Our Mission is to prevent disease and injuries, promote healthy living, protect the environment, and ensure public health preparedness.
# A Message from the Director

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- Program Updates

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- Responding Together
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- Use of Low-Cost Air Quality Sensors Expanded
- Wildfire Smoke Impacts in Iowa

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# A Special Thanks to Our Community Partners
Dear Linn County Neighbor:

This annual report provides you the meaningful work this health department has completed during the past fiscal year. Responding to the pandemic has been the focus of our effort, requiring dedication from all of my colleagues here at Linn County Public Health (LCPH). They have been working impossible hours in an unprecedented environment tracking and monitoring COVID-19 cases, contact tracing, answering calls and messages (sometimes abusive), and combating misinformation. This non-stop COVID-19 work has notably taken its toll on the public health workforce, and my colleagues are no exception.

Our community has come together to adopt preventive measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to care for our most vulnerable residents. Another fiscal year has ended, but the threat of SARS-CoV-2 remains. We are tired of the virus, but the virus is not tired of us. While we now have extremely effective vaccines to contain the spread of the virus, we have sadly fallen behind in obtaining herd immunity here in Linn County. Less than 60% of Linn County residents are fully vaccinated. We continue to urge our neighbors to get vaccinated, and to continue to follow additional mitigation strategies such as wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing hands to keep this virus at bay.

Collaboration and partnership with cities and towns, healthcare providers, non-profit organizations, and businesses enhanced our pandemic response. LCPH was the only health department in the state to hold a 24-hour mass vaccination clinic, delivering nearly 2,000 doses of COVID-19 in collaboration with a local pharmacy. We continue to work with our stakeholders to increase vaccination rates in Linn County. The miracle of COVID-19 vaccine has been available to us since January 2021. Let’s not squander this miracle — let’s get vaccinated.

In addition to COVID-19 response, LCPH swung into action to assist our neighbors when a derecho hit us in August of last year. We used GIS tools to develop a needs assessment to help link our neighbors to services like housing, food, and needed medication. We expanded the use of PurpleAir sensors to measure PM2.5 emissions in areas with active fires or other concerns with particle pollution. We also worked to grow solar usage in Linn County, in a partnership with Johnson County.

Meanwhile, we continue to deliver our regular public health services such as food safety, air quality, water and septic services, childhood lead poisoning prevention, disease prevention, and clinical services. In addition, we remain engaged with our stakeholders on the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and My Care Community, which utilizes a software platform to address Social Determinants of Health (SDH).

When we first earned accreditation in 2014, we became the first health department in Iowa to receive this national recognition. This year, we are happy to announce that LCPH submitted required documentation to the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) for reaccreditation. We continue to work on quality improvement and added mental health to our strategic plan. Moving forward, our strategic focus will also include health equity, aligned with our strategic vision of LCPH. We envision robust strategies that build both organizational capacity and infrastructure to advance health equity. In addition, we will foster strategic community partnerships to engage in social justice and cultivate a culture of shared ownership of health equity.

Under tremendous challenges, your health department remains committed to its mission, and proud to stand for science, compassion, equity, and justice. Thank you for all your help and support during these challenging times!

Sincerely,

Pramod Dwivedi, DrPH, MS, MSW, MA
The Linn County Board of Supervisors appoints members to the Board of Health, the governing body that supports our mission at Linn County Public Health.

CONNECT WITH US!
Linn County Public Health
1020 Sixth Street SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Phone: 319-892-6000
Clinic Phone: 319-892-6093
General Fax: 319-892-6099
Clinic Fax: 319-892-6098

Air Quality
Issued 130 Authorizations to Install and 168 Permits to Operate for applicable air sources. Air Quality also conducted 70 minor source and 25 major source air quality inspections, responded to 214 air quality complaints, issued 44 Notices of Air Quality Violations, and sent 114 Letters of Air Quality Non-Compliance.

Assessment & Health Promotion
branch supervisor, Kaitlin Emrich, was named one of Corridor Business Journal’s Forty Under 40. Linn County Public Health was the 2020 recipient of the Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) Award from The Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), honoring the work of Dr. Amy Hockett. Dr. Hockett was also the 2020 recipient of the Innovation in Public Health Award from The Council of Affiliates - American Public Health Association.

