

# TOWNSHIP of HOPEWELL

## MERCER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### ACTIVITY SUMMARY 2020-2023



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**The Hopewell Township Health Department** protects the health and well-being of our community, as well as the environmental resources upon which we all depend.

Since 1950, the average lifespan of U.S. residents has increased by more than 10 years, with much of the gain attributable to advances in public health, such as:

- Vaccinations
- Motor-vehicle safety
- Safer workplaces
- Control of infectious diseases
- Decline in deaths from coronary heart disease and stroke
- Safer and healthier foods
- Healthier mothers and babies
- Family planning
- Fluoridation of drinking water
- Recognition of tobacco use as a health hazard

## Mission Statement

### Healthy People in a Healthy Community

To assure all residents a safe community and healthy environment, through evidence-based environmental protection and public health services.

## Long Range Goals

Continued implementation and compliance with the public health practice standards and 10 essential public health functions. These include the following:

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems in the community
3. Inform, educate and empower people regarding health issues
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
5. Develop policies and plans which support individual and community health efforts
6. Enforce the laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure health care when it is otherwise unavailable
8. Ensure a competent local public health system and assure a competent personal health care workforce
9. Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services
10. Research for innovative solutions to health problems



This will be accomplished through a collaborative process with the County and other local health departments and health services agencies in the greater Mercer area.

## Short Range Goals

- Continue to develop & strengthen community partnerships with key agencies and organizations
- Continue working towards a computerized data information system to streamline departmental functions
- Perform review of all health and animal control ordinances to assure codes align with current community needs

## Agency Overview

### Board of Health

The Health Department is managed and funded through the Hopewell Township Board of Health. The Board is comprised of the five elected members of the Hopewell Township Committee. The mission of the Board of Health is to protect, improve, and promote health, productivity, and well-being for all Hopewell Township residents. In 2020 and 2021, meetings were held via Zoom due to COVID-19 safety protocols. In 2022 meetings resumed in-person the second half of the year. Board of Health Members as of December 2023 included Uma Purandare (Chair), Michael Ruger, Kevin Kuchinski, Courtney Peters-Manning, and David Chait.

### Board of Health Advisory Committee

The Hopewell Township Board of Health Advisory Committee was established in 2007 to provide expert counsel to the Board of Health as they strive to achieve their goal of protecting, improving, and promoting the health, productivity, and well-being of all Hopewell Township residents. The Advisory Board consists of Hopewell Township residents with the requisite public health, medical, and/or environmental health expertise to serve as professional advisors to the Township Committee / Board of Health.

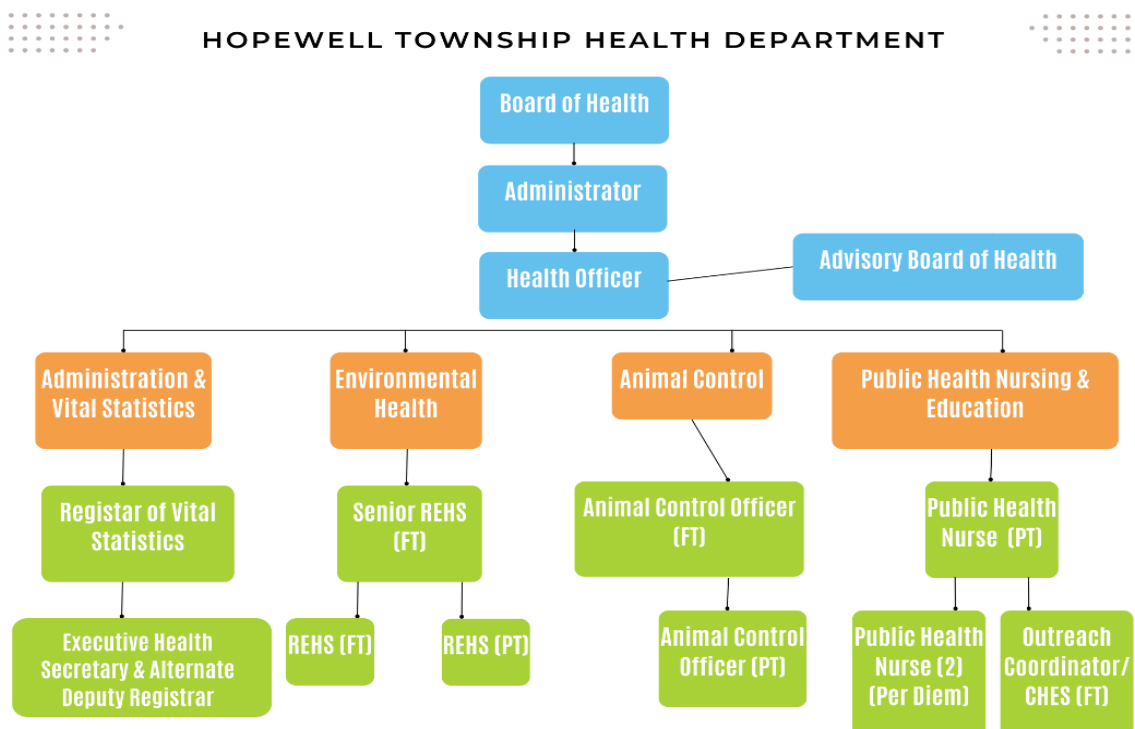
### Boroughs of Hopewell & Pennington

In April of 2023, the Township entered into shared services agreements with both Hopewell & Pennington Boroughs to provide comprehensive public health programs and animal control through the Hopewell Township Health Department. Each Borough maintains their own autonomous and independent Boards of Health.

