

INTRODUCTION

Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH) provides a range of services as it works to protect and improve the health of people and the environment in Ramsey County. SPRCPH is one of the largest local public health departments in the state. The department traces its origins to the appointment of the first public health officer by the city of Saint Paul in 1854. Saint Paul and Ramsey County's previously separate public health departments merged in 1997 through a joint powers agreement. The department is nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board.

- Through federal and state mandates, the department works with community partners to:
- Prevent the spread of disease.
- Protect against environmental hazards.
- Prevent injuries.
- Promote and encourage healthy behaviors.
- Plan and respond to health emergencies.
- Ensure the quality and accessibility of health services.

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health fulfills these responsibilities, in part, by collecting and analyzing health trends and concerns that can be addressed through public health programs, strategic planning, and community action. SPRCPH is pleased to present the 2018 Ramsey County Community Health Assessment. To reflect the ever-changing, increasingly diverse population and its characteristics, the assessment selectively highlights emerging issues and trends in local population health.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT?

A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is the study of local population health, which identifies key health conditions and needs among county residents. This CHA process included community engagement with more than 2100 residents about health experiences and concerns as well as data and trend analysis from a variety of sources.

The Community Health Assessment includes more than 120 health topics, organized into 16 topic areas, that together describe conditions of health across Ramsey County. These topics are formatted as 2-page summaries, each of which describes: what is being measured and why it is important; how we compare locally to regional, state or national benchmarks; health disparities by race, ethnicity, geography, gender, or age; and what Ramsey County government is doing to improve the health of the community regarding each health topic.

This document is intended to be a reference for policy makers, residents, and community leaders to identify and understand local health issues. The assessment also serves to:

- Improve our understanding of community experience, particularly as it affects individual, family, and community health;
- Engage the work of advancing health equity with hope for the future;
- Share information that supports people and organizations in Ramsey County developing their own plans for improving health;
- Guide county and department priorities, strategic planning and quality improvement;
- Fulfill state law (MN Statute 145A) and national accreditation requirements.

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LIMITATIONS

While the assessment presents many important issues and topics, it does not present every possible health-related issue. In some cases, the kinds of information that could inform a county health assessment are simply not available. This may be because the data is not collected at the local level, or not stratified by race/ethnicity, income or sexual orientation. When race/ethnicity data are gathered, analysis may be further limited due to a lack of data stratification by more specific racial categories, such as U.S.-born vs. African-born for the Black/African American population, or the many ethnicities and cultures represented in the category of Asian/Pacific Islander.¹ In other cases, especially when it comes to understanding the interactions of the many factors that contribute to health, data are lacking in part because the theoretical models are still being developed.

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PROVIDE FEEDBACK



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