



Most Prosperous

Healthiest

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MARATHON COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

2016 Annual Report
Executive Summary

Published: May 2017

Making Our Communities Healthy

The charge of the Marathon County Health Department is to address health conditions that cause people to become ill, injured, or die prematurely. In order to know where to invest resources, the Health Department, with our community partners, needs to have a good understanding of what health conditions have the biggest impact on people becoming ill, injured, or dying prematurely.

So how do we diagnose the health of Marathon County? Much like a doctor has specific tools to check the health of a patient, the Health Department uses specific tools to check the health of the County. The Health Department does not use a thermometer, a blood pressure cuff, or a scale to check the health of Marathon County. Instead, we use data.

In the latest examination of the health of our county, the department, along with the Marathon County Board of Health, and representatives from Healthy Marathon County, looked at more than 60 data points from the 2015-2017 LIFE Report. In their review, they determined the major contributors in causing people to become ill, injured, or die prematurely. The diagnosis is that the people who live, learn, work, and play in Marathon County would be healthier by addressing the following health conditions:

Alcohol & Other Drug Misuse and Abuse	Create a culture in communities where alcohol is used responsibly and other drugs are not misused	Social & Economic Factors that Influence Health
Behavioral Health	Promote well-being by preventing or intervening in mental illness and substance abuse or other addictions	
Adverse Childhood Experiences	Prevent or reduce the impact of potentially traumatic events during childhood that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being	
Healthy Weight	Having a weight that lowers one's risk for health problems	
Health Needs of Aging	Developing and maintaining optimal mental, social and physical well-being and function in older adulthood	
Oral Health	Promoting healthy teeth and the entire mouth	

Like a doctor who prescribes drugs and treatments to cure ailments of their patients, the Health Department, with our community partners, have prescriptions to prevent or reduce the impact of what ails our residents. On January 5, 2017 the 2017-2020 Marathon County Community Health Improvement Plan was released to the community. This community-owned plan is our prescription for improving the health of our residents and the communities, in which they live, learn, work and play in. The plan was developed with the input of 80 individuals representing more than 40 organizations.

Residents of Marathon County are fortunate to live in Marathon County, a county where community members and organizations understand the complex problems that face the health and social well-being of people and communities they live in. The health issues facing the County can only be addressed when everyone rolls up their sleeves to contribute to the work that needs to be done. To read more about the work that will be done in our county over the next four years to improve the health of our residents and communities, visit <http://marathoncountyhealthpriorities.org>

In good health,

Joan Theurer, Health Officer

Vision:
To be the healthiest and safest county in which to live, learn, work and play.

Mission:
To advance a healthy Marathon County community by preventing disease, promoting health, and protecting the public from environmental hazards.

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Making Our Communities Healthy

Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse and Abuse

The goal of the Alcohol and Other Drug program is to create a culture in communities where alcohol is used responsibly, and other drugs (prescription or illicit) are not misused. The AOD Partnership has been the Marathon County community coalition focused on substance abuse prevention for nearly 30 years. With the financial investment of a number of local foundations, the AOD Partnership Board initiated a strategic planning process in 2016 to revisit mission, vision and structure to ensure sustainability and a clear role in the community.

Another accomplishment for 2016 was the collection of the aggregate Youth Risk Behavior Survey data and the report to the community. The cooperation of all the schools was impressive, and the report has been shared widely. The highlight was seeing and hearing about the report in a presentation from Department of Public Instruction staff when they acknowledged Marathon County for the report.

One hundred percent of schools districts (public and private) also contributed to the Annual School Networking Meeting to discuss current alcohol and drug trends, assess staff and student needs, and share local resources available to help address substance use amongst youth.

Further Impacts

- Maintained participation of 100% of pharmacies and multiple clinics (including Marshfield, Aspirus, Advanced Pain Management, and Bone & Joint) promoting the Marathon County Medication Drop Box Program. This program continues to collect approximately 4,000 pounds of medications every year
- Convened and participated in conversations with federal legislators on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (P.L. 114-198), and treatment concerns in rural areas. The legislation ensures a coordinated response, encompassing: prevention, treatment, recovery, law enforcement, criminal justice reform, and overdose reversal.
- Participated in and recruited local speakers for the Governor's (WI) Opioid Task Force to inform them of the community need, impact of opiates, and need for youth prevention.



Find out more...

