

**BASTROP COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**



**FY 2024-2025
Department Report**

November 10, 2025

A YEAR IN REVIEW: COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Building infrastructure simultaneously with delivering some basic services is like building a plane while you are trying to fly it!” This quote matches much of what we accomplished in our first budgeted year as the Bastrop County Public Health Department (BCPHD).

Here’s a quick snapshot of key accomplishments for FY 24-25.

In March 2025, BCPHD seated its augural Bastrop County Advisory Board of Health which includes 9 appointees who represent a diversity of health occupations and disciplines.

Along with a highly qualified Advisory Board of Health, the BCPHD hired its first staff including an Information Specialist, an Epidemiologist, a Clinical Services Administrator and a Grants Coordinator. Along with these 4 part-time staff positions, we added to the roster our health and medical team, which included our Local Health Authority and an experienced community medical volunteer.

Within weeks after staff were hired, BCPHD went into emergency communication and surveillance mode given the West Texas measles outbreak and the potential for measles cases arising in Bastrop County. While there were no confirmed cases of measles in the county, there were several suspected cases that needed to be followed in addition to posting several health alerts for the public and healthcare providers followed by the creation of an emergency measles communication plan.

Over the course of 10 months our staff have been building the systems, networks and relationships needed to effectively perform and deliver public health services.

Our Information Specialist created our first issues of a BCPHD newsletter which now has over 600+ subscribers. Along with our first set of newsletters, a BCPHD logo was developed as our visible brand alongside Facebook and Instagram postings. In fact, the first health alert produced by our staff team featured a Mosquito-borne Illness post that garnered nearly 82,000 views with more than 32,000 individuals reached. Of special note, our Information Specialist led the Mental Health Coalition that endorsed BCPHD’s CredibleMind agreement to provide a 24/7/365 mental health digital platform. Launched in September 2025, this platform provides access to mental health community resources, along with information and support on 100 mental health topics and 20 different assessments free to anyone in Bastrop County.

Our Epidemiologist, in addition to leading the measles surveillance work in the county provided numerous updates to the Bastrop County Commissioners’ Court on

Notifiable Disease Conditions. These county specific data reports were the first of their kind to ever to be presented to county leadership and the Advisory Board of Health. In addition to these reports, BCPHD is pursuing data user agreements with the Texas Department of State Health Services which will grant access to all electronic disease reporting systems and provide the necessary resource tools to conduct surveillance of diseases reported in Bastrop County.

Our Clinical Services Administrator developed an analysis of foundational clinical and related public health services for the first phase of service transition from Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Public Health Region 7 to Bastrop County Public Health Department (BCPHD). Recommendations were presented to the Bastrop Advisory Board of Health (ABoH) for the transition of public health nursing, immunizations, perinatal Hepatitis B prevention case management, and clinical emergency and disaster preparedness response services. Supportive data and the rationale for selecting these services were included. ABoH provided approval as proposed.

Our Grants Coordinator convened two collaboratives representing more than 25 different city and county organizational partners across Bastrop County. Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) in funding was received from the St. David's Foundation for the Housing + Health Collaborative. This collaborative includes 13 nonprofits, Cities of Bastrop, Smithville, and Elgin, and Bastrop County, for the purpose of engaging Bastrop County residents in designing solutions and policies to encourage the development of safer and affordable housing as a pathway to a healthier county for all. The Healthcare Workforce Collaborative is the second collaborative funded by St. David's Foundation for \$2 million dollars. The purpose of this collaborative is to address the professional healthcare workforce shortage in Bastrop County. Funds will be provided for scholarships to 250 Bastrop County residents who want to enter the healthcare field and agree to stay in Bastrop County as trained healthcare workers.

We had two exceptional Texas A&M interns, one representing the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health at the School of Public Health and the other one representing the Bush School of Government and Public Affairs. These individuals supported our air quality work and the opioid prevention and remediation strategies in the county. Their efforts were first of a kind and established opportunities for future programming and policy development in their respective areas of expertise.