Hopewell Township Board of Health: [www.hopewelltpw.org/190/Board-of-Health](http://www.hopewelltpw.org/190/Board-of-Health)

Pennington Borough Board of Health: [www.penningtonboro.org/board-health](http://www.penningtonboro.org/board-health)

Hopewell Borough Board of Health: <https://www.hopewellboro-nj.us/>



## Administration & Vital Statistics

The Health Officer serves as the agency Director, overseeing all programs and services to assure compliance with New Jersey's Public Health Practice Standards and local regulations. The Health Officer develops the annual budget and monitors expenditures, oversees shared service contracts, conducts public health planning by evaluating community needs and services in collaboration with community partners, and reports to the various Boards of Health as necessary. In recent years, grant management has also been a key activity to sustain staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Administrative support staff in the Department serve as the organizational backbone for all professional services. From greeting residents and contractors, triaging phone calls and common email inquiries, issuing licenses and permits, processing deposits, responding to OPRA requests, and maintaining inventory, the entire Health Department team benefits from this foundational support. In addition, serving as a back-up for the Township's busy Vital Statistics program is essential. As of December 2023, the Department had one full-time Executive Health Secretary / Alternate Deputy Registrar.

### Open Public Records Act (OPRA)

The public has the right of access to government records and responding to OPRA requests is a key administrative service. The Health Department receives frequent inquiries from realtors performing due diligence ahead of property purchases, as well as septic system contractors, in order to properly evaluate on-site conditions. The Department experienced a surge of OPRA requests during the "hot" real estate market of 2021-2022.

**2020 → 319 OPRA requests**

**2021 → 427 OPRA requests**

**2022 → 598 OPRA requests**

**2023 → 335 OPRA requests**

### Funding & Revenue

Routine Health Department revenue includes fees for environmental licenses and permits (restaurants, septic systems, etc.), pet licensing, and fees for certified vital records. Staffing and operational expenses are supported through the annual Hopewell Township budget allocation. From 2020-2023 the Department applied for and received several grants to both sustain core staff and hire surge staffing during the pandemic.





## Vital Records & Statistics

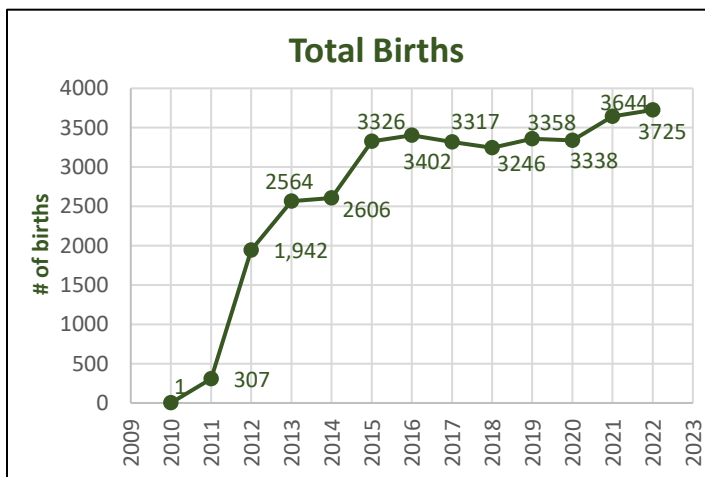
Births, marriages and deaths are permanently recorded by the Registrar of Vital Statistics in the municipality in which they actually take place. Services include handling burial permits, issuing marriage licenses and certified copies of vital records.

Hopewell Township receives a high volume of birth certificate requests due to Capital Health being located within the Township. Any child born at that hospital will go through Hopewell Township Vital Statistics to receive a birth certificate.

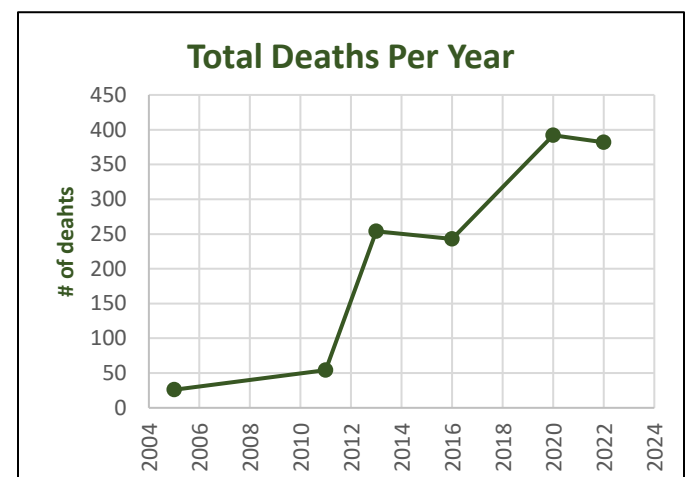
As of December 2023, the program was managed by one full-time, bilingual Certified Municipal Registrar, with support and coverage provided by the Department's Animal Control Officer (Deputy Registrar) and Health Secretary (Alternate Registrar).