Alcohol & Other Drugs Partnership Council: www.aodpartnership.org

Pushback Against Drug Abuse: www.pushbackdrugs.org

Take Back Youth: www.takebackyouth.org

Western Marathon County Healthy Communities: www.wmchc.org



Making Our Communities Healthy Behavioral Health

In 2016, the Health Department contributed to new community initiatives in support of behavioral health. In recent years, there is increase understanding of the importance of one's mental well-being and the connection to good physical health.

Changemakers for Behavioral Health

May of 2016, the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment of the Medical College of Wisconsin announced a new "Changemakers" program focused on behavioral health. In July, Marathon County Health Department was one of ten communities across the state awarded a grant by the program.

In the first six months of the project:

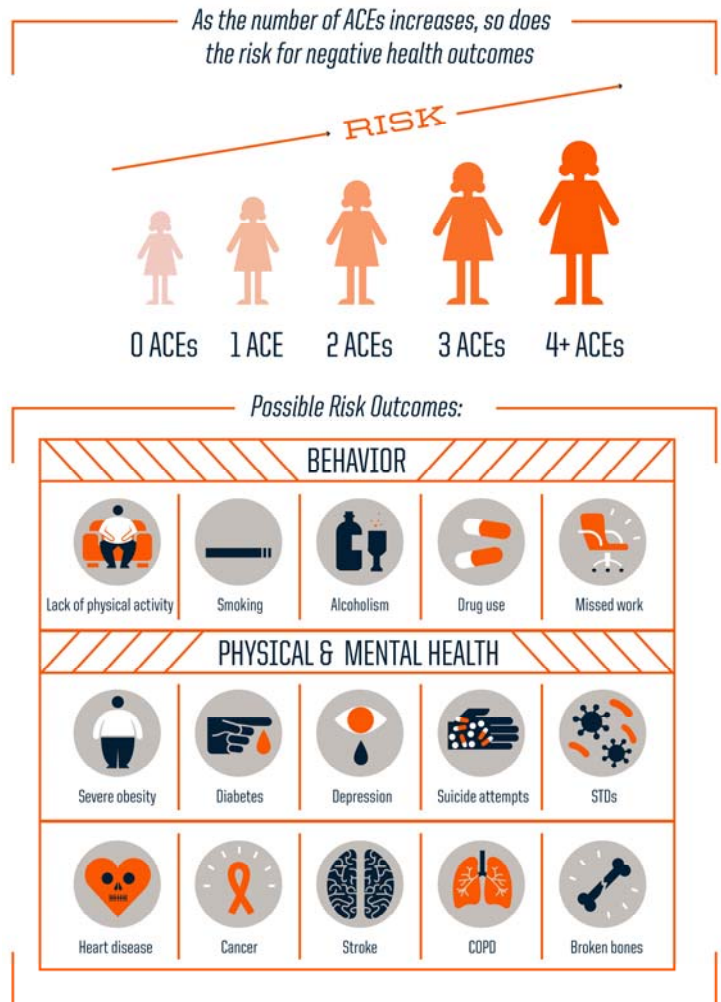
- A new staff person was hired
- Four staff spent 22 days participating in the Learning Community events gaining knowledge and creating local plans
- A local community partners group was created to provide direction to the local plan
- The Edgar School District collaborated with the research team to document the impact of mental health counseling that was instituted in their school district.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

In 2016, Marathon County identified the need for more training to be available on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are linked to increased risk for poor mental wellbeing, alcohol and other drug and substance misuse and abuse, and chronic diseases. A Public Health Educator from the Health Department and a Social Worker from the Marathon County Social Services Department, who are certified ACEs Trainers, teamed up to provide five presentations to 129 individuals in 2016.

ACEs was identified as a 2017-2020 Community Health Priority in May of 2016. In late summer, community contributed to developing a plan of work to align community efforts for 2017-2020.

WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?



Source: <http://www.rwjf.org/aces>



Find out more...

Behavioral Health: www.marathoncountyhealthpriorities.org/priority-areas/behavioral-health/

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):

www.marathoncountyhealthpriorities.org/priority-areas/adverse-childhood-experiences/

Making Our Communities Healthy

Tobacco

Tobacco is still the leading cause of death and disability in our nation, and is responsible for nearly one in five deaths in the United States. Marathon County Health Department is the fiscal agent to the Central Wisconsin Tobacco Free Coalition, covering Marathon, Portage, and Wood counties. The Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program provides the funding for the programs and has specific objectives which are completed within the three county jurisdictions. The effort is guided by a local steering committee of public health officials and community members from the three counties.

