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2020 was a year that underlined the importance of a robust public health system and the services we provide at the La Crosse County Health Department. It was also a year that saw many of us summon physical and emotional reserves we didn’t know we had. While continuing the important work of the Health Department, long hours were spent planning for and responding to COVID-19. We learned how to work together virtually through Teams, how to share information with the community so everyone could stay healthy, and 2020 also brought new meaning to the importance of work/life balance as many worked from home.

Thankfully, and due to years of planning for emergencies, our talented and dedicated staff were able to collaborate with state and community partners to provide accurate information to the public, free testing sites, and timely access to vaccinations. We can now look forward to continuing to support the recovery from the pandemic and a new chapter with a new health director. Our focus will remain on continuing to provide the great public services our community depends on.

After the extraordinary effort our team produced in 2020, we can be more confident than ever that the La Crosse County Health Department is ready to face new challenges together.

*Jane Klekamp*
At the beginning of 2020, the Health Department began the year with normal and routine activities. We kicked off the year by raising awareness for Radon during Radon Action Month. We recognized "Healthy Living Heroes" in the community. We began promoting rabies vaccinations and dog licenses. Education was provided about e-cigarettes and 2nd hand tobacco exposure and also on using caution during food and storm clean-up. Our local WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program was continuing to serve clients full-time in person.

On February 28th, 2020, Health Department activities began to change. On this day, Wisconsin saw its 1st case of COVID-19, and the La Crosse County Health Department issued its first press release. Our message then was "Let's Be Ready" and we urged local residents to protect themselves by washing their hands, covering their mouths, avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth, and staying home from work while sick. (One year later, these messages have largely remained the same.)

On March 9th, the La Crosse County Health Department hosted a media conference with various partners. A key part of the Health Department's mission is to protect the health of all La Crosse County residents. It was our intention with these early press conferences to provide information and inform residents of the risks and prepare them for what might be to come.

On March 12th, our Health Director at the time (Jennifer Rombalski) issued a call for La Crosse County to avoid any events that attract 250 or more people and to consider postponing those events. And on March 18th, La Crosse County had its 1st positive case of COVID-19.

Since that time, the Health Department has largely focused its efforts on communication, testing, disease investigation and contact tracing, data, and vaccination efforts.

View a summary video of 2020 COVID-19 efforts: [CLICK HERE](#)
One of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of a communicable disease like COVID-19 is to quickly identify those who are ill and those they may have exposed, then ask those people to isolate and quarantine away from others. This prevents the illness from spreading further, which has several important benefits: (1) it reduces the overall number of infections, (2) it reduces the speed of transmission, and (3) it reduces the potential number of severe infections, which in turn reduces hospitalizations and deaths and can help safeguard healthcare system capacity. A hospital with reduced capacity due to staff shortages (from widespread exposures or illness) or due to high numbers of hospitalizations will be less able to care for all patient types--for example, car accident victims, patients having a stroke, those having a heart attack, those needing cancer treatments, and those who just need basic preventive screenings and care. That is why this last benefit - safeguarding the capacity of our local healthcare systems - is essential, not just for improving the outcomes of those with severe COVID infections, but also those with any other number of health conditions. (continued on page 5)
These are among the many reasons why La Crosse County Health Department placed heavy emphasis on reaching as many cases and their contacts as possible as quickly as possible. This process, called “disease investigation and contact tracing”, is one we have utilized for a wide spectrum of diseases for decades. Building on this experience and skill, the disease investigation and contact tracing team called and talked with cases, identified those with whom each case had been around during the time when they could have transmitted the virus to others, and then reached those individuals who could have been exposed to provide guidance about quarantine. These calls also provided an important opportunity for the health department to teach people about COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread, especially to others with whom they lived. Disease investigation and contact tracing helped reinforce how those impacted could get medical assistance, connected them with community services and helped them obtain support.

