



**County  
Health Officials  
of New York**  
Leading the way to healthier communities

**2020**

**Annual Report**

# EXECUTIVE LETTER

## Rising to the Challenge: Local Health Departments Shine During COVID-19 Pandemic Response



**Kevin D. Watkins, MD**  
President, Director

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an extraordinary amount of stress and devastation on our world, country, and state. Everyone has been touched in some way by this crisis, whether due to restrictions on social freedoms; required quarantine/isolation; job loss or insecurity; or the illness or loss of a loved one. The year 2020 presented challenges that many considered inconceivable, however, those working in local health departments have been waiting in the wings for years, preparing for such an occurrence. Professionals from local health departments have been trained and assembled for an outbreak of this magnitude for decades. Despite budgetary and workforce challenges, those employed at local health departments have been working on the frontline of public health in their communities, using their expertise and authority to respond to this crisis and support those impacted by the effects of widespread disease.



**Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES**  
Executive Director

As the membership association for local health departments, the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) has played a prominent role in bringing visibility to the work conducted by our members during COVID-19. We have refocused our programmatic priorities to support COVID-19 mitigation and response efforts employed by local health departments. Since day one, NYSACHO has closely monitored community spread of COVID-19; maintained constant communication with local health departments and state partners to ensure current and accurate information is shared; identified common barriers and needs of local health departments and worked to address them with the State Department of Health and other state leaders; connected our members with the resources they need to better assist communities statewide; and advocated for policies and funding that will allow local health departments to strengthen protective measures for their community members across the state.

As we move into 2021, our priorities have shifted to equitable vaccine administration. with our members hosting daily vaccine PODs and navigating the challenges associated with managing this monumental task. While we look forward to the day we can consider this public health threat eliminated, we know that once the dust settles important considerations for the public health landscape, such as funding deficits and workforce shortages, will need to be addressed. NYSACHO is committed to raising these concerns and starting to engage in discussions with our state leaders about the need to bolster local health departments to support the needs of New York State as future public health threats are identified.

Leadership at NYSACHO could not be more impressed by and proud of our members, who have been working around the clock to protect New York's communities. Thank you for your relentless dedication and hard work during this challenging year.

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# Our Values



## **COLLABORATION**

Working together with others to promote excellence in public health through the exchange of ideas, programs and policies.

## **INTEGRITY**

Ensuring transparent, ethical and accountable performance.

## **RESPECT**

Showing regard for self and others and maintaining an environment of teamwork, growth and enhancement.

## **COMMITMENT**

Building passion and shared responsibility to achieve our goals.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Developing and exemplifying the courage to set a course of action and shape the future of public health.

## **EMPOWERMENT**

Leveraging our knowledge and experience to achieve success with special emphasis on health equity and health in policy framework.

# Our Vision



NYSACHO is recognized as the collective voice of local health departments, leading policy, education, and advocacy to create healthy and safe communities in New York State.

# Our Mission



NYSACHO supports, advocates for, and empowers local health departments in their work to promote health and wellness and prevent disease, disability and injury throughout New York State.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## 2020-2021

President



**Dr. Kevin D. Watkins**  
Public Health Director  
Cattaraugus County

Vice President/Treasurer



**Dr. Indu Gupta**  
Commissioner of Health  
Onondaga County

Immediate Past President



**Daniel Stapleton**  
Public Health Director  
Niagara County



**Dr. Lawrence E. Eisenstein**  
Commissioner of Health  
Nassau County



**Heidi Bond**  
Director of Public Health/  
Director of Patient Services  
Otsego County



**Emiko Otsubo**  
Chief Operating Officer/  
Executive Deputy Commissioner  
New York City



**Linda Beers**  
Public Health Director/  
Director of Services for Children with  
Disabilities  
Essex County



**Amy Gildemeister**  
Director of Public Health  
Schoharie County



**Dr. Carol Smith**  
Commissioner of Health  
and Mental Health  
Ulster County



**Dr. Michael Mendoza**  
Commissioner of Public Health  
Monroe County



**Dr. Irina Gelman**  
Commissioner of Health  
Orange County



**Paul Pettit**  
Public Health Director  
Genesee and Orleans Counties



**Assunta S. Rozza**  
Deputy Commissioner Finance  
New York City



**Nancy McGraw**  
Public Health Director  
Sullivan County

# LEADING PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY AND ADVOCACY

# 494

**BILLS TRACKED**

To sustain New York's public health system, it is critical that the role of each local health department continues to be recognized as an essential service. Ensuring the availability of ample and flexible funding to public health programs will allow counties to continue to mitigate threats to their communities and protect their citizens. This has never been more evident than in 2020 as local health departments faced the largest public health threat in a century: COVID-19.

