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County Health Rankings Action Plan / Business Case Framework

A recommendation of the Greater Flint Health Coalition Cost & Resource Planning Committee's Ad Hoc County Health Rankings Workgroup to strategically improve the Health Behaviors and Health Outcomes of Genesee County residents via coordinated, community-wide action and advocacy.

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**Adopted by the GFHC Board of Directors
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KEY ISSUE TO ADDRESS – HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

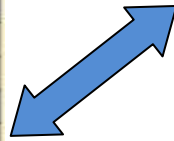
County Health Rankings Report

The *County Health Rankings Report* is an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Public Health Institute to quantify the health of a community based on many factors affecting health, including the quality of healthcare, individual behavior, education, social and economic factors, and the built environment.

HEALTH INDICATOR	RANKING (OUT OF 82)
OVERALL HEALTH OUTCOMES	78 of 82
Morbidity	79 of 82
Mortality	73 of 82
OVERALL HEALTH FACTORS	81 of 82
Health Behaviors	82 of 82
Clinical Care	21 of 82
Social & Economic Factors	78 of 82
Physical Environment	75 of 82

*These rankings are out of a total of 82 Michigan Counties ranked in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "County Health Rankings" Study (2018)

HEALTH FACTOR DETAIL	RANKING (OUT OF 82)
HEALTH BEHAVIORS	82 of 82
Diet, Exercise, Physical Activity	81 of 82
Smoking	67 of 82
Alcohol Use	25 of 82
Unsafe Sex	82 of 82



From a local perspective, this report highlights that health behaviors and health outcomes are critical issues to address in Genesee County, which ranks 78th of 82 in health outcomes and 82nd of 82 in health behaviors when compared to counties

across the State of Michigan.ⁱ Compounding the issue, these rankings compare only counties within Michigan, which is currently ranked in the lower third of all States regarding coronary heart disease, adult obesity, infant mortality, and binge drinking.ⁱⁱ This makes Genesee County one of the unhealthiest counties in the entire nation.

Additional Data Relating to Genesee County's Health Status

In addition to the County Health Rankings Report, available data indicates poor health outcomes for Genesee County's population as mortality rates for leading causes of death such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes far exceed State and national averages while significant racial disparities exist across all major disease states.^{iii,iv} Outcomes specifically linked to behavioral risk factors and preventable diseases are also astonishingly high as the smoking rate is 25.6% and the combined obesity/overweight rate is above 68%.^v

Influence of Health Behaviors and Potential Negative Impacts Without Action

Extensive research clearly indicates that 1) a large proportion of diseases and disorders are preventable and 2) modifiable health risk factors are precursors to increased morbidity and mortality rates.^{vi,vii,viii,ix,x} Furthermore, many modifiable health risks are associated with increased healthcare costs even over short periods of time.^{xi,xii,xiii,xiv} In the absence of significant action, it is likely that Genesee County will continue to be an unhealthy community with poor health outcomes and a low quality of life while healthcare costs continue to rise.

Rising healthcare costs also present a burden for employers and businesses, as employers generally contribute approximately 77% of employee health insurance premiums.^{xv} This also reduces community attractiveness, especially from an economic development perspective. Additionally, employees with higher rates of disease also have lower levels of productivity and higher rates of absenteeism, decreasing business efficiency.^{xvi,xvii} Without addressing health behaviors and chronic diseases, these burdens make Genesee County a less attractive business community.

Health Behaviors Identified as Key Issue to Address

Health behaviors account for approximately 50% of an individual's health. This recognition provides the starting point for the GFHC to become a catalyst to improve health outcomes by increasing actions focused on health and health behaviors in compliment to the GFHC's track record of successful healthcare access, quality, and cost efforts, programs, and initiatives.^{xviii}



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Goals To Achieve

The Greater Flint Health Coalition (GFHC) will address the key issues of health behaviors and health outcomes through coordinated health improvement focused efforts based on the following goals:

- **The GFHC, both collectively and through its broad-based member organizations, will become a catalyst for Genesee County/City of Flint to become a “Healthy Place to Live, Work, and Play” over the next 10 years.**
- **Significantly improve both health behaviors and health outcomes on a community-wide level.**

Focus Areas

A community-wide plan of action should be developed focusing on key health and community issues to be addressed through the GFHC. This plan to improve health behaviors shall include the focus areas of physical activity, active living, nutrition and diet, smoking, breastfeeding of infants, the physical environment, neighborhood safety, and public transportation in order to improve health behaviors and health outcomes.

