



# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Matt Strittmater**  
*Health & Human Services*

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March 1, 2024

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Alayne Krause,

I am pleased to present the Health and Human Services Department's 2023 Annual Report.

Talented and dedicated Health & Human Services staff once again rose to meet challenges in our community. Examples included: (1) Public Health facilitation of the 2024 – 2026 Community Health Needs Assessment; (2) Behavioral Health continued expansion of the most intense wrap around services for children and adults; (3) Child Protective Services out-of-home placements were reduced for the fourth consecutive year; (4) Economic Support activity greatly increased as temporary Medicaid policies established during the pandemic were replaced with regular eligibility, enrollment, and benefits management processes; and (5) National Opioid Settlement and American Rescue Plan Act funded services were initiated.

Goals for 2024 include: (1) Enhancing Accounting and Environmental Health staffing patterns; Completing the 2023-2025 Health & Human Services strategic plan; (2) Implementing a Day Reporting Center to use as an alternative to Shelter Care in Youth Justice; (3) Continuing to focus on reducing out of home care for adults and children; (4) Continuing to increase the number of individuals served in our most intense Behavioral Health programs; and (5) Partnering with other community agencies to develop a plan of action to respond to the health challenges identified in the 2024-2026 Community Health Assessment.

Thank you to the Health and Human Services Committee, the entire County Board of Supervisors, and County Administrator Krause for your continued support of our services. Thank you as well to the Department's exceptional partners and staff for their contributions, leadership, and support. Our successes would not be possible without all of you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Strittmater  
Health & Human Services Director

## **Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities**

*Partnering with the residents of Sheboygan County to improve health and quality of life through education, building community connections, and empowering all to be their best selves.*

The Sheboygan County Health and Human Services Department is the County's comprehensive health and human service planning and delivery agency organized under Chapter 46 of the Wisconsin Statutes. It provides information and assistance to a diverse consumer base, including individuals facing economic crises, health risks, challenges to child, youth and family wellness, life changes associated with aging, and other needs.

## **Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2023**

- Child Protection Services Out-of-Home Care Reduction – 139 children in the Child Welfare system were placed in out-of-home care as 2023 began. That number was reduced by 15% down to 118 as the year ended. Health & Human Services and County Corporation Counsel have been focused on this since 2019, and this is the fourth straight year of reductions. Tremendous work has been done to locate relatives, provide in-home safety and support services, reduce the backlog of court cases, and minimize the amount of time it takes to ensure children have a safe and stable living situation.
- Expansion of Intensive Behavioral Health Services – The number of children and adults served in the two of the most intense treatment services continues to grow. The number of children and adults with significant mental health and/or substance use challenges served by the Comprehensive Community Services program increased from 198 in January to 208 by the end of the year with 162 on the waitlist (5% increase). The number of children with emotional, physical, and/or cognitive challenges served by the Children's Long-Term Support program rose from 258 in January to 302 by the end of the year (17% increase). Continued expansion of the two programs is likely to occur as they are well funded by the state and both have individuals waiting to be enrolled.
- Economic Support Services “Unwinding” – Unwinding is the term used by our federal partners to describe the steps for state Medicaid agencies to replace temporary policies established during the COVID-19 emergency with regular eligibility, enrollment, and benefits management processes. The eight-county consortium we are part of tackled 1.9 million tasks, which included 300,000 phone calls. Sheboygan County is still seeing a 22% increase in our caseload since 2020 (around 3,000 additional cases).
- 2024 – 2026 Community Health Needs Assessment – Significant time and energy was devoted toward collaborating with a number of other organizations for a Community Health Assessment. Input was elicited through 38 key informant interviews, three community listening sessions, and 1,215 community member survey responses. Thousands of data points are currently being reviewed to identify priority health topics for the community.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Initiatives – Neighbors + Families Together (a neighborhood support program) and a Mobile Crisis/law enforcement co-response model

both began operation in the City of Sheboygan during 2023. Both programs are funded utilizing ARPA funds.

