

# Lawrence Township Health Department 2024 Annual Report

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Lawrence Township Health Department provides professional, competent and efficient environmental and public health services to the residents of this community. Under the mandates of the Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health and the ordinances and policies of the Board of Health, the Health Department promotes and protects the public's health by the use of disease prevention activities, health promotion and education, inspections and enforcement activities.

The Health Department responds quickly and effectively to the ever-changing priorities of the public health field in order to meet the needs of the community.

## **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

The health department's primary responsibility is to protect the health of the residents and to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. The Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health, N.J.A.C. 8:52, designates activities to be conducted by Local Boards of Health. The three core public health functions include the following shared services:

- Assess and monitor the health of the community and at-risk populations to identify health problems and priorities.
- Formulate public policies with community and government leaders to address local and national public health problems and priorities.
- Provide populations with access to appropriate and cost-effective care including health promotion, disease prevention and follow-up evaluation.

The required activities are conducted by the health department staff which consists of six full-time staff, one full-time grant funded staff and two per-diem nurses. Private contractors are hired for pediatrician services, veterinarian services, animal shelter services and deer recovery services.

**FULL-TIME STAFF**

Keith Levine, H.O., REHS, LI/RA, CPM.....Health Officer  
Licensed Health Officer Reg. No. A-2257  
Licensed Registered Environmental Health Specialist Reg. No. B-2257  
Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor Permit No. 039853  
Certified Public Manager

Gina Breth, RN..... Head Clinic Nurse  
Registered Professional Nurse License No. 26NO10681600

Aimee Landau, B.S. ....Registered Environmental Health Specialist  
Licensed R.E.H.S., Reg No. B-2176  
Lead Inspector / Risk Assessor – Permit Number 022657  
Certified Pool / Spa Operator – Reg. No. 19-293722

John Sullivan, B.S.....Registered Environmental Health Specialist  
Licensed R.E.H.S. – Reg. No. B-166541  
Certified Pool / Spa Operator – Reg. No. 15659394  
UST Subsurface Evaluator License No. 0012646

Jessica Meyer.....Animal Control Officer  
Certified Animal Control Officer No. 3429

Linda Ciosek.....Registrar of Vital Statistics  
Certified Municipal Registrar CMR No. 1216

Naseema Uddin.....Local Health Outreach Coordinator  
Grant-funded position ending in June 2025

**PER DIEM STAFF**

Carol Nicholas, RN.....Per Diem Nurse  
Registered Professional Nurse

MaryLou Ferenchick, RN.....Per Diem Nurse  
Registered Professional Nurse

Alexis Duran.....Part-time Animal Control Officer  
License No. 03667

## 2024 DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The health department participated in the completion of the Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership Community Health Needs Assessment in 2024. The county-wide assessment which was conducted in cooperation with four area healthcare facilities as well as the other seven local health departments and the Mercer County Department of Health and Human Services. Health department staff participated in focus group sessions as well as need prioritization sessions. Residents were encouraged to complete the individual needs survey through a link on our website to gauge community needs. A total of 230 residents completed the survey. The Mercer County Community Health Needs Assessment will be posted on the Township website once the final draft is available. The data collected from this survey will be used to formulate our Community Health Improvement Plan.
- Our VFC (Vaccines for Children) NJDOH provider annual site-visit was deficiency free this year.
- We participated in 2 ICAR (Infection Control Assessment and Response) with the NJDOH ICAR team and Regional Epidemiologist at two area long-term care facilities to educate and improve their operation around infection control procedures.
- We are currently in a voluntary year long process working with the IQIP (Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers) team from the NJDOH to ensure that our Child Health Conferences are being done in the most efficient and effective way possible.
- Our nurse had the pleasure of doing a presentation for the group PEO (Philanthropic Educational Organization), we discussed what our Health Department does (all positions, and some health and safety topics (i.e.,) shingles, RSV, fall prevention)
- We continue to provide free children's books to the children who attend our Child Health Conference to foster a love for reading. We work with the Mercer County Lawrence Library Branch to get books when needed.
- In 2024, the health department worked with universities, colleges and health partners in the area to host interns. A total of four interns worked with the health department this past year.