In 2016, efforts to increase awareness of the health risk associated with e-cigarettes occurred with the general public and policy makers, resulting in the Cities of Wausau and Marshfield amending their clean indoor air ordinances to include e-cigarettes. Sixteen educational presentations on e-cigarettes were given to community groups and policy makers to describe the impact these new nicotine delivery devices has on personal and public health.

The Wisconsin WINS program is a retail compliance program conducted in cooperation with local law enforcement and youth volunteers. The goal of the program is to identify retail locations that will sell tobacco products to minors. Those who do not sell are given acknowledgement and those who do sell are cited for the violation of state statute. All retailers are offered education for employees regarding how to check identification of buyers. In 2016, 70 compliance checks were conducted throughout the County, and 61 (87%) did not sell to minors.



Tobacco Related Disparities

SECONDHAND SMOKE EXPOSURE

According to a 2011–2012 national survey:⁴

CHILDREN

7 out of 10 black children, ages 3 to 11, were exposed to secondhand smoke regularly. This is a prominent disparity as on average 4 out of 10 children were exposed regularly.



MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

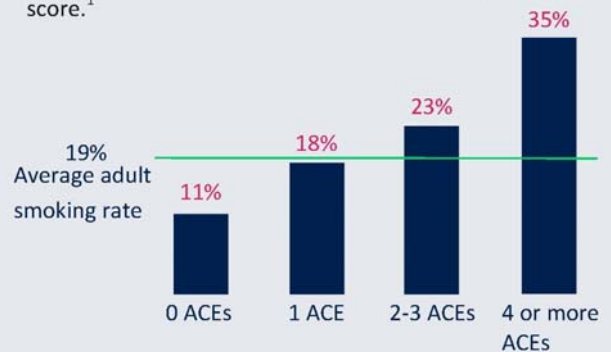
More than 1 in 3 nonsmokers who lived in rental housing were exposed to secondhand smoke.

Source: www.tobwis.org

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are negative life experiences that occur before the age of 18 (e.g., abuse, neglect, household dysfunction), are linked to risk behaviors, and could lead to negative health outcomes.¹

There is a strong correlation between smoking and ACE score.¹



Source: www.tobwis.org

Find out more...

Central Wisconsin Tobacco Free Coalition: www.centralwitobaccofree.org

Wisconsin WINS: www.wisconsinwins.com

Clear Gains—Wisconsin's Smoke Free Housing Initiative: www.wismokefreehousing.com



Making Our Communities Healthy

Healthy Weight

Healthy Weight is identified as one of the top health priorities in Marathon County. The conditions of overweight and obesity are being addressed by targeting our communities' food systems and the built physical environment for physical activity.

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Coalition

In 2016 the HEAL coalition met monthly and meetings were structured to provide time for learning about best practice interventions in obesity, and the Collective Impact model of community work. Additionally, time was allocated for the subcommittees (Local Foods - Community Gardens and Pedestrian Friendly Environments) to plan and evaluate their strategies.

Farmers Markets and Local Foods

In 2016, four local farmers markets extended their market season dates and one extended their hours, increasing the overall amount of time that growers are available to consumers. Notably the Village of Weston market saw significant growth in the number of customers, reaching an all-time high "point-in-time count" of 1,497 customers.

Bicycle and Pedestrian: Encouragement, Education, and Evaluation

The most significant development in 2016 was the progress the Central Wisconsin Off-road Cycling Coalition has made with implementing their long range plan. Marathon County Health Department staff has assisted the organization by making connections to community partners and grant writing. Funds were raised to support building a cycling track in a portion of Sylvan Hill park.

Further Impacts

- Health Department staff assisted six markets with providing Electronics Benefit Transfers (EBT) for the FoodShare program. A Double Your Dollars initiative was initiated in July, and resulted in EBT usage increasing by more 50% after the program was initiated. Overall utilization of EBT usage at the Farmers Markets has steadily increased since 2014.
- Customer feedback and bicycle counts presented to the Weston Farmers Market Manager resulted in the Village placing a bike rack at the market for customers.
- Health Department staff organized "walk audits" in the downtown Wausau area. A survey tool was created to assess the walkability and volunteer's conducted the audit in August of 2016. Information was collected and shared with the City of Wausau. As a result of the audit, certain downtown crossings will be repainted to clearly designate the safe zones.



Find out more...

