



APPLETON HEALTH DEPARTMENT QUARTERLY REPORT January 1- March 31, 2021

Executive Summary

The Health Department's day-to-day activities for the first quarter of 2021 are enumerated in the attached report. The Department continues to work toward fulfilling the goals of our Department, keeping in mind the belief statements that support and enhance our mission statement.

“Provides services to protect and promote the health and well-being of the citizen and consumer.”

The dark days of winter took on a new meaning this quarter as our community burden rate was in the “very high” category. With COVID deaths, as a lagging indication from hospitalization, we unfortunately experienced and reported many this first quarter. In addition, we continued to work with our school districts to conduct contact tracing as case counts increase in this population. The approval of safe and effective vaccines to combat COVID was the bright spot of the quarter. The morale of staff and the community at large improved with having a solution of protection against a disease that has changed our way of life.

Public health nursing staff followed up with 1,398 individuals with confirmed cases of COVID-19 during the 1st quarter of 2020. During this same time, nursing staff also followed up with 420 probable cases of COVID-19. In addition, nurses followed up with contacts of these confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases.

“Provides services in a cost effective and efficient manner.”

On January 11th, a new indoor testing site opened to the public at the Fox Cities Exhibition Center. With Wisconsin winter weather we decided a new testing site in an indoor setting away from the elements was critical to make sure testing availability remained constant. The indoor testing site tested 2,920 individuals between January 11th and March 31st, 2021. Due to vaccine distribution at the exhibition center, the testing site did have to move to the Reid Golf Course in February. The move was smooth and there seemed to be little confusion in the community. Testing is still a critical component to the fight against COVID-19.

“Develops and evaluates departmental programs, policies and procedures based on community needs and collaborate with community agencies and providers to assess those needs and ensure high quality services.”

On January 21, 2021, the annual Weights & Measures Policy and Procedure Training was held in Madison, WI. Local City Sealers and State Inspectors attended the meeting with State Management. The meeting provided information regarding recent changes in policies as well as the yearly schedule for training and state surveys. City Sealer Eric Maggio was a member of the Policies and Procedures Committee that oversaw and implemented the changes.

Every three years our Environmental program is evaluated by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection to ensure we continue to meet the requirements of our Agent Contract for our establishment licensing and inspection program. This is usually done on site over the course of several days. In January and February of this year, the evaluation was done virtually. Steve Kihl, Environmental Supervisor, compiled and uploaded all the required documents. They review items such as inspection policies and procedures, license fee schedules, numbers of licensed facilities, completed inspections, and staff training policies. The outcome of this evaluation was very positive. The main item requiring attention is the need to complete routine inspections annually for each establishment.

At the start of 2021, two COVID-19 vaccines had been given Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Pfizer was granted EUA on December 11, 2020, and Moderna on December 18, 2020. Appleton Health Department staff started to vaccinate eligible members of the community on January 12, 2021. By February, these clinics had moved to the Fox Cities Exhibition Center. The single-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine was approved by the FDA for emergency use on February 27. Staff then had three COVID-19 vaccines available to give eligible members of the community. By the end of March, more than 16,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered at the Fox Cities COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic.

“Professional staff works together as a cohesive team by cooperating, communicating, and supporting each other to achieve departmental and individual goals.”

Since August of 2020, the health department has hired 15 LTE nurses to assist with COVID-19 contact tracing. These valuable staff members have assisted the public health nurses during times of COVID-19 case surge and have continued while the public health nurses have been working at the COVID-19 Vaccine clinic. Several of these nurses have also worked at the clinic, in the roles of vaccinators and with vaccine prep. These nurses have provided a valuable and essential service to the Appleton community during the pandemic.

“Encourages the individual to share the responsibility for their health and the health of their family.”

Starting in January, vaccination planning ramped up. In Appleton, we were able to hire a vaccine coordinator to assist with this important task, Julie Lederhaus. With her knowledge and drive, a location was quickly identified, and the planning was intensified to get a vaccine clinic up and going for the community. January 24, 2021, the Fox Cities COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic began vaccinating the eligible groups as defined by the state. There was such a need that the registration system was flooded and overbooked by 6,000 appointments in the first 15 minutes of opening on the website. This tremendous response booked our clinic for the first two weeks straight, clearly the community was ready to get vaccinated! Since the opening of the clinic there were many lessons learned and lots of shots in arms. The atmosphere and the mood of the volunteers, patients, and staff working the clinic has been positive and uplifting from day 1. This was the small light at the end of the still long tunnel the community needed desperately.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Eggebrecht, M.Ed., MCHES
Health Officer