

# Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

2019 – 2023

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Updated August 2022

## Introduction

The Ramsey County Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) are required by state law (MN Stat. §145A) with oversight from the Minnesota Department of Health, as well as the national Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The Ramsey County Board serves as the Community Health Board for Ramsey County in fulfillment this statute. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH), referred to as “Public Health” and “the Public Health department” throughout this document, had reached final board approval of priorities and had begun initial implementation scoping as of late 2019. Due to timing leading into the COVID-19 pandemic response, work to implement the Community Health Improvement Plan began but was not documented using a formal plan. This document shall serve as interim CHIP publication to serve out the remaining planning cycle through calendar year 2023.



Public Health completes a Community Health Assessment, a Department Strategic Plan, and a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) once every five years. The Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan are county-level processes led by the Public Health department. Through the Community Health Assessment (CHA) the department studies health conditions and needs among county residents through qualitative and quantitative data analysis, including more than 120 topics that describe conditions of health across Ramsey County. Public Health has placed a high level of intentional effort on developing relationships and partnerships to strengthen integration across the county’s Health and Wellness Service Team (HWST) as well as departments across the county enterprise. Analysis and engagement through this assessment helps strengthen shared understanding and language about health conditions and racial equity.

## Community Priorities for Action

In late 2018, the Community Health Assessment findings were shared with the Ramsey County Community Health Services Advisory Committee (CHSAC), which is an advisory committee to the public health department, appointed jointly by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners and Saint Paul City Council. The Advisory Committee then completed a prioritization exercise in January 2019, which highlighted poverty, homelessness, access to health care, youth experiences, mental health, health in a changing climate, and diabetes.

As part of Public Health’s department strategic planning process, staff engaged elected County Commissioners, the County Manager, Deputy County Managers and department heads, asking what the top community health concerns are among those we serve. Scores from the CHSAC prioritization were combined with community engagement results from: Community Health Assessment Survey (2018, n=2100); Strategic Planning organizational leadership engagement (2018, n=21); Strategic Planning community engagement (n=78); and Strategic Planning Elected Board Engagement. These engagements emphasized racial equity, healthy food, active living, access to health care, mental health, violence prevention, homelessness and

housing instability, and opioid prevention. Engagements with community residents, advisers, and county staff leadership affirmed work the public health department has been co-leading with community action teams in recent years. Community and partner engagement additionally highlighted emerging priorities among county residents, not previously in this list: climate change, homelessness, opioids.

Community Priorities for Action:

- Goal 1: Racial and Health Equity
- Goal 2: Healthy Eating, Active Living, and Tobacco-Free Living (SHIP Initiatives)
- Goal 3: Access to Health Care Services
- Goal 4: Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Goal 5: Violence Prevention
- Goal 6: Climate Change
- Goal 7: Homelessness and Housing Stability
- Goal 8: Opioid Overdose Prevention

Within each priority narrative below, specific measures are included. However, much of the measurement framework intended for CHIP implementation was temporarily suspended due to intermittent pauses in implementation, measurement, or both. The Department Leadership Team held a reflection session early in 2022, which captured some strengths and challenges across public health programs and initiatives. Insights from that discussion are included in this plan where applicable to add context from CHIP work during pandemic response.

## Considerations for Social Determinants of Health

Within each community priority identified for action, social determinants of health were considered at each stage of the assessment, planning and implementation process. High level summary for each included in this list.

- Goal 1: Racial and Health Equity
  - Establishes system level goals for department staffing to reflect communities served
  - Incorporates Racial and Health Equity Liaison into department policy and decision-making processes
- Goal 2: Healthy Eating, Active Living, and Tobacco-Free Living (SHIP Initiatives)
  - Healthy Eating – Breastfeeding: Hmong and African American lactation
  - Healthy Eating, Community Agriculture: Ramsey County zip codes with Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) in Q1
  - Healthy Eating, Food Security: SVI Q1, emphasis on Black or African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic or Latino, and other Populations of Color
  - Healthy Eating, WIC and SHIP Collaboration: Focus on food access for residents eligible for Medical Assistance (multiple social determinants of health)
  - Active Living, All Abilities Network: Active Living options for People with Disabilities
- Goal 3: Access to Health Care Services
  - People without health insurance
  - People with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses
  - Opioid overdose resources for populations experiencing recent surge in overdose hospitalizations and deaths, African American and American Indian residents

