



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Innovating & Collaborating for
Community Health Improvement

FROM THE HEALTH OFFICER



BWell Saginaw is more than the flavor of the month. It is a countywide commitment to elevate public health far beyond what any one hospital, clinic, department or agency can do alone.

It is not always easy to work collaboratively. Public health has never been easy. Yet, your Saginaw County Health Department team is more determined than ever to drive the kind of collaboration and innovation needed to move our community from one of the state's least healthy...to one of its healthiest.

Throughout this report, you'll see glimpses of initiatives born in 2023 and taking shape in 2024. We have so many reasons to be hopeful and excited about our community's future!

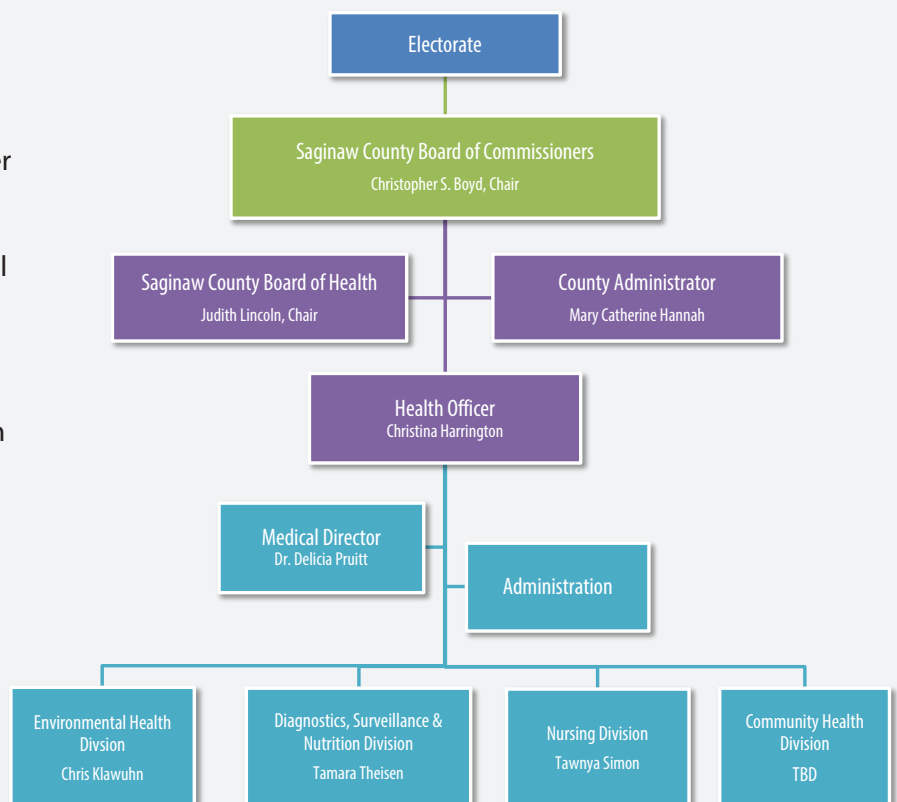
Christina Harrington, MPH
Health Officer

The last calendar year can best be summed up with three words – focus, innovation and collaboration.

With the COVID-19 pandemic behind us and our Top 3 health priorities in front of us, the health department team realigned our resources to not only deliver mandated services but to also focus on our county's greatest health challenges — obesity/related chronic disease, mental health/substance use, and maternal/child health in Saginaw County.

To that end, we are establishing a Community Health Division to strengthen our organizational structure and help us fulfill our duties as the community's chief health strategist and leader of groundbreaking initiatives with BWell Saginaw partners that will measurably improve health outcomes.

Organizational Chart – January 2024



FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Analyzing, evaluating and listening are critical parts of any healthcare provider's relationship with a patient. The same is true of a health department's role in a community. Last year was significant for the Saginaw County Health Department not only because of our comprehensive Community Health Assessment, but also because of community listening sessions facilitated by our new Health Equity Council.

Based on the information and knowledge collected during the Community Health Assessment and the HEC's initial work, the health department is working with our BWell Saginaw partners on 12 key strategies we believe will help us achieve the goals of our Community Health Improvement Plan with a focus on health equity.

One of the highlights for me is working with other healthcare providers to enhance how we help patients manage their risk for chronic diseases. The result is the first of many "prescriptions" for better health and well-being for EVERYONE in Saginaw County.

