



RICHMOND & HENRICO HEALTH DISTRICTS

**2023**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



**A year  
of  
unfolding**

# Dear neighbors, partners, and friends,

## Welcome to the 2023 Richmond and Henrico Health Districts (RHHD) Annual Report!

2023 was a year of unfolding: we returned to priorities that were sidelined by the pandemic's urgency and re-evaluated our community's most pressing public health needs. We developed a new mission statement—protect health, champion equity, and partner to address local needs—that orients us toward our values even as the strategies to achieve that mission shift.

It would be difficult to document all the work that happens at RHHD. Instead, this year we offer you a snapshot of initiatives where we see innovative coalitions or strategies unfolding to address health, well-being, and equity. I hope you will see the playful, community-oriented spirit of this report as an invitation into the conversation about where RHHD has been and where we are headed next.

*Dr. Elaine Perry*  
**RHHD Director**



# HIV/STI Prevention and Care

## The year that was

Virginia saw a 22% rise in early syphilis diagnoses, so RHHH's STI Prevention team started building strategies to protect communities against this very contagious but very curable STI. We added members to our Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) team, who work with residents recently diagnosed with an STI to communicate STI exposure to partners. New health educators went out into communities to normalize regular STI screening. And we sustained relationships with local pharmacies—RHHH patients can access HIV and STI medications closer to home at Hope or Bremo pharmacies.

*"DIS are often the folks who notify people. And there's a big responsibility to that. There's so much stigma and misinformation out there that, if we're able to have that conversation with them in that moment, it can increase the likelihood that they get the information they need to make the best decisions for themselves."*

*Brad Cox,  
Disease Intervention Specialist Supervisor*



# 3,695

Visits to STI clinics across all RHHH sites

# 1,066

DIS investigations into possible syphilis or HIV cases

# 722

Bicillin treatments for syphilis

# 106

Health Educator referrals to pharmacy partners

## What's unfolding in 2024

RHHH's Deputy Director, Dr. Melissa Viray, and Medical Director Dr. Saritha Gomadam have been tapped to lead the commonwealth's Central Region syphilis response.

## Check it out



RHHH offers STI and HIV testing, PrEP support, and help finding treatment through our STI clinics. Find clinic hours and service info at our website.

# Environmental Health

## The year that was

The RHHD team responsible for food safety and facility inspection saw the number of food-related facilities in our region plateau and then dip during the pandemic. During that time, Environmental Health staff trained to inspect new food packaging and delivery systems. In 2023, our region's food scene revved back up. Environmental Health specialists ensured food safety at beloved events like the Celtic Festival, NASCAR races, and the Richmond Folk Festival returned to form, and new traditions like the inaugural Iron Blossom Music Festival.

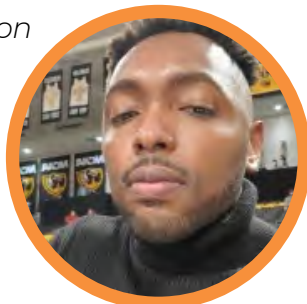
*"EH is the silent, behind-the-scenes group that's making sure everything's working smoothly and everybody's doing what they're supposed to as far as food goes. If the event is rain or shine, we're rain or shine."*



Natasha Crawford,  
Environmental Health  
Tech Specialist

*"I love educating operators on the proper way to handle stuff. It's a good feeling to have a place that has had violations get completely compliant."*

Ed Nixon, Environmental  
Health Specialist



# 40

New restaurants opened in Henrico County—  
Environmental Health inspected all of them!

# 175k

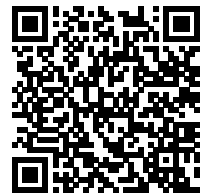
Visitors attended the Richmond Folk Festival.  
They ate at food trucks inspected by RHHD's  
teams.

## What's unfolding in 2024

Environmental Health is embarking on a major self-assessment of the food safety retail standards! This is a national program that helps food safety experts continue to reduce instances of foodborne illness in their communities.

