

# Report on **Public Health** Services in **Kent County**

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2000



# Kent County Health Department

2000

To the Citizens of Kent County,  
the Kent County Board of Health, and  
the Kent County Board of Commissioners:

As you may be aware, this will be the last report issued under my direction. After almost 32 years in public health -- with 20 of those years spent here in Kent County -- it is time to hand the reins over to someone younger with new ideas and vision and more energy than myself. My retirement is effective March 1, 2001.

I have spent all of my public health career at the local level, resisting all temptation, and offers, to go onto state or federal health agencies, or to the private sector. I have never regretted this decision one day in my life. I have always maintained and continue to believe that it is at the local level, where people live, that public health has the greatest impact, and the greatest potential to improve people's lives.

So, for the last time, I would like to thank the Kent County Board of Commissioners and the Kent County Board of Health for their continued leadership and support. But most of all, I would like to thank you, the citizens of Kent County, for allowing me to serve for so long in such an exceptional community. It is my pleasure to present the Health Department's 2000 Report on Public Health Services in Kent County.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Mack, M.D., M.P.H.  
Public Health Director

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**In 2000, over \$20,000,000 was invested in public health services in Kent County. This is a report of the return on that investment – an accounting of the public health services provided to individuals in Kent County, and of the activities of over 330 public health professionals who protect and assure the health of our community.**



# 2000 Public Health Services Report

Kent County  
Health Department

The U.S. public health system -- a collaborative network of federal, state, and local public health agencies -- is among the best in the world. But of those agencies, it is *local* public health departments that are responsible for delivering the majority of public health services in communities across the country. It is at the local level that health funding becomes health services -- that federal and state monies to reduce lead paint hazards, breast cancer, and cigarette smoking are transformed from good intentions to tangible services.

In Kent County, the Kent County Health Department administers federal, state, and local dollars to provide programs and services that protect and enhance the health of Kent County citizens: eight community public health clinics that deliver clinical health screening and prevention services; restaurant inspections, and well and septic system evaluations to reduce hazards in the environment; visits to pregnant women and young children in their homes to build strong healthy families; and AIDS testing, health education classes, and the investigation and control of

tuberculosis and other diseases in the community. This is how public dollars are translated into public services that prevent disease, prolong life, and promote community health; this is the business of local public health departments.

The Kent County Health Department pursues these responsibilities with the utmost sense of purpose. We strive to be responsible stewards of public dollars, and of public trust. Our commitment is not just to the community at large, but to every individual within it.

## Caring Today for a Healthy Tomorrow

### Health Department Administrators

Douglas Mack, M.D., M.P.H.  
Public Health Director, Chief Medical Examiner

Barbara Terry, M.S.  
Deputy Public Health Director

Bill Anstey, M.B.A.  
Director of Finance and MIS

### 2000 Kent County Board of Health

James DeHaan, M.D., Chair  
Medical Representative

Commissioner Kenneth Kuipers, Vice Chair  
District 19

Commissioner Katherine Kuhn  
District 14

Commissioner Herschell Turner  
District 17

Catherine Winick  
Community Representative

Douglas Mack, M.D., M.P.H.  
Ex-officio

### Mailing Address

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### On the World Wide Web

[www.co.kent.mi.us/health](http://www.co.kent.mi.us/health)

### Public Health Reports

Copies of this and other Health Department reports, Community HealthWatch report cards, and health brochures are can be viewed or downloaded from the Health Department web site "Publications" page:  
[www.co.kent.mi.us/health/publications.htm](http://www.co.kent.mi.us/health/publications.htm)

# Public Health Administration

Phone: 336-3023

Fax: 336-3033

Because local public health departments play such a vital role in assuring the health of community, public health administration must be both proactive and responsive to emerging community needs, and threats to public health. In addition to managing infrastructure that allows the organization to function efficiently, public health administration must uphold and discharge the statutory responsibilities assigned to local public health departments in the Michigan Public Health Code. These activities not only include administering clinical, environmental, and dis-

ease control programs, but also conducting community health assessment, providing leadership for community health decision-making and policy, and assuring the benefits of public health programs are available to everyone in the community.

