

Since 1900, the average lifespan of U.S. residents has risen from 48 to nearly 78 years.

Advances in public health are responsible for at least 25 of those increased years.

- *Michigan's Guide to Public Health for Local Governing Entities*

## Board of Commissioners Support of Public Health

Local governing entities are ultimately responsible for local public health administration and governance in response to state and local laws, rules and regulations. Local governing entities also establish public health regulations and fees for services, approve the local health department's budget, approve its plan of organization and appoint health officers. As such, local governing entities are charged with the public's trust to be good fiscal stewards, along with protecting and promoting the health of the community. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, as the local governing entity, provides vision, leadership and policy making to make our community a safer, healthier place to live.

Washtenaw County Public Health has long experienced a collaborative relationship with the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners. The Board has supported Public Health's efforts to assess - and improve - the health of our residents. Over the past year, the Board of Commissioners has taken many steps to advance the health of our citizens; actions for which the Board should be recognized.

- Approved Public Health's Comprehensive Planning, Budgeting and Contracting (CPBC) Agreement with the Michigan Department of Community Health. This ensures we receive funds for General Communicable Disease Control; Hearing Screening; Immunizations; Sexually Transmitted Diseases; Vision Screening; Food Service Sanitation, and various other categorical funds allocated to local health departments.
- Reviewed, provided input and ultimately approved our 2015-2019 Public Health Strategic Plan.
- Established the Washtenaw County Board of Health. While the Board of Commissioners retains legal authority as the local governing entity, the Board of Health will serve as advocates and educators for public health services and policies. The Board of Health will also identify public health problems and concerns, establish health priorities, and advise the Board of Commissioners and Public Health on issues and possible solutions.
- Authorized the department to proceed with the planning and development of a Public Health owned dental clinic, which will serve low income and Medicaid enrolled residents in our community, filling a gap in service.
- Ratified the grant application to The Kresge Foundation for the Prescription for Health program, helping to ensure that low income residents with chronic disease will have access to fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets.
- Reviewed and commented on the Community Health Assessment/Community Health Improvement Plan and the County Health Rankings, showing engagement in and support of these important processes.
- Called upon the Michigan State Legislature and Governor Snyder to repeal Michigan's "Stand Your Ground" laws, and to adopt common-sense gun regulations such as improved background checks, strengthened gun-free zones and limits on the sale of high-capacity magazines.
- Reviewed and supported the Food Policy Council Policy Agenda, helping to preserve access to safe, local and healthy food for all residents of Washtenaw County.
- Supported the department during a time of major transition, as our Health Officer, Richard M. Fleece, retired after 38 years of public service. The Board was quick to recognize the importance of filling this role, appointing Ellen Rabinowitz as Interim Administrative Health Officer, and then as Health Officer, easing this transition.
- Confirmed the appointment of Allecia M. Wilson, M.D., as Deputy Medical Examiner, which will support the efficient operation and maintain appropriate professional support of the Medical Examiner system in Washtenaw County.
- Proclaimed the week of April 7-13, 2014 as Public Health Week "Public Health: Start Here." The Board also expressed its appreciation for the ongoing contributions of County staff, individuals and organizations who make up our public health system and carry out this important work.

### For more information:

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