

PORTAGE COUNTY

2026-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan



PORTAGE COUNTY
COMBINED GENERAL
HEALTH DISTRICT



University Hospitals

The Science of Health. The Art of Compassion.



Mental Health &
Recovery Board
OF PORTAGE COUNTY



CHNA Priority 1: Chronic Disease

CHNA Priority 1: Chronic Disease

Strategy 1: Provide programs and information related to tobacco, lung cancer, and smoking cessation; provide lung cancer screenings.

Goal: Reduce the lung cancer mortality rate.

Objective: By December 31, 2028, reduce the burden of tobacco use and tobacco-related disease in Portage County.

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<u>Activity 1:</u> Continue referring residents to the University Hospitals Portage Medical Center (UH Portage) smoking cessation program		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage	68 referrals.
<u>Activity 2:</u> Continue offering tobacco harm reduction items through vending machines at Portage County Health District (PCHD) and UH Portage		Josh Sexton, Portage County Health District	49 lozenges dispensed 57 gum dispensed Totaling \$1,522.79
<u>Activity 3:</u> Continue providing Quit Kits to residents		Jalessa Caples, Kent City Health Department	No targeted outreach, no quit kits distributed. Quit Kits (7 days' supply of nicotine gum, lozenges, patches, fidget toys, gum, candy) distributed at KCHD or health fairs/events. Nicotine patches more effective for vapes.
<u>Activity 4:</u> Distribute tobacco cessation resource guide		Jalessa Caples, Kent City Health Department	One online viewing. Will be updating the guide and sending out to community partners, post on website. Tobacco grant funding no longer available in Ohio.



<u>Activity 5</u> : Increase distribution of resources related to tobacco and lung cancer as part of the ACS Health Equity Program		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage	239 resources distributed.
<u>Activity 6</u> : Increase lung cancer CT screenings through UH Portage		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage	Data will be gathered annually.
<u>Activity 7</u> : Provide education about the dangers of and misconceptions about vaping		Jalessa Caples, Kent City Health Department	No education, presentations or events January-March 2026.
<u>Activity 8</u> : Explore school-based tobacco programs and tobacco resources to share with youth. Understand what is currently being done and opportunities for expansion.		Sarah Gehring, Townhall II	Too Good for Drugs: K-5th Project Alert: 6th-8th Too Good for Drugs: High School Vaping Quitting Resources: The EX Program, My Life My Quit
Collaborative Partners: UH Portage, PCHD, Kent City Health Department, Townhall II			
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Access to smoking cessation programs/materials, Access to screenings, Health equity			
Target Population: Adults; youth; residents who smoke cigarettes, vape, and/or use other tobacco products			
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Chronic disease			

CHNA Priority 1: Chronic Disease

Strategy 2: Increase education about and improve access to colon cancer screenings and colon cancer prevention.



Goal: Decrease colon cancer rates.			
Objective: By December 31, 2028, reduce the incidence and mortality of colorectal cancer in Portage County.			
Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<p><u>Activity 1:</u> Increase education about colon cancer screenings and colon cancer prevention, including information about nutrition and physical activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic: Limitations of Cologuard - Topic: Screenings recommended starting at age 45 (for those with average risk) - Audience: businesses – when University Hospitals Portage Medical Center (UH Portage) provides biometric screenings - Audience: Geographic areas with high prevalence of colon cancer according to the (UH Portage) data; NAACP - Outlet: National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month (March) 		<p>Mindy Gusz, UH Portage</p> <p>Cowan Stevens, Axess Family Services</p>	<p>113.</p> <p>NEOMED Free Clinic FIT Tests:</p>
<p><u>Activity 2:</u> Improve access to colon cancer screenings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bulk order and send out Cologuard 		<p>Cowan Stevens, Axess Family Services</p>	

- Explore other ways to improve access to screenings			
Collaborative Partners: UH Portage, Axess Family Services			
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Access to screenings, Health equity			
Target Population: Adults, Adults 45+			
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Chronic disease			

CHNA Priority 1: Chronic Disease

Strategy 3: Educate the community on chronic disease risk factors; increase access to preventive screenings and monitoring devices.

