

**HUNTERDON COUNTY  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**



**2016  
Annual Report**



## Hunterdon County Department of Public Safety Division of Public Health Services



The mission of the Hunterdon County Division of Public Health is to prevent disease, promote healthy lifestyles, and protect the health and well-being of all residents and visitors of Hunterdon County. Services and programs of the division include:

### Environmental and Consumer Health

Educates, enforces, and protects residents through programs in food safety, safe drinking water, septic and construction planning, air pollution control, solid waste enforcement, rabies control, kennel and public bathing place inspections, and many others.

### Public Health Nursing

The Hunterdon County public health nursing program provides population-based community health services in communicable disease control and education, pregnancy and prenatal care, chronic disease monitoring, childhood vaccination, lead poisoning prevention, health education, blood pressure monitoring and professional development resources for the medical community.

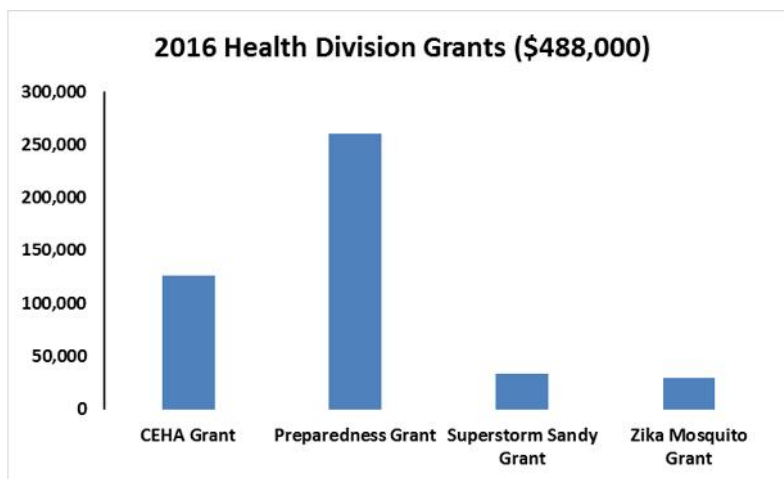
### Vector Control

The mosquito & vector control program offers a full range of mosquito control and insect surveillance activities to the Hunterdon community. Key services include mosquito and black fly (gnat) surveillance and control, bed bug education, tick and Lyme disease education, and mosquito-borne disease surveillance, control and monitoring.

### Public Health Preparedness

The preparedness team is a group of specialists that create, develop, evaluate and implement action plans to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to serious public health crises including emerging diseases, pandemic influenza, disease outbreaks, wide-scale natural disasters, and terrorist attacks. The team recruits and maintains the Medical Reserve Corp, a team of volunteers trained in public health preparedness efforts.

**We invite you to learn more about the programs and services offered by the Hunterdon County Division of Public Health. Please visit our website at [www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/health](http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/health)**



## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### RETAIL FOOD PROGRAM 2016

The retail food industry in Hunterdon County is very dynamic with 710 establishments county-wide that require surveillance. This industry poses challenges to county inspectors because of constant changes in ownership, business failures, construction of new businesses. Ongoing surveillance ensures compliance with the state and local laws and protects the public from the possible effects of improper food handling.

During the 2016 calendar year, county inspectors conducted 710 fixed facility inspections, 21 mobile retail food inspections and 190 temporary retail food establishment inspections. Temporary establishments are located at the many events and festivals held in Hunterdon County each year. These include the New Jersey Festival of Ballooning in Readington Township, the county's 4-H fair in East Amwell Township and Lambertville's Shad Festival. In addition, there were 27 plan reviews conducted for new businesses and businesses undergoing renovations in 2016. New businesses that opened in 2016 were Buffalo Wild Wings and Costco wholesale warehouse in Raritan Twp., More Than Q in Lambertville, and NJ and Bridge St. Bagels in Milford.

