

COVID-19 Annual Report, 2021



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INTRODUCTION

2021 began with a new set of challenges for public health. The United States experienced its deadliest month of the COVID-19 pandemic in January 2021, but the Emergency Use Authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines by the FDA a month earlier looked to be a step toward recovery. New Jersey implemented a phased approach as informed by the CDC's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices, and within the first week of 2021, the Paramus Health Department began administering the Moderna vaccine to healthcare personnel, long-term and congregate care residents and staff, and frontline first responders. The vaccine was a symbol of hope for millions that suffered enormous tragedy during the year prior, and represented a return to normalcy. Unfortunately, 2021 ended just as it began; with a new set of public health challenges. The prevalence of the Omicron variant in New Jersey led to a record number of daily COVID-19 cases, as well as hospitalizations. Throughout 2021, the Paramus Health Department has been strengthened through the hiring of additional personnel, a bolstering of relationships with community stakeholders, and the development of a plan for COVID-19 targeted outreach and prevention. With these elements in place, the Health Department is better equipped to ensure the continued health of the Paramus community.

Strengthening Local Public Health

On December 4, 2020, the Paramus Health Department received a letter of intent from the New Jersey Department of Health. Paramus was awarded \$142,236 through the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant, effective December 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Through this grant, the Health Department would hire Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinators (VPOCs); a position created to access, mitigate, and respond to the social and health impacts of COVID-19 on at-risk populations through targeted outreach. Irene Brown was designated as the VPOC on February 1st, and then led a search for three additional part-time VPOCs. Within the month, Debbie Cibelli, Anastasia Maltsev, and Michael Meyer were hired by the Health Department, and each VPOC attended a grantees webinar on February 26th to understand grant requirements and deliverables. On March 1st, the new VPOCs officially started, and began to collaborate on a community assessment that would analyze the needs of the Paramus community, and identify populations deemed most vulnerable as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This arduous task revealed the true strengths of each VPOC, from educational and occupational backgrounds of nursing, human resources, and political science. In addition to this grant, the New Jersey Department of Health's Office of Local Public Health created an initiative to deploy retired Health Officers to bolster local health departments.

David Volpe, a seasoned public health professional, began working with the Paramus Health Department on February 15th to assist in COVID-19 related functions, and to assist the Health Officer in the overwhelming conditions the pandemic presented.

Assessing the Needs of Paramus

The community assessment would be the first deliverable for the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant. Once familiarized with the Health Department and resources available for research purposes, the VPOCs set out to understand the needs of Paramus. Immediately on March 1st, Ms. Maltsev and Mr. Meyer began reaching out to community partners including medical and health agencies, senior care facilities, schools, religious centers, and members of the community. This task, while time-consuming, allowed the VPOCs to further understand the impacts of COVID-19 in the areas of health, education, employment, the provision of health and human services, and community resources. Within three weeks, the community assessment was finalized, amassing to 27 pages of thorough qualitative and quantitative analysis specific to Paramus. On March 19th, the VPOCs submitted their community assessment to the Paramus Board of Health, and were available to answer questions about grant progress and the assessment at the Board's March 22nd meeting.

“The needs of the Paramus community are dynamic and ever-changing. Therefore, it is necessary to continue tailoring public health initiatives built around these needs.”

Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating

Upon completion of the community assessment, it was concluded that the most vulnerable populations encompass those that are aged 65 and over, those who experience food insecurity, those facing mental health problems, and those who are facing unemployment. Like many communities, the needs of the Paramus community are dynamic and ever-changing. Therefore, it is necessary to continue tailoring public health initiatives built around these needs. The next step for the VPOCs was to develop a plan for accessing the identified vulnerable populations, and increasing the resiliency of each group.

Ms. Maltsev and Mr. Meyer spent much of their time scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments from the end of March through April, helping the Health Department administer over 500 doses in April alone. Unfortunately, when the Health Department received an allocation of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, many individuals and community members were adamantly against receiving this vaccine, and had a preference toward the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines. This hesitancy

toward receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was greatly amplified on April 13th when the FDA and the CDC recommended a pause on the vaccine while they examined its safety. Six cases in the United States of rare and severe blood clots were reported after individuals received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and the Paramus Health Department already had 150 individuals scheduled for a Johnson & Johnson vaccination clinic for April 14th. On the morning of the FDA and CDC's announcement regarding the pause, each staff member of the Health Department assisted in calling and cancelling appointments. Once able to resume administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in late April, the VPOCs quickly noticed a resulting trend of vaccination hesitancy among members of the Paramus community. Overcoming this new issue would require VPOCs to listen to the concerns of community members, and give informed and educated responses to their questions. Many of these concerns were eased once individuals were informed of future Moderna clinics to be held by the Health Department.

