



LA CROSSE COUNTY
Health Department
Nationally Accredited

CHIP Progress Report

January - March
2025

Health Priorities

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) includes 3 health priority areas. Our community created the goals that we work on each year. The Health Department puts together a community-driven action plan to address the greatest needs in La Crosse County.



Behavioral Health Vision

Build a community that prioritizes protective factors for positive childhood experiences and resilient communities.



Healthy Environment Vision

Collaborate for solutions that build healthier and more accessible neighborhoods where people are connected to what they need where they live.



Access to Care Vision

Grow a system of care that represents and supports underserved peoples to get the right care at the right time.

Behavioral Health

The Behavioral Health Goal has three objectives. Over time, the work aims to improve mental health and decrease substance use, suicide, and self-harm. This quarterly update describes the activity from January through March 2025.

Progress: What has been done?



Youth substance use prevention

- Staff held a **pilot of the INDEPTH program** - alternative to suspension program to reduce tobacco use for youth. Holmen Middle and High School participated with ongoing use of an online program for the middle school students.
- Drug Free Communities staff **presented to the municipalities board** on hemp-derived THC retail availability in La Crosse County.
- Staff are **finalizing their survey on substance use risk perception** that will be sent out to all families who have children ages 11-18.



Mental health and resiliency

- Family Health staff are in the process of changing the perinatal mental health screening that WIC families receive at their appointments. They have developed a flow chart and policy and procedure for the PHQ-2 and PHQ-9 screenings. The next step is to start training staff on the new process.



Self-harm and substance use prevention

- Staff attended the Homeless Connect event along with other Alliance to HEAL members. They **handed out 48 doses of Narcan, 25 Fentanyl test kits, and 50 Fentanyl test strips.**
- **Increased Narcan access points in 3 new locations** including the Main Library, Cia Siab, and Our Saviors Lutheran Church.
- Applied for and received the SOR grant which will be used to help fund **harm reduction and prevention efforts for substance use.**
- The Dental Pain Program staff have **maintained their existing relationships** with 3 dental practices and **over 50%** of dental pain calls have received treatment this quarter.
- Staff attend monthly Community of Practice meetings with the Southwestern WI Gun Shop/Safe Storage Community of Practice which is focusing on the **Governor's Challenge to prevent suicide.**
- Suicide Death Review staff are developing best-practice recommendations based on **local data, community input, and research.**

Healthy Environment

The Healthy Environment Goal has three objectives. Over time, the work aims to improve housing, food access, and opportunities for physical activity. This quarterly update describes the activity from January through March 2025.

Progress: What has been done?



Safe, affordable, and supportive housing

- Environmental health staff created a **newsletter** for owners of manufactured home communities and provided educational materials for the residents about **home health and safety**.
- Social worker and sanitarians work together to provide resources and education to residents with a housing complaint, such as **free carbon monoxide detectors from La Crosse Fire Department**.
- January was Radon Action Month and we distributed **143 radon test kits with a 75% return rate** where people have tested their homes. We celebrated the month with media outreach and education.



Year-round access to healthy food

- The Food Resource Guide was updated and includes information on the **5 food pantries** that use the same federal resource, called TEFAP.
- Staff are working with a UWL professor and student group to update the online **Food Resource Map**. The map will include additional information about grocery stores and convenience stores that accept SNAP dollars.



Increase opportunities for active transportation

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) staff hosted **Winter Walk to School Day** for 3 schools. Schools received education on safe winter walking and celebrated with hot chocolate at the end of their walk.
- Health Educators are working closely with **Logan Middle School PE classes** to provide pedestrian and bicycle safety during the school day.
- Middle school parents were surveyed to learn more about **barriers and safety concerns for walking and/or biking** to school on the northside of La Crosse. Results will be used to advocate for improvements in local committee meetings. Staff are included in the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Safe Kids coalition, Committee on Transit and Active Transportation, and the Technical Advisory Committee.
- The first quarter has been all about preparing for the **busy spring and summer** months where partner agencies have asked for help with events and education.

Access to Care

The Access to Care Goal has three objectives. Over time, the work aims to improve relationships, communication, and community-centered services. This quarterly update describes the activity from January through March 2025.

Progress: What has been done?



Increase access to clinical services

- Nursing staff is working closely with community health workers, health insurance, and healthcare partners to **increase vaccine rates** through clinics, home visits, and education.
- During the 2024-2025 school year, dental staff have provided dental sealants and fluoride varnish for **1200+ kids** through the Seal-A-Smile program.
- The **La Crosse Smiles** program is working with 5 schools this school year. **179 kids** received dental care at school. **56% of the kids** needed more dental care and were connected to a local dentist for follow-up care.
- Health department staff and healthcare partners are using shared messaging for **lead testing recommendations**. The team is encouraging two lead tests by 2 years of age for all children to match new guidelines.



Enhance organizational health literacy

- **Health literacy training materials** are being developed for the staff onboarding process.
- Staff are working on templates for the department to use in **public health campaigns** and other communication needs.



Increase connections to resources

- Health Department Social Workers assisted **215+ individuals with health insurance benefits** so far this year.
- Staff are increasing outreach opportunities by partnering with the Mobile Med Team, REACH Center, St. Clare's Health Mission, Vivent, Coulee Recovery Center, Hope Restores, and more. Education and resources are being brought throughout the community and in partner agency locations to **meet people where they are already gathering**.
- In 2025, the WI Well Woman program has enrolled **20 participants**. All enrollees are able to receive **free preventive cancer screenings** - mammograms and cervical screenings.