

## **Tompkins County Health Department**

**T**he mission of the Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD) is to promote, preserve and improve the health of the people of Tompkins County consistent with public health law.

TCHD is a full service health department comprised of the Environmental Health, Community Health Services, and the Children with Special Health Care Needs Divisions. As of March 2005, there were 87 staff providing services and coordinating programs for the benefit of County residents.

### **Service Divisions and Programs**

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#### **COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION**

##### **Maternal Child Unit**

Maternal Child Unit (MCU) provides health care services for mothers, infants and children and through its communicable disease program, surveillance and care for all residents.

- Mothers
  - Pre- and post-natal care (MOMS)
  - Breastfeeding support
- Children
  - Immunizations
  - Lead poisoning prevention
  - Newborn and child health assessments
- All community residents
  - Immunizations
  - Influenza immunization
  - Communicable disease surveillance and case management
  - Tuberculosis (TB) surveillance, contact investigation and treatment
  - Rabies post-exposure immunizations
  - Anonymous HIV counseling and testing

##### **WIC**

The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) improves the nutrition and health status of eligible women, infants and children (up to age 5 years.) WIC achieves this goal through the provision of checks to purchase nutritious foods, nutrition and health education, breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals and connections with local health and human service agencies.

##### **Health Promotion Program**

The key role of the Health Promotion Program (HPP) is to educate the public, health care practitioners and policymakers about the importance of disease and injury prevention. HPP promotes healthy eating,

physical activity and avoidance of tobacco to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. HPP works in partnership with businesses, local media, health providers, schools, health care providers, and human service and community agencies to achieve these objectives. HPP works closely with other CHS programs to market and promote their programs and is actively involved in bioterrorism preparedness. HPP is responsible for coordinating the Municipal Public Health Services Plan (MPHSP) and for developing and maintaining the Community Health Assessment.

#### **Home Health Care**

Home Health Care (HCC) is a Certified Home Health Agency in accordance with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and Medicare's Conditions of Participation. It is an optional program (under Article 6 of public health law) of the TCHD. HHC's employed and contracted staff includes registered nurses; home health aides and physical, occupational and speech language pathology therapists. HHC provides medically ordered visits for clients in their homes. HHC also partners with local health care providers and agencies to provide other necessary services.

### **CHILDREN with SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS**

The programs in this division serve children who have or are at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional condition and who require a broader variety of health and related services to reach their fullest potential.

The division has 4 programs:

#### **Children with Special Health Care Needs**

Children with Special Health Care Needs is a federal program that offers information and referral services concerning health and related issues to families with special needs up to the age of 21. The program guides and assists families with their social-emotional, financial, medical and transportation needs.

#### **Early Intervention Program**

Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a federally mandated program, regulated by NYSDOH. Children who have a disability or developmental delay are eligible for the program from birth to 36 months.

#### **Physically Handicapped Children's Program**

Physically Handicapped Children's Program ensures access to quality health care for chronically ill and physically handicapped children. This is achieved through program standards requiring access to specialty centers and physician specialists for children enrolled in the program.

**Preschool Special Education Program**

Preschool Special Education Program is responsible for the administrative and fiscal oversight of special education services and programs provided to children three to five years of age who meet eligibility requirements in accordance with the New York State Education Department regulatory standards. Each child has his or her own educational plan. The spectrum of services include speech, physical, occupational and counseling therapies along with special education programs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

This division is an educational and regulatory agency. It protects, preserves and improves the health of the County's residents through inspections and permits, responses to public health nuisances and education of facility operators and the public.

**EH Programs**

The programs include:

- Inspection of public and private water systems and individual sewage systems
- Food Protection: inspection of restaurants and temporary food establishments
- Rabies control
- Inspection of temporary residences: motels/hotels children's camps, camps and parks, pools and beaches, and mobile home parks
- Adolescent Tobacco Use Protection Act (ATUPA) and Clean Indoor Air Act enforcement
- West Nile Virus surveillance and prevention
- Neighborhood Notification Law for Pesticides enforcement
- Lead Poisoning Control: environmental sampling for case investigation
- Nuisance resolution and other programs

Technical staff spends two-thirds of their time in three programs: Public and private water systems, individual sewage and food service.

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS of TCHD****Bioterrorism Preparedness**

Bioterrorism Preparedness focuses on the development and refinement of a comprehensive response plan for agents of bioterrorism. In 2004, TCHD hired a bioterrorism coordinator who is responsible for meeting NYSDOH grant requirements, planning drills and public education.

**Emergency Medical Service**

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) in Tompkins County receives assistance through a program administered by TCHD. The Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response coordinates EMS activities in the County. Five ambulance agencies provide advanced life support treatment and transport services in the County assisted by 13 first response fire department rescue squads.

**Medical Examiner**

TCHD employs one chief medical examiner and two deputy medical examiners to investigate and certify cause of unattended and suspicious deaths.

**Vital Statistics**

Vital Statistics is responsible for filing the records of all births and deaths that occur in Tompkins County with the Bureau of Vital Statistics at the NYSDOH. The Vital Statistics office maintains records from 1881 to the present.

**Key Trends**

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Some of the trends that TCHD has identified that will affect the department's mission and service delivery in the next 5 years include:

- Emerging infectious diseases
- Aging of the population and associated need for increased services
- High-tech health care at home
- Need for ancillary providers of services
- Increasing requirements for emergency planning and response that impact the delivery of other programs.
- Regionalization of services. One example is grant funding for chronic disease programs such as heart health and diabetes that often do not address local need adequately.
- Need for contracted ancillary providers of health services: i.e. speech therapists, special education teachers.
- Increasing reliance on computers for information storage and retrieval.
- Increasing State reporting requirements.
- Reduction in State financial support.

For more information on Tompkins County Health Department programs and services, see the Department's annual report and go to [www.tompkins-co.org/health/](http://www.tompkins-co.org/health/).