



# Post Pandemic ANNUAL REPORT

A Retrospective on  
FY 2020-2022

# Post Pandemic ANNUAL REPORT

## A Retrospective on FY 2020-2022

## THANK YOU!

Throughout the challenges and loss suffered by many during the COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced moments we refer to as “COVID blessings” – positive things that happened because of COVID and our role in responding to this virus and its unprecedented spread throughout our community and world.

In addition to our amazing staff of health professionals, one of the health department’s biggest COVID blessings came from the true, authentic and lasting partnerships formed in 2020-2022. Saginaw County delivered a robust, collaborative response to COVID-19 that has been recognized statewide. It engaged the health department, hospitals, healthcare providers, first responders, law enforcement, media, faith-based community, nonprofit sector, schools, universities, pharmacies, businesses, and citizens. Here are just a few examples of partnerships in action:

- SCHD staff vaccinated CMU School of Medicine students with some of the first doses we received in Saginaw County. These students, in turn, worked to vaccinate the public at nearly all of vaccination events under the direction of Steve Vance, MD, FACEP, associate dean.
- Closure of The Dow and postponement of the Saginaw Spirit hockey season in 2021 paved the way for the arena floor to be used for Saginaw County’s largest-ever drive-thru vaccine event. We could not have done it without local law enforcement, Michigan National Guard, additional nurses and resources from Covenant and Ascension St. Mary’s, and volunteer nurses in the community.
- We could never have reached thousands of our community’s elderly to schedule vaccine appointments by phone and give them the protection they needed from COVID-19 without the amazing support of the Saginaw County Commission on Aging and United Way of Saginaw volunteers.
- Molina Healthcare graciously brought food and coffee trucks to a number of our vaccination clinics to provide free food and drinks to staff and residents receiving vaccinations.
- There is a special place in heaven and in our hearts for school administration and office staff. We know the COVID-19 lift was heavy. You were thrust into roles you neither imagined nor deserved with reporting, serial testing, contact tracing, and communication. Thank you for partnering with us to protect your school communities so well.

The list of people and organizations we now consider partners is simply too big to list. You know who you are...and we thank you! Because of lasting partnerships, we can now tackle some of our biggest health challenges and work together to make Saginaw healthier and more resilient.

## FROM THE CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

In March 2020 when a global pandemic and the likelihood of shutting down our world became a reality, no one could have predicted the true impact of COVID-19 on every aspect of our lives.



More than two years later, we have the benefit of knowing more about the virus, how to mitigate its spread, and how to minimize its severity. The health department has built a new and better relationship with our community based on communication and guidance, not fear. Our goal has been to share accurate information with Saginaw County so that each resident, school, business, and agency can make informed choices.

Saginaw County has been through the worst of the pandemic. Many are asking us “What happens next” now that COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths are on the decline – yet the virus, and potential variants, are still very real and becoming one among many respiratory illnesses we face each winter.

While COVID-19 defined 2020 and 2021 for us, it hasn’t altered our commitment to safeguarding Saginaw from ALL diseases. Rather, our determination to lead the way in building a healthier Saginaw is stronger than ever before.

We believe the best way to prevent, mitigate and prepare for any future “events” is to work collaboratively with others to build a healthier Saginaw...one that is more resilient so that if or when we experience the next wave or disease, we experience less severe illness, lower hospitalization, and fewer deaths.

As we work together with a growing list of community organizations to bring life to BWell Saginaw, we want to take a look back at the last two years and Saginaw County’s COVID-19 response. In doing so, we hope to shed light on the unprecedented partnerships that came out of the response...partnerships that are crucial to making a healthier, more resilient Saginaw our new normal.

**Christina Harrington, MPH,**  
Chief Health Officer and Director

## FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Without the unique partnership between the Saginaw County Health Department and CMU Health, I wouldn’t even be here as medical director! I joined the department in January 2020. As I soon learned, preparations and planning for a possible COVID-19 public health emergency were already well underway. While we didn’t get word of our first case of COVID-19 until March 21, the health department team was already “on it,” quickly working to shift resources away from many of our regular services to COVID-19 response.

Part of my role in that preparation was leading a Medical Command & Control team with our healthcare partners in the county. Having this in place to coordinate efforts and create standards of care for COVID-19 was vital and a large part of Saginaw’s success.

Our efforts evolved as scientific knowledge about the virus grew, testing supplies became more available, and as the promise of a vaccine came into view. By the end of 2020, we were working on emergency vaccine distribution efforts and laying the groundwork to administer thousands of COVID-19 vaccines a week – all of this while continuing to center health equity in our response and with our limited resources.

Throughout the pandemic, the health department staff worked around the clock to keep the community as safe as possible. I’m not sure many people truly understand how small but mighty this team is! But I know our entire community is grateful for our dedication and sacrifices.

One good thing I see that came out of the pandemic is a greater overall appreciation for public health – from our healthcare partners, businesses, schools, and residents. Thank you for trusting our information, seeking our guidance, and valuing our work. We have so much to accomplish moving forward. With your continued support, we pledge to continue to safeguard Saginaw.



**Delicia Pruitt, MD, MPH, FAAFP**  
Medical Director

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## Surveillance

### Investigations

Staff reassignment: Throughout the pandemic, either Saginaw County Health Department staff – many reassigned from their normal roles – or Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) staff called Saginaw County residents who tested positive for COVID-19 (or their family members) to complete case investigation interviews.

During these calls, case investigators provided information so people could monitor their symptoms and get medical care when necessary. They also shared guidance on how to prevent the spread of illness to family or community members. Finally, they gathered information about where residents may have gotten the virus and who they likely exposed during their infectious period. This helped SCHD to find common sources of exposure and identify close contacts who were exposed and should be contacted by our contact tracing team.

Staff had conversations with tens of thousands of residents about their COVID-19 illness or exposure, which continues even today with mySaginawHealth – our custom web-based self-reporting app. At the height of the pandemic, with more than 200 positive cases reported daily, this process was challenging!

