



Maximizing quality of life across the lifespan

Strategic Plan
2023-2025

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Message from the Director/Health Officer

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present our strategic plan for 2023-2025. As we focus on rebuilding and resetting following a challenging pandemic, this plan is purposefully internally-focused. It is our time to assure a strong emphasis within, and strengthen our own foundation in order to allow us the capacity to accomplish our mission – *Maximizing quality of life across the lifespan.*



Strategic planning within a local health department is unique. We have what is considered an overarching strategic plan in both our Community Health Assessment (CHA) and our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). That is our guidebook that creates a shared vision with community partners and residents. The common mission moves us forward together, beyond the sum of what any one of us can accomplish alone.

This strategic plan is different. While our CHA and our CHIP guide our work and prioritize where we allocate our limited capacity, this strategic plan was developed through engagement of our own team and governing entity. This is the plan that will solidify the ground on which we stand, as we very purposefully focus on recovery, reinvention, rebuilding, and resetting...together.

Our Department is committed to regaining a passionate, resilient, and energized workforce as we reset and prioritize our goals and objectives to reduce burnout and maximize impact. We seek to build trust and understanding of how Wood County Health Department adds value in our communities. Finally, we look forward to creating and maintaining a culture that exemplifies health equity.

The development of this plan has reinforced our belief in both the strengths each employee brings to the Wood County Health Department and the critical role of partnerships and collaboration. Let us all embrace our core values as we work together, with our partners, and with the public. We look forward to our ongoing work alongside many of you as we focus on the community and implement our CHA and CHIP. We also look forward to your support as we focus internally and rebuild and reset.

Our success rests with the dedicated individuals throughout our Agency who strive to improve the public's health in Wood County every day. This has not been an easy task and I thank the members of our team who have bravely continued on this journey.

Warm Regards,

Sue Smith, RN, MSN, CPM
Director/Health Officer

Background/Process

A Strategic Planning (SP) Team was formed which included five managers, one Health & Human Services Committee member, and the Human Resources Director. All health department employees were invited to participate in the process of developing the Wood County Health Department 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. A group of ten employees volunteered and the Employee Input Committee (EIC) was formed. The EIC responded to surveys and the data collected helped the SP Team to identify missing elements of the current plan. Under the direction of Dawn Kessler, (Catchafire.org volunteer), a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis had been finalized. Both the SP Team and the EIC played a significant role in brainstorming strategic priorities for each SWOT. Four priorities/focus areas were identified and key strategies named. Elements of the Community Health Improvement Plan and the Quality Improvement Plan were considered as part of that strategic consideration.



The Community Health Assessment informs all three plans.

(Adapted from MarMason Consulting LLC, 2012)

Throughout the entire process, employees were kept informed with progress towards a new plan. The final plan was shared with employees and presented at the November Health and Human Services Committee meeting. A commitment to ongoing review and monitoring progress has been made by leadership through the development of performance measures linked to plan goals, and the document will be reviewed and adapted throughout the next three years.

Mission

Maximizing quality of life across the lifespan

Vision

Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to thrive, be healthy, and live their best life.

Core Values

Integrity ▪ Professionalism ▪ Service ▪ Compassion ▪ Diversity ▪ Initiative

Summary of SWOT Analysis

The following internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats, were identified. The goal of this process is to help the Wood County Health Department (WCHD) use its strengths to seize new opportunities and minimize any potential threats, while developing a plan to address its weaknesses so they do not hinder the success of the organization.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate, talented, competent, caring, and adaptable workforce • Strong teamwork within program areas • Flexible work policies • Supportive leadership, including management and oversight committee • Strong work ethic • Recognized by external partners for innovation 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of trauma experienced by staff during pandemic response • Continued heavy workload • Energy, time, and resources required to reprioritize our work • Lack of understanding of other teams' programs and activities • Recruitment and retention of experienced and qualified staff • Budgetary challenges and funding restrictions
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of funding and revenue streams; i.e. billing for services, American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, opioid settlement, and grant funding • Awareness of public health roles and responsibilities and support for prevention with policy makers, local partners, residents, and community members • Internal and external communication methods and tools, i.e. social media, mandates, learning various teams' work, activities, etc. • Partner with other local health departments, academic institutions, foundations, private industry, public orgs, and other nonprofits • Benefits of being a Wood County employee; Wood County as a preferred employer, etc. 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty around federal, state, and local revenue, funding, and budgets • Low public health literacy of residents and community members; primary prevention, Social Determinants of Health, etc. • Potential of public health statutory authority being redefined • Misinformation and politicization of public health; through social media, etc. • Communication styles of policy makers, local partners, residents, and community members

NOTE: it is recognized that the months of the COVID response created overreaching problems that may take time to repair (i.e. COVID disrupted trust and relationships)

Goals & Strategies

- 1. Regain a passionate, resilient and energized workforce**
 - Create a Workforce Development and Employee Engagement Plan (WDEEP) with an emphasis on the continued recovery needs of staff.
 - In the WDEEP, implement best practices for employee engagement, workforce development, recruitment, retention, work/life balance, developing a sense of purpose, and employee well-being.
 - Continue team building activities at staff meetings.
 - Share resources to promote mental and physical health and well-being (prioritize self-care), and provide opportunities for peer support/connection.