Goal: Decrease atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease deaths.

Objective: By December 31, 2028, reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Portage County by decreasing coronary heart disease mortality and reducing the prevalence of key risk factors, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and stroke/transient ischemic attack (TIA).

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<u>Activity 1:</u> Educate the community on chronic disease risk factors and prevention and conduct the following screenings: blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol, and pre-diabetes screenings (track separately)		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage	UH Screenings BP: 178 BMI: 28 Pre-Diabetes: 29 Cholesterol: 50 PCHD is purchasing machines and supplies for chronic disease prevention – cholesterol, A1C



			NEOMED Free Clinic – will begin to distribute blood pressure cuffs for home B monitoring. Will share with community.
<u>Activity 2:</u> Maintain intern role for American Heart Association Rural at Heart Program Intern will implement and promote use of blood pressure machines in libraries		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage Amy Cooper, Portage County Health District	Intern role has started. Orientation complete. Planning underway to implement and expand BP program at the libraries; will add BP monitors to library circulation
<u>Activity 3:</u> Promote cardiac CT for cardiac calcium score tests		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage	Will provide data annually:
Collaborative Partners: UH Portage, Northeast Ohio Medical University Free Clinic, PCHD			
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Access to screenings, Access to medical equipment, Health equity			
Target Population: Adults			
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Chronic disease			

CHNA Priority 1: Chronic Disease			
Strategy 4: Educate Portage County residents on healthy eating and active living.			
Goal: Improve nutrition and physical activity.			
Objective: By December 31, 2028, improve healthy eating and physical activity behaviors among adults and youth in Portage County by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and increasing participation in regular physical activity.			
Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress



<p><u>Activity 1:</u> Continue physical activity programming made available by University Hospitals Portage Medical Center (UH Portage) and Portage Parks (Parks Rx Program)</p> <p>Increase awareness of programs</p> <p>Include corporate connections</p> <p>Continue Portage Park District's community group hiking opportunities</p>		<p>Mindy Gusz, UH Portage</p> <p>Jennifer White, Portage Park District</p>	<p>No program this quarter due to inclement weather.</p> <p>Portage Park District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs advertised via monthly e-newsletter (6,500 subscribers), website, and social media (Facebook & Instagram) • Park Rx Programs & Awareness Events: 5 programs, 344 attendees • Group Hikes: 17 hikes, 122 attendees
<p><u>Activity 2:</u> Continue community education on nutrition</p> <p>Include corporate connections</p>		<p>Mindy Gusz, UH Portage</p>	<p>420</p>
<p><u>Activity 3:</u> Provide community education on physical activity</p> <p>Include corporate connections</p> <p>Continue Portage Park District's Junior Ranger program</p>		<p>Mindy Gusz, UH Portage</p> <p>Kim Plough, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Department</p> <p>Jennifer White, Portage Park District</p>	<p>44</p> <p>Sequoia – Park RX collaboration – outdoor classes. Free cooking demonstration with Dietitians in May. May 14 -NEW Center event with quinoa crockpot chili, nutrition education. Will be partnering with Reed Memorial Library to provide food demonstrations on May 30 using “kitchen on wheels”</p> <p><i>Nourish and Move</i> – quarterly nutrition and physical activity education.</p> <p>Portage Park District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Ranger Hikes, Acorn Adventures Programs (pre-K), and School Programs: 9 programs, 173 students
<p><u>Activity 4:</u> Continue providing Eating Smart Being Active, a nutrition and physical activity education program</p>		<p>Jeannie Yount, OSU Extension</p>	<p>117 lessons were delivered to 25 participants. Locations include Root House, Safer Futures, Freedom House and PARC (Portage Area Recovery Center)</p>



Collaborative Partners: UH Portage, Portage Park District, PCHD, Kent City HD, OSU Extension			
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Access to physical activity opportunities, Access to nutrition education, Food equity			
Target Population: Adults, Youth			
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Chronic disease			

CHNA Priority 1: Chronic Disease

Strategy 5: Increase access to and participation in community-based nutrition programs and opportunities such as farmers’ markets.

