

Community Health Improvement Workgroup Newsletter

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Happy Spring! April 2021

Community Health Improvement Plan Background

The Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is the strategic plan for addressing priority areas identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and in-line with the goals of the New York State Prevention Agenda. The CHIP is a county-wide plan developed by the Community Health Improvement Workgroup (CHIW) to improve the health of the community with goals, objectives, and interventions. The Monroe County CHIP has two primary focus areas for 2019-2021:

1. Addressing disparities in maternal and child health (MCH) outcomes and
2. Improving mental health and well being

Our MCH goal of reducing racial, ethnic, economic, and geographic disparities in maternal child health outcomes, and promoting health equity for maternal and child health populations is the work of the Maternal Child Health Advisory Group (MCH-AG). The MCH-AG identified three primary underlying drivers of reducing disparities: optimal birth spacing, access to safe and affordable housing, and the elimination of institutional racism.

Our second priority centers on improving mental health by focusing in two key areas: building well-being and resilience, and facilitating supportive environments that promote respect and dignity for people of all ages. Areas of work include eliminating stigma reducing language, connecting target audiences to Mental Health First Aid Courses, and exploring opportunities for hospital involvement in community wealth building.

The full CHIP can be accessed at

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/MediaLibraries/URMCMedia/community-health/health-policy/Final-CHIP-2019.pdf>

Addressing Disparities in Maternal and Child Health

Recognizing that safe and affordable housing is an important determinant in maternal and child health outcomes, the MCH-AG signed on to an advocacy letter that supports Good Cause Eviction policies and the enactment of Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act in Rochester. This letter was sent to City Council, and was read at “Speak to Council” on March 16th, 2021. The video of this “Speak to Council” Session was recorded and can be viewed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E17fygwFcWU> on the Rochester City Council’s Youtube page. The CHIW also wrote a similar letter, advocating for the two policies from a public health perspective and highlighting the benefits of ensuring housing security and providing pathways to homeownership.

Another local housing initiative, the Eviction Prevention Pilot Initiative or EPPI, implemented collaboratively through Systems Integration and the

City of Rochester is unrolling their second round of eviction prevention measures starting April 1, 2021. EPPI 2.0 (the second iteration) will allot federal and state COVID-19 relief funds to tenants who demonstrate that their financial hardship (either increased debt or decreased income) is due to the pandemic. New to EPPI 2.0 is the option for landlords to apply for the money with the verbal consent of their tenants who have failed to make rent payments due to COVID-19 financial stressors. For more information, and for other housing and financial resources, visit 2-1-1/Lifeline or any of the resources listed on this page: <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=21474847012> .

Last newsletter, we shared Stephanie Townsend's contributions at the Maternal Child Health Advisory Group meeting and her Public Health Grand Rounds session on the Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) commission's recommendations for policy in Rochester. The RASE Commission was called to action by the County Executive Adam Bello and Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren in summer of 2020 to review policies that reinforce local inequities and to provide recommendations for policy interventions that promote equity. The RASE Commission's full report was released in mid-March, 2021, and is available for the public at: <https://rocrase.com/report>. The recommendations from the Housing, Healthcare, Job Creation, Mental Illness, and Social Service sub-committees in particular will be used by the CHIW to select advocacy priorities that advance equity in our community and priority areas.

Improving Mental Health and Well-Being

The CHIW has an ongoing stigma-reduction initiative to create supportive document that share resources with patients who visit the emergency departments for health issues related to substance use. We are working with the hospital systems, health department, and community members with lived experiences to create patient-centered and non-stigmatizing documents through thoughtful language change.

In March, we implemented a recently created document that was developed with the help of local peer resource organizations ROCovery Fitness and Liberty Resources Strong Memorial and Highland Hospital are planning to use the resource in the Emergency Department and have created SmartPhrases to link easily to the document. A SmartPhrase is a tool in the Electronic Medical Record that allows a provider to type a short phrase and pull up a larger/longer set of instructions. This SmartPhrase pulls up the document with local resources, contact points, harm reduction principles, and recovery services for when someone is admitted to the Emergency Department with symptoms or injuries congruent with a substance use disorder.

To learn more about these initiatives or any of the CHIW activities, please feel free to contact Rachel_allen1@urmc.rochester.edu.

Events and Announcements

Public Health Grand Rounds

On April 2nd from 12-1pm there was a panel of experts discussing the housing crisis in Rochester and its impact on health. Videos of previous Public Health Grand Rounds and links to future PHGR are found at <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/community-health/education/grand-rounds.aspx>

National Public Health Week

National Public Health Week is April 5-11, 2021 and is comprised of virtual events and daily themes. The overall theme of the week this year is “Building Bridges to Better Health”, and daily themes are posted with Twitter discussions and social media posts. The daily themes and accompanying factsheets can be found at <http://www.nphw.org/NPHW-2021>. You can also find their content on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/NPHW>.

Webinars

Healthi Kids: Food Policy Council-Cooking Up Change

The local food policy council is still in development and discussions of membership, leadership, and the future of the council will be held in three sessions in April (the 6th, 8th, and 10th). [Register here](#).

Webinar Series-Turning the Tide: Understanding and Eliminating Minority Health Disparities.

This series will be conducted from January to July 2021, hosted by UAlbany, HANYS and other community Partners. The next presentation will be “The Impact of COVID-19 on Sexual and Reproductive Health Disparities: Perspectives of Frontline Providers in New York State”. https://www.hanys.org/events/health_equity/register/.

Grants

Rochester Area Community Foundation: Community Vaccine Education Grant

The RACF is offering grants up to \$3,000 to organizations to develop targeted COVID-19 vaccine information campaigns to areas and zip codes in the Rochester area with low vaccination rates. Information can be found at <https://www.racf.org/grant/active-community-vaccine-education-grant/>.

Data

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps has released a “data refresh” for 2021, including updated data for county data including death data

through 2019. FAQs about the data refresh are found at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/faq-page>. They are planning ways to release COVID-19 data and death rates as well. The updated data page for Monroe County can be found at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/new-york/2021/rankings/monroe/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>.

What is the CHIW?

The Community Health Improvement Workgroup (CHIW) is a collaborative group that meets monthly to advance the Community Health Improvement Plan's priorities for Monroe County, NY.

The CHIW, composed of representatives from local hospitals (University of Rochester Medical Center's Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital, Rochester Regional Health's Rochester General Hospital and Unity Hospital) and the Monroe County Department of Public Health are committed to working collaboratively with the residents and institutions of Monroe County, to improve the health of our community. Every three years, through a process mandated by the Affordable Care Act, and the New York State Department of Health, non-profit hospitals and the health department conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to determine areas of community health concern. With community input, we prioritize community health needs and develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to address the most pressing issues of our community.

The mission of the CHIW is *“To improve the health and wellness of individuals and families of Monroe County by addressing prioritized needs and inequities through sustainable systems change built on collaboration and supported by shared resources.”*

For more information, see <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/community-health/health-policy/current-policy-initiatives.aspx>