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Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department Celebrates 30 Years of Service

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD) proudly marks its 30th anniversary, celebrating three decades of commitment to protecting health, preventing disease, and supporting the well-being of residents across both counties. Since its establishment in 1996, the department has continued to grow, innovate, and strengthen partnerships that enhance service to the community.

Over the past three decades, BLDHD has reached important milestones that reflect its dedication to responsive and community-driven public health. In 2016, Dr. Josh Meyerson joined the department, bringing expanded clinical expertise and leadership into communicable disease and epidemiology activities. The following year, BLDHD launched Community Connections, an initiative designed to link individuals and families with local resources, improving access to housing, food assistance, mental health support, and other essential services. In 2020, new staff joined the department to further reinforce its preparedness and response capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to a strong, coordinated community effort during an unprecedented public health challenge. In 2022, BLDHD was successful at securing grants for School Wellness Programs in four school districts, providing nursing and mental health services.

“Celebrating 30 years of service is more than reaching a milestone—it’s honoring the partnerships, resilience, and trust that define our work in Benzie and Leelanau counties, said Dan Thorell, Health Officer. “Every day, our team shows up with compassion, expertise, and a deep commitment to the people we serve. The feedback we hear from our residents reminds us why public health matters and inspires us to continue building healthier, stronger communities for decades to come.”

Community affirmation of the department’s work remains one of its strongest measures of success. The 2024 Client Satisfaction Survey, completed by 117 residents, demonstrated exceptional appreciation for staff friendliness, professionalism, and expertise. Respondents highlighted easy appointment scheduling, knowledgeable nurses, supportive home visits, and positive experiences across services including all programs.

As BLDHD enters its fourth decade, it remains steadfast in advancing health equity, strengthening partnerships, and delivering high-quality services that reflect the needs of Benzie and Leelanau residents.

Learn more about the department and its services at www.bldhd.org.

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