*\*The following charts are for illustrative purposes and do not represent all Vital Statistics services & activities.*

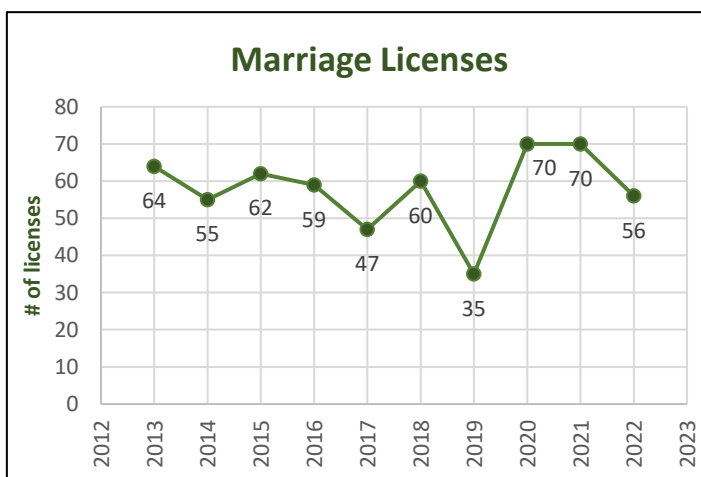
### Total Births Per Year



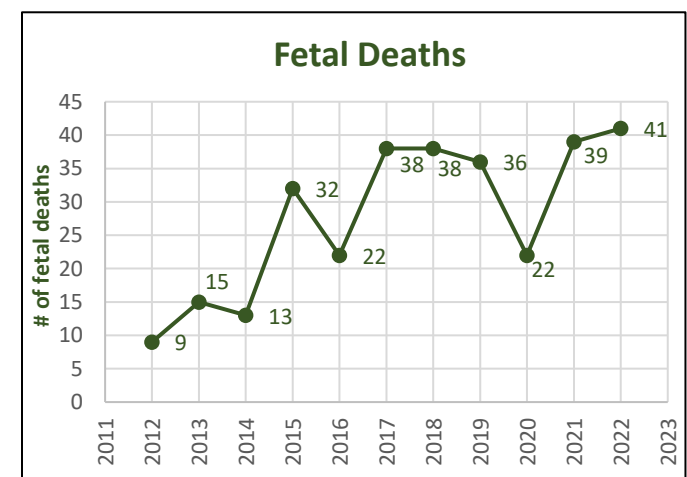
### Total Deaths Per Year



### Total Marriage Licenses Per Year



### Total Fetal Deaths Per Year



## Animal Control Officer (ACO)

Hopewell Township's Animal Control Officers protect individuals and their domestic animals and are responsible for:

- Animal Bites and Rabies Control
- Pet Licensing
- Rabies Vaccination Clinics
- Kennels, Pet Shops, and Shelter/Pound Facilities
- Collecting and impounding lost pets, stray domestic animals
- Sick, injured, or dangerous animals
- Emergency preparedness to protect animals during disasters



As of December 2023, the Health Department employed one full-time Animal Control Officer and one per diem ACO for coverage and support, as-needed.



# 2020

Dogs Licensed  
1779

Cats Licensed  
367

Rabies Clinics  
2

Pets Vaccinated  
365

# 2021

Dogs Licensed  
1785

Cats Licensed  
344

Rabies Clinics  
2

Pets Vaccinated  
302

# 2022

Dogs Licensed  
1742

Cats Licensed  
318

Rabies Clinics  
2

Pets Vaccinated  
340

# 2023

Dogs Licensed  
1802

Cats Licensed  
273

Rabies Clinics  
4

Pets Vaccinated  
373

## Environmental & Consumer Health

Routine inspections are performed by NJ-licensed Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) professionals. Inspections, education, and enforcement activities are conducted to ensure businesses are in compliance with State and Township public health regulations. Whether responding to a resident complaint, ensuring food safety at a restaurant, evaluating water quality data, inspecting a summer youth camp, or monitoring the proper installation of a septic system, these professionals are vital to ensuring a safe and healthy community.

The environmental health staff conducts regular inspections for the 150+ food vendors throughout the Hopewell Valley. Copies of all reports are left with the business owner and are on file at the Health Department for public review. For more information from the CDC about food safety [visit this link](#). Seasonally, public bathing places are inspected by the Health Department. Life-saving equipment, personnel certifications, and proper sanitation procedures are checked to ensure safety. For more information about safe swimming from the CDC, [click here](#). Public Health nuisances and occupational complaints that are reported to the Department are investigated and appropriate action is taken as needed.

As of December 2023, the Health Department employed one full-time Senior Registered Environmental Health Specialist, and two part-time REHS inspectors.

### Septic Systems

The design, construction, and operation of individual sewage disposal systems are monitored to assure the proper treatment and disposal of sewage, which is essential to protect the underlying groundwater and drinking water supplies relied upon by many Township residents. Permits and inspections are required for new construction, as well as repairs or alterations for existing systems.



Hopewell Township ordinance requires the private inspection of septic systems during real estate transactions. The Health Department reviews these inspections reports (along with well water sampling results) through a “Letter of Review” application process. Home sales often drive the upgrades needed to repair or replace an older or malfunctioning system. The busy real estate market of 2021-2022 led to an increase in permits / inspections during that timeframe.