- COVID-19 and other vaccine access for people with transportation barriers or homebound
- Goal 4: Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - Capacity support for culturally specific mental health and wellbeing resources
  - Medical preventative screening resources for those with serious and persistent mental health diagnoses
- Goal 5: Violence Prevention
  - People who are currently or recently involved with the justice system
  - African American males who are currently or previously involved with justice system
  - Social Vulnerability Index in Quartile 1 (zip codes)
  - People directly affected by gun violence in Ramsey County
- Goal 6: Climate Change
  - Vulnerability and resilience focus areas (zip codes, neighborhoods), closely related to CDC SVI with additional factors
  - Environmental justice focus for low-income people, SVI Quartile 1 zip codes
- Goal 7: Homelessness and Housing Stability
  - Policy focus for housing stability work to move upstream, less reactive
  - Focus on chronically homeless, people with disabilities, current/recent justice-involvement
- Goal 8: Opioid Overdose Prevention
  - Opioid overdose resources for populations experiencing recent surge in hospitalizations and deaths, African American and American Indian residents
  - Access and support for people currently housed in Ramsey County Correctional Facilities

## Process for Monitoring and Revision

Monitoring and revision of this plan occurs at the action team level within each team's regular meeting schedule. Action teams typically meet between once per month and once per quarter. Each action team reviews and updates goals and outcomes 1-2 times per year. Strategy changes may be implemented throughout each year, in which case they are updated in the team's workplan and reported annually by each Action Team. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic response, Action Team members were convened as a whole-plan implementation cohort every 1-2 years. During this convening, action team members reflect on what is going well, areas for improvement, and identify emerging cross-functional and collaborative opportunities. This type of meeting was put on hold after the 2019 convening and will resume in 2023. The group anticipates using these meetings to highlight progress and success stories and to update measures for the next implementation period.

## Goal 1: Racial and Health Equity

Public Health Racial and Health Equity Leadership Team (R-HELT)

Ramsey County will develop a countywide approach to improve race-based disproportional outcomes by deconstructing systemic and institutional barriers to be more fair, inclusive, and transparent in how we share decision-making power with residents, communities, and employees to build a more equitable organization.

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health has recognized Racial and Health Equity as a top priority for many years. Within the current planning framework, this priority is listed as number one in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), Public Health Strategic Plan, and County Strategic Plan.

Public Health aligns itself with the Ramsey County strategic plan with additional measurable outcomes at department and program levels. Policy and systems change

These measures are selected but not yet available for reporting, and data will be included on the next annual plan update. The public health department reports on the following measures in partnership with the County Human Resources department, included in the [Ramsey County 2022 Strategic Plan](#):

- Percentage of employees who complete racial equity trainings; Target: 100%
- Percentage of new employees who complete racial equity training; Target: 100%
- Number of interview panels with residents on interview panel; Target not yet set
- Number of residents included in interview panels; Target not yet set

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

1. Build and nourish R-HELT and its identity
  - 1.1. 90% of R-HELT members will increase their knowledge of cultural communities residing in Ramsey County and racial inequities in Ramsey County to further the expertise of R-HELT
  - 1.2. 90% of R-HELT members will increase their knowledge of other R-HELT members about each other (lived experiences; interest in racial and health equity) to enhance positive working relationships.
2. Increase staff capacity to promote racial and health equity and apply in daily work
  - 2.1. 95% of SPRCPH permanent employees will complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment including the post-test individual conference.
  - 2.2. 100% of SPRCPH divisions will have annual plans for using the IDI results of their staff to increase cultural competency.
  - 2.3 80% of SPRCPH employees understand what it means to use a racial and health equity lens approach in their job.
3. Provide a supportive work environment for all SPRCPH staff
  - 3.1. 95% of employees report that SPRCPH provides a supportive workplace from discrimination based on protected class.
4. Develop structure in place to ensure racial and health equity accountability (support, integration, communication)
  - 4.1. R-HELT will review 90% of SPRCPH - wide policies to ensure they address underlying racial and health inequities and recommend new policies that are needed.
  - 4.2. R-HELT will ensure a racial and health equity analysis is applied to 98% of SPRCPH 2-year budget reviews.

- 4.3. R-HELT will partner with 90% of department-wide workgroups/ teams to ensure that racial and health equity is incorporated into their workplans.
- 4.4. Review 85% HR hiring policies to ensure and advocate for crediting community/ cultural experience in hiring process.
- 4.5. 90% of SPRCPH supervisors will have tools to evaluate staff attitudes and capacity regarding racial and health equity when conducting annual performance evaluations.