In all, not a bad start for a fledgling startup who is the first local health department to enter the Texas Public Health system in more than 30 years.

Please read on----*There are a myriad of other accomplishments achieved by the BCPHD team which are detailed in the report that follows.* **Donna**

Public Health Priorities

As part of the development of the Bastrop County Public Health Department (BCPHD), a county-wide Task Force was created to recommend strategic and operational actions for FY 24-25. Among various other preparatory tasks, the Task Force was charged with recommending the BCPHD's public health priorities based upon data gathered from the community. The Public Health Priorities, as determined and approved by the BCPHD Task Force members on July 11th, 2024, are as follows:

A. Healthcare Access

1. Navigation
2. Coordination
3. Affordability
4. Sustainability

B. Health Promotion, Education, & Collaboration

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Substance Abuse
4. Mental Health
5. Teen Health

C. Environmental Health

1. Air
2. Food
3. Water

D. Infectious Disease

1. Surveillance
2. Treatment
3. Response

Advisory Board of Health

On July 11th, 2024, the BCPHD task force determined and approved the utilization of an Advisory Public Health Board to act as a governance system for the health department. This advisory board of health was established in March of 2025. Advisory Board of Health members serve in an advisory capacity which includes, but is not limited to, providing oversight of the Public Health Department, assuring outreach to underserved communities, and informing county commissioners and municipalities of emerging and high-profile public health issues. The Board reports to the Bastrop County Judge and

Commissioners, and City Councils of Bastrop, Elgin, and Smithville. The following graphic displays the current Advisory Board of Health Members and their roles.

Roger Adams City of Elgin	Wick Baker	Audrianna Esser
Raj Gupta City of Bastrop	Sue Iha Co-Chair	Jackie May
Cassidy Penn City of Smithville	Bill Satterfield Chair	Linda Wilson

BCPHD Staff: FY24-25

With financial support from St. David's Foundation grants, American Resue Plan and Bastrop County, we were able to hire the following individuals. This is a marked increase over the FY 23-24 funding level which provided only county funding for the Executive Director as a part-time position.

This staff team is highly qualified with well over 150 years of experience in the public health field. They work in collaboration with other sectors of the county including building relationships with state and federal public health agencies to achieve health improvement. This high functioning team is ideally positioned to build the core services that support county approved public health priorities and align with state statutory requirements.