# 15

**BILLS PASSED  
BOTH HOUSES**

When progressive public health policies are passed into law, local health departments are on the front lines to implement them and adjust to new mandates. COVID-19 has served as a crucial reminder to policy makers that public health responses require public health resources; and in order for local health departments to continue a robust response to COVID-19 and be prepared for future public health emergencies, local public health must be prioritized by the New York State legislature.

# 14

**BILLS  
CHAPTERED**

In 2020, NYSACHO advocated for changes that would benefit New York's communities during COVID-19 and enable local health departments to increase their capacity for COVID-19 response efforts. NYSACHO's advocacy efforts included, raising the visibility and profile of local health departments in their role as lead health strategists; and advocating for equity in response efforts and resources, particularly for rural counties, increased funding for local public health, and clear and consistent state guidance that takes into account local health department needs and capacity.

## 2020 LEGISLATIVE SUCCESSES:

- Passage of S.8182A/A.10508A which authorizes licensed pharmacists to administer any approved vaccines for COVID-19
- Passage of comprehensive tobacco and vaping product reforms in the 2020-21 State Budget
- Introduction of NYSACHO drafted legislation defining indoor areas under the Clean Indoor Air Act
- Introduction of NYSACHO drafted legislation to clarify that physician orders shall suffice for documentation of eligibility for COVID-19 paid sick leave
- Amendments to A.10500-C, related to confidentiality of contact tracing information that removed barriers related to data access for public health purposes and actions.



Herkimer County Public Health Nursing Service employees at a COVID-19 vaccine POD.



Erie County COVID-19 diagnostic testing team members link arms in solidarity.

Throughout the year, NYSACHO leadership worked to strengthen relationships with new and long-time legislative leaders, the executive leadership at the Governor’s office, and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). In response to NYSACHO’s communications with the NYSDOH regarding the need for local health department staffing support, the state hired and trained thousands of virtual contact tracers to assist local health departments. Additionally, to support local health departments with school reopening, the state hired “school specialists” at each local health department to work directly with schools.

NYSACHO also built relationships with hospital and Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) associations, K-12 school associations, the business sector, healthcare associations, long term care facility associations, rural health associations, and others and frequently collaborated with these entities on advocacy, letters, information sharing, and working through regional/local issues.

Furthermore, NYSACHO engaged policymakers on NYSACHO’s key legislative priorities and educated them about the critical role of local health departments in pandemic response, as well as drafting and proposing amendments to legislation that would further NYSACHO members’ goals.



Cayuga County Health Department staff prepare for COVID-19 testing clinic.



Chautauque County Director of Health, Christine Schuyler, and other county officials give COVID-19 briefing.



Nassau County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Lawrence Eisenstein, at a COVID-19 vaccine POD.

# PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

COVID-19 created an urgent need for information sharing and coordination between the NYSDOH, Executive Branch, and localities to ensure a coordinated and appropriate public health response to the pandemic. To ensure effective communications, NYSACHO and its membership assembled an innovative and responsive public health framework which includes the following elements:

- Weekly calls with local health departments where NYSDOH staff provide situational updates and respond to questions regarding time sensitive elements of the pandemic and related response activities.
- Weekly/bi-monthly members only Zoom meetings where local health department leaders share best practices and vote on organizational positions.
- Initiation of a Q&A process where NYSACHO staff consolidate questions from local health departments and receive verbal answers from a NYSDOH director-level representative.
- Daily monitoring of new law, regulation, executive order, guidance, or information change that impact local governments with subsequent communication to county health officials and partner organizations.
- Identification and fostering of partnerships that enhance our collective mission to promote and protect community health during the pandemic.



Wayne County Public Health Staff at a COVID-19 testing clinic.



Employees of the Ulster County Department of Health and Mental Health distribute masks to residents.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH NYSAC:

NYSACHO's partnership with the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) proved stronger than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Stephen Acquario's leadership, NYSAC has demonstrated unparalleled commitment and support to the county led pandemic response. This leadership contributed to NYSACHO's visibility and success in our efforts to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers. County-level response to the pandemic has been a true collaborative effort, and we thank our colleagues at NYSAC and those working at all levels of county government who have supported pandemic response.