By May, the demand for COVID-19 vaccines declined dramatically, and the New Jersey Department of Health's COVID-19 dashboard showed that Paramus had the highest vaccination rates among Bergen County municipalities. Now that the Paramus Health Department was no longer holding vaccination clinics attracting an average of 150 individuals per program, more time and attention could be spent on implementing plans for identified vulnerable populations. With an ample supply of vaccine still available, VPOCs relied on the increased support of community stakeholders to assist in identifying individuals still in need of the vaccine. To assist Paramus' senior population, the VPOCs worked with the Paramus Senior Center and long-term care facilities to identify seniors and staff of these organizations in need of the vaccine. Ms. Cibelli was instrumental in accessing the food insecure population as Director of the Paramus Community Pantry. Ms. Cibelli ensured that food pantry recipients were made aware of vaccination clinics being held, and kept the recipients aware of other resources they might need with regards to testing and access to health services. The VPOCs also scheduled vaccination appointments and assisted the nursing staff in making visits to homebound Paramus residents. Visits to numerous long-term care facilities in Paramus were also made in order to administer the vaccine to residents unable to leave the facility.

To evaluate vaccination efforts, Mr. Meyer compiled data on those who received the COVID-19 vaccine through the Paramus Health Department. Between January and July, the Health Department administered a total of 1,700 vaccines, a remarkable effort that depended on the newfound relationships with organizations in and around Paramus. Once the data was broken down by demographics of gender, race, and age, Mr. Meyer noticed that further efforts should be made to

reach racial minorities, as 77% of individuals who received the vaccine were white and non-Hispanic or non-Latino. Mr. Meyer created a document sent to Borough Administrator Joseph D'Arco, and the Office of Emergency Management titled "An Equitable COVID-19 Response." In this document, Mr. Meyer stated that addressing social inequities has been a crucial objective of the Paramus Health Department throughout the pandemic. Mr. Meyer specified that a renewed commitment to providing equitable vaccine administration to communities of color and other underserved populations was essential. These communities also include sexual orientation and gender identity minority groups, persons with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and those living at the margins of our economy. In order to do this, the Paramus Health Department would have to continue working diligently with community partners to identify social support and primary care needs for these populations. To further guarantee that VPOCs were doing all they could to promote social equity with their response and vaccination efforts for COVID-19, they would frequently participate in virtual meetings, webinars, and workshops to identify best practices for community outreach.

In the second week of July, the Paramus Health Department received official notice of the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant being extended until June 2022. New grant deliverables and roles were acknowledged and accepted, and the VPOCs got back to working on community outreach initiatives. This new grant cycle saw the creation of a job titled "COVID-19 Generalist," otherwise abbreviated as CVG. Ms. Brown stepped down as a VPOC, and became a CVG, and Debbie Druskin and Kam Lam joined as CVGs. The CVGs, already employees of the Health Department, became cross trained in VPOC work, and became support staff for the VPOCs. Funds from the grant were utilized to cover a percentage of their salaries, up to \$116,667 per year.

In mid-July, Ms. Maltsev and Mr. Meyer joined and attended the first meeting of the Bergen County Mental Health Working Group, a collaboration of the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and the Bergen County Mental Health Board's Professional Advisory Committee. The VPOCs saw this as a way to further develop relationships with community partners and advocate for the health of vulnerable populations. The group, made up of public health professionals and law enforcement, was formed in order to ensure adequate protocols were in place for law enforcement to support those facing mental health issues, those with substance abuse disorders, and those with cognitive or developmental disabilities. The ongoing initiative focuses on the creation of new policy to address gaps that exist between law enforcement and mental health professionals, and became a way for the VPOCs to further advocate for those facing mental health issues; a vulnerable population identified in

the community assessment. Mr. Meyer continues to advocate for this population as a member of the Systems Navigation Subcommittee, and the Suicide Prevention and Intervention Subcommittee.

In late July, the VPOCs and CVGs met for their first joint meeting. Topics of the meeting included the potential skewing of COVID-19 case rate statistics based on testing flaws, implications of vaccination rates on testing and seeking COVID-19 tests and treatments, and new mask recommendations. Information regarding the new Delta variant became a heavily discussed topic, and it was imperative that the VPOCs and CVGs worked together to produce a proactive response to mitigate the risk of infection among members of the Paramus community. With the Paramus National Night Out just a week away, the VPOCs worked diligently to create handouts containing COVID-19 information with a listing of testing and vaccination centers, as well as other relevant health information. On August 3rd, the three VPOCs joined with Health Officer Joanna Adamiak to meet community members and disseminate educational material concerning COVID-19 and a myriad of other health topics. The event was a great success, and the following day, the VPOCs met with the CVGs to discuss further outreach programs. Ms. Lam and the other Registered Environmental Health Specialists were supplied with health education materials to hand out while on food-establishment inspections, as this would increase awareness of COVID-19 protocol and resources in the Paramus community.