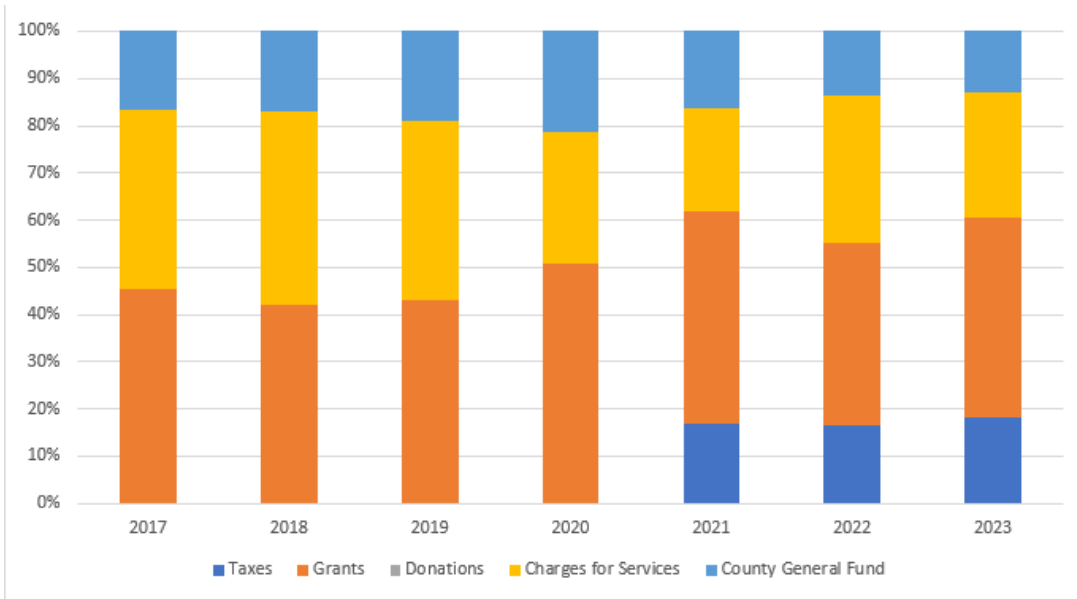
Looking forward, the next three years *will* be a pivotal time for public health in our community. Everyone is part of the change.

Delicia Pruitt, MD, MPH, FAAFP
Medical Director



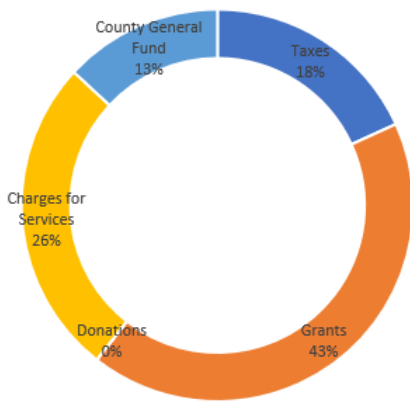
FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

Revenues by Category 2017-2023

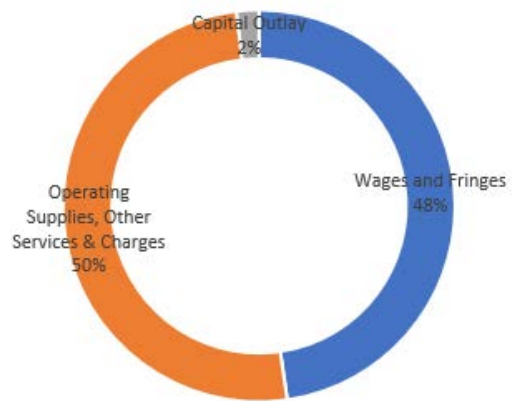


Financial totals showing percentages:

FY23 Revenue by Category



FY23 Expenditures by Category





County-wide Millage, Grants and County General Fund Dollars WELL Invested in our Community's Health

We have a great deal to be grateful for in 2023, including:

- Additional state funding, championed by State Representative Amos O'Neal, a long-time advocate for public health and former Saginaw Board of Health member.
- County-wide millage funds we have carefully invested in staffing, mobile services, outreach, and BWell Saginaw activities.
- Additional grant funds that allow us to go far beyond mandated services by innovating and realigning our services to produce outputs that can more strategically impact health outcomes.
- County general fund support that meets state "maintenance of effort" guidelines and demonstrates our county's commitment to public health.
- Impactful results from mandated and other traditional services, funded by both grants and county general fund dollars.

The next few pages contain just a few examples of how our dollars are well invested in the community's health for mandated and/or core health department services.

Hearing & Vision

At the health department, we firmly believe school-age hearing and vision screenings are essential for early detection of issues, improving academic performance, and supporting social development. They help identify problems that can affect learning, behavior, and health. Early intervention prevents long-term complications, reduces costs, and ensures equal educational opportunities for all students, including those from underserved communities.

Last year, Saginaw County Health Department invested \$321,176, resulting in 8,616 hearing and 11,273 vision screenings – roughly \$16 per screening.

During that process, numerous children were identified as having a range of impairments – some of which could profoundly impact learning and functioning in day-to-day life – and were referred by health department staff for follow-up by specialists. Our follow-up on referrals revealed the need for surgical intervention on clouded corneas as well as corrective intervention to 20/100, 20/200 and even 20/400 vision in students as young as pre-school and first grade. To put this into perspective, 20/400 vision means children seeing at 20 feet what others can see at 400 feet.

These kinds of results underscore our powerful partnerships with schools in providing the kinds of support that allows all students to thrive both in and outside the classroom.

Immunizations

While it often goes without saying, vaccines are a vital part of disease prevention and health management in every community. Saginaw County does well in immunizations rates – above the state average and holding strong.

We want to maintain and grow this trend. Childhood immunizations are essential for preventing serious diseases, reducing child mortality, and ensuring long-term health. They contribute to herd immunity, control outbreaks, and protect vulnerable populations.

Last year, the Saginaw County Health Department spent roughly \$1 million to deliver immunization services at mobile clinics, to the homebound, at health fairs, and at our first-floor immunization clinic on North Michigan Avenue. We do this as a “safety net provider” because not every child or adult goes to the doctor nor has the opportunity to get immunizations at a primary care provider.

That \$1 million investment translated into 2,579 visits (including TB tests) representing citizens who otherwise would not be immunized. Furthermore, we worked with 260 parents on vaccine waiver education and engaged with area PCPs on safely and accurately maintaining their own immunization supplies.