## SHARED SERVICES

Below is a list of shared services in which the health department currently participates.

### Health Service

### Partner

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Child Health Services – Provider                         | Hopewell Township Shared Service Agreement      |
| • Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic- Receiver            | Hamilton Township Shared Service Agreement      |
| • Nurse Case Manager for Childhood Lead-Poisoning-Receiver | City of Trenton Memorandum of Understanding     |
| • Emergency Public Health Shared Services                  | Mercer County Shared Service Agreement          |
| • Childhood Lead Poisoning Cases- Provider                 | Hopewell Township Interlocal Services Agreement |
| • Drug and Alcohol Prevention Services                     | Mercer County Shared Service Agreement          |
| • Deer Carcass Removal                                     | Mercer County Cooperative Purchasing Agreement  |
| • Disposal of Animals                                      | Hopewell Township Shared Service                |
| • Tuberculosis Services – Receiver                         | Trenton Health Team-Grant from Mercer County    |

## PARTNERSHIPS

The role of the local board of health includes assuring access to prevention services. The health department works in conjunction with healthcare providers and community agencies to assure residents have access to health education and health promotion programs as well as to health screenings. The health department works cooperatively with the following agencies:

- Lawrence Rehabilitation Center
- Capital Health System – Hopewell Campus
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton
- Penn Med Princeton Health
- Mercer Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Mercer County Prevention Coalition
- Lawrence Township Board of Education
- The College of New Jersey School of Nursing
- The Bronc Radio, Rider University
- Homefront
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (N.J.D.E.P.)
- Hunterdon/Mercer County Regional Chronic Disease Coalition
- Mercer County Lawrence Library
- Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership
- Lawrence Senior Center
- Lawrence Township Recreation Department
- Rutgers University School of Public Health
- Wegmans Pharmacy
- Princeton Pharmacy
- Embright Education (Formerly Camp Fire)
- 1-800-GAMBLER

## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

### **COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

- Regulate and Inspect Retail Food Establishments (plan reviews, inspections, complaints)
- Regulate and Inspect Public Bathing Places
- Regulate and Inspect Tanning Facilities
- Regulate and Inspect Body Art Facilities
- Regulate and Inspect Massage Therapy Establishments
- Regulate and Inspect Youth Camps
- Vermin Control Investigations
- Weeds and Obnoxious Growth Investigations
- Non-Residential Property Maintenance Complaint Investigations
- Public Health Nuisance Complaint Investigations
- Litter and Debris Investigations
- Tobacco/Vape Age of Sale Enforcement and Inspections
- Foodborne Illness Investigations
- Child Care Center Inspections
- Enforcement of State and Local Regulations

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

- Public Health Emergency Response
- Public Health Emergency Planning and Exercise

### **HEALTH EDUCATION, PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY**

- Attend a multitude of community event for health promotion
- Community Health Assessment
- Community Health Partnership Development
- Community Health Planning
- Smoking Prevention Education
- Nutrition and Exercise Education
- Counseling Referral Services
- Emergency Preparedness Promotion and Education
- Community Health Fairs
- Senior Center Health Education Programs and Health Screenings
- Substance Abuse Prevention Programs

### **ADULT HEALTH PROMOTION**

- Diabetes Screening and Counseling
- Cardiovascular Screening and Counseling (blood pressure screening)
- Vision and Hearing Screening

### **AIR AND NOISE POLLUTION CONTROL**

- Air Pollution and Odor Complaint Investigations
- Noise Complaint Investigations
- Enforce Smoking Regulations
- Radon Testing and Education

## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION**

- Infectious Disease Reporting, Investigation and Outbreak Tracking
- Immunization Services for Uninsured Infants and Children
- School and Day Care Immunization Audits
- Tuberculosis Screening Referrals
- and Treatment Monitoring
- Sexually Transmitted Disease Testing, Counseling and Treatment
- Influenza Vaccinations

### **MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROMOTION**

- Nutrition Counseling Services
- Child Health Clinics (for Uninsured and Underinsured Children 0-18yrs)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program referrals
- Blood Lead Screening for Children
- Referrals for Vision and Hearing Screenings
- NJ Family Care Information and Referral

### **RABIES AND ANIMAL CONTROL**

- Enforcing of Animal Related State and Local Laws Including Dog and Cat Licensing
- Complaint Investigations, Animal Bite Investigations and Quarantine Enforcement
- Control of Stray and Injured Animals
- Assistance with Wildlife Conflicts
- Rabies Vaccination Clinics
- Coordination of Dead Deer Recovery
- Pet Shop and Kennel Inspections
- Zoonotic Disease Control, Reporting and Investigation
- Provide Assistance on Animal Cruelty Investigations
- Response to Emergency Situations Involving Animals (Floods, Fires, etc.)

### **WATER QUALITY PROTECTION**

- Well Installation and Well Sealing Inspections
- Septic System Regulation and Inspections
- Private Well Testing Act Notification
- Soil Testing and Site Evaluation for Septic Systems

### **VITAL STATISTICS**

- Marriage Licenses, Domestic Partnership and Civil Union Licenses
- Certified Copies of Marriage, Birth and Death Certificates

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**

- Issuance of Permits and Licenses
- Review of Zoning Board and Planning Board Applications
- Coordination of Partnerships and Shared Services
- Coordination of Financial Activities Including Revenue Collection

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **VITAL STATISTICS**

The Registrar of Vital Statistics maintains all records of the marriages, domestic partnerships, civil unions, births and deaths, which occur in Lawrence Township. The services provided include handling burial permits, issuing marriage licenses and certified copies of vital records.

- **In 2024, 175 marriage licenses were issued and a total of 190 certified copies of vital records were issued. There were no civil union licenses issued and no domestic partnership registrations issued in 2024.**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER HEALTH SERVICES**

The environmental and consumer health inspections are conducted by the Registered Environmental Health Specialists (inspectors). Inspections, education and enforcement activities are conducted to ensure businesses are in compliance with public health regulations. Residential and commercial properties are also inspected as needed to assure they are maintained in compliance with local ordinances.

### **RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS**

Routine inspections of all retail food establishments located within the township are conducted annually. Based on the risk level of the establishment, which is determined by the extent of food preparation performed, inspections may be conducted more frequently than once per year. Inspections are conducted to ensure establishments are clean, safe and are operated in accordance with N.J.A.C. 8:24 "Sanitation in Retail Food Establishments". The inspectors also respond to complaints and monitor recalled food products to ensure the food sold and served is safe for consumption by the public.

- **In 2024, there were 285 establishments licensed in Lawrence Township.**
- **There were 313 routine inspections conducted and 59 re-inspections were conducted.**
- **Plan reviews were conducted for 25 new or renovated food establishments.**

## **PUBLIC BATHING PLACE**

The inspectors monitor and inspect public bathing places throughout the municipality. This includes pools at schools, health clubs and housing complexes. Water quality is monitored and pools are checked for the required safety equipment and personnel as required by N.J.A.C. 8:26 "Public Recreational Bathing".

- **In 2024 there were 30 licensed public bathing places.**
- **There were a total of 30 pre-operational inspections completed.**
- **There were a total of 75 routine inspections conducted including initial inspections and re-inspections.**

## **YOUTH CAMPS**

The New Jersey Department of Health (N.J.D.O.H.) requires youth camps to be inspected by the local health department prior to opening each year and there may be follow-up inspections conducted at the request of the State Health Department. Inspections are conducted to ensure that camps are in compliance with sanitation and safety standards as required by N.J.A.C. 8:25.

