



Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance

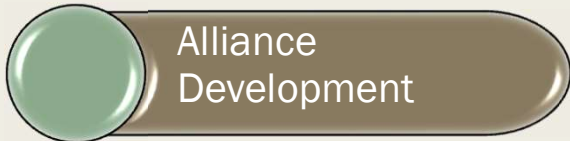
2019-2020 Annual Report

Vision: Improved health and wellness of residents of the Thumb of Michigan.

Mission: To develop, implement, and sustain models of shared public health services that increase capacity, contain costs, maximize assets, and more effectively impact health outcomes

Six Focus Areas

1. Aligned Policies and Procedures
2. Grant Seeking and Writing
3. Information Technology
4. Development of Workforce
5. Shared and Leveraged Purchasing
6. Community Outreach



- ❖ **Workforce Development:** Alliance members continue to explore increasing connections with universities and colleges in an effort to promote and encourage pursuit of public health as a career. This outreach includes placement of students for job shadowing, internships, and professional experiences. The 2020 COVID 19 pandemic served as an opportunity for experiences for individuals at testing sites and vaccine clinics. Career collaborations also includes Local College Access Networks, Talent Consortiums, STEM projects, and county technical education centers. Alignment with the Thumb Community Health Partnership will also allow for continued growth in the healthcare workforce. Over the years, the Alliance has supported a wide variety of training program to increase the competencies of staff in a variety of areas. Training during the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year included Emotional Poverty to building cultural competency. In addition, training includes Team Building and Supervisory Skills.
- ❖ **Program Capacity:** The Alliance continually looks for ways to increase capacity of programs and staff. In 2020, the Environmental Health Divisions of the four health departments which are members of the Alliance implemented a project to improve management and storage of environment health records using health space. This improvement will increase access to information in the field and improve the ability to respond to public requests for records and information.
- ❖ **Strategic Planning:** Alliance members utilized the key concepts recommended by the National Association of County and City Health Officials to conduct strategic planning. This model incorporates three planning processes: Community Health Planning, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Strategic Planning. In 2018, the Alliance completed a comprehensive community-based assessment process that resulted in the 2018 Thumb Community Health Plan. Each of the local health departments have implemented a Continuous Quality Improvement process at the program level. In September 2019, the members of the Alliance contracted with Balcer Consulting and Prevention Services to lead each health department and the Alliance through a strategic planning process. The strategic planning process was focused on how to best define the roles, priorities, and direction of each health department and the Alliance; thereby, strengthening the capacity to impact community health indicators.
- ❖ **Working and Sharing Across Counties:** Alliance members continually look for ways to leverage expertise and find efficiencies by working together. In 2020, the Alliance partnered with the Thumb Community Health Partnership and were awarded a Network Development Grant from the Office of Rural Health Policy. The Grant is focused on increasing cross-sector collaboration. By developing this cross-sector network, partners will achieve efficiencies; expand access to services; coordinate and improve the quality of essential health care services; and strengthen the rural health care system as a whole.



Projects to Address Community Needs

Six regional goals were identified during in the Thumb Region Community Health Improvement plan.

Perinatal Health

- The Alliance continues to partner on projects to ensure access to lactation consultants and peer support. Utilizing telehealth, the Alliance has successfully ensured access to an IBLC Lactation Consultant. This technology has been even more important during COVID 19 safety restrictions.
- Alliance members are leaders for the Perinatal Collaborative and supported both town hall events and participation in a perinatal study in partnership with Michigan Public Health Institute.

Adolescent Health

- Many of the programs of the Alliance members offer and provide support to reduce Adolescent Health Risks including substance abuse prevention programs, family planning services, and abstinence programming.
- The Alliance member also work closely in collaborative relationships to ensure that youth issues are addressed in the community via the County Human Services Collaborative Body, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils, and community coalitions.

Chronic Disease

- Heart Disease and Stroke accounted for 1/3 of all deaths in the Thumb in 2016 and 24% of deaths for those under age 65.
- Working collaboratively with the Thumb Community Health Partnership, the Alliance has participated in a consistent messaging campaign to raise awareness about the Addressing the causes of CVD will also impact the impact of other chronic condition such as diabetes.

Infectious Disease

- All four health departments that are members of the Alliance continually work to promote and encourage immunizations across the lifespan. While each county has varying immunization rates, they are working to learn best practices and identify ways to improve rates.
- During the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic this foundation for sharing has been critical in ensuring access to testing, vaccines, and accurate information. Alliance members share outreach materials and ideas for reaching those most in need and at risk of serious effects from the virus.

Substance Use Disorders

- At a county level, Alliance members are leaders in addressing substance use issues. Members have implemented Marijuana Awareness projects to reduce injury and negative health effects.
- Alliance members are also members of the Thumb Opioid Response Consortium and have provided both leadership and a connection to local leaders. The consortium completed a comprehensive planning process in 2019 and in 2020 received a Rural Communities Opioid Response Program implementation grant to strengthen prevention, treatment, and recovery supports in the region.

Injuries

- Through the Thumb Community Health Partnership, the Alliance members have developed a project to reduce injuries related to male suicide. The project utilized the Healthy Men Michigan Model to develop a campaign utilizing www.mantherapy.org as a tool to reduce stigma using male humor and to connect men to local resources.
- Additionally, the Alliance members are engaged with law enforcement in the community to reduce injury and deaths from overdoses and motor vehicle crashes.

Next Steps: In 2020-2021, the Alliance will implement strategic plans and work with the Thumb Community Health Partnership to align Health Assessment practices across the region. The Community Health Assessment process will include an analysis of progress on measures identified in the 2018 Health Assessment and identify emerging areas of concern. Efforts will be made to coordinate efforts and collaborate with many organizations to address regional priorities and emerging needs.