Farmers Markets and Local Foods: www.marathoncountylocalfood.org

HEAL Coalition: www.facebook.com/HEALCoalitionMarathonCounty

Making Our Communities Healthy

Start Right

Trauma sensitive care practices were implemented in the Start Right program in response to the increased awareness of stress and trauma among clients served. These practices included the institution of an engagement only visit, essentially a “meet and greet” for clients referred to the program so that they can meet their public health nurse and establish a relationship prior to an assessment taking place. This practice has been so successful that it was presented as an example of Trauma Informed Care for health departments at a state conference.

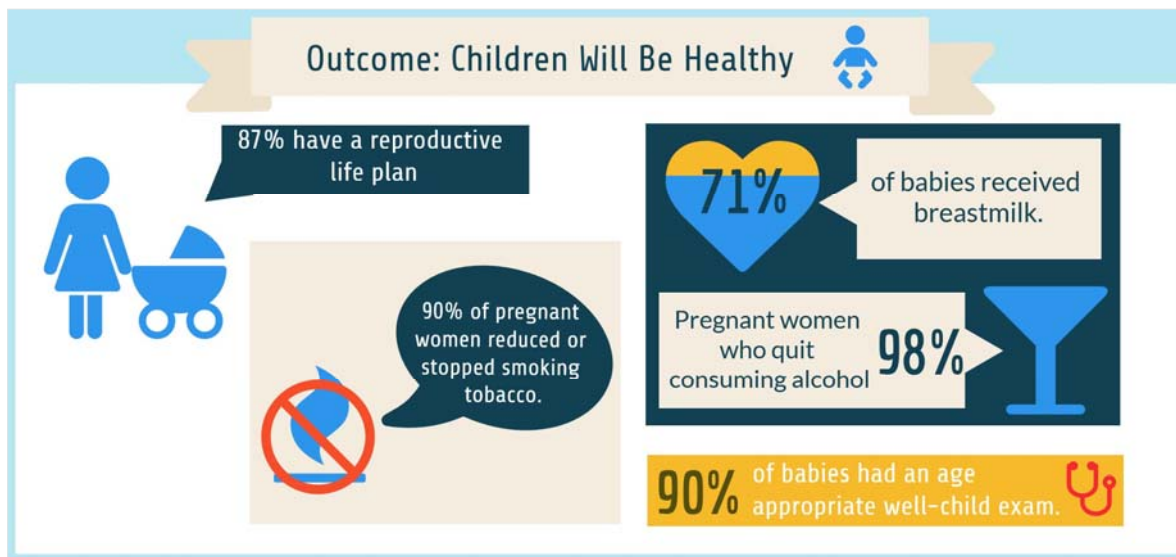
Trauma informed program modifications and community collaborations occurred to address some of the unique needs of our diverse clients in the program. For example, the Start Right program was adjusted to the unique needs of the incarcerated pregnant women at the jail. Nine pregnant women at the jail in 2016 were served, the largest number to date.

New and strengthened collaborations occurred with social services, WIC, the Neighbor’s Place, the Marathon County jail, and other agencies, assuring that coordination of services occurs to help support positive outcomes for families. In addition, the public health nurses, outreach worker, and supervisors have had increased training on trauma informed care.

Start Right!

Quality Improvement

In addition to converting paper records into an electronic format staff identified ways to reduce the amount of paper records generated. In 2016, all Family Health Public Health Nurses were issued a county owned tablet computer and the forms in our intake packet for the Start Right program were converted to electronic documents. This allows public health nurses to meet with clients in their homes and fill out forms right on the tablet. Signatures can be secured electronically, and the electronic forms can be immediately filed in the appropriate client chart. Client charts are always up-to-date and the department has reduced liability by not transporting paper records that contain HIPAA protected information.



Find out more...

Marathon County Health Department: www.marathoncountyhealthdepartment.org

Start Right on Facebook: www.facebook.com/StartRightFirstSteps

First Breath: www.wwhf.org/programs/first-breath

My Baby and Me: www.wwhf.org/programs/my-baby-me



Making Our Communities Healthy

Communicable Diseases

Investigation and Control

The health department performs surveillance of diseases reported in the county to prevent further spread of disease. On a weekly basis, infection control practitioners from area hospitals and clinics receive a report of communicable disease occurrences in Marathon County.