Clinical Services
administered 7,593 total immunizations to 6,074 individuals, including 385 influenza and 4,819 COVID-19 vaccinations. Clinical Services staff served 261 clients for STI testing and treatment and conducted 1,190 chlamydia, 627 gonorrhea, 40 syphilis, and 8 HIV case investigations. Due to COVID-19, the clinic was closed the majority of the fiscal year and services were impacted as a result.
COMMUNICATE Openly + Effectively
Sharing of and listening to the opinion of others

RECOGNIZE Valued Contributions
Celebrating what others bring to the table

CREATE A Supportive + Positive Work Environment
Being in control of your attitude and outlooks

DEMONSTRATE Personal Integrity + Respect For Others
Treating others with honest and esteem

BE ACCOUNTABLE For Your Actions + Decisions
Owning your circumstances and your results

EMPOWER Teams
To develop innovative solutions

Strengthen Internal and External Communication

Enhance Organization Effectiveness

Enhance Organization Culture

Expand & Enhance Partnerships

Social Determinants of Health

Funding

Food and Aquatic Safety, Tattoo, & Tanning completed 962 food-service inspections and 55 routine aquatic safety inspections. Staff also completed 15 tattoo and 8 tanning facility inspections, which was limited due to COVID-19 restrictions during part of FY21.

Home & Water Quality issued 186 septic permits, conducted 129 septic finals, issued 80 well permits, sampled 183 wells for the Grants to Counties program, conducted 58 public water supply inspections, and reviewed 214 time of transfer inspections for home sales. 76 preliminary active cases for lead poisoning were identified among children 0 to 6 years old, with 7 children meeting the criteria for an elevated blood lead inspection and follow-up. Staff investigated housing nuisance reports and found 17 to be substantiated.

Lab supports point of care testing for Clinical Services and also supports the Environmental Health Division. Lab staff analyzed 192 bacteria samples, 185 Nitrate samples, and 140 arsenic samples for the Grants to Counties program.
Linn County Public Health (LCPH) continued our COVID-19 response, maintaining incident command for the larger part of this fiscal year. As we entered our third, and most notably alarming, wave in the fall of 2020 clinical services continued case follow-up. However, the increase in cases in a short period of time began straining local contact tracing resources and lead to delays in the contact tracing process. To increase capacity during this surge, 40 contract employees were brought on and 39 LCPH employees were trained to assist with contact tracing. To improve efficiency of contact tracing efforts by LCPH, residents who received a positive COVID-19 test result were encouraged to complete the COVID-19 Investigation Form online. The online investigation form, launched November 17, received 716 responses through June 30, 2021.

**July 16, 2020** LCPH releases return to school guidance.

**July 23, 2020** LCPH strongly recommends all residents and visitors to consistently and correctly wear a face mask in public settings and when around people of different households.

**November 9, 2020** LCPH allocates CARES Act funds to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

**November 12, 2020** LCPH updates close contact definition; and recommends additional actions to combat increase in cases.

**November 18, 2020** Linn County Board of Supervisors signs resolution unanimously approving the Linn County Board of Health’s face covering regulation due to rapidly increasing cases of COVID-19.

**November 19, 2020** LCPH urges residents to review and follow holiday guidance to combat COVID-19.

**December 15, 2020** Linn County’s first allotment of COVID-19 vaccine arrives at Mercy Cedar Rapids and UnityPoint Health - St. Luke’s Hospital. Each hospital received 975 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to offer to frontline healthcare workers.

**December 24, 2020** LCPH utilizes, ahead of December 30 deadline, CARES Act funds to purchase $123,299.95 of PPE and other supplies to prevent spread of COVID-19. LCPH partnered with Linn County EMA to purchase PPE and additional supplies. A total of 68 partners requested supplies. This includes home or center-based childcare providers, schools, and non-profits.
As the pandemic continued into the winter months and the first few COVID-19 vaccines received emergency use authorization under the United States Food and Drug Administration, LCPH’s response quickly shifted to **vaccine planning and distribution**. In anticipation of upcoming vaccine eligibility among select frontline workers, our planning section within incident command created a registry for businesses to identify eligible employees to receive vaccine.

All vaccine coming to the state was funneled through local public health. With the limited supply of vaccine, LCPH worked with partners to allocate the initially limited supply of vaccine to providers within the framework of the state’s vaccine distribution plan based on tier levels. LCPH worked with a total of 116 vaccine providers to order vaccine and supplies for their organizations. This occurred on a weekly basis through June when supply finally met demand. As of June 30, 2021 LCPH administered the following per the Iowa Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS) for a total of 4,819 vaccinations:

- 1,195 Pfizer initial and second dose
- 3,205 Moderna initial and second dose
- 416 J&J Janssen single dose

**January 4, 2021** Eastern Iowa Health Center and Area Ambulance begin offering vaccine to independent health care providers and staff with initial allotment of COVID-19 vaccine.