During 2020, the Health Department followed up with more than 9,900 cases and tens of thousands of contacts. By contrast, in the recent five years, the number of total communicable disease investigations has, on average, numbered between 250 - 500/year. In order to reach so many cases and contacts, LCHD hired and trained 75 new pandemic support staff who worked alongside existing health department staff, 22 county employees from other departments, and investigation teams from each of our local universities to complete that disease investigation and contact tracing process. We also worked with school nurses and contact tracers from our 5 public school districts, many area private schools, businesses, long-term care facilities, area hospitals, and our fellow public health agencies at the local, regional, and state levels. We are grateful for each of these team members and partners, and incredibly impressed by the work we accomplished together.

To that end, we sought to estimate the number of infections that disease investigation and contact tracing may have averted, and relatedly, the amount of resources we saved our community by avoiding further disease spread and the added isolation, quarantine, hospitalizations and deaths that would have accompanied it. A simple and conservative statistical model estimates that these investigation efforts averted more than 3,400 cases, 17,000 - 20,000 close contacts, 117 hospitalizations, and 20 deaths. This work has resulted in saving our community more than $11,000,000 in lost productivity and hospitalization costs.

Through this experience, our team was reminded just how much good we can accomplish for our community when multi-sector work together towards a shared goal.
“Words can save lives. Our ability to boost confidence in COVID-19 vaccines will depend largely on the language, the messengers, and methods we use to communicate to Americans that the vaccine will help keep them and their families safe and healthy.”
-Dr. Brian C. Castrucci, President and CEO, de Beaumont Foundation

A primary goal for the Health Department from the very beginning of the pandemic has been to provide accurate communication. We aimed to follow the Risk Communication guidance that is set by the Centers for Disease Control and that is: Be first, be right, be credible.

Because this pandemic forced many of us to stay at home, we needed to rely on technologies like Zoom (for press briefings), and Social Media, along with other traditional media platforms. We worked to make these communications as accessible as possible to everyone in our community by utilizing a sign-language interpreter at all press briefings, utilizing Hmong-speaking staff to interpret the messages, and a Spanish-speaking volunteer. Press briefings often coincided with a traditional press release to inform the public in other traditional routes such as the local newspaper or television.

We worked to be the primary source for the community to be able to come to for consistent, reliable, and factual information with the ultimate goal to protect community residents and their health. A key part of this process was to answer community questions quickly and in a timely manner. This included our Call Center (this remains open to field vaccine questions) which has responded to more than 4,000 documented community phone calls. We answered more than 8,290 questions via Facebook and Instagram and more than 4,229 emails to the COVID-19 inbox since the start of the pandemic. Our team continues to send out a weekly newsletter (on Fridays) to continue to provide an overview of COVID-19 and Health Department information along with creating social media content to provide community education and information. The communications team also kept the lacrossecounty.org/covid19 website up to date with COVID-19 information.

We are now beginning to shift our communication efforts largely to COVID-19 vaccination which includes: how and where to get a vaccine, who is eligible, addressing vaccine hesitancy, and working with local media to get the word out.

According to a survey completed by community partners, communication was listed as a top strength of the La Crosse County Health Department. We look forward to using all of the communication lessons learned in future Health Department communications and efforts.
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
Wash your hands.
Stay home.
Don't panic.
LACROSSECOUNTY.ORG/COVID19

Update: March 21, 2020 3:30 pm
New Cases in La Crosse County: 0
Total Cases in La Crosse County: 5
Deaths in La Crosse County: 0

Frequently Asked Question:
What is community spread of COVID-19?
Answer:
Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

We're wearing them. You should, too.
The La Crosse County Health Department partnered with the Wisconsin National Guard to provide COVID-19 testing in La Crosse County. COVID-19 testing was offered a variety of locations including the La Crosse County Highway Shop in West Salem, Holmen High School, the Health & Human Services Building, and the WiDOT office. In total, 15,899 COVID-19 tests were administered at all locations in 2020. Thank you to the Wisconsin National Guard, our internal testing team and volunteers, and all of the locations who assisted us to provide these needed service in the La Crosse area.
Local case data for COVID-19 has been an important decision-making tool for La Crosse County. In 2020, the health department was able to provide daily and weekly data points related to our COVID-19 cases. Being able to track the changes in disease transmission rates was a crucial data point for many sectors in our community—schools, universities, businesses, healthcare, and beyond. As a local health department, our data efforts were used widely in the community to guide decisions about returning safely to schools and universities, opening up businesses and the local economy, and understanding the strain on our local healthcare systems.

