

## St. Clair County Health Department

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*Protecting the health of  
St. Clair County residents*



**2009 Annual Report**

# mission statement

To assure the accessibility of appropriate and quality personal, public and environmental health services to St. Clair County residents and their families.



**St. Clair County Health Department Leadership 2009**

Top row L-R Janet Ruggles, BS, M(ASCP) Lab Director, Elaine Kempf, BA, Administrator, Susan Amato, MA, Dir. of Health Education, Diane Forsys, BS, RS, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Bottom row L-R Greg Brown, BS, RS, Env. Health Director, Diane Jovanovich, BS, RD, WIC Coordinator, Annette Mercatante, M.D., Health Officer/Medical Director, Karen VanNess, MSN, RN, Nursing Director and Herb Wendt, Jr., CPA, Accountant/Financial Systems Manager.

**2009 Board of Health members:**

**Donald Konyha, D.V.M.....Chairperson (deceased)**  
**William Smiley.....Vice-Chairperson (deceased)**  
**Marie Muller.....Secretary**  
**Barbara Britz .....Member**  
**Janice Littlefield .....Member**  
**Pam Wall .....B.O.C. Representative**

Donald Konyha, DVM, died after a short illness in April 2010. Dr. Konyha served faithfully on the Advisory Board of Health since his appointment in 1982, and as its chairperson since 2000.



## medical director and health officer

### To the community of the beautiful Blue Water Area of St. Clair County:

On behalf of the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners and the Advisory Board of Health, the St. Clair County Health Department is pleased to present you with the Annual Report of 2009. This report describes the many programs and services we provide for the citizens of St. Clair County with the intention of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health. We are fortunate to have a highly skilled and industrious staff who are dedicated to the value and benefit these services bring to you. Likewise, our success would not be possible without the support and collaboration we have with so many community partners, state agencies, and local individuals.

This year we survived the largest vaccination campaign in U.S. history, H1N1, all with a dwindling budget and vocal anti-vaccine opponents. Our ability to vaccinate over 16,000 high risk people within days of vaccine distribution is a testament to our emergency preparedness capabilities and dedication. Significant outreach work with the schools, hospitals, and local healthcare providers has laid the groundwork for future positive collaborations and improved communications. As we face an ominous economic future we take comfort in knowing that this community has the ability, intention, and stamina to do the right thing for all its citizens.

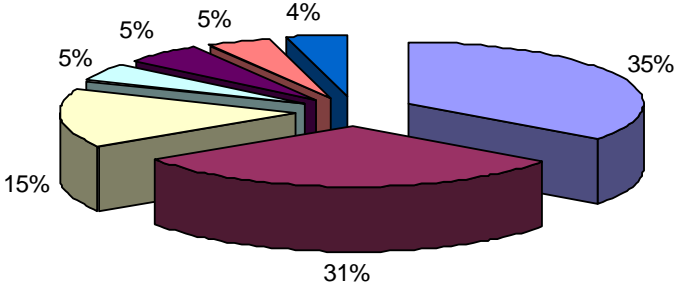
I encourage you to review this report and offer us feedback. What worked 20, or even 2 years ago may not be the most advantageous process now. The most compelling aspect of health is that it is so variable in definition, yet unequivocally the most precious asset we can have. I wish you all good health!

*Accredited by the Michigan Public  
Health Accreditation Commission*

Annette M. Mercatante, M.D.  
Health Officer/Medical Director  
St. Clair County Health Department

# financial

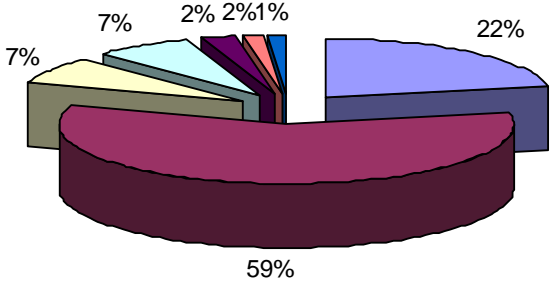
2009 Health Department Revenues



Total Revenues: \$8,081,141

- County Appropriation
- Charges for Service
- Federal Vaccine (In-Kind)
- Licenses & Permits
- State Revenue
- Medicaid Full Cost Reimbursement
- Other Grants & Revenues