- 2. Reset and prioritize our goals and objectives to reduce workload and maximize impact**
 - Collaborate with employees to conduct a workload audit in order to: eliminate duplication or redundancies, prevent scope creep and stay on-mission, eliminate lower priority items that may be unnecessarily draining capacity, and assure employees feel they can successfully achieve a work/life balance.
 - Conduct more comprehensive program evaluation processes and continue program prioritization based on evidence, outcomes, and equity.

- 3. Build trust and understanding of how WCHD adds value in the community**
 - Strengthen partnerships with other local health departments, academic institutions, foundations, private industry, public organizations, media, and other nonprofits to enhance public health understanding and literacy within our communities.
 - Develop and implement an internal communications process to provide an effective flow of information between teams as well as bidirectional information between department leadership and employees.
 - Develop and implement an external communications plan to ensure information is accessible, relevant, and effective to reach intended audiences.
 - Assure we have representation on appropriate local and state committees, groups, or organizations.
 - Utilize a community engagement process or tool in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

- 4. Create and maintain a culture that exemplifies health equity**
 - Refresh employee training on health equity and provide the basics to solidify the understanding of health equity, how it affects their own roles in the department, and emphasize the “Why”?
 - Leverage the health equity team to accomplish this work through implementation and evaluation of the Health Equity Action Plan.

Work Plan

Regain a passionate, resilient, and energized workforce

Strategy 1: Create a Workforce Development and Employee Engagement Plan (WDEEP) with an emphasis on the continued recovery needs of staff.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
1.1 ... Review the literature to determine current recommendations and best practices for employee engagement (Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards workforce summit, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire student survey, etc.).	Niki Lucht March 2023
1.2... Conduct an annual employee engagement survey.	Niki Lucht May 2023 annually
1.3 ... Prioritize areas to address from literature review and survey data above and our own survey data; include these areas in the employee engagement plan.	Niki Lucht July 2023
1.4 ... Create a WDEEP.	Niki Lucht September 2023
1.5 ... Assess current policies, including the Work Schedule, Telework, and Employee Wellness, to determine updates and additional policies to implement best practices identified that are currently missing.	Management Team March 2024

Strategy 2: In the WDEEP, implement best practices for employee engagement, workforce development, recruitment, retention, work/life balance, developing a sense of purpose, and employee well-being.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
2.1 ... Allocate resources during the budget process and as needed to support the WDEEP, including investment in employee development.	Kathy Alft August 2023 annually
2.2 ... Conduct core competency assessments to understand whether staff have skills needed to perform their job functions (could be nationally recognized model or internally developed set of competencies).	Management Team October 2023
2.3 ... Prioritize areas within WDEEP, focusing on areas of highest need.	Management Team January 2024
2.4 ... Collaborate with academic institutions to encourage the development of public health students and other qualified individuals to enter the field of public health to meet the current and future staffing needs of health departments.	Sue Smith Ongoing
2.5 ...Modify current employee engagement survey to align with the WDEEP.	Niki Lucht February 2024

Strategy 3: Continue team building activities at staff meetings.	
Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
3.1 ... Define a team to lead team building activities.	Management Team January 2023
3.2 ...Create a list of team building activities, which includes budgetary expenses.	3.2 Team (NEW) February 2023
3.3 ... Continue a standing agenda item to focus on a team building activity.	Kathy Alft Ongoing
Strategy 4: Share resources to promote mental and physical health and well-being (prioritize self-care), and provide opportunities for peer support/connection.	
Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
4.1 ... Meet with the Wellness Coordinator to discuss what role they may play in supporting this strategy.	Macy Mancl January 2023
4.2 ... Provide support and representation for Wood County’s employee wellness program.	Macy Mancl Ongoing
4.3 ... Promote and support the use of department exercise equipment, “10 and 2”, walking meetings, etc.	Danielle Hiller Ongoing
4.4 ... Support <i>Sunshine</i> initiatives and efforts.	Management Team Ongoing
4.5 ... Support work/life balance through check-ins between staff and supervisors.	Management Team Ongoing
Reset and prioritize our goals and objectives to reduce workload and maximize impact	
Strategy 1: Collaborate with employees to conduct a workload audit in order to: eliminate duplication or redundancies, prevent scope creep and stay on-mission, eliminate lower priority items that may be unnecessarily draining capacity, and assure employees feel they can successfully achieve a work/life balance.	
Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
1.1 ...Develop a streamlined process or consistent document for use in creating and tracking goals, objectives, progress, and evaluation.	David Strong March 2023
1.2 ... Develop a timeline, procedure, and plan for completing workload audits for the department.	Management Team January 2024
1.3 ... Create a list of current efforts and workload assignments to assure the health department has the number of staff needed in appropriate roles to meet the needs of the population served.	Each Team March 2024 annually

