



CLAY COUNTY
**PUBLIC
HEALTH
CENTER**



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



CLAY COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER



MISSION

The mission of the Clay County Public Health Center is to deliver the essential public health services of prevention, promotion and protection to the communities of Clay County.

VISION

Empowering all people in Clay County to lead healthier lives!

BOARD OF HEALTH



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PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gary E. Zaborac, MS, Director of Public Health

Darrell Meinke, MPH, Deputy Director

Robert Gilliland, CEHS, Section Chief, Environmental Health Protection

Jami Hrenchir, MPA, SPHR, Section Chief, Operations/HR Director

Jason Stalling, MBA, CFHA, Section Chief, Community Health Promotion

Ashley Wegner, MPH, CIC, Section Chief, Health Planning and Policy

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our 2021 Annual Report. The following pages offer a brief review of the many accomplishments of your nationally accredited Clay County Public Health Center (CCPHC) during 2021. We continue to work hard every day to assure conditions exist in which all our citizens can be healthy. Our Board of Health is committed to ensuring the highest standard of public health services are delivered to the residents of Clay County.



Unfortunately, 2021 saw the continuation of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2021, Clay County had experienced over 46,000 cases, approached almost 1,000 hospitalizations, and 500 deaths. The good news is that a vaccine to prevent the spread of COVID-19 arrived in January 2021. CCPHC began immediately offering vaccination clinics. CCPHC and our staff were also a proud lead partner in Operation Safe. Along with North Kansas City Hospital, Liberty Hospital, Cerner, and countless community partners and volunteers including every municipality in Clay County, Operation Safe helped to get almost 100,000 shots in arms during a three-month period in late winter and early spring. Liberty Fire Chief John Mills, The City of Liberty and North Kansas City Fire Chief Dave Hargis and the City of North Kansas City also played major roles in Operation Safe and we thank them for their efforts and leadership.

In addition to providing immunizations, our department also provided disease investigations, contact tracing, and testing services to help slow and prevent the spread of disease. Every single CCPHC employee had a supporting role in our community response. All of this plus continuing to provide high quality public health services every day. I am so proud of our staff and our Board of Health. They have done a phenomenal job! There is no doubt that due to the efforts of our highly dedicated team, countless lives have been saved, hospitalizations were reduced, and fewer people became sick from this deadly virus. I am truly privileged and humbled to be a part of this organization of so many dedicated public health professionals.

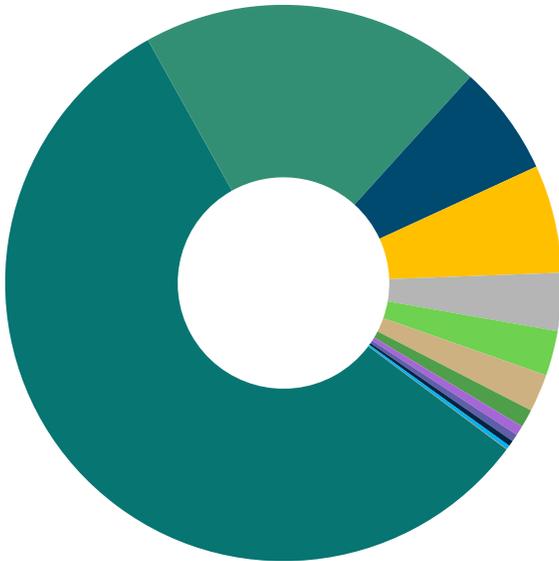
Being successful in assuring conditions exist for people to be healthy takes a strong network of collaborative partners. The collaborative spirit of the Northland continued to be on display during 2021. We extend a sincere thank you to each of our partners in the local public health system in Clay County. Finally, we thank the people of Clay County for your continued support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary E. Zaborac". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Gary E. Zaborac
Director of Public Health

2021 FINANCIALS

REVENUE



Local Taxes	\$4,828,880.52
Federal Grants/Contracts	\$1,686,903.42
Environmental Fees	\$546,442.60
ARPA*	\$535,535.39
Vital Records	\$286,131.00
Insurance Billing	\$222,361.40
State Grants/Contracts	\$186,546.30
CARES Act*	\$89,387.80
Medicaid/MC+	\$48,093.42
Clinic Fees	\$36,675.75
Interest	\$27,911.69
Other**	\$20,226.33
Medicare	\$1,702.81