2009 Health Department Expenditures



Total Expenditures: \$7,906,058

- Environmental Health
- Emergency Preparedness
- Laboratory
- Other Programs
- Nursing
- Women, Infants, & Children
- Dental



Elaine Kempf, Administrator

## 2009 agency highlights

**2009 proved to be a challenging year at St. Clair County Health Department.** After 35 years as director/health officer at St. Clair County Health Department, Jon Parsons retired on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Jon's many contributions were acknowledged by the St. Clair County Coordinating Body with the presentation of the Community Service Award to Mr. Parsons at their meeting on September 14, 2009. This award is given out annually to a community stakeholder who truly exemplifies collaboration and coordination to best meet the needs of the people in our community. Recipients are known to think outside of the box, be willing to partner with other organizations, share resources and take risks to meet gaps in community services. The award recipient is selected annually by the Coordinating Body steering committee.

**Annette Mercatante, M.D. was appointed as Health Officer/Medical Director in 2009.** Dr. Mercatante has served as fulltime medical director since January 2008 and is proving herself to be an asset to the department.

**Health Department staff, department-wide prepared diligently for the November on-site Accreditation Review by state program staff.** Selected Saturday mornings provided uninterrupted time for staff to gather documentation and ready their manuals for the in-depth inspection. When reviewers arrived, they found program staff prepared and once again able to successfully meet the challenge.

**In the midst of Accreditation preparation, the Pandemic Flu, otherwise known as H1N1, arrived.** It began in May just in time to coincide with Jon Parsons' official retirement and the beginning of Dr. Mercatante assuming her new Health Officer position. H1N1 was a phenomenal opportunity for staff to use their emergency preparedness training to carry out special vaccination clinics for the public.

**The 2010 county and state budget process** was challenging in that it began early in the year and was drawn out until the end of November. It resulted in 2 part-time and 1 full-time staff layoffs at the Health Department, closing of Algonac and Capac branch offices, and the elimination of several vacant positions in 2010. It is not anticipated that 2011 and 2012 will improve. In fact, it is likely that the Health Department will see additional layoffs if attrition does not occur. Every vacancy the department has from now on will be scrutinized to determine if the position must be filled or eliminated.

**New Health Department Building** – Capital Improvement Plans were once again submitted for a new health department building. However, the county's economic situation led the Board of Commissioners to recommend no capital projects initiated in 2009 or in the near future.

**Finally, Board of Health Member, William E. Smiley,** died on July 18, 2009. He served St. Clair County and its residents in many ways for many years. Mr. Smiley will be remembered fondly by Health Department staff for the 26 years he served on the Board of Health – many of those as chairman.



Janet Ruggles, Lab Director

## laboratory

The laboratory serves as support for the various clinics of the Health Department, including the Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Clinic, Family Planning Program, Preventive Health Services, Environmental Health and Teen Health Center.

Having an on-site laboratory is a valuable service to the community, as it enables the clinics to have immediate diagnoses for treating their patients. Water sample testing ensures safe water throughout the county. The following is a list of tests performed in the laboratory.

### Laboratory tests performed in 2009:

Sexually transmitted infection testing	14,844
Water samples (wells, pools, spas, beaches and other surface waters)	3,766

### Other laboratory services include:

- Selected chemistries for intra-department support service
- Pregnancy testing (serum)
- Throat – Strep A
- Urinalysis
- Tick identification (Department of Agriculture)
- HIV (Kent County Health Department)
- Hepatitis and other specialized testing (Michigan Department of Community Health in Lansing)

## WIC (women, infants & children)



WIC Staff

Program offers nutrition counseling and education and food benefits to low to moderate income pregnant and nursing women, infants, and children under age 5 who have a medical or nutritional need.

- In 2009, the WIC program provided for the purchase of over **\$2,508,668** worth of nutritious food and dairy products by St. Clair County WIC program enrollees.
- From January through December of 2009, there was an average monthly enrollment of **4,244** clients.
- Coordination of WIC and Maternal Infant Health Program services resulted in **405** pregnant women being enrolled in both programs during one appointment and **252** home visits that included WIC services.
- In 2009, the WIC program enrolled **635** pregnant and breastfeeding women, **1,011** infants and **2,417** children 1-5 years of age.
- Collaborative efforts with MSU Extension, the Breastfeeding Initiative Program and MSUE peer counselor provided nutrition education at the WIC office and enrolled pregnant and breastfeeding women for home services.