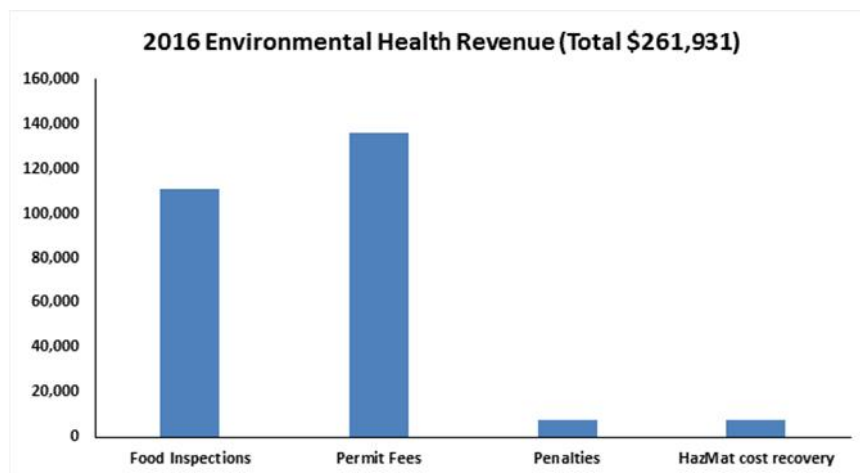
A big part of ongoing surveillance of the county's retail food industry includes responding to citizen complaints and reports of suspected food-borne illness incidents and outbreaks. County health

inspectors work closely with public health nurses to investigate confirmed food-borne illness cases from restaurants in Hunterdon County. Inspectors conducted 64 non-routine investigations and 20 inspections, some of which were associated with a possible food-borne illness.

### BODY ART, TATTOO AND PERMANENT COSMETICS SAFETY

In Hunterdon County there are now six approved body art establishments that we monitor for compliance with the State of New Jersey's sanitary code. Two of these establishments either expanded their services or moved to a new location in 2016, and facility inspections were conducted there. A third new body art facility opened in Union Township this year — Immortal Ink — Jugtown. A complete inspection was conducted prior to its opening. A seventh body art establishment has applied for approval to open in 2017 in the Borough of Lebanon, and we are working with the owner so that the establishment will be in compliance with the state's sanitation code for body art establishments.

We will continue to monitor these operations annually to ensure that they remain in compliance with approved body art procedures as set by the State of New Jersey. Our goal is to continue protect the public from health complications that might occur from a poorly run establishment.



## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE

### Hunterdon County All-Hazards Mitigation Plan (HMP)

The Hunterdon County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for developing and maintaining the All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. “Mitigation” is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. In order for mitigation to be effective we need to take action now—before the next disaster—to reduce human and financial consequences later. This includes analyzing and assessing risk.

Division of Health leadership served on the steering committee for the 2016 HMP, and public health threats/mitigation programs were a newly added piece in the county plan. Public health issues included in the update are water-borne and vector-borne illness during flooding events, emerging infectious disease readiness for EMS personnel, public health implications of long-term power outage events, and hazardous materials response to CBRNE incidents.



**A tractor trailer accident on Route 78 impacts the stream below. July 14, 2016**

### Hazardous Materials Response 2016 Updates

For the protection of residents and environmental resources, the County of Hunterdon is responsible for maintaining a comprehensive response plan for incidents including but not limited to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) material.

The Division of Public Health and Office of Emergency Management are mandated by state statute for the provision of such services. Pursuant to N.J.S.A 26:3A2-21, et. seq., the County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) obligates the county Division of Health to maintain standardized countywide hazardous material (Hazmat) and CBRNE emergency response capability, capacity, and competence. In addition to hazardous materials response, CEHA grant deliverables of the Health Division include air, water, and noise pollution control and solid waste enforcement. Likewise, the New Jersey State Police, Office of Emergency Management is the lead enforcement agency for SARA Title III (Emergency Planning Provisions, Subtitle A –Section 303) and has incorporated its requirements into the local/county emergency operations plans required by the New Jersey Emergency Management Act.

