



**2015**

# **Annual Report Summary**



Eau Claire City-County  
**Health Department**



# Message from the Health Officer

I am happy to share with you the Eau Claire City-County Health Department's (ECCCHD) 2015 Annual Report Summary. 2015 was an exciting year! We had a specific focus on paying attention to where we live, work, learn and play and how this impacts health. Place matters. Did you know that your zip code can make a difference in your health outcomes? A healthy community supports so many things including business and school success, tourism revenue and crime-prevention.

“Whether you realize it or not, you benefit from the public health prevention efforts that happen here every single day.”

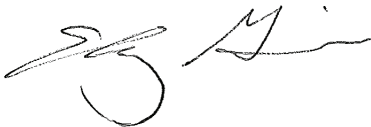
This report provides you with some highlights of how staff at the health department promote and protect health. We do this by:

- Paying attention to data and using data to make decisions
- Learning from what works here and in other communities
- Engaging and listening to you and our partner organizations
- Focusing on prevention rather than treatment

Improving issues like chronic disease, alcohol misuse, mental health, communicable disease and environmental hazards is complicated work. We know that it takes time and partnerships to tackle these issues and move upstream to prevention. We look forward to the continued work we do together to create a healthier Eau Claire for all of us.

Thank you to the staff, the community and Eau Claire leaders who support our efforts. I encourage you to let me know how we can continue to improve the work we do at the health department. Please contact me at 715.839.4721 or [Elizabeth.giese@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:Elizabeth.giese@co.eau-claire.wi.us).

Respectfully,



Elizabeth Giese, RN, MSPH  
Director/Health Officer ECCCHD





# Eau Claire City-County Health Department Mission

Keeping people in all Eau Claire City/County communities safe and healthy.

## Guiding Principles

The Health Department's work is guided by these four overarching principles:

- Prevention-** Promotion of health and prevention of disease, injury and disability is critical in saving lives and money
- Health Equity-** Everyone should have equal opportunity to be healthy
- Collaboration-** People working together provide the best solutions
- Quality-** Efficiency and effectiveness is critical in programs and services

## Eau Claire City-County Board of Health

The Eau Claire City-County Board of Health (BOH) is an eight member board, appointed by the County Board and City Council. The BOH has representation from: a City Council member, a County Board member, 2 practicing physicians, 1 practicing dentist, 1 registered nurse and 2 community representatives. The Board advises and advocates for the provision of reasonable and necessary public health services and provides leadership that fosters local involvement and commitment.

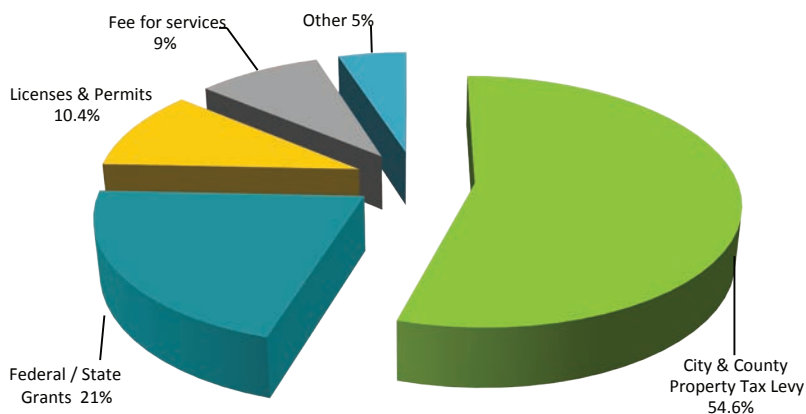
- Donald Bodeau, MD
- Jennifer Eddy, MD
- Blair Johnson, DDS
- Kathy Mitchell, PhD
- John Paddock
- Merey Price, RN
- Elizabeth Spencer, RD
- Gerald Wilkie



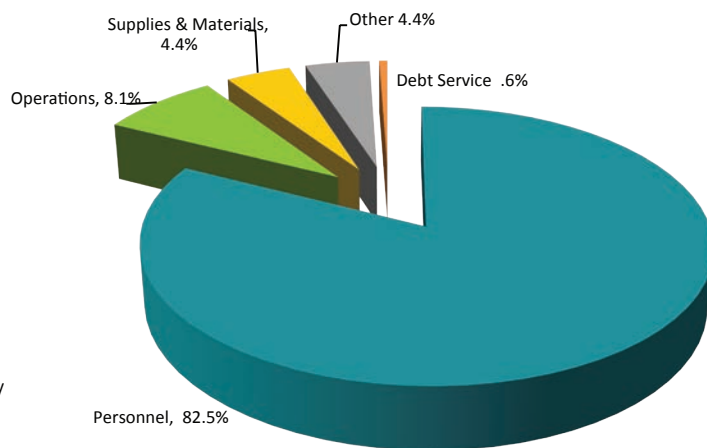
Price, Johnson, Bodeau, Paddock, Eddy, Mitchell and Spencer