- **In 2024 there were 8 youth camps licensed by the state, which were located in Lawrence Township.**
- **There was a total of 8 pre-operational inspections performed.**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH NUISANCES**

The health department receives requests for investigations of public health nuisances concerning weeds, insects, rodents, garbage, trash, yard waste, odors and general unsanitary conditions. Inspections, owner notification, follow-up and enforcement are conducted for abatement of the violations. Local ordinances are enforced to assure the abatement of the various public health nuisances.

- **In 2024 there were 337 public health nuisance complaints investigated.**
- **There were 37 court summonses were issued by the inspection staff for non-compliance.**

## **INDIVIDUAL WATER SUPPLIES (WELLS)**

The health department monitors the drilling and installation of wells and the sealing of abandoned wells as per N.J.D.E.P. requirements. In addition, the results of water testing conducted in accordance with the N.J.D.E.P. Private Well Testing Act are reviewed by the health department. Property owners are notified by the health department when testing standards are exceeded.

- **There were 7 well abandonment inspections performed in 2024.**
- **1 new well installation inspection was conducted.**



## **INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL (SEPTIC SYSTEMS)**

The design, construction and operation of individual sewage disposal systems are monitored to assure the proper treatment and disposal of sewage on individual properties.

- **Plan reviews were completed for 25 septic systems. The work on these systems consists mostly of the replacement of disposal fields or significant repair to existing septic systems which have been identified as malfunctioning. Most of the malfunctioning systems have been identified during real estate transfers.**
- **22 permits were issued for minor repairs to septic systems.**
- **There were 75 installation inspections conducted.**
- **A total of 38 soil tests and soil logs were witnessed by the health department staff.**

## **TANNING FACILITIES**

N.J.A.C. 8:28, Tanning Facilities regulations were adopted in NJ in 2009.

- **There are currently no tanning salons registered in Lawrence Township.**

## **BODY ART ESTABLISHMENTS**

- **There were 2 body art facilities inspected in 2024.**

## **MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENTS**

In 2024, 3 massage establishments were licensed in Lawrence Township. The inspection of an establishment includes a review of the credentials of each therapist to ensure they are properly licensed. In addition, the establishments are inspected in order to assure they are in compliance with the local ordinance.

- **There were 3 inspections of massage establishments conducted in 2024.**

## **CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING**

Children found to have an elevated blood lead level require intervention to prevent harm from lead poisoning, which can impair brain and organ development and cause permanent damage to the child. When a childhood lead poisoning case occurs, we oversee all aspect of that case from investigation and relocation through abatement and recovery. Our in-house Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor perform the environmental portion of the case. Currently, Lawrence Township has a shared service agreement with the City of Trenton for the Nurse Case Management portion of the elevated lead investigations.

- **1 childhood lead-poisoning case was handled in 2024**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING SERVICES**

The public health nurse is responsible for the following programs within the health department; Maternal/Child Health, Communicable Disease, Chronic Disease/Adult Health, Health Promotion, and Public Health Emergency Planning. Services are provided to residents of all ages including infants, pre-school and school age children, adults and older adults. The health department works in conjunction with area physicians, school nurses, hospitals, long term care facilities and state and county health department staff to assure these activities and disease tracking are completed in a timely and accurate manner.

### **CHILD HEALTH CONFERENCE(S)**

The health department provides childhood immunizations and well-baby visits to children ages two months to eighteen years who reside in Lawrence who are uninsured or underinsured. The vaccines are provided to the health department by the Federal Vaccines for Children Program. Many of these families have needs beyond clinical needs for which the nurses provide information, resources and referrals to the families. Chapter 13 of the State Sanitary Code states all children under the age of six years should have a blood test to determine their blood lead level. The parents of the children who attend the child health conference are educated on the importance of blood lead testing and children are offered the testing at the clinic.

