

Springfield-Greene County Health Department

Introduction

The Health Department impacts each Springfield and Greene County resident every single day, through safe air, safe food, immunizations, disease control and prevention and other programs that protect public health.

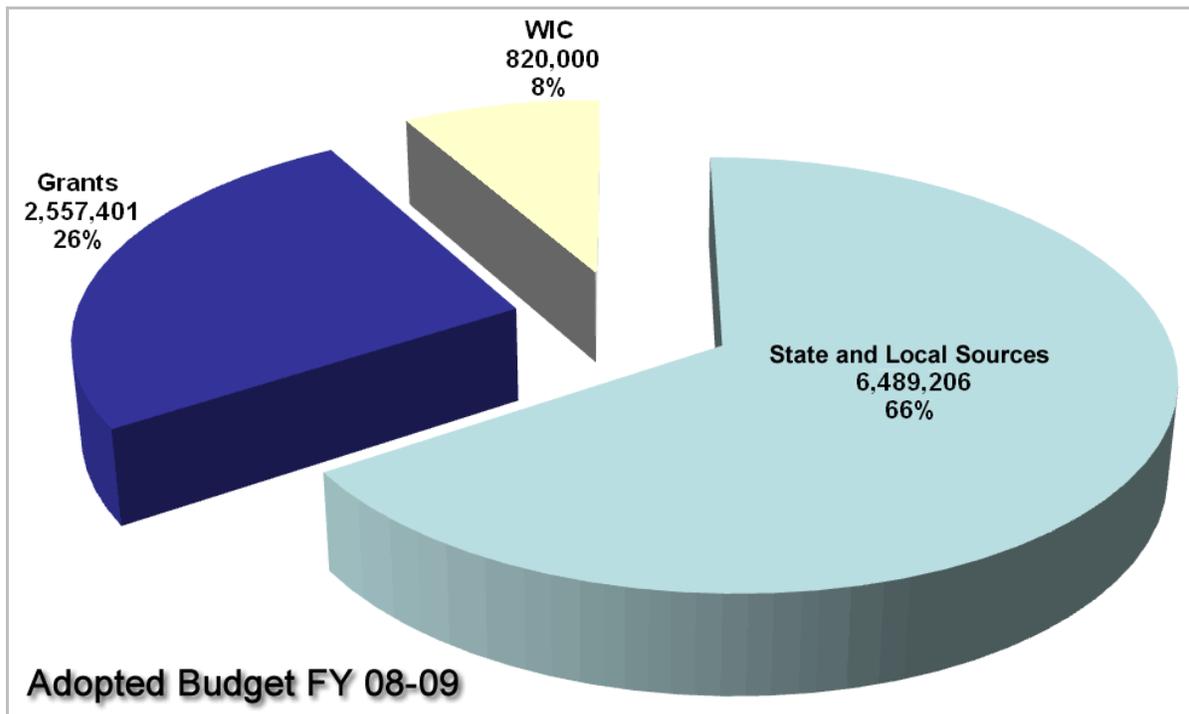
The Springfield Department of Health was established with the passage of Special Ordinance 139 on July 14, 1873. Its early tasks were operating a children's home and a hospital. In the early 1900s, the department prioritized controlling venereal diseases. In the 1920s and 1930s, it began expanding its environmental programs, and by the 1940s, greater emphasis was given to providing medical services to the indigent. In the 1950s and 1960s, the department's focus on sanitation services shifted to a broader focus on air, water, housing, insect and rodent control and environmental epidemiology.

In 1977, the city and county health departments combined, but maintained separate budgets. Personnel were declared City of Springfield employees. The department still prepares two separate budgets for adoption by the City of Springfield and Greene County, with a unified budget approved by City Council. The Director of Health remains a City employee, but answers to both City Administration and the County Commission.