In 2000, the Kent County Health Department continued its tradition of excellence in public health administration, participating in the State of Michigan's local public health department accreditation program. The Health Department was in full compliance with 96%

of accreditation indicators, and in many areas received special recognition for innovative programs and service delivery systems.

The Administrative Division is proactively addressing the threat of bioterrorism, forming an internal response team and participating in several community response simulation exercises. Racial health disparities in the community also continues to be a priority for the Health Department, as well as for the Healthy Kent 2010 initiative, with infant mortality topping the list of problem areas.

## Financial Summary, FY 1999-2000

### Revenues

State Grants	\$ 8,010,341	36%
County/Local	8,786,982	40%
Fees	2,507,212	11%
Medicaid/Medicare	2,872,220	13%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$22,176,755</b>	<b>100%</b>
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### Expenditures by Service Category

Administration	\$ 7,110,852	33%
Nursing Services	4,479,990	21%
Health Promotion- Disease Prevention	3,791,176	18%
Clinical Services	3,827,304	18%
Environmental Health	2,060,584	10%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,269,906</b>	<b>100%</b>
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### Expenditures by Expense Category

Personnel	\$13,048,853	61%
Substance Abuse	1,291,512	6%
Other Contract Services	5,526,586	26%
Equipment	73,611	0.3%
Supplies	956,566	5%
Travel	198,062	1%
Communication	174,716	0.7%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,269,906</b>	<b>100%</b>
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## Assessment and Assurance

Specialized Health Reports Published: 4  
 Total Reports Issued: 5  
 Community HealthWatch Report  
 Cards Published: 6  
 Data Requests Fulfilled: 128  
 Percentage of Customers Who Rate Department  
 Services as Above Average or Better: 91%

## Public Communications

News Releases Issued: 48  
 Health Alerts Issued: 1  
 Average Response Time for Issuing  
 Health Alerts: 2 hours  
 Number of Hits to Health Department  
 Web Site (3/1/00 -12/21/00): 164,702  
 Percentage of All Hits to Kent County  
 Web Site Domain: 25%

# Community Clinical Services

Phone: 336-3962

Fax: 336-4915

Preventing disease is less expensive than treating disease. Consequently, the preventive and screening services provided by the Health Department's Community Clinical Services Division are one of the best health care values to the citizens of Kent County: the cost of providing them represents only a fraction of the potential expense of treating the disease and illness they prevent.

The Clinical Services Division provides health services to help individuals stay healthy, and to detect potential health problems as early

as possible. Clinical health services include immunizations -- one of the most cost-effective means of assuring child health ever -- WIC (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children), child health and development screening, health and nutrition counseling, pregnancy testing, and blood pressure screening.

In order to make these services as accessible as possible, the Health Department operates eight community Public Health Clinics in Kent County. There are three clinics in the City of

Grand Rapids — on Fuller St. in the main Health Department building; in the Sheldon Complex on Franklin St. S.E.; and the Westside Clinic on Stocking N.W. Other Health Department clinics are located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Sparta, Cedar Springs, and Lowell.

Most clinical services are provided at no cost to Kent County residents so they are available to everyone who needs them. Although these services generate little revenue, they provide our community with significant long-term health care cost savings.

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## **Wanda Bierman, R.N., M.S., M.P.A., Division Director**

### **Immunization**

Vaccine Doses Administered: 61,771  
Immunization Client Visits: 46,356  
Travel Immunization, Vaccine Doses: 7,977  
Travel Immunization, Client Visits: 4,338  
Tuberculosis Tests Given: 5,991  
Percentage of Children Entering Kent County  
Schools with Up-to-Date Immunizations: 98.5%

### **Vaccine Doses by Type of Disease**

Tetanus/Diphtheria: 15,777  
Pertussis: 9,042  
Haemophilus Influenza B (HiB): 5,991  
Polio: 8,085  
Measles/Mumps/Rubella: 8,232  
Hepatitis B: 14,325  
Varicella (Chicken Pox): 3,794