### Implementation responsibility

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health’s Racial and Health Equity Leadership Team (R-HELT) is a chartered organization comprised of department staff and community representatives, accountable to the Department Leadership Team (DLT) and the county-level Health Equity Core Team. The Public Health Racial Equity Liaison is responsible for coordinating the group, facilitating workplan development, and reporting on progress. Team members responsible for each objective and strategy within the R-HELT workplan are listed on the workplan, included as appendix to this document.

### Plans for policy and system level changes

During the COVID-19 pandemic response, Ramsey County leadership, in conjunction Public Health leaders, established the “Equity Action Circle” to serve as advisory for steering racial and health equity considerations during the pandemic and beyond. New positions and organizational structure were established to support staff and community in advancing racial equity:

- Racial and Health Equity Liaison positions established in all departments within the Health and Wellness Services team (over 50% of county budget and personnel: Public Health, Social Services, Financial Assistance Services, Community Corrections, Veterans Services, Health and Wellness Admin)
- Racial and Health Equity Core Team established at service team level, to coordinate advisory and oversight functions across departments
- Innovations in food justice, housing policy, and health care access were established with a racial and health equity first approach
- Commitments at county and department level toward raising staff awareness of structural racism aim to process all staff through updated diversity, equity, and inclusion training curriculum
- New initiatives for direct COVID services and collaboration with Trusted Cultural and Community Messengers programs were established as infrastructure to address culturally specific and appropriate services and information sharing across communities the county serves.

## Goal 2: Healthy Eating, Active Living, and Tobacco-Free Living

Public Health Healthy Communities, Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) Team

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health received funding from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) to work with a variety of partners to improve the health of our community. SHIP supported partnerships are designed to create healthier systems and environments where people live, work, learn and play.

### Population Health Measures

- Decrease percentage of residents who are food insecure
- Decrease percentage of children who are food insecure
- Increase percentage of adults who consume daily fruits and vegetables
- Increase percentage of youth (9<sup>th</sup> grade) who consume daily fruits and vegetables
- Increase percentage of Ramsey County adults who report any exercise, past 30 days
- Decrease percentage of Ramsey County residents who currently use tobacco

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

The following list of measurable outcomes include broad policy and system-level changes as well as smaller scale initiatives.

1. Increase healthy eating
  - 1.1 Increase access and implementation of Breastfeeding in workplaces and schools; Measure(s): support 2 local schools to become Breastfeeding Friendly sites; Create or improve at least 13 employee lactation rooms within Ramsey County facilities.
  - 1.2 Increase understanding and reduce barriers to urban agriculture in the City of Saint Paul and all municipal jurisdictions in the county; Measure(s): implement a land use scan and at least 1 test site for public land converted to community garden
  - 1.3 Increase food security; Measure(s): #/% clients receiving Screen-and-Intervene screening at public health clinics; update and re-publish a food resources map
  - 1.4 Increase healthy eating in the Justice System; Measure(s): new strategy, measures being developed
  - 1.5 Increase fruit and vegetable consumption among WIC recipients; Measure(s): reach 14 corner stores to implement increased fruit/vegetable offerings; increase WIC participants' use of fruits and vegetables.
  - 1.6 Increase access to healthy food options in employment settings; Measure(s): #/% small businesses that implement changes; # employees across all sites with improved options.
2. Increase physical activity
  - 2.1 Sustain and expand the All Abilities Transportation Network; Measure(s): increased bicycle and pedestrian facilities in areas of high social vulnerability index (SVI Quartile 1)
  - 2.2 Increase access to trails and outdoor recreation within Ramsey County Parks; Measure(s): in development
3. Reduce use of and exposure to tobacco
  - 3.1 Increase municipal support for tobacco-free living through city policies; Measure(s): #/% of municipal governments that implement tobacco-free policies in public spaces

- 3.2 Decrease tobacco use in county-operated public spaces; Measure(s): Establish county ordinance to prohibit tobacco use on all county properties

### Implementation responsibility

Each area of Goal 2 implementation is co-led by public health staff in collaboration with at least one additional agency. All areas of implementation include community representatives. Collaborative partners for each area of work are listed below:

- 1.1 Breastfeeding – Healthy Communities staff coordination
  - Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition
  - Twin Cities Regional Breastfeeding Coalition
  - Hmong Breastfeeding Coalition
  - Ramsey County HR, Property Management, Communications, Employee Wellness Coordinator
- 1.2 Urban Agriculture – Healthy Communities and City of Saint Paul staff coordination
  - Twin Cities Agricultural Land Trust
  - All cities in Ramsey County
  - Ramsey County GIS services
  - Land access organizations
  - Urban Roots Farm
- 1.3 Food Security – Community Health Equity – Emergency Food Systems program staff
  - Food shelves, free meal programs, hunger organizations
  - Hunger Solutions
  - Farmers Markets in Ramsey County
  - Public health clinics, WIC, family health, mental health clinic
  - Ramsey County schools
  - Ramsey County Financial Assistance Services
  - Ramsey County GIS
- 1.4 Healthy Eating in the Justice System – Healthy Communities staff coordination
  - Ramsey County Community Corrections
  - Ramsey County Correctional Facility
- 1.5 Fruit and vegetable consumption by WIC participants – Healthy Communities staff coordination
  - Ramsey County WIC
  - Hennepin County WIC
  - MDH WIC
  - City of Minneapolis SHIP
  - BrightSide Produce
- 1.6 Healthy Food at Employment Sites
  - Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and 20 member businesses
  - Ramsey County HR
- 2.1 Sustain and Expand the Ramsey County All Abilities Network – Healthy Communities staff coordination
  - Ramsey County Public Works
  - Toole Design



- Community engagement with Public Housing Authority residents and through the Saint Paul Pedestrian Planning process
- 2.2 Increase Access to Trails in Ramsey County Parks
  - Ramsey County Parks and Recreation
- 3.1, 3.2 Decrease Tobacco Use in Public Spaces
  - Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
  - City of Saint Paul
  - All Municipal Governments within Ramsey County

The detailed workplan for this Goal area is written in a separate document as an Excel-formatted workbook.

### Plans for policy and system level changes

Under this CHIP Goal area, nearly all listed ‘measurable outcomes and priorities for action’ represent a policy or systems-level change. For example, land use policy changes are part of the food security and access strategies, policies that make it feasible for residents and community groups to produce their own local food without having to purchase additional property. Breastfeeding measures all aim to change organizational policies and amenities to provide easy, culturally appropriate and accessible resources that support lactation practices on a job site or within a public health clinic setting. Tobacco policies have been implemented across county-owned properties, an evidence-based system-level change that reduces exposure to second-hand smoke in public spaces.

Racial and health equity considerations are incorporated throughout this Goal area, giving priority attention to geographies within the county that have higher Social Vulnerability Index, and prioritizing services and pilot programming for American Indians, African Americans, Asian American People, Latino and Hispanic people, and other populations of color.

### Goal 3: Access to Health Care Services

Public Health Clinical Services, Correctional Health, Health Protection Divisions; Ramsey County Social Services, Corrections, Sheriff's Departments

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health partners with health care providers, community organizations, and other Ramsey County departments to ensure residents get needed, affordable, culturally- and linguistically-appropriate, acceptable, and effective health services in a timely manner. As part of its core function, SPRCPH provides Clinical Services to qualified individuals for low- or no cost. The public health clinic offers Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention, Refugee Health, and Clinic 555, which includes Sexual Health Services, Tuberculosis Control Services, Syringe Services, and Immunizations. In addition to assuring access to these health care services, Public Health focuses this CHIP priority in the following areas:

- Access to Medication Assisted Treatment for people with Opioid Use Disorder, housed at Ramsey County Correctional Facilities
- Access to physical health prevention services (diabetes and heart health focus) for people with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses
- Access to COVID-19 vaccine services for homebound individuals and those with financial, language, and transportation barriers.

#### Population Health Measures

- Decrease percentage of residents who were uninsured past year
- Decrease percentage of gap between uninsured American Indian, African American, Asian American, Latino or Hispanic residents and their White/Caucasian peers
- Reduce percentage of residents who can't get medical care when they need it
- Increase percentage of residents with one or more doses of COVID-19 vaccine
- Increase percentage of residents who are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines

#### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

Selected measures for this Goal are described, but data and indicators are being developed.