In doing so, we are providing a valued service that is cost-effective, reduces healthcare costs, and supports regular school/work attendance.

Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The Saginaw County Health Department WIC program is crucial for providing nutritious food, promoting healthy pregnancies, improving child health, and reducing food insecurity. It supports low-income families, encourages breastfeeding, connects to essential services, and fosters long-term health and educational benefits.

Last year, we invested \$1 million in nutrition and breastfeeding support for more than 3,300 Saginaw County moms. WIC staff counseled clients at the health department and also took their services on the road providing support at the Saginaw Farmers Market among other community locations.



They enrolled 34.7% of eligible mothers within their first trimester of pregnancy – surpassing the state of goal of 32.9%.

Our dietitians also helped to re-establish the Saginaw County Breastfeeding Coalition – co-led with WIC staff at Great Lakes Bay Health Centers. The new coalition has initiated four support groups, breastmilk circles (supports for breastfeeding families), and held a breastfeeding event to educate the public on the new PUMP Act.

Through this work, Saginaw has also seen an increase in breastfeeding initiation and duration numbers with nearly 74% of moms at least initiating breastfeeding and 26.5% providing breastmilk six months later.

OTHER CORE SERVICES: SCHD STEPS UP TO PROTECT COMMUNITY

Behind the scenes, health department staff protect the community's health and wellbeing through disease surveillance and prevention, family and parent support, and expertise to monitor and enforce safe food and clean water and air. We cannot be a healthy community without them!

- In 2023, the health department's Environmental Health Division stepped up to provide the expertise and knowledge needed to assume responsibility for managing and enforcing Saginaw County's materials management process. They keep hazardous waste from contaminating our water, soil and air, while also ensuring food safety at local restaurants and food preparation establishments. Their vital role in protecting our health often goes unnoticed.
- Likewise, our laboratory completed remodeling and expanded its testing capacity in 2023 to support Saginaw and the state's regional laboratory network. The work performed in the lab in providing timely results of drug screenings, water testing, STI and pregnancy testing, COVID testing, and disease surveillance allows the entire health department to function at optimal capacity to protect the community. Our staff was recently showcased by the state to a group of laboratory experts from Indonesia.
- Expecting moms and babies in Saginaw benefited from personalized, face-to-face interaction with our Nurse Family Partnership nurses throughout 2023. Home visits gave first-time families added support to ensure babies are sleeping safely and successfully, meeting developmental milestones, eating well, and growing strong.
- Dr. Pruitt began providing clinical support to our Personal Health Center in 2023, seeing clients for family planning, STI testing and treatment and more. Under her expert guidance, we are optimizing clinic flow and facilities. We look forward to her integrating and rotating CMU medical residents in the clinic in 2024.



HIGHLIGHTED INNOVATIONS FUNDED BY COUNTYWIDE MILLAGE AND NEW GRANT DOLLARS

- BWell Saginaw Obesity Summit
(planned throughout 2023)
- Phase 1 development of a social determinants of health (SDOH) Community Information Exchange platform and certification program for community health workers to manage referrals
(a dream come true after years of planning)
- Health Equity Council
- Step Up & BWell
- Walk with a Doc
- Community Health Division
- Room 202 Harm reduction expansion
- Youth Mental Healthpedia
- Mental health first-aid training and heart safe certification in schools
- Opioid overdose prevention through partnership with San Francisco Health Department
- Parenting Street Smarts Facebook Live video series
- And more! Read on!



BWELL SAGINAW: COMMUNITY SETS HEALTH PRIORITIES AND PUTS PLAN IN MOTION FOR NEXT THREE YEARS

Envision a Saginaw where...

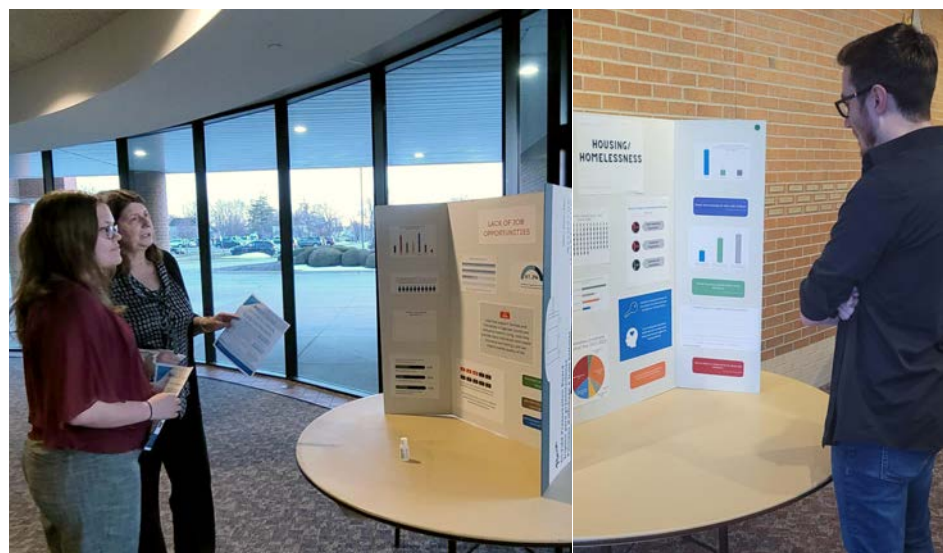
- **All residents have access to healthy, fresh foods...**
- **Families, neighborhoods, and workplaces embrace healthy lifestyles marked by physical activity, mental well-being, and preventive healthcare...**
- **Everyone – from the youngest to the oldest – is connected to people and services designed to help them thrive...**
- **New mothers are wrapped in a warm embrace from the community where their infants will grow and take root...**
- **Mental health IS health, resources are readily available to everyone for self-care, and no one is left alone to navigate connections to professional care...**
- **Patients and healthcare providers regularly interact for wellness as much or more than illness...**
- **Saginaw County residents can envision and become the healthiest version of themselves.**

A public health “system” to support this vision is what BWell Saginaw is all about. And Saginaw County Health Department has taken the helm to drive this critical community initiative.