### **WIC**

Average Monthly Enrollment: 17,706  
Clients Receiving Immunization  
During WIC Appointments: 2,467  
Percentage of Clients Who Participate in  
Optional WIC Nutrition Education Class: 90%

### **Other Clinical Services**

Child and Refugee Health Screenings: 1,380  
Health Assessment and Counseling,  
Client Visits: 8,363  
Pregnancy Tests: 1,520  
Hemoglobin Tests: 23,292  
Blood Lead Tests: 8,432\*

\*Capillary blood lead tests done in Clinics as part of Environmental Health Division Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Total child blood lead tests (page 6) includes capillary and venous tests.

### **Health Care Cost Savings**

The availability of public health clinical services results in significant health care cost savings. Every dollar spent on WIC services results in \$4.21 in Medicaid cost savings for newborns and their mothers. Likewise, it is estimated that every dollar spent on immunization saves over \$10 in future health care costs.

# Community Nursing Services

Phone: 336-3040

Fax: 336-3983

The Community Nursing Division provides health services to vulnerable or at-risk people in Kent County. Mothers at risk for poor birth outcomes, refugees, residents of the Heartside neighborhood, children who are chronically ill or handicapped, and the elderly all benefit from, and are served by, the Health Department's Nursing Division.

Because early detection and intervention help assure the best long-term health outcomes, most of the Community Nursing Division's services focus on preventing health

problems from the very earliest stages, during pregnancy and the first year of a child's life. The Nursing Division's Maternal and Infant Support Services Program provides health assessment, education, counseling, case management, and referral for pregnant women and their infants. Healthy, full-term babies are less likely to die during their first year of life, less likely to require expensive neonatal intensive care and other medical treatment services, and less likely to experience developmental disabilities that can require a lifetime of costly treatment and care.

Medicaid pays for Maternal and Infant Support Services for clients that are Medicaid-eligible. These services are also provided at no cost to low-income families that are not Medicaid-eligible.

School health services provided by the Division also focus on prevention and early detection. Skilled technicians screen thousands of children and adolescents for vision and hearing problems every year. Public Health Nurses also screen all 7th and 8th grade children for scoliosis.

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## Sandra Walls, R.N., M.S.N., Division Director

### Maternal and Child Health

Maternal Support Services (MSS), Enrolled: 2,426  
Maternal Support Services Client Visits: 9,070  
Infant Support Services (ISS), Enrolled: 4,458  
Infant Support Services Client Visits: 22,845  
MSS/ISS Advocacy Services, Families Served: 348  
MSS/ISS Advocacy Services, Client Visits: 1,799  
Medicaid Enrollments, Pregnant Women: 808  
Medicaid Enrollments, Children: 221  
Lead Poisoning Clients Enrolled: 343  
Lead Poisoning Home Visits: 754  
Healthy Start Program, Family Assessments: 196  
North County Mother's Club, Participating Families: 63

### School Health

Vision Screenings: 52,599  
Hearing Screenings: 51,085  
Student Scoliosis Screenings: 15,671

### Special Populations

Children's Special Health Care Services,  
Families Served: 905  
Refugee Health Services Screenings: 755  
Percentage of Refugees Who Receive Health  
Screenings from Health Department  
within 90 Days of Arrival: 97%  
Interagency Community Nursing Project,  
Clients Served: 293

# Environmental Health

Phone: 336-3089

Fax: 336-2436

Environmental Health programs have raised the standard of living in the U.S. by controlling or eliminating significant disease vectors, and by reducing health hazards in the community environment. The Health Department's Environmental Health Division protects individuals in the community, and the community as a whole, by assuring a clean and potable public water supply, inspecting Kent County's food service establishments, and making the community safe for animal and human cohabitation. Environmental Health activities also include land use evalu-

ation, well and septic system assessment, ground water monitoring, and lead and radon hazard reduction. The Division also operates the Kent County Animal Shelter.