1. Medication Assisted Treatment for people with Opioid Use Disorder housed at RCCF
  - 1.1 Increase the portion of RCCF residents with OUD who receive MAT
2. Prevention screening and services for people with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses
  - 2.1 Increase portion of existing clients who have received prevention screening
3. Access to COVID-19 vaccine services for homebound individuals and those with financial, language, and transportation barriers
  - 3.1 Sustain average response rate to providing homebound vaccine equal/less than 7 days

#### Implementation responsibility

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health shares staffing and implementation responsibility for the above three initiatives:

- Medication Assisted Treatment: Led by Public Health's Correctional Health Division, and partnering with Social Services, Corrections, and the Sheriff's Department. Members of these departments formed a committee that has also included My Home Inc. and other community-based organizations at the onset of developing this program.

- Prevention screening for those with Severe and Persistent Mental Health Diagnosis: Led by Ramsey County Social Services in partnership with Public Health Medical Director and Healthy Communities Division
- Access to COVID-19 vaccine services for homebound individuals and those with financial, language, and transportation barriers: Led by Public Health Clinical Services and Health Protection Divisions in partnership with Ramsey County Social Services

#### Plans for policy and system level changes

During the COVID-19 pandemic response, Ramsey County leadership, in conjunction Public Health leaders, established the “Equity Action Circle” (EAC) to serve as advisory for steering racial and health equity considerations during the pandemic and beyond. Access to Health Care Services is a primary focus for the EAC, and the group established the Health Care Working Group to support that priority. The initiatives described in this priority are all cross-cutting system-level efforts led or co-led by the Public Health department to advance improved access for all.

## Goal 4: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Public Health Healthy Communities Division, Medical Director, Ramsey County Social Services

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health partners with community organizations and other county departments to support mental health and wellbeing in Ramsey County. The primary areas of focus that Public Health leads or supports are:

- Promote mental health and wellbeing for residents and staff
- Increase social connectedness, expand the continuum of cultural healing-centered engagement and mental well-being
- Improve clinical services offered to individuals with Severe and Persistent Mental Health Diagnoses

### Population Health Measures

- Decrease rate of Mental Health ER visits
- Decrease adolescent and adult rates of suicide death
- Decrease percentage of adults who report 14 or more days poor mental health, past month
- Decrease percentage of 9<sup>th</sup> graders who report past year suicide attempt

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

Selected activities for this Goal are described, but measures and data indicators are being developed.

1. Promote mental health and wellbeing for residents and staff
  - Real Talk wellbeing events
  - Newsletter communications with residents and staff
2. Increase social connectedness, expand the continuum of cultural healing-centered engagement and mental well-being
  - Cultural Healing Summit
3. Prevention screening and services for people with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses
  - 3.1 Increase portion of existing clients who have received prevention screening

### Implementation responsibility

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health staff in the Healthy Communities Division co-lead and coordinate mental health and wellbeing promotion activities and Cultural Healing Summit. Prevention screening for those with Severe and Persistent Mental Health Diagnosis is led by Ramsey County Social Services in partnership with Public Health Medical Director and Healthy Communities Division.

### Plans for policy and system level changes

During the COVID-19 pandemic response, Ramsey County leadership, in conjunction Public Health leaders, established the “Equity Action Circle” (EAC) to serve as advisory for steering racial and health equity considerations during the pandemic and beyond. Access to Health Care Services is a primary focus for the EAC, and the group established the Health Care Working Group to support that priority. The initiatives described in this priority are all cross-cutting system-level efforts led or co-led by the Public Health department to advance improved access for all.

## Goal 5: Violence Prevention

Public Health Healthy Communities Division, Ramsey County Healing Streets Initiative

Ramsey County invests in local initiatives that address persistent and recently dire rates of gun violence and related trauma. The Healing Streets Program provides immediate support after an incidence of violence to prevent further violence. Community mediators and grief workers from this program have worked with more than 500 families or individuals on grief supportive services, collaborating with the county's Transforming Systems Together initiative.

Community mediators' focus is working with young people currently or recently in custody at a correctional facility to support these youth in transitioning away from gun violence.

### Population Health Measures

- Decrease rate of firearm injuries
- Decrease rate of deaths involving a firearm
- Decrease rate of violent crime involving firearms

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

Measures and indicators for the program's success are under development.

### Implementation responsibility

Public Health Healthy Communities Division leads the Healing Streets Work in collaboration with community partner organizations, the county's Transforming Systems Together office, and the City of Saint Paul.

