

# 2025 Annual Report



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# Introduction:

## New Full Time Health Officer: Daniel Thorell

It is an honor to present the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department's 2025 Annual Report. This year marked my first year serving as the agency's full-time Health Officer, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside a dedicated team of public health professionals committed to protecting and improving the health of our communities. Even in a year full of challenges, the BLDHD staff showed their resilience and ability to adapt.

Public health is built on a foundation of prevention, partnerships, and dedicated professionals. Every day, our staff work alongside residents, schools, healthcare providers, community organizations, and local governments to prevent disease, promote healthy lifestyles, and ensure a safe environment for everyone who lives in or visits Benzie and Leelanau counties.

In 2025, our Personal Health programs continued to make a meaningful impact on families and individuals throughout the district. Our public health professionals provided thousands of services including immunizations, home visits for maternal and infant health, hearing and vision screenings for school-aged children, and support through programs such as WIC and Children's Special Health Care Services. Our team also continued critical work in infectious disease control and harm reduction, helping to protect the health and well-being of our communities.

Our Environmental Health team remained equally busy, conducting hundreds of food safety inspections, issuing well and septic permits, evaluating existing septic systems and wells, monitoring public water systems, and responding to community concerns. In 2025, the department also implemented new environmental health software and transitioned to an updated workspace in Benzie County—investments that will improve efficiency, communication, and service delivery for years to come.

This year also brought significant professional achievements among our staff. Several team members completed advanced degrees, certifications, and received statewide recognition for their leadership and service in public health. These accomplishments reflect the deep commitment our staff have to professional excellence and to the communities they serve.

Public health is truly a community effort. We are grateful for the continued support of our Board of Health, county partners, community organizations, healthcare providers, and residents who work with us to promote healthier communities.

As we look ahead, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department remains committed to our mission to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote public health. Together, we will continue building healthier, more resilient communities for current and future generations.



Health Officer, Dan Thorell meets with Senator John Damoose in Lansing

Sincerely,  
Daniel R. Thorell, MS, RS  
Health Officer  
Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department

# Leadership

## Administration Team

Health Officer: Daniel R. Thorell, MS, RS

Medical Director: Joshua Meyerson, MD, MPH

Director of Administrative Services: Dodie Putney, BS -Retired 2/28/2025

Director of Administrative Services: Shelley Jablon, BS

Director of Environmental Health: Eric Johnston, RS

Director of Personal Health: Michelle Klein, RN, MA, PH-C

Assistant Director of Personal Health: Debbie Aldridge, RN -Retired 12/12/2025

Personal Health Supervisor: Autumn Jurek, BSN, RN, IBCLC -Retired 10/4/2025

Personal Health Supervisor: Betsy Hardy, MSN, RN

Personal Health Supervisor: Hannah Grinage

Personal Health Supervisor: Lauren Wolf, LMSW, IMH-E

Public Health Technician Supervisor: Kerry Turner, MBA

Finance Supervisor: Renee Youker

## Board of Health

Chairperson: Gwenne Allgaier- Leelanau County Commissioner

Vice Chairperson: Gary Sauer- Benzie County Commissioner

Members:

Christina Trigg - Benzie County Commissioner

Dr. Mark Kuiper- Benzie County Member at large

Mark Walter- Leelanau County Commissioner

Dr. David Quimby- Leelanau County Member at large

## Mission and Vision

The mission of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote public health

Our vision is optimal community health and well-being supported by equitable services, outreach, and education, delivered by expert, caring, and compassionate public health professionals.