### Outbreak Management

One health department communicable disease nurse named Susie coordinated thousands and thousands of outbreaks in Saginaw County's long-term care, school, business, congregate and healthcare settings. She tracked the status of every

outbreak for 28 days, reported to the state, and provided guidance and direction to enhance mitigation on these hard-to-manage situations.

### Data Collection

The community demand for COVID-19 data was understandably strong! But initially, it was terribly incomplete. Hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, employers – even the health department – struggled to collect data on a disease that never existed before, had no diagnosis code, no test, and no presence in any database system. Already cumbersome state and federal systems had to expand rapidly. Questions asked during case investigations changed constantly as capabilities and the demand for data grew.

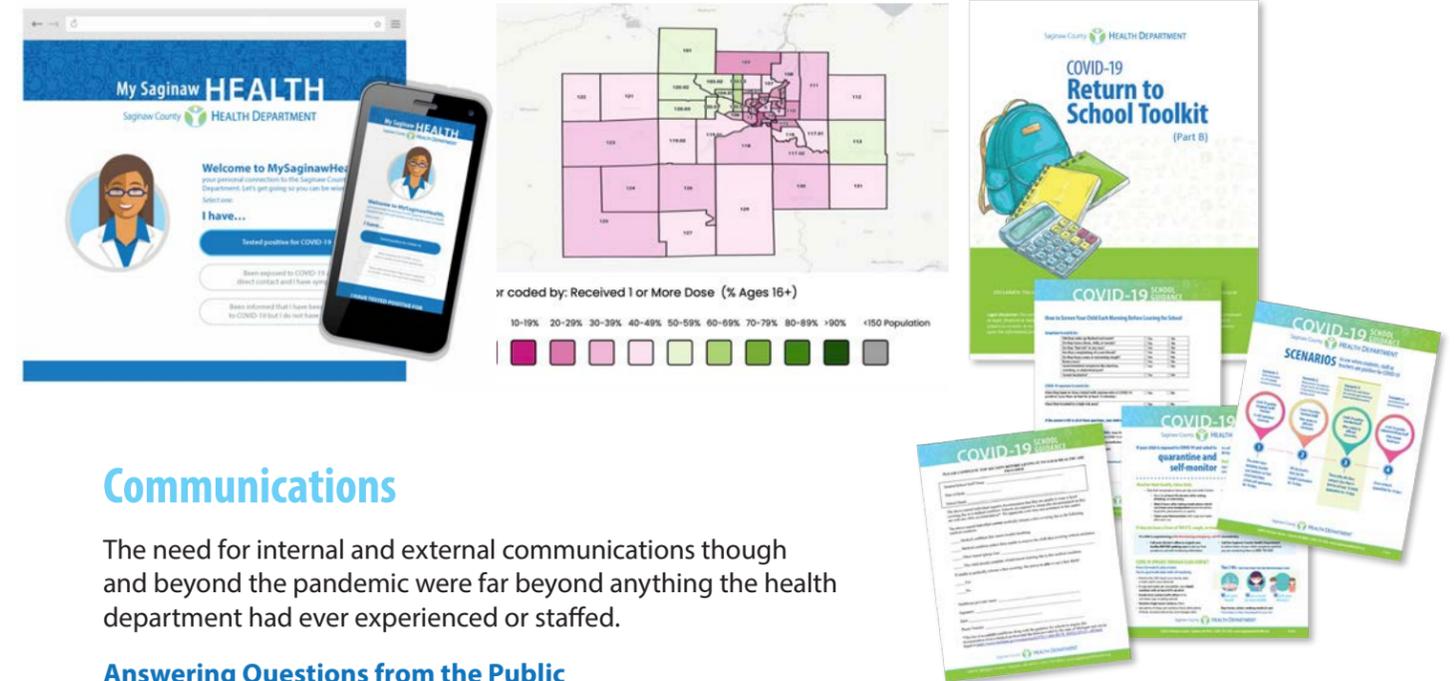
### Contact Tracing

Non-nursing staff took over much of the heavy lifting to reach non-household close contacts exposed by others to COVID-19. In addition, they reached out beyond 14 days to do wellness checks to determine if people were recovering from their illnesses. Much like case investigations, staff spoke with thousands and thousands of residents – many of whom were NOT happy about being exposed or being contacted by the health department.

### Data Analysis and Reporting

Various agency database systems reported COVID-19 data differently, requiring the health department to continuously monitor, collect, and interpret while sharing daily. We reported Saginaw County's case numbers, positivity rates, ages, and ethnicity daily on [saginawpublichealth.org](http://saginawpublichealth.org) and on Facebook. When available, we reported hospitalization rates due to COVID, ages, number of people on ventilators, vaccination rates by age/race/ethnicity/geography. We often use global data to forecast and report the possibility of case spikes and the presence of variants.

Out of the struggle came several valuable tools, including Michigan's [mistartmap.info](http://mistartmap.info), the vaccine dashboard, the CDC's community tracker, and the Saginaw County Health Department's [mySaginawHealth.org](http://mySaginawHealth.org).



## Communications

The need for internal and external communications though and beyond the pandemic were far beyond anything the health department had ever experienced or staffed.

### Answering Questions from the Public

We reassigned all staff when we created a COVID-19 hotline to answer the flood of questions coming to us from residents, business owners, and partners. We also added a coronavirus section to our website and focused all posts to COVID-related material on our social media accounts.

### Contracting with Professional Communicator

The need for timely communications – and the flow of misinformation – was evident before the discovery of our first case. We contracted with a local communications firm The Barckholtz Group to help us with email updates, social media posts, guidance materials, and information campaigns.

### Facing Our Community

Facebook Live presented us with a great way to talk face-to-face with our community throughout the pandemic. For 63 straight Wednesdays at 10am, we shared case information, responded to tough questions, and provided guidance on important topics like gatherings, in-person learning, masking, and so much more. Our goal was to help everyone make informed choices without fear or panic.

