



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

 **KNOX COUNTY TENNESSEE**
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Message to Knox County



As we close out another year, I am proud of the collective efforts that have shaped our work to improve the well-being of the Knox County community. This report provides a glimpse of our many achievements. More importantly, it displays the dedication, resilience, and teamwork that have guided our efforts to address the diverse health needs of our community.

Throughout this year, we have made significant strides towards improving access to care and addressing health disparities, with no sacrifice to the high level of service that is expected from our programs. Here are just a few examples:

As tooth decay rates climb in Knox County children, we convened partners to launch the Knox Pediatric Dental Coalition which addresses the disparities in childhood dental health. At the end of 2024, this initiative received a statewide award from the Tennessee Department of Health.

For our senior population, the Knox County Health Department spearheaded the application to AARP's Age-Friendly network, showing our commitment to the county's fastest growing demographic.

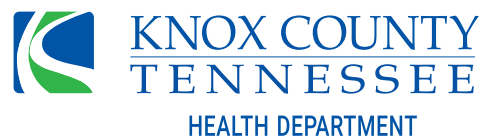
Meanwhile, our WIC clinic continues to operate at historic levels. We support more than 10,000 monthly participants by providing food, formula and valuable education about eating well and staying healthy.

In the pages that follow, you will find numerous key accomplishments over the year. On behalf of the entire team at the Knox County Health Department, I want to express our sincere gratitude for your partnership, support, and trust. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the health of our community, and we look forward to another year of shared progress and success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Parton', written in a cursive style.