## Check it out

Environmental Health doesn't just work with food. This team also inspects hotels, pools, marinas, and wells. Learn more about our work in Richmond (Environmental Health Division - Richmond City Health Department) and Henrico (Environmental Health - Henrico County, Virginia)



# Immunizations & School Partnership

## The year that was

At the start of 2023, the percentage of kids who started the school year on time with the required immunizations was still below pre-pandemic numbers. RHHD's school health experts teamed up with Richmond Public Schools, Henrico County Public Schools, and local health providers. They explored creative immunization options, like appointments during school hours, at familiar sites over the summer, and with school nurses kids already trust. With everyone pitching in, kids and their families—regardless of insurance status, zip code, or language—completed their immunizations quickly and conveniently. These events also focus on connecting students to Primary Care.

*“For every student that we immunize, we have now reduced that barrier to being able to attend school. Each one of those immunizations is extraordinarily meaningful to the wellness of that child and the success of their family, too. Each number is connected to a person we’ve helped.”*



Virginia Slattum,  
Community  
Health Nurse  
Supervisor

# 79

In-school vaccination and physical events

# 2,948

In-school vaccines provided

# 258

School physicals conducted

## What's unfolding in 2024

RHHD used our “off-season” to discuss what worked best in 2023 and come back better than ever! 2024 back-to-school immunization and physical events are already underway to reach kids during the school day.



## Check it out

Visit RHHD's School Health Hub to make a healthy start for the next school year.

# Newcomer Services

## The year that was

RHHD’s Newcomer Program worked with asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants, parolees, and holders of Special Immigrant Visas as they created new homes in Richmond and Henrico. Our client demographics continue to shift in response to conflicts around the world—this year, we saw community members coming from Ukraine, Congo, Afghanistan, Syria, Guatemala, Haiti, Pakistan, Myanmar, and El Salvador, and we encountered a range of languages including Persian, Pashto, Kinyarwanda, Arabic, and Spanish. Coordinating with resettlement agencies and primary care partners, we scheduled newcomers for free initial health screenings and immunizations and created permanent healthcare homes for each person down the road. We also sent out our Doses on Demand mobile unit to make sure newcomers could access required immunizations for their green card applications.

*“Care is not just immunization appointments. It can be looking for a job, knowing which doctors accept Medicaid, learning about healthy food, or figuring out how to talk to the school. We support and empower people to help them navigate the system by themselves.”*

Elham Khairi,  
Community  
Health Worker Senior



# 5,373

Refugees arrived in the Commonwealth of Virginia

# 178

RHHD Welcome Center newcomer appointments

# 413

People received newcomer health screenings

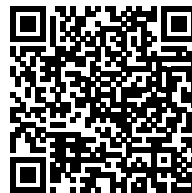
# 94%

of Newcomer clients needed an interpreter

## What’s unfolding in 2024

RHHD is working on a Language Access Plan to make sure that each client we meet receives informative, clear health materials that help them to make medical decisions for themselves and their families.

### Check it out



For more information, visit our Refugee Services page: Office of New Americans-Refugee Services.

# Unite Us: Documenting Connection

## The year that was

On its surface, Unite Us looks like a data collection platform. But at its core, it's an opportunity to celebrate the hard work of client-facing teams like Community Health Workers and WIC staff, to learn our communities' needs more deeply and accurately, and to connect health department services and regional resources. When someone walks into a WIC office or a resource center and asks for longer-term help with housing, food access, or employment, to name just a few, RHHD staff use Unite Us to create resource referrals linking clients to services. 2023 was all about engagement, making sure that the number of staff confident in using this platform continued to grow. Our rockstar community engagement team held weekly office hours, updated their training materials, and even began running new trainings on topics like allyship for LGBTQ+ clients.

*"Our team is being included in the statewide 'super-user' work group because of the outstanding work and high utilization of our CHWs and WIC staff. Their efforts showcase the effectiveness of our manuals, training, and support systems in facilitating resource linkage and collective impact."*

D'atra Franklin,  
Unite Us Community  
Engagement Specialist



# 1,588

clients referred to additional services

# 2,233

referrals (1.4 per client)

# 484

food access cases

# 52

staff participated in Safe Zone training to support LGBTQIA+ clients and coworkers

## What's unfolding in 2024

Unite Us teams will begin working with a broader set of local organizations, as well as VDH's central office to discuss the expansion of Unite Us.