### Informing Staff

The way COVID-19 announcements were made by the state directly to the media before local public health departments proved to be challenging. Often our frontline staff was fielding questions from the public before administrative staff were even aware of announcements. We had to be creative and offer one another grace often.

### School guidance

SCHD administrative staff worked closely with all public and parochial schools to support in-person learning wherever and whenever possible, providing one-on-one guidance to superintendents based on local community spread, executive orders from the state, and with support for athletic antigen testing, test-to-stay attendance, and continuous guidance when needed for masking, cohorting, social distancing, and more. We also placed health resource advocates (HRAs) in schools to help with COVID-19 and more.

### Restaurant, Venue and Entertainment Support

Health department staff worked tirelessly to support restaurants, banquet facilities, concession stands, wedding planners, movie theaters, bowling alleys, and all other entertainment venues in interpreting and understanding continuously changing and confusing executive orders for operation throughout the pandemic based on indoor/outdoor restrictions and capacity requirements.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## Emergency Preparedness & Safety

### Public health leadership

Prior to our first case, SCHD had already gathered together a Medical Command & Control team of physician leaders from our hospitals and other health centers to coordinate community response, standards of care, testing, and more. This was an important step in Saginaw's collaborative response.

A separate Incident Command team provided oversight on everything from vaccination clinics to emergency orders and emergency contingency housing for residents who had nowhere to recover from COVID-19 without exposing others.

Throughout the pandemic, we had the benefit of Lt. Mark Przybylski, director of Saginaw County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM). His dedication to helping us with housing, vaccine clinic locations and logistics, May's 2020 flood, liaison with Michigan's National Guard, and so much more made him an invaluable member of the COVID-19 response team.

### Personal protective gear

The demand for PPE was overwhelming at the start of the pandemic, as was the response from our community in finding and donating PPE. In late March 2020, SCHD issued the first of six emergency orders, requiring that all donations of PPE be coordinated through the OEM so it could be distributed efficiently to healthcare setting where the need was greatest.

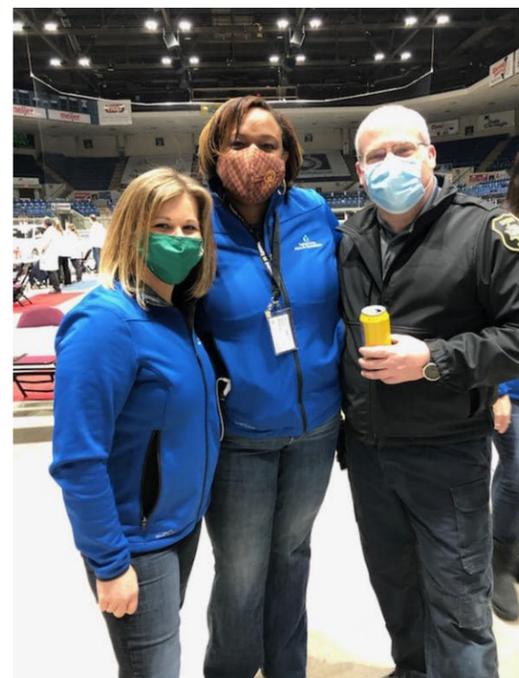
## Vaccine Administration

### Getting ready to vaccinate

Our first vaccine shipment arrived in late December 2020, with first shots given by SCHD on December 18 to health department staff. Our local hospitals also received their own doses and were invaluable in the vaccination effort. The goal was to start vaccinating members of our community as soon as the supply was delivered – and we were!

With initial supplies limited, our first priorities were healthcare workers not employed by the hospitals and our most vulnerable residents – the elderly and most compromised by underlying conditions – thousands of which required phone calls to schedule their appointments. Most health department clinics were designed to be drive-thru for both COVID safety and elder safety. On February 11, we held the county's largest ever drive through clinic at The Dow. We also vaccinated at the former Sears Automotive Building, at local churches, schools, fire departments, pavilions, and several dozen other locations around the county. SCHD delivered about 20% of the vaccines in Saginaw County, providing coordination and keeping our lens on equity and accessibility for all.

Our small team of public health professionals vaccinated all day, every day, for 20 weeks, providing first, second, and booster doses! And we couldn't have done so many clinics in so many locations without CMU medical students, Michigan National Guard, and volunteer nurses from the community.



# TIMELINE

# 2020



**January 2020**

Talks began with the Centers for Disease Control and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services about a novel virus impacting global health.

**February 29, 2020**

A health department nurse drove Saginaw's first sample to the state's laboratory for testing. It was negative.

**March 13, 2020**

The first case in Saginaw County's healthcare setting became known, although it was not a Saginaw Co. resident.

**March 16, 2020**

Schools closed across the state upon order of the governor.

**March 21, 2020**

Saginaw's first COVID-19 case reported to health department.

**March 22, 2020**

Saginaw County Health Department started COVID-19 hotline and sent out its first email blast to leaders in the community about the COVID-19 response.

**March 24, 2020**

Michigan's stay-home order was issued to flatten the curve.

**March 25, 2020**

All Saginaw County offices were closed. Room 409 at the Saginaw County Health Department became COVID-19 Headquarters. COVID-19 testing opened in Saginaw County.

**March 31, 2020**

Saginaw County Health Department issued the first of six emergency orders, requiring that all donation of personal protective equipment (PPE) be coordinated through Saginaw's Emergency Management System.  
  
Toilet paper shortages, remote learning, Zoom meetings were born.



**August 2020**

Very difficult back-to-school season with in-person, remote-only and virtual options. SCHD provides extensive guidance to schools and webinars for parents.

**Summer 2020**

Confusing and complicated restaurant and gathering restrictions.

**July 2020**

Governor mandates masks in certain public places.



**June/July 2020**

Drive-thru high school graduations.

