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A quarterly newsletter from Public Health Madison &amp; Dane County

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## The Community Health Assessment is Almost Complete!

In early 2018, we formed an internal team to embark on the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) journey. After several months of planning and preparing, we convened a steering committee--with membership from organizations in Dane County representing individuals who are impacted by health and racial inequities--in September 2018.



Since then, the Steering Committee--alongside an external facilitator and the internal team--have applied the Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework to understand our community's assets and challenges. The framework also helps us assess what the community perceives

as factors that would make Dane County a healthy place to live, work, learn, and play. This foundational and innovative work will help Public Health and our community partners identify needs, prioritize and coordinate efforts, direct resources, and provide more effective public health services.

We have gathered a substantial amount of community input. As of October 2019, we have:

- Collected almost 300 surveys
- Hosted 13 focus groups
- Completed three key informant interviews
- Sponsored two youth Photovoice projects

In addition to this primary data collected by the group, we have assessed several existing data reports, including the recent Neighborhood Resource Team Community Conversations, the Dane County Health Council Community Health Needs Assessment, and the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan Imagine Madison. After assessing current reports, the Steering Committee identified populations that had been missed or had insufficient data collected about them. The internal team will be completing additional data analysis and identifying themes. They will then present the results to the steering committee to support the prioritization process.

The Steering Committee and internal team will convene on December 12th to review and assess all of the data and walk through a prioritization process to identify 3-5 strategic issues. After prioritization, the steering committee will develop action plans for each strategic issue. We plan to develop these action plans by early 2020.

## Youth Vaping: A Public Health Crisis

As an unregulated industry, it's difficult to know what is in e-cigarettes and vapes, and at what levels. What we do know is that these products contain nicotine, with some cartridges having as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. Kids' brains continue developing until they're about 25 years old, and exposure to nicotine during this time can hurt their brain development, leading to long-term, long-lasting effects like mood disorders, lowered impulse control, and damage to the parts of the brain that control attention and learning. Because their brains are still developing at this age, kids can also become addicted to nicotine more easily than adults.



Packaged in ever-changing, sleek and discreet designs, the lure of using these products for adolescents is great. We became alarmed last year by the hugely

popular JUUL, which looked an awful lot like a USB flash drive for a computer and came in appealing flavors like watermelon, mango, and mint, so we created a [video](#) to educate parents and teachers about them. We're now equally as concerned with newer iterations of these products; some look like asthma inhalers, watches, and key fobs for a car.

While we've been keeping up with what form these products will take next, we've also been busy tracking national and local cases of vaping hospitalizations and deaths due to severe lung damage from vaping, which continue to grow weekly. We issued a [health alert](#) in early September urging people to stop using vaping products, whether for nicotine or THC consumption, until all tests have been completed. That is still our advice. Additionally, our Tobacco and Nicotine-Free Living team has continued to educate schools, parents, and policy makers about the concerns and dangers of these evolving products, and what strategies we have to reduce initiation of the products. We're also keeping an eye on a number of bills that, if put into place, could reduce youth access to, and use of, these products.

Want to keep up with the latest in this rapidly-changing issue? Follow the [Tobacco Free Columbia Dane County Coalition](#) on [Facebook](#), or email Coordinator [Ryan Sheahan](#) to sign up for their newsletters. Want to get involved? Join the Coalition!

## Maternal and Child Health Strategic Plan Released

The Breastfeeding Community Collaborations and the Fetal & Infant Mortality Review Teams' [Maternal and Child Health Strategic Plan](#) was approved by the Board of Health on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Strategic Plan outlines the vision, values, strategies, and goals that will be our focus over the next five years.



Staff assemble dumpings for lunch before their strategic planning session.

While our teams work under the "Maternal and Child Health" umbrella (and we define MCH broadly, beyond the gendered language embedded in 'MCH!'), we are lucky to have team members from WIC, perinatal, and policy, planning and evaluation, in order to strengthen internal program linkages. Many programs at PHMDC work in the MCH space! The teams look forward to more regularly reporting work to the Board, and being held accountable to our proposed actions!

## Finding Cross-Divisional Intersections to Promote Health Equity





Cross-divisional collaborations in our department have opened doors to new and innovative ways to support health equity promotion in our community.

Recently, Community Health Division staff shared with our Environmental Health Division's Food Safety Program how access to bathrooms is a constant worry for transgender and non-binary people, and how providing gender inclusive spaces helps to create a safe and stable work environment.

This information was shared with the Food Safety Program's Safe Food Advisory Committee (SFAC) and information was gathered from them on what they need to create these spaces. This is not the first time that the Food Safety Program has partnered with other PHMDC divisions for improving equity; last year they partnered with the Community Health Division to create the Lactation Room Design factsheet for restaurant operators so that parents of all genders have places to chest feed and pump, including employees. This builds upon the past work and provides yet another intersection for equity in restaurant settings.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of other cross-divisional partnerships with the Food Safety Program in 2019:

- We created a newsletter for food operators on the proper disposal of sharps waste (needles and syringes) in a restaurant.
- We created food safety videos, which will be published in multiple languages.
- We are developing a customer satisfaction survey to learn how the Food Safety Program can improve services when working with food operators.
- We are providing Dane County food operators information on how they can support food insecure neighborhoods and reduce food waste.
- We are working to help pass new ordinances that support equitable sliding scale licensing, plan review, and re-inspection fees for food operators.

By identifying connections with what others in our department are doing, we can begin envisioning ways to maximize health equity in our community and the overall impact of our public health work. With nearly 3000 licensed food establishments, the Food Safety Program is well-positioned to begin these partnerships and promotion. It is that ripple effect that we talk about when we uphold our department's mission, vision, and values and promote a diverse and inclusive community.

## New Board of Health Members

We have recently appointed two new members to our Board of Health.



### Robin Lankton

Robin Lankton is the Director of Population Health at UW Health. She has a Masters of Public Health in Community Health Sciences, a Bixby Certificate in Population and Reproductive Health, and is also a Certified Health Education Specialist. Her areas of interest include community health improvement, systems change, collaborative partnerships and supporting the conditions for all people to have the best opportunity to live well and thrive. Welcome, Robin!



### Dr. Debbie Jones

Dr. Debbie Jones is a Hospitalist physician for SSM Health – Dean & St. Mary's in Madison, arguably the first full time Hospitalist in the State. She is a board certified Internist who received her education at Loyola Stritch School of Medicine and her formal training at St. Joseph Hospital (Chicago, IL). Dr. Jones also sits on the board of directors for the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness, and in her spare time, she leads and supports many efforts locally and nationally to advance women and persons of color in Medicine. Welcome, Dr. Jones!

One vacant County resident seat still exists on our Board of Health.



### PFAS Update

PFAS has been in the news again due to new surface water results that identified some of these substances in Starkweather Creek. We updated our PFAS webpage (also in Spanish and Hmong) to focus on PFAS in Dane County and to provide a place for people to get the most up-to-date information on sample results,

proposed sampling, and health information.



*Healthy people. Healthy places.*

