



## Columbiana County Health District

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Columbiana County Health District is proud to announce that they were recently presented the Ohio Department of Health Director's Award for their ongoing response to the East Palestine train derailment. Director, Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff commended the district and its staff while presenting the award to Health Commissioner, Dr. Wesley J. Vins at this year's Ohio Public Health Conference.

The Health District has been involved in many aspects of the response including the development and implementation of the potable water sampling plan that informs sampling for private water wells in the area and allows the opportunity for residents who have been impacted by the derailment to have their water co-sampled by the Health District and Norfolk Southern at no cost. Along with peace of mind, this ongoing sampling program has provided a total of 442 sets of final sample results to date.

The Health District led state and federal partners in opening and operating the temporary Health Assessment Clinic at First Church of Christ in East Palestine. This free clinic provided residents who had health questions or concerns related to the derailment the opportunity to speak with medical and mental health professionals. The clinic was open for 28 days and served 338 individuals. The Columbiana County Health District also initiated the establishment of the permanent Health Clinic located in East Palestine which is now operated by East Liverpool City Hospital and continues to serve residents with derailment related health concerns free of charge.

"This is a testament to our public health partnership from the local to the federal level. Partners are our greatest strength. Our residents have benefited greatly thanks to all of the hard work that the Health District staff and our public health partners have, and continue to do." said Dr. Vins when asked what this award meant to the department.

Dr. Vins also took advocacy for East Palestine residents to Washington, D.C. this March when he testified in a hearing held by the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment. He focused on community recovery and the need for a long-term private well sampling program to ensure safe drinking water for homes affected by the derailment.

The Columbiana County Health District was established in 1919 and achieved national accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board in 2022.

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Our Vision: "A safe community of healthy people"