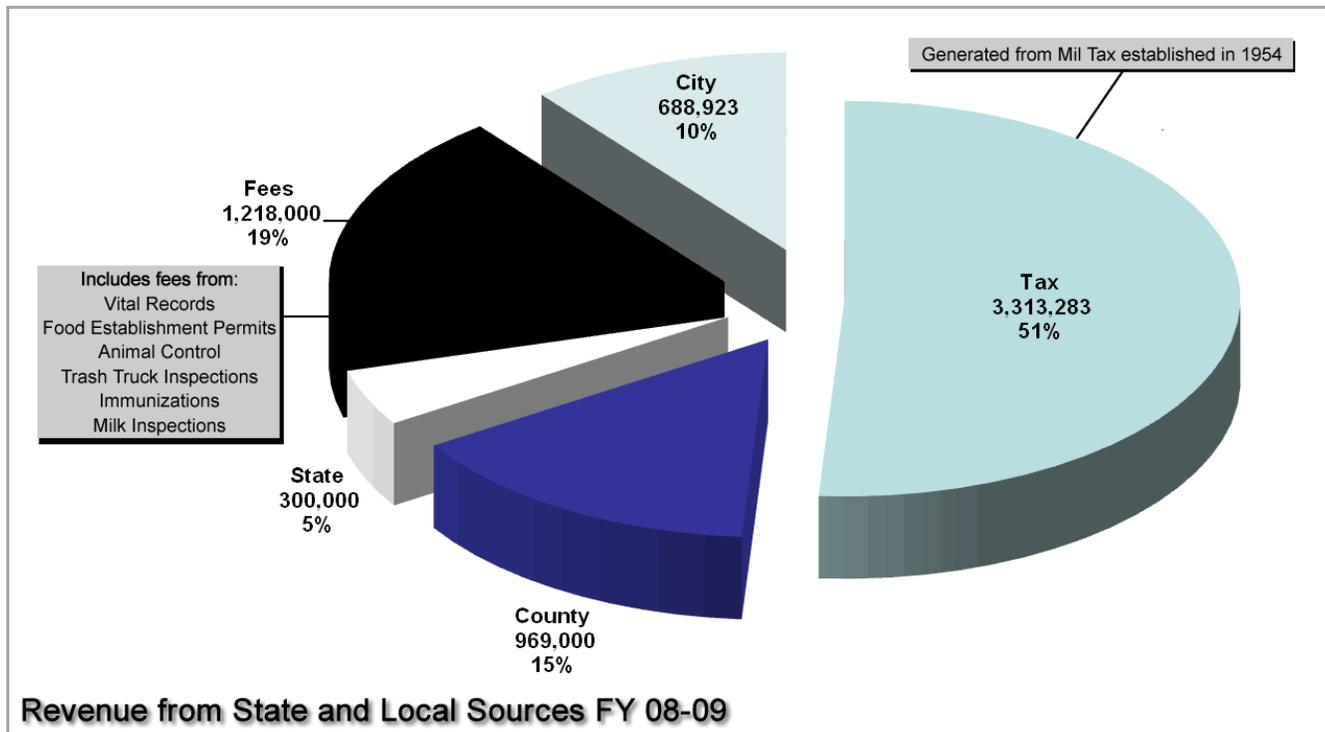
Today, the department continues to devote its efforts and resources to improving public health, with a primary focus on preventative health.

Budget

The Health Department functions under diverse funding from multiple sources. Less than 10 percent of the nearly \$10 million (\$9,866,607) annual operating budget comes from the City's general revenue transfer. Recently, this funding source has declined significantly due to the current budget climate.



Funding from state and local sources, shown in the “Adopted Budget” chart as 66% of the Health Department’s total budget, is described in the following pie chart titled “Revenue from State and Local Sources FY 08-09.”



Organizational Structure

The department employs approximately 110 individuals, including 16 temporary/seasonal and contract workers. The employees are organized under three main divisions:

- Community Health,
- Environmental Health, and
- Maternal, Child and Family Health.

The department is managed by Director of Health, Kevin Gipson, and Assistant Director of Health, Clay Goddard, with support from administrators for the three main divisions. There are also administrators for finance and public information, as well as program managers for approximately 50 distinct programs (see attached organizational chart).