While most Environmental Health services are supported by user fees that cover the cost of providing the services, state-administered grants and federal grants also support some specific services. The majority of Environmental Health services are conducted outside the Health Department building, at locations across Kent County.

In 2000, the Environmental Health Division made headlines by becoming the first in the state to post food service establishment inspection records on the internet. The Health Department web site received over 20,000 hits the day after the local news media announced the inspection reports were available on-line. In addition in 2000, the Kent County Animal Shelter partnered with Vickie's Pets who assists in the placement of animals in suitable homes. The first six months of this partnership resulted in placing over 400 animals in good homes.

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## David Kraker, R.S., Division Director

### Sanitation

Campground Inspections: 29  
Child Care/Adult Foster Care Facilities: 257  
Food Service Inspections: 3673  
Mobile Home Inspections: 84  
Public Pool Inspections: 504  
Percentage of New, Remodeled or Existing Public Pools Receiving Comprehensive Inspection: 100%  
Sanitary Facility Evaluations: 1270  
Public Health Nuisance Investigations: 232

### Water Quality

Type II Public Water Supply Permits: 24  
On-site Water Supply (well) Permits: 1,682  
Surface Water Samples Taken: 642

### Land Use

Vacant Land Evaluations: 249  
Land Development Plan Reviews: 40  
On-site Sewage Disposal Permits: 1,607  
Sewage System Evaluations: 2,338

### Education

Food Service Sanitation Class Participants: 1,022  
Percentage of Class Participants Passing Exam: 95%  
Child Care/Adult Foster Care Facility Sanitation Class Participants: 697

### Lead Hazard Control

Housing-related Lead Hazards Identified: 157  
Percentage Investigated: 100%  
Total Child Blood Lead Tests: 11,097  
Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels: 182  
Home Lead Test Kits Distributed: 123

### Animal Control

Total Complaints Received: 7,443  
Percentage Complaints Investigated: 99%  
Total Bites Reported: 1,158  
Total Dog Licenses Sold: 32,924  
Total Animals Received at Shelter: 5,112  
Animals Adopted to New Homes: 695  
Animals Reclaimed by Owner: 782  
Animals Euthanized (Unfit for Adoption): 1,002  
Animals Euthanized (Overpopulation): 1,391

# Health Promotion Disease Prevention

Phone: 336-3037

Fax: 336-3844

The Health Department's Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Division provides services that focus on preventing disease and promoting health, both in individuals and in the community as a whole. The Division provides a unique combination of clinical, screening, and educational services to help individuals identify and reduce risks for chronic, infectious, and sexually-transmissible disease. The Health Promotion Division also provides public health laboratory services that are vital to controlling disease outbreaks in the community, and hazards in the environment.

Health Promotion services that include health education, life-style risk assessment, and health risk screening, help individuals learn about their risks for chronic disease — the leading killers of Americans — and take steps to reduce their risks. Most health promotion services are provided at very low cost, or no cost at all, so they are available to everyone.

Surveillance and control of communicable disease in the population is also a critical activity of the Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Division, and of local public health

departments generally. Coordinating efforts with local hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers, the Communicable Disease Unit investigates disease outbreaks to control the spread of tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis, and vaccine-preventable diseases, among others, in the community.

Health Education services cover a variety of topics and activities including presentations, trainings, brochure development, coalition building and oversight, as well as consultation and health curriculum design.

## **Carol Vander Wal, M.P.H., Division Director**

### **Communicable and Sexually Transmitted Disease Control**

Clients Treated for Tuberculosis: 1,201  
Clients Seen for STD Services: 6,788  
Clients Receiving Anonymous or  
Confidential HIV Counseling/Testing: 2,152  
Clients Who Return for HIV Test Results: 74%  
Premarital Health Classes Provided: 259  
Participants in Premarital Health Classes: 2741

### **Laboratory Testing**

Environmental Bacteriology Tests: 22,547  
Environmental Chemistry Tests: 10,157  
HIV Serology Tests Conducted: 41,706  
Syphilis Serology Tests Conducted: 3,856  
Gonorrhea/Chlamydia Tests Conducted: 65,635