In order to provide safe and proficient hazmat resources for the protection of county land and residents, the Division of Public Health and Office of Emergency Management partner to create a program with the capacity, competency, and capability to mitigate public exposure to hazardous materials.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION  
COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND INVESTIGATED  
JANUARY 1,2012-DECEMBER 31,2016**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
AIR POLLUTION	99	63	64	75	64
RETAIL FOOD	55	46	61	67	61
HAZMAT	84	73	55	41	55
SEPTIC	35	51	37	39	37
SOLID WASTE	53	55	55	51	55
OTHER	103	97	43	48	54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>326</b>

**SEPTIC PLANS RECEIVED 2014-2016**

<b>Application type</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>New</b>	46	39	30
<b>Alteration</b>	287	284	326
<b>Repairs</b>	379	440	510
<b>Total received</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>866</b>

**2016 RABIES TEST RESULTS**

	<b># Tested</b>	<b># Positive</b>	<b>% Positive</b>
Beaver	2	1	50%
Cat	41	5	12%
fox	4	1	25%
Raccoon	18	10	55%
Skunk	3	2	66%
Other animals	62	0	0

## Environmental Health Activities 1/1/2014-12/31/2016

<b>Category</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Complaints received	315	321	326
Initial and follow up complaint investigations	496	441	461
Notices of Violation issued	57	74	49
Penalty Assessments issued	1	15	12
Summonses Issued	17	6	4
Retail food initial inspections completed	727	676	650
Spot Check and follow up retail food inspections	108	136	103
Retail food preoperational inspections	35	62	53
Temporary event food vendor inspections	352	221	240
Retail food establishment Plan reviews	29	39	26
Dry cleaner inspections	4	4	3
Emergency generator/boiler inspections	26	47	18
Solid waste vehicle spot checks	19	50	39
Solid waste roll off container spot checks	12	53	29
Solid waste facility inspections	8	43	51
Septic system plans received	730	782	865
Septic installation field inspections	1472	1663	1811
Well installation inspections	196	137	154
Septic and Well final certifications issued	584	795	783
Public non-community water system inspections	88	71	108
Construction referral permits issued	140	149	167
Recreational bathing facility inspections	82	122	115
Kennel ,pet shop, and shelter inspections	25	36	28
Rabies specimen transport to Trenton lab	137	128	130
Number of specimens positive for rabies	13	17	19
Animal Bite reports processed	308	290	299
<b>Total</b>	<b>5981</b>	<b>6378</b>	<b>6543</b>

## MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL

The Mosquito & Vector Control Program offers a full range of mosquito control and insect surveillance activity to the Hunterdon community. The program's primary focus is mosquito abatement. There are approximately forty mosquito species within Hunterdon County. A few of these species play a role in disease transmission. Others cause nuisance, and some have no health implications whatsoever. Each year, populations of these species are monitored throughout the county to perform abatement activities as necessary.

Programs offered include:

- Mosquito and black fly (gnat) surveillance and control.
- Bed bug education.
- Tick and Lyme disease education.
- Disease surveillance and monitoring.



Outreach and education at NJAES Snyder Farm (June 24, 2016)



Sprayer Calibration April 29, 2016 and September 9, 2016



Tick-borne diseases present a threat to human health in Hunterdon County. The black-legged tick (pictured to the left imbibing blood) serves as the most significant vector of disease. Tick-borne diseases within the county include Lyme, ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, anaplasmosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Powassan virus, although not yet confirmed in the county, represents an emerging tick-borne illness for the region.



Zika Virus in the Western Hemisphere (Dr. John-Paul Mutebi above) at the NJMCA 103rd Annual Meeting—Atlantic City, NJ





## BLACK FLIES

Black flies, commonly referred to as “gnats,” are closely related to mosquitoes. Like mosquitoes, adult female black flies require a blood meal for egg production. As a result, some species are considered pests. In Hunterdon County the predominant pests are species within the *Simulium jenningsi* complex. These species require open rivers to complete larval development. *Simulium jenningsi* then pupate and emerge as adult-flying insects. Adult *S. jenningsi* can fly for several miles to obtain a blood meal. The adults live for at least a month.



**Adult stage of the black fly species, *Simulium jenningsi***



**Larval (left) and pupal stage (right) of *Simulium jenningsi* black flies.**

Primary areas that produce *S. jenningsi* larvae in Hunterdon County are the Musconetcong, Lamington, Raritan South Branch, and Delaware rivers.



