

**Department of Health and Social Services**

**Division of Public Health (DPH)**

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**Joint Finance Committee Hearing  
Fiscal Year 2026 Budget**

**February 25, 2025**



Good afternoon, Representative Williams, Senator Paradee, members of the Joint Finance Committee and members of the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and present our accomplishments and Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

## Accomplishments



### Laboratory Operational Expansion

The DPH Laboratory will nearly double in size to enhance testing capacity.



### Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

We prevent childhood lead poisoning and promote health in children under 6 through education, safe environments, screening, and early intervention.



### Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Equipment

Office of Emergency Medical Services oversees the statewide EMS system with real-time emergency communications.



Thank you for the funding we received in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Without your support, we would not have been able to accomplish the following:

- Lab Expansion-
  - Boosted preparedness, rabies testing, and outbreak response.
  - Aligned epidemiology and immunization programs with the lab and SHOC
- Residential Lead Remediation-
  - Allocated funds to reduce lead-based paint hazards, creating safer homes.
  - Offered financial aid for relocation, meals, and essentials during lead remediation.
  - Supported lead remediation projects to help families and lower exposure risks.
  - Completed 2 remediations, with 3 more in progress.
- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention-
  - Upgraded lead reporting software for healthcare providers.
  - Hired environmental firms to perform in-home lead investigations.
  - Created and shared resources for providers, families, and schools addressing elevated lead levels.
  - Offered specialized training with accredited CMEs for healthcare providers.
- Emergency Medical Services Equipment-
  - EMS received new radios and chargers to replace outdated 800 MHz models, boosting response capabilities for mass casualty events.
  - The radios enable direct communication with EMS leadership during complex cases.

## FY 2026 Governor's Recommended Budget

(\$ in Thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	335.8	61.1	345.9	742.8
Dollars (\$)	60,276.0	38,836.5	68,466.1	167,578.6



**Budget Definitions:**

GF – General Funds  
 ASF – Appropriated Special Funds  
 NSF – Non-Appropriated Special Funds  
 FTEs – Full Time Equivalent Positions

The slide above shows the total budget included in the FY2026 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's FY 2026 Recommended Budget is:

- \$60,276.0 (Sixty Million, Two Hundred-Seventy-Six Thousand) in General Funds
- \$38,836.5 (Thirty-Eight Million, Eight Hundred Thirty-Six Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars) in Appropriated Special Fund/Spending Authority; and
- \$68,466.1 (Sixty-Eight Million, Four Hundred Sixty-Six, One Hundred Dollars) in non-appropriated Special Funds/grants for a total of;
- \$167,578.6 (One Hundred Sixty-Seven Million, Five Hundred Seventy-Eight, Six Hundred Dollars) in Total Funds.

## FY 2026 Governor's Recommended Budget

- \$400.0 – Increase Caseload for Office of Animal Welfare
- \$2,227.2 – Increase Clients and Caseload for Birth to Three
- \$50.0 – Supports the Cardiac Arrest Registry



### **\$400.0 Office of Animal Welfare**

- Animal cruelty cases are the most complex and costly for DAS, involving severe abuse like dogs starving on chains, abandoned pets, physical abuse, neglect, and animal fighting.
- DAS seizes about 500 animals yearly, costing around \$700 per animal or \$350,000 in sheltering costs
- These costs are expected to significantly increase by FY 2026.

### **\$2,227.2 Birth to Three Program**

- Referrals supporting families across all counties have increased due to Aiden's Law, House Bill 202, updates to Birth Mandate & Established Conditions, and a focus on blood lead levels.
- Early intervention services are provided to all families, regardless of their ability to pay.
- Birth to Three has seen a rise in direct service claims, covering these costs for families.

### **\$50.0 Cardiac Arrest Software**

- Using the CARES software, patient data from dispatch to discharge helps identify ways to improve care and boost survival rates for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.
- Communities can compare EMS performance with local, state, or national data to adopt practices that enhance emergency cardiac care.

## Looking ahead



DPH  
Mobile Health Units

DPH Telehealth  
Care Access

My Healthy Community  
(MHC)

### **DPH Mobile Units (Expanded Services) will allow us to:**

- Meet Clients where they are to help reduce barriers.
- Partner with DSAMH bridge clinic to reach the unhoused.
- Work with DOC to reach those re-entering the community.
- Work with DSS to provide services to vulnerable populations.
- Reduce stigma, expand services, and build community trust in government health systems.
- Focus on adapting healthcare delivery to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

### **Care Access (Telehealth) will allow us to:**

- Improve access by using telehealth to extend DPH clinic services to vulnerable populations, the unhoused, and those unable and unwilling to visit in person.
- Launch limited-term primary care services to address long wait times for chronic illness care.
- In Sussex County, collaborate to provide prenatal care for patients affected by service restrictions.
- Connect patients with long-term providers, including FQHCs and hospital resident clinics.

### **My Healthy Community Portal (MHC)**

- MHC offers community-level data to explore health and environmental factors that influence it, while promoting transparency to Delawareans.
- MHC provides essential data to Delawareans, legislators, OGOV, DOE, and community leaders statewide.

- MHC displays over 50 user-friendly datasets, including influenza cases, flood zone buildings, Lyme incidence, school census, cancer data, childhood lead exposure, and air quality.

# THANK YOU



- Thank you for allowing us to present today.
- We are glad to answer any questions you may have.