# 2025 Services Overview

## Personal Health

- **Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS):** 185 clients enrolled and 62 plans of care were completed
- **Community Connections:** 1,364 referrals received and 982 visits made (home, community, or phone). We also provided outreach to 1,556 clients who were referred to us by our Medicaid managed health plan partners informing them of services they were due or eligible for.
- **Harm Reduction:** one additional Narcan distribution box was placed in the community.
- **Healthy Futures:** 423 contacts with 123 home visits to 193 families
- **Hearing Screening:** 1,202 screenings were completed for school-aged children.
- **Immunizations:** 3,480 immunizations were administered in 1,973 Immunization appointments.
- **Infection Disease Control:** 2,070 case investigations were conducted.
- **Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP):** 177 MIHP clients were served in 838 home and office visits.
- **Parenting Communities:** 484 children from 352 Leelanau families enrolled and receiving services.
- **School Based Health Centers:** 2,483 nurse visits were completed and 1,773 mental health visits were completed in five public school districts.
- **School Oral Health Screening:** 172 screenings were completed for school-aged children, 8 referrals made, four urgent referrals made.
- **Sexual Health:** 31 clients were tested for sexually transmitted infection (STI), 16 clients were tested for HIV, and 13 clients were tested for Hepatitis C.
- **Tuberculosis (TB) Test:** 79 TB tests were administered
- **Vision Screening:** 1,562 screenings were completed for school-aged children.
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** 701 clients enrolled in WIC, 101 received fluoride varnish and dental screening, and 93 lead tests were completed.

## Environmental Health

- **Beach Monitoring**
  - Swimming Beaches Monitored: 10
  - Partial Body Contact Advisory Issued: 3
- **Campground Inspections: 30**
- **Food Protection Program**
  - Active Food Licenses: 277
  - Active Food Truck and Mobile Licenses: 39
  - Routine Food Inspections: 402
  - Follow up Food Inspections: 78
  - Plan Reviews Received and Approved: 20
  - Mobile/Food Truck Inspections: 80
  - Temporary Food Inspections: 82
  - Food Complaints: 8
  - Foodborne Complaints: 7
- **Septic and Well**
  - Existing Well & Septic System Evaluations: 715
  - Septage Hauling Vehicle Inspections: 30
  - Septage Receiving Facility Inspections: 4
  - Septic Permits Issued: 519
  - Vacant Land Evaluations: 150
  - Well Permits Issued: 390
- **Pool Inspections: 29**
- **Tattoo Parlor Inspections: 2**