Meet the BCPHD Team



Donna Nichols

.....
Executive Director



Pompeyo Chavez

.....
Bastrop County Health Authority



Carla Culberson

.....
Clinical Team Member



Debra Seamans

.....
Clinical Services Administrator



Adriana Rodriguez

.....
Information Specialist



Andrew Lam

.....
Epidemiologist



Amy Mills

.....
Grants Coordinator



Ruby Hernandez

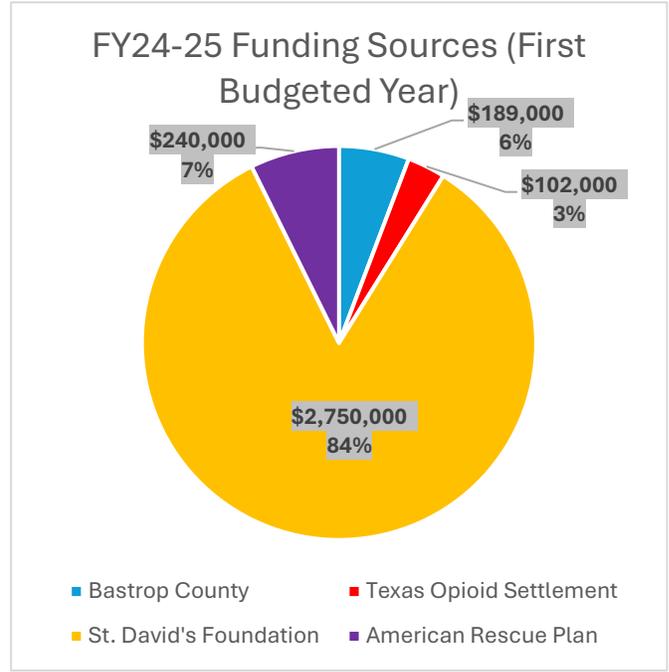
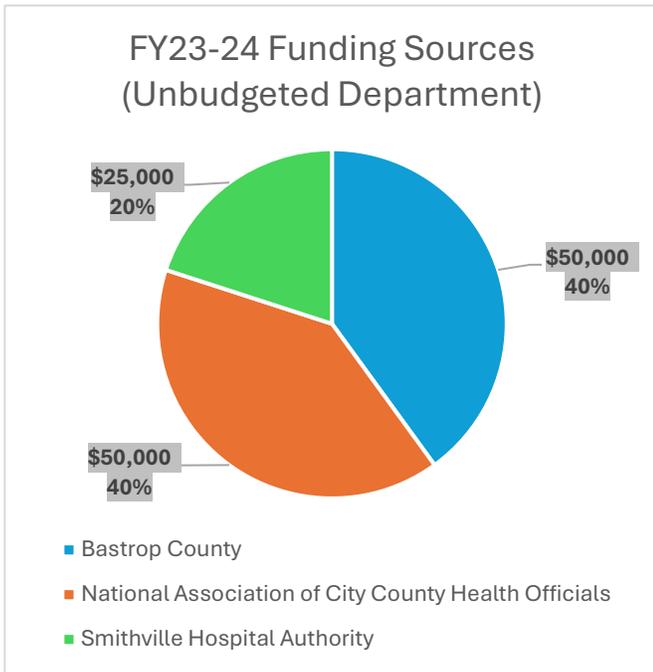
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Environmental Health Specialist

Staff Name	Title	Funding Source	Classification	Notes
Donna C Nichols, MEd, CHES	Executive Director	Bastrop County	Full-Time Equivalent in FY 24-25	Part-Time Equivalent in FY 23-24
Pompeyo Chavez, MD	Local Health Authority	Volunteer	Appointed by Bastrop County	Appointed every two years as per state statute
Adriana Rodriguez, MA	Information Specialist	Bastrop County	Part-Time Equivalent in FY 24-25	Moves to Full-Time Equivalent in FY25-26 Ms. Rodriguez will obtain her DrPH in 2025.
Andrew Lam, MPH	Epidemiologist	American Rescue Plan	Part-Time Equivalent	Funding continues through December 2026. Mr. Lam will obtain his DrPH in 2026.
Debra Seamans, MSN, RN	Clinical Services Administrator	American Rescue Plan	Part-Time Equivalent	Funding will continue through December 2026.
Amy Mills, BS	Grants Coordinator	St. David's Foundation	Part-Time Equivalent	Ms. Mills will continue as a part-time equivalent through June 2027. She will receive her MPH in 2027.
Carla Emery-Culberson, DPM, MPH	Health and Medical Team Member	Volunteer	BCPHD Approved Community Volunteer	Dr. Culberson will receive opioid settlement funds to support healthcare workforce training and mobilization efforts in the county in FY 25-26.

Intern Name	University/Department	Intern Title	Project	Notes
Ruby Hernandez, MPH	TX A&M University, Department of Occupational and Environmental Health	Environmental Health Specialist	Air Quality	Ms. Hernandez will receive her DrPH in 2025
Amanda Munene, BS	TX A&M University, School of Public Health and Bush School of Government and Public Affairs	Prevention Specialist	Opioid Prevention and Remediation	Ms. Munene will receive a dual degree as an MPH and MIA in 2025

Funding Sources

The following pie charts display the funding sources for FY23-24 (as an unbudgeted department) and FY24-25 (during our first budgeted year). In the BCPHD’s first budgeted year, the Department received a mix of funding including funds from the county, state, and federal governments in addition to philanthropic funds. These funds provided the necessary jump start to build core services and the essential functions of a local public health department. **The BCPHD increased its funding from \$125,000 in FY 23-24 to \$3,281,000 in FY 24-25.**



Looking Back: FY 24-25 BCPHD Major Accomplishments

The Bastrop County Public Health Department (BCPHD) is powered by a talented and highly qualified team of public health professionals. Their collective expertise drives our essential functions, and their tireless efforts, combined with the support of our partners, have a real impact on improving the health and quality of life for everyone in our county. These accomplishments reflect a strong dedication to public service and to addressing the needs of Bastrop County residents.