### Plans for policy and system level changes

The Healing Streets Program is established as a community-first public health and public safety initiative that is shared between Ramsey County and City of Saint Paul governments and community partner organizations. The initiative aims to expand our public safety framework beyond simply responding to emergencies after they happen, to making strategic investments toward reducing the number of emergencies we endure in the first place. System-level work toward that goal includes the Community Ambassadors Initiative, which redirects at-risk youth to Right Track, a local government employment program.

## Goal 6: Climate Change

Public Health Environmental Health Division, Energy Governance Team

Climate change continues to impact the health and well-being of Ramsey County residents, with severity in racially and ethnically diverse and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Ramsey County is committed to leading in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, elevating environmental justice and fighting against the disparate impacts, particularly in Black/African American, American Indian and other underrepresented communities across the county.

### Population Health Measures

- Decrease rates of respiratory and cardiovascular disease
- Decrease rates of heat related illness
- Decrease death and injury incidents during extreme weather events

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

The coming year will be a year of capacity building, creating strategy, engaging key stakeholders, and inviting community members to be integral to the work. We will identify countywide performance measures from the Strategic Energy Plan from the Energy Governance Team as part of the county's supplemental budget process. In addition, the engagement process will aim to identify metrics, community indicators, and outcomes building from the county's long-term visioning and strategic actions to address the impacts of climate change on health and well-being of residents across Ramsey County as well as advance environmental justice. Internal planning and operations:

- Hired a planning specialist dedicated to creating and implementing public health and county-wide health and climate change planning.
- Assess all existing county documents and create a summary and integration of all reports.
- Develop policies and options for employee incentives to contribute to slowing the effects of climate change. This could include, but is not limited to, bike accessibility to county buildings, bus passes, parking lot assessments, and other incentives that reduce carbon emissions and eliminate reliance on fossil fuels.

### Implementation responsibility

Public Health Environmental Health Division leads the Climate Change and Community Resilience initiative, in partnership with community organizations and senior county leadership and the County Board of Commissioners.

### Plans for policy and system level changes

Building off the work of the Energy Governance Team, the Strategic Energy Plan, and Ramsey County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Ramsey County will expand its work to develop a comprehensive approach that combats climate change. The pandemic in the last two years have been an ongoing case study of community resilience, but the county must be intentional, strategic, accountable, and focused in pursuing equitable, measurable and impactful outcomes through climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Environmental justice and addressing climate change requires a multi-layered approach that includes strategic action and supporting community-led initiatives to build resiliency. Ramsey County is uniquely qualified to partner with community and key stakeholders to lead courageously and address climate change.

This year, Ramsey County will host an environmental summit where community members and partners will be invited to help co-design, improve, implement and evaluate policies and services for those who are impacted by climate change in racially and ethnically diverse communities. Through a series of engagement sessions, community members, stakeholders and partners will be invited to jointly co-design, improve, implement, and evaluate policies, practices and service delivery in a way that centers the experience of those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and will benefit from identified services.

## Goal 7: Homelessness and Housing Stability

Heading Home Ramsey

Public Health HouseCalls Program, Minnesota Community Care

Ramsey County is committed to ending homelessness within our county and the metro region by working in coordination with local, regional and national efforts around homelessness. This Community Health Improvement Priority is shared as a countywide initiative, entitled “Heading Home Ramsey”:

The county partners with public and private organizations working to end and prevent homelessness in Ramsey County through the Heading Home Ramsey initiative. Comprised of local service providers, nonprofits and government organizations, the initiative grew out of the former Homeless Advisory Board created by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners and the Saint Paul City Council in 2004. Heading Home Ramsey engages in ongoing strategic planning to improve, update and strengthen both the Continuum of Care and the initiative's overall plan for ending and preventing homelessness. The governing board and member organizations routinely review data to assess capacity, identify gaps and analyze what programs are working successfully.

The Public Health department’s HouseCalls program direct financial assistance and support to prevent families in Ramsey County from becoming homeless due to safety and sanitation concerns. A collaboration between the Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health Department and Minnesota Community Care, HouseCalls remains open during the COVID-19 pandemic to serve Ramsey County residents. HouseCalls services include financial assistance for utility disconnection, eviction assistance due to non-payment of rent, sanitation condemnation. The first step is that staff determines eligibility for services and talks about the best way to stabilize the housing. When case management support will help solve the problem, HouseCalls staff has the experience and compassion to work with the household and identify the right resources to prevent the housing loss.