**Location of *S. jenningsi* habitat (left) and black fly larvae collected on a leaf (right).**

## BED BUGS

Bed bugs have been a problem in Hunterdon County since the early 2000s. These insects have been found in a variety of settings including commercial buildings, apartments and single-family homes.



Both the common bed bug (*Cimex lectularius*) and the eastern bat bug (*Cimex adjunctus*) can be found in Hunterdon County. Prior to abatement, residents are advised to identify the species causing a problem in their home.



**Eastern bat bug (left) and common bed bug (right).**

## TICKS

Ticks carry several pathogens in Hunterdon County. These cause Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis, babesiosis Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Powassan virus. The most common tick-borne disease in Hunterdon is Lyme. Although Lyme disease is documented year-round, the times of highest transmission are mid-May through mid-July.



**Deer tick nymph**

The nymphal black-legged tick (also referred to as the deer tick) is most commonly found during this time.





August 18, 2016. Administrator, Scott Crans, (far left) from the NJ Office of Mosquito Control Coordination is interviewed by the media regarding a tire cleanup effort at the Alexauken Wildlife Management Area in Ringoes, NJ. Hunterdon County entomologist, Gary Donato (far right), assists in the tire cleanup effort.

### Mosquito Surveillance Activities from 2010-2016 in Hunterdon County

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
# Traps Set	1,317	1,160	1,591	1,672	1,470	1,761	835
# Mosquitoes Collected	150,000	128,000	158,000	149,000	99,192	92,000	44,000
# Mosquitoes Tested for WNV	15,170	14,403	17,776	16,759	13,581	11,525	11,376
# Mosquito Samples Tested	360	318	465	409	327	265	288
# Positive Samples	27	65	96	58	11	21	39
% WNV positive samples	7.5	20.4	20.6	14.2	3.4	7.9	13.5
# Pesticide Applications	265	456	204	475	207	153	117

### Mosquito Abatement Activities by Municipality for the Year 2016

Municipality	# Traps Set	Mosquito Samples Tested	Positive WNV Samples	Insecticide Treatments
Alexandria	34	7	0	5
Bethlehem	6	0	0	1
Bloomsbury	4	0	0	2
Califon	7	5	0	6
Clinton Town	28	9	1	6
Clinton Twp	97	41	7	13
Delaware	36	12	0	3
East Amwell	44	23	7	3
Flemington	72	23	2	5
Franklin	96	27	1	3
Frenchtown	32	7	0	3
Glen Gardner	2	0	0	0
Hampton	2	0	0	0
High Bridge	22	10	1	3
Holland	1	1	0	0
Kingwood	29	12	0	4
Lambertville	9	3	0	0
Lebanon	3	0	0	6
Lebanon Twp	7	4	0	3
Milford	11	6	0	0
Raritan	151	47	7	33
Readington	119	35	12	18
Stockton	12	7	0	0
Tewksbury	3	3	0	0
Union	3	1	0	0
West Amwell	5	5	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>117</b>

## PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING AND EDUCATION (PHNE)

### STAFFING:

- ) 4 Public Health Nurses (3FT&1PT)
- ) 1FT Bilingual Asst., 1PT Sr. Clerk, 1FT Clerk

### SERVICES:

Communicable Diseases Reporting and Surveillance

- ) Immediate, 24-hour reportable diseases and outbreak investigation (60 reportable diseases identified by NJDOH require such investigations)
- ) Tuberculosis (TB) control and case management
- ) Vectorborne disease investigation

Maternal Child Health Services

- ) Improved Pregnancy Outcome Program
- ) School Immunization Audits
- ) Childhood Vaccine Program
- ) Childhood Lead Poisoning Investigation

Adult/Senior Health Program

- ) Brunch and Learn Program
- ) Blood Pressure Screening
- ) Paternity/Parentage Testing

Community Health Improvement (Partnership for Health)

- ) Partnership for Health – Healthy Weight
- ) Access to Prenatal Care Committee
- ) Hunterdon Maternal Child Health Coalition
- ) Community Resources
- ) Support Emergency Preparedness