Immunizations

Marathon County Health Department provides vaccines at immunization clinics held at the health department as well as public health clinics held at the Marathon County Jail and Aspirus Wausau Family Medicine in Wausau. Public health nurses provide education on immunizations at every opportunity when in contact with families in Marathon County. By providing education and access to vaccines, the health of the community is protected against vaccine-preventable disease.

Sexually Transmitted Disease

At the STD clinics, specially trained public health nurses, working under the supervision of Aspirus Wausau Family Medicine physicians, screen individuals for STDs/HIV, provide treatment, and provide vaccines. All individuals seen through the clinics are counseled on risk-reduction behaviors. Client partners are identified and counseled to seek treatment with their primary care provider or at the clinic. As a result of the clinic, individuals who may not seek care due to barriers such as cost, concerns about confidentiality, or not having a health care provider are screened and treated, reducing further transmission of STDs/HIV in the community.

Rabies Control

The Rabies Control Program goal is to prevent humans from contracting rabies. This is accomplished through routine reporting of animal bites by hospitals, clinics, and law enforcement agencies; investigation of bite incidents; use of quarantine; and laboratory testing of animals when appropriate. Because rabies is nearly always fatal, the goal for the Rabies Control Program is to assure proper follow up after an animal bite to include quarantine or rabies testing and the need for prophylaxis due to an animal bite exposure.

Quality Improvement

Electronic Disease Follow-up

Conversion of paper Vaccine Administration Records to electronic records began in 2015 and still continues. This involves scanning and electronically filing records going back to 1978, and is scheduled to be complete in the fall of 2017. Beginning in 2016, all paper lab slips were scanned and saved electronically in the county's electronic record management system, allowing easier access and saving valuable space in the department.

Further Impacts

Public Health Preparedness

The emergence of new infectious diseases and natural disasters require a coordinated community response. Marathon County Health Department works closely with area health care organizations, Marathon County Emergency Management, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way of Marathon County, and Marathon County Department of Social Services to develop and exercise plans to close national preparedness capability gaps.

Tuberculosis

The Marathon County Health Department's Tuberculosis (TB) program follows up with individuals who have latent (non-infectious) TB and individuals with active (infectious) TB disease to prevent further spread of TB in the community. In 2016 Marathon County had 4 new cases of active TB disease diagnosed, and 30 persons with latent TB received treatment coordinated by the Marathon County Health Department.

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Find out more...

Marathon County Health Department: www.marathoncountyhealthdepartment.org

Wisconsin Department of Health Services: dhs.wisconsin.gov

Making Our Communities Healthy

Water Testing Laboratory

The Marathon County Health Department Water Testing Laboratory provides convenient, reliable, and reasonably priced water testing services to the citizens of Marathon County and surrounding Counties with the goal of safer drinking water. The lab monitors public and private drinking water systems in addition to recreational waters, such as swimming pools and beaches, testing for several microbiological and chemical parameters. In addition, lab personnel interpret results for well owners, and provide education concerning water safety issues.

In 2016, there were 2,808 public drinking water samples (2,700 in 2015) and 1,607 private drinking water samples (1,761 in 2015) tested in the lab. In 2016, 7% of public drinking water samples were bacteriologically unsafe (5% in 2015), as were 17% of private public drinking water samples (18% in 2015).

Quality Improvement

Information Management

In 2016, the water testing laboratory implemented a new laboratory information management system (LIMS). Implementation included researching and replacing nitrate/fluoride analysis equipment and water baths, training, internal and external coordination with the database vendor and IT staff, and customer outreach.

Testing Methods

The lab's Pseudalert test method for whirlpools was approved by DATCP saving materials, media, equipment, and staff time. This also resulted in faster, more reliable, results.

Licensing and Food Safety

The Marathon County Health Department provides health inspections and licensing for a variety of establishments including restaurants, groceries, convenience stores, lodging, campgrounds, recreational/education camps, swimming pools, mobile home parks, and body art facilities. A minimum of one routine inspection, or pre-inspections for compliance, are completed prior to issuing a permit.

As part of the Licensing Program, the Marathon County Health Department works to identify and respond to health issues related to food safety including outbreak investigations. Program staff serve as the primary investigators when there is a suspected food or water borne illness in Marathon County. Limiting the spread of a communicable disease and providing clear guidance to facilities during and after an investigation to prevent future illnesses are key goals in our licensing program.

Quality Improvement

Facility Mapping

A project to map facilities based on assigned sanitarians was completed in 2016. The intent for mapping facility locations was to provide a tool for use in balancing sanitarian facility inspection workload between sanitarians. Mapping facility locations helped to identify specific facilities to transfer between sanitarians with consideration for the sanitarians involved and other facility assignments.