# environmental health

The Environmental Health Division continues to protect health and promote quality of life through many traditional Environmental Health programs including food service inspections, public and private on-site water supply, lead abatement, public and private on-site sewage disposal, public swimming pools, campgrounds, and public bathing beaches. The Environmental Health Division in St. Clair County is also responsible for two non-traditional programs including enforcement of Michigan Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Rules, and implementation of the St. Clair County Phase II Storm Permit.

### Division Highlights

- Monitored 20 public bathing beaches and 46 stream locations with close proximity to the beaches for source/causation analysis
- Received a grant for bacteria source tracking and Canada Goose deterrent methods at Chrysler Beach in Marysville and a grant to develop a TMDL Implementation Plan at 9 Anchor Bay Watershed streams to monitor for E. coli
- Successfully met all program requirements for Accreditation
- Updated the division website with all applications, instructions and credit card payment brought online
- Started utilizing the new Eljen alternative on-site sewage disposal system



**EH Sanitarians collect water quality data in Burtch Creek to gauge the stream's health**

### Program Statistics

- Temporary food inspections 323
- Restaurant inspections 1,023
- Food complaint investigations 101
- ServSafe Class attendees 133
- Bacterial surface water testing samples 1,624
- On-site wastewater services 1,003
- Water well services 187
- Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Inspections 441

# nursing division highlights



**Nurses administered 13,709 H1N1 vaccines in 2009**

The introduction of the H1N1 virus that started in the spring of 2009 commanded the attention and targeted activity of the Nursing Division through the end of the year. Health department nurses were introduced to and trained in the administration of injectable and nasal H1N1 vaccine. These nurses vaccinated eligible health department staff and retired health department nurses and community nurse volunteers in preparation for mass community clinics which immediately followed. Mass community clinics were coordinated through all school districts in the county and the local colleges. The flexibility and commitment of all nursing division staff to address this significant public health initiative was impressive, commendable and a great action to witness.

While the H1N1 initiative was in full scale, the division went through their three year Accreditation cycle at the end of November 2009. The Family Planning program, STI/HIV, Immunizations, Communicable Disease and Vision and Hearing programs were all evaluated by Michigan Department of Community Health and missed no indicators.

The depressed local economy caused many in the community to call upon the division’s Outreach Program. The need for state health insurance programs, food, shelter and health care has never been greater. The Outreach Program helped more than 4,000 families connect with state health insurance programs and local community resources.

While consumers’ need for health department resources dramatically increased with the economy in 2009, state and local budgets were significantly trimmed. Nursing Division staff again demonstrated resilience, flexibility and professionalism to more than meet the challenge.



**Outreach staff attending Community Resource Fair**

## Nursing Division Services      2009 Clients Served

Adolescent Health Services	1,468
Children’s Special Health Care Services	553
Family Planning Services	2,052
HIV Testing	329
Immunizations: Child, Adult (including Flu, travel vaccines)	8,193
Maternal Child Health Service	976
Outreach Services	4,086
STI Testing and Treatment	2,166
TB Skin Tests	475
Vision & Hearing Screens	21,775



**Nurses provided 3,945 public health nurse visits in 2009**



## TEEN HEALTH CENTER

In 2009, the Teen Health Center (THC) provided 3,059 visits to 1,468 adolescents ages 10 through 21. The adolescent health center is located directly behind Port Huron High School. The center is staffed by a physician, nurse practitioner, registered nurses, and clerical support staff. This primary care clinic for teens is open year round, Monday through Friday with later hours available on Mondays. Insurances are accepted and fees for those without health insurance are based on family size and income. THC offers enrollment in the state health insurance programs; Healthy Kids and MICHild. Service numbers by category for 2009 are as follows:

Immunizations	689
General Medical (including sick visits)	1,923
Mental Health Visits	88
Physical Exams	523
STI diagnosis and treatment	720
Family Planning Referrals	193
Substance Abuse Referrals	8



Sandy Mangan, Nurse Practitioner with a THC client

### Lifestyles Program



Obesity, a common problem for today's youth, is an important focus area for THC. To help THC clients with this significant issue, Annette Mercatante M.D., St. Clair County Health Department Medical Director and local physician, Sushma Reddy, M.D., Endocrinologist, designed *Lifestyles*, an adolescent nutrition and exercise program for THC clients whose goal is to improve activity/exercise levels while holistically enhancing positive nutritional choices. Each participant receives an individualized plan of care and participates in an 8 week program. Every teen participating in the program receives a comprehensive physical assessment, a consultation with a registered dietitian and a nurse facilitated curriculum which includes nutritional information, exercise education methods taught by YMCA certified instructors and guest speakers. Future enhancements to the *Lifestyles* program include possibly adding cooking classes for participants to learn how to cook and prepare healthy foods and snacks.