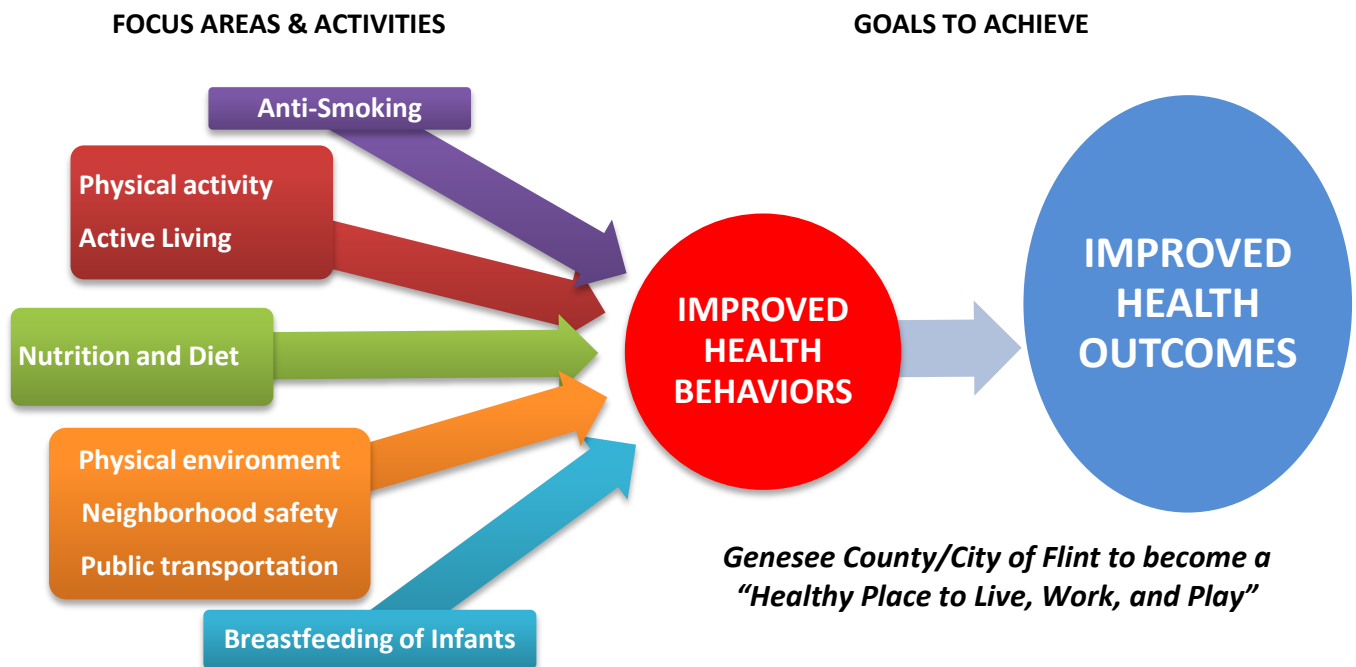
The target population will include residents of Genesee County and the City of Flint, and the settings identified to reach this population include the workplace, schools, and public places. This will be accomplished via targeted community-based interventions.

Activities Required to Achieve Positive Impact and Success

Multiple strategies will be critical to achieving success and impact regarding GFHC led efforts. These strategies include the following:

- 1) Strong commitment, support, and engagement of GFHC Board member organizations;
- 2) Use of major employer groups and school systems to reach a critical mass of the general population;
- 3) Build on existing community resources and activities;
- 4) Activities must be systemic and focus on both short & long-term strategies, goals, and outcomes which should include structural changes;
- 5) Activities should be evidence-based and where possible consider other successful community-based health improvement models.