- **There were 12 child health clinics conducted.**
- **A total of 110 children were seen at the clinics with 261 immunizations being administered.**
- **38 children were screened for elevated blood levels in 2024.**

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

The public health nurse conducts immunization audits at pre-schools and private and public schools in Lawrence Township. The audits consist of reviewing immunization records to assure children are age-appropriately vaccinated.

- **There were 25 pre-schools, 13 elementary schools and 3 high schools audited in 2024.**

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

### **REPORTABLE DISEASES**

N.J.A.C. 8:57-1 “Reportable Diseases” requires the reporting and investigation of specific diseases where the individual resides. Investigation and follow-up is completed for all reportable diseases and for outbreaks of respiratory illness or gastro-intestinal illness in any institution or long-term care facility. Institutional outbreaks require immediate attention as well as coordination and communication with the staff of the facility.

All reportable diseases are reported through the N.J.D.O.H. Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS). Upon receipt of reportable diseases, the public health nurse investigates the case, inputs the details of the case into the CDRSS including laboratory test results, the case management details from the physician and the diagnosis analysis.

- **In 2024 there were 90 communicable diseases reported and investigated.**
- **29 Outbreaks in the community were closed in 2024 with 3 more that remain active into 2025.**
- **Of those, 95 cases were confirmed positive while others were deemed not to be a case, based on the case definition as determined by the New Jersey Department of Health. Follow up is conducted on a case by case basis.**

### **TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL**

Testing for exposure to Tuberculosis is conducted on specific high-risk individuals within the community. The individuals include teachers, pre-school staff, contacts of individuals who have tested positive for tuberculosis and health care professionals.

- **There were 18 people screened for tuberculosis exposure in 2024.**
- **The City of Trenton and the Trenton Health Team are working cooperatively to provide case management for Mercer County residents who test positive for tuberculosis.**

### **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

This service is provided to residents through a shared service agreement with the Hamilton Township Health Department. The agreement includes the patient assessment, diagnosis, treatment and contact follow-up.

- **There were 22 Lawrence residents who received services for sexually transmitted diseases in 2024.**

## **ADULT HEALTH SERVICES**

The health department provides blood pressure screenings for our senior population as well as education on chronic disease and prevention. In addition, the health department works with local providers to provide cancer screenings and for referrals for health screenings.

### **INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM**

The health department contracts with Wegmans Pharmacy to provide 2 drive-through flu vaccinations clinics held at our senior center at the end of each year. We also partner with Princeton Pharmacy in Lawrence to provide us with flu and other vaccinations for our homebound population, the Project Freedom community and Homefront organization. Our registered nurse visits the homebound residents and the other two locations mentioned, to provide these shots.

- **There was a total of 106 immunizations administered in 2024. This number was much lower than a typical year due to lack of uptake in 2024.**

### **HEALTH PROMOTION**

Throughout the year, health promotion activities are conducted by the health department staff. Some programs are health education programs for specific groups such as summer camp for children or older adults at the senior center, while health education information is often shared during community events, such as National Night Out, Community Day, Rider University events and Lawrence Township Public Schools event. The health department regularly works with local health providers, hospitals and area agencies to provide a variety of health promotion activities.

- **The health department participated in 20 health promotion activities during the year 2024.**
- **We distributed a total of 2,580 free COVID-19 test kits to our residents.**
- **We distributed a total of 120 free radon test kits to our residents.**
- **274 Blood Pressure Screenings at the Lawrence Community and Senior Centers**

## **ANIMAL CONTROL**

Lawrence Township has one full-time Animal Control Officer and a part-time back-up Assistant Animal Control Officer for emergencies. The Animal Control Officers are responsible for picking up stray, sick, injured or abandoned animals, for investigating and reporting animal bites, following up with rabies quarantine cases, coordinating and executing 2 annual rabies clinics, transporting animals to the state lab and Mercer County Wildlife Center, and doing public education. The investigation of complaints, including cruelty cases, and the enforcement of all state and local regulations pertaining to animals are performed by the Animal Control Officers. Kennels and pet shops are inspected annually by the Animal Control Officers to ensure compliance with state regulations.