Taking the “healthcare pulse” in the community:

Under the leadership of the Saginaw County Health Department, BWell Saginaw partners successfully wrapped up a critical initiative guiding the health improvement of our community in 2023 – the Community Health Assessment. More than 1,500 people who live or work in Saginaw County took the survey and participated in community conversations. They provided valuable data about the status of their own health as well as the “well-being” of our local public health system.

The assessment is a significant undertaking the health department spearheads every three years. The results are used to craft a community health improvement plan. The assessment and plan are required by the government for local hospitals but valued by multiple organizations invested in Saginaw County’s health. Here, it’s a true partnership including all members of the BWell Saginaw Partner Coalition: Saginaw County Health Department, Saginaw Community Foundation, Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, Covenant HealthCare, Ascension St. Mary’s, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority, Saginaw Intermediate School District, Michigan Health Improvement Alliance, HealthSource Saginaw, CMU Medical Education Partners, Saginaw Valley State University, United Way of Saginaw County, and the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.



Sharing results with the community:

In March 2023, the results of the assessment were shared with interested community members and staff from local health and human service organizations throughout the county.

A room full of community citizens with lived experience as well as many of Saginaw’s health leaders learned about the robustness of the process, saw the data, and then individually voted on the Top 3 health priorities from a field of 10:

- **Mental health**
- **Transportation**
- **Housing/homelessness**
- **Neighborhood safety/violence**
- **Access to healthy food**
- **Economy and infrastructure**
- **Job opportunities**
- **Chronic disease**
- **Maternal/child health**
- **Racial and ethnic discrimination**

Top 3 health priorities selected as a community:

Based on votes, the Top 3 priorities driving Saginaw County’s efforts to become one of Michigan’s Top 25 healthiest communities are:

Obesity & related chronic disease

Mental health & substance use

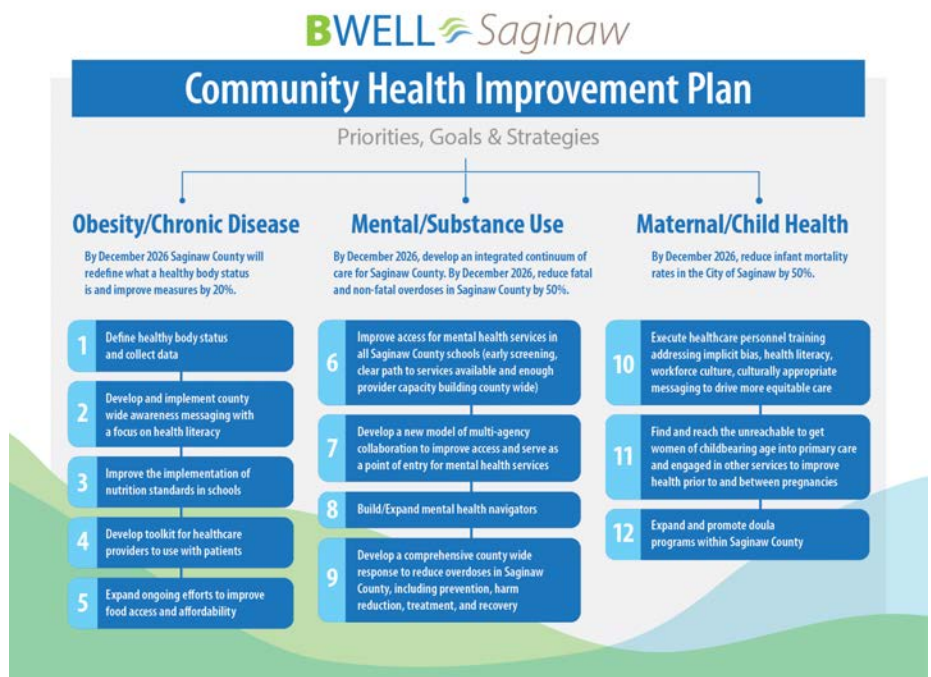
Maternal & child health

A plan to make improvements:

Over the summer of 2023, BWell Partners crafted a comprehensive Community Health Improvement Plan with 12 key strategies – each has a corresponding workgroup with content experts from literally hundreds of community organizations dedicated to measurably impacting Saginaw County’s overall health outcomes by December 2026 by:

- **Redefining what a healthy body status is and improving measures by 20%**
- **Developing an integrated continuum of care for the county and reducing fatal and non-fatal overdoses by 50%**
- **Reducing infant mortality in the City of Saginaw by 50%**

The crucial “lens” we must view these priorities through is the impact of racial and ethnic inequities.



HEALTH EQUITY COUNCIL ENSURES WE REACH ALL WITH OUR EFFORTS

The Health Equity Council (HEC) is designed to build and strengthen the capacity of the local Saginaw community to develop and deliver programs and services specifically to reach those who, despite our best efforts, are impacted disproportionately when it comes to healthcare – African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, rural and senior citizens, and women who seek maternal infant care.