Strategy Outline



ACTION PLAN / BUSINESS CASE

The GFHC will make use of both **short and long-term intervention strategies** to support targeted goals of becoming a catalyst for Genesee County/City of Flint to become a “healthy place to live, work, and play” over the next 10 years by significantly improving both health behaviors and health outcomes on a community-wide level. The intervention strategies and corresponding outcome objectives are described in detail, and where possible provide evidence-based support and cost-analysis.

SHORT-TERM INTERVENTION STRATEGIES (1-3 YEARS)

The five short-term strategies described below represent interventions which the GFHC and its member organizations could begin developing and implementing within the next 1-3 years.

Workplace Wellness Initiatives

With unhealthy lifestyles and modifiable risk factors accounting for 25% of employee healthcare expenditures, employers are uniquely positioned to benefit from improvement in health behaviors.^{xix} It is well-documented that if effectively implemented workplace wellness programs provide benefits to both employees and employers through improved health outcomes and reduced medical costs.^{xx,xxi} Meta-analyses reviewing up to 72 articles have concluded that health promotion programs achieve an average Return-On-Investment (ROI) of \$1.49 - \$3.48 per \$1.00 invested with employer cost-savings being demonstrated within 3-5 years of program implementation.^{xxii,xxiii,xxiv}

These effective workplace interventions include various components such as: a health risk assessment, health education and promotion programs, individual nutrition and smoking cessation classes, financial incentives or discounts for employees, and campaigns/competitions to increase fitness activities and healthy lifestyles.^{xxv}

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Collaboratively implement workplace wellness strategies within all GFHC member organizations, starting with Major Employers* <i>*Evidence-based</i>	Improve health behaviors and health outcomes	ROI of \$1.49 - \$3.48 per \$1.00 invested	GFHC Board support of Pursuing Initiative
	Decrease employer healthcare costs	Approximate cost of \$150 per employee to implement programs	Engagement of Major Employers’ Wellness Coordinators to Develop Strategy
	Improve employee productivity	For 2500 employees, Investment of \$375,000 can yield total net savings of up to \$930,000	Financial Support of Employers to Implement Programs
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Increase Physical Activity rates and decrease Obese/Overweight Prevalence			
Increase the number of Genesee County Employers offering regular Workplace Wellness programming			
Insufficient Physical Activity (less than 4 times / week) Current Rate: 62% Target Goal: 50% Target Date: TBD		Obese/Overweight Prevalence (BMI>25) Current Rate: 68% Target Goal: 50% Target Date: TBD	

Community-Wide Campaigns to Promote Healthy Lifestyles

In order to increase interest and awareness of healthy activities, community-wide campaigns can be used as a tool to engage the community and can be broadly targeted to the general population or to a specific at-risk group. Regarding a general population initiative, the GFHC has previous experience through its *Just a Bit Gets You/Youth Fit* campaign implemented from 2000-2003. This effort was designed to increase physical activity levels among Genesee County's most sedentary individuals by providing its "101 Easy Ways to Better Health." This was successful in decreasing sedentary lifestyles, and has since been replicated in multiple other communities nationwide.^{xxvi}

Shape up Somerville was a targeted intervention in Somerville, Massachusetts, which focused on childhood obesity prevention by engaging children, parents, families, and community members in various before school, during school, after school, home, and community activities designed to improve the health behaviors of children. This community-based environmental change intervention showed statistically significant decreases of BMI in children at high risk for obesity.^{xxvii}