Additionally, with local data, the Coulee COVID-19 Collaborative was able to identify mitigation strategies for varying degrees of disease transmission. These mitigation strategies are an effective tool for all community members to follow as disease rates change over the course of time. The strategies act as a guidebook for addressing higher and lower disease rates and how our community can respond to these changes.

Currently, our data is shared widely with the community at https://lacrossecounty.org/couleecovid19. This website provides insight into our weekly status and recommended strategies, daily and weekly case data, and metrics related to public health, schools, long-term care, and healthcare. Publishing our data has been a unique opportunity for many sectors in our community to understand a bigger picture of how COVID-19 has affected our county.
Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination has always been seen as the way back to our normal way of life. The La Crosse County Health Department has been planning for this type of response and scenario for decades as part of Preparedness training. This has included things like mass vaccination clinic practice, putting plans in place, and participating in State and Nationwide stakeholder meetings and learning days to prepare. All of this hard work and preparation has prepared our department for exactly what is needed for COVID-19 vaccination in 2021. We are ready and we are prepared.

As the first COVID-19 vaccine doses began to come into La Crosse County in December 2020, our department began to put all of our plans into place. This included working with local vaccinators (health systems, pharmacies, and health clinics) and hosting weekly meetings to establish communication and plans. In December 2020, our team began working with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to discuss the possibility of a mass vaccination clinic in our community and what it might look like to have a clinic and facility that can provide thousands of vaccine doses each day. Now that we are well into 2021, these efforts are well underway and as of April 2021, more than 30% of La Crosse County residents have received at least 1 COVID-19 vaccine dose, a massive accomplishment by all our partners and vaccinators.

Pictured: (Aron Newberry - La Crosse County Health Department, Joe Gow - UWL, and Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers)
In the Spring of 2020, the La Crosse County Health Department partnered with The Hunger Task Force of La Crosse and a wide variety of other community businesses and organizations to host a series of "Food Drive Fridays." The result was a massive success. The results are pictured below. We believe that every person deserves to have access to food and essentials, especially during times of uncertainty. We thank all of our community partners and businesses who helped to make Food Drive Friday a success in 2020 and helped to assist so many during the COVID-19 pandemic impacts.

Food Drive Friday
Final Results:

68,189 POUNDS OF FOOD
$309,586.12 COLLECTED

Thank you to those in our community who donated!
A. BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELOR PROGRAM
The La Crosse County WIC Program continues to have a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) on staff. All pregnant and breastfeeding women on the WIC program are referred to Trina for additional support. Trina can provide mothers with basic breastfeeding information and support, along with sharing her own personal experiences. BFPC's are often considered the “cheerleader” for a WIC breastfeeding mom. They help to cheer them on and meet their own breastfeeding goals.

B. FARMER’S MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM
In 2020 the WIC Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provided $35.00 in WIC vouchers to each eligible WIC family. Families could then purchase freshly grown fruits, vegetables and herbs at area farmers’ markets. Of La Crosse County families receiving FMNP vouchers, 83% (up from 75% in 2019) spent some or all vouchers provided in 2020. However, 822 FMNP vouchers were issued (decrease from 986 in 2019) due to the impacts of COVID-19 less families were interested in receiving the vouchers and visiting markets. The FMNP benefits not only families participating in the WIC Program, but local farmers selling at the La Crosse County markets.

C. COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHANGES:
The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, signed into law on March 18, 2020, permits USDA to grant waivers to state WIC agencies to make accommodations to physical presence requirements for WIC appointments. The waivers also waive the requirement for weight, height, and bloodwork requirements to be obtained. The La Crosse WIC staff have been primarily working from home since this waiver took effect. They provide services to WIC participants remotely, primarily by telephone appointments. The initial waiver was extended. It is now set to expire on May 20, 2021.
The Great Rivers Hub Program implements a system to bridge the gap between health care delivery and the social service sector for cost savings, improved population health outcomes, and increased client experience and engagement. The La Crosse County Health Department currently has two Community Health Workers working in the Great Rivers Hub Program. (Maichor Lee & Sheila Campos.)