## Health Promotion

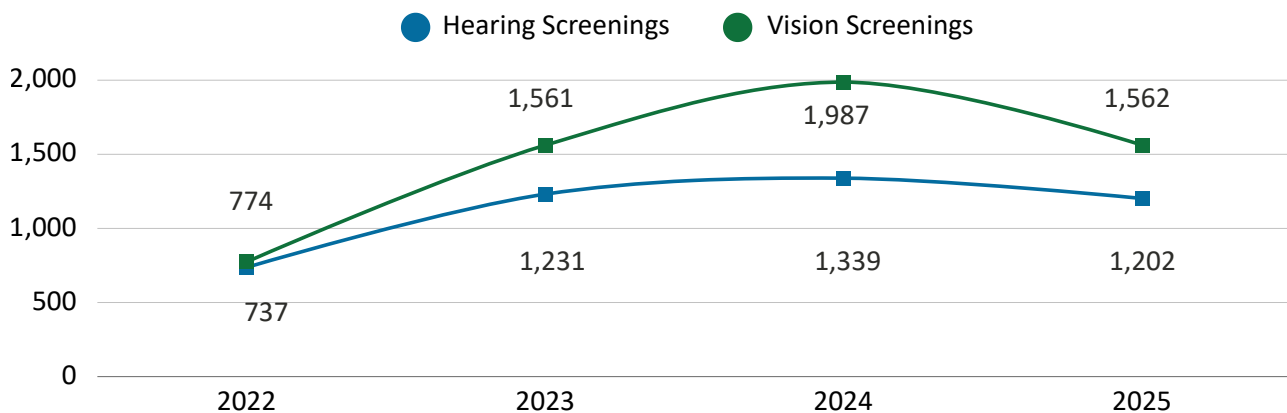
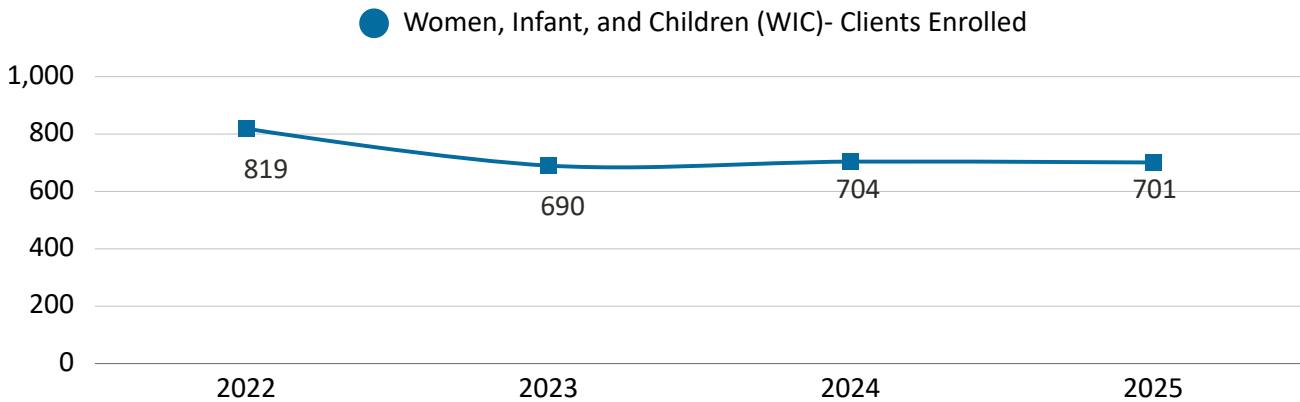
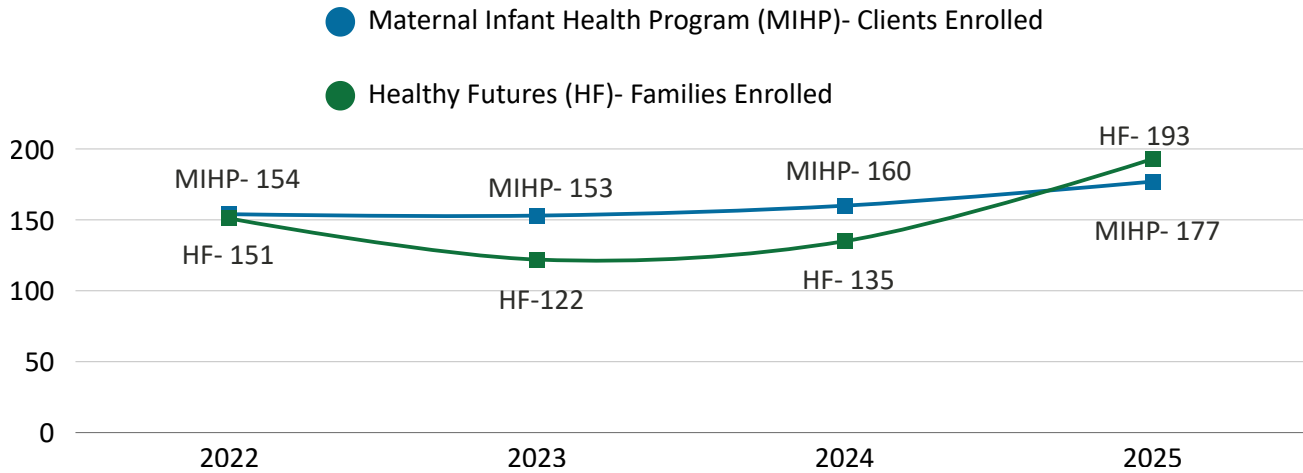
- Successfully applied and completed three grants.
- 1,150 marijuana/medication lock bags distributed
- 18 Press Releases sent to local media
- 12 Newsletters published
- 4 Provider Updated published
- 11 Outreach events attended