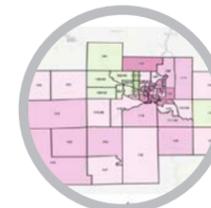
**May 18, 2020**

Dams breach and Saginaw floods.



**May 8, 2020**

MI Safe Start reopening announced.



**April 29, 2020**

Saginaw County Health Department started FB Live events to inform the community that lasted for 63 consecutive weeks. SCHD assumed role of "making sense of it all" to meet needs of community.



**April 15, 2020**

Income tax deadline extended.

**April 2, 2020**

Saginaw's first COVID-19 death. Saginaw County public health emergency order required businesses to screen employees for symptoms.

**September 2020**

SCHD launches "Do it For Big Ma" to address inequities



**October 7, 2020**

Saginaw County Health Department's first mask giveaway.



**October 31, 2020**

Schools closed across the state upon order of the governor.

**November 2020**

Saginaw County Health Department passes first ever public health millage. State initiates three-week "pause" to deal with hospital capacity.



**December 2020**

COVID-19 surges, hospital capacity challenged, holiday gatherings discouraged, state priorities expanded for everyone 65+ for COVID-19 vaccines, taxes community capacity.

**December 17, 2020**

First COVID-19 vaccine arrives at Saginaw County Health Department.



**December 18, 2020**

First shots given to health department staff, followed by first responders, medical students and other non-hospital employed healthcare providers.

**December 29, 2020**

SCHD mobile RV arrives to help deliver public health services county wide.



# TIMELINE

# 2021



**May 21, 2021**

Lt. Governor Gilchrist comes to SCHED vaccine clinic at Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy.



**May 11-June 30, 2021**

SCHD converts former Sears Department Store into vaccine clinic. Vaccine demand declines dramatically. COVID-19 boosters start.

**April 2021**

SCHD launches mySaginawHealth.org for vaccination self-scheduling.



**April 11, 2021**

Vaccine demand peaks in Saginaw County, with providers delivering more than 10,000 doses weekly.

**March 2021**

SCHD and Health & Community Connected host church vaccination clinics throughout Saginaw.



**February 11, 2021**

Saginaw County's largest ever drive-through vaccination clinic at The Dow



**January 22, 2021**

SCHD begins vaccinating school staff.



**January 15, 2021**

Saginaw County's first ever drive-through vaccination clinic at former Sears Automotive drive thru.

**January 2021**

Athletic testing begins at Saginaw's schools. SCHD receives grant to provide health resource advocates to help schools with testing, health promotions, and public health best practices.

**June 2021**

SCHD launches vaccine hesitancy campaign, including a physician phone bank on WNEM TV5.



**June 2021**

State removes remaining COVID-19 restrictions but continues face mask and gathering orders. Nearly 53% of Saginaw's eligible residents are vaccinated.

**Summer 2021**

Delta variant impacts Saginaw County.

**August/September 2021**

Most county schools resume in-person learning, adopting test-to-stay protocol because of Delta variant. SCHD research conducted on school data shows primary mode of transmission is within households, not in the classroom.

**December 2021**

Omicron variant impacts Saginaw County.

**March 2022**

Saginaw County's BWell Partner Coalition launches message of hope and resilience to move beyond COVID-19.

# 2022

**BWELL**  *Saginaw*

**GET YOUR VACCINE**  **TO SAFEGUARD SAGINAW**

## New Vocabulary, Thanks to COVID-19

- Essential worker
- Critical infrastructure
- Executive orders
- PPE
- PCR
- Social "pods"
- Surge
- Pause
- "Flatten the curve"
- Herd immunity
- The 3 Ws: Wash your hands, watch your distance, wear a mask

# COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS



**55,000+**

Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Saginaw County

**Nearly 1,000**

Saginaw County resident COVID-19 deaths

**1,000,000+**

Staff calls made or answered on SCHED COVID-19 Hotline



**15,000**

Doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered by SCHED in first quarter of 2021 alone at 52 clinics, including counties largest ever drive-thru clinic on the arena floor at The Dow

**50,000**

Doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered as of March 4, 2020 by all Saginaw County vaccine providers – ending the quarter with 80,000!

**20**

Consecutive weeks SCHED nurses vaccinated residents all day, every day alongside CMU medical students, Michigan National Guard medics and nurse volunteers



The amount of doses administered by SCHED public health nurses compared to other providers at as many as 36 different locations. In turn, SCHED willingly and graciously responded to 110% of all vaccine misinformation, complaints and questions about the process

**20%**

Public health millage passed during pandemic, thanks to Yes! to Public Health committee and its outstanding job educating our community about health department needs.

**\$2.4 million**

**61,000**

Residents boosted

**2**

SCHED helped give a second life to the old Sears Department Store at Saginaw's Fashion Square Mall in the summer of 2021, using it to further COVID-19 vaccine efforts AND help families catch up on important preventive health measures like childhood immunizations and hearing/vision screenings



**401,472**  
SCHED website views in 2020

**63**



Number of consecutive weeks chief health officer Christina Harrington, MPH, and medical director Delicia Pruitt, MD, appeared on Facebook Live to provide guidance and answer questions



**1**

Rock concerts attended by SCHED staff to test stage crew for Korn concert.

**12,000**

Calls made to schedule senior citizens 65+ for COVID-9 vaccination with the help of Saginaw County Commission on Aging and United Way of Saginaw volunteers

# ADDRESSING HEALTH EQUITY

The health department brought together religious and community organizations to form the Health and Community Connected (HCC) workgroup. The mission of this group was to better the health of the Saginaw community by providing resources, prevention services, and health education to people who reside in Saginaw's most socially vulnerable areas. Members who joined SCHD in this effort included NAACP-Saginaw Branch, SCHD, Saginaw African American Pastors, CMU Health, St Joes Catholic Church, Covenant HealthCare, Ascension St. Mary's, Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, STARS Transportation, and Saginaw Community Foundation.