Programs

Community Health – Kendra Williams, Administrator

- **Epidemiology**
Disease investigation staff work with state partners to detect, control and prevent the spread of infectious diseases in the community. Staff also monitor communicable disease reports, investigate illnesses and utilize consistent reporting from local partners to monitor public health.
- **Health Education**
Staff work with public health colleagues, citizens and community organizations to call attention to important health issues, increase knowledge and foster a supportive environment for the prevention of disease. Staff also promote healthy lifestyles in order to improve community health.
- **HIV Case Management**
Staff assist HIV/AIDS clients by locating, coordinating and authorizing medical and psychosocial services, including medical care, housing, counseling, transportation, medication, dental care, food, home health, education, support groups and insurance continuation.

- **HIV Prevention**

Staff maintain an aggressive program designed to identify cases of HIV through confidential testing at no cost to the client. Nurses ensure that clients are treated correctly, educate the public on risk factors and prevention methods and work to break the chain of infection by locating and notifying contacts of known infections.

- **Laboratory Services**

Laboratory staff provide environmental, analytical and medical testing services in a consolidated laboratory in order to provide valid data to staff making decisions about how best to care for clients and protect public health.

- **Regional Bioterrorism**

The Health Department maintains an active emergency response team of 25 employees, who are prepared around the clock to field emergency phone calls and respond to emergency situations. The department also has a team of full-time employees dedicated to planning the Health Department's response to a bioterrorist attack, influenza pandemic or other public health emergency.

- **Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic**

Nurses work to identify cases of sexually transmitted disease, ensure that clients are treated correctly, educate the public on risk factors and prevention methods, and break the chain of infection by locating and notifying contacts of known infections.

- **Tuberculosis Clinic**

Staff test individuals to identify active cases of tuberculosis and monitor treatment to ensure the illness does not spread to others in the community. Nurse case managers assess clients' physical responses to medications and ensure they are taken properly.

Environmental Health – Karen Prescott, Interim Administrator

- **Animal Control**

Animal Control Officers pick up dogs running at large, trap wild animals, impound vicious or nuisance dogs, quarantine biting animals, enforce the pit bull ordinance, and manage the Springfield Animal Shelter. Staff work successfully with animal rescue agencies to relocate animals not claimed by their owners. In 2008, staff responded to more than 18,000 calls and logged over 157,000 miles.

- **Childcare Facility Inspections**

Upon request from the Missouri Department of Health and Seniors Services' (DHSS) Bureau of Child Care, staff inspect childcare facilities at least annually for food safety, handwashing, basic sanitation, safety and environmental concerns.

- **Complaints**

Staff follow up on environmental complaints on mosquitoes, weeds, trash, brush, sewage and inoperable vehicles

- **Food Compliance**

Staff inspect food service in schools, food processors, retail, convenience stores and restaurants. They also inspect temporary and mobile units used seasonally and at special events. Staff follow up on complaints dealing with food-borne illness and general sanitation. In addition, they evaluate blueprints for proposed food establishments to determine if a facility will meet code requirements.

- **Hotel/Motel Inspections**

Staff inspect hotels and motels at least annually for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) licensure division. Inspectors look at sanitation, fire safety and environmental issues.

- **Housing Inspections**

Staff inspect dwelling units, in response to complaints, to determine compliance with minimal housing standards.

- **Milk**

Staff inspect and regulate Grade A dairy farms, bulk milk haulers and bulk milk farm trucks. Inspectors review Grade A dairy barn blueprints to determine compliance with state and federal regulations. They facilitate the collection of individual Grade A dairy farm milk samples and pasteurized fluid milk products for laboratory analysis, and they investigate complaints. The milk program covers a 12-county area in southwest Missouri and generates up to \$200,000 in gross revenue each year.

- **Pool and Spa Inspections**

Staff inspect swimming pools and spas at municipal pools and lodging facilities. They look at water quality, water clarity, safety equipment and environmental and safety concerns.