	NEW SYSTEMS	ALTERATIONS	REPAIRS
2020	3	96	56
2021	8	101	65
2022	6	105	63
2023	4	57	47



## Drinking Water Quality

Many Hopewell Township residents get their drinking water from a private well. Maintenance and testing of private wells is a personal responsibility and encouraged to protect your family's health. In New Jersey, well water testing is required during all real estate transactions under the [Private Well Testing Act](#). Landlords are also required to test their well water once every five years and to provide each tenant with a copy of the test results. Otherwise, it is recommended to test your private well drinking water - at minimum – using the intervals below:

- **Every year: total coliform bacteria, nitrates, and pH**
- **Every 5 years: lead, volatile organic compounds, arsenic, iron, manganese, PFAS**
- **At least once: Mercury, gross alpha, and uranium, synthetic organic compounds**

**Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”)** are a large family of thousands of manmade chemicals that have been used in industrial and commercial applications for over 70 years. Also known as “forever chemicals,” PFAS repel water and oil and are resistant to heat and chemical reactions. New Jersey currently regulates three substances - PFOA, PFOS, and PFNA - because it was determined that these three PFAS occur in groundwater and drinking water at levels of concern. These chemicals have been linked to numerous adverse health effects, including decreased birth weights, increased cholesterol and liver enzymes, thyroid disease, and kidney & testicular cancers. Unfortunately, PFAS chemicals have been detected in many Hopewell Township groundwater supplies. The Health Department hosted two NJDEP community presentations on this topic and arranged for discounted lab pricing to encourage testing. For more information, visit <https://hopewelltpw.org/667/PFAS-Information>.

**Legionella** -- In late 2022, the presence of Legionella bacteria was identified in water samples collected from more than half of 30 homes within several municipalities served by Trenton Water Works (TWW), including homes within Hopewell Township. The testing was conducted in September 2022 as part of an ongoing New Jersey Department of Health and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection joint investigation into elevated cases of Legionnaires' disease among Mercer County residents served by TWW. Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia that people can get after breathing in aerosolized water (small droplets of water in the air) containing Legionella bacteria. Individuals cannot get Legionnaires' disease by drinking water that has Legionella bacteria. Simple measures can reduce the growth of bacteria in home plumbing systems; for example: cleaning shower heads and aerators, increasing the temperature of your hot water heater to at least 120 degrees, and regularly flushing any pipes that are stagnant. For more information, visit <https://www.hopewelltpw.org/180/Water-Quality>.

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## Food Safety

Unannounced inspections of all retail food establishments are conducted at least 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”. REHS inspectors also respond to complaints and monitor recalled food products to ensure the food sold and served is safe for consumption by the public. Entering into shared services agreements with the Boroughs in early 2023 resulted in an approx. 60% increase in inspection volume.

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## Recreational Bathing Facilities/Youth Camps

Recreational bathing places are monitored and inspected throughout the summer season. This includes public pools, health clubs, and housing complexes. Water quality is monitored and pools are checked for the required safety equipment and personnel as required. The New Jersey Department of Health also requires summer 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.



## Miscellaneous

The Health Department assists in the resolution of quality-of-life questions and concerns, as well as conducts investigations to prevent and correct ("abate") conditions that interfere with the use or enjoyment of property or potentially endanger life, health and safety.

### Complaint investigations include:

- High grass or dead / dying trees
- Deteriorated infrastructure
- Noise, odors, general nuisances
- Septic malfunctions
- Debris, garbage, rodents

## DEP Hotline

The Hopewell Township Health Department works closely with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to solve local pollution control problems. NJDEP's 24/7 Hotline is 877-WARNDEP (877-927-6337).



## Public Health Nursing

The Public Health Nurse provides community health services by integrating a clinical understanding of health & wellness with epidemiological methods to implement an appropriate public health response. Core activities include following-up on communicable disease reports, ensuring access to healthcare including vaccinations, and conducting immunization audits at schools and childcare centers. Program goals include prevention of illness, injury or disability, and advancing the health of the population in partnership with the community. As of December 2023, the Health Department had one part-time and two per diem Public Health Nurses.

### Effects of COVID-19 on Public Health Nursing



The pandemic shut down most in-person services during 2020 and created a need for widespread vaccinations throughout 2021-2022. Many routine activities, such as blood pressure screenings and other events focusing on chronic disease prevention, were postponed in order to provide vaccinations, contact tracing, and COVID-19 outbreak mitigation. The Department hired contact tracers to assist through NJDOH grant funding. The Health Department's nursing program resumed many routine services from 2022-2023 in conjunction with ongoing booster vaccination clinic offerings. A significant portion of Township residents are ages 55+ and both flu and COVID clinics have routinely been well-attended. The Public Health Nurse also ensures access to vaccinations for our uninsured, homebound, and disabled residents.

### Immunization Record Audits

To prevent some of the most serious communicable diseases, the New Jersey school immunization regulations (Immunization of Pupils in Schools (N.J.A.C. 8:57-4) require students to receive a series of vaccinations prior to attendance at a childcare center or K-12 school. In order to ensure compliance, local health departments annual conduct immunization audits. During an immunization audit, Public Health Nurses examine each child's vaccine record to ensure that each student is up-to-date, minimizing risk to the entire population and especially any vulnerable children at the facility.



### Communicable Disease Control

N.J.A.C. 8:57-1 "Communicable Diseases" requires the reporting and investigation of specific diseases by the local health department where an individual resides. Investigation and follow-up is performed for all reportable diseases and for any outbreaks of respiratory illness or gastrointestinal 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 (listed here: [www.nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/when/](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/when/)) are managed through the NJDOH's Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS). Upon notification of a reportable diseases, the Public Health Nurse will interview the physician or patient, gathering details about symptoms, exposures and potential sources, and educate about control measures to prevent further transmission. **Excluding COVID-19, Hopewell Township Health Department has followed up on an average of 125 communicable disease reports annually.**



### Legionnaires' Disease

In October 2022, the presence of Legionella bacteria was identified in water samples collected from more than half of 30 homes within several municipalities served by Trenton Water Works (TWW). However, people cannot get Legionnaires' disease by drinking water that has Legionella bacteria and simple measures can reduce the growth of bacteria in home plumbing systems. From 2020-2023 no cases of Legionnaires' Disease were identified among Hopewell Township residents. Physicians and local health departments in the area remain vigilant. For more information please visit:

[www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/legion.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/legion.shtml)

### Tick-borne Illnesses




Hopewell Township has numerous hiking trails, natural parks, and wooded areas where ticks can be found. Therefore, it is important that the Health Department provides residents with information on preventing bites and seeking prompt treatment as needed. Dissemination of materials preventing tick-borne illnesses are targeted in the beginning of each spring and throughout the summer when ticks are most active. The blacklegged tick (deer tick) is most prevalent in our area. The following data shows tick-borne illnesses reported in Hopewell Township through 2020-2022:

**Lyme Disease:** 158

**Babesiosis:** 14

**Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis:** 8

**Other:** 2

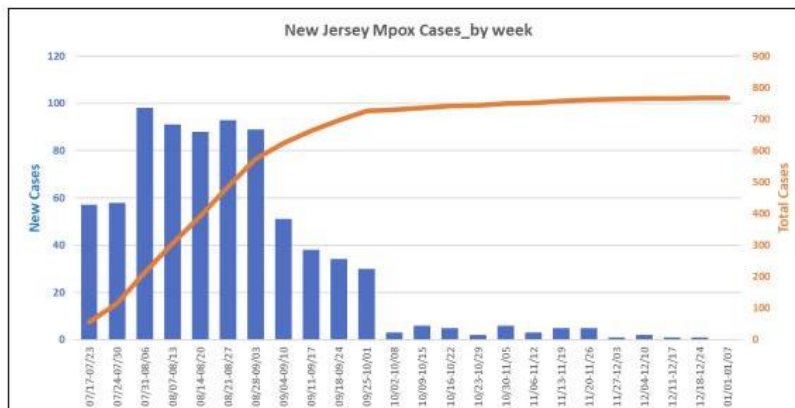
Black-legged tick	Lone Star tick	American Dog tick
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lyme disease</li> <li>Anaplasmosis</li> <li>Babesiosis</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ehrlichiosis</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rocky Mountain spotted fever</li> </ul>



Cases of babesiosis have been increasing at a concerning rate according to a new [report](#) from the CDC. Babesiosis is considered an endemic from the Northeastern states where cases peak during the spring and summer months. Babesiosis is caused by the *Babesia* parasite, a bite from a tick carrying the parasite can send it into a person's bloodstream. The infection can be treated by antimicrobial medications, but in extreme cases, it can be fatal especially among those who are immunocompromised.

### Mpox (formerly Monkeypox)

Mpox is a disease caused by infection with the mpox virus. The virus can cause flu-like symptoms, swollen lymph nodes, and a rash that often begins on the face and spread to other parts of the body. As with all communicable diseases, local health departments work to monitor cases, educate close contacts, provide treatment and vaccines, and further prevent the spread of disease. In October and November 2022, Hopewell Township partnered with Mercer County Division of Health to provide an mpox vaccination clinic at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Titusville.



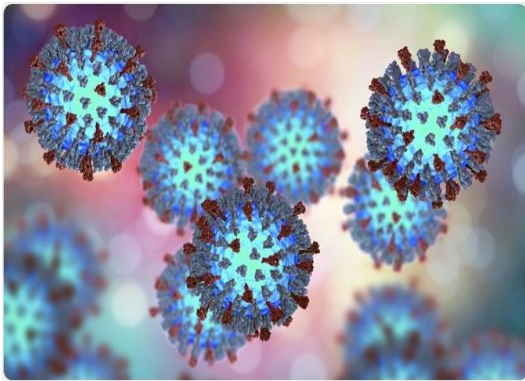


**4 STEPS TO FOOD SAFETY****Foodborne Illnesses**

Local health departments investigate foodborne illness cases most often when a resident has lab work performed at their doctor's office. However, despite consuming food that produces abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting, many foodborne illnesses go unreported. LHDs conduct interviews with patients to assess the potential source(s) of illness and look for patterns of exposure from certain foods or places of business. These boots-on-the-ground investigations are a part of the larger food safety network that can lead to nationwide product recalls.

**Ebola**

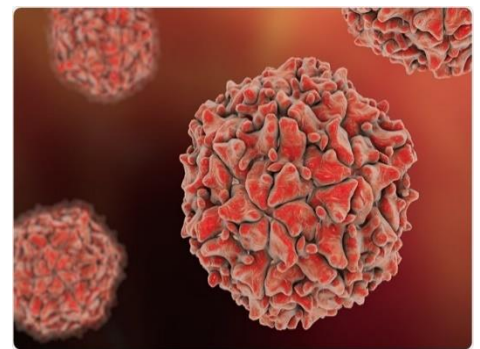
In September 2022, Uganda declared an Ebola disease outbreak (WHO). Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease that can occur in humans and some animals. It is caused by an infection with a virus. Ebola is spread through direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected, symptomatic person. It is also spread through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions. There is no specific medicine that cures people infected with Ebola. Local health departments monitor travelers from countries with active Ebola outbreaks as directed by the CDC and/or NJDOH.

**Measles**

Measles is a very contagious disease caused by a virus, where up to 90% of people having close contact with an infected person will get measles if they are not vaccinated (NJDOH). Throughout 2020-2022 there were a total of 183 cases reported in the US (CDC). Data underscores concern that growing parental resistance to routine childhood immunizations might be fueling a resurgence in vaccine-preventable diseases. As of the 2022-2023 school year, only about 93 percent of American kindergartners were vaccinated with the required two doses; the second year in a row that measles, mumps and rubella coverage fell below the 95 percent level ideally needed for community protection.