## Check it out



The Unite Us Get Help link connects residents to a community health worker to support resource navigation ([uniteus.com](http://uniteus.com))



# Built Environment

## The year that was

As the warmest year on record, 2023 saw more than 200 emergency room visits for heat-related illness in Richmond and Henrico. Unhealthy smoke from Canadian wildfires reached our communities in unprecedented ways. On our roadways, vehicular crashes caused 172 fatalities. These issues don't impact all of us equally: built environment health concerns are all more likely to affect folks without access to stable housing or transportation. To address environmental health disparities, RHHD hired a Built Environment Specialist, who coordinates efforts with city, state, and community organizations.

*"In neighborhoods that don't have street trees to keep them cool, sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus service to get people to jobs or doctors' appointments, and no place to connect with neighbors and friends, people's health is going to suffer. Communities need these things to stay healthy."*

Peter Braun,  
Built Environment Specialist



# 175 +

fans distributed by RHHD's Community Health Workers in Richmond's public housing communities

# 9 Million +

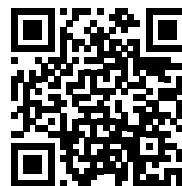
Rides on GRTC's bus lines

## What's unfolding in 2024

RHHD's Built Environment Specialist will support health interventions as part of our communities' work on establishing warming and cooling centers and on roadway safety action planning.

## Check it out

Families struggling with cooling their home can take advantage of the Virginia Energy Assistance Program to fix or replace air conditioning units and help with the cost of electricity bills.



Energy Assistance (EA) -  
Virginia Department of  
Social Services.



# Substance Use Disorder

## The year that was

Richmond and Henrico have some of the highest drug overdose rates in the state. RHHD's approach to this overdose crisis focuses on immediate response and long-term planning. RHHD staff provided naloxone, which can reverse an opioid overdose, and trained people how to use it. They also distributed fentanyl, xylazine, and benzodiazepine strips that help reduce overdose risks for people who use drugs by making sure they know what is in their drug supply. Our epidemiology team also hosted a series of community conversations in which residents shared their perspectives on the prevalence of overdoses.

*"I hope that my words, education, or dispensing of resources can help someone save themselves or their loved ones."*

*Keisha Tolliver,  
Opioid Outreach Lead*



*"My goal is to have Narcan in the hands of everyone in the community. We have not yet come up with a way to keep opioids out of the community, but we do have a way to equip the community with naloxone."*



*Patrice Shelton,  
Community Health  
Worker Senior*

# 121

Community Conversation participants

# 1,240

Units of Naloxone distributed by the Outreach team

# 3,262

Fentanyl test strips distributed by the Outreach team

# 34

Training sessions @ the Richmond City Justice Center

## What's unfolding in 2024

RHHD has hired a full-time Substance Use Disorder Coordinator who will develop strategic planning focused on opioid overdose, with a focus on linking prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery resources.

## Check it out

Register for virtual naloxone training, find a naloxone distribution event, learn about needle exchange, or discover recovery resources at RHHD's Overdose Prevention webpage.



# Locations



  
**Henrico West HD**  
8600 Dixon Powers Dr  
(804) 501-4001

  
**Henrico West WIC**  
7740 Shradler Rd Suite B  
(804) 501-1610

**Henrico East HD**  
1400 N. Laburnum Ave  
(804) 652-3190 

**Whitcomb RC**  
2106 DeForrest St  
(804) 786-0555

**Fairfield RC**  
2311 North 25th St  
(804) 786-4099

  
**Gilpin RC**  
436 Calhoun St  
(804) 219-9126

  
**Mosby RC**  
1536 Coalter St  
(804) 786-0204

  
**Creighton RC**  
2150 Creighton Rd  
(804) 371-0433

  
**Richmond City HD**  
400 E. Cary Street  
(804) 482-5500

  
**Richmond Community  
Hospital WIC**  
1510 N 28th St  
(804) 786-3201

  
**Hillside RC**  
1615 Glenfield Ave  
(804) 230-7740

  
**Southside Plaza WIC**  
509 E. Southside Plaza  
(804) 205-9816

  
**Southwood RC**  
1754 Clarkson Rd #B  
(804) 230-2077





**RICHMOND & HENRICO HEALTH DISTRICTS**

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(804) 205-3501**

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**rhhd.gov  
henrico.us/health**