## Emergency Preparedness

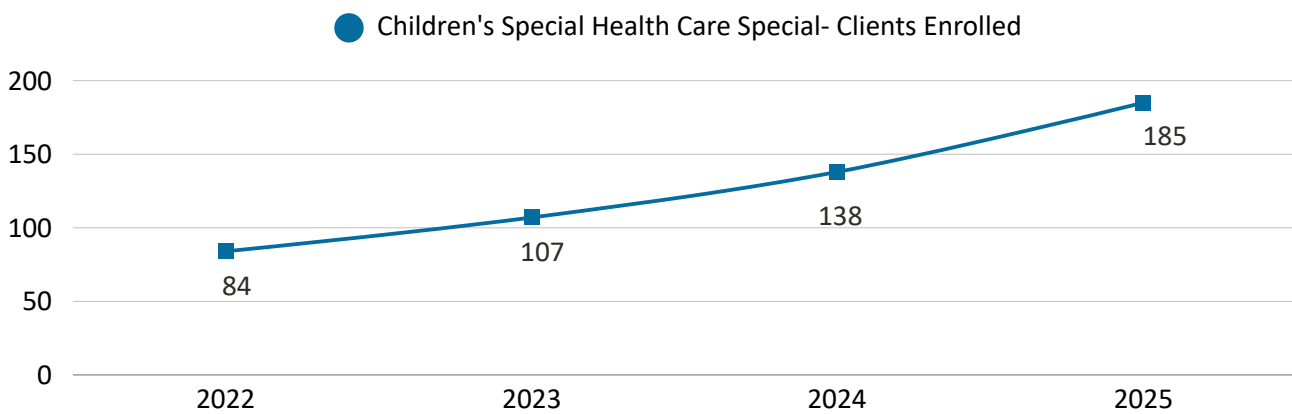
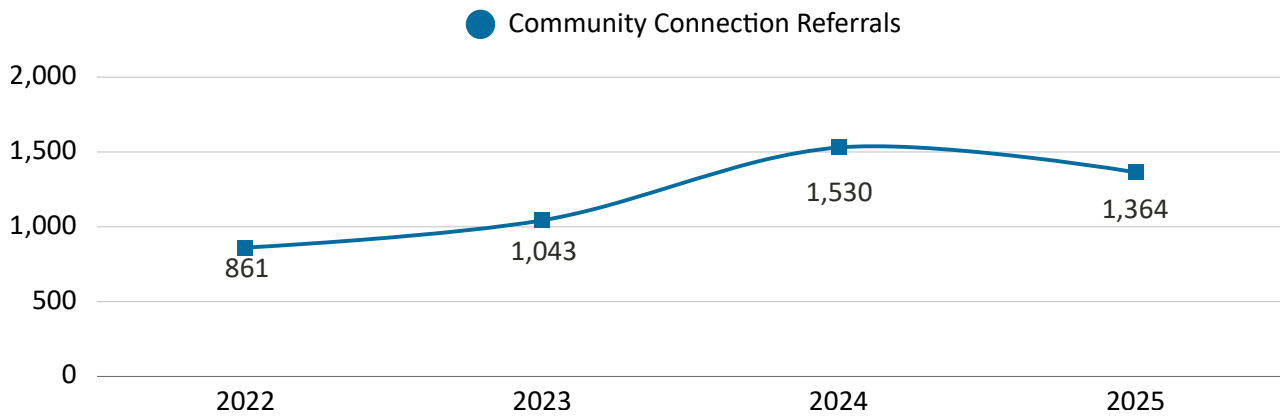
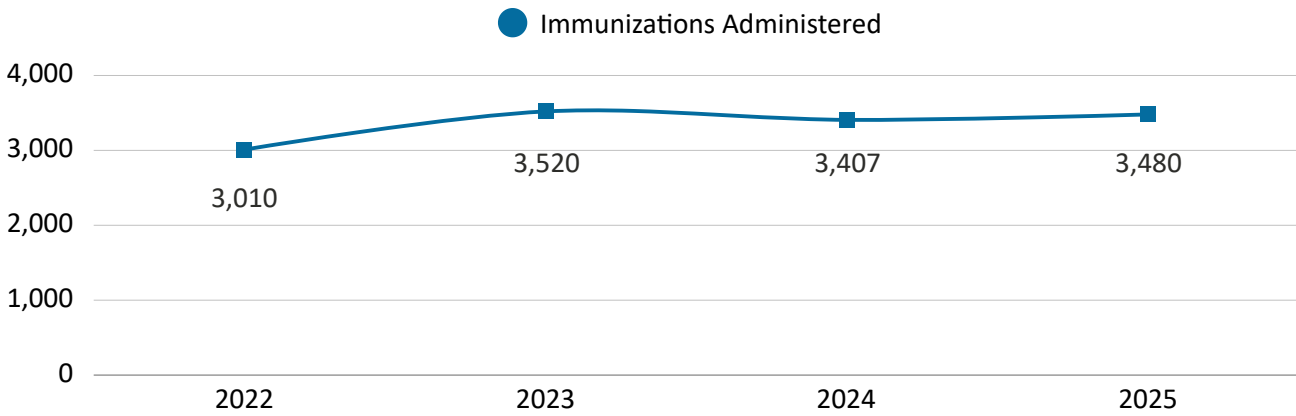
- One Public Health Advisory issued.
- 4 Staff cyber security trainings completed.
- New volunteer management platform launched.