## Budget (Preliminary) - \$5.35 million

### 2015 Revenues



### 2015 Expenses



Health data provides a snapshot of the health of our community and shows how health is influenced by many things, including our everyday surroundings - where we live, learn, work and play. Data helps us to:

- Identify and understand current/potential health problems or environmental public health hazards
- Provide health information to community partners
- Evaluate if the programs, policy and environmental changes are making a difference

### Eau Claire by the Numbers

102,105 Eau Claire County population<sup>1</sup>

35% of children enrolled in public schools that are eligible for free lunch<sup>2</sup>

1 in 4 Residents live in a rural area<sup>2</sup>

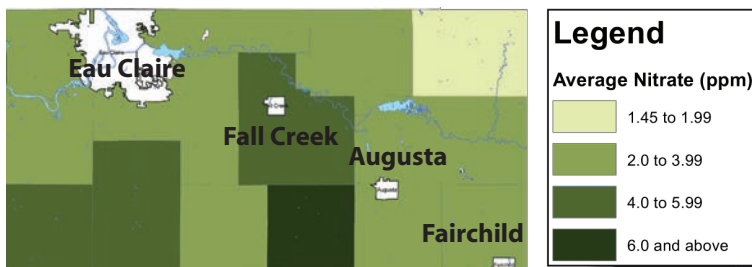


\$48,102 Median household income<sup>2</sup>

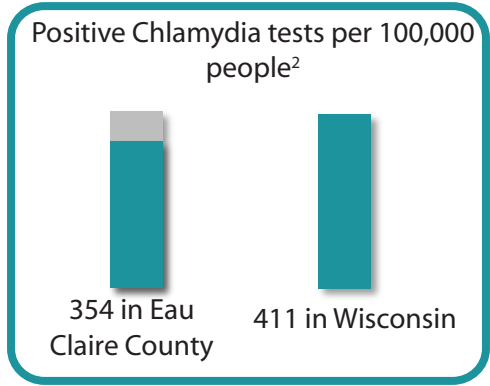
9% population that is African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Hispanic<sup>2</sup>

1 in 7 Residents live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)<sup>2</sup>

Nitrate Levels in Well Water



Learn how Environmental Health is researching nitrate levels in drinking water on **page 9**.



Learn how our Nurses are working to increase awareness on **page 6**.



**13** yrs old is the average age youth in Eau Claire County say they first use alcohol<sup>3</sup>

Learn how Health Educators are working to reduce underage drinking on **page 5**.

1 American Fact Finder US Census Bureau  
 2 County Health Rankings  
 3 PRIDE Survey

## Community Health

The places where we live, work and play can greatly influence our health. Health Educators work closely with community partners to collectively identify and address those things that can improve our health in these places. This includes working with individuals, but also includes making changes to systems and policies.

## Healthy Kids = Healthy Communities

The Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention held their 2nd annual #MoreKidsDrugFree campaign in the fall of 2015. The purpose of the campaign is to share the many ways that youth are impacted by alcohol and drug use, and the importance of seeing more kids drug free in Eau Claire County. Most alcohol and other drug problems start at an early age and negatively impact health and safety for a lifetime. In Eau Claire County, the average age of first use for both alcohol and tobacco products is 13. This campaign matters in the community because kids free of alcohol and drugs are less likely to get hurt today and have drug problems tomorrow.

Getting involved in the More Kids Drug Free campaign is a great way to invest in our youth and in our community's future.



Everyone has a role in the solutions:

- Make sure parties are supervised by an adult
- Properly dispose of unused/expired prescription drugs
- Lock up alcohol
- Talk with your kids – the sooner the better

To learn how you can get involved with the #More Kids Drug Free campaign and other Alliance efforts, go to [www.getinvolvedasap.org](http://www.getinvolvedasap.org).