TOTAL 2021 REVENUE : \$8,516,798.43

*Federal grants for COVID-19 relief

**Facility rent (Rodgers Health), miscellaneous refunds and reimbursements

EXPENDITURES



Salaries	\$3,661,817.13
Debt Services*	\$1,945,868.00
Benefits	\$1,624,017.80
Contract Services	\$760,007.76
Other**	\$287,120.82
Utilities	\$214,046.52
Supplies	\$189,328.71
Capital Expenses***	\$43,883.02
Travel	\$34,065.17

TOTAL 2021 EXPENDITURES: \$8,760,154.93

*Paid off lease purchase agreement for building

**Banking fees, vehicle expense, vaccine costs, interest expense

***For the replacement/updates of facilities and equipment

2021 AT A GLANCE

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION

STD testing clients: 328

Non-COVID immunizations provided: 8,206

School-based dental screenings: 4,882

School fluoride varnish applications: 7,421

WIC contacts (certification, nutrition education, card reload, etc.): 12,584

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor contacts: 5,784



OPERATIONS

Birth and death certificate requests processed: 22,330

Staff hours spent on COVID response: at least 25,000

Website visits: 520,950

Views of social media posts: 3,018,844

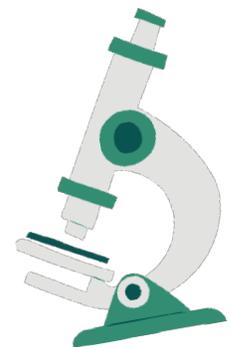
HEALTH PLANNING & POLICY

Communicable disease cases investigated: 12,303

Families served through Harvesters food pantry: 1,984

Volunteer hours logged: 931

PHAB reaccreditation application submitted: August 25



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food establishment inspections: 1,463

Food handlers trained (online and in-person): 3,273

Pool/spa inspections (indoor and outdoor): 406

On-site sewage permits issued: 105

Lodging inspections conducted: 19

GETTING KC VACCINATED

Through public and private partnership, almost 100,000 doses of the COVID vaccine were given within the first few months of its availability.

Although the introduction of the first COVID-19 vaccines was extremely exciting, it was going to take a lot of work and time to vaccinate entire communities. In order to accomplish more together than they could apart, Cerner, Liberty Hospital, North Kansas City Hospital and Clay County Public Health Center teamed up with Clay County municipalities and schools to form "Operation Safe" (OS). This effort would end up making COVID vaccination a much faster reality for thousands of people in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Discussions and planning began in January and within two weeks, the first clinic opened on February 4, vaccinating 996 patients on the first day. Soon after launch, Operation Safe was designated by the state of Missouri as a high-throughput vaccinator, boosting the vaccine supply and allowing OS to vaccinate at an even higher level.

In order to get vaccinated at Operation Safe, a person needed to fill out the online form to express their interest. Once deemed eligible according to the state's designated phases and tiers of distribution, they would receive an email or text from OS to book an appointment. Upon arriving at the Operation Safe site at Cerner's headquarters, some of the over 600 volunteers would guide patients to parking spots or to a drop-off zone offered for those with limited mobility.

After a quick check-in process, patients were immediately directed to a station where a

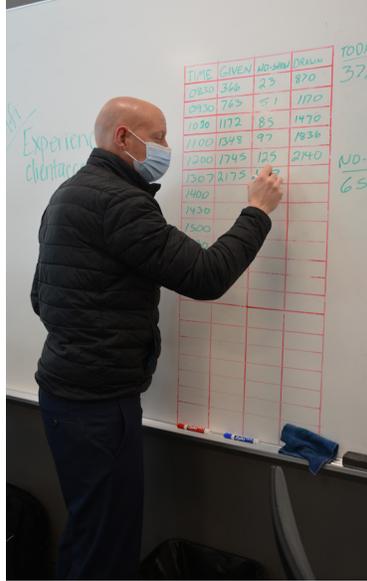


nurse would give them information about the vaccine and administer it. Finally, patients were directed to an area where they would need to wait for 15 or 30 minutes for observation. While waiting, selfie props and stickers were available to mark the occasion and patients could provide feedback on their experience.

Lots of hard work by many people enhanced each person's experience. The website, phone line and radio channel provided thorough communication, wheelchairs with volunteers to push them were available to anyone at the site with limited mobility, and music played and volunteers danced to celebrate the joyful occasion. Details like this resulted in overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community and boosted the team's morale.