Find out more...

Marathon County Health Department: www.marathoncountyhealthdepartment.org

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: dnr.wi.gov

Drinking Water: dnr.wi.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/

Wisconsin Department of Health Services: dhs.wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: datcp.wisconsin.gov



Making Our Communities Healthy

Human Health Hazards

The Human Health Hazard program goal is to reduce exposure to substances, activities, or conditions that can negatively impact health, minimizing the health impacts of such exposures.

Mercury Reduction Program

The Mercury Reduction program is a partnership with Wausau Water Works and Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District. The program continues to demonstrate success in keeping mercury waste from waterways. Marathon County Health Department's role is to outreach to dentists, schools, automotive repair, and other businesses on proper disposal of mercury-containing products. In addition, residents may exchange mercury-containing thermometers for digital thermometers, free of charge, through seven locations. Thirty-six of the thirty-eight (38) area dental offices reported disposal results from installed amalgam separators. For 2016, approximately 192 pounds of dental amalgam waste and containers were disposed properly. Additionally, approximately 112 thermometers, 6 thermostats, 2 mercury switches, and 7 sphygmomanometers were collected at seven drop-off sites in the metro area, and correctly disposed through the Marathon County Solid Waste Department's Hazardous Waste Collection Facility.

Radon and Other Indoor Air Quality

The Health Department operates the regional Northcentral Radon Information Center (RIC), a 12-county consortium to educate individuals and promote testing for radon. In 2016, the department provided seven presentations on health risks, testing, and mitigation of radon. Additionally, the Health Department provided regional support to health departments within the RIC consortium area and responded to consultations by phone or email. The Radon Information Center provides radon information and test kits to individuals, private businesses, and government agencies.

Further Impacts

- The Health Department screens for potential contaminate hazards on tax delinquent properties, and properties being purchased by Marathon County. In 2016, no Environmental Transaction Screens were performed. The Marathon County Treasurer's Department was in the process of developing an internal method to identify and determine statuses of properties. Environmental Transaction Screening is expected to resume in 2017.
- In coordination with nation-wide Environmental Protection Agency efforts, the Radon Information Center promotes radon testing during January Radon Action Month through media press releases in English and Hmong. During this time, the department receives inquiries concerning the health risks, testing, and mitigation of radon.
- In addition to radon, the Health Department receives inquiries about other indoor and outdoor air topics. The topics vary and may include questions about wood smoke, carbon monoxide, and mold. In 2016, there were 41 such inquiries, including 36 regarding mold.

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Find out more...

Marathon County Health Department: www.marathoncountyhealthdepartment.org

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: dnr.wi.gov

Wisconsin Department of Health Services: dhs.wisconsin.gov

Making Our Communities Healthy- Operations & Quality Improvement

Network Electronic Filing System Cleanup

Using Project Management principles, the Administrative Support Team, with support of department staff, led the project to review, organize, and purge all working files saved on our network. Formal policies and procedures were written to set clear expectations for electronic files, and a maintenance plan was developed.

Through the process, a dashboard was developed to track progress, and 6,093 file folders and over 66,000 files were eliminated, leaving only relevant and useful documents. The result is an organized system where electronic files can be easily found and accessed by department staff.

Customer – Centered Culture

In 2016, the Health Department participated in a pilot to learn more about creating a customer-centered culture. The pilot informed the department of the importance to define who our customers are and what they expect. Many times the service provided has different types of customers with different interests.

The Health Department applied what was learned from the pilot in developing the 2017-2020 Marathon County Community Health Improvement Plan. Prior to developing and writing the plan, stakeholders who use the plan were invited to share their expectations for what they wanted to see in the plan; the plan was to have measureable outcomes, be compelling, evidence-based, solution-oriented and readable. As a department, the intent is to increase the customer's involvement when planning new products.

Further Impact

The Fiscal and Administrative Support Team also contributed to the following impacts in the operations of the department.

- Growth and development of skills in Project Management.
- Increased role in assisting the Water Testing Lab
- Assisted the Medical Examiner's Office with administrative functions
- Developed Community Health Priorities website with Chronic Disease Team:
www.marathoncountyhealthpriorities.org



Find out more...

Marathon County Health Department: www.marathoncountyhealthdepartment.org

Marathon County Health Priorities: www.marathoncountyhealthpriorities.org





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