Though HCC, we orchestrated vaccine clinics at area black and brown churches in zip codes indicating the highest hesitancy and lowest vaccine rates. We enlisted support from Great Lakes Bay Health Center, Ascension St. Mary's and Covenant to staff clinics at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist, Victorious Believers, St. Joseph Catholic Church, and New Birth Missionary Baptist.

From September – December 2020, SCHD launched a "Do it for Big Ma" public information campaign and teamed up with Health & Community Connected (HCC) members to address inequities and bring resources to people most impacted by COVID-19.

At one point early in the pandemic, 35% of our black and brown populations were impacted by COVID positivity. Thanks to a generous grant from the Saginaw Community Foundation, we spearheaded a communications campaign targeted at our minority communities. As a result, we brought the percentage down to 19%, which is representative of our community as a whole.



# SUPPORTING FAMILIES VIRTUALLY

The pandemic posed challenges to the traditional model of providing benefits for WIC participants and enrolling new participants. SCHD WIC staff adapted swiftly to develop new virtual service delivery models to support participants throughout COVID-19.

All through the pandemic, WIC continued to provide essential services to help families and children be their healthiest selves. WIC staff re-imagined their process and began completing appointments over the phone and meeting clients outdoors for contact-free pick-ups of breast pumps, EBT cards, and Project FRESH coupons.



# PASSING COUNTY'S FIRST-EVER PUBLIC HEALTH MILLAGE

"Thank you, Saginaw!" We are so pleased that our community understands the value of the health department and is willing to invest in steady, predictable and adequate funding enabling us to do the job of safeguarding everyone in Saginaw with passage of a \$2.4 million millage to help pay for:

- Sustained operation of 1-2 mobile units returning services to out-county areas and enhancing services county-wide beyond the health department building on Michigan Avenue.
- A full-time epidemiologist to delve into Saginaw County's higher-than-average cancer, asthma, heart disease, and mortality rates.
- Instead of ONE nurse, a team of nurses for disease surveillance and investigation of more than 100 diseases including influenza, Hepatitis A, and COVID-19.

- New equipment and increased testing capacity for the public health laboratory.
- Enhanced public communications for reliable health information and education.

We remain deeply grateful to all who voted yes, particularly those who came out early in support of our efforts including many of our county commissioners, our Board of Health, Covenant, Ascension St. Mary's, CMU Health, NAACP, Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, Saginaw County Medical Society, and other stakeholders including superintendents, business owners, and volunteers.

Despite our differences on so many other issues, it's gratifying to know that our community is united in wanting Saginaw County to be an even better place to live, work, play and be well.





# QUESTIONS?

Throughout the pandemic, our leaders, staff and COVID-19 hotline answered hundreds of thousands of questions from residents, schools, and businesses hungry for information. Because COVID-19 was a novel virus, we didn't always have answers. And because the virus changed, our answers often had to change as well.

Our goal, however, was steadfast – transparency, authenticity, and accessibility. As your trusted source of information, we remained dedicated to the concept of “informed consent.” We provided you with information to the best of our ability so that YOU could make choices and take appropriate action for you and your family

Here is just a small sampling of questions asked and answered!

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Shouldn't we all continue to work remotely for a while longer?

You said it would be two weeks. Why are so many things still closed?

Does the vaccine make women infertile?

Hospitals must be getting money for saying these deaths are caused by COVID. How much do they get?

Why is there still no county-wide mask mandate?

Where can I go for testing?

My allergies are acting up. I don't need to test for COVID, right?

Where can we get more PPE?

How long do positive employees need to isolate?

How long does COVID live on surfaces?

When can I get a booster shot?

What do I do if I test positive?

My neighbor has already gotten the vaccine, and she's younger and healthier than me. That's not fair. Am I being left behind?

Why so little vaccine in Saginaw County compared to communities around us?

How many people are we allowed to invite to our wedding?

How do I report a gym open for business when all others are following the rules?

Can we pass out candy at Halloween?

How many breakthrough cases do we have?

Who is considered an essential worker?

When will we be able to visit our loved ones in nursing homes?

Aren't there a lot of false positive tests? False negative tests?

Are we wearing masks to protect ourselves or others?

When are the 12-15-year-old boosters coming?

Do I need to show a negative COVID test results to travel to \_\_\_\_\_? I leave tomorrow, where can I get that test?

Why am I being coerced into getting the vaccine? It was created too quickly. It wasn't tested enough.

Can my dog catch COVID from me?

Can we please talk about masks in schools during this monster surge? Why can't you direct schools to require masks to keep our kids safe?

What's better – natural immunity or immunity from vaccination?

How long does immunity from the vaccine last?

My favorite restaurant won't take reservations for their igloos. Can I sit inside instead?

What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

Are retail grocery store workers in Phase 1B?

Where do clergy fall in the vaccine rollout?

My 21-year-old daughter is going out of town in 2 weeks to a different state for an internship. Can she get the vaccine there?

How do you test for variants?

I'm 64, when will I be able to get vaccinated?

If a student tests positive in a classroom, do we have to deep clean the whole school?

Do you recommend wearing gloves to the grocery store?

How many Saginaw County residents are vaccinated?

If someone has COVID, how long should they wait until they get a vaccine?

Where are you coming up with your vaccine priorities? Please vaccinate our schools before the prisons.

What vaccine is more effective at preventing breakthrough infections?

I lost my vaccine card. Where can I get another?

Why do healthcare workers still go to work if they have symptoms?

Are we in a surge?

What if you quarantine for 5 days after exposure, then get tested at Day 5, but don't get your test results for a day or two? Do you go to work?

Why do healthcare workers still go to work if they have symptoms?

Do medical facilities still have to enforce the mask mandate and social distancing?

I am so afraid. I don't know if I should send my kids to school or not?

How long until we reach herd immunity?

I was taking Tylenol for a pulled muscle while I received the second vaccine. Will it still be effective for me?

What's the difference between COVID, RSV and the flu?

There are magnets in the vaccine. Don't get it!