The Operation Safe team was made up of a variety of people: pharmacists, doctors, nurses, EMS staff, security, public safety personnel, community volunteers, public health and more. CCPHC leadership served in the development of the partnership and in the command center. Communications specialist Kelsey Neth was part of the public information team that helped coordinate media relations, manage social media and create the Operation Safe website. Some of the other ways Clay County Public Health Center staff contributed to the effort included logistics, supply sourcing, data management, administering vaccines, and acting as government liaisons.

Wennekota Tarama, emergency planner at



Left Top: Operation Safe utilized two buildings at Cerner's headquarters.

Left Bottom: Multiple community buses brought seniors from around the county to get vaccinated.

Top Left: Emergency Planner Wennekota Tarama waits outside to help people enter the Operation Safe building.

Top Middle: Jason Stalling, section chief of Community Health, helped onsite by tracking the number of doses prepared and administered per hour.

Top Middle: Communications Specialist Kelsey Neth holds the logo she created for the effort.

Top Right: Brooke Klingensmith, RN, took a shift administering COVID vaccines at Operation Safe.

Bottom Left: (L to R) Liberty Hospital CEO David Fees, Director of Public Health Gary E. Zaborac, Cerner Senior Vice President Eva Karp and North Kansas City Hospital President and CEO Stephen Reintjes Sr. addressed the media in May.

Bottom Right: The site sometimes ran into the evenings, to ensure no doses were wasted.

CCPHC worked to identify and secure any supplies that Operation Safe needed. However, he also helped make the effort more equitable and accessible for everyone.

"My biggest satisfaction was being able to coordinate with cities and school districts to bus in over 100 vulnerable seniors with transportation and mobility issues to receive their doses of the vaccine. It was rewarding to see the smiles and joy on their faces after they were vaccinated," said Tarama.

Operation Safe held a total of 32 clinics, offering first and second doses of Pfizer and Moderna. The final clinic was on May 6. In the end, almost 100,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered to community members. As many as 5,600 people were vaccinated in one day and the highest hourly rate recorded was 548 patients. By the time OS closed, 19% of vaccinated Kansas Citians had gotten their vaccines there.

Operation Safe was able to fill a gap and offer a quicker route to protection from the

widespread impact of COVID than other options or if the partners were to work separately. Although the final numbers were impressive, the primary satisfaction for all who worked at Operation Safe was knowing the difference they made in their community.

"It was exciting to be part of history," said Tarama. "I'm glad that CCPHC was a part of this wonderful, beautiful, successful, collaborative effort to help people get the vaccine and stop the spread of COVID."

BACK AT HOME BASE

The health center's immunizations team, small but mighty, provided COVID-19 vaccines in various ways to ensure protection for everyone.

On January 7, the energy in the room was electric. This was the day the first COVID-19 vaccines were delivered to Clay County Public Health Center, an occasion extremely exciting for an organization weary from almost a year of a pandemic with minimal prevention tools to offer. Now there was a better way to protect the community and to start to move forward.

"The COVID vaccines, while not the only tool, are an essential tool to helping us end the pandemic," said Corrie Courtney, program manager of immunizations. "The efficacy of them has been pretty amazing when you compare them to other vaccines. After a year of existence, they've helped keep a lot of people at work and school and out of the hospital and saved a lot of lives."

Although CCPHC was just one of many places that ended up offering COVID vaccines, as a public health department, a lot of work went into ensuring that everyone who wanted to be vaccinated was able to do so. In addition to administering doses from CCPHC's building and helping at Operation Safe, the team vaccinated inmates at the Clay County Detention Center and juvenile detention center, as well as partnered with local fire departments and EMS to vaccinate homebound residents.

Staff assisted other healthcare providers with submitting their applications for offering COVID vaccines and transferred extra doses to providers that didn't get as many doses as they needed from the state. CCPHC also contracted with Heart to Heart International to host community vaccination clinics throughout Clay County.

"Everyone worked so hard and did such an amazing job. Our staff really cares about protecting our population and did a lot of things we've never done before," said Courtney. "They were great at educating people that came in to alleviate fear and make it a pleasant experience as much as possible. Everyone really stepped up and did a great job even though it was a really, really demanding year."