Before the start of the 2021-2022 school year, Ms. Maltsev and Mr. Meyer met with Ms. Adamiak and Mr. D'Arco to discuss guidance for recreation and education. The VPOCs then created concise guidance, which was distributed to the Recreation Department and the Paramus Public School District on September 1st. The VPOCs simultaneously updated the community assessment, to be submitted to the New Jersey Department of Health by October 15th. Once again, the VPOCs conducted thorough research, and concluded that the unvaccinated population would be added to the most vulnerable groups in the Paramus community. A large part of this population included children, as many were not yet eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and efforts to advocate on their behalves were bolstered. While the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized by the FDA and recommended by the CDC for emergency use in those aged 12-15 in May, those under 12 years old were still unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. To further advocate for vulnerable populations and the general public, the VPOCs consulted with Ridgewood Diagnostic Labs to establish a no-cost COVID-19 PCR testing center in Paramus. By early October, Mr. Meyer and Ms. Adamiak met with Ridgewood Diagnostic Labs, and plans to create a new testing center were underway. Originally, the Paramus Senior Center was deemed a location of interest to hold the testing, but an inspection of the Paramus Municipal Pool parking lot proved that this would be the superior location. On October 21st, the no-cost Paramus

Municipal Pool testing location opened, and Ms. Adamiak and Mr. Meyer visited to introduce themselves to the staff. Upon the testing location's opening, Mr. Meyer designed informational flyers, and sent them to Paramus residents, public and private schools, long-term care facilities, and Borough employees. The testing location was also advertised on electronic displays throughout Paramus and Borough Hall.

On November 3rd, Mr. Meyer participated in a meeting with Ms. Adamiak, Mr. D'Arco, and the Valley Hospital to discuss health education. As Mr. Meyer assisted in the creation of a community assessment to identify health vulnerabilities in Paramus, he was able to communicate which populations would benefit the most from health education programs moving forward. A copy of the community assessment finalized in the previous month was sent to the Valley Hospital, and Mr. Meyer made himself available to work in conjunction with the Valley Hospital to create health and wellness initiatives for 2022. Facilitating a relationship between the Paramus Health Department and the Valley Hospital will be essential to ensure positive health outcomes for Paramus residents through health education and promotion.

In late November, Mr. Meyer attended the Paramus Board of Health meeting, and the topic of recreation guidance was brought up. Confusion over procedures for positive cases and protocol for contact tracing teams showed that the Health Department needed to meet with Recreation Department staff to communicate best practices for COVID-19 risk mitigation, and to establish a better working relationship between the two departments. On November 24th, Mr. Meyer joined Ms. Adamiak, Mr. D'Arco, the public health nurses, Ms. Irene Brown and Ms. Janice Fraioli, and the Director of the Recreation Department, to determine ways to guarantee coaches and other recreational staff are aware of correct COVID-19 procedures. It was decided that Mr. Meyer would create policy for the Recreation Department, and that the nursing staff would conduct contact tracing for teams when a positive case was identified. Mr. Meyer worked closely with Ms. Adamiak to revise policy recommendations, as the New Jersey Department of Health guidance was modified frequently in the final weeks of 2021.

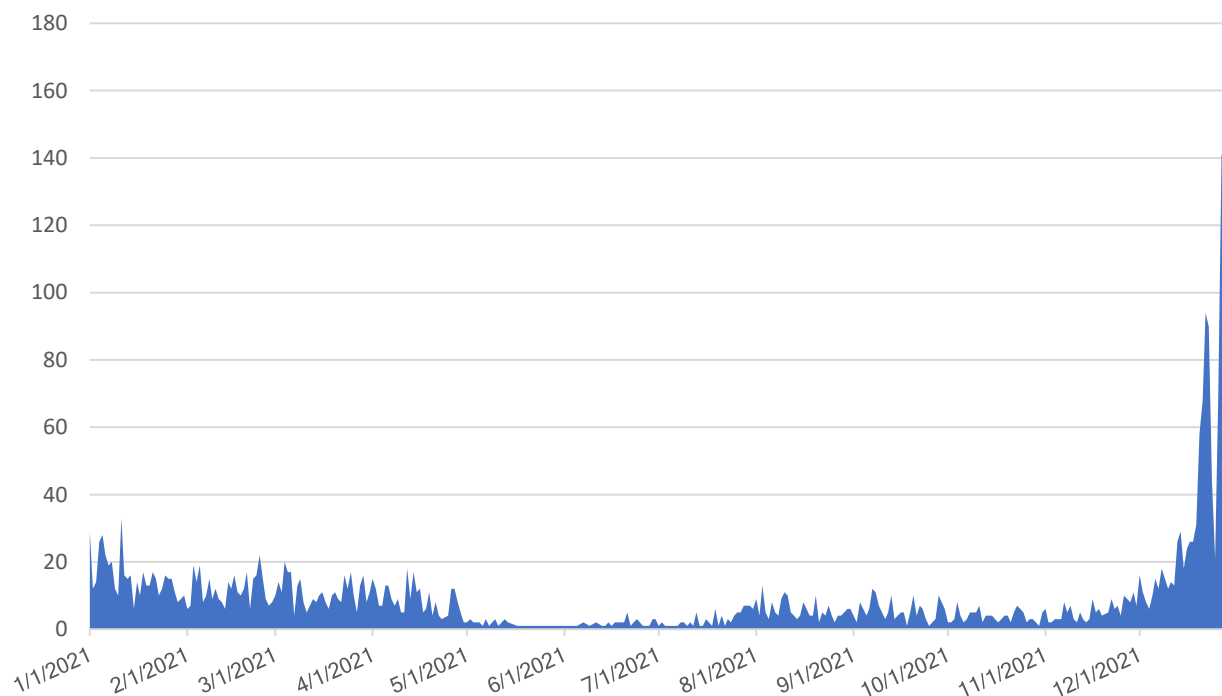
On December 9th, the New Jersey Department of Health issued an alert signaling that Bergen County and the state of New Jersey were at high COVID-19 activity levels. Mr. Meyer sent an email to all Paramus public schools, private schools, and daycares to notify them of the change, which would require close contacts of COVID-19 positive individuals to quarantine for 14 days if they were not fully vaccinated. Within weeks, Paramus experienced a record number of COVID-19 cases. The

