

JUNE 2021

Points of Interest...

- Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic (March 2020), St. Clair County has had 18,493 known cases of COVID-19 among our residents. Of those individuals, we know of 425 residents that have died due to the virus or complications from the disease. Thankfully, current infections rates have recently declined with just under two new known infections a day over the last seven days. The reduction in infection rates is likely directly related to COVID-19 vaccinations. As of the last report from the State, 48.7% of our residents (12 & older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. With new variants of the virus emerging, it is our hope that vaccination rates will continue to improve to protect our residents from the virus.
- To date, the COVID-19 Delta variant has been identified in 25 Michigan residents. The Delta variant was first identified in India and has been reported by the CDC to be significantly more infectious than the UK or Alpha variant which was the variant that likely drove the last surge in cases within the county. With around 50% of our St. Clair County population over the age of 12 unvaccinated, we are still at risk of another surge in COVID-19 cases. The more people that are vaccinated now, the better protected our community will be from the virus.
- School closures and virtual learning during the Pandemic had a great impact on hearing and vision screening for school aged children as well as kindergarten roundup. Typically, the program provides kindergarten roundup for 15 schools; Technicians attended six. All schools received a flier from the St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) Hearing and Vision program indicating free screening availability at the health department in place of kindergarten roundup. Historically, technicians do not work during the summer months because schools are not in session. This summer, technicians will remain in the office so they can continue to provide screening and assist with COVID duties as needed.
- Community collaboration and partnerships emerged and gained strength out of the COVID response. SCCHD has partnered with Blue Meets Green to address economic impacts of COVID and improve COVID vaccine uptake. From this partnership, COVID vaccination clinics were held at over 18 local employers (ranging from municipalities to manufacturing) and a large media campaign was created to promote COVID vaccination. Another partnership, "The Better Together Diversity Initiative" dedicated time and efforts to hosting 20 COVID vaccination clinics committed to individuals with increased social vulnerability.
- The Environmental Health Division has begun beach monitoring. Utilizing grant funding, eight beaches (Chrysler, Conger-Lighthouse, Fort Gratiot County Park, Holland, Keewahdin, Lakeport State Park, Lakeside and Marine City) are being tested weekly for water quality. In addition to the standard method, two beaches (Chrysler, Holland) are also monitored using a rapid testing technology that allows for results within four hours. New this year is that these two beaches will be further evaluated with microbial source tracking to determine if the source of any fecal contamination is from gulls, geese or humans.