# Program Trends

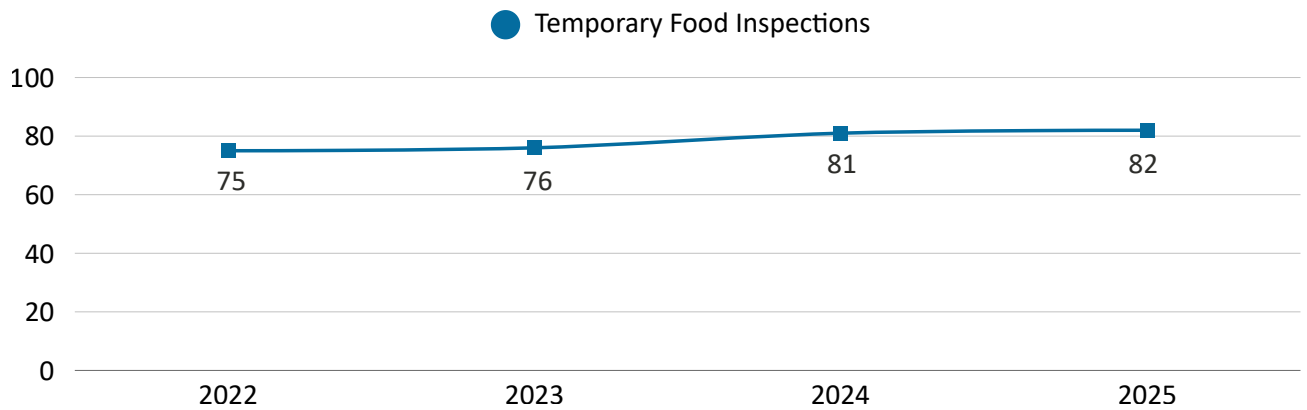
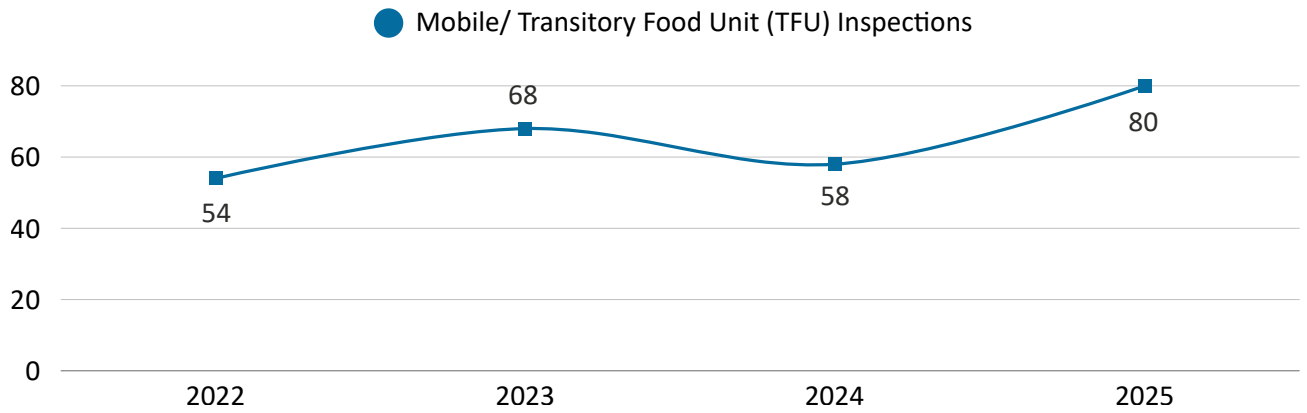
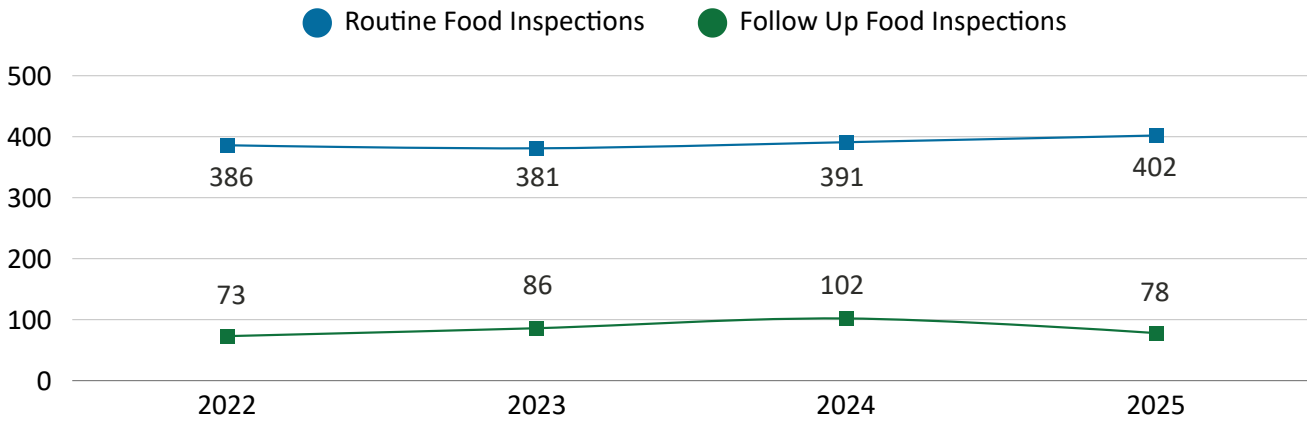
## Personal Health