emergence of the Omicron variant caused an overwhelming increase of cases, as well as a heightened demand for testing. The Health Department's testing center at the Paramus Municipal Pool proved to be an essential service for Paramus and its residents. Slight logistical difficulties occurred as the testing location began accommodating hundreds of patients per day, but the Paramus Police Department was instrumental in alleviating traffic issues with cones positioned meticulously throughout the parking lot. To further mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure, Mr. Meyer assisted Ms. Adamiak in updating policy for Paramus Borough buildings, which would require all visitors to wear masks, and all employees to wear masks when not seated at their desks. As 2021 came to an end, Mr. Meyer once again sent out updated quarantine and isolation guidance on December 31st. This guidance included a flow chart Mr. Meyer created to ensure everybody would be capable of understanding the significant changes to recommended quarantine and isolation periods.

COVID-19 CASE DATA

The following chart displays all COVID-19 cases among Paramus residents in 2021. This includes confirmed cases (PCR tests) and probable cases (rapid tests). There were approximately 3,638 COVID-19 cases among Paramus residents during 2021. The emergence of the Omicron variant led to a sharp increase of infections, with about 1,475 new cases reported in December alone.

Cases Per Day, 2021



COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINIC DATA

Between January and July 2021, the Paramus Health Department held 17 COVID-19 vaccination clinics, and administered 1,700 vaccines to healthcare personnel, long-term and congregate care residents and staff, frontline first responders, Paramus residents, employees, and members of neighboring communities. The following table displays demographic data of all vaccine recipients.

Gender Demographic Spread

	Total	Percentage
Female	497	53.79%
Male	427	46.21%

Racial Demographic Spread

	Total	Percentage
White	716	77.49%
Hispanic	80	8.66%
Asian	44	4.76%
African American	19	2.06%
Other/Not Specified	65	7.03%

Age Demographic Spread

	Total	Percentage
Ages 18-24	52	5.63%
Ages 25-44	245	26.52%
Ages 45-64	369	39.93%
Ages 65-84	209	22.62%
Ages 85+	49	5.3%

Residential Status Spread

	Total	Percentage
Paramus Residents	404	43.72%
Non-Paramus Residents	520	56.28%

Total Vaccines Administered

1,700

Total Vaccinated Individuals

924

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Funds available through the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant have been utilized effectively to ensure that the Paramus Health Department is capable of increasing staff to assist in COVID-19 related activities. Funds have also been providing the Borough reimbursement for the salaries of Health Department staff performing other essential duties.

- For use between the period of 12/1/2020 and 6/30/2021, an award in the amount of **\$142,236** was granted to the Paramus Health Department
- For use between the period of 7/1/2021 and 6/30/2022, an award in the amount of **\$291,042** was granted to the Paramus Health Department
- Funding through the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant has been confirmed for an additional year between the period of 7/1/2022 and 6/30/2023. The award amount is not currently known.

The following tables summarize grant expenditures during the two grant cycles. As the Strengthening Local Public Health 2021-2022 Grant is ongoing, only expenses from the first two quarters are shown.

Strengthening Local Public Health Grant 2020-2021

Quarter 1 (January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021)

DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES	REIMBURSED AMOUNT
VPOC Salaries and Wages	\$28,043.00	\$28,043.00
VPOC Fringe Benefits	\$4,762.00	\$4,762.00
VPOC Equipment	-	-
VPOC Training	-	-
VPOC Other	-	-
Equipment	-	-
Supplies	-	-
Other	-	-
TOTAL	\$32,805.00	\$32,805.00

Quarter 2 (April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021)

DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES	REIMBURSED AMOUNT
VPOC Salaries and Wages	\$47,073.00	\$47,073.00
VPOC Fringe Benefits	\$4,762.00	\$4,762.00
VPOC Equipment	\$2,274.00	\$2,274.00
VPOC Training	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00
VPOC Other	\$1,021.00	\$1,021.00
Equipment	\$14,109.00	\$14,109.00
Supplies	\$4,005.00	\$4,005.00
Other	\$1,177.00	\$1,177.00
TOTAL	\$76,621.00	\$76,621.00

Between Quarter 1 and 2 of the 2020-2021 grant cycle, cumulative expenditures totaled **\$109,426.00**, accounting for 76.93% of funds made available to the Paramus Health Department. **\$32,810.00** of the remaining budget went unused, accounting for 23.06% of available funds.