### 2016 STATISTICS

Communicable Diseases

The total number of disease cases reported in 2016 is 1855. PHNE investigated each reported illness, provided education and implemented preventive measures if needed. The top five numbers of reported cases (as of 2/03/16) are in the following categories of illness:

Disease	Case*
<b>1. Vectorborne Diseases (Lyme, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis)</b>	<b>1304</b>
<b>2. Hepatitis C (Chronic + Acute)</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>3. Foodborne Illness (Campylobacteriosis, Salmonellosis, Shiga Toxin-producing E. Coli ...etc.)</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>4. Varicella</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>5. Pertussis</b>	<b>40</b>

*\*Note: the final numbers of confirmed, prob-*

2016 top five reported illnesses are similar to the year 2015. Lyme disease remains the number one reported disease in Hunterdon County.

Outbreaks: There were a total of 18 outbreaks in 2016. Ten out of eighteen were gastrointestinal related outbreaks, six out of eighteen were respiratory illnesses and two were other outbreaks. The majority of outbreaks were involved in schools and long-term care facilities.

### Emerging Infectious Diseases

Zika virus surveillance has been the most interesting public health initiative of 2016. Zika virus is a viral infection primarily caused by the bite of an infected mosquito. It can be spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby. The virus can also be sexually transmitted from an infected person to their partner.

As new information emerged about the transmission of the virus and its effects on newborn babies, the New Jersey Department of Health kept local health departments (LHD) updated with bi-weekly Zika webinars, frequent messages and changing Zika telephone scripts to field community questions and concerns.



Due to the high demand for Zika testing from primary practice providers and OB physicians the NJDOH delegated the LHD to field the requisitions and be the forefront of Zika testing approval. This initiative began in July 2016.

As of December 31, 2016 there have been only two confirmed cases of Zika virus infection in Hunterdon County. Both cases were travel related in young non-pregnant females. At the local health department level we have fielded 31 requests for testing. Public health nurses promote Zika awareness and Zika prevention for travelers. PHN also assists with screening people who have returned from affected countries.

#### **Tuberculosis (TB) Control and Case Management**

There have been no confirmed TB cases in 2016, but 6 suspected cases were treated with TB medications before patients had a negative culture test. Eight residents were followed and evaluated to rule out TB. All of these 14 cases were investigated and reported to NJDOH. In addition, five cases were exposed to TB and required screening and medical evaluation. One case was diagnosed with Latent TB infection and was monitored and provided treatment by Public Health Nurses.

	<b>2016</b>
<b>Active TB Cases</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TB Case investigations</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>TB contacts</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Services</b>	
<b>Visits (home, office, hospital)</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Professional Contacts</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Other Contacts (education, general assistance, etc.)</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>TB Skin Test</b>	<b>13</b>

#### **Maternal Child Health Services**

Childhood vaccine program - works with Hunterdon Medical Center affiliated practices to provide immunizations for noninsured and underinsured children who meet federal poverty guidelines.

Childhood lead poisoning program provides education and surveillance for children with lead poisoning. PHNE collaborates with the environmental health staff to investigate cases with a blood lead level over 10.

<b>No. of New Lead Cases 2016</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>No. of Home Visits 2016</b>	<b>7</b>

#### **School Immunization Audits**

29 out of 53 public and private schools were audited in this reporting year. Working with dedicated school nurses, the compliance rate was 98%. 37 daycare centers and preschools are audited annually since most required vaccinations are administered during early childhood. 26% of the nursery schools did not meet the compliance rate recommended by NJDOH. Initial audit results indicated that 5% of children in nursery schools had no age-appropriate DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis) vaccine and 2-9% of parents claimed a religious exemption against vaccination for either one or multiple vaccine antigens. PHN promotes vaccination and follows up on deficiencies to ensure that our community reaches herd immunity. See the table below for overall audit results.

	<b>2016</b>
<b>Total school audits (public, private and nursery schools)</b>	<b>69</b>
<b># of records reviewed</b>	<b>5367</b>
<b># of records with deficiencies</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Total deficiency rate (public, private and nursery schools)</b>	<b>3.61%</b>
<b>Deficiency for only nursery schools</b>	<b>6.88%</b>

The Public Health Nurse coordinates with the Registered Environmental Specialist to inspect affected child's home.