- **Starling Control**

Staff work with partners to minimize damage from flocks of starlings and provide an audio file to help individuals reduce the starling population on their property.

- **Vehicle Inspections**

Staff inspect trash trucks annually as part of a City business license requirement.

- **Water, Septic and Sewage Compliance**

Staff investigate sewage complaints and evaluate water and septic systems for regulated facilities and county zoning cases.

- **Well Water**

Staff collect private well water samples for testing at the request of homeowners. Greene county residents can submit well water samples to be tested for \$10.00. If an inspector collects the water sample, there is an additional \$15.00 fee. Additional tests that can be run for an additional fee of \$5.00 each are iron, sulfate, chlorine, nitrate and hardness.

Maternal, Child and Family Health – Pam Bryant, MA, RN, CPHA, Administrator

- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**

The WIC program provides nutrition education, health screenings and risk assessment, nutrition counseling, and food prescriptions to at-risk pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children up to five years old. WIC served 81,576 participants in 2008, and the monthly case load has been increasing dramatically since 2007. WIC's current monthly caseload is 7,475.

Public Health Nursing Section:

- **Immunizations**

Nursing staff at the Westside Public Health Center provide vaccinations to children, adults and travelers abroad, following national guidelines determined by the Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices. In 2008, staff provided 24,581 immunizations during 14,862 client encounters, including seasonal flu vaccination clinics. An annual audit revealed 87% of 2-year-olds were up-to-date with all recommended immunizations for their age.

- **Childcare Provider Consultation and Children's Health Program**

Nursing staff provide training, resources, programs, immunizations, consultation and facility inspections to childcare providers in Greene County. In 2008, approximately 1,792 children were impacted through the various health education programs. In addition, 172 childcare providers attended the annual Childcare Provider Conference, which offered educational opportunities and eleven different medical screenings.

- **“Good Touch, Bad Touch”**

With parental permission, a public health nurse teaches body safety to 4 and 5-year-old children, their parents and their childcare providers with the "Good Touch, Bad Touch" program. In 2008, the program reached 1,087 children.

- **Obesity Prevention**

Nursing staff work with childcare providers to develop nutritious food choices for the children and include active play time in their daily routine.

- **“We Brush, Too!”**

A community health nurse provides dental health education, skill development, and tooth brushing supplies to childcare centers and teaches providers and children the importance of caring for teeth properly. In 2008, 356 children were served at 40 facilities. One childcare facility that implemented the program had one child out of 44 (or 2%) need a dental referral, compared to another facility without the program that had 12 out of 33 (or 36%) children who needed a referral. This program is provided at a cost of less than \$5.00 per child.

- **Lead Poisoning Case Management/Environmental Lead**

Nursing staff and environmental staff work together to address the issue of lead poisoning in children. Nurses test children considered to be at-risk and work with the families of those who test positive to improve the children's health by creating a healthier environment at home, encouraging proper handwashing and adding foods rich in calcium, iron and protein to their diet.

Environmental staff perform comprehensive EBL (elevated blood lead) investigations for children, do educational lead consultations of homes, and do lead testing for childcare centers. Staff complete HUD rehabilitation lead testing for the Planning Department and lead testing of commercial projects for the City of Springfield. Staff also do testing for OACAC's low-income housing repair and assist EPA Region 7 with Lead Disclosure audits. Program staff act as a resource on local projects for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services as well as the Department of Natural Resources and do testing for the National Parks Service. In addition, staff act as an educational resource for families and healthcare providers.

- **Nursing Services**

Public health nurses offer head lice screenings and perform blood pressure screenings. Nurses provide home visits for at-risk mothers, children and infants. Nurses also provide education and meet basic infant and child health needs.

- **Safe Sleep**

Nurses work with community partners to provide education and guidance on safe sleep habits for infants in order to reduce the risk of infant death.

