

Board of Commissioners & Board of Health - A Year in Review

Local governing entities are ultimately responsible for local public health administration and governance. They establish public health regulations and fees, approve the local health department's budget, approve its plan of organization and appoint health officers. These entities are charged with the public's trust to be good fiscal stewards while also protecting and promoting the health of the community. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BOC), along with the Board of Health (BOH), provide vision, leadership and policy development to make our community a safer, healthier place to live.

Over the past year, both Boards have taken steps to advance the health of our citizens:

- The BOC approved the Health Department's annual budget and Comprehensive Planning, Budgeting and Contracting Agreement with the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS). Since 1987, MDHHS has funded local public and environmental health programs through this agreement, ensuring we receive funds for communicable disease control; hearing and vision screening; immunizations; food service sanitation; sexually transmitted disease control; and other programs which promote health and protect the environment. As a result of BOH advocacy, the BOC also approved the use of County general funds to fill our budget deficit this fiscal year.
- The BOC supported the successful effort to have Washtenaw County intervene in the litigation between the State of Michigan and Gelman Sciences, Inc., which allows the County to participate in future discussions and agreements to clean up the local 1,4-dioxane contamination.
- The BOC authorized the agreement with Saint Joseph Mercy Health System to provide financial support of \$150,000 for sustaining the Prescription for Health Program. This program assists those most in need in our community by providing access to fruits and vegetables and by encouraging long-term health behavior change.
- The BOC authorized the agreement with the Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation to provide financial support of \$210,000 for a State of Michigan sponsored project that will focus on reducing Emergency Department admissions in Washtenaw and Livingston counties.
- The BOC approved a package of immigration resolutions asserting Washtenaw County's support for our immigrant community, including a resolution adopting a policy governing the solicitation of immigration status by public servants. These actions affirm us as a welcoming county that respects the innate dignity of all people.
- The BOC approved the purchase and implementation of Tyler EnerGov to replace existing outdated software programs. This technology investment will create efficiencies, enhance workflow and increase security.
- Both Boards passed resolutions in opposition to the repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), recognizing the importance of assuring access to health care for all.
- Both Boards supported the creation of a Deputy Health Officer position, expanding our operational capabilities.
- The BOH approved a resolution in support of the Michigan Coalition for HIV Health and Safety statewide effort to modernize HIV criminalization law and improve health outcomes and safety of all Michigan residents.
- The BOH approved a resolution in support of the BOC adoption of an Equity Ordinance for Washtenaw County.

Although not specifically Washtenaw County Health Department efforts, the Board of Commissioners continued to demonstrate their commitment to health for all in our community with the following measures:

- Supported the development and passage of the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health and Public Safety Preservation Millage.
- Approved a resolution affirming the County's commitment to a joint Washtenaw County - City of Ann Arbor equity initiative.
- Approved a resolution encouraging the Michigan Civil Rights Commission to assist the Ypsilanti Area Community, its broader region, and Washtenaw County to address the racial segregation and racial inequity occurring in the Ypsilanti Community School District.
- Approved a resolution condemning events of hate and extremism in Charlottesville, Virginia and Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- Approved a resolution to urge the United States Congress to preserve the protections of individuals in the Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals program by passing the bipartisan-supported Dream Act of 2017.
- Approved a resolution affirming intent to take action on Climate Change in accordance with the Paris Accord goals.
- Approved a resolution proclaiming June 18 through June 24, 2017 as Gun Safety Week in Washtenaw County.
- Approved a resolution proclaiming October 2016 as Domestic Violence Awareness month in Washtenaw County.

For more information:

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