**Improved Pregnancy Outcome Program (IPO) Provides** prenatal/postpartum education, support and referrals for at-risk pregnant women who reside in Hunterdon County. The primary goal is to help ensure a healthy outcome for mother and child by coordinating the delivery of essential prenatal care and by providing prenatal and postpartum education. In addition to being individual-focused, PHNE collaborates with healthcare providers, hospitals and community agencies to improve healthcare access for qualified clients.



*Pictured left: Juliet Leonard, RN conducted a postpartum and newborn visit. The visit includes assessing for postpartum depression, newborn assessment, addressing feeding issues, newborn care and exercise, weight loss, etc.*

Among the women being admitted, 22% were younger than 20 or older than 35 (ranging from 15 to 42 years of age). 90% of the clients had no insurance or had Medicaid.

<b>Women Admitted</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Newborns Admitted</b>	<b>57</b>

<b>Services Categories</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Counseling and Education</b>	<b>1469</b>
<b>General Assistance</b>	<b>2630</b>
<b>Professional Contacts</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b>Prenatal Vitamins Dispensed</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Service Locations</b>	
<b>Home Visits</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>PHNE Office</b>	<b>657</b>

**Outcome:** 88% of the clients delivered full term (> 37 wks), 91% of the newborns were of normal birth weight, and 58% of new mothers exclusively breastfed. Only 26% of program participants had cesarean delivery compared to almost 33% of all births countywide in 2014 (the most recent data available).

#### **Adult/Senior Health Program**

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>DNA/Buccal (parentage) tests</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>BP Screening</b>	<b>533</b>
<b>Brunch &amp; Learn Program (B&amp;L)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>B&amp;L program participants</b>	<b>238</b>

#### **New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI) Robert Wood Johnson Grant Opportunity**

In 2016, the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health was awarded a 4-year New Jersey Health Initiatives grant. Karen DeMarco, health officer, serves as one of the members of a six person team representing Hunterdon County. The grant provides leadership training and access to subject-matter experts to “Build a Culture of Health” in Hunterdon County, with a focus on evidence-based and sustainable programming for the greatest community impact. In year one, the NJHI team is participating in training opportunities and enhancing collaborative opportunities for the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health. Other members of the team include Dr. Cindy Barter, Collette Camisa, Kim Blanda, Rose Puelle, and Freeholder Director Suzanne Lagay.



## Public Health Preparedness

### Public Health Preparedness

Since 2003, New Jersey has designated the Hunterdon County Division of Health as the lead agency for public health preparedness in the county. A multidisciplinary team of specialists has developed, evaluated and implemented action plans to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to serious public health crises including emerging diseases, pandemic influenza, disease out-breaks, wide-scale natural disasters, and terrorist attacks. Preparedness staff members focus on building and sustaining capacities associated with seven public health preparedness capabilities contained within the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's National Standards for State & Local Planning. These capabilities include:

- Emergency Public Information & Warning
- Information Sharing
- Mass Care
- Medical Countermeasures Dispensing
- Medical Material Management and Distribution
- Public Health Surveillance & Epidemiologic
- Investigation
- Volunteer Management

TEEX training held at the Rte 12 county complex. 12-14-16



### Regional POD Exercise

In March, Hunterdon County participated in a joint exercise with Mercer and Somerset counties to set up a point of distribution (POD) to medicate community members in the aftermath of a bioterrorism event. The counties together tested the number of medication dosages that could be given in the shortest period of time, the set-up of the facility with-in four hours of notification of a bio-terrorism event, the staffing coordination between each of the agencies, the ability to establish and maintain a multi-disciplinary/jurisdictional communications network, and to establish a joint information center to test the dissemination of information to the media and public during an emergency.

### On-Going Preparedness Projects

The Preparedness Team has been working with a group of Hunterdon County municipalities to create a POD that would be set up and managed by those municipalities. Currently, the county and municipalities are creating this plan, with the goal to set up a table-top exercise in 2017.