In 2020, NYSACHO and NYSAC collaborated on the following initiatives:

- Shared information and interpreted Federal and State guidance, executive orders, and policies.
- Raised visibility of public health interventions with state and federal level policymakers.
- Advocated for county access to testing, PPE, and laboratory capacity, particularly in rural communities.
- Supported county and local health department role in vaccine administration.
- Hosted webinars for county leadership on disease surveillance, testing, tracing and vaccine administration.
- Explored technology options for management of contact tracing, appointment scheduling, and vaccine inventory to support members.

## KEY SUCCESSES BY OTHER PROGRAM AREAS:

Select NYSACHO activities are funded in part by contracts secured from the New York State Department of Health and Columbia University Region 2 Public Health Training Center.

## GENERAL PUBLIC HEALTH WORKS

- Hosted 5 virtual trainings on the NYS Messaging & Monitoring System
- Hosted NYSDOH Student Weight Dashboard Overview Webinar
- Year 8 Article Six Performance Incentive Expedited Partner Therapy Technical Assistance Webinar
- Hosted Contact Tracing Webinar
- Hosted School Clinical Toolkit Review Webinar
- Staff participation on behalf of and with LHDs on 712 meetings, calls, and webinars

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Hosted webinar on Part 5 Amendments: PFOA, PFOS, 1-4-Dioxane
- MCL Risk Notification Training and Implementation Update
- Coordinated weekly calls during the spring and summer of 2020 with the Center for Environmental Health and Conference of Environmental Health Directors to address LHD questions related to COVID-19 response and impact on Environmental Health Services
- Coordinated submission of and responses to New York Forward related questions from Environmental Health Directors to Empire State Development Regional liaisons.
- Tracked 278 bills related to environmental health

## IMMUNIZATION

- Virtual Statewide Immunization Meeting on Using Motivational Interviewing to Enhance Vaccination Readiness.
- Hosted 3 Adult Immunization Coalition Webinars in partnership with the University at Albany School of Public Health. Topics included: CDC/NYSDOH adult immunization updates, Project VCTR, and development of a COVID-19 vaccine. (Provided continuing education credits to approximately 613 participants)
- School Nurse Immunization Toolkit
- Printed and disseminated 1,000 copies of the 2020 adult immunization schedule and 1,000 copies of the 2020 pediatric immunization schedule to LHDs
- Advancement of the Campaign to ImmuNYze all New Yorkers and the Let's Get Immunized NY campaign.

## PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Annual Meeting with NYSDOH Office of Health Emergency Management, to Review PHEP Contract Deliverables
- Project Public Health Ready Technical Assistance

## EARLY INTERVENTION

- Statewide Early Intervention Meeting featuring Bridges to Health and Healthcare training
- 6 EI All County Calls
- 9 EI Fiscal Workgroup Calls

## REGION 2 PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER

- Live webinar "Change Management: Recovery, Reopening, Reinvention, and Re-energizing the Public Health Workforce"
- 12 Community-based Training/TA Coordinator Calls
- 12 PHTC Steering Committee Calls
- 6 NYSDOH Check-in Calls
- Marketing plan to promote educational opportunities available to LHDs
- Audience Analysis project for outreach communications for LHD partners working on population health improvement initiatives in New York State.
- Published "In Progress Review" Report and manuscript in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* highlighting LHD accomplishments and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic

## OTHER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- NYS Health Foundation Grant brought a cumulative \$240,000 of funding to support rural county health departments' COVID-19 response activities.

## Communications Snapshot



418 Social Media Posts



57 Press Releases and Advocacy Letters



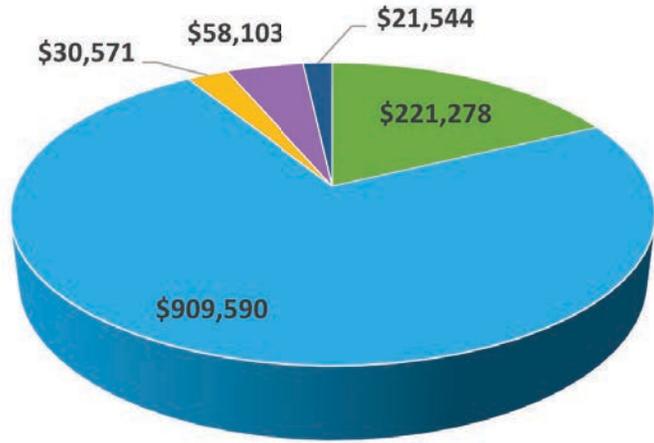
614 Technical Assistance Requests  
417% increase from 2019