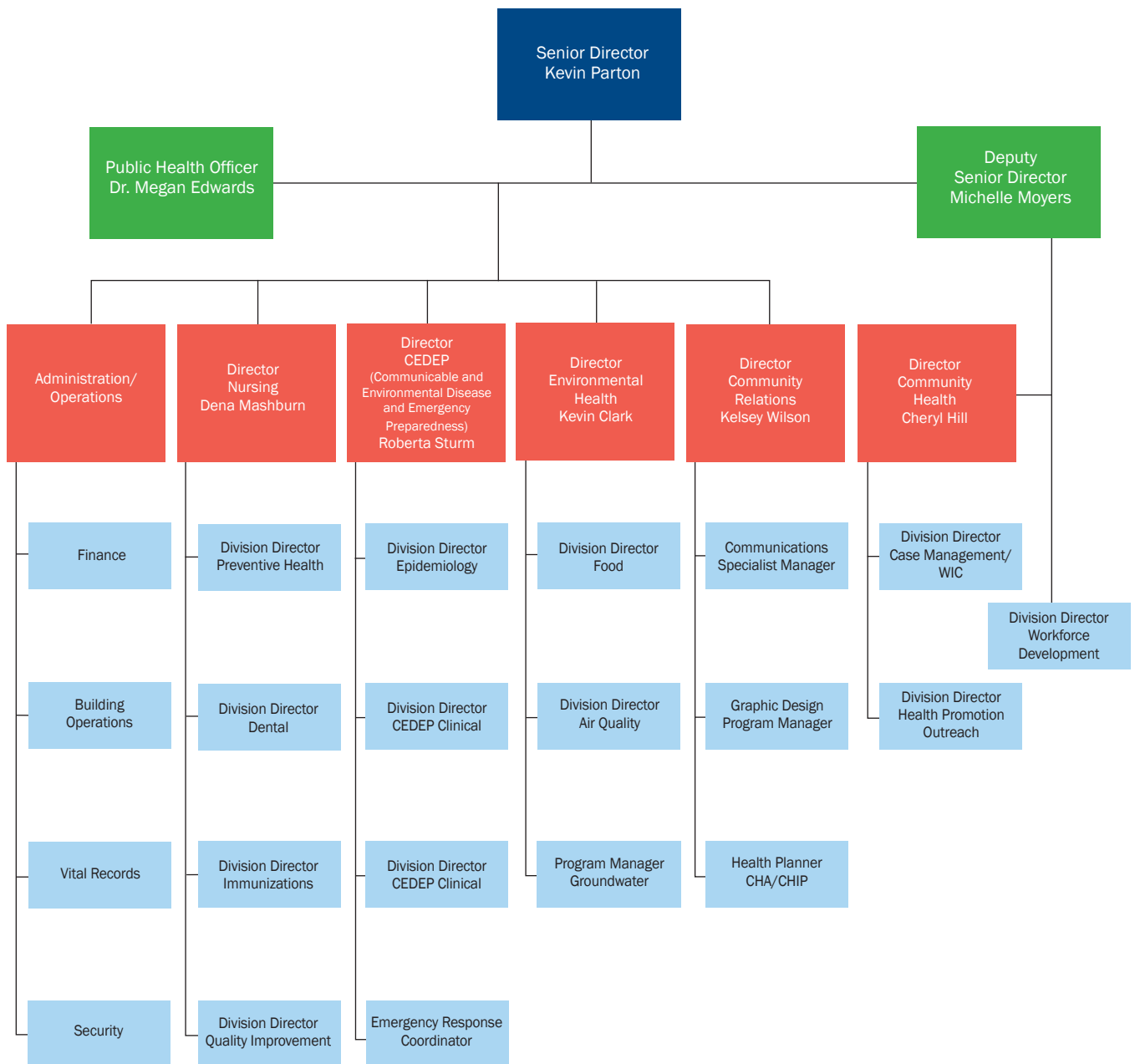
Kevin Parton
Senior Director



Organization

The Knox County Health Department is a division of Knox County Government under the supervision of Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs.

KCHD consists of numerous divisions and employs more than 270 professionals including epidemiologists, nurses, environmental specialists, public health educators, dentists, dietitians, and emergency preparedness specialists.



Who We Are

VISION

Every person a healthy person.

MISSION

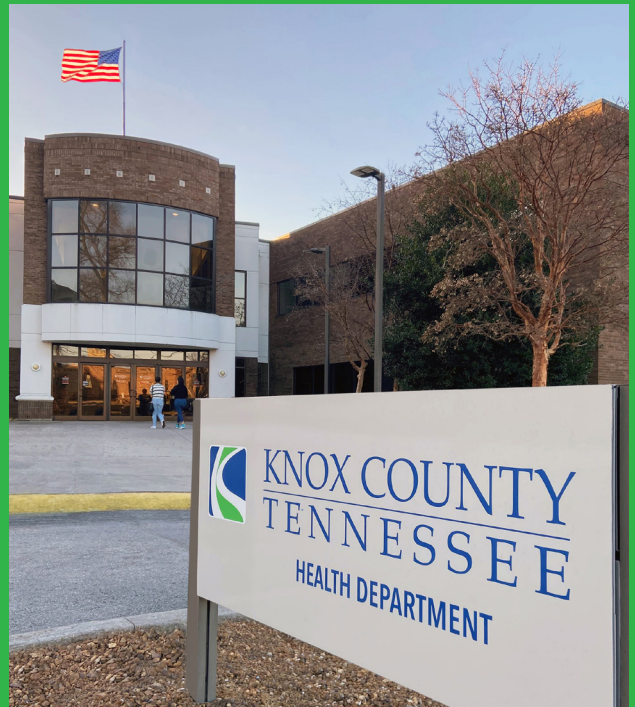
To encourage, promote, and support the development of an active, healthy community through innovative public health practices.

CORE VALUES

- Responsiveness and commitment to our community
- Excellence through evidence-based and innovative practices
- Accountability and integrity in our operation
- Leading by example

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Communication
- Workforce Development
- Organizational Performance Improvement



GENERAL INFORMATION

Knox County Health Department

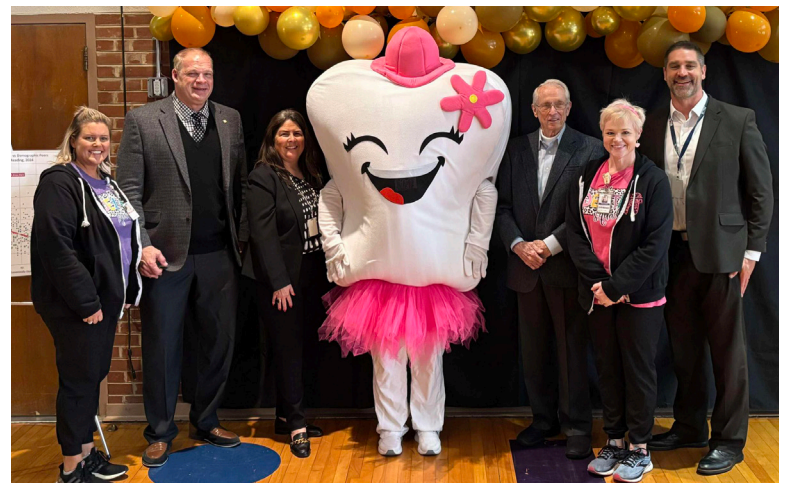
- Main Location
140 Dameron Avenue
- West Clinic
1028 Old Cedar Bluff Road