- **Prenatal Case Management**

Professional registered nurses encourage pregnant women to choose healthy behaviors in order to deliver healthier babies. Throughout the client's pregnancy, a nurse case manager is involved monthly with her health care, and visits her twice after the baby is born. Nurses provide pregnancy testing, information, resources and referrals. Between July and December 2008, 87.5% of the women who were smokers at the time they enrolled in the prenatal case management program reduced or quit smoking during their pregnancy.

- **Minority Health**

Nursing staff work to strengthen relationships with minority groups in the community, to offer education in a language and format that is understandable to the individuals and to provide public health services such as immunizations, tuberculosis skin testing and blood pressure screenings in an environment familiar to them.

- **Freedom from Smoking®**

Nursing staff work with individuals who are ready to quit smoking in a seven-session, interactive, small-group setting. Staff lead discussions that engage participants and empower them with tools to manage nicotine addiction, stop automatic smoking behaviors, and choose healthy alternative behaviors.

Additional Programs

- **Air Quality Control**

Staff protect the citizens and the environment from the effects of air pollution by enforcing local, state and federal air quality regulations with local businesses and by monitoring ambient air at four locations around the city. Staff also investigate dust, smoke and odor complaints, and conduct inspections of asbestos removal projects.

- **Clean Indoor Air/Tobacco Enforcement**

Staff work with food establishments to enforce the smoke-free dining ordinance. Staff work with businesses to ensure compliance with no sales to minors regulations.

- **Data Analysis**

Staff compile, track, and analyze community and environmental health data for community leaders and public health policymakers.

- **Emergency Response Planning**

Staff work with agencies and community partners in efforts to prepare appropriate responses to emergency situations. They educate the public on individual, family, group and agency preparedness and continuity of

business plans. Staff also recruit and train volunteers who can stand-up a private Point of Dispensing (POD) site to assist with potential mass medication response during a public health emergency.

- **Environmental/Community Planning**
Staff research and analyze community health and environmental health indicators, issues and trends in order to identify gaps, prioritize initiatives and implement programs to improve public health.
- **Mosquito Control**
Staff provide the public with information about mosquito bite prevention and mosquito habitat elimination. Environmental services staff apply larvacide to public areas where mosquitoes thrive.
- **Pandemic Influenza Planning**
Staff work with local businesses, groups, schools and faith-based organizations to plan and prepare for pandemic influenza.
- **Public Health Policy**
Staff work with health care partners to identify gaps in care, recommend solutions and advocate at the state level. Staff assist in scientific evaluation of recommended solutions and interventions and help make adjustments as needed.
- **Public Information**
Staff work to make public health information available to all community members by maintaining the Health Department's Web site, developing communication products and materials, providing training, coordinating with local, state and federal partners, giving public presentations and working proactively in media relations.
- **Senior Outreach**
Staff encourage senior adults to prepare for emergencies. They also offer information on shingles and provide shingles vaccinations at no cost to eligible senior adults.
- **Vital Records**
Staff issue certified copies of birth certificates for individuals born in Missouri and death certificates for individuals who died after 1979. Requests for certified copies of birth certificates generated more than \$266,000 in gross revenue for the City of Springfield in 2008.

Outcomes

Through public health efforts, the department has seen remarkable improvements in public health in the Springfield-Greene County area. Here are a few highlights from 2008.

- Nursing staff provided 24,581 immunizations.
- The laboratory processed nearly 26,000 medical and environmental tests.
- Animal Control Officers responded to more than 18,500 complaints.
- Environmental staff investigated 6,305 complaints.
- Food inspectors conducted 3,922 food establishment inspections, including reinspections and complaints.
- Health education programs impacted nearly 1,800 children.
- WIC served 81,576 participants.

Summary

Public health impacts each member of our community every day. Staff at the Health Department work diligently to ensure the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat is safe. They slow and stop the spread of disease through immunizations, clinic testing and treatment, education, surveillance and disease investigation. They restrict the ability of viruses, germs and bacteria to spread by reducing vectors, immunizing residents and teaching healthy behaviors. They work to fill the gaps in medical care among the most vulnerable in our community. They offer information, resources and services that empower members of our community to live longer, happier, healthier lives.