52 Newsletters, including a redesign

# FINANCIAL REPORT

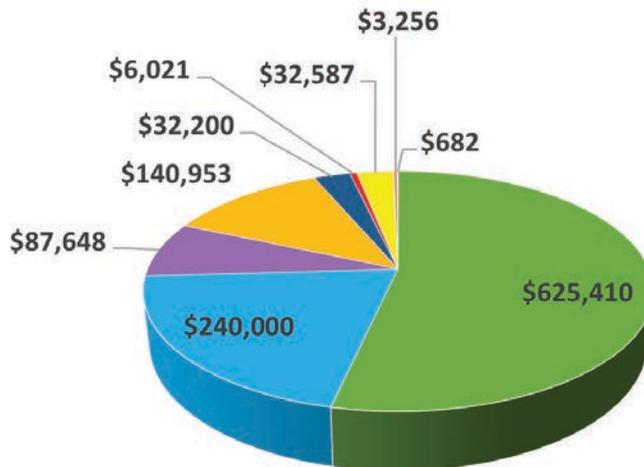
## NYSACHO Revenue Sources Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020



**Total:**  
**\$1,241,086**

- Membership Dues
- Investment Returns
- Other Income
- Contract and Grant Income
- PPP Loan Forgiveness

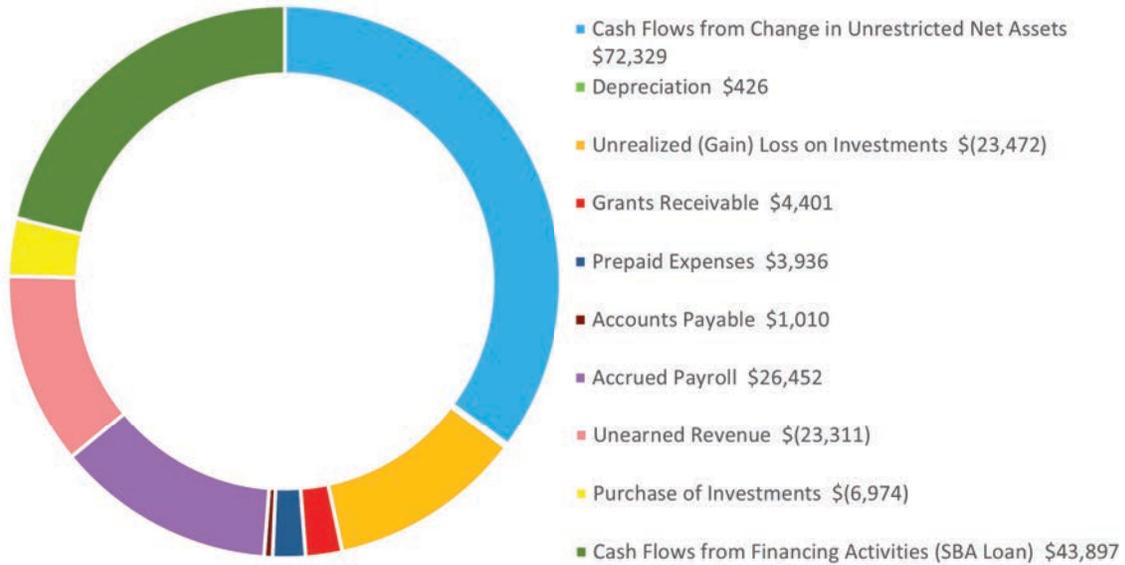
## NYSACHO Expenditures Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020