Strategy 2: Conduct more comprehensive program evaluation processes and continue program prioritization based on evidence, outcomes, and equity.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
2.1 ... Update the existing framework of the performance management plan.	David Strong March 2023
2.2 ... Complete at least one storyboard (Quality Improvement project) per team per year.	Each Team December 2023 annually
2.3 ... Implement quality improvement strategies to increase efficiencies and inform program prioritization and evaluation efforts.	Each Team Ongoing

Build trust and understanding of how WCHD adds value in the community

Strategy 1: Strengthen partnerships with other local health departments, academic institutions, foundations, private industry, public organizations, media, and other nonprofits to enhance public health understanding and literacy within our communities.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
1.1 ... Continue involvement and representation on coalitions and committees with like goals and priorities.	All Employees Ongoing
1.2 ... Engage experts to review communications, conduct fact checking, and verify communications are not omitting data that provide important context.	Kayleigh Mengel Ongoing
1.3 ... Involve community partners in dissemination of unified public health messages, such as social determinants of health and primary prevention.	Kayleigh Mengel Ongoing

Strategy 2: Develop and implement an internal communications process to provide an effective flow of information between teams as well as bidirectional information between department leadership and employees.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
2.1 ... Maintain monthly M&M (Management Memo).	Kathy Alft Monthly
2.2 ... Hold staff meeting to review policies, strategic plan goals, program updates, provide all staff trainings etc.	Kathy Alft Monthly
2.3 ... Hold team meetings within program areas.	Supervisors Quarterly
2.4 ... Monitor, evaluate, and adapt communication process change as identified in a variety of survey methods (Trauma Informed Care survey, Staff Engagement survey, Solution Revolution, etc.).	Management Team Ongoing

Strategy 3: Develop and implement an external communications plan to ensure information is accessible, relevant, and effective to reach intended audiences.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
3.1 ... Periodically survey community members to assess awareness and trust in the health department's services or functions.	COVID Recovery Team March 2023 March 2024
3.2 ... Update the 2-page document summarizing Public Health.	Kayleigh Mengel June 2023 annually
3.6 ... Revamp our website to make it more user-friendly, concise, and understandable for the general public.	Penny Sharp August 2023
3.7 ... Identify effective strategies to combat misinformation.	Kayleigh Mengel Ongoing
3.3 ... Develop external communications plan.	Kayleigh Mengel April 2024
3.4 ... Review communication policy with staff.	Kayleigh Mengel June 2024
3.5 ... Provide training to staff on effective public health communication methods, including reading level, intended audience, translation of written materials, interpretation of oral materials, use of logo, etc.	Kayleigh Mengel June 2024

Strategy 4: Assure we have representation on appropriate local and state committees, groups, or organizations.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
4.1 ... Update listing of who is involved in what state/local groups and memberships.	Kathy Alft January 2023 annually
4.2 ... Identify areas where WCHD is not represented and should be.	Management Team February 2023 annually
4.3 ... Annually budget for membership representation.	Kathy Alft August 2023 annually

Strategy 5: Utilize a community engagement process or tool in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
5.1 ... Research and create a list of community engagement tools to ensure current best practices are included.	Management Team January 2024

5.2 ... Train appropriate staff on various methods of community engagement. (i.e. for Food Safety Advisory committee, Plain Clothes community, CHA/CHIP efforts, public beaches, etc.)	Management Team July 2024
5.3 ... Through Performance Management planning, monitor and evaluate community engagement efforts done by different program areas.	David Strong December 2024
Create and maintain a culture that exemplifies health equity	
Strategy 1: Refresh employee training on health equity and provide the basics to solidify the understanding of health equity, how it affects their own roles in the department, and emphasize the “Why”?	
Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
1.1 ... Conduct an equity assessment that considers staff competence in the areas of cultural humility, diversity, or inclusion (include findings in WDEEP).	Health Equity Team March 2023
1.2 ... Invite the Health Equity team to a management team meeting to discuss a training plan and timeline for staff.	Kathy Alft May 2023
1.3 ... Identify potential trainers or speakers and coordinate education into staff meeting.	Health Equity Team Ongoing
Strategy 2: Leverage the Health Equity Team to accomplish this work through implementation and evaluation of the Health Equity Action Plan.	
Actions	Responsibility & Timeline
2.1 ... Continually monitor and annually update department-wide policy that reflects specific intention focused on inclusion, diversity, equity, or anti-racism.	Health Equity Team January 2024 annually
2.2 ... Define what it means to DO this work and to be successful in exemplifying health equity.	Health Equity Team January 2024 annually
2.3 ... Annually update WCHD’s Healthy Equity Action Plan.	Health Equity Team January 2024 annually

Acknowledgements

The Wood County Health Department would like to thank all employees for their commitment to improving the public’s health through participation in the Agency’s strategic planning process. Special appreciation is extended to Dawn Kessler for her significant time and energy with the development of the Wood County Health Department’s Strategic Plan.



For additional copies of this plan call 715-421-8911, or visit our website at www.co.wood.wi.us.