

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

### PROMOTE HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENTS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COUNTY

Dakota County Public Health's Environmental Health program works to prevent and control diseases, injuries, and disabilities related to the interactions between people and their natural and built environments.

The program's key responsibilities include:

- ▶ Facilitating radon testing and mitigation.
- ▶ Responding to public health nuisances and inquiries.
- ▶ Following up on complaints and conducting investigations.
- ▶ Reviewing mass assemblage licenses.
- ▶ Investigating clandestine drug labs.
- ▶ Issuing and enforcing lead hazard reduction orders.

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

### Distributed 1,041 radon test kits

Free radon test kits are available to Dakota County residents at WSC and NSC service centers. Residents often call with follow up questions related to their results, additional testing, and mitigation options.

### Communicated with 118 residents about environmental health concerns

Residents contact Environmental Health through the intake email or phone line. The most common questions were about mold, rodent or insect infestations, and heavy content homes.

### New mold and moisture in rental housing document

This 2-page resource (available in English and Spanish) features tips to prevent mold issues, steps renters can take if they see or smell mold, and information on how to clean moldy materials.

### New public health nuisance document

This 1-page fact sheet shares examples of public health nuisances as well as information on the County's role in identifying and addressing nuisances.

### Connected with cities

Environmental Health met with city staff from Apple Valley, Eagan, West St Paul, and Burnsville to identify areas for ongoing collaboration. Outreach to more cities is planned for 2025.

## FEATURED PARTNERSHIP

In 2024, Environmental Health partnered with Dakota County's Environmental Resources Department to promote private well testing through the Safe Drinking Water for Private Well Owners Program. Unlike residents on public water supply, where the supplier is responsible for ensuring drinking water meets federal guidelines, residents on private wells are responsible for testing and treating their own drinking water. The partnership supports assisting private well owners with drinking water testing, interpretation of testing results, and choosing appropriate water treatment.



For some private well owners, the cost of water testing may be a barrier to obtaining safe drinking water. The goal of the program is to provide low- or no-cost testing to ensure equitable access to water testing opportunities.

This includes:

- ▶ Expanding outreach and education efforts to increase private well testing participation rates.
- ▶ Reducing barriers so that all private well owners are able to test their well water at least once for common contaminants found in Dakota County groundwater (nitrate, arsenic, coliform bacteria, manganese, and lead).
- ▶ Providing support to high-risk individuals and communities, and populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