### **Chronic Disease Control**

Women Screened for Breast/Cervical Cancer: 1024  
African American women attending breast health  
education sessions: 818  
Adult Dental Services Program, Value of Donated  
Dental Services: \$79,193

### **Health Promotion**

Worksite Health Promotion Grants: 62  
Participants in Programs Funded by Worksite  
Grants: 2800  
Participants in Community Health  
Programs/Screenings: 4,467

### **Health Education**

Number of individuals receiving education  
on the following health topics:  
Substance Abuse/Violence Prevention: 4,281  
HIV Prevention: 18,847  
Sanitary Food Service and Handling: 986  
Youth Tobacco Prevention: 16,177

### **Recognition**

Three of the Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Division's programs received awards for excellence from the Michigan Department of Community Health in 2000:

- Project Respect (sexual assault prevention program);
- Smoke-free Air for Everyone (SAFE) Tobacco Reduction Coalition of Kent County;
- Women's Health Network (cancer screening program).



# A Proud Public Health History

Kent County

The first record of a public health act in Kent County was the immunization of some 150 Native Americans by Dr. Charles Shepard in October 1835. Though the specific purpose of these immunizations has been lost to history, protecting the health of the community has always been the guiding principle of local public health efforts. Reviewing the history of public health in Kent County shows how far these efforts have progressed.

The first record of public sanitation activities was in 1849 when the Grand Rapids Village Council ordered that 200 barrels of lime be spread over the village streets to prevent health hazards from “primitive facilities and indifferent ways.” The organization of the first public health authority in Grand Rapids took place 16 years later, in 1877, when the Council convened a local Board of Health for the “protection of its citizens.”

In 1915 the beginnings of a health department for the remainder of Kent County took shape with the hire of Charlotte VanDuzzor, R.N., as the first County School Nurse. The Kent County Health Department was officially born in January 1931 with the passage of state legislation that allowed counties to organize health departments. Dr. J.D. Brook was the first Kent County health officer. For the next 36 years, there would be two public health departments in Kent County.

The City of Grand Rapids secured its place in public health history in 1945 when it became the first in the United States, and the world, to add fluoride to its public water supply to reduce tooth decay and cavities. The results of the ‘Grand Rapids Study’ were undeniable, and water fluoridation is regarded as one of the leading public health accomplishments of the 20th century.

In 1952, Dr. Winston Prothro was named Director of the Grand Rapids Health Department, and in 1954, Director of the Kent County Health Department, with the goal of forming a single health department to serve all of Kent County. The consolidation of the Grand Rapids and Kent County health departments was completed in 1967.

Upon the retirement of Dr. Prothro, Dr. Douglas Mack was appointed Public Health Director in January 1977. In 1979, the Health Department moved to its present location on Fuller Avenue N.E. A reorganization of public health services in 1993 consolidated some 30 satellite clinics into eight full-service community Public Health Clinics. Today, the Kent County Health Department employs more than 330 public health professionals and is recognized as one of the most progressive local public health departments in Michigan.

## Health Department Directory

Phone: (616) 336-3030

Toll-free from anywhere in the 616 or 312 area codes: 1-888-515-1300

Fax: 336-3884

## Director’s Office

Phone: 336-3023

Fax: 336-3033

## Community Relations

336-2220

## Healthy Kent 2010

Phone: 336-2221

Fax: 336-3884

## Communicable Disease/TB Unit

Phone: 336-3425

Fax: 336-2432

## Public Health Laboratory

Phone: 336-2299

Fax: 336-2274

## Other Important Phone Numbers

Immunization: 336-2233

WIC: 336-3011

AIDS Information Line: 336-3602

Outreach Unit (toll-free): 1-800-301-1733

Animal Shelter: 336-3210

## Health Department Web Site

[www.co.kent.mi.us/health](http://www.co.kent.mi.us/health)

## **Report on Public Health Services in Kent County, 2000**

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Kent County Health Department

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