COMMUNICATIONS

- ❖ BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER (3)
 - Spanish and English versions produced

- Developed and maintained a subscriber list of 600+
- Posted on social media and Bastrop County website



❖ SOCIAL MEDIA

- Dedicated Facebook and Instagram accounts
- Posted daily/weekly

❖ HEALTH AND MEDIA ALERTS

- Created and distributed updates measles information in both English and Spanish during the 2025 measles outbreak
- Provided vaccine guidance to healthcare professionals regarding measles outbreak
- Created, formatted, and distributed a news release on mosquito-borne illnesses which had more than 81,734 views, 600 interactions, and a reach of 32,533

❖ MEDIA INTERVIEWS

- Community Impact featuring stories on Credible Mind/Mental Health, Healthcare Workforce Funding and Housing +Health Community Design Sessions
- Elgin Courier featuring Credible Mind
- KVUE, ABC affiliate, evening news segment on BCPHD CredibleMind

❖ INFECTION DISEASE PLANS

- Measles Communication Plan detailing communication messages, materials to be developed and steps to be taken during a measles outbreak
- Infectious Disease Plan with emphasis on managing measles outbreaks from an epidemiological and clinical perspective

❖ BRANDING

- Created BCPHD Logo used on all officially sponsored and supported communications

❖ PRESENTATIONS

- Bastrop Chamber of Commerce-150 participants

- Bastrop County Health Fair-750 participants
- BEST Leadership Session-30 participants
- TX A&M, School of Public Health, CCHA 20 Year Celebration-50 participants
- TX A&M, Job Fair-80+ Interested Intern and Practicum Students
- State of Bastrop County-100 participants

COLLABORATIVES AND COALITIONS

❖ BASTROP COUNTY COLLABORATIVE ON HOUSING AND HEALTH

- Expanded access to affordable housing as a pathway to better health
- Engaged in a community-driven planning process that will result in a site-specific and “shovel ready” plan for a new housing development that reflects the values, priorities, and needs of our residents... by the end of 2025
- Served as the lead agency and collaborated with 13 nonprofit organizations and the cities of Smithville, Elgin, and Bastrop
- Partnered with Square One to provide project management support and to lead a team of architects, engineers, and community engagement firms to help us accomplish this goal
- Detailed Collaborative Accomplishments:
 - Researched the most innovative and promising affordable housing projects from other rural areas and creating a comprehensive report describing the ones that would be the best potential models for us to consider in Bastrop County
 - Developed an "Outreach Protocol" to guide the collaborative's community engagement work, to ensure that all voices can be heard throughout the process, based on the shared wisdom of the nonprofit organizations in the county
 - Designed a community engagement process, in partnership with our contractors Square One and Adisa Communications, to capture the perspectives of a broad and diverse range of Bastrop County residents.
 - Hosted listening sessions in Bastrop, Elgin, and Smithville, engaging around 50 residents, to listen to residents' experiences with housing



and to capture their perspectives about what's working well, and not so well, about affordability of housing in our community.