KCHD contact information:

- Main: 865-215-5000
- Email: health@knoxcounty.org
- Online: www.knoxcounty.org/health
- Facebook:
[@KnoxCountyHealthDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/KnoxCountyHealthDepartment)
- Twitter: [@KnoxCoHealthTN](https://twitter.com/KnoxCoHealthTN)
- Instagram:
[@KnoxCountyHealthDepartment](https://www.instagram.com/KnoxCountyHealthDepartment)

Knox County Health Department

At a Glance



276

team members

78

employees with
licensure

42

student internships/
clinical rotations

61

new team members
onboarded

79,675

calls to Public
Information Line

20,823

total vaccines
administered

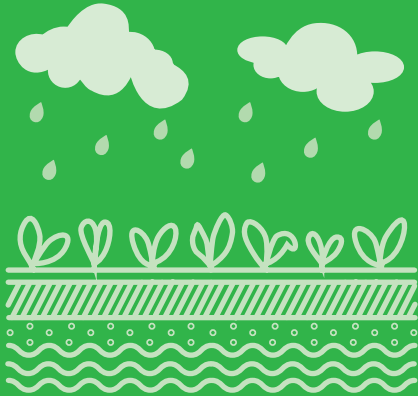
55,115

total patients served

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Division enforces state public health regulations for restaurants, schools, hotels, public swimming pools, and other facilities. The division also upholds state laws governing our groundwater supply and onsite wastewater systems (septic systems). Finally, this division works to maintain the Environmental Protection Agency's National Ambient Air Quality Standards in Knox County through monitoring, permitting, and ensuring compliance.

GROUNDWATER



310 final inspections following subsurface sewage disposal systems installation



30 well water samples collected and tested

AIR QUALITY



291 complaint investigations conducted related to air quality concerns



556 compliance evaluations of permitted facilities



6,011 open burning permits issued

FOOD SAFETY



10 inspectors



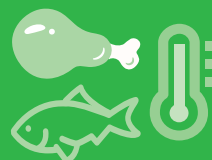
3,360 permitted establishments visited



6,000 inspections conducted



140 temporary food permits issued to vendors at festivals



1,800 food handlers trained on food safety practices in English, Spanish and Mandarin

Clinical Health

Clinical services include a broad range of preventive care and treatment including adult and child immunizations, women's wellness and gynecological care, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and dental care.



595

vaccines given at community vaccination events

DENTAL



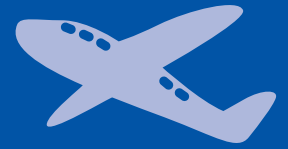
5,719

patients in office



8,500

sealants on Knox County students' teeth



1,082

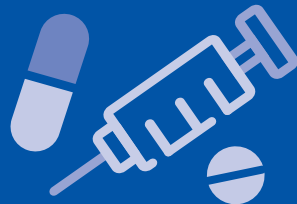
travel vaccines

HARM REDUCTION



1,878

doses of naloxone distributed



1 major marketing campaign launched by All4Knox to address substance use stigma



\$7.5 million received for Overdose Data to Action grant to combat substance use



111

newborn screenings

WOMEN'S HEALTH



9,621

visits to the Women's Health Clinic

462

visits for breast and cervical cancer screenings

218

colposcopies performed

9,754

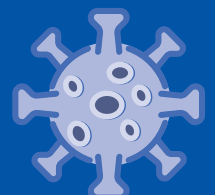
visits to the Communicable Disease Clinic

1,466

Tuberculosis patient visits

5,086

visits to Centers of Excellence Clinic to receive care for HIV



Community Health

Providing accurate, reliable health information to the public is crucial to improving population health. Education and outreach accompany nearly every area of our work, but we don't stop with education – we also engage the community. We build strategic partnerships with schools, farmers markets, health care providers, nonprofits, law enforcement agencies, and many others in order to better the health of our community.



WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN

10,200

clients served in the program monthly



\$33,300

paid directly from USDA to our local farmers thru the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program



SERVED

104
families

128
children

805
total visits

CHANT

Community Health Access & Navigation in Tennessee



more than **800** families are served

7,358 occasions assisting families with medical and social services

HEALTH PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

2,100

produce boxes given to students and families at after-school sites through NEAT Harvest Program



125 wellness resources,

including mobile lactation rooms, walking route signage and healthy snack racks provided across 9 Knox County Schools through the East Tennessee Wellness Roundtable



240 presentations given to over 5,000 attendees



133 families who did not have a safe place for their infant to sleep were provided a crib



56 balance screenings, 38 vision screenings, and 35 fitness checks were conducted among seniors at various outreach events

Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness

We assess the overall health of Knox County. Epidemiologists gather and analyze health data to provide a comprehensive view of the community. Along with monitoring community health, the Health Department also prepares for and responds to public health threats. Our highly skilled epidemiology and emergency response teams continue to be a crucial part of preventing and responding to outbreaks and providing emergency preparedness education/guidance to families, businesses, churches, partner agencies, schools, and others.



16,847 cases of reportable diseases investigated



8 outbreak investigations, including largest number of pediatric Pertussis cases in years



13 emergency preparedness outreach events

5 emergency preparedness response events including the West Knox County tornado in August 2023 and the January 2024 winter storm.



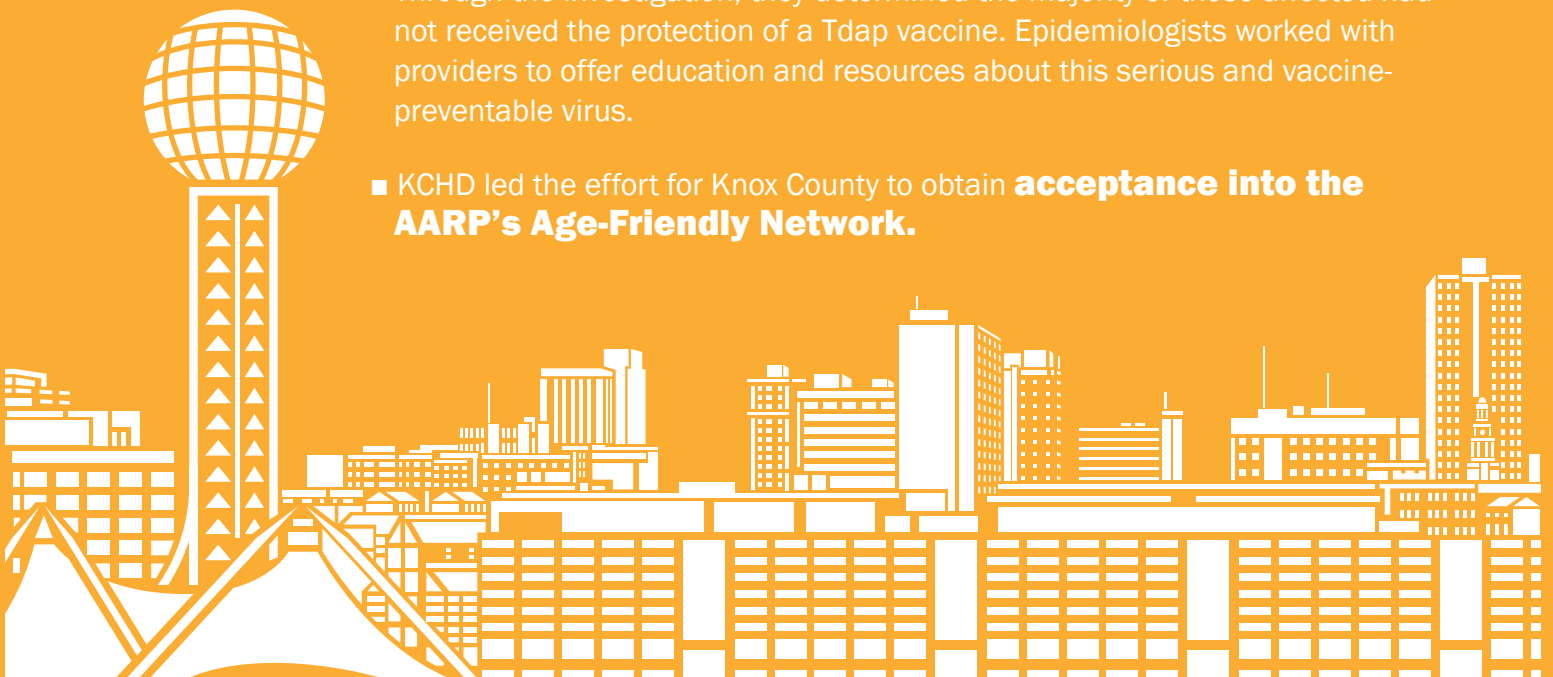
5 emergency preparedness exercises including Fight Flu TN, Department of Energy and medical surge exercises.