Why does the CDC keep changing its recommendations for isolation and quarantine?

The case numbers you're reporting can't possibly be true with so many people doing home tests. Everybody I know has COVID. Why aren't you doing something?

Does singing in church spread COVID?

How are they keeping people safe in ERs when both COVID and normal patients come through those doors?

Is it safe to go to the movie theater?

I got my first Moderna shot and had an allergic reaction. I was told not to get a second one. How protected am I?

If someone is fully vaccinated, do they have to quarantine after international travel?

Are you calling people for vaccine appointments?

What can I do for my 3-year-old when she goes to daycare?

Are the antibody medicines being used in our area? If so, where? How can we get them?

When can we open the dressing rooms in our store?

Shouldn't we wash all our fruits and vegetables with soap and water?

Has anyone looked into getting mobile vans out into the community to distribute the vaccine in neighborhoods?

I do not understand how we can justify a pause in the J&J vaccine given the apparent complication rate is so low compared to the death rate from COVID.

Parents from my son's school are hosting an unofficial prom. Is that legal?

If someone has COVID, how long should they wait until they get a vaccine?

Are hospitals at full capacity?

# FINANCIALS

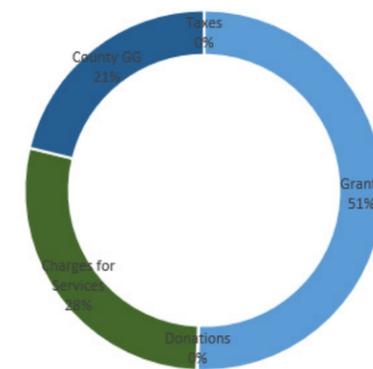
Stagnant and declining resources over the last 15 years have been a fact of life for local public health departments across Michigan, including Saginaw County. In 2020-2022, SCHD received more than \$4 million in COVID-19 funds to help pay staff, deliver the vaccine at clinics, purchase supplies, communicate, engage with area churches and other community partners, and so much more. The funds came as 16 separate grants with 16 different reporting requirements and guidelines. Regardless, a major lesson learned during the COVID-19 pandemic is this: the injection of adequate, flexible funding empowers us to respond in the best, most innovative ways to meet the needs of Saginaw County. It is now more evident than ever before that local public health needs to have flexible funding to continue to be adaptive to the ever changing needs of public health in our communities.

Total Revenue by Category

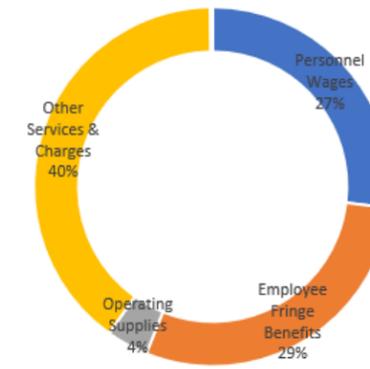


## Financial totals showing percentages:

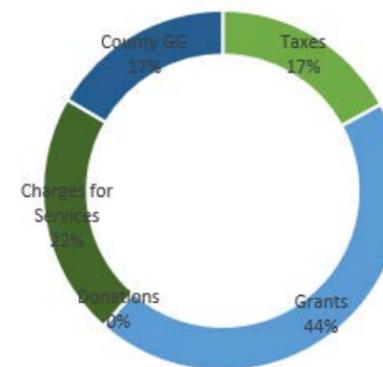
FY2020 Revenue by Category



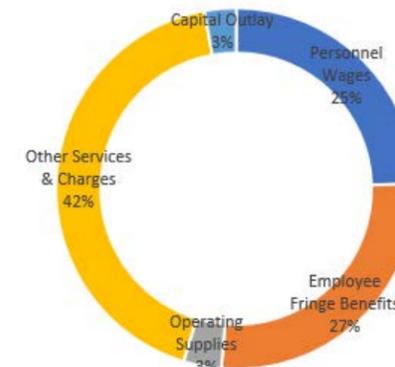
FY2020 Expenditures by Category



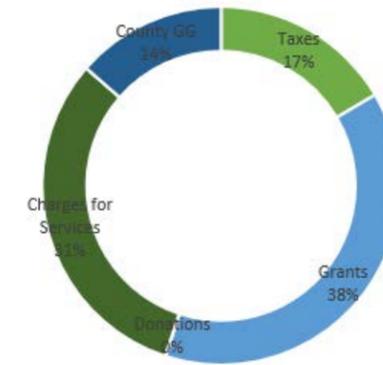
FY2021 Revenue by Category



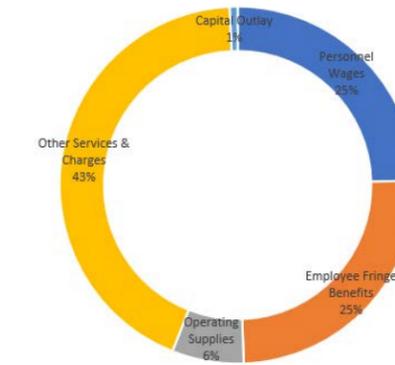
FY2021 Expenditures by Category



FY2022 Revenue by Category



FY2022 Expenditures by Category



# BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS

Judith Lincoln, Chair

Averetta Lewis, PhD, FNP-BC, Vice Chair

Stephanie Duggan, M.D.

Michael Sullivan, M.D.

Gene Nuckolls

Calvin Williams

Jeffrey Collier, Ed. D.

Barb Kemp-Lauria

Samuel Shaheen, M.D.

Renee Johnston

Charles Mueller, M.D.

Cheryl Hadsall

Commissioner Sheldon Matthews

Robert Belleman

## BWELL Saginaw

### Moving Beyond COVID-19 to Build a More Resilient Saginaw

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's that overall health plays a major role in how diseases impact a community. Designed as a multi-organizational effort to guide Saginaw County forward in becoming one of Michigan's Top 25 healthiest communities, "BWELL Saginaw" is gaining support and producing tangible benefits for our community.