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Community-based Health Improvement Campaign* <i>*Evidence-based</i>	Improve Health Behaviors (including among most sedentary) through increased awareness and interest in healthy lifestyle activity	Implementation would involve significant grant funding and require leveraged media coverage to support program activities	Three-fold GFHC Board support: 1) Supporting the pursuance of grant funds 2) Supporting awareness and involvement in any potential initiative or program 3) Leadership by example
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Increase Physical Activity rates and decrease Obese/Overweight Prevalence			
Insufficient Physical Activity (less than 4 times / week) Current Rate: 62% Target Goal: 50% Target Date: TBD		Obese/Overweight Prevalence (BMI>25) Current Rate: 68% Target Goal: 50% Target Date: TBD	

Support of Smoke-Free Workplaces and Campuses

While many organizations in Genesee County have gone "smoke free," widespread implementation of this as cross-organizational policy has the potential for increased impact and reduction of smoking behaviors. Establishment of this policy has been shown to decrease smoking rates by 3.8% while also reducing the incidence of cardiovascular disease such as myocardial infarctions.^{xxviii,xxix} It is also estimated that the impact of reduced smoking rates and improved cardiovascular health would result in small cost savings.^{xxx}

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Institution of smoke-free workplaces in all GFHC member organizations* <i>*Evidence-based</i>	Reduce smoking behavior	Minimal Implementation Cost	GFHC Board support of Pursuing Initiative
	Improve cardiovascular health outcomes	Approximate long-term cost savings of \$1 per employee	Engagement of GFHC Member organizations to institute smoke-free workplace and campus policies
	Reduce Healthcare Costs		
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Decrease Smoking Prevalence Increase the number of Genesee County Employers enforcing Smoke-Free Campuses			
Current Rate: 25.6%		Target Goal: 20% (National average) Target Date: TBD	

Coordination of Existing & Future Health Improvement Activities

Many programs exist in the community with a focus on health, physical activity, and healthy eating through community-based organizations such as the Crim Fitness Foundation, Genesee Intermediate School District, and others. However, to date many of these efforts are neither coordinated nor community-wide, limiting impact. Through the GFHC structure and advocacy of Board leadership, it is possible to require community coordination, in turn maximizing collaboration, thus increasing the impact of health improvement efforts by supporting existing programs and cooperatively pursuing new opportunities and grants from a community perspective.

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Re-development of GFHC Health Improvement/ Health Outcomes Committee to catalog & coordinate community efforts; Membership will be based upon community leadership and expertise with public health / behavior efforts	Improve Coordination	Implementation involves GFHC Staff time and partner participation	GFHC Board mandate to support coordination via Health Improvement/ Health Outcomes Committee in order to increase collaboration which will maximize impact via reduced "silo" based efforts
	Support to participating organizations		
	Increase healthy behaviors and healthy lifestyles	Potential for increased resources and grant funding due to coordination	
	Improve Health Outcomes		
	Reduce Healthcare Costs		
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Improve Community-wide Coordination of Health Behaviors / Health Outcomes Initiatives			
Current Status: Unmonitored / Unmeasured / Uncoordinated			
Target Goal: Coordinated, Cataloged, Measurable Community Action via GFHC Leadership Support			

Community Support of Infant Breastfeeding

Research has well-documented that breastfeeding children provides many benefits, perhaps most significantly a lower risk for both diabetes and obesity.^{xxxix,xxxii} The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions provides a review of evidence-based interventions, which include maternity care practices, educating mothers, professional support, and breastfeeding friendly policies, while additional research demonstrates cost-savings for infants who are breastfed.^{xxxiii,xxxiv} To support increased awareness of these evidence-based care practices and their benefits, local physicians, hospitals, and employers will need to consistently promote breastfeeding to the community residents. Support should be established through community education, local providers, and employers who can consider adopting policies that support breastfeeding.

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Engagement of Local Providers and Employers to Promote Increased Awareness regarding the Benefits of Breastfeeding and Implementation of Breastfeeding friendly Policies* <i>*Evidence-based</i>	Increase breastfeeding	Potential healthcare system cost-savings of \$331 per infant when comparing breastfed infant versus non-breastfed infant in first 3 months after birth	GFHC Board support
	Decrease prevalence of pediatric obesity and diabetes		Implementation involves Commitment from local Physician Champions, Hospitals, and Employers
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Increase Breastfeeding Rates (to Healthy People 2010 Objectives)			
At Discharge (WIC Participants): Current Rate = 41% Target Rate = 75% Target Date = TBD			
At Six Months (WIC Participants): Current Rate = 8% Target Rate = 50% Target Date = TBD			

LONG-TERM INTERVENTION STRATEGIES (10-20 YEARS)

The three long-term strategies described below represent interventions which the GFHC and its member organizations will begin planning for with a focus on a 10-20 year anticipated impact.