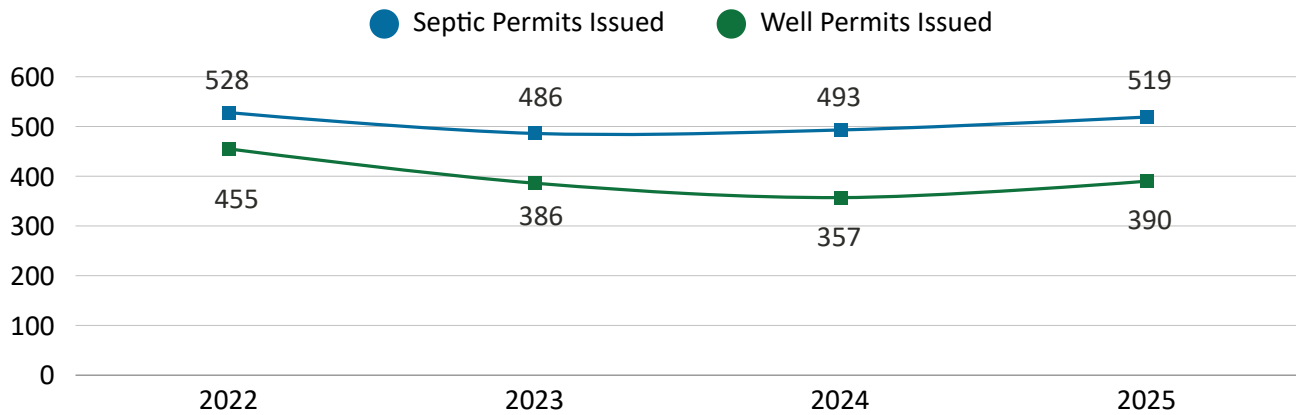
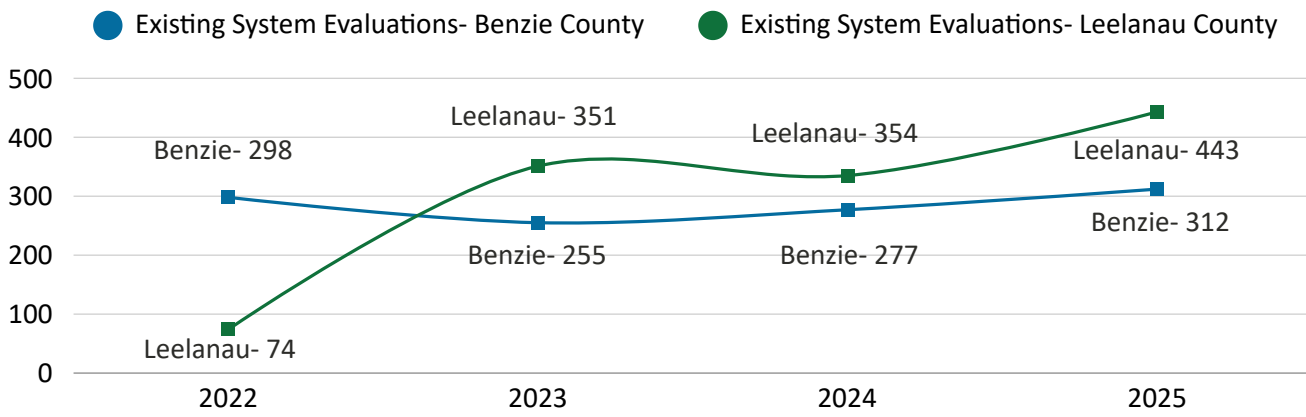
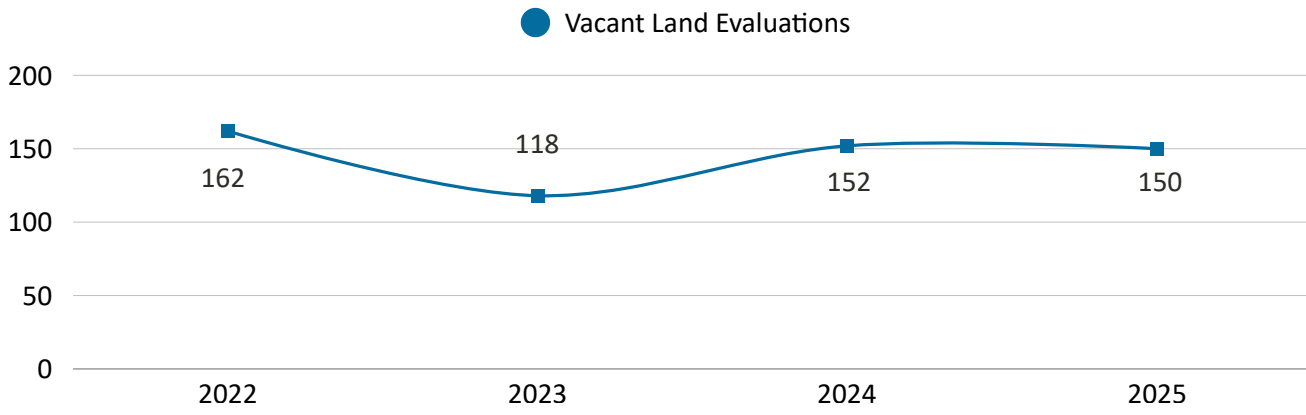
## Personal Health