BWELL Saginaw shines a spotlight on three significant health issues facing the people who live, learn, and work in Saginaw County:

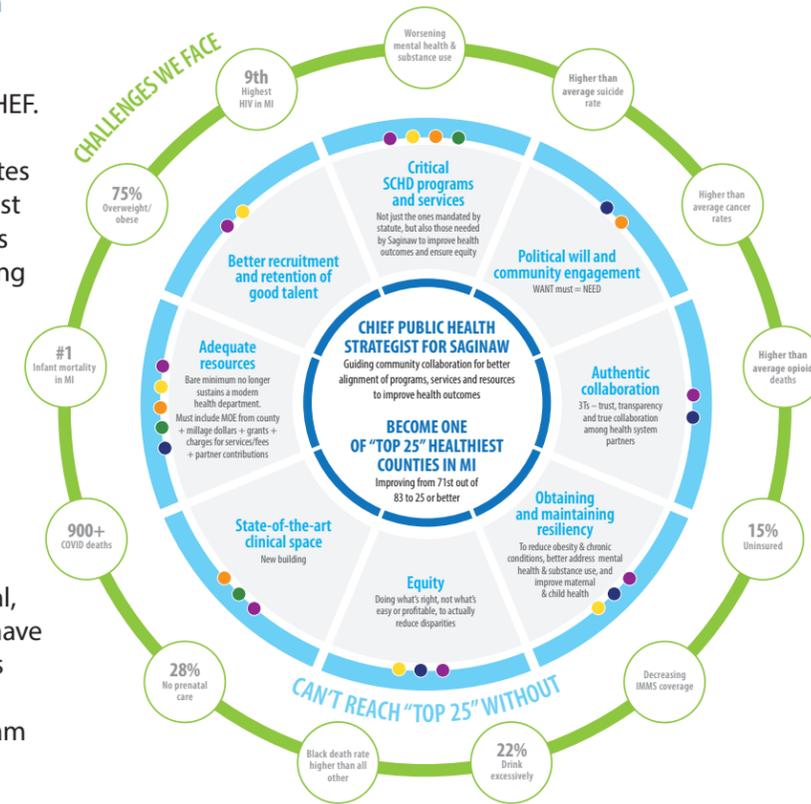
- **Obesity/chronic disease management**
- **Mental health/substance use**
- **Maternal/child health**

**BWELL Saginaw 5K Race/Walk, Family Fun Run and Healthy Living Expo** – our inaugural event on October 1 brought together hundreds of runners, walkers, cheerers, and interested community members. Planning for this event was a great experience, including receiving support from so many generous sponsors including Covenant HealthCare, Ascension St. Mary's, Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, United Way of Saginaw County, Central Michigan University College of Medicine, Saginaw Co. Community Mental Health Authority, Saginaw Co. Parks & Recreation, Molina, Health Advantage Credit Union, and Family First Credit Union.

**Receiving \$150K grant from Michigan Health Endowment Fund to pilot wellness initiative in schools** – Step Up & BWELL Saginaw "challenges" will commence throughout our school districts in January 2023, thanks to a generous grant from MHEF. Our school health resource advocates (HRAs) will lead student teams in logging their exercise minutes and eating a healthier diet while competing against other schools for prizes. In the end, the real prize is improving the health of our community by reaching families and children.

**Community Information Exchange (CIE)** – New moms in Saginaw County lack systematic access to the wide variety of support available to them resulting in poor outcomes and underutilized services. SCHD is rebuilding a coordinated CIE connecting every mom, every baby, every time to health department staff dedicated to improving access to health services and normalizing maternal, infant, and child care. There is no manual, moms have questions, and everyone referred by our providers and birthing hospital will receive a check-in to answer questions and to meet their needs (program enrollment, appointments, resources). Saginaw's maternal and child health partner coalition have come together ready to "wrap our arms" around families, and this CIE is the enabling platform we need to be successful.

**Mental health/substance abuse campaign** – Our community has benefited from a robust social media campaign focusing on self-care tools for mental health and substance use. Another phase of the campaign includes anti-stigma billboards enlisting the support of influential community members to help us share important messaging. Another grant for 2022-23 will enable the campaign to grow and continue reducing the stigma surrounding mental health & substance use.



# THE BWell SAGINAW PARTNER COALITION INCLUDES:

Ascension St. Mary's

CMU Health

Covenant HealthCare

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers

HealthSource Saginaw

MiHIA

Saginaw Community Foundation

Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority

Saginaw County Health Department

Saginaw Intermediate School District

United Way of Saginaw County

Let your voice **BHeard**  
BWell, Saginaw needs your input on what the health needs are in the community.

Tell us what you think  
BWellSaginaw.org  
Paper copies of the survey are also available in the health department lobby. SCAN Me!

Complete this 10-minute survey and be entered to win a \$250 visa gift card!

**BWELL** Saginaw

**The BWell Saginaw Partner Coalition** collected more than 1,500 responses to the 2022 Community Health Assessment representing a wide cross section of the county's population. The data is currently under analysis and will be shared community-wide in early 2023.

## OTHER HEALTH DEPARTMENT SERVICES PIVOT

Like other county buildings, we closed the health department and were not able to offer traditional healthcare services from our clinics during the pandemic. Many non-nursing staff were recruited for COVID-19 duties.

### Environmental Health and Other Non-Nursing Staff Shift, Guide...Even Direct Traffic at Vaccination Clinics

Few health professionals pivoted as sharply as non-nursing health department staff such as Environmental Health (EH) inspectors. COVID-19 closed restaurants, cancelled events, and ground new construction to a halt. Instead, the EH crew performed contact training – spending hours on the phone to help control the spread of COVID-19 by making people aware of their exposure and helping them understand their risks. They were often joined by Hearing & Vision screening experts and other health department staff. As more nurses came on board, our intrepid non-nursing staff shifted to wellness checks and recovery tracking.