## Community Health by the Numbers

# 160

youth trained to be alcohol/drug prevention peer educators/advocates

# 141%

increase in the Health Department's Facebook likes

# 250+

community partners committed to improve the health of Eau Claire

## Eau Claire Healthy Communities Celebration and Legislative Event

In April 2015, Eau Claire Healthy Communities held their 2nd annual celebration and legislative event to focus on learning and planning action related to our health priorities. Healthy Communities continues to be a strong partnership with over 200 members from 50+ community organizations working on clear action around community health priorities. Community members participated in a small group training on creating persuasive messaging and created some powerful messages for their work. An example:



*Active transportation can improve your health and create a more sustainable environment. What active transportation option—bicycling, walking, or riding the bus—will you try next week?*

Both events were filled with passionate, energetic and insightful community members. It is clear that the community is committed to improving health in Eau Claire County!

# Healthy Communities: Community Health Assessment

A community health assessment looks at overall health and works with community members to select what health issues are the priorities for community action. The assessment process began in fall 2014 with a community health survey. In 2015, six community meetings were held in Eau Claire County. During these meetings, community members prioritized the top health concerns for Eau Claire County. They discussed the root causes of these issues, current available resources as well as gaps in resources for each priority area. The top 3 health issues identified for Eau Claire were:

- **Alcohol misuse**- In 2012, the binge drinking rate in Wisconsin (25% of adults) was the highest in the nation.
- **Obesity**- 3 in 4 Eau Claire County adults do not consume the recommended 5 fruits and vegetables per day.
- **Mental health**- 60% of Eau Claire County residents feel mental health is a moderate or major problem.



Healthy Communities adopted the assessment in the spring of 2015 and over the next 3 years will focus on improving the health of the community around these 3 areas. Learn more about the work Eau Claire Healthy Communities is doing at [www.ehealthycommunities.org](http://www.ehealthycommunities.org)!

## Public Health Nursing

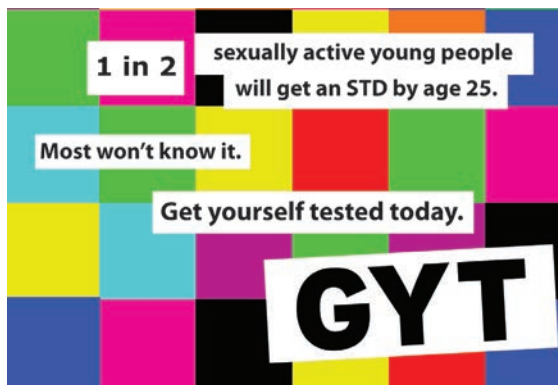
*Public Health Nurses provide a wide variety of individual, family and group services that positively impact health in our community. From prenatal education to communicable disease prevention, public health nurses encourage and support community members to make healthy choices and prevent disease.*

## Get Yourself Tested (GYT)

Chlamydia, a sexually transmitted infection, is the top reportable communicable diseases in Eau Claire County with 426 cases in 2015—even more than Lyme Disease! With both chlamydia and gonorrhea rates rising, Get Yourself Tested clinics were planned to promote sexual health for all residents of Eau Claire City and County.

In 2015, nearly 1,000 residents received services through our Family Planning clinic and at community GYT events. Our participation in the 2015 national Get Yourself Tested (GYT) campaign raised awareness about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Eau Claire County. We partnered with Positive Avenues, Augusta Family Medicine Clinic, AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin and UW- Eau Claire to host GYT events. Over 100 Eau Claire residents received STI testing and sexual health education services at the events.

With chlamydia and gonorrhea rates rising in Eau Claire County, good sexual health is everyone's responsibility. Knowing your sexual health status not only keeps you safe, but keeps your partner safe too!





## The Year in NUMBERS

1879

vaccinations given to infants, children and adults

146

Safe Sleep toolkits were distributed to healthcare and community providers

829

reportable communicable diseases followed up on

158

women received prenatal care coordination services

26

nursing students completed clinical practice experiences with public health nurses

992

women and men received contraceptive services

## Nurse Family Partnership

Nurse-Family Partnership®, a maternal and child health program, helps low-income, first-time parents with the support they need to become confident parents and strong women, and ultimately, give their babies the best possible start in life. We were fortunate to bring this evidence based program to Eau Claire County in late 2015.

Public health nurses are the backbone of Nurse-Family Partnership's success. Because of their specialized knowledge, the nurses who deliver this program establish trusted relationships with young, at-risk mothers by providing home visits that are designed around three goals: a healthy pregnancy and delivery, baby's good health and development, and the woman's vision and goals for her future.