Top to Bottom: Nurse Cierra Collins and Program Manager of Immunizations Corrie Courtney pose with their "I Got the Shot" stickers after getting vaccinated in January. CCPHC nursing staff work to prepare syringes to be administered at the Clay County Detention Center. Program Manager of Community Health Kim Mawby is excited to receive her first dose of the COVID vaccine on the first day CCPHC administers it. Angie Bannwarth prepares a syringe for use at CCPHC's COVID vaccination clinic in Liberty. Nursing staff sit at their stations, ready for another day of giving the public protection against the COVID-19 virus.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

The community development and epidemiology programs continued to work closely with local schools.

Schools were one of the most impacted segments of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although adults, including school staff, were able to get vaccinated early in 2021, most children were not able to have that level of protection until November.

Despite occasional public pushback, Clay County school districts were committed to following public health guidance while also seeking to return day-to-day operations back to normal as much as possible. Clay County Public Health Center was happy to partner with them to accomplish this.

The two primary ways CCPHC's staff assisted schools were: helping manage cases and outbreaks and providing guidance. Two CCPHC staff members acted as school district liaisons throughout the year, hosting weekly meetings or keeping close contact via phone with school medical staff and administration. Due to evolving updates in guidance for quarantine, isolation, masks and more, providing insight on how to adopt new guidance in a wide variety of circumstances was very valuable to school districts.

"We were recognized in regional forums for our work with the schools and how we were going above and beyond," said Ashley Wegner, section chief of health planning and policy. "It wasn't because we added capacity, it was the emphasis we put on these partnerships and how we made them a priority."

After enduring the challenges of COVID together, CCPHC looks forward to how these strengthened relationships could potentially bring positive change to the community in the future.

"I think we've really improved our relationships so much with the schools that it will lead to other things," said community development specialist Ryan Shafer. "Now hopefully we can transition those relationships into working on other health education projects we've wanted to work with them on."

COVID-19 IN 2021

The following data is for Clay County Public Health Center's jurisdiction - all areas of Clay County outside of Kansas City limits.

11,868

Cases reported

164

Deaths caused
by COVID

361

Hospitalizations

6,149

Disease investigations
conducted by CCPHC

67

Outbreaks
identified

138,955

Total doses of COVID-19 vaccines
administered to Clay County residents

6,540

Doses
administered
by Clay County
Public Health
Center

66

Doses
administered to
homebound
residents through
EMS partnership

56

Heart to Heart
International
community
vaccination clinics
held in Clay County

2,476

Doses
administered by
Heart to Heart
International on
behalf of CCPHC

16%

5-17 year olds
fully vaccinated

51%

18+ fully
vaccinated

PLAYING CATCH-UP

Despite early setbacks, Environmental Health completed their annual inspections and kept on track for achieving the program's ultimate goal.

After new staff and lots of training in 2019 and then major changes in 2020 due to coronavirus, 2021 was set to be a year where the environmental health team could focus on being very productive. However, four of the program's staff started the year as disease case investigators due to continued high rates of COVID cases.

It wasn't until a few months into 2021 that the entire environmental health team was able to come back together and get back on track. Although the main goal was to complete all annual inspections before the end of the year, the team took an approach that allowed them to prioritize certain places over others.

"We do everything food-wise based on risk," said Leah Ferris, program manager. "The inspectors were able to prioritize where they were going, focusing on high risk facilities like hospitals first to protect those people then sprinkling in medium and low risk places."

Thanks to vaccine distribution and lower COVID numbers mid-year, the number of pool openings and event inspections increased, adding to the team's workload. This was on top of the number of onsite sewage and lodging inspections that stayed the same throughout the pandemic. However, by the end of the year, every staff member completed all necessary inspections for their district.

"That was super impressive to me," said Ferris. "You could tell they all knew the end goal but they weren't rushing, they were doing quality work. I really am super proud of how hard my team worked in 2021."



Environmental Health Specialist Mary O'Reilly conducts an annual inspection of a local hotel.

Completing routine inspections is important for ensuring public safety.

"If you're able to keep up and inspect these places at the right frequency, you're able to make sure they're in compliance with the food code," said Robert Gilliland, section chief of environmental health. "If we're getting in there at the right times, the right frequency, then we're able to make sure establishments are doing what they're supposed to and they haven't lapsed into bad habits."