## Environmental Health-



## Environmental Health-



# Personal Health Highlights

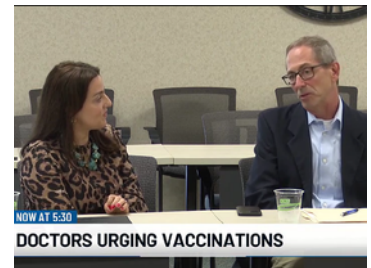
Personal Health Services continue to grow stronger through the dedication, leadership, and professional development of our staff. This year, Michelle received statewide recognition for nursing leadership—an achievement that reflects both her personal commitment and the strength of our nursing team. Autumn completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing while serving in a leadership role, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to advancing both her education and her impact. Courtney earned her master’s degree, expanding our capacity to support families through Parenting Communities of Leelanau County and Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP) services with deeper clinical expertise and compassionate care.

Our team’s daily work builds meaningful, trusted relationships with families across the community. Through WIC and breastfeeding support services, Jennifer provides invaluable peer counseling that empowers parents with practical guidance and encouragement. Jamie strengthened breastfeeding care in our community by advancing her professional certification, ensuring families receive high-quality, evidence-based support. Outreach initiatives such as the Food Assistance Programs meeting continue to bring together SNAP partners, WIC Produce Connections, local farmers, and families, expanding access to fresh, healthy foods while reinforcing strong community partnerships.