Throughout 2016 the team worked on updating the Everbridge® database with contacts of local stakeholders that would need to be contacted during emergencies. Many small drills were conducted using this system to make sure that messages and responses could be received.

Monthly communication drills were also held with other counties via the 800 megahertz radio system, and Hippocrates, a state run communication system.

The team also received training on a new system called Mutualink. This system allows transmission of video, audio and file sharing, and the team participated in communication drills with this new system as well.

Local businesses were recruited to the fixed facility plan, a plan that distributes medication through businesses to their employees and families during a Public Health Emergency. The team closed out 2016 with plans for a full-scale fixed facility POD exercise to take place at the Everittstown garage in February of 2017.



*Public Health Nurse, Kathy Jaeger, distributes medication to community members at the Regional POD exercise on March 24, 2016.*



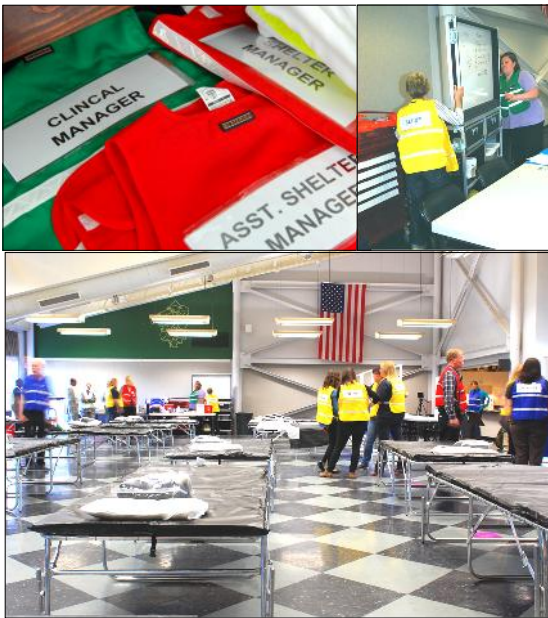
## Regional Medical Needs Shelter Set-Up Drill

In April, the three counties came together again to set up a medical needs shelter (MNS) in the conference room of building one at the Route 12 complex. The goals of this drill were to initiate activation of MNS, transport MNS resources to the MNS location, establish a timeline for setting up and demobilizing the shelter, and communicate with relevant partners, including the original requesting county, that the MNS is set-up and ready to receive evacuees.

When Tropical Storm Hermine threatened New Jersey over Labor Day Weekend, public health and preparedness staff were ready to open the MNS with the training and practice they received during this MNS set up drill.



*Public Health Nurses Juliet Leonard and Janis Clark set up the nurses station at the Medical Needs Shelter Set-Up Drill on April 18, 2016.*



## Hunterdon County Division of Public Health Joins Healthy Workforce Initiative

In May 2016, the Hunterdon County Division of Public Health joined the Chamber of Commerce as a partner in the Healthy Hunterdon Workforce Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to create “a culture of health” for employees. The Health Division joins with other businesses throughout the county in this effort, and the Chamber of Commerce provides activity ideas and quarterly meetings for participating employers.

As increased physical activity is shown to improve overall health, and result in decreased sick time and better productivity for employees, the newly formed Health Division Wellness Committee focused their efforts on creating opportunities for staff to get moving. Before scheduling events, the committee surveyed fellow employees about their preferred activities and current level of fitness.

Between the months of May and November, the health division staff kept track of their weekly steps, and successfully walked the mileage of a “Walk to Hollywood.” To help staffers achieve this common goal, the wellness committee organized group hikes after hours, with a focus on county park lands. From the months of June to November staff walked a total of 4,233 miles. This surpassed the goal of 2,735 miles by 1,498 miles! Twelve staff members participated and completed a total of seven group hikes through the various parks of Hunterdon. These include walks along the canal in Lambertville, Ken Lock-



wood Gorge, and Columbia Trail. We are looking forward to starting up our group hikes in the spring and will reverse course from California to New York this

time.

For 2017, in addition to hiking, the wellness committee is planning lunch and learn opportunities about nutrition and stress reduction, a weight loss challenge, and a Polar Plunge for employees who would like to participate.