Health Department Highlights:

- Governor Tony Evers has included funding for the Community Health Worker workforce in his latest budget proposals. La Crosse CHW’s participated in an Advocacy Day at the state capital and met with senators and representatives to inform about the impact about community health workers.
- There is now a Coulee Region CHW network for community health workers to connect with each other.
- To review the full impact of the Great Rivers Hub Program you can view the impact report here or hear from local CHW’s in the video below! (Click the image to view)
The La Crosse County Health Department Communicable Disease program was greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Medical facilities closed both clinical and non-essential hospital services. When individuals could not attend their annual screenings, people stopped or delayed testing for most communicable diseases.

Overall, La Crosse County saw fewer communicable diseases than previous years, except for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea. The number of Chlamydia cases reported in 2020 was 639 (602 in 2019), and the number of cases of Gonorrhea reported was 164 for 2020, which was up from 84 in 2019.

Tuberculosis cases were lower in 2020. (See chart below). Several clients in 2020 chose to delay seeing a physician or chose not to treat. Each client was initially seen in person and then future medication visits were by video call. Active TB is a reportable and communicable disease that needs to be reported to the Health Department within 24 hours of results. Latent or TB infection is not infectious but needs to be reported to the Health Department within 48 hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Q1 suspect</th>
<th>Q1 confirmed</th>
<th>Q2 suspect</th>
<th>Q2 confirmed</th>
<th>Q3 suspect</th>
<th>Q3 confirmed</th>
<th>Q4 suspect</th>
<th>Q4 confirmed</th>
<th>Year Suspect</th>
<th>Year confirmed</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
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A member of the Health Department staff does participate in the Suicide Prevention Initiative Group which meets monthly. The focus of this group is awareness and prevention. The “Your Life Matters” billboards and lawn signs are sponsored by this group and can be seen throughout our community. Because of COVID our 2020 Summit was held virtually with nearly 300 attendees. We did enjoy helping outside at Riverside Park for Rotary Lights last December and despite the need for masks, it was great fun to see people again in person. Our 2021 annual Suicide event will be held Wednesday September 22 2021 at Riverside Park and our annual Suicide Prevention Summit will be held Thursday September 23 2021 at UWL. We are hoping our 2021 Summit will be in person but will be prepared to present it virtually again if needed.
Although 3 Environment Health staff members were reassigned completely to COVID-19 response and 2 Environmental Health staff used 50% of their time for COVID response, we continued to provide 438 inspections to our licensed business establishments. We also permitted 54 new businesses and completed a plan review and pre-inspections for each, both in-person and virtually. Our inspectors for licensed businesses filled the role of working as a point of contact and liaison with businesses who encountered positive COVID-19 cases in their establishments. The Environmental Health Team consulted with over 1,500 business owners to provide COVID-19 best practices. This included developing a business toolkit, survey forms, a public notification system, and following up with community complaints related to COVID-19 protocols within businesses.

The department maintained summer LTE staff to complete all pool and beach sampling from May-September. These staff also assisted with some COVID-19 response activities.

Environmental Health received 260 community complaints outside of COVID-19 activities.
Laboratory

Available laboratory services remained the same in 2020. One lab staff member retired and a new employee was hired in March 2020. The lab did not reduce the testing offered, although we did lose drug testing from Justice Support Services. Lab staff were also involved with COVID-19 response working with case data and analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laboratory Analysis</th>
<th>Number completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beach sampling</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNR bacteria samples</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNR Nitrate samples</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private well arsenic</td>
<td>623</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private well lead</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private well metals panel</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private well Nitrate</td>
<td>1011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private well bacteria</td>
<td>1367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land conservation fecal coliform</td>
<td>221</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land conservation phosphorus</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land conservation total suspended solids</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.Coli surface water</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH Pool and Whirlpool testing</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities – Condenser well</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Well and Septic

Well and septic inspections and permitting still occurred throughout 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Permits</th>
<th>Inspections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soil Test Onsite</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Permits</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Septic Permits</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Septic Permits</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Radon is an invisible gas that is known to cause lung cancer. In 2020, 253 property owners tested their homes for Radon. Of those tested, 35% of homes showed an elevated and unsafe level of Radon above 4.0 pCi/L.
In 2020, the Health Department continued to enroll women into the WWWP to receive breast and cervical cancer screening services. Because of the pandemic, fewer people were seeking cancer screenings. Despite the decrease in cancer screenings, 21 women did use WWWP for mammograms and PAP smears. Six percent of the women using the program were minorities. The Health Department looks forward to increasing the number of women who use WWWP through our partnership with Scenic Bluffs in Cashton, WI.