**Polio – 2022 NY case**

In July 2022, a case of paralytic poliomyelitis was confirmed in an unvaccinated adult in Rockland County, New York. One case of paralytic polio is considered a public health emergency. The virus was also detected in samples of sewage from several New York locations, indicating local circulation of the virus. As a bordering state, the circulation of poliovirus in parts of New York State underscores the urgency of making sure that every child and adult in New Jersey has been vaccinated against polio. Three doses of polio vaccine are 99% effective in preventing paralysis ([NJDOH](#)).





## COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The COVID-19 pandemic created unique challenges for our community to overcome throughout 2020, 2021, and beyond. With the help of community leaders and partners, front-line workers, first responders, and our dedicated Health Department team, we were able to quickly respond to protect and provide resources for our most vulnerable residents.

The spread of COVID-19 led to a great hardship for our community and nation. From 2020-2021 we saw unprecedented outbreaks, hospitalizations and deaths, pushing hospitals, healthcare workers, first responders, and the entire public health system to its breaking point. In early 2021, Hopewell Township Health Department mobilized to offer ongoing clinics at a scale and scope to ensure rapid access to vaccinations for the entire community as quickly as possible. This could not have been done without the help of our community partnerships as they have supported our ability to offer vaccine clinics, share COVID-19 information, and overall enhance the quality of services provided for the health and well-being of the community.



During 2022, COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact on our community. New variants of the virus, and the ongoing prevalence and severity of disease, continued to put a stressor on hospitals, healthcare workers, health departments, the school system, and the community as a whole. The Health Department sustained its efforts to protect the public from the spread of COVID-19. Those efforts included hosting numerous vaccination clinics, distributing free antigen testing kits, and providing guidance to schools, childcare centers, and other facilities regarding outbreak management.

Hopewell Township Health Department is grateful for the many community health partners who worked with us to expand access to vaccinations, particularly for vulnerable populations with limited resources or transportation barriers, including Capital Health, the Mercer County Division of Health, Hopewell Pharmacy, Walgreens, and Wegmans.

## Contact Tracers

Contact tracers were rapidly hired and trained in 2020 to assist local health departments in reaching those individuals who had been in close contact to a person with COVID-19, providing up-to-date guidance on isolation and quarantine recommendations to reduce further spread of the disease. Through grant-funding, 5 contact tracers were initially hired in 2020 to assist the Township Health Department. They utilized the NJ platform “CommCare” for a standardized and uniform procedure, allowing LHDs to effectively manage contact tracing at the magnitude necessary for incoming COVID-19 cases.

**CommCare**



## Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant

Following the initial surge of contact tracing, New Jersey Department of Health grant funding provided ongoing support to help local health departments continue to respond and mitigate the effects of the pandemic within their communities. In early 2021, a COVID-19 Generalist (CVG) and Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator (VPOC) were appointed through the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity 2021 Grant, via federal CDC funds distributed by the NJDOH. These positions worked together to support the Department, provide response to public health emergencies, and serving disproportionately affected populations. The Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity 2021 Grant was extended into 2022 and 2023, with updated position titles and descriptions:

***Infectious Disease Preparedness Generalist (IDPG)*** [formerly known as the COVID-19 Generalist (CVG)] was appointed to assist with outreach to populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases through POD planning / vaccine logistics, testing, contact tracing, resolving laboratory reporting issues within the jurisdiction, and other COVID-19 and other infectious disease-related activities.

***Local Health Outreach Coordinator (LHOC)*** [formerly known as the Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator (VPOC)] was appointed to assess, mitigate and respond to populations disproportionately affected by the social and health impacts of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. This includes ensuring that these populations have access to testing and support services such as housing, primary medical care, insurance coverage, and unemployment compensation.

## Enhancing Local Public Health Capacity Grant

In 2023, the Hopewell Township Health Department applied for and received additional funding from the New Jersey Association of County & City Health Officials (NJACCHO). This grant offered flexible options to local health departments to utilize funding aligned with local needs and priorities. As of December 2023, the grant was expected to run through June 30, 2025. There remains a need for sustainable and consistent State-level funding for local health departments to ensure continuity of services and maintain a state-of-readiness, regardless of grant availability.

## COVID-19 Recovery

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*“May 11, 2023 marked the end of the national Public Health Emergency Declaration for COVID-19. For more than three years, we as a nation came together to address the largest public health challenge in our lifetimes. And while the disease’s impact has been felt across the globe, the front lines of the U.S. response has been handled locally, community by community, led by our nation’s local health departments.*

*“From the beginning, local health department staff have worked tirelessly to keep their communities informed, track the spread of the virus, and take steps to keep their populations as safe as possible. As the nation shut down, local health officials and staff stepped up to do what was necessary, whether that be setting up vaccination campaigns for thousands of people or ensuring that one individual household had enough food to eat to support themselves while quarantining. They developed drive-through and mobile testing operations, helped schools and businesses reopen safely, and led the way through to ensure everyone in their community had access to the information and resources necessary as we learned more about the virus and the pandemic changed around us.*

*“There is no doubt that the response to COVID has changed our lives in untold ways. Moreover, far too many of us lost a friend or family member to this disease. We must never forget that over 1 million Americans died from this disease and many others continue to experience long-term impacts from the virus.*