The council exists thanks in part to a grant to the health department from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Office of Equity and Minority Health (OEMH) in partnership with the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI). Saginaw’s HEC is one of 11 across the state to address health disparities in underserved and rural populations.

Under the coordination of Joyce Seals with oversight by the health department, Saginaw’s HEC works with a network of trusted community partners to improve gaps in healthcare. To learn more about the lived experiences of the community, the HEC spent much of 2023 conducting public “discussion sessions” with more than 100 participants representing a diverse range of residents from targeted marginalized populations.

These sessions confirm the existence of disparities and provide valuable insights into solutions. The health department and its BWell Saginaw partners are using the results to help drive the 12 strategies identified in Saginaw County’s Community Health Improvement Plan.

A full report of the HEC discussion sessions is available at bwellsaginaw.org.

In addition to its groundbreaking research, the HEC is credited with bringing GirlTrek to Saginaw in 2023. This global, evidence-based neighborhood program is described as far more than a walking club. It exists to bring health and happiness to the doorsteps of Black women who dedicate themselves to taking back their neighborhood streets for 30 minutes of walking daily.

In 2023, the HEC also gave out 10 mini grants to grassroots organizations focused on reducing risk factors and inequities related to COVID-19.



INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS:

OBESITY & RELATED CHRONIC DISEASE

- 1 Define healthy body status and collect data
- 2 Develop and implement county wide awareness messaging with a focus on health literacy
- 3 Improve the implementation of nutrition standards in schools
- 4 Develop toolkit for healthcare providers to use with patients
- 5 Expand ongoing efforts to improve food access and affordability

To accomplish the obesity/related chronic disease-related goals in our Community Health Improvement Plan, in 2023 the Saginaw County Health Department, BWell Saginaw partners, and a host of subject matter experts formed five work groups to address:

- Defining “healthy body status” beyond BMI and collecting data
- Developing and implementing countywide awareness messaging
- Improving implementation of nutrition standards in schools
- Developing a toolkit for healthcare providers to use with patients
- Expanding ongoing efforts to improve food access and affordability

The work of these groups will extend all the way to 2026 while we work to improve “healthy body status” by 20% and move Saginaw County out of the state’s #1 most obese ranking. Meanwhile, the health department focused itself on delivering impactful programming designed to educate our community and to get them moving!





Step Up & BWell Launches in County Public Schools

Close to 2,000 students and staff registered for Step Up & BWell, a new program first launched March 1, 2023 in all county school districts and relaunched October 1, 2023. This pilot program — funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund and monitored by Central Michigan University College of Medicine — encourages students, staff, teachers, and families to develop healthier exercise and eating habits. Guided by SCHD health resource advocates (HRAs) in each public school district, schools compete with one another for bragging rights and tangible incentives by tracking their exercise and earning “stars” for other healthy behaviors such as eating fruits and vegetables and avoiding sugary beverages and junk food.

The goal of Step Up & BWell is to promote positive behaviors focused on better health at all BMIs.

Incentive prizes are awarded to top teams quarterly and have included Family Fun Nights at Haithco Park, Shocks & Saves tickets, and more. HRAs provide plenty of education and motivation. Families receive newsletters with health improvement tips and suggestions.



BWell Race Series Gets Saginaw Moving

Now held annually the last Saturday in September, the BWell Saginaw Race Series grew to include a 10K run and Double Challenge for Change (5K and 10K) in 2023. A 3K Turtles & Hares “stroll” will be added in 2024 to encourage residents who don’t consider themselves runners or racers to participate at their own pace on a beautiful course winding through the Saginaw Children’s Zoo.

In 2023, BWell Saginaw Race sponsors include Dig Deep Races, Saginaw YMCA, Ascension St. Mary’s, Covenant HealthCare, Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, Saginaw Community Foundation, CMU Medical Education Partners, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority, Saginaw County Health Department, United Way of Saginaw County, with additional support from CMU College of Medicine, Saginaw County Parks & Recreation, and Family First Credit Union.



The Saginaw YMCA also offered a free 9-week pre-race training program to interested race participants.



INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS:

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

6

Improve access for mental health services in all Saginaw County schools (early screening, clear path to services available and enough provider capacity building county wide)

7

Develop a new model of multi-agency collaboration to improve access and serve as a point of entry for mental health services

8

Build/Expand mental health navigators

9

Develop a comprehensive county wide response to reduce overdoses in Saginaw County, including prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery

To accomplish the mental health/substance use improvement goals in our Community Health Improvement Plan, in 2023 the Saginaw County Health Department, BWell Saginaw partners, and other behavioral health experts formed four work groups to address:

- Improving access to mental health services in Saginaw County schools
- Developing a model of multi-agency collaboration to improve access and serve as a “point of entry” for mental health services
- Building/expanding mental health navigators to help residents engage in available services
- Developing a countywide response to reduce overdoses in Saginaw County

The work of these groups will extend all the way to 2026 while we work to develop a community continuum of care for mental health services and reduce overdoses by 50%.

The health department spearheaded several programs to address behavioral health in 2023 because of the critical role it plays in overall health. “Being well” requires prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, and accessible care and treatment for those who need it most.



Mental Healthopedia, Mental Health First Aid Training and “Chill Rooms” Help Saginaw Youth

Grant revenue devoted to behavioral health initiatives empowered the Saginaw County Health Department to support and create several impactful youth programs in 2023.