*"I feel like I'm not alone. I have more self-esteem and respect for myself since starting the program."  
-NFP mother*

Women voluntarily enroll as early as possible and one of our trusted, respected, and compassionate public health nurses visits her from pregnancy until her baby turns 2-years old. Nurse-Family Partnership changes the lives of our most vulnerable citizens, and thereby creates a better, safer, and stronger community, not just for today but for generations to come.

### Suicide Prevention

Eau Claire County Medical Reserve Corps and the Healthy Communities Mental Health Action Team partnered together to train 18 members to be Certified QPR Gatekeeper Instructors. Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) is an evidence-based curriculum that teaches the importance of offering hope to individuals contemplating suicide. Attendees of the QPR trainings learn how to ask if a person is contemplating suicide, how to persuade them to get help, and how/where to refer for help. In 2015, there were 24 trainings throughout the county and 320 community members in attendance. The team has received positive feedback from the community:

*"This was one of the most helpful in-services I have been to! Any action may save a life, but no action most likely will lose one."*

*"This is such a critically important topic and training. I'm grateful to have been able to participate. Thanks."*



Public Health Nutritionists focus on developing and encouraging healthy eating across the life span of our population. Good nutrition is important for health and disease prevention. Our nutrition programs advocate for healthy behavior changes and access to healthy food choices in the community.

## e-WIC – Making the Healthy Choice

New eWIC benefit cards rolled out during the summer of 2015! Our WIC Program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) moved away from printed vouchers to an electronic benefit card (eWIC). This was an exciting change for the nearly 1,900 low-income families in our community that use the WIC program to purchase healthy food. The eWIC card was developed to simplify grocery shopping. It allows families to use benefits how and when they want, while securing benefits on a PIN protected card.



Public Health Dietitians work one-on-one with families to determine their nutritional needs and select a food package that can be purchased with their eWIC card at one of our 14 local WIC approved grocery stores/pharmacies. eWIC has improved the shopping experience for families by:

- Eliminating paper vouchers/checks (easier to keep track of)
- Working just like a debit card (swipe to make WIC-eligible purchases)
- Ability to purchase just a few items at a time and save the rest for another trip (more convenient)
- No need to separate WIC foods from non-WIC foods (faster check-out)

**“I Like it! It’s easy to carry. I like it better than the paper [checks]--sometimes [I] forget the paper [checks]. It is easier for the cashier to use.”**

*-WIC participant*

WIC is one of the most successful, cost-effective and important nutrition intervention programs in our nation. In addition to helping families get healthful food, WIC also offers nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support, health education, and connections to other community resources. eWIC along with the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, helps to level the playing field when it comes to making nutrition education and healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables available for all residents of Eau Claire County.

### Public Health Nutrition and WIC by the Numbers

305

women received contact from breastfeeding peer counselor

women participating in WIC started breastfeeding their babies

78%

4300

community members received nutrition education at Veggin’ Out booths at area farmers’ markets

families who spent all or some of their farmers’ market vouchers

82%



70 carseats were given to families in need through the Kids Ride Safe Project

grocery store and farmers’ market tours were given to WIC families

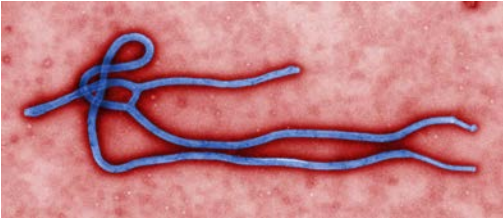


## Emergency Preparedness

*Public Health Emergency Preparedness efforts ensure the Health Department and the broader community are ready to respond to a variety of environmental hazards and communicable diseases.*

### Ebola

Emerging infectious diseases, natural disasters and many other emergencies can have a significant impact on health. Being prepared and planning ahead is critical to protecting public safety. As we saw with the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, threats can come from anywhere and travel long distances. State and local health departments, including our Health Department, worked diligently to prepare and coordinate Ebola plans across local, regional and state jurisdictions. We participated in local and regional Ebola exercises, provided the most current guidance to all key partners, and monitored individuals who had traveled to high-risk countries. In fact, our Health Department monitored Wisconsin's third highest number of travelers to Ebola-affected areas.