**January 26, 2021** Limited COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to persons 65 and older.

**February 8, 2021** Linn County LIFTS and Horizons NTS begin providing free next-day rides for residents in need of transportation to scheduled and confirmed COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

**March 8, 2021** 16-64 year olds with underlying conditions become eligible for vaccine.

**April 1, 2021** LCPH Director participates in national "We Can Do This" campaign meeting as part of USDHS Community Corps.

**April 5, 2021** All Iowans 16+ become eligible for vaccine. Demand continues to outpace supply.

**April 17, 2021** 24-hour vaccine clinic to accommodate shift workers, those observing Ramadan, and others seeking flexible hours to receive vaccine begins in collaboration with Reutzel Pharmacy.

**May 24, 2021** LCPH is honored at Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival and accepts Freedom Festival Heroes recognition in honor of Frontline Workers and Medical Professionals.
Responding to a global pandemic warrants a collective response. LCPh staff met with public health department contacts within our assigned Service Area 6 (SA6). These weekly meetings were held virtually for months, switching to twice a month later in the fiscal year. As media markets and provider networks cross county boarders, SA6 check-ins involved information sharing and lessons learned in response.

Locally, Linn Area Partners-Active in Disaster (LAP-AID) is a network of over 30 member agencies with a mission to simplify access to services, share information, and advocate for the most vulnerable. LCPh shared COVID-19 information with LAP-AID member agencies and on the LAP-AID website COVID-19 resource page. LCPh COVID-19 status reports and related COVID-19 resources were also shared with several distribution networks maintained by LCPh. These networks include—but are not limited to—law enforcement, EMS, school health and administration, colleges, medical providers, and city clerks.

To ensure all members of our community had accurate information and access to COVID-19 resources and vaccine, a vulnerable populations workgroup began on February 1, 2021. The workgroup, which met 8 times through June 30, consisted of trusted members of various vulnerable populations and comprised over 30 community agencies working directly with various vulnerable population groups. Topics addressed during meetings and follow-up work included current COVID-19 information, vaccine hesitancy, vaccine access and barriers, shared resource materials, input on locations and neighborhoods for community clinics, and avenues for expanded communication and outreach.

6th Judicial District
Belle’s Basix
Catherine McAuley Center
Cedar Rapids Farmer’s Markets
College Community Schools
Double Tree 24hr Clinic in partnership with Reutzel Pharmacy
Geneva Tower
Green Square Meals
Harris Building Clinic for school & daycare workers
Heart of Iowa—ASAC
Hispanic and Latino Community in partnership with YPN
Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition offices for clients
Islamic Center
Kirkwood Community College
LADD Library Opportunity Center
Linn Community Food Bank
Linn County Fair
Linn-Mar Schools
Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry
Lynnhwood Apartments
Marion Schools
Quaker Oats
The ROC Center in partnership with NAACP

COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS
COVID-19 LESSONS LEARNED

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated already existing health inequities in the United States. These inequities were noticed and documented at a national level, and also in our Linn County community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Public Health Association have provided the reasons why COVID-19 exposed existing racial and ethnic health disparities due to systemic differences of societal factors among certain groups such as housing, access to health care, occupation and job conditions, income and wealth, and educational access.

Beyond exposing and further deepening health inequities, the COVID-19 pandemic led to worsening health conditions for individuals and families. Social Determinants of Health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age that affect quality of life and health outcomes. During COVID-19 and the Derecho, the community experienced increased food insecurity, housing instability, and unemployment, which are all social determinants of health. Additionally, conditions that impact physical and emotional health worsened nationwide and in Linn County, including domestic violence and child abuse, gun violence, mental health conditions, substance use, and overweight and obesity.

PUBLIC INFORMATION DURING COVID-19

The role of a local health department in informing the public and answering questions during a global pandemic cannot be understated. During the fiscal year:

- **33** Joint Information Center meetings convened with **30** members representing **20** organizations.
- **37** news releases related to COVID-19 and Derecho released.
- **190** media inquiries related to COVID-19 and Derecho received.

**2,000** COVID-19 vaccine flyers for individuals 65+ distributed to local organizations, libraries & churches.


- **2** Opinion-Editorial articles published.
- **4** COVID-19 PSAs released.
- **9,615** phone bank calls received.

**28** COVID-19 Status Updates published, with **3,200+** subscribers.

**127,659** unique views on LinnCounty.org/COVID and **87,777** unique views on LinnCounty.org/Vaccine.

**11** virtual media briefings on Facebook with a total video viewership of **44,370** minutes, **144,600** reach & **9,803** engagements.