- **In 2024, 52 stray dogs and 85 stray cats were picked up by the animal control officers. 28 dogs and 11 cats were retrieved, the rest were brought to our shelter or perished.**
- **There were 35 dog bite investigations completed.**
- **3 pet shop and kennel inspections were conducted in 2024.**
- **There were a total of 1536 calls for service which were addressed by the animal control officers.**
- **In the Rabies Control Program, the township conducted 2 rabies vaccination clinics. A total of 248 dogs and 80 cats were vaccinated at the clinics.**
- **103 Summonses were issued**
- **There were 2 specimens submitted to the NJ State Laboratory for rabies testing. None of the specimens tested positive for rabies.**
- **Deer removal is a coordinated effort with the N.J.D.O.T., Mercer County and a private contractor. The police department assists with reporting dead deer for removal after normal work hours. A total of 67 deer were removed from roadsides.**

## **LAWRENCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ALLIANCE**

The Municipal Alliance Committee is comprised of citizens and professionals from Lawrence Township. This group works together to develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan to provide substance abuse awareness activities to the residents of Lawrence. This work is done through the completion of a community needs assessment every five years. The results of the needs assessment are then used to develop a strategic plan.

Activities supported by the Alliance include Project Graduation at Lawrence High School, substance abuse and mental health programming on the BRONC Radio 107.7 at Rider University, Camp Fire NJ programs in the elementary schools and peer leadership activities at the Lawrence High School.

Funding for the Lawrence Alcohol and Drug Alliance is provided through a grant from the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder. In 2024, the funding amount was \$13,012.00.

## **2024 Lawrence Alcohol and Drug Alliance Committee**

Keith Levine, Chairperson & Coordinator

Tara Alicja, Lawrence Township Police Department

Alex Krajunus, Superintendent of School Designee

Kelly Nitti, Embright Education (Formerly Camp Fire)

Michael Pantanella, Community Representative

Nancy Bergen, Superintendent of Recreation

Malissa Arnold, Mercer Council on Drugs and Alcohol

Jayshree Kalwachwala, LTPS Project Graduation

Jeanne Swain, I-800 GAMBLER

John Ryan, Council Liaison

## **HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD**

Martha Friend, Chairperson

Maureen Adams, RN

Anthony Brickman, MD

Brielle Easton, MPH

Laurie Wilson, RN

Vacant, Council Liaison

Keith Levine, Health Officer, Staff Liaison

\*This report completed and submitted in memory of Health Advisory Board member **Mary C. Baird** (November 11, 1946 - September 8, 2024). Thank you Mary for your dedication and service to the community.

## **Lawrence Township Health Department Budget 2024**

**Total Annual Health Budget: \$39,550**

**Total amount spent for 2024: \$34,375.88**

**Expenses Include:**

- Medical Services (Vaccines and Medicine)
- Contractual Services (Doctor, Veterinarian, Clinics, Nurse Case Management)
- Equipment
- Office Equipment Services
- Office Supplies
- Training
- Memberships
- Data Processing (IT Service)

**Total Annual Animal Control Budget: \$15,750**

**Total Amount Spent for 2024: \$15,477.91**

**Expenses Include:**

- Animal Shelter Services
- Emergency Animal Care Services
- Deer Pick-up
- Equipment
- Supplies (Food, Litter, etc.)
- Training
- Uniform Allowance
- Office Supplies

### **Grants Secured by the Health Department**

1) Sustaining Local Public Health Infrastructure

Grantor: NJ Dept. of Health (from US Dept. of Health and Human Services)

Amount: \$168,049 good through March 2026

2) Municipal Alliance

Grantor: NJ Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder

Amount: \$13,012 annually

3) Radon Awareness Program

Grantor: NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)

Amount: \$2000 applied for annually