In 2015, we had a chance to test our plans and provide a coordinated response between local partners, WI Department of Health Services, WI State Laboratory of Hygiene, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assure that an individual who was being monitored by our Health Department as a low-risk traveler received evaluation at a local hospital and was tested for Ebola virus disease based on

symptoms. Laboratory tests confirmed the individual did not have Ebola and presented no risk. The rapid and coordinated response of the situation highlighted the importance of being prepared to protect everyone in our community – whether it is a contagious disease or natural disaster.

## Environmental Health

*The physical environment in which people live is an important determinant of health. Environmental health protects the health of the public by assessing, correcting, controlling and preventing those factors in our environment that can negatively affect health, including foodborne and waterborne outbreaks.*

### Nitrate Well Water Outreach

Nitrates is a common, naturally occurring contaminant found in well water and unsafe levels can pose serious health risks to infants. It can lead to "blue baby syndrome," a condition caused by lack of oxygen in infants. Nitrate is found in plants, air, water, and soil. Many rural areas of our county consistently test high for Nitrate. We collaborated with the Eau Claire County Land Conservation Division to promote testing rural wells for nitrates. To increase awareness in 2015 we provided well water testing for nitrate at a reduced fee and conducted educational presentations to local residents on the importance of testing their well water.

Residents could pick up test kits for the reduced fee at the Land Conservation Division building and other



locations around Eau Claire County. We performed 881 nitrate tests in 2015. The program also provided Eau Claire County residents with valuable education about the importance of testing their well water to keep themselves and their families healthy. Be sure you and your family aren't at risk for high nitrate levels – test your water once a year if it comes from a well.

## Environmental Health by the Numbers

43% of tested homes had high radon levels



unsafe private drinking water bacteria tests 19%

1567 housing consults were completed, providing education and expertise on housing topics to the community

spore tests came back safe 100%



5 trucks of usable donations collected during "Don't Dump-It Donate-it"



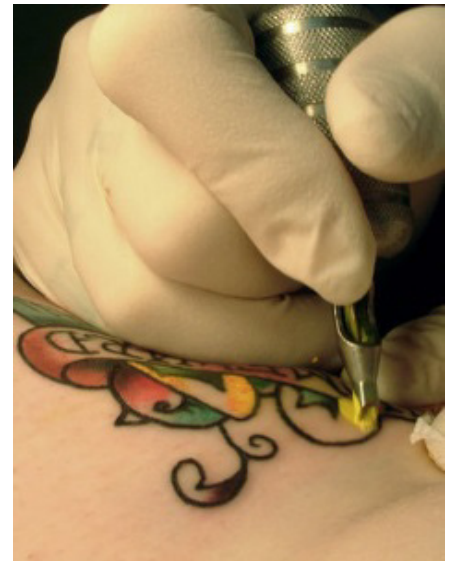
restaurant inspections completed 948

## Making Tattooing/Piercing Safer in Eau Claire

Tattooing, a form of body art, is becoming increasingly popular in the Chippewa Valley area. Diseases like Hepatitis and HIV can be spread by using unsanitary body art (tattoo/piercing) equipment. In 2015, members of the local body art industry and the health department partnered to talk about common issues and concerns. There are 16 licensed body art shops in Eau Claire. Members of these shops helped the Health Department to look over the current code. This led to changes in our local body art code.

As a result, of this partnership, new training requirements were added to the code. Body artists must complete this training before they can get a license in Eau Claire County. Requirements include completing blood-borne pathogen training (diseases spread through blood) and 200 hours of supervised experience.

The local body art industry was a strong partner and dedicated considerable time and effort to make these code changes. These changes will hold all Eau Claire body artists to a high standard of safety and responsibility. This shows our local body artists are dedicated to the safety of our community.



"It is extremely important that each artist obtain and keep valid the proper licenses and certifications. This allows our clients to rest assured that we, as professionals, are using all of our knowledge and training to give them the safest experience possible."

- local shop owner



## Health Department Staff

*Thank you for taking the time to read about some of the important and fulfilling work our staff accomplished in 2015. We are striving to create a healthy and safe community for the citizens of Eau Claire City and County, and are proud to share this summary with you.*



Eau Claire City-County  
**Health Department**

Office: 720 Second Ave  
Eau Claire, WI 54703

Website: [www.ehealthdepartment.org](http://www.ehealthdepartment.org)

Phone: 715-839-4718

Fax: 715-839-1674

The full 2015 Annual Report and this Summary Report can be found at [www.ehealthdepartment.org](http://www.ehealthdepartment.org)