Strengthening Local Public Health Grant 2021-2022

Quarter 1 (July 1, 2021 – September 30, 2021)

DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES	REIMBURSED AMOUNT
VPOC Salaries and Wages	\$27,375.00	\$27,375.00
CVG Salaries and Wages	\$26,665.00	\$26,665.00
Professional Service Agreements	-	-
Equipment	\$1,188.00	\$1,188.00
Supplies	-	-
Other	-	-
TOTAL	\$55,228.00	\$55,228.00

Quarter 2 (October 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021)

DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES	REIMBURSED AMOUNT
VPOC Salaries and Wages	\$21,425.00	\$21,425.00
CVG Salaries and Wages	\$30,134.00	\$30,134.00
Professional Service Agreements	-	-
Equipment	\$2,943.00	\$2,943.00
Supplies	\$1,166.00	\$1,166.00
Other	\$3,536.00	\$3,536.00
TOTAL	\$59,204.00	\$59,204.00

Between Quarter 1 and 2 of the 2021-2022 grant cycle, cumulative expenditures totaled **\$114,432.00**, accounting for 39.31% of funds made available to the Health Department.

\$176,610.00 of the remaining budget is unused, accounting 60.68% of funds still available until June 30, 2022.

PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES

January

1/7/2021: The Paramus Health Department conducted their first COVID-19 vaccination clinic. A total of 130 Moderna doses were administered.

1/14/2021: Conducted a first dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 170 doses were administered.

February

2/11/2021: Conducted a second dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 138 doses were administered.

2/22/2021: Conducted a second dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 171 doses were administered.

2/26/2021: All VPOCs attended the Strengthening Grantees VPOCs Webinar on 2/26/2021 on the introduction to grant requirements and projects.

March

3/1/2021: D. Cibelli, A. Maltsev, and M. Meyer began working in the capacity of Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinators.

3/4/2021: Conducted a first dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 143 doses were administered.

3/5/2021: Conducted a first dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 179 doses were administered.

3/17/2021: All VPOCs attended the Strengthening Grantees VPOC webinar on the use of NJ 211 for research and assistance.

3/19/2021: The Paramus Borough Community Assessment was submitted to the Board of Health for further commentary and review.

3/22/2021: VPOCs attended the Paramus Borough Board of Health meeting and were available to answer questions about grant progress and the completed community assessment.

3/22/2021: Conducted a first dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 207 doses were administered.

April

4/1/2021: Conducted a second dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 143 doses were administered.

4/6/2021: Conducted a second dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 170 doses were administered.

4/13/2021: A. Maltsev and M. Meyer conducted phone interviews and teleconference meetings with directors of the long-term care facilities in Paramus. The goal of the teleconferences was to determine the needs of the long-term care establishments and facilitate their access to COVID-19 testing and vaccination. Needs and concerns were vetted and further guidance was shared.

4/21/2021: All VPOCs attended the Strengthening Grantees VPOCs Webinar on the inculcation of cultural humility in the workplace and when working with vulnerable populations.

4/22/2021: Conducted a second dose vaccination clinic of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 196 second doses and 4 first doses were administered.

4/27/2021: Conferenced with the Paramus Borough Community Pantry team to determine the vaccination status of pantry recipients and link them to resources. A list of those who still need the vaccine was forwarded to the VPOCs to be scheduled for COVID-19 vaccination. Religious centers and private schools in the community were emailed with information regarding the May 11th COVID-19 vaccination clinic, along with an informational flyer that could be distributed among the Paramus Borough and the surrounding community.

4/28/2021: Conducted a small-scale Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccination clinic to vaccinate Borough employees still seeking vaccination and protection from the COVID-19 virus. A total of 5 vaccines were administered.

4/29/2021: A. Maltsev and M. Meyer reached out to multiple non-profit organizations located within Paramus to disseminate information regarding the May 11th COVID-19 vaccination clinic.

May

5/3/2021: D. Cibelli and M. Meyer participated in a Zoom meeting with VPOCs from Ridgewood, Englewood, Maplewood, and Orange. Ideas to further improve community outreach methods were discussed, as well as efforts to vaccinate our respective communities.

5/7/2021: Mobile Vaccination Clinic flyers were sent and distributed to the Korean-speaking population of the Paramus Borough. These mobile clinics would ensure COVID-19 education and vaccination reach the vulnerable population of those with limited English proficiency (LEP).

5/11/2021: Conducted a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccination clinic. One vaccine was administered as a mobile vaccination to a resident of a long-term care facility. In total, 41 doses were administered to the local community.

5/13/2021: Conducted a Moderna COVID-19 vaccination clinic. A total of 8 vaccines were administered.

