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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **GO Health 2022: A Year in Review**

As we say goodbye to 2022, Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health) would like to wish you all a healthy and Happy New Year. This was a full year for the Health Departments. Not only were staff involved in ongoing COVID-19 activities, Monkeypox (Mpox) and polio were added to the list of emerging issues. Staff were determined to keep working towards Public Health Accreditation (expected in 2023) and also kept many public services and operations running smoothly to help improve the health and well-being of residents.

The **Community Health Services** staff have been working diligently, including remaining up-to-date on the evolution of the COVID-19 vaccination guidelines. Throughout 2022, immunization clinics (including COVID-19 and traditional), as well as outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers resulted in 3,212 vaccinations being administered. This includes 42 individuals who received post-exposure rabies treatment after being exposed to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal. Not including COVID-19, 472 communicable disease investigations were conducted. During the growing season, staff provided various healthcare services to 1,388 seasonal and migrant farmworkers on location to reduce barriers to receiving care.

**Public Health Emergency Preparedness** started 2022 responding to a tidal wave of COVID-19 cases from the omicron variant. However, due to lower severity of this variant combined with increased immunity within the community, efforts to contain this variant began to lessen, and public health emergency preparedness eventually began focusing on risks associated with new infectious threats, which ranged from avian influenza and Ebola to Mpox and polio. Experience from COVID-19 response led to dramatic changes for Emergency Preparedness, including revision of major preparedness plans, re-organization of the medical reserve corps and revision of an emergency preparedness mobile app.

**Environmental Health** staff continue to regulate permitted facilities throughout Genesee and Orleans Counties through compliance with the New York State (NYS) Sanitary Code. They help assure the community is safe from foodborne illnesses by conducting inspections of food service establishments. Staff also routinely inspect septic systems, monitor Public Water Supplies, enforce the NYS Clean Indoor Air Act, and offer free rabies clinics. The Lead Program continues to promote education and outreach to enhance lead poisoning prevention and promote testing of children for lead exposure. GO Health was awarded a second grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to expand an existing home-repair program to address lead hazards and prevent childhood lead poisoning throughout the entire Genesee, Livingston, Orleans and Wyoming (GLOW) region.

Staff within our **Children's Programs** work with families of our youngest children providing case management, education, support and referrals. Some of the services children may need that are provided through this program are speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy and special education teacher services. Staff work closely with families to make sure children receive the services they need.

The **Public Health Education** team spent a majority of the year developing the 2022-2024 Genesee, Orleans and Wyoming (GOW) Counties Community Health Assessment (CHA)/Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and in partnership with local hospital systems, Community Services Plan (CSP). The team was also responsible for implementing the 'Strengthening Capacity in Suicide, Overdose, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) Prevention for Local Health Departments' technical assistance grant. This funding improved the internal capacity of GO Health to address the intersection of suicide, overdose and ACE's and brought together community partners for a GOW Trauma & Resiliency Conference.

**Weights & Measures** (W&M) completed 470 inspections accounting for over 1,190 devices within the two counties. These tests involved pumping more than 26,000 gallons of fuel and using more than 5.9 million pounds of test weight ensuring all commercial weighing and measuring devices meet NYS standards. The department handled 13 complaint investigations, confirmed 591 package weights & 300 item prices, and collected 132 fuel samples confirming fuel sold within both counties met a variety of parameters. Since transitioning to a department of one in 2020, W&M has shown savings in excess of \$150,000.

"It is our extreme pleasure to serve the residents of Genesee and Orleans Counties," stated Paul Pettit, Public Health Director for GO Health. "We thank the Genesee and Orleans County Legislatures, the Board of Health, our community partners and other volunteers for their support and collaboration. We look forward to another productive year of improving the health and well-being of our community and wish everyone a safe, healthy, and happy New Year."

For more information about GO Health programs, visit [www.GOHealthNY.org](http://www.GOHealthNY.org).

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