*“The recovery from COVID-19 will assess our courage to move forward with learned intention to incorporate the lessons of the pandemic to prepare for—and respond to—future challenges. However, our ability to address these threats is at risk. Across the country we are seeing an erosion of public health authority and the politization of public health that is impacting the morale of our health departments as well as the effectiveness of our work.*

*“We need to rebuild trust with the public and restore the critical tools of public health. Moreover, we must learn the key lessons of the pandemic and adopt policies and procedures to implement them. and we need to strengthen and truly support the public health system—especially the nearly 3,000 local health departments who provide much needed care and strategic direction in their communities. The stronger our local health department network is before crisis, the better off we all will be when—not if—the next one hits.*

*“While the federal emergency is over, there is still work to be done as we embark on this next chapter. COVID-19 is still with us, and local health departments will continue to do what is necessary to support their communities and address the many other public health challenges that continue to impact our nation.”*

- Lori Tremmel Freeman, CEO  
National Association of County & City Health Officials

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## Health Education & Outreach

Health education occurs throughout all of Hopewell Township Health Department's initiatives, with a focus on providing programs that aid the public in making informed decisions about their health. Educational programs and screening services help prevent communicable diseases, chronic illnesses, and help to ensure residents have the tools for a healthy lifestyle. During 2020-2022 the main priority of health education and outreach was providing resources and timely information to the public about COVID-19 and increasing vaccination rates. Through grant funding, the Department was able to maintain a full-time Outreach Coordinator and Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) from early 2021 through the end of 2023.

### Rapid Public Health Assessment

Since the onset of the pandemic, public health response evolved frequently to provide up-to-date testing, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation guidelines, and vaccination to prevent the spread of infectious disease and protect the public's health. As part of the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity funding, the Hopewell Township Health Department's Local Health Outreach Coordinator (LHOC) conducted a Rapid Public Health Assessment each year to quickly assess and align programs and services with community needs. The goal of each annual Assessment was to:

- Define and categorize populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases;
- Detail the community demographics of the LHD's service area;
- Describe the populations in need, health disparities, and community impacts of COVID-19 and other specific infectious diseases targeted by the LHD;
- List community agencies that provide support to these disproportionately affected populations; and
- Summarize key findings and priorities.

Demographics from the Assessment are outlined on page 19 of this report. The LHOC gathered input from stakeholders within the community to develop an action plan and took on the main role of ensuring that resources and educational materials reached our targeted populations through multiple channels. Outreach included:

- Distribution of COVID-19 testing kits
- Distribution of health education materials (flyers, infographics, fact sheets)
- Dissemination of information through social media, newsletters, and the Hopewell Township website
- FISH deliveries (local meals-on-wheels) to Seniors within the community where they would be provided their meal and social support resources from the Health Department
- Tabling events to share information on communicable diseases, health screenings, and other services the health department offered
- Youth mental health training and liaison with the Municipal Alliance





## Outreach Events

Education and outreach priorities included COVID-19 as a significant focus for 2020 and 2021, with a return to a variety of topics including tickborne illnesses and chronic disease prevention in 2022. A collaborative effort is made to ensure connection with all populations, especially those who are at a higher risk for poor health outcomes. The Department has partnered with Hopewell Valley Senior Services, Hopewell Valley Public Schools, Hopewell Valley Mobile Food Pantry, Hopewell Valley Municipal Alliance, Hopewell Valley Emergency Services, local businesses, faith-based organizations, and other community partners to ensure widespread reach for up-to-date health information and to link residents with social support services.

## Social Support and Wellbeing

The [Social Support brochure](#) was developed using grant-funding to link the Hopewell Valley community to local resources for food assistance, transportation, housing, senior services, youth services, health care resources, behavioral health support, and emergency services. By having this information both printed and online, and with widespread distribution, we aim to help ensure everyone in our community has access to the services they need to live a happy and healthy life. Copies of the brochure were provided in 2023 through Hopewell Valley's emergency services (Fire and Police), to school nurses, local churches, the Hopewell Valley Mobile Food Pantry, and many other partners to increase reach of distribution to residents. In addition, the *Social Support & Wellbeing* page was developed in 2022 on the Township's website.

[www.hopewelltp.org/680/Social-Support-Wellbeing](http://www.hopewelltp.org/680/Social-Support-Wellbeing)

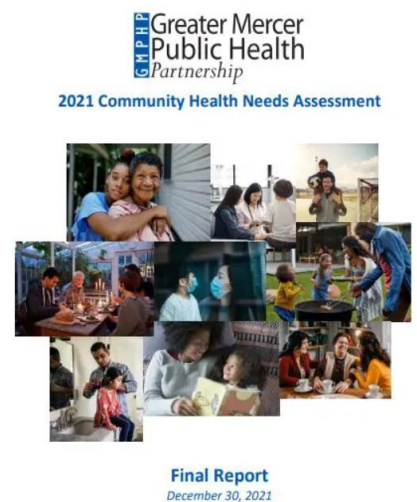


## Community Health Needs Assessment

The Department actively participated with the Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership and continues to plan for the needs of a growing community to ongoing assessment and alignment of goals and priorities.