**2** PSAs on Facebook with a total video viewership of **114** minutes, **1,851** reach & **30** post engagements.

**207** COVID-19 related Facebook posts with a total reach of **707,186** & **74,741** total engagements.

**284** COVID-19 related messages received on Facebook Messenger.

**162** COVID-19 related tweets with **144,735** total impressions & **4,628** total engagements.

**33** videos on COVID-19 updates channel.
Impact of Derecho Strains Inspectors

The storm and the ongoing global pandemic affected the overwhelming majority of facilities under our regulatory umbrella – many having to close for months for repairs and some unfortunately never to re-open.

In the days and weeks that followed the derecho, our inspectors assessed facilities and provided important advice as to how to proceed with their operations in the wake of this unprecedented natural disaster. For example, food safety inspectors visited with hundreds of facilities in the past year that were impacted by building damage, power outages, supply chain issues, and staffing shortages. The aquatic safety inspector also spent the past year visiting and assessing each facility in our jurisdiction and providing guidance to help them get back up and running safely.

Inspectors were often required to step out of their typical regulatory role of compliance inspections and enforcement work and instead provide educational outreach, advice, and a kind ear to listen to concerns. To this day, many facilities still are not operating or are not operating at full capacity.

AN INLAND HURRICANE

On August 10, 2020, Linn County was hit by a Midwest derecho. The derecho, which is essentially an inland hurricane, caused widespread power outages and property damage to a large section of Linn County, and severely impacted Linn County’s largest city. In Cedar Rapids, winds reached as high as 140 mph, the highest winds ever recorded during a derecho event—equivalent to a Category 3 or 4 hurricane.

Use of ArcGIS to Develop Needs Assessment

LCPH staff convened with cross-sector partners to develop a needs assessment survey which was distributed to Linn County residents through a variety of methods, which allowed health and social service organizations to quickly identify and respond to resident’s needs. The needs assessment survey provided an opportunity for individuals to connect to My Care Community to ensure basic needs such as housing, food, and medication were met and volunteer services were deployed to areas of need in a timely manner.

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AIR QUALITY

The Linn County Air Quality website, www.linncleanair.org, received an upgrade. The community may now apply for an open burning permit, check the Air Quality Index, sign up to receive air quality alerts, read local ordinances, and download air quality permits and application forms with one simple click.

Grow Solar Linn + Johnson Counties

Grow Solar Linn + Johnson Counties solar group buy was offered to residents of both counties during 2021. This was the first dual-county solar group buy offered by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) in partnership with Linn and Johnson Counties and several primary partners. This is the fifth solar group buy offered in the two county area since 2017. Grow Solar offers residents and business owners the opportunity to learn about solar energy and the option to buy affordable solar for their own home, business, or farm.

In 2021, fifteen virtual Solar Power Hour education sessions were offered with over 430 people attending. Online recordings featuring English and Spanish captions, as well as American Sign Language, were also available on the program’s website. Solar installation commitments made through Grow Solar 2021 surpassed 557 kW from 64 property owners in Linn and Johnson Counties.

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) administers the Grow Solar programs and leads the advisory team of local partners from Linn County Public Health, Linn County, Johnson County, the City of Cedar Rapids, the City of Iowa City, Green Iowa AmeriCorps–Cedar Rapids/Matthew 25, Green Iowa AmeriCorps–Iowa City, Johnson County Conservation, Linn Clean Energy District, Johnson Clean Energy District, and The Nature Conservancy in Iowa. The installer for the 2021 program was Eagle Point Solar.

Use of Low-Cost Air Quality Sensors Expanded

Throughout the year, the Air Quality Branch utilized low-cost air sensors to measure PM2.5 emissions in areas with active fires or other concerns with particle pollution. Following the derecho, multiple mulch piles spontaneously ignited exposing neighbors to high levels of wood smoke. Low-cost sensors are affordable and portable while providing real-time data, making the sensors a great tool to use out in the field.