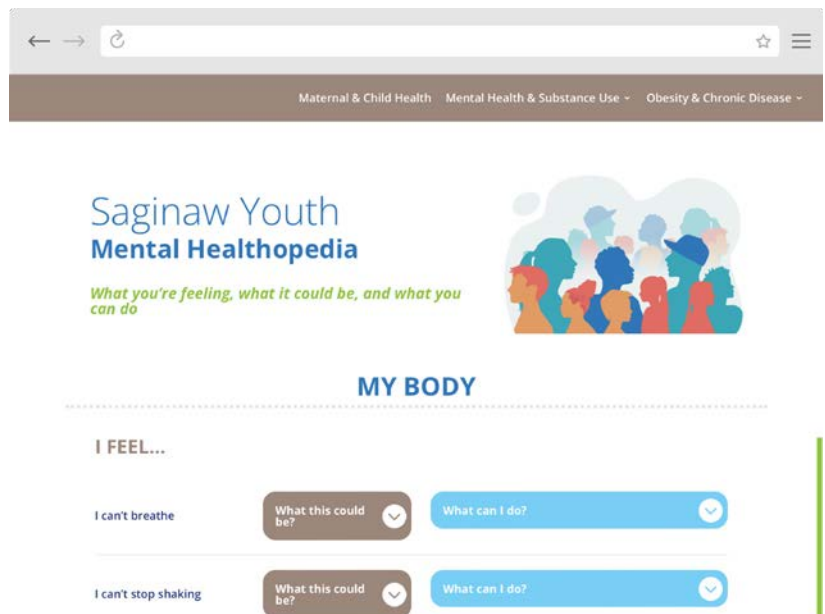
At the request of a group of Saginaw County high school students, the health department spearheaded the development of an online self-help tool call the Youth Mental Healthopedia, located at bwellsaginaw.org.

The “feelings” described in the Mental Healthopedia are in students’ own words. The suggestions for “What this could be?” and “What can I do?” have been provided by a team of local mental health professionals within the BWell Saginaw Partner Coalition and are not meant to replace professional help.

“Professional help can be hard to ask for but can often make these kinds of feelings less troublesome for teens,” said Catherine Macomber, PhD, LMSW, assistant dean at the Saginaw Valley State University College of Health & Human Services, Department of Social Work, and lead content creator for the new tool. “But self-help is a good start, and this is a great example of how adults can stop talking and instead engage young people in the solutions they crave.”

In addition to the Youth Mental Healthopedia, each county public high school also now has the materials and equipment for a Chill Room for students to seek out when they need a moment to collect their thoughts and address their mental health needs. Grant dollars are also being used to train school staff in Mental Health First Aid Training and Suicide Prevention Training.

While not a comprehensive solution to our county’s youth mental health crisis, these tangible resources are “getting the ball rolling” on a community-wide continuum of care to help kids cope, build resilience, and access help when needed.



Room 202 Opens to Reduce Harm and Prevent the Spread of Disease

The health department opened Room 202 in late 2022 and then expanded to take services “on the road” out in the community in 2023, providing lifesaving resources nearly 150 times to users including clean syringes, injection supplies, smoking and snorting supplies, wound care supplies, and hygiene kits along with NARCAN and fentanyl test strips.

According to the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, substance users who engage in harm reduction services are 5x more likely to enter a drug treatment program than non-clients. Harm reduction is an evidence-based approach to reducing the negative personal and public health impacts of substance use. It allows community “helpers” like the health department, police and first responders to engage very high risk and hard-to-reach individuals in comprehensive, free programs and services to prevent the spread of diseases like hepatitis and HIV, prevent overdoses, and prevent deaths while NOT increasing illegal drug use.

Room 202 is a judgement-free space where people can connect with friendly faces, ask questions, and pick up free supplies to reduce their risk for disease transmission, illness, or accidental overdose. Coaches from Peer 360 are available every Tuesday 9am-3pm.



Needles and other clean supplies to reduce harm

Meeting each other wherever we are... with compassion, not criticism



BWell Saginaw Health ALERT

STREET DRUGS: Buyer Beware!

In our continuing efforts to reduce accidental overdoses and harm from drugs purchased without a prescription from a healthcare provider, we are working with the Michigan State Police to analyze and report the "state of street drugs" seized during law enforcement activity.

Be careful of what you buy on the street – you have no idea what you are getting:

- Beware of white powders! They could be cocaine, methamphetamine, ketamine, fentanyl, nothing at all, or a mixture of all of the above.
- 99% of opioid samples in Michigan contain fentanyl and/or a fentanyl analog.
- 25% of opioid samples in Michigan (as of January 2024) contain xylazine, a dissociative anesthetic used to tranquilize animals.
- 90% of “ecstasy” tablets contain methamphetamine – only 3% contain MDMA.
- Most M/30 tablets on the street are fake and contain fentanyl or another opioid.
- Most Xanax bars on the street are fake and contain one or more designer benzos. Designer benzos produce strong sedation and amnesia and increase the risk of respiratory depression and death. They are particularly dangerous when mixed with alcohol.
- Approximately half of Adderall tablets on the street are fake and contain methamphetamine.