2024 Accomplishments Continued

- **KCHD created a new Quality Improvement Division.** Through this division, team members developed new tools to track customer satisfaction and program performance. One such project decreased patient wait times at the Women’s Health Clinic by 12% and improved patient satisfaction to 99%.
- **The Air Quality Division received an \$80,000 Inflation Reduction Act grant** to replace an existing monitoring shelter and update equipment.
- With rates of tooth decay increasing among kids, **KCHD created the Knox Pediatric Dental Coalition** to address dental disparities in the community. The School-Based Dental Program continued their work providing free dental screenings and resources at 14 Knox County elementary and middle schools.
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clients continue to have the option for remote services.** This greatly removes barriers to service that impact many families from receiving food benefit assistance. Monthly participation numbers have seen sustained growth since this option became available with nearly 10,200 individuals receiving WIC benefits.
- **The Knox County Youth Health Board** served 25 high school students from across the county, who contributed nearly 350 volunteer hours over the course of the school year.
- **The Parents as Teachers Program completed 805 visits** with local families to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development, promote school readiness and provide connections to needed services. Within the program, 95% of enrolled children were up to date on their well-child visits.
- **The Epidemiology team conducted a robust investigation of a substantial increase in Pertussis (whooping cough) infections** among children in the community.

Through the investigation, they determined the majority of those affected had not received the protection of a Tdap vaccine. Epidemiologists worked with providers to offer education and resources about this serious and vaccine-preventable virus.

- KCHD led the effort for Knox County to obtain **acceptance into the AARP’s Age-Friendly Network.**



- As a part of the annual statewide initiative, Fight Flu TN, **KCHD team members offered free flu vaccines** at four locations across the county: Lonsdale Elementary, Sarah Moore Greene Elementary, Sarah Simpson Professional Development Technology Ceter, and the Travel Immunization Clinic at KCHD.
- **The N.E.A.T. (Nutrition Education Activity Training) Harvest program provided 2,100 produce boxes** to students and families at after-school sites in an effort to improve access to healthy food and promote positive eating habits.
- **KCHD partnered with the University of Tennessee Medical Center to provide two lactation pods on their campus** to better support their patients and employees who are breastfeeding.
- **The KCHD Tobacco Use Prevention and Control team hosted their first tobacco treatment conference** with over 60 providers attending and gaining skills to better support their patients with quitting tobacco products.
- During a cold December, **hot showers were offered to those with less access through the utilization of KCHD’s emergency preparedness shower trailers.** A total of 42 showers were taken during a four-day time period.
- Tennessee Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Ralph Alvarado presented KCHD with two **Bright Spot Awards for the Youth Health Board Program and NEAT Harvest.** Knox County Health Department was the only metro health department in the state to receive a Bright Spot award, which highlights excellent preventative care work happening across the state.
- KCHD dietitian **Madelyn Howe was named Young Dietitian of the Year** by the Knoxville Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Howe’s work centered around food security and access in Knox County.
- **KCHD won an Orchid Award from Keep Knoxville Beautiful** for the community refrigerator at Sam Duff Memorial Park. This award recognizes projects that demonstrate pride in communities through creative and well-designed communal space or projects for residents to enjoy.
- During the back-to-school rush, **nearly 900 patients were seen and given approximately 1,600 vaccines.**