### Population Health Measures

- Number of people experiencing homelessness in emergency shelter/ street outreach programs
- Number of families and singles on the waiting list after being assessed for housing through Coordinated Entry
- Number of people in shelters new to homelessness this quarter
- Availability of housing available by type: Emergency Shelter, Permanent Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Transitional Housing
- Number of people entering or leaving permanent housing projects annually (net difference)

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

Measures and indicators for the program’s success are under development.

- Increase percentage of HouseCalls clients that are able to keep housing after intervention
- Reduce the number of people who return to homelessness within 6 months of leaving a program

### Implementation responsibility

Public Health HouseCalls program works in collaboration with Ramsey County Social Services and Minnesota Community Care to help prevent families from becoming homeless due to safety and sanitation concerns. Heading Home Ramsey Initiative leads additional Homelessness Response and Prevention efforts as described above.



### Plans for policy and system level changes

Ramsey County works across multiple departments to advance housing stability for all residents. System-level work has focused on a continuum of supports and longer-term policy changes. The county has expanded and extended programs that help people at risk of losing their housing to stay longer and access more resources to help them stay housed. Coordination between departments and systems have continuously improved, especially during pandemic response, to improve communication, referrals and resource sharing for shared clients. The City of Saint Paul, comprising 80 percent of Ramsey County residents, started a universal basic income program to ensure extremely low-income households have access to additional funds to be able to meet basic needs, including housing and food.

## Goal 8: Opioid Overdose Prevention

Public Health Healthy Communities Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator  
Clinical Services Syringe Services Program

Ramsey County Minnesotans have suffered tremendously from the opioid epidemic. Opioid overdose deaths have increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary reports show 654 opioid-involved deaths in Minnesota in 2020, a 59% increase from 2019, while deaths among Ramsey County residents more than doubled during the same period. On August 20, 2021, the Attorney General’s Office joined historic \$26 billion multistate settlement agreements with pharmaceutical distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen, and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. The settlements received final approval from the companies on February 25, 2022. The parties to these settlements are states and cities and counties.

Saint Paul – Ramsey County serves as a lead coordinator-convener to establish priorities and community roles under this new funding. The new funding builds upon two areas of work that are well-established for Opioid Overdose Prevention: The Syringe Services Program, located in the department’s Clinical Services Division, and the more recently established Medication Assisted Treatment initiative within the Ramsey County Correctional Facility, implemented by the Correctional Health division of Public Health.

### Population Health Measures

- Decrease rate of deaths from opioid overdose
- Decrease rate of emergency room visits for non-fatal opioid overdose
- Decrease percentage of high school students reporting past-year opioid misuse

### Measurable outcomes and priorities for action

Measures and indicators for the program’s success are under development.

1. Implement community-developed prevention framework under new funding
  - Measures to be developed
2. Syringe Services Program
  - Measures to be developed
3. Medication Assisted Treatment for people with Opioid Use Disorder housed at RCCF
  - 3.1 Increase the portion of RCCF residents with OUD who receive MAT

### Implementation responsibility

The Healthy Communities’ Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator leads the current development of the new Opioid framework funded by the Opioid Settlement. Clinical Services Syringe Services program staff implement activities under that program. Shared with Goal 3, Access to Health Services, the Medication Assisted Treatment initiative is led by Public Health’s Correctional Health Division, and partnering with Social Services, Corrections, and the Sheriff’s Department.

### Plans for policy and system level changes

Understanding the resources and capacity of treatment providers within the health care system to provide Opioid Use Disorder Medication Assisted Treatment (OUD-MAT) that was culturally responsive and accessible for people who were uninsured or underinsured was very important to creating a safety net for the clients who have been enrolled in this program. Staff from Public Health, Social Services, Corrections, and the

Sheriff's Department formed a Committee that has also included My Home Inc. and other community-based organizations at the onset of developing this program, in order to address system-level factors related to Opioid Use Disorder. The Committee met with various health care providers within the system to understand services offered and how clients may be referred into the program. The Committee created a mechanism for referral to providers within the health care system, allowing for client choice. Planned next steps will be to engage with health insurance companies to determine contracts needed for billing for services rendered. Members from all sectors have been integral to the creation, implementation and process/quality improvement of this program. System level planning for the pending Opioid settlement will be completed late 2022.