



**12** employees serving **44,397** people across **9** rural counties

DEDICATED TO

- Decreasing mortality linked to heart disease
- Achieving positive mental health outcomes
- Improving access to care to support a healthier and more resilient district



Antelope, Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya  
Paha, Knox, Pierce, & Rock Counties

[www.ncdhd.ne.gov](http://www.ncdhd.ne.gov)

(402) 336-2406



Nationally Accredited

## From the Director

North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) continues to have fruitful partnerships that keep our department closely connected to the community. We remain focused on key areas like heart disease, access to care, and mental health, collaborating with partners to drive meaningful improvements in community health.

Over the past year, NCDHD made strides to reduce mortality rates due to heart disease through several key initiatives. A HeartCorp employee was hired through a partnership with the American Heart Association, allocating resources toward blood pressure monitoring, older adult education, food insecurity, and AED access. We established ten permanent blood pressure monitoring stations as easy-access referral points. Forty-eight (48) older adults participate in a 20-session physical activity and nutrition program.

The department travels across our large 9-county area, offering oral health and immunization services to address access to care needs. We strive to improve opportunities for all district residents to access healthcare. Focus groups and 1:1 meetings continue to ensure the needs of Native American, Hispanic/Latino, elderly, and low-income residents align with department efforts to improve access to healthcare. To address underlying barriers to health, the department led a paid media campaign to enhance awareness and support application assistance for Medicaid. In coordination with the Holt Boyd Collaborative, the department sponsors gap assistance and coaching for needy families.

Mental health needs are a top concern of residents. NCDHD is working to reduce deaths by suicide in an area that struggles with mental health provider shortages. We trained thirty (30) individuals in Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) and 20 in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). These trainings build community support and encourage early intervention. Two additional full-time Licensed Mental Health Professionals were placed in area schools with the department's support. Media campaigns and community events reinforced the message that "it is okay not to be okay." We increased the number of screenings for social determinants of health and depression assessments. NCDHD continues to perfect a pilot follow-up referral program that supports individuals with needs identified during the screening assessment.



**Heidi Kuklis, MPH**

Health Director  
heidi@ncdhd.ne.gov

Positive change is taking place to contribute to community health. The momentum from the past year propels us forward with a sense of purpose. We look forward to collaborating with our community partners in FY2025 to provide all residents what they need to be happy and healthy.



## Communicable Disease Control

Our staff conducted surveillance, managed outbreaks, and responded to reportable communicable diseases. In 2023, NCDHD completed 239 investigations, the most common being campylobacteriosis, hepatitis, and animal exposures. NCDHD implemented timely interventions that helped reduce transmission, safeguard vulnerable populations, and maintain public safety.

**NCDHD investigated 239 reportable cases of diseases.**



## Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

NCDHD continued to offer vaccinations to individuals of all ages, races, and income levels across the district. We collaborate with local businesses and healthcare partners to provide traveling vaccine clinics and in-office services. Our outreach efforts emphasize the importance of staying current with vaccinations to prevent disease and injury and improve the overall well-being of our communities.

**NCDHD administered 2,091 vaccinations & held 103 clinics, 54 being mobile.**



## Environmental Public Health

NCDHD expanded our environmental health programming. One new initiative is our air quality program that installed 3 PurpleAir monitors across the district. These monitors measure particulate matter in the air, providing real-time data that empowers our communities to take proactive steps to protect their health based on air quality. Monitors were installed in Ainsworth, O'Neill, and Butte, Nebraska.

**Air quality monitors are now in Valentine, Ainsworth, & O'Neill.**



## Maternal, Child, & Family Health

The Miles of Smiles program delivered preventative oral health screenings to 3,965 children across the district during the 2023-2024 school year. Of those screened, 3,191 received fluoride varnish; 460 referrals were made, including 25 urgent referrals. This program bridges the gap in access to preventative oral healthcare and addresses long-term issues related to tooth decay.

**In FY 23-24, 3,965 students were screened for oral health issues.**



## Access to & Linkage with Clinical Care

NCDHD integrated digital media display boards as a platform to connect with our district through a network of diverse host locations, including clinics, libraries, grocery stores, and gas stations. These partnerships enhance our ability to serve the community more effectively, providing health education, notification of events, and real-time information during disasters and outbreaks.

**Digital billboards installed in 7 establishments across the NCDHD district.**