- Hosted design workshops in Bastrop, Elgin, and Smithville, engaging around 50 residents, to build on what we learned in the Listening Sessions and focus on the design strategies that are most important to consider for future affordable housing projects in Bastrop County
- Hosted quarterly, public sessions to update interested stakeholders about the progress on the project to maintain transparency
- Developed a list of criteria for site evaluation based on community input about what matters most to them about the location of affordable housing
- Identified land currently listed for sale and reviewed for possible "fit" for future affordable housing based on the criteria developed with community input

❖ BASTROP COUNTY HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE

- Applied for and received a grant from St. David's Foundation for \$2 million to provide scholarships to 250 Bastrop County residents who want to enter the healthcare field and agree to stay in Bastrop County as trained healthcare workers
- Finalizing the full collaborative, which is likely to include BCPHD, City of Smithville, Career Tracks, TX A&M School of Public Health, Office of Public Health Practice, and 6 additional nonprofit Partners along with a larger network of employers and educational providers
- Career Tracks is the lead provider within the collaborative, with the responsibility of finding and placing 250 students - and they have already begun the recruitment process.

❖ BCPHD MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

- Partnered with 13 members who represent 8 local mental health or nonprofit organizations
- Engaged partners in endorsing and supporting CREDIBLEMIND, a free mental health platform for all Bastrop County residents

- Populated the “community resources” page on CredibleMind with local mental health resources in Bastrop County

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES



- ❖ Finalized the Traumatic Brain Injury Report for the county
- ❖ Established contacts across departments and community stakeholders, including Bastrop County Office of Emergency Management, Ascension Seton Hospitals, and Bastrop County Developmental Services
- ❖ Engaged in meetings on epidemiology case tracking software and GIS mapping integration for current and future surveillance capabilities
- ❖ Created internal tools: Q&A resource document and facility/restaurant line lists for investigations.
- ❖ Joined EAIDU State Epidemiology Monday Calls and integrated BCPHD into regular DSHS communication channels.
- ❖ Created a streamlined resident complaint response process for public health inquiries.
- ❖ Co-authored measles and influenza report for Commissioners Court.
- ❖ Established communication with Childcare Regulatory and other external agencies to improve outbreak response coordination.
- ❖ Authored Measles FAQ document and guidance for providers on testing and reporting.
- ❖ Carried out public health responses for communicable diseases in Bastrop County such as foodborne illnesses, measles, mumps, and pertussis.
- ❖ Delivered ongoing weekly measles situation reports and pertussis surveillance updates to BCPHD and partners
- ❖ Established collaboration with Williamson County Epidemiology Department, including a site visit to learn their operational workflows.
- ❖ Developed BCPHD Foodborne Illness Complaint Form for the department.
- ❖ Provided regular epidemiology updates and briefings to BCPHD leadership and maintained situational awareness of state and national surveillance data.

- ❖ Responded to various Bastrop County resident reports to the health department over the year.

PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICAL SERVICES TRANSITION



- ❖ Developed an analysis of foundational clinical and related public health services for the first phase of service transition from Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Public Health Region 7 to Bastrop County Public Health Department (BCPHD)
- ❖ Recommendations were presented to the Bastrop Advisory Board of Health (ABoH) for the transition of public health nursing, immunizations, perinatal Hepatitis B prevention case management, and clinical emergency and disaster preparedness response services. Supportive data and the rationale for selecting these services were included. Received ABoH approval as proposed
- ❖ Investigated potential electronic health record (EHR) system vendors and funding options to identify products to meet the clinical and technological requirements and needs of BCPHD. Purchase of an EHR system was submitted with the BCPHD 2025-2026 budget proposal
- ❖ Researched detailed “fixed site” and “mobile clinic” equipment and supply lists to support immunization and basic public health nursing services. Provided related budget information for consideration by the Bastrop County Commissioner’s Court.
- ❖ Conducted an in-depth review into the DSHS Immunizations programmatic requirements for BCPHD to effectively serve as a vaccination provider for the Bastrop community and to deliver perinatal Hepatitis B prevention case management services to pregnant women and infants

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMMING

❖ OPIOID TRAINING AND NARCAN DISTRIBUTION

- Bastrop County Employee Narcan Training (30)
- Bastrop County Health Fair Participant Training (15) with 250 doses distributed
- Narcan dispensers (40) and unlimited doses ordered for county-wide distribution