- National Opioid Settlement Funding Initiatives – A child/youth focused therapist and a crisis worker on-site at the detention center to enhance transition planning were both added in 2023 via National Opioid Settlement funding.
- Trauma Informed Care Training – Various internal trainings were attended 868 times in 2023 (68 internal Social Work continuing education credit opportunities).
- Mind the Mind Conference – The Department sponsored the Health & Human Services track at this conference. 57 staff attended, and two staff were conference presenters.
- Youth Justice Innovation Grant – A \$100,000 grant was received to assist with implementation of a Day Reporting Center to use as an alternative to Shelter Care.
- Hmong Café – Public Health collaborated with the Sheboygan County Food Bank, Safe Harbor, PRISM Health & Wellness, and the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association to implement a weekly opportunity to celebrate Hmong culinary heritage and community connection.
- Uptown Social Collaboration – The Department collaborated with Uptown Social and Lakeshore Community Health Care to hold 14 influenza and COVID-19 vaccine clinics. 815 vaccines were given. 75 homebound community members were also visited and vaccinated.
- Senior Nutrition Program Enhancement – Restaurant based alternatives to complement congregate meal sites were implemented in Plymouth and Cedar Grove in 2022 based on community stakeholder input. A third location in Random Lake was added in 2023.
- Electronic Health Record Implementation – Significant staff time was devoted to implementing a new Electronic Health Record. This project has been ongoing for many years. Design and testing were completed in 2023, and went live in January 2024.
- Child Support Payments – \$14.5 million in Child Support payments was collected and distributed.
- Food Share – \$26.1 million of Food Share benefits were provided to an average of 12,534 Sheboygan County recipients each month.
- Women, Infant and Children (WIC) – Just under \$1.6 million in supplemental nutrition program benefits were distributed and utilized in local grocery stores and pharmacies. \$20,958 were utilized at farmer's markets.
- Adult Protective Services – Responded to 341 referrals of potential abuse and neglect.
- Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) – Fielded 13,172 phone calls related to information and assistance, completed 319 functional screens for Family Care eligibility, and conducted 22 outreach events.

## Budget

The Health & Human Services 2023 budget was set at \$44,889,372 for the start of the year and later amended to \$45,218,409 to allow for adjustments to state and federal grant awards that were unknown during the budget development. The 2023 budget reflects an increase of \$1,798,798 as compared to 2022. Levy contributions account for \$14,259,204 which is a decrease of \$353,014 over the prior year. The Department experienced a \$329,954 positive variance for the year. The drivers of positive variance included: (1) Staff attrition; (2) Reduction in vendor expense due to staffing challenges and pandemic dynamics; (3) Higher than anticipated reconciliation funding from the state in Behavioral Health programs; and (4) Reduction in the overall cost of adult and children out-of-home care placements.

	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Results</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	\$44,668,811	\$45,018,032	\$349,221
<b>Expenses</b>	\$45,218,409	\$45,009,995	\$208,414
<b>Transfers In/Out</b>	\$544,218	\$316,536	-\$227,682
<b>Total</b>	-\$5,380	\$324,573	\$329,954

The Department's 2024 budget is set at \$49,654,885. Levy contributions increased to \$14,539,439. The overall budget is increasing by \$4,436,476 compared to 2023.

## Issues and Challenges Ahead

The cost and complexity of child and adult out-of-home care remains the primary financial challenge. Workforce dynamics continue to present a significant challenge as the Department and contracted vendors struggle to maintain staffing patterns due to a continued decline in the number of qualified applicants. A notable number of referrals continue to occur for the most robust Behavioral Health services (Birth to 3; Children's Long Term Support, and Comprehensive Community Services). The historic community needs of poverty, mental health, substance use, chronic unemployment or under-employment, and rural transportation also all present significant challenges.

## Goals and Objectives for 2024

- Enhance Accounting infrastructure.
- Initiate the Community Recovery Services funding stream.
- Enhance capabilities of the new Electronic Health Record system.
- Continue COVID-19 pandemic mitigation and support.
- Increase Behavioral Health service delivery in the most intense and well-funded services for children and adults with significant levels of need.
- Enhance Environmental Health staffing pattern.
- Implement a Day Reporting Center within the Youth Justice service continuum.
- Partner with other community agencies to develop a plan of action to address the primary health concerns identified in the 2024-2026 Community Health Needs Assessment.