Julie Harter and her family continue to support the Women of La Crosse County Diagnosed with Breast Cancer Fund by raising awareness and money for essential medical items not covered by health insurance, such as mastectomy items, compression sleeves, and breast prosthetics.

Due to COVID-19, there is a greater need for blood donation than ever. La Crosse County has stepped up to this need by adding back-to-back donation dates for each of our 5 previously scheduled donation drive dates. This means that instead of having the blood drive 5 days as was done in 2020, it is being doubled to 10 days in 2021. In the 1st two blood drives of 2021, there were already 157 blood donations. The next Blood Drives will be:

- April 20th & 21st
- June 30th & July 1st
- September 30th & October 1st
- December 1st & 2nd

Individuals who have been vaccinated for COVID-19 are eligible to donate as long as it has been at least 2 days from their vaccine.
The Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (7 C's Health Initiative) successfully wrote and received a grant for $125,000 each year for two years. The 7 C's Health Initiative covers the counties of Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau, Monroe, La Crosse, Vernon and Crawford.

Pictured above: Policymaker Breakfast held at Logan High School with FACT youth and La Crosse Area Health Initiative members. The FACT youth presented at the breakfast and highlighted the new FACT group, the health risks of e-cigarettes, and the importance of clean indoor air. LAHI members discussed the history of clean indoor air and the current goals/objectives of the coalition to educate parents/adults about the health risks of e-cigarettes. There were 6 City of La Crosse Council members that attended the breakfast, along with 11 FACT youth and 4 LAHI members, coalition coordinators, and 2 school personnel. In addition to the presentations by the youth and coalition, the City Council members were encouraged to ask questions and discuss their own work related to youth issues.

In 2020, the City of La Crosse included e-cigarettes in their smoke-free air laws and also passed an ordinance making their properties completely smoke-free. La Crosse also celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Smoke-Free Air Law.

This group also worked to collect 88 surveys within the low income demographics to gather interest in smoke free outdoor spaces in the City of Onalaska. The survey showed immense support for smoke free spaces at the following: parks, playgrounds, sports/ball fields, skateboard parks, festival grounds, walking/hiking trails, picnic areas, golf courses, campgrounds, dog parks, boat landings, beaches, and farmers markets.
The Alcohol and Marijuana Workgroup hosted Informed Families Webinars in 2020. The purpose of this series was to educate parents about current youth substance abuse trends and factors that may increase substance misuse. Topics for the webinar series included: marijuana legalization, parenting of a sex trafficking victim, helping families cope with anxiety, and healthy digital use among teens.

The group also developed and distributed Dinner Conversation Cards. These cards included questions that would foster conversations between youth and parents at the dinner table.

The annual Marijuana Trends Report was developed. This report includes data on La Crosse County youth marijuana use, local hospitalizations data, and community belief assessments.

Lastly, a "Wake Up Call" (pictured below) event was hosted at Logan High School. Wake Up Call was a guided tour of a teen's mock bedroom where more than 59 "red flags" of potential substance abuse are revealed. Parents left empowered to look for signs and have conversations with their child.

La Crosse County Health Department
2020 report
There is no denying 2020 was a challenging year for many residents of the Coulee Region. The social isolation, a shaky economy where many layoffs occurred, limited access to essential services, and other factors related to the pandemic have greatly impacted our communities. The Alliance To HEAL (Halting the Effects of Addiction Locally) recognizes the struggles many are facing and has been working diligently throughout the year to minimize the influence of substance misuse in the region. Although La Crosse County saw 38 (plus 2 pending if drugs were present) drug overdose deaths in 2020 – more than double the amount of drug-related deaths in 2019, and previous years – area experts recognize that without many of the efforts of the Alliance to HEAL, this statistic could have very well be much higher.