The CCPHC environmental health program strives for excellence in everything it does. In 2014, they enrolled in the National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards, the gold standard of FDA's food safety programs. This voluntary program emphasizes the important parts of a retail food program and is a long-term goal that CCPHC's program continues to work towards.

There are nine standards programs aim to meet. Upon initially enrolling, CCPHC already met some guidelines and worked to get them verified. In 2021, CCPHC met and verified one new standard, bringing the current total to six standards met and four verified.

The CCPHC environmental health program also received four grants this year from FDA & AFDO (Association of Food and Drug Officials) to help them complete the standards. This is the most ever received in one year.

"With all the growth we're seeing in the county, we'll need to make sure we continue to meet the standards by having enough staff," said Gilliland. "But for now, we'll continue to work hard and look forward to completing all the standards very soon."

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

Thanks to careful financial management, the building was paid off early, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

On November 1, 2007, the new Clay County Public Health Center building opened at 800 Haines Drive in Liberty, Missouri. The previous facility, built in 1956, was no longer capable of meeting the needs of the rapidly growing population in Clay County.

“Constructing this new building was a priority of the Board of Health as early as my first interview for my role,” said Director of Public Health Gary E. Zaborac. “I was brought on and we first had to figure out a way to pay for it.”

In Missouri, governmental organizations are not allowed to borrow money. Some initial funding came when the City of Liberty purchased the existing property from the Board of Health Trustees for approximately \$3 million. Then, instead of approaching voters with a bond or tax levy increase, CCPHC started the process of working with UMB Bank to secure a different financial arrangement.

This arrangement, called a Lease Purchase Agreement (LPA), meant that an investment firm would fund the remainder of the cost of construction. At the end of the lease, CCPHC could purchase the building for \$1.

CCPHC was required to create a debt service fund within the annual budget to pay for building maintenance and make annual payments of about \$250,000 towards the LPA. After years of responsible management of the fund, it was determined that CCPHC would be on track to pay off the lease purchase agreement early. This, along with refinancing to decrease the interest rate in 2009, would end up saving taxpayers a substantial amount of money.

On March 19, the final payment was made and paperwork was signed, officially making the building property of the Clay County Public Health Center Board of Trustees. Although CCPHC was still heavily involved in COVID prevention efforts at the time, the organization still managed to cover the unexpected costs, maintain its contribution to the debt service fund and pay off the LPA early as planned.

“Refinancing the LPA plus an early payoff has saved almost \$750,000 in interest payments,” said Zaborac. “We are very proud of this facility and our good fiscal stewardship that led to savings for taxpayers. To me, it’s a win-win.”



Left: Director Zaborac joins Board of Health President Patricia Dixon as she signs the termination of the lease.

MODERN TIMES, MODERN MEASURES

After one full year, a major change in how WIC food benefits are redeemed meant adjustments for staff but also happier clients.

For years, participants of the WIC program redeemed food benefits using a voucher system. However, in 2020, Missouri WIC updated to an electronic system. Now WIC benefits are loaded for current and future months on an eWIC card, making it easier for participants to redeem benefits.

With the eWIC system, clients can scan all their items, swipe their eWIC card to cover eligible items, then their SNAP card if they are part of that program, and then pay any remaining costs. This results in a much faster and easier process for families and cashiers.

"They all love it. They don't have to mess with the little paper vouchers anymore," said Karen Jording, client services specialist. "A lot of them feel like they were always embarrassed at the store because people knew they were getting WIC. Now that they've got the card, nobody knows the difference."

Another beneficial difference between the vouchers and an eWIC card is that previously, clients had to buy all their items at one time.

Now, if they want some items later in the month or an item is low on stock, clients can get less than their full allotment and redeem the rest later.

As great as the new Missouri eWIC system has been, it has not been without its challenges. One challenge with the system is loading new benefits. Benefits are not able to be loaded to the cards remotely so participants must physically bring their card to their local WIC agency to be reloaded. This can be a significant barrier, especially for clients with limited transportation options and during a pandemic that reduced the number of in-person appointments. However, the CCPHC team made it as easy as possible by having a mobile cart to meet clients outside where

their cards could be reloaded without ever having to leave the car.

"Overall, I think our clients have been very satisfied with the change. There's always a learning curve but it's been a fairly smooth transition," said WIC Manager Lori Bunton. "We try to give our clients as much information as we can and help solve any problems that come up."

With the move to a more technology-friendly WIC program also came the introduction of the WICShopper app. This smartphone application can be downloaded by WIC families to keep track of nearly everything related to their participation in the program.