Goal: Reduce food insecurity.

Objective: By December 31, 2028, improve food security and access to healthy foods in Portage County by reducing food insecurity among adults and children and increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Data Source	Target Data/Metric
<u>Activity 1:</u> Participate in and increase awareness of the Senior Nutrition Program.		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage Kate DeAngelis, Haymaker Farmers' Market in Kent	No activity. PCHD Thrive Together Farmers’ Market has been approved to accept Senior FMNP in 2026, in addition to SNAP and WIC FMNP.	
<u>Activity 2:</u> Participate in and increase awareness of the Power of Produce kids’ program		Mindy Gusz, UH Portage Kate DeAngelis, Haymaker Farmers' Market in Kent	No activity. PCHD is exploring addition of POP at Thrive Together.	



<p><u>Activity 3:</u> Continue and expand referrals and participation addressing food insecurity and its impact on health at the University Hospitals Portage Food For Life Market.</p>		<p>Mindy Gusz, UH Portage</p>	<p>544 Food for Life patient visits. 1234 patients and family members impacted.</p>
<p><u>Activity 4:</u> Increase awareness of the Portage County Community Resource Guide¹</p>		<p>Audrey Riley, Portage County Job and Family Services</p>	<p>Updates are needed</p>
<p><u>Activity 5:</u> Continue implementing a Social Determinant of Health Screening Tool that includes food insecurity</p>		<p>Cowan Stevens, Axess Family Services</p>	
<p><u>Activity 6:</u> Continue and expand school-based programs to address food insecurity</p> <p>Continue to partner and participate with Raven Packs which is a community wide initiative to feed food-insecure students in the Ravenna Schools and community. The bags are delivered directly to the schools</p> <p>Birdie bags - Birdie bags are delivered to participating Portage County schools to provide bags of food, snacks and pantry items for food –insecure children</p>		<p>Mindy Gusz, UH Portage</p> <p>Laura Wunderle, Raven packs</p> <p>Candice Curtis, Birdie Bags</p>	<p>3411 Raven Packs packed and distributed.</p> <p>Birdie Bags delivered - 25,700 Snacks given - 102,800 Visits to the pantry - 2,533</p>
<p><u>Activity 7:</u> Continue Axess Family Services efforts to reduce food insecurity through food pantry and other efforts</p>		<p>Cowan Stevens, Axess Family Services</p>	

¹ <https://www.portagecounty-oh.gov/job-family-services/pages/resource-guides>



<p>Activity 8: Host pop-up pantries in Portage County at least 4 times per month (PCHD, KCHD, NEOMED, KSU)</p>		<p>Sarah Meduri, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>PCHD served 599 families January-March, transitioning to market-style pantry in May 2026. Community partners will offer resources onsite to those attending the pop-up pantry.</p> <p>KCHD served 91 families Jan-March.</p>
<p>Collaborative Partners: UH Portage, Haymaker Farmers' Market in Kent, Portage Senior Center, Portage County Job and Family Services, PCHD, Axess Family Services, Raven Pack Program (Ravenna City Schools), Birdie Bags (Kent City Schools), Akron Canton Regional Food Bank</p>			
<p>Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Food equity, Access to healthy food options</p>			
<p>Target Population: Adults, Youth, Seniors, SNAP recipients</p>			
<p>Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Chronic disease</p>			

CHNA Priority 2: Mental Health and Substance Misuse

<p>CHNA Priority 2: Mental Health and Substance Misuse</p>			
<p>Strategy 1: Conduct suicide prevention and mental health outreach to Portage County youth and analyze youth mental health data.</p>			
<p>Goal: Improve youth mental health.</p>			
<p>Objective: By December 31, 2028, improve youth mental health outcomes in Portage County by reducing mental health emergency department visits, suicide risk and ideation, and persistent feelings of sadness among youth.</p>			
<p>Action Step:</p>	<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Lead Person or Organization(s)</p>	<p>Progress</p>
<p>Activity 1: Conduct suicide prevention and mental health outreach to individuals and community groups/organizations to increase awareness and address youth mental health</p>		<p>Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board</p> <p>Sarah Gehring, Townhall II</p>	<p>See Appendix: Townhall II School Programs</p>