A Community Health Needs Assessment was conducted in 2021, through a comprehensive partnership of local health departments, hospitals, and human service agencies. For more information, please visit

<https://gmphp.org/>





## Demographics

### Community Data Summary: HOPEWELL TWP



Issue	Indicator	Units	Time Period	HOPEWELL TWP	MERCER	County Comparison*	NEW JERSEY	State Comparison*
Demographics	Population	Total Population	2016 to 2020	17,967	368,085		8,885,418	
	Poverty	% Under 2 times Poverty	2016 to 2020	7.6	23.8	33	22.1	16
	Minority	% Minority	2016 to 2020	21.0	51.2	25	45.3	43
	Health Insurance	% with no Insurance	2016 to 2020	2.3	7.1	33	7.6	22
Environment	Air Cancer Risk	Risk per Million	2017	113	136	17	155	36
	Air Non Cancer	Combined Hazard Index	2017	1.8	2.1	17	2.2	43
	Air Quality Index (AQI)	Days AQI above 100 (3 yr Avg)	2018 to 2020	3.7	4.3	33	3.2	60
	Community Drinking Water	Number of MCL, TT and AL exceedances(3 yr)	2019 to 2021	8	8	MCL or AL	30	MCL or AL
	Private Wells	% of Private Wells above Primary Standard	2002 to 2018	34.2	26.7	88	14.5	92
	Ground Water/ Soil	% Area Restricted Use	2022	0.8	2.2	33	3.9	47
	Surface Water Quality	% Designated Uses Not Supported	2016	75.9	83.1	17	72	47
	Flooding (Urban Land Cover)	% Urban Land Use Area Flooded	2021	2.1	5.2	25	12.1	20
Sites	Air Permit Sources	Sites per Sq Mile	2022	0.25	0.65	17	1.05	25
	Combined Sewer Overflow	Number per Town	2019	0	1	0	212	0
	Brownfield Development Areas	Number per Town	2019	0	2	0	39	0
	Contaminated Sites	Sites per Sq Mile	2022	0.55	1.96	8	3.85	24
	Scrap Metal Facilities	Sites per Sq Mile	2022	0.00	0.04	33	0.07	26
Built Environment	Age of Housing	% Pre1950	2016 to 2020	18.5	28.6	42	25.2	39
	Radon	% tests > 4 pCi/L	1985 to 2015	33.0	14.0	100	12.3	84
	Open Space (OS)	Pop. >1/4 mi. from OS per acre of OS	2022	1.0	388.5	8	525.2	18
	Traffic	% Population 1000 ft heavy traffic	2018	6.0	13.4	42	9.3	56
Public Health**	Low Birth Weight	% All Births < 5 lb, 8 oz	2016 to 2020	5.0	8.1	BELOW	7.9	BELOW
	Childhood Blood Lead	% Children tested > 5 µg/dL	2019 (SFY)	N/A	3.5	SUPPRESSED	2.3	SUPPRESSED
	Asthma (ED)	Age Adjusted Rate per 10,000	2016 to 2019	SUPPRESSED	82.3	SUPPRESSED	55.7	SUPPRESSED
	Heart Attack (AMI) (IP)	Age Adjusted Rate per 10,000	2016 to 2019	2.9	18.4	NO DIFFERENCE	16.3	BELOW
	Heart Disease Deaths	Age Adjusted Death Rate per 100,000	2015 to 2019	123.0	156.8	NO DIFFERENCE	163.7	BELOW
	COPD (ED)	Age Adjusted Rate per 10,000	2016 to 2019	SUPPRESSED	29.1	SUPPRESSED	24.6	SUPPRESSED
	Stroke (IP)	Age Adjusted Rate per 10,000	2016 to 2019	SUPPRESSED	23.5	SUPPRESSED	19.8	SUPPRESSED
	All Cancer Deaths	Age Adjusted Death Rate per 100,000	2015 to 2019	113.8	144.6	NO DIFFERENCE	144.6	BELOW
	Lung Cancer Deaths	Age Adjusted Death Rate per 100,000	2015 to 2019	17.1	31.4	NO DIFFERENCE	31.9	BELOW
	Smoking	% of Adults	2018	11.1	15.4	BELOW	15.4	BELOW
	Obesity	% of Adults	2018	26.8	31.1	BELOW	28.2	BELOW
	Heat Related Illness (ED)	Age Adjusted Rate per 10,000	2016 to 2019	SUPPRESSED	1.3	SUPPRESSED	0.9	SUPPRESSED

\*All comparisons are percentile, except Public Health indicators are based on 95% Confidence Interval

\*\* (ED) are based on Emergency Department Hospitalization data. (IP) are based on In Patient Hospitalization data

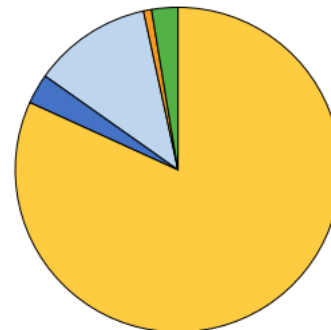
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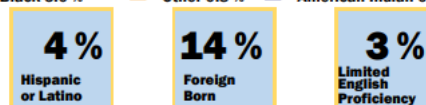
## Demographics

Population	17,967
Births (2020 SHAD)	109
Deaths (2020 SHAD)	122
<5 years old	6 %
>65 years old	15 %
Poverty	3 %
Single parent households	6 %
Disabled	7 %
Unemployment	3 %
No Health Insurance	2 %
College+ Education	60 %
High school education	14 %

Households	6,238
Housing Units per Square Mile	114
Homeowners	82 %
Renters	10 %
Persons per Household	2
No Vehicle	2 %
Vacancy	7 %
Public Transportation	4 %



White 81.8 % Asian 11.8 % 2 or more races 2.6 %  
Black 3.0 % Other 0.8 % American Indian 0.0 %



Source: Healthy Community Planning