Wildfire Smoke Impacts in Iowa

Air quality in Linn County was occasionally impacted in FY21 by pollution originating from fires long distances away from Iowa. Smoke and particulate matter, transported from fires hundreds of miles away by meteorological conditions, can still increase ground level pollution. For most of FY21, smoke from distant wildfire events caused hazy skies without impacting health or increasing ground level pollution, but agricultural burning in the Flint Hills rangeland of Kansas and Oklahoma were observed by Linn County continuous fine particulate monitors to cause increased fine particulate at ground level on April 3rd and April 4th, 2021. Final Linn County measurements of the fine particulate concentrations on those dates from the Federal Reference Method came in below the National Ambient Air Quality Standard of 35 ug/m³.
When LCPH receives a permit for a septic, the first step is to complete a site evaluation and review the data submitted by the septic contractor. During this site evaluation, our environmental health specialist will determine if an absorbent trench or a sand filter will be suitable for the site. However, if these are both ruled out, the property will then need an alternative system. Alternative systems require a maintenance agreement with a certified system contractor. LCPH has 416 properties, and growing, that require a maintenance agreement to ensure the system is functioning as intended. Alternative systems are more common when the lot size is too small, too much top soil has been removed from the property, or the water table is too high. While it is always good to have options, these cause homeowners to invest in an alternative system and pay the maintenance agreement fee yearly. As we continue to expand into undeveloped areas, we will likely see more alternative systems.
Community Health Improvement Plan

As part of the obesity strategic issue of the 2018-2021 Linn County Community Health Improvement Plan, the 5-2-1-0 initiative was promoted among schools, childcare centers, and other organizations serving youth 0-18 years of age.

In FY21, the objective of increasing the number of 5-2-1-0 sites by 100% was met, with 16 sites registered in Linn County.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

The daily stress caused by COVID-19, emerging variants, virtual school, a derecho, and financial instability have had a big impact on our community. It is normal to experience feelings of isolation, anxiety, sadness, and fear during times of uncertainty. Attitudes and awareness surrounding mental illness and mental health are changing as dialogue around brain health has increased nationally, locally, and around the spaces many of us live, work, and play.

Promoting Make It OK! in the Community

Make It OK! is a community campaign to reduce stigma by starting conversations and increasing understanding about mental illness. Supporting the Make It OK! initiative is part of the Mental Health strategic issue of the 2018-2021 Linn County Community Health Improvement Plan. LCPH works both externally, and internally, to promote Make It OK! within workplaces and organizations alike. LCPH supported the Make It OK! -- Linn County Community Call to Action on March 11, 2021. LCPH is also registered as a Make It OK! workplace.

Hoarding Needs a Mental Health Approach

Hoarding impacts between 2 and 5% of the population to varying degrees. If left untreated, hoarding disorder can have far-reaching, adverse effects on nearly every aspect of a person's life. From direct health and safety risks to community complaints about odor, sanitation, and fire hazards, hoarding is a public health concern. However, until a person living with a hoarding disorder is internally motivated to change, they often do not accept help. Often this motivation comes from housing inspectors with some mental health or hoarding experience.
Financial reports for FY21 are shown below. The year-end budget was $6,798,567, which included $3,705,771 in local tax dollars.

### Category Expenditure | Earned Revenue | Linn County Tax Dollars | % of Budget
--- | --- | --- | ---
Administration & Finance | $1,276,043.45 | $265,369.34 | $1,010,674.11 | 19%
Community Health | 2,552,007.64 | 1,152,061.61 | 1,399,946.03 | 38%
Environmental Quality | 2,970,516.26 | 1,675,365.34 | 1,295,150.92 | 44%

### Five Year Actual Budget History

![Five Year Actual Budget History](chart.png)

### Revenues By Source

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fed pass through by State</td>
<td>$937,405</td>
<td>13.79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
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<td>Non-Clinical Fees &amp; Fines</td>
<td>$269,966</td>
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<td>Patient Fees</td>
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<td>Private Foundations</td>
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<td>Regulatory Fees</td>
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<td>State (no Fed pass-through)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax Levy</td>
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<td>54.51%</td>
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**TOTAL $6,798,567 100.00%**

### Expenditures By Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary/Fringe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<td>Provider Charges</td>
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<td>Charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Credits</td>
<td>$56,004</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL $6,798,567**

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2021 Linn County Public Health Annual Report
MEET OUR TEAM

Linn County Public Health would like to recognize the staff who have worked to make Linn County a healthier place to live, work, and play.

LCPH also supported students and interns from Coe College, Iowa State University, Mt. Mercy University, and University of Iowa.

A special thanks to Dr. Pope, Linn County Public Health Medical Advisor.
A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Through routine public health initiatives, LCPH works with many community partners. These entities and individuals assist to strengthen the public health system. COVID-19 was an example of community partners in action protecting those that live, work, and play in Linn County. LCPH will be forever grateful to those who stood near us during the COVID-19 response. The gratitude list is long and includes, but is not limited to, those who assisted with vaccination clinics, delivered food to those recovering from COVID-19, pivoted educational opportunities, provided personal protective equipment, supported testing, completed contact tracing, were conduits of accurate information to the public, responded to the surge in fatalities, increased mental health services, and provided medical care. For these activities and many others, we are thankful.

Julie Stephens
Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery Specialist
Linn County Public Health