❖ CREDIBLEMIND DIGITAL PLATFORM

- Launched September 22nd



- Provided Spanish and English Versions available free to all Bastrop County residents
- First two weeks of online activity engaged 439 unique users



PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT

❖ DATA USER POLICIES

- Engaged with DSHS officials on gaining access to state data systems for surveillance purposes

❖ COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- Created and provided editorial newsletter guidelines to external authors

❖ IMMUNIZATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- Implemented Clinical Transition Plan which details needed Immunization Policies and Procedures along with approved Clinical Services

❖ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH POLICY BRIEF

- Provided air quality sampling data associated with toxic fumes emitted by Darling Ingredients plant
- Communicated recommendations for action to county leadership

NEW FUNDING

❖ St. David's Foundation GRANT FUNDING-\$2,750,000.00

- Bastrop County Collaborative for Housing + Health- \$750,000.00
- Bastrop County Healthcare Workforce Collaborative-\$2,000,000.00

❖ Texas Opioid Settlement Funding-\$102,000.00

- Prevention and Remediation Plan

❖ American Rescue Plan Federal Funding-\$240,000.00

- Epidemiology Technical Support
- Clinical Services Administrative Support



BASTROP COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH TASK FORCE AND ADVISORY BOARD OF HEALTH

- ❖ Bastrop County Public Health Task Force

- 15 Members representing county and community leaders
- Selected and received approval from the Bastrop County Commissioners' Court for Bastrop County's Public Health Priorities
- Established the Advisory Board of Health Selection Process and Timeline

❖ Bastrop County Advisory Board of Health

- 9 Members selected/appointed by City and County Governments
- Seated March 2025
- Approved CredibleMind digital platform
- Approved Clinical Services Transition Plan
- Supported the proposed BCPHD FY25-26 County Budget
- Approved the Scope of Work for the Healthcare Workforce Grant Funding



Looking Forward: FY25-26

Taking Bastrop County's health into our own hands.

The future of Bastrop County's health won't be left to chance. Instead of waiting to see what the future holds, the Bastrop County Public Health Department (BCPHD) is stepping up to lead with purpose, building a resilient and healthy county from the ground up. We are not merely reacting to threats but proactively preventing them, preparing for the unexpected, and protecting the well-being of every resident.

Forging a path with tangible action.

The next fiscal year will be defined by concrete, measurable progress toward a healthier Bastrop County. We are not just creating a plan; we are bringing it to life with the following actions:



- **Launching our first public health clinical services: Texas Vaccines for Children and the Adult Safety Net.** A key milestone in our mission is the successful launch of our first clinical services. These programs will directly protect our most vulnerable residents – our children and uninsured adults – from vaccine-preventable diseases. We will:

- Secure a dedicated, easily accessible location for the new clinic to ensure a smooth transition of services from Public Health Region 7.
 - Partner with the Texas Department of State Health Services to ensure full compliance and a seamless startup.
 - Identify and secure the necessary personnel and financial resources to guarantee that service delivery is uninterrupted for Bastrop residents.
- **Arming our team with high-tech tools for public health action.** To enable swift, data-driven responses, we are building a more robust technological infrastructure. We will:
 - Finalize data user agreements with the State to gain immediate access to critical, county-specific public health data.
 - Use this data to power new public-facing dashboards on our upcoming BCPHD website, providing residents with unprecedented transparency into our progress and the health status of our community.
 - **Engaging the community with high-touch and high-tech outreach.** Our work extends beyond the clinic and the computer screen. We will continue to build strong partnerships with local and state organizations to amplify our impact, focusing on both:
 - **High-Touch Programming:** Direct, person-to-person engagement to build trust and address immediate community needs.
 - **High-Tech Public Health Actions:** Using data and digital tools to enhance communication, resiliency and ensure residents have the information they need to protect their families.

This is more than a strategy; it is a promise. A promise to build a healthier, more connected Bastrop County, one concrete action at a time.