<p>Include prevention education for middle school and high school students (Townhall II)</p> <p>Include Signs of Suicide for middle school and high school students (Townhall II)</p> <p>Explore what other programs are being implemented in schools</p>																															
<p><u>Activity 2:</u> Continue Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) referrals and activities</p>		<p>Bill Russell, Coleman Health Services</p>	<p>Coleman Health Service - Portage MRSS - 9/2/25 through 2/28/26</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Total Referrals:</td> <td colspan="3">42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Month/Year</td> <td>January</td> <td>February</td> <td>March</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>13</td> <td>16</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referrals from 988</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table> <p>Service Outcome</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>3 days or less</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 days or more</td> <td>5</td> <td>12</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No service</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <p>3 days or less was crisis assessment only, 4 days or more entered stabilization and worked with the team, no service was a 3rd party referral, and the family/guardian declined outreach.</p>	Total Referrals:	42			Month/Year	January	February	March		13	16	13	Referrals from 988	5	3	4	3 days or less	6	0	4	4 days or more	5	12	7	No service	2	3	2
Total Referrals:	42																														
Month/Year	January	February	March																												
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4 days or more	5	12	7																												
No service	2	3	2																												
<p><u>Activity 3:</u> Track and report 988 data for Portage County youth</p>		<p>Sydney Butts, Townhall II</p>	<p>TH2: There were 359 988 calls during Q1 total. Safety forces were called 25 times and there were 14 MRSS referrals. We are unable to separate this data between adults and youth. There were 19 calls from callers aged 12 and under. There were 72 calls from callers aged 13-24. There were 82 calls where the callers age was undisclosed/unknown.</p>																												

<p><u>Activity 4:</u> Track and report Portage County youth data for ED and urgent care for attempted suicides to identify possible trends</p>		<p>Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>PCHD: 53 visits for Q1 of 2026 (compared to 56 for Q1 of 2025; 2025 total was 212 visits).</p>
<p><u>Activity 5:</u> Evaluate Coroner’s Data Report (monthly) to determine number of deaths by suicide among youth to identify possible trends and/or prevention strategies</p>		<p>Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Terra Howell- Muth, Mental Health & Recovery Board</p>	<p>Continue to report data at SPC meetings, last meeting held on 2/19/2026. No youth suicides reported.</p>
<p><u>Activity 6:</u> Collect and evaluate youth ACEs scores from behavioral health agencies in Portage County</p>		<p>Terra Howell- Muth, Mental Health & Recovery Board</p>	<p>2025 Children’s Advantage youth ACE data (632 questionnaires completed) – highest yes scores: Q3 - Living with someone depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide (300 yes) Q7 – parent or adult swear at you, insult you, put you down (187 yes) Q1 – feel you didn’t have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, had no one to protect/take care of you (101 yes)</p> <p>NEOMED Free Clinic/PCHD – will promote mental health services at upcoming Sports Physical event at PCHD on June 13.</p>
<p><u>Activity 7:</u> Evaluate trends in MRSS data in Portage County</p>		<p>Bill Russell, Coleman Health Services</p>	<p>Referrals from 988 have increased, the 3 months prior we had 4 total calls</p> <p>85% of our calls were seen within 60 minutes</p> <p>Top referent is schools, followed by families/self referrals</p> <p>0% of calls required law enforcement (excluding if family's call police themselves or if police refer to MRSS).</p>

Collaborative Partners: Mental Health & Recovery Board, Townhall II, Coleman Health Services, Portage County Health District
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Health equity
Target Population: Youth
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Mental health and addiction

CHNA Priority 2: Mental Health and Substance Misuse

Strategy 2: Provide community-based activities and trainings to raise awareness about adult mental health and analyze adult mental health data.

Goal: Improve adult mental health.