5/18/2021: VPOCs held multiple conference calls with community members in reference to COVID-19 vaccination and mobile outreach to seniors. Based on stakeholder input, it was determined that a COVID-19 mobile vaccination clinic would take place on May 20th.

5/19/2021: All VPOCs attended the Strengthening Grantees VPOC webinar to connect and share ideas and resources with other VPOCs and Social Support Coordinators. VPOCs participated in breakout rooms and group discussions to make connections and determine best practices.

5/20/2021: Conducted a mobile vaccination clinic to perform outreach to the vulnerable Paramus Borough residents who are homebound. A total of 3 individuals were given Janssen COVID-19 vaccinations and participated in health screenings.

5/24/2021: M. Meyer attended the Paramus Board of Health meeting to present updates regarding the grant and was available for questions.

5/25/2021: VPOCs called all Paramus Borough residents who had received only one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure that they had completed their course of vaccination.

5/26/2021: VPOCs completed the transfer of 280 doses of the COVID-19 Moderna vaccine to an urgent care facility in Paramus. The vaccine was delivered in accordance with best quality and safety standards.

June

6/9/2021: Revisions began on the final Paramus Borough Community Assessment. Data and observations were compiled for input into the updated Community Assessment.

6/16/2021: All VPOCs attended and participated in the Strengthening Grantees webinar on the topic of protecting essential workers and addressing workplace vulnerabilities. Best practices on safety and protection were discussed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and general precautions.

6/24/2021: VPOCs scheduled a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccination clinic for June 29th. M. Meyer contacted a long-term care facility to schedule a time to vaccinate a resident. A. Maltsev and M. Meyer completed a Social Support Manual to submit to the Bergen County LINCS Social Support Coordinator.

6/29/2021: Conducted a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 clinic. One vaccine was administered in-office, and one vaccine was administered to a long-term care facility.

July

7/1/2021: The Paramus Health Department hosted a “Wear Red, White, and Blue for Women’s and Men’s Health” event for employees of the Paramus Borough. The Health Department distributed information regarding women and men’s health, and provided employees with breakfast.

7/8/2021: VPOCs received official notice about the extension of the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant into the year 2022. New grant deliverables and roles were acknowledged and accepted.

7/12/2021: VPOCs worked with contact tracers to ensure strong community response regarding an uptick in COVID-19 test positivity rate. Town residents were called, given access to supports, and linked to appropriate resources.

7/14/2021: A. Maltsev and M. Meyer attended the Bergen County Mental Health Working Group; a collaboration of the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and the Bergen County Mental Health Board's Professional Advisory Committee. Ways to ensure adequate protocols are in place for law enforcement to support those in mental health crisis were discussed, as well as ways to create a mental health toolbox to assist this vulnerable population.

7/16/2021: Conducted a mobile vaccination clinic for residents and staff of two long-term care facilities. A total of 4 Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines were administered.

7/20/2021: VPOCs attended the Office of Local Public Health Welcome Webinar to familiarize themselves with the upcoming expectations and deliverables of the 2021-2022 Strengthening Local Public Health Grant.

7/21/2021: VPOCs attended the VPOC/CVG/SSC Monthly Meeting to discuss best practices, become acquainted with the expectations for the next grant period, and to meet other colleagues in the same position across New Jersey.

7/27/2021: Teleconferenced with Holy Name Medical Center regarding a mobile vaccination clinic being held at the Paramus Borough VFW. Holy Name expressed the desire to partner with the VPOCs to foster a healthier community and to present health education information targeted at Paramus Borough residents.

7/29/2021: VPOCs attended a webinar titled, "The Opioid Epidemic: A Focus on Vulnerable Populations," which was sponsored by the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey. Educational topics included opioid use related to the pandemic, health issues and addiction among veterans, and how to address health concerns among youth, young adults, and the elderly.

August

8/3/2021: VPOCs participated in National Night Out at the Paramus Borough Public Library. VPOCs and J. Adamiak interacted with the public and disseminated educational materials on COVID-19, health, and resilience.

8/9/2021: M. Meyer updated the COVID-19 vaccination sites in the Paramus Borough to reflect any changes in vaccine availability among community partners.

8/11/2021: VPOCs and CVGs participated in a COVID-19-related meeting with J. D'Arco to address Paramus Borough Board of Education interests and concerns. Topics addressed included COVID-19

testing statistics, COVID-19 death statistics, state COVID-19 vaccination rates, masking guidance, and COVID-19 safety precautions.

8/11/2021: VPOCs compiled COVID-19 data and statistics for dissemination to J. D'Arco and the Mayor and Council.

8/15/2021: D. Cibelli participated in a food drive held by Just Jersey Fest, and delivered goods to the Paramus Community Pantry for the food insecure.

8/18/2021: M. Meyer and A. Maltsev attended the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office Mental Health Working Group Meeting from 9:30-12:30 to address the partnership of police departments and mental health professionals in regards to the continuum of care for those with various mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

8/30/2021: Facilitated in the transfer of 230 Janssen COVID-19 vaccines and ancillary kits to the NJ EMS Task Force for delivery to another vaccination location.