Structural Change to Healthcare Delivery Reimbursement Models

One key concept which is becoming increasingly relevant in today's healthcare system is the need to change from a fee-for-service based model to a pay-for-performance outcomes based model. This will be supported by various ongoing healthcare initiatives including the increased development of patient-centered medical homes and the implementation of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*.

Reforming the healthcare delivery finance system is one opportunity to do this. A local insurer-led pilot for redistribution of a to-be-established small percentage of healthcare insurance premiums to be reinvested for health behavior and prevention program sustainability rather than service utilization is a key opportunity. While cost-effectiveness has been demonstrated for certain disease states and behaviors such as smoking cessation and congestive heart failure, additional research and cost-analysis is required to fully determine the impact of this reform on insurers, providers, and patients.^{xxxv,xxxvi} It is requested that the GFHC Cost & Resource Planning Committee address this issue to determine its feasibility and sustainability. HealthPlus of Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and Blue Care Network will be asked to commit to developing and piloting these behavior change incentive models in the Genesee County community via the GFHC member base.

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Plan, Develop, and Implement structurally different health insurance payment structure to invest in healthy lifestyles and wellness activities	Improve Health Behaviors and Outcomes	Changes in health outcomes clearly demonstrate reductions in healthcare costs, however, payment structures such as this have not been fully examined	Commitment from HealthPlus, BCBSM, and BCN to develop and pilot behavior change models in Genesee County
	Reduce Healthcare Costs		GFHC Board to charge GFHC Cost & Resource Planning Committee to develop payment structure model to implement for Genesee County beneficiaries
Target / Measureable Outcome			
TBD Payer Reinvestment into Community Prevention and Health Behavior Focused Initiatives			
Outcome: TBD Pilot in Genesee County to Exhibit Cost Savings achieved from Payer Reinvestment			

Impact/Influence on Local School Curriculums Regarding Nutrition and Physical Activity Requirements

Regarding the health of children, local schools have a tremendous impact through both the type of food that is offered to students and the amount of physical activity that is required for students. This impact provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that school curriculums encourage children to be healthy.

One such initiative, entitled *Project Health Schools*, has encouraged the adoption of healthy habits by incorporating health screenings, motivational assemblies, parent communication, healthier cafeteria options, and reward opportunities for students. Through these activities this project has effectively decreased cholesterol and triglyceride levels while increasing fruit consumption and exercise.^{xxxvii}

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Comprehensively Review current school policies, practices, and curriculum via the Genesee Intermediate School District and identify opportunities to improve health through long-term policy change in local school systems* <i>*Evidence-based</i>	Increased physical activity in schools	The cost-analyses of such policy changes would be determined on a case-by-case basis	GFHC Board request to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the GISD to create healthier school policies and curriculum by completing a health-based policy and practice initiative that results in a detailed implementation plan
	All school menu plans revised to increase daily consumption of fruits and vegetables, reduce salt, support portion control for Genesee County students		
	Improved Outcomes for Genesee County children		
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Increase Physical Activity rates and decrease Obese/Overweight Prevalence in school-aged children			
Insufficient Physical Activity (less than 4 times / week) Current Rate: 62% Target Goal: 50% Target Date: TBD		Obese/Overweight Prevalence (BMI>25) Current Rate: 68% Target Goal: 50% Target Date: TBD	

Environmental Infrastructure Regarding Land Re-Development, Public Transit, Safety, and Housing