**Below are the Alliance to HEAL’s 2020 highlights:**

- Distributed more than 800 doses of Narcan to law enforcement, emergency rooms, fire departments and other agencies saving lives of many who overdosed
- Increased options for improperly disposed of needles, including medical sharps. La Crosse County’s nine publicly-available sharps disposal boxes donated by the Western Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition collected over 4,200 pounds of used hypodermic needles in 2020
- Continued collection of prescription drugs
- Worked with treatment providers to encourage changes in treatment and recovery services, including offering virtual meetings and improved connection of peer recovery coaches with providers and those seeking substance use and mental health services
- Collaborated with Viterbo University to offer over 100 professionals and community members a training summit on opioids, substance use, and mental health
- Reduced interruptions in the La Crosse County jail for inmates on medicated assisted treatment by 75 percent
- Community support helped fund a “navigator” position in 2021 to link clients more seamlessly to services and with less wait times to improve access to substance use treatment
- Collaborated with the Overdose Fatality Review Team to develop recommendations to reduce drug overdose deaths
- Developed a parent toolkit to reduce substance use among adolescents and increased awareness of services for help
- Developed a resource guide for alternative pain management
The La Crosse County Wellness Team accomplished a variety of projects in 2020. Some of these projects included:

- Admin Center fitness room expansion, and creation of a new fitness space with added equipment.
- Health & Human Services break room remodel (see photos below).
- Fitness room reopening in September to include COVID protocols.
- Fall Mental Health focuses leading to a contract with Sarah Johnson from the YMCA to offer weekly live discussions.
- Nutrition and wellness related sessions offered for five weeks to the Sheriff’s Department.
- Continued to offer Wellbeats program with 236 County employees current subscribing.
The La Crosse County Health Department continued to track animal bite reports in 2020. The total bites reported to the Health Department was 224. The process the Health Department follows for animal bites is:

- If zero follow-up is needed (animal was licensed, vaccinated, and compliant with quarantine release form) staff spend on average 15 minutes for these contacts.
- If follow-up is needed (unvaccinated animal, unknown biting animal, stray, biting animal euthanized before completing quarantine, non-compliant with quarantine and submitting quarantine release form, etc.) then the contacts can take longer, 30 minutes to several hours.
- If non-compliant, a citation can be issued and this process can take 30 minutes to 1 hour.

The Dental Pain Protocol Project is an initiative with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and began in La Crosse County in 2019. The project goals are to encourage appropriate use of antibiotics to reduce infection, encourage better pain management that reduces the use of opioids, and link to a referral mechanism to provide access to dental care to reduce return visits to the Emergency Department and/or Urgent Care. Local Emergency Department and Urgent Care providers have been trained to respond to patients with dental pain using a protocol developed by the dental pain project team. Individuals having non-traumatic dental pain are given a referral card to contact a dental care coordinator at the La Crosse County Health Department. The dental care coordinator assists with finding and scheduling dental care. LCHD is continuing to search for more dentists that will see these individuals. Access continues to be very limited and is a challenge.
COVID definitely made an impact on the 2020 Holiday For Goodness Sake Project.

We needed to change our gift drop off location to the facilities delivery garage area in back, donors signed up for a drop off time to avoid contact with other donors, our volunteer elves couldn't volunteer with co-workers from their same section, many donors sent cash or gift cards to avoid having to shop, and the list goes on…

But as always, we had a very successful project. Over 800 people received some holiday cheer from this project by the Coulee Region coming together to spread hope. A very generous woman from the community donated 20+ boxes of new clothing for children (size newborn-18), The Gilbert Brown Foundation donated 2 pallets of brand new toys, Barnes and Noble's Holiday Community Book drive donated 1200 new books of various reading levels, The Rock Foundation & 95.7 The Rock donated 4 totes full of premade bags of hygiene items, and ZCare at Z93.3 donated $1000 from their “Zoom with Santa” for kids in foster care, especially those that were placed the week of Christmas. All in all, there were over 200 community donors/groups that made this project a success by purchasing gifts, donating cash or giftcards. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this years For Goodness Sakes Christmas Program a success!