During this time, the May 2020 flood required EH expertise to protect ground water and to set up and inspect shelters, assess damages, and assist with wells and septic systems impacted in James and Spaulding Townships.

Eventually, restaurant inspections were conducted via FaceTime to maintain food safety. Interpreting the cumbersome executive orders (EOs) for restaurant and venue occupancy and investigating EO compliance complaints grew increasingly challenging – at a time when staff were needed to help with mass vaccination clinic logistics. Many spent hours outside in the winter cold directing cars into drive-thru clinics.

While taxing and overwhelming at times, COVID-19 duties brought out the very best in our non-nursing staff. Their roles throughout the pandemic were vital, valued, and essential for protecting Saginaw County on many levels.

### Public Health Lab Performs Critical Surveillance and Testing

Before COVID-19, Saginaw's public health laboratory was recognized as a key part of the regional laboratory response network for bioterrorism. That capacity dwindled with decreasing funding over the years leading up to COVID-19. However, the skill set remained.

Saginaw was the first county to submit a COVID-19 sample to the state lab for analysis. The state would subsequently provide us with new equipment and resources to run more samples for PCR testing with 24-hour results. A lengthy, methodical and successful remodel occurred throughout the pandemic in and around the lab. Staff became the county's champions for equitable access to 24-hour PCR test results and grew a vital testing hub for long-term care facilities, shelters, travelers, and districts – including the serial antigen “test to stay” and “test to play” programs at multiple county schools.

# RETURNING TO MORE TRADITIONAL SERVICES

## Harm Reduction

The Saginaw County Health Department was instrumental in shining a light on harm reduction thanks to the 50-foot mural on the side of our building created by Michigan artist Kevin Burdick. The mural was part of a harm reduction project funded by a grant received by the Saginaw Community Foundation. The mural is inspired by local participants of the PEER 360 Recovery Alliance and is designed to deliver a message of hope for those who struggle with opioid use and recovery. The project has other components as well, including emergency responder training.

“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.

For some, engagement in harm reduction services is the first step toward “being well.” Please join the health department and the community foundation in celebrating opportunities to impact lives and improve our community.

## Region’s First Narcan Vending Machine

In 2020, 2,171 Michiganders died of opioid overdose – 55 in Saginaw County alone. In response to this growing public health concern, a vending machine was installed at the Saginaw County Health Department. It is the first of its kind within the Great Lakes Bay Region and a vital tool to address the opioid crisis and the stigma of substance use.

At no charge, the vending machine dispenses: 1) fentanyl test strips to detect the presence of fentanyl in street drugs, and 2) Naloxone (also known as Narcan), a life-saving opioid overdose-reversal tool bystanders can use to revive an individual long enough to get paramedics on the scene. These products are free to anyone – no questions asked and no identification required – Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm, in the SCHED lobby.

The vending machine and its contents are designed for anyone, including friends, family, and the general public who know or interact with someone at risk for opioid overdose including those:

- Taking high doses of opioids as prescribed for pain
- Living with opioid use disorder
- Misusing opioids prescribed for others or using illicit opioids like heroin or fentanyl



It is part of an ongoing partnership between SCHED and the CAREing Quick Response Team (made up of the Michigan Health Improvement Alliance, Ten16 Recovery Network, Mobile Medical Response and other partners). Program support for the vending machine was funded by a grant from MDHHS.

Improving access to life-saving harm reduction tools is a growing part of SCHED’s work. Naloxone is vital to battling the opioid crisis, and lethal doses of fentanyl are turning up in more and more substances. This vending machine is an incredible opportunity to get help and hope into the hands of not just people who use opioids or other substances, but every community member. None of us know when we may need to save a life.

Saginaw now joins Ann Arbor, Jackson and several northern communities offering free Narcan and fentanyl test strips from a vending machine.

paraphernalia. Syringe services programs (SSPs) allow drug users to exchange their used syringes for new, sterile needles and works, thereby reducing the spread of infectious diseases that can be transmitted via needle sharing while putting them on a path toward education and treatment.

## Regional Monkeypox Taskforce Addresses Messaging to Key Audiences

SCHED is participating in a newly formed regional taskforce spearheaded by Great Lakes Bay Pride and including health department peers from Midland, Bay, and Central Michigan, MiHIA, and Great Lakes Bay Health Centers.

Central to the work of the taskforce is helping our communities understand and assess the risks surrounding monkeypox while informing them about vaccination and treatment options – without stigma, just facts. Our guidance on monkeypox – just as it has been with COVID-19 – is designed to help people make informed choices.

We continue to offer the monkeypox vaccine to those who qualify and are working with local healthcare providers on TPOXX treatment protocol and dispensing requirements.

## COVID-19 Guidance for 2022-2023 School Year Reflects Shift in Approach Back to Proactive Public Health

In the school setting, management of COVID-19 has transitioned away from a pandemic emergency response model toward a more standard approach used in the management and control of other respiratory viral diseases like influenza. Communicating this to our county’s school districts continues to require a robust effort – made easier with the SCHED team of health resource advocates (HRAs) stationed in most districts.

Though subject to change with fluctuations in disease transmission – right now – in the preK-12 school setting, the focus is on basic illness prevention and detecting and responding to in-school clusters of cases, ongoing transmission in the school, and outbreaks. Management will rely less on things like case investigation, contact tracing, and quarantining of students or staff following school exposures.



## Room 202 Opens with Syringe Exchange Services and More

Another exciting harm reduction initiative spearheaded by SCHED is our new Room 202 clinic. This space provides our community with a syringe exchange program.

The syringe program was made possible by another Saginaw “community-wide effort” to change ordinances allowing users to exchange syringes without penalty for carrying drug





# Saginaw County HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1600 N. Michigan Avenue, Saginaw, MI 48602

P: 989-758-3800

F: 989-758-3750

[www.saginawpublichealth.org](http://www.saginawpublichealth.org)