Environmental and policy approaches promoting physical activity are important to consider in combination with lifestyle modification strategies because they provide a benefit to all people exposed to the environment rather than focusing on specific individuals, patients, or target groups.^{xxxviii,xxxix} Furthermore, issues of safety, public transit, and poor housing quality are most prevalent in disadvantaged populations with high levels of risk for poor health behaviors and outcomes. Current evidence notes that urban design and land use policies can be effective in increasing levels of physical activity and that policy and environmental approaches to increasing physical activity and improving health can play a key role in improving the health of communities.^{xi}

As land re-development efforts in Genesee County continue, it is requested that healthcare stakeholders be actively integrated into the efforts and development of future land use and urban planning to ensure that the inclusion of policies on healthy lifestyles and health outcomes is strongly considered. This may include revitalization and/or support of land areas which promote health such as parks and gardens as well as non-motorized transit.

Intervention	Outcome Objectives	Cost-Analysis	Action Required
Healthcare stakeholders be Actively involved in planning and infrastructure (s) focused on Land Use and Urban Planning* <i>*Evidence-based</i>	Improve Health Behaviors through increased integration of communities that support active living by design allowing increased population interest in healthy lifestyle activity	The cost-analyses of such interventions would be determined on a case-by-case basis	GFHC Board demand active representation of public health and healthcare stakeholders in future policy and land-use decision-making bodies.
	Improve Health Outcomes		GFHC Board support to Pursue Land Use and Urban Planning Opportunities and Projects with Local Partners
	Reduce Healthcare Costs		
Target / Measureable Outcome			
Active Health Stakeholder Involvement and Representation in Land/City Planning Activities			
Current Status:	Health stakeholders episodically involved in city/county planning & land re-development Activities.		
Target Goal:	Active participation in all city, township, village, county planning, and land re-development activities, including participation in development of City of Flint Master Plan. Target outcome is a built environment that supports active living, supporting consistent availability of healthy places to live, work, and play.		

CALL TO ACTION

As outlined throughout the Action Plan / Business Case, there are specific action steps which require feedback, commitment, and buy-in from influential community leaders prior to planning and/or implementation. This begins with the GFHC Board of Directors and its member organizations. It is clear that the GFHC's Board leadership is necessary to implement real change regarding the issue of health behaviors and health outcomes and programs, policies, and practices that create an impact. Discussion and engagement around these recommended activities and actions is crucial in order to strengthen GFHC Board ownership, which will in turn maximize the impact of these efforts. Once ownership is established, a public and private, institution-based commitment will be necessary. This will require Board members to ensure their own organization and staff consistently participates in and adheres to the "community approach" of short and long-term strategies and commitments. In addition, each Board member will be asked to participate in action and campaigns in order to conceptually "**LEAD BY EXAMPLE.**"

The outcome of discussion around these specific activities and actions will ideally begin the development of both short-term (1-3 years) and long-term (10-20 years) priorities, goals, and tactics to strategically address the critical issue of health behaviors and health outcomes in Genesee County. Based on GFHC Board participation and consensus, a balanced "**Top Five Priorities**" to make Genesee County a "**Healthy Place to Live, Work, and Play**" will serve as the deliberate action-based focus to improve the community's *Health Status / Health Behaviors*.

These recommended "Top Five Priorities" for Genesee County Health Improvement are:

- 1. Increase Physical Activity rates and decrease Obese/Overweight Prevalence**
- 2. Decrease Smoking Prevalence**
- 3. Increase Healthy Food Access to improve Nutrition and Diet**
- 4. Increase Breastfeeding Rates**
- 5. Active Healthcare Stakeholder Involvement and Representation in Land/City Planning Activities that Improve Genesee County's Physical Environment, Safety, and Transportation Capacity**

It is further recommended the Board authorize the GFHC and community to move forward with planning and community-wide implementation of each targeted initiative. Board representatives will need to designate high-level staff to participate and coordinate within their organization. The GFHC's re-established Health Improvement/Health Outcomes Steering Committee will be the body accountable to the Board to carry out this Call to Action over the short and long-term periods specified.

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