If you use, please consider the following to reduce your risk of harm:

- Have Narcan on hand anytime you use.
- Never use drugs alone.
- Use test strips on your drug before use.
- A free vending machine for Narcan and test strips is available in the first-floor lobby of the Saginaw County Health Department, 1600 N. Michigan Avenue, 8am-5pm, Monday thru Friday.
- Free, confidential supplies such as safer injection supplies, safer smoking and snorting supplies, wound care supplies, and peer support are available in Room 202 every Tuesday at the Saginaw County Health Department, 9am-3pm. Call (989) 758-3802 for more information.
- If you would like to talk to a peer about quitting, please reach out to Peer 360 Recovery at (989) 778-3144.



Partnering with San Francisco Health Department on Overdose Prevention

Thanks to a special grant from the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the Saginaw County Health Department was paired with overdose prevention experts from the San Francisco Health Department to learn best practices and for assistance in developing a countywide dashboard for overdose tracking.

Takeaways from our 2023 partnership include the importance of:

- Educating users to never use alone – always have NARCAN and someone willing to administer it if needed
- Approaching people with the right message and messenger
- Harm reduction efforts WORK and help build the kinds of relationships that can ultimately lead to treatment and recovery
- Total abstinence from drugs does not work for every addict
- Accessibility of real-time data is invaluable in linking partners in a common effort to prevent overdoses



State Police Help Inform Overdose Prevention Partners

Based on information gathered from drugs seized and analyzed by the Michigan State Police, we are gaining better real-time information about drugs in our community. We are using this information in our harm reduction efforts and

to guide our countywide response. The following are recent developments we call “things you should know if you use street drugs”:

- Beware of white powders! They could be cocaine, methamphetamine, ketamine, fentanyl, or nothing at all, or a mixture of all the above.
- 99% of opioid samples in Michigan contain fentanyl and/or a fentanyl analog.
- 25% of opioid samples in Michigan (as of January 2024) contain xylazine, a dissociative anesthetic used to tranquilize animals.
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- Approximately half of Adderall tablets on the street are fake and contain meth.

The Saginaw County Health Department, BWell partners, and a host of overdose prevention groups continue to work collectively using evidence-based strategies to reduce overdoses and guide the county on effectively using opioid settlement funds to improve prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery programs in Saginaw.

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS:

MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

10

Execute healthcare personnel training addressing implicit bias, health literacy, workforce culture, culturally appropriate messaging to drive more equitable care

11

Find and reach the unreachable to get women of childbearing age into primary care and engaged in other services to improve health prior to and between pregnancies

12

Expand and promote doula programs within Saginaw County

To accomplish the maternal & child health improvement goals in our Community Health Improvement Plan, in 2023 the Saginaw County Health Department, BWell Saginaw partners, and other maternal/child health experts formed three work groups to address:

- Executing healthcare personnel training addressing implicit bias, health literacy, workforce culture, culturally appropriate messaging to drive more equitable care.
- Finding and reaching the unreachable to get women of childbearing age into primary care and engaged in other services to improve health prior to and between pregnancies.
- Expanding and promoting doula programs within Saginaw County.

The work of these groups will extend all the way to 2026 while we work to reduce infant mortality rates in the City of Saginaw by 50%.



Sounding the Alarm on Safe Sleep

The health department took a lead role in several initiatives in 2023 focused on maternal & child health. Among them, sounding the alarm on safe sleep in October 2023 after an alarming number of Saginaw County infants lost their lives due to unsafe sleep practices that were preventable.

We actively sought assistance from the public to spread the word about the importance of infant safe sleep — especially to parents disconnected from traditional support systems and mainstream media messaging.

Here are the guidelines we shared:

- BABY SLEEPS ALONE in a SAFE place for every sleep.
- That means preferably a crib, bassinet, or pack 'n play with no pillows, blankets, toys, stuffed animals or bumper pads.
- Resist the temptation – no matter how tired you are – of feeding or calming your baby and letting them fall asleep with YOU in bed, on the couch, or in a lazyboy-style chair.
- Don't let babies sleep unattended in a car seat.
- Baby and young siblings should not sleep in the same crib.
- Keep baby's sleep space where you can see and hear them. Share your room, not your bed!
- Use a wearable blanket or footed sleeper to keep baby warm. Weighted blankets/sleepers/swaddles should not be used.
- Stop swaddling the baby when they exhibit signs of attempting to roll (typically occurs around 3-4 months but may occur earlier).
- Remind everyone who cares for your baby how to keep baby safe while sleeping.

We asked parents, grandparents, friends, neighbors, churches, social service agencies, doctors, first responders, medical examiner's office and hospitals to work together to promote awareness of safer sleep practices so we can help prevent a tragedy for a family.



SCHD Assumes Leadership of Michigan's Region 5 Perinatal Quality Collaborative

In 2023, the health department stepped up to lead Michigan's Region 5 Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PQC) – one of 10 organized statewide. Each is charged with improving birth outcomes and authentically engaging families in a unified approach by healthcare professionals, community partners, families, faith-based organizations, Great Start, home visiting agencies and others in the region.

The work of our region's PQC is closely tied to BWell Saginaw goals but combines the resources and brainpower of others in our region, including Bay County.

Through this collaborative, we have been introduced to several promising programs that could be highly impactful in Saginaw County, including **RxKids** – a program recently introduced in the City of Flint to support families with cash assistance at the most critical time when poverty impacts them...childbirth.

We continue to work closely with our county's birthing hospital, Covenant HealthCare, as well as Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, the driver of our county's doula program, to develop strategies and build a community that wraps its arms around mothers and babies.