# health education & planning highlights

The Health Education Division promotes healthy lifestyle behaviors among St. Clair County residents through programs, presentations, community assessment activities and the provision of resources. Nearly 200 presentations were provided to 6,800 participants during 2009 on health promotion and communicable disease prevention topics.



The Health Education team encourages residents to Eat Fresh....Buy Local at the Farmer's Market by providing a "Food Art" activity



## Additional responsibilities of the Health Education Division include:

- The Health Education division played a prominent role in the H1N1 Pandemic of 2009. The division was responsible for communicating continuous flu updates to community partners including schools, health care providers, local government and many other community organizations. Media releases to keep St. Clair County residents up to date on the status of the pandemic and market locations of vaccine clinics, as well as maintenance of current flu information on the department's website were additional division responsibilities.
- Enforcement of the St. Clair County Smoke-free Worksite Regulation that was adopted in 2007, as well as advocacy for passage of state-wide smoke-free air legislation.
- Continuation of *Healthy You* program at Birchwood Mall in cooperation with Partners at Heart. Free, monthly BMI/BP screenings are provided in addition to education on physical activity and nutrition. An additional site (Great Lakes Maritime Center-Vantage Point) was added in 2009. Approximately 650 residents participated in the program during FY 2009/10.
- Eat Fresh....Buy Local campaign @ Vantage Point featured 6 organizations representing the St. Clair County Healthy Community Coalition to provide fun, healthy food activities. Promoted Farmer's Market and encouraged participants to eat more fruits and vegetables grown locally.
- Continued leadership of and/or participation in numerous coalitions with our community partners such as the St. Clair County Smoke-free Team, the Healthy Community Coalition, Parenting Workgroup and Port Huron Hospital's Helmet Safety Committee.



# emergency preparedness division



The Emergency Preparedness Division is directed to develop the health department's capacity and capability to effectively respond to the public health consequences of not only terrorist threats, but also infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological emergencies. The health department's "All-Hazard Plans" are annually reviewed, exercised, and revised as needed to meet stringent requirements from the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the Michigan Department of Community Health's Office of Public Health Preparedness (OPHP) but also constructed to meet the demands of constant change in the nature and severity of public health threats to this community within our jurisdiction, and to be able to coordinate effective and efficient response across borders as well.

**The "2009 Novel H1N1 Pandemic Event" was a true readiness test for local health departments. In response to this pandemic the health department:**

- Requested the apportioned much needed assets from the CDC's "Strategic National Stockpile" to local private providers, hospital and clinics;
- Nearly 100% of all health department staff were available to work the long days into late evening hours in support of the mass vaccination clinics resulting in the successful vaccination of over 15,000 individuals;
- Sporadic vaccine shortages challenged the health department, forcing the difficult decision to sub-prioritize populations "at risk";
- A robust public information campaign utilizing multi-media to inform, educate, explain, and sort fact from fiction was an essential piece to the overall response;
- The health department's mass clinic response staff was augmented by nearly 60 additional volunteers, composed of retired health department employees, family members, nurse volunteers from various agencies, and school staff members which helped provide much needed support and relief for an already stressed internal work force;
- Logistical support for this time sensitive mission provided by RESA, Algonac, East China, Port Huron, Capac, Marysville, Memphis, and Yale School Districts, Baker College and SC4, Community Mental Health, and the St. Clair County Sheriff and Maintenance Departments.



It is with the commitment to preparedness and readiness from our local hospitals, schools, physicians and other entities that we are able to effectively meet the challenges of H1N1 and succeed beyond initial expectations with an apolitical commitment to the overall well being for all citizens of our county.

# did someone say H1N1...?



"The time and patience you have shown just lets us know that you really love your job and the people of your community."



"Please pass along our thanks to everyone who helped and worked at the clinic for that day. Kudos for the members of the St. Clair County Community Health Department."



"I just wanted to say what a great experience we had at Port Huron High School for the flu shot clinic."



"Hats off to the county health department."