"Everything's pretty much right there. They can check the balance on their benefits, see if their card's loaded and check their next appointment. They can scan UPC codes to see if items are actually WIC approved and even find healthy recipes and tips to try. I think the app really helps streamline everything for clients," said Bunton.

Although staff and clients look forward to a fully remote future with eWIC, the latest updates have been welcome changes and hopefully inspire more local families to choose WIC to keep their families fed and healthy.

CASH VALUE BENEFIT

Thanks to increased federal funding during the COVID-19 pandemic, Missouri WIC was able to offer clients large increases in the amounts that could be spent each month on fruits and vegetables. Originally introduced in June and thought to be temporary, these increased benefits continued through the end of the year.

DENTAL WORK

The efforts of CCPHC's dental team were recognized as they resumed and rebuilt operations after COVID interruptions.

One of the primary parts of the Clay County Public Health dental program is the school-based preventative services program (PSP). Dental hygienists Karmen Vaughn and Mikayla Cox visit local schools throughout the year to provide dental screenings, fluoride varnish and oral health education to students in preschool through fifth grade.

"Our services are important because we are filling the gap for underserved communities," said Vaughn. "We provide those services for children who don't see a dentist or for children who do but still need education on things like how to brush properly."

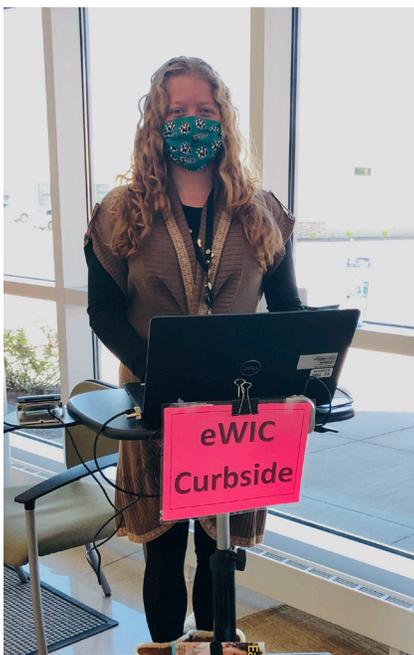
During the 2020-2021 school year, CCPHC saw 3,113 students as part of the PSP. This was about 19% more than the next highest county, according to the Missouri Department of Health's oral health dashboard. Although this is an accomplishment worth celebrating, COVID greatly impacted those numbers.

"We felt like we were still strongly in the midst

of the pandemic in 2021, with not much change from 2020. There were still quite a few schools to reschedule and it took double the administrative work to provide services. We were only able to see about one-third of the children we normally would," said Vaughn.

In order to provide students with the most relevant and age-appropriate dental health education, the CCPHC team made their own series of videos. These were especially helpful during COVID when staff could no longer go into schools. Later, the content created by CCPHC was included and credited in the updated oral health curriculum of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Looking ahead, Vaughn says, "Schools not only want to continue our on-site services, they are looking to us for guidance on how to continue dental services amidst the pandemic. We are definitely optimistic about 2022 and the new school year."



Far Left: Nutritionist Taylor Smith is posted in the lobby, ready to help clients. WIC staff met participants outside or in the lobby to quickly and easily load benefits onto eWIC cards.



Left Top: Family Fun Day was made possible thanks to many staff members, including Megan Justice, Teresa Tunstill, Brooke Jarchow and Lori Bunton.

Left Bottom: WIC Nutritionist Liz Hubler presents ideas for healthy school lunches live during Family Fun Day.



CLAY COUNTY

PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER



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Photos from Front Cover

Top: CCPHC nurse Cierra Collins is one of the first to receive a COVID vaccine after CCPHC got its first shipment in January.



Middle: Everyone vaccinated through Operation Safe received a sticker.

Bottom: On behalf of Clay County Public Health Center, Director Zaborac receives a plaque of recognition from the Mid-American Regional Council for service to the community during the COVID pandemic.

Photos from Back Cover

Top: Volunteers sort and prepare food during the August mobile food pantry event.

Middle: Staff learned and practiced how to use a fire extinguisher during a presentation by Smithville Area Fire.



Bottom: At William Jewell College's Opening Convocation ceremony in September, Director Zaborac accepts a certificate of recognition for partnership during the pandemic.