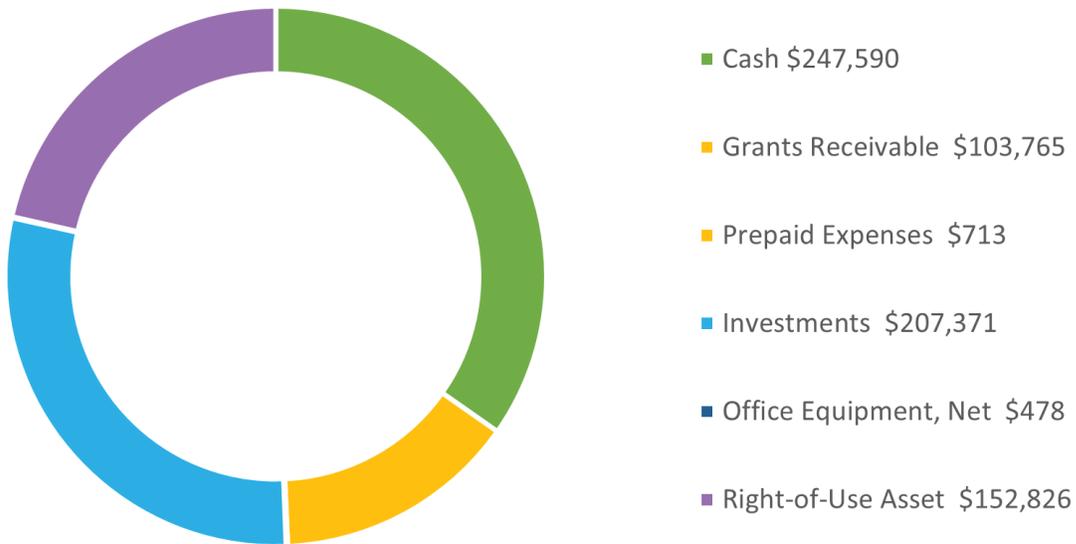
**Total:**  
**\$1,168,757**

- Personnel: Salaries, Payroll, Taxes, Benefits
- Meetings, Conferences, Trainings
- Rent
- Office Supplies and Related Expenses
- Depreciation/Misc.
- Grant Passthrough to Local Health Depts.
- Consultants: Lobbyist, Communications, Speakers, Etc.
- Staff Travel to Programs and Conferences
- Insurance

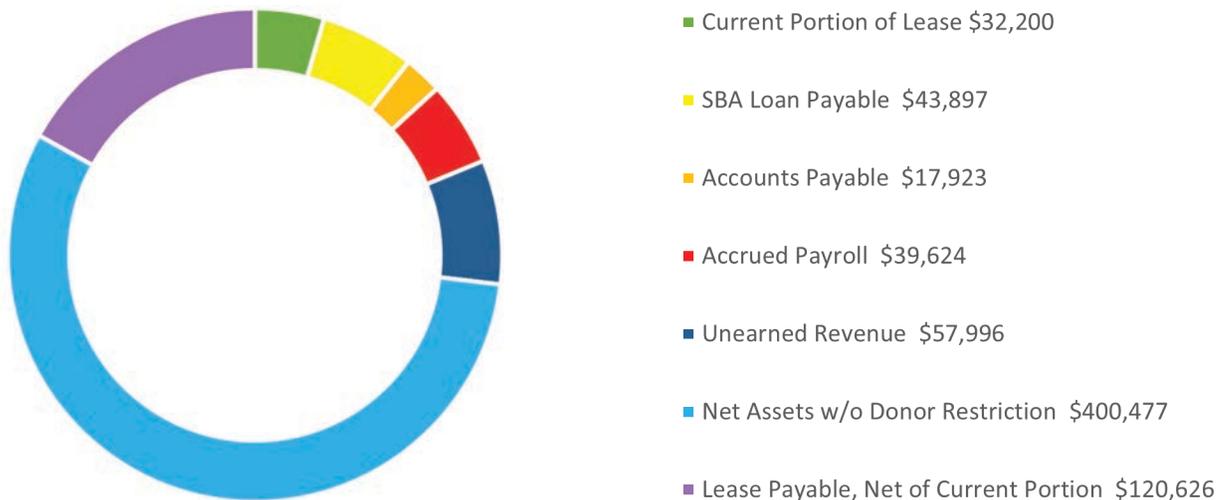
### NYSACHO Cash Flows Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020



### NYSACHO Current Assets Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020



### NYSACHO Cash Liabilities Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020



# TO NYSACHO MEMBERS

The NYSACHO staff would like to thank all of New York’s local health department commissioners, directors, and staff for your incredible work in 2020. You spent countless hours investigating COVID-19 cases, contact tracing, issuing quarantine and isolation orders, running COVID-19 testing PODs, educating your communities, and working with local businesses and other organizations to mitigate the spread of this virus, all while performing other essential duties to keep your communities healthy. Your sacrifice does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. We are honored to support, advocate, and empower you all!

And thank you to the NYSACHO Board of Directors for providing generous bonuses to the NYSACHO staff! We greatly appreciate your support and the acknowledgement of our hard work in 2020 to support New York’s local health departments in your fight against COVID-19.

We look forward to the day we can all meet again in person.

- Sincerely the NYSACHO Team



**Sarah Ravenhall**  
Executive Director



**Cristina Dyer-Drobnack,**  
Program Director



**Robert Viets**  
Program Director



**Peggy DiManno**  
Special Project Executive



**Kathryn Simpson**  
Program Manager



**Molly Fleming**  
Program & Member Engagement Manager



**Kayla Dise**  
Office Manager



**Arnisha Evans**  
Public Health Specialist