Parenting STREET SMARTS

The Newbies' Guide to Raising Tiny Bosses

Parenting Street Smarts: Using Social Media to Reach More Moms

Based on our success with FB Live during the COVID-19 pandemic, the health department was asked to work with maternal/child experts from Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, Covenant, and CMU Medical Education Partners to produce and distribute a series of videos geared to expecting and/or new parents and their support systems via social media. The series began in 2023 and continued into 2024. It is still available at bwellsaginaw.org and includes safe sleep, swaddling, car seat safety, helping siblings adjust, mental health challenges – baby blues and beyond, handling grief and infant loss, developmental milestones, and more.



Dr. Shaheen Awarded SCHED Distinguished Service Award

The Saginaw County Health Department annually recognizes an individual, organization, or business that has made a significant contribution to the advancement of public health in Saginaw County in the previous year.

This year, Samuel Shaheen, MD, president of CMU Medical Education Partners, was awarded the Richard Calley Distinguished Service Award. From his support for our public health millage to his vision for a healthier Saginaw, Dr. Shaheen is as a true champion of public health!

The relationship between CMU and the health department began in 2017 when a small group of health department leadership sat down with him and his staff to talk about collaboration. Dr. Shaheen supported and strengthened our vision, culminating in a shared medical director position with CMU.

Dr. Shaheen exemplifies what it means to be a leader – rolling up his sleeves when needed and constantly advocating for public health, pushing the envelope with



innovation, and understanding what it takes to transform Saginaw, where he has been a lifelong resident. And when Sam speaks – people listen.

Through his Medical Diamond Project, he has built the political will to bring the CMU College of Medicine to Saginaw, transforming downtown, and integrating public health into this framework is his vision.

Rhodes Named Employee of the Year

Each year, SCHED employees nominate a fellow employee who demonstrates exemplary work performance, teamwork, customer service, public health promotion, community involvement, professional development and allegiance to the mission, vision, goals and values of our organization. This year's winner is Deborah Rhodes, RN, one of our nurses doing home visits with pregnant first-time moms in the Nurse Family Partnership program. She also performs our fetal infant mortality review duties. Her dedication to improving maternal and child health outcomes is clear to both co-workers and clients. She is an excellent listener, always puts client needs first, and actively seeks continuing education. Many Saginaw County residents met Deb during one or more of our many COVID-19 vaccine clinics throughout Saginaw County during the pandemic — poking arms through car windows and in private residences for those who were homebound. A health department veteran of more than 20 years, she is a willing volunteer to drive the RV for special clinics and even parades. Join us in congratulating Deb — such a deserving recipient of this high honor from her peers!



CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIPS

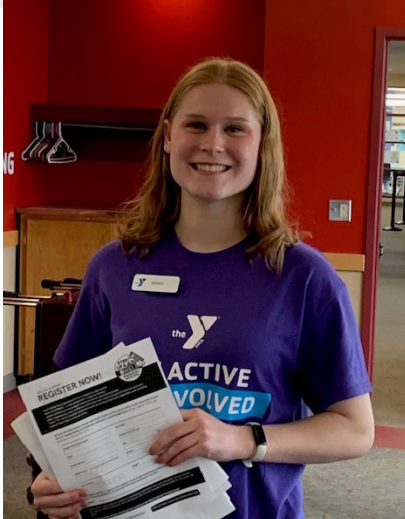
In addition to our 13 BWell Saginaw partners, we celebrate the work we did with so many partners in 2023. Among them:

- PartnerShift – envisioning and building a Community Information Exchange with a network of community health workers as its foundation
- Saginaw Medical Diamond – participating in planning and creation of this transformational development in downtown Saginaw for the Central Michigan University School of Medicine and more
- San Francisco Health Department – for guidance and best practices in overdose prevention
- Peer 360 – for peer counseling in our Room 202 harm reduction program
- Saginaw YMCA – for successful healthy body initiatives and the site for our BWell Race Series
- Saginaw County Commission on Aging – for mobile service delivery
- Bay County United Way/Bay County Health Department – for inviting us to build a Community Information Exchange on the platform they are currently designing for Bay County
- Health fairs – for opportunities to join our Hispanic and Black leaders in promoting health and preventing disease
- Health Equity Council members – for lending your voice to expose and end health disparities
- Pulse 3 Foundation – for supporting our BWell Race Series, inviting us to the Hearts & Paddles pickleball event, and working with our HRAs on heart safe school certifications
- CMU College of Medicine – for providing us with support to be an academic health department, assisting us with research, engaging with us for provider education and training in public health, and providing CME support and credit for our inaugural Obesity Summit
- Saginaw Valley State University – for spearheading development of the content for our Youth Mental Healthopedia and playing a major role in planning our inaugural Obesity Summit
- Saginaw County Medical Society – for helping us communicate with healthcare providers and advocating for our inaugural Obesity Summit
- Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce – for inviting us to talk about BWell Saginaw at Perc breakfasts and Leadership Saginaw
- Saginaw Community Food Club & Kitchen – for working closely with us on expanding efforts to improve food access and affordability...a key social determinant of health
- Michigan State Police and local law enforcement – for their commitment as “helpers” in reducing harm and drug seizure data and perspective on overdose prevention



NOTES

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1600 N. Michigan Avenue, Saginaw, MI 48602

P: 989-758-3800

F: 989-758-3750

www.saginawpublichealth.org



Saginaw County  HEALTH DEPARTMENT