Prevention remains at the heart of our work. Under the leadership of Dr. Meyerson, vaccine advocacy efforts continue to promote informed decision-making and protect community health. The expansion of the Secure Your Stash campaign into Leelanau County has broadened safe medication storage education and outreach. Additionally, grant-funded initiatives led by Mariah and Rachel are increasing access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities for seniors and Native American populations, ensuring that prevention efforts are inclusive, culturally responsive, and community-centered.



Outreach Immunization School Clinic in Benzie.



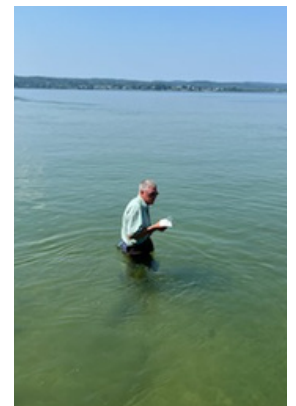
Dr Meyerson advocating for vaccines in Lansing.

# Environmental Health Highlights

Environmental Health (EH) advanced both infrastructure and innovation this year, strengthening our ability to serve the community effectively and efficiently.

In Benzie County, the EH team transitioned into an updated and improved workspace designed to better support collaboration, customer service, and day-to-day operations. The refreshed space enhances workflow efficiency, provides a more welcoming environment for residents and partners, and reflects our continued investment in accessible, high-quality public health services.

In addition to physical improvements, EH implemented new software to modernize data management, streamline inspections and permitting processes, and improve communication with residents and local businesses. This upgraded system increases accuracy, enhances transparency, and allows staff to respond more quickly and effectively to community needs.

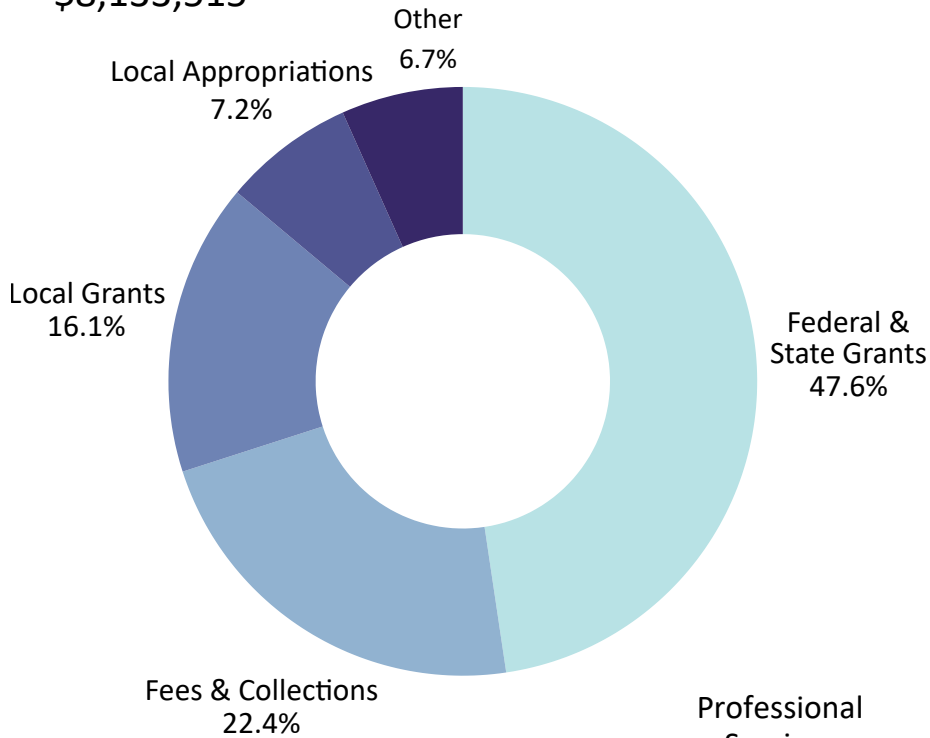


Clay collecting water samples in South Lake Leelanau.

# Financial Overview

## FY 2024/2025 Revenues

\$8,133,515



## FY 2024/2025 Expenditures

\$7,992,336