Objective: By December 31, 2028, improve adult mental health outcomes in Portage County by reducing mental health emergency department visits, suicide and suicide ideation, and poor mental health days, while increasing access to social and emotional support.

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<p><u>Activity 1:</u> Conduct adult suicide prevention and mental health outreach</p> <p>Trainings/education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) trainings - Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) - Gun locks with educational information - Continue promotion of 988 <p>Explore audiences to target (e.g., businesses, veterans, rural community)</p>		<p>Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board</p>	<p>2/5/2026, QPR, 17 adults, Portage Safety Council 2/18/26, AID, 25 KSU students 3/12/26, Youth MHFA, 15 KSU Staff 3/13/2026 QPR, 2 KSU Social Work students and 1 community member 3/18/26, QPR, 8 community members 3/31/26, QPR, 7 Hiram nursing students & 13 Hiram students MHFA training scheduled 4/8/26 with JFS staff.</p>



<u>Activity 2:</u> Open and operate Coleman Crisis Center		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board	The Ribbon Cutting for the Crisis Center will be held on May 26 from 11am-1pm. A director for the Crisis Stabilization Unit has started working, and the center is on track to open this summer.
<u>Activity 3:</u> Track and report 988 data for Portage County adults		Sydney Butts, Townhall II	There were 359 988 calls during Q1 total. Safety forces were called 25 times and there were 14 MRSS referrals. We are unable to separate this data between adults and youth. There were 57 calls from callers aged 25-34. There were 27 calls from callers aged 35-44. There were 17 calls from callers aged 45-54. There are 10 calls each for age groups 55-64 and 64-84. There was only one caller aged 85 and older. There were 82 calls where the callers age was undisclosed/unknown.
<u>Activity 4:</u> Track and report Portage County adult data for ED and urgent care for attempted suicides to identify possible trends		Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District	233 visits for Q1 of 2026 (compared to 198 for Q1 of 2025; 2025 total was 869 visits).
<u>Activity 5:</u> Evaluate Coroner's Data Report (monthly) to determine number of deaths by suicide among adults to identify possible trends and/or prevention strategies		Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District Terra Howell- Muth, Mental Health & Recovery Board	2025 final data – 19 deaths 2 females, 17 males Average age is 50, in 2024 it was 53 Age range 21-81 12 gunshot wounds, 1 prescription drug overdose, 1 struck by motor vehicle, 3 hanging, 1 struck by a train, 1 hypothermia/drowning 2026 data as of that meeting – 3 deaths 3 males Ages 31, 40, 67 2 hanging, 1 gunshot wound.
<u>Activity 6:</u> Collect and evaluate adult ACEs scores from behavioral health agencies in Portage County		Terra Howell- Muth, Mental Health & Recovery Board	2025 Axxess Family Services/Townhall II/Coleman Health Services ACE data (1,101 questionnaires completed) – highest yes scores: Q1 - Living with someone depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide (422 yes) Q6 – live with someone who went to jail/prison (387 yes)

			<p>Q8 – parent/adult in home ever hit, beat, kick, physically hurt you (354 yes)</p> <p>Q4 – live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or using drugs, including prescription drugs (341 yes)</p> <p>Q9 – ever feel no one in family loved you or thought you were special (340 yes)</p> <p>Q2 – lose parent through divorce, abandonment, death, or other reason (308 yes).</p>
<u>Activity 7:</u> Provide resources for suicide loss survivors		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board	Email letters and resources to suicide loss survivors when information on next of kin is received from Coroner’s office (all sent for 2025 deaths that information was received for).
<u>Activity 8:</u> Provide Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) de-escalation training for first responders		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board	2026 CIT Training schedule has been set: Refresher Course on May 12, the 40-hour CIT class Sept 28-Oct 2, and an Advanced Course for Veterans in November.
Collaborative Partners: Mental Health & Recovery Board, UH Portage, Townhall II, Portage County Health District			
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Health equity			
Target Population: Adults			
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Mental health and addiction			

CHNA Priority 2: Mental Health and Substance Misuse
Strategy 3: Increase access to substance misuse educational programming and harm reduction items.
Goal: Reduce adult and youth substance misuse.



