



**LA CROSSE COUNTY**  
Health Department  
Nationally Accredited

# CHIP Progress Report

October - December  
2024

## 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 October through December 2024.

## Progress: What has been done?



### Opioid harm-reduction work

- The Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) team has **reviewed 6 cases** this quarter. The committee wrapped up the end of the year with a transition to working on implementation of recommendations from the review process. The Alliance to HEAL workgroups have been actively **working on implementing 7 of the recommendations**.
- Staff continue their efforts with Narcan distribution. **90 doses** have been distributed this quarter. Staff have held **1 Narcan training with 10 attendees**.
- Fentanyl test strip distribution is new to the Health Department this year. **50 fentanyl test strips** were distributed this quarter.
- Health department staff have made **32 referrals** to community-based dental care for non-traumatic dental pain and **over half of the referrals have already received treatment**.



### Self-harm and suicide prevention work

- Staff joined the Southwestern WI Gun Shop/Safe Storage Community of Practice which is **focusing on the Governor's Challenge to prevent suicide**.
- The 2025 goal of the Suicide Death Review team is to focus on **development of an evidence-based recommendations list** based on the review data that has been collected in the last couple of years and can be worked on in the future.



### Culture change around substance use and mental health

- Staff were trained on the INDEPTH program - which is an alternative to suspension tool for tobacco use and can be used in a school or community setting. Implementation of the **INDEPTH program will begin in 2025**.
- Drug Free Communities staff have been **focusing on building partnerships** to work on efforts related to **hemp-derived THC** use among youth in La Crosse County. A presentation was put together on this subject and was shared with the board in December.

# 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 October through December 2024.

## Progress: What has been done?



### Safe, affordable, and supportive housing

- **Environmental health staff have adopted habitability standards** to use for all homes during a complaint inspection to create a uniform inspection process between municipal and county inspectors.
- We are working closely with the County Planning & Zoning Department staff on climate action and sustainability projects. Health Department staff will be connected with the **Housing Needs Assessment** planned for 2025.



### Year-round access to healthy food

- The Food and Nutrition Partners meeting highlighted the **YMCA Y on the Fly program and other YMCA resources**. The group also expanded to include Kwik Trip and students from the Viterbo Dietetic program.
- LCHD staff used the **Food Resource Map** to study the strengths and gaps in food access across the county. Two areas that have **less access for healthy, affordable, and/or fresh foods** are on the northside and the downtown area of La Crosse. These are also areas that have been identified by community members as having less access and more barriers to healthy foods.



### Increase opportunities for active transportation

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) staff participated in **25+ walking and biking educational events** throughout the year. Events included International Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day, library summer reading program, city-wide bike rodeo, railroad safety, and school-related encouragement activities.
- The health department actively participates in local committees to **advocate for safety and active transportation options**. Staff are included in the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Safe Kids coalition, Committee on Transit and Active Transportation, and the Technical Advisory Committee.
- SRTS staff and Logan Middle School students were part of a **City Planning class** at the school. The student project included a design of one section in the city and were challenged to **include active transportation** into their plans this year.

# 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 October through December 2024.

## Progress: What has been done?



### Build relationships and increase community engagement

- Hmong Breastfeeding videos have been viewed **632 times** so far. With continued education and encouragement in 2024, breastfeeding initiation has **increased steadily** among Hmong WIC participants from **43% up to 56%**.
- Wisconsin Well Woman Program had **40 new enrollees and 26 women that re-enrolled in 2024**. Program participants receive free cancer screenings and health insurance to cover a cancer diagnosis for those in need.
- The **La Crosse Smiles** program visited Hintgen and Hamilton/SOTA during the first half of the school year. Almost **100 kids received dental care at school** with over 40% being connected to a local dentist for follow-up care.
- Public health nurses are continuing to **build relationships** with community organizations to connect with underserved populations through **St. Clare's Health Mission, the Warming Shelter, community health workers, local health insurance vendors, and WIC clients**. Services provided include vaccines, lead testing, fluoride varnish, and resource coordination.



### Build organizational health literacy

- **35%** of the Health Department website pages have been revised using the **health literacy standards**. Staff will continue to revise pages to create an easy to understand source of information for the public.
- Staff ran a short **public health campaign for testing homes for Radon** that focused on education through social media, a TV interview, and free radon test kits during Radon Action Month.



### Provide health services in community spaces

- Social workers and nurses are **collaborating to provide services** to unsheltered individuals. The first **Winter Homeless Outreach Event** is being planned for January 2025. Continued outreach with the Street Med team happens on Wednesday mornings to build ongoing relationship with those needing services for insurance, food assistance, and other clinical services.
- In 2024, health department staff participated in **over 35 outreach events** to connect people to needed resources in the community.