the case manager will initiate a referral to OTC for services and Vivitrol if needed. This Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) grant enables the county to provide the Vivitrol injection to the arrestee prior to release to the community. This intervention greatly reduces the risk of overdose deaths upon release from jail. All these programs are designed to work collaboratively with community partners and have proven to have a positive impact on public health and safety, recidivism, and the related costs to the community.

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TAD
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Dodge County Human Services and Health Department is responsible for providing care and treatment to children and adults, the frail elderly, individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities, individuals with mental illness, emotional impairments or addictions, and individuals and families facing economic hardship. Wisconsin State Statutes carry the legal authority for services to these client populations and place the policy-making and program implementation responsibility with the County Human Services and Health Board. Funding for the services for all clients groups come from a variety of federal and state sources as well as from county tax levy.

The authority placed with the County is undertaken with the highest level of responsibility to provide the best evidence-supported services for all citizens of Dodge County with full responsibility and accountability to tax payers. The Human Services and Health Board is comprised of elected County Board Supervisors and volunteer community members.

This report highlights the programs and services delivered in three divisions with several units and Court Services Programs as well as provides a fiscal picture of the Department's 2021 expenditures.

If you have any questions about the information in this report, please contact Rebecca Bell, Director of Human Services and Health Department at 920-386-3534.

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2024 ANNUAL REPORT