Objective: By December 31, 2028, reduce substance misuse and its associated health impacts in Portage County by decreasing substance-related emergency department visits and deaths, and reducing alcohol and marijuana use among adults and youth.

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<p><u>Activity 1:</u> Continue distributing Narcan and educating Portage County residents on how and when to use Narcan</p>		<p>Josh Sexton, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Kent City HD Townhall II</p> <p>Mindy Gusz UH Portage</p>	<p>684 Narcan kits distributed by UH Portage Outpatient Pharmacy. 3 Narcan kits and 332 Fentanyl test strips distributed in the UH Portage ED.</p> <p>PCHD: 260 kits distributed to community members 11 kits for Naloxboxes 51 kits for first responders Total 322 kits</p> <p>Townhall II January - 3 Kits February distribution: 36 boxes of Narcan - Vending Machine in Kent 25 Kits passed out not from the vending machine 14 Narcan from the Vending Machine in Ravenna March: 21 boxes of Narcan - Ravenna Vending Machine 40 Dawn Kits 9 boxes of Narcan - Kent Vending Machine</p>
<p><u>Activity 2:</u> Continue providing harm reduction items in the vending machines at PCHD, University Hospitals (UH) Portage Medical Center, Townhall II, and probation</p>		<p>Josh Sexton, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Mamie Sawyer-Brewer, Townhall II</p>	<p>PCHD/UH vending machines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication deactivation pouches: 16 • Fentanyl test strips: 12 • First aid kit: 128 • Hygiene kit: 21 • Naloxone: 39 • Sharps container: 25 • Condoms: 73 • Dental Dams: 30 • Internal (female) condoms: 8 • Lubricant: 20 • Pregnancy test: 83



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicotine lozenges: 49 • Nicotine gum: 57 • Total cost: 3,255.06 <p>Townhall II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 36 Fentanyl test strips • Feb. 30 Fentanyl test strips • Mar. 28 Fentanyl test strips <p>Recommendation was made to create a guide/map with the locations of vending machines in Portage County</p>
<u>Activity 3:</u> Continue Operation New Beginnings – the Portage County Mental Health and Recovery Board sends a letter to each person arrested for a DUI in Portage County. A couple of weeks later Townhall II reaches out with a call offering their services		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board Townhall II	Jan-Mar 2026: 29 letters were sent to Portage residents who had an OVI charge from Ohio State Highway Patrol. Townhall contacted 16 people and one person came in for an assessment.
<u>Activity 4:</u> Explore options for providing training to bartenders, especially those bartending during outdoor festivals		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board	
<u>Activity 5:</u> Continue and expand the “Drink Less, Be Your Best” CDC campaign		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board	Ads running this April for Alcohol Awareness month in publications and social media.

<p><u>Activity 6:</u> Review all substance-attributable deaths (including alcohol) and develop strategies for prevention</p>		<p>Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board</p> <p>Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>Portage County's Overdose and Suicide Fatality Review Committee met on February 26, 2026, and reviewed 3 suicide deaths and 3 overdose deaths.</p> <p>Main discussion points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of childhood trauma/normalization of drug use by adults while the individuals were children • Need for easier access to previous positive suicide/overdose risk screening results when people come to EDs • Potential need for social work intervention earlier on when people have painful/chronic illnesses • Limiting access to lethal means • Gina wrote up the 2025 annual report from the review, I submitted it to ODH by April 1, per OFR and SFR requirements. <p>2025 Coroner's report: 28 overdose deaths and 13 deaths from chronic active alcoholism. Increase of methamphetamine and cocaine deaths, less fentanyl than past years. Increase of females overdosing. Avg age of alcoholism deaths: 60, 9 men, 4 women Forming a SUD workgroup to carry out the recommendations from the Fatality Review Committee.</p>
<p><u>Activity 7:</u> Track use of safe needle exchange and disposal</p>		<p>Angela DeJulius, Axess Family Services</p>	
<p><u>Activity 8:</u> Provide education to adults and youth about the dangers of and misconceptions about marijuana</p>		<p>Jalessa Caples, Kent