8/31/2021: M. Meyer and A. Maltsev participated in a meeting regarding COVID-19 guidance with J. Adamiak and J. D'Arco. COVID-19 guidance for recreation and educational sectors was discussed and a plan was made to create concise guidance for their regulatory agents.

September

9/1/2021: Concise education and recreation COVID-19 guidance was distributed to the appropriate governing bodies of these sectors. Governing bodies were directed to call the Paramus Health Department with any additional questions.

9/3/2021: M. Meyer, D Cibelli and A. Maltsev attended the NACCHO webinar entitled, "Cultural Contexts of Resilience and Vulnerability: Global Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic" to learn about how to address vulnerabilities in the community in the context of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Psychological Vulnerability Scale.

9/14/2021: A. Maltsev and M. Meyer attended a webinar entitled, "What's New: Equity and Policy Preparedness During Public Health Emergencies," to better understand how to serve vulnerable groups through the end of the COVID-19 response and future public health emergencies.

9/20/2021: The final copy of the Paramus Borough Community Assessment for the Quarter 1 of the 2021-2022 grant was submitted and presented to the Paramus Board of Health for commentary and approval. A highlighted version with indicators of key changes from prior community assessments was disseminated for ease of reading and understanding.

9/22/2021: A. Maltsev D, Cibelli, and M. Meyer attended the OLPH Grant Updates Webinar regarding the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant 2022. Topics discussed included progress reports, expenditure reports, and due dates for grant deliverables.

9/23/2021: D. Cibelli, A. Maltsev, and M. Meyer attended the VPOC/CVG/SSC Monthly Meeting to discuss progress reports, expenditure reports, and due dates for grant deliverables.

9/23/2021: A. Maltsev and M. Meyer consulted with Ridgewood Diagnostic Labs coordinator, S. Abada, to collaboratively establish a free COVID-19 testing program for the Paramus Borough community.

9/25/2021: VPOCs scheduled and coordinated the administration of influenza vaccines to the high-risk populations of Paramus, namely the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. The Flu Shot Program served 45 residents.

October

10/1/21: Coordinated COVID-19 educational response as a result of a COVID-19 exposure in the elderly population. CVGs and VPOCs responded by providing resources for symptom management and testing if deemed necessary.

10/4/21: M. Meyer and J. Adamiak met with the coordinators of the Safe Halloween event that will take place on October 31st at the Paramus Rescue Squad Building. Meyer and Adamiak learned about plans for the event, and offered recommendations to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as the event is expected to host approximately 1,000 members of the community.

10/8/2021: A. Maltsev had a phone conference with an organization that provides home health care and resources to those with developmental and cognitive disabilities. The organization was provided with information about COVID-19 vaccination and contact information for an initiative that provides COVID-19 vaccination to the homebound.

10/14/2021: M. Meyer and J. Adamiak had a Zoom meeting with Ridgewood Diagnostic Laboratory to discuss bringing free COVID-19 PCR testing to Paramus residents and teachers. Topics discussed included using the Paramus Senior Center as a location for testing, logistics of a drive-thru clinic, and possible days for the clinics to be held. Meyer and Adamiak had an in-person meeting later that day to determine the best location for COVID-19 testing clinics in Paramus. It was decided that the Paramus Municipal Pool would be the best location. COVID-19 testing will be available at no-cost five days a week.

10/20/2021: M. Meyer assisted Supervising Public Health Nurse J. Fraioli at a senior apartment complex for their flu vaccination program. A total of 31 doses were given, 27 high dose and 4 regular doses.

10/21/2021: M. Meyer assisted Supervising Public Health Nurse J. Fraioli at a senior apartment complex for their flu vaccination program. A total of 6 doses were given, 3 high dose and 3 regular doses. M. Meyer and J. Adamiak visited the opening of the no cost COVID-19 testing clinic held at the Paramus Municipal Pool. The clinic will operate Monday-Friday 9am-6pm.

10/25/2021: M. Meyer attended the Paramus Board of Health meeting to update board members on the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity grant. Meyer stated that we have had great success bringing no cost COVID-19 testing to the community, and have aided residents calling to ask about booster doses now that the CDC has expanding eligibility for the vaccine. Meyer also discussed the expected announcement of the FDA approving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those between the ages of 5 and 11 years old.

10/27/2021: M. Meyer completed training for access to CDRSS in order to assist in the surveillance of COVID-19 cases in Paramus.

10/28/2021: M. Meyer completed training for access to NJIIS in order to assist Paramus residents inquiring about their vaccination information.

November

11/3/2021: M. Meyer, J. Adamiak, and J. D'Arco met with the Valley Hospital to discuss health education for Paramus residents. Meyer discussed findings of the vulnerable population assessment, which can assist the health educator in determining new programs for 2022.

11/10/2021: M. Meyer completed Commcare training and the required test in order to gain access to the system and assist with tracking new cases among Paramus residents.

11/18/2021: M. Meyer, Debbie Cibelli, and I. Brown participated in the monthly Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity grantees meeting. Topics discussed included reaching older adults, and success stories in our communities.

11/22/2021: M. Meyer attended the Paramus Board of Health meeting and was available to answer any questions regarding COVID-19 and vulnerable populations outreach. Meyer discussed the current number of COVID-19 cases, expanded eligibility for boosters, health education initiatives for 2022, and guidance for the recreation department.

11/30/2021: M. Meyer sent updated COVID-19 guidance to all Borough employees in an email. This included information about boosters, doses for children, proper quarantine and isolation policies, and answers to many questions the Health Department has been receiving.

December

12/2/2021: M. Meyer worked with the Ridgewood Diagnostic Laboratory to solve a reporting issue with their Paramus COVID-19 testing center location. M. Meyer also investigated an anonymous complaint about a COVID-19 testing center. Meyer responded to the complaint by going to the testing location and ensuring that they had a cleaning and disinfecting policy in place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure among patients and staff. Meyer made recommendations to put up COVID-19 safety signage, as well as additional hand sanitizing stations.

12/3/2021: D. Cibelli met with the Senior Center to discuss new recipients that were food insecure and how to get them registered for the pantry.

12/9/2021: M. Meyer sent an email to all Paramus public schools, private schools, and daycares to alert them that Bergen County is now at a high COVID-19 activity level. Because of this, any close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual should quarantine for 14 days if they are not fully vaccinated.

12/10/2021: D. Cibelli met with the Director of the Bergen County Mental Health task force to discuss possible Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for Borough staff.

12/14/2021: M. Meyer assisted J. Adamiak in creating new policy for Borough employees to follow due to a recent increase in COVID-19 cases. Employees would be required to wear masks when not seated at their desks, and must wear masks when assisting Borough residents. D. Cibelli met with volunteer staff of the Paramus Community Pantry to discuss safety protocol for COVID-19 at the Pantry in regards to their safety and the safety of the recipients.

12/16/2021: VPOCs and the CVGs attended the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity monthly grantees meeting on Zoom. Topics discussed included community success stories, as well as methods to determine community vulnerabilities.

12/20/2021: M. Meyer attended the Paramus Board of Health meeting to discuss progress with the grant, and discussed COVID-19 updates in the community. Meyer informed the Board of the increase in cases, as well as an increase in breakthrough infections. Further, Meyer apprised the Board that the Paramus Municipal Pool COVID-19 testing location has had great success, especially in the weeks leading up to the holiday season.

12/23/2021: A COVID-19 testing clinic was set up for Paramus residents and Borough staff, and 380 individuals were tested.

12/29/2021: M. Meyer ensured multiple homebound residents were able to access no-cost COVID-19 testing through Vault Health. M. Meyer then delivered PPE and hand sanitizer to senior citizens in Paramus to ensure they could stay safe during the surge of COVID-19 cases in New Jersey.

12/31/2021: M. Meyer sent out updated guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health regarding quarantine and isolation recommendations. Meyer summarized the guidance, and created a flow chart to ensure all are capable of understanding the new recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS

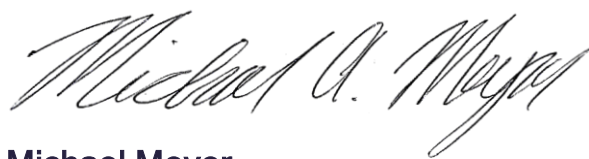
Looking Back

The year 2021 had immense challenges, but the Paramus Health Department provided expert response to the needs of the community. The Health Department became better prepared to take on unforeseen challenges, and ensured a proactive public health response that identified issues before they emerged. This is best observed through the opening of the no-cost Paramus Municipal Pool testing location in October 2021. Once in place, this testing location proved important during the Omicron spike in December 2021, which inundated testing locations and labs across New Jersey. The year 2021 also brought new members to the Paramus Health Department. David Volpe began in February, and has been a great asset with his expansive knowledge of public health. Anastasia Maltsev began her role as a part-time VPOC in March, and while she left her role in November, Ms. Maltsev provided expert knowledge in developing and implementing plans to assist vulnerable populations. Michael Meyer began his role as a part-time VPOC in March, and ended 2021 with an appointment to the position of Public Health Supervisor Assistant. Joanna Adamiak began as the Health Officer and Director of the Department in May, and her leadership provided a clear direction for resiliency amid the pandemic.

Looking Ahead

The year 2022 will undoubtedly have its challenges, but lessons learned from 2021 will only serve to strengthen the Paramus Health Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A focus on building partnerships with community stakeholders has proven to be one of the most effective ways to identify and assist populations deemed most vulnerable, and this will be a continued effort moving forward. Advocating for the health and wellness of the Paramus community is an arduous task that requires passion and strength. These are just two of the many intrinsic qualities that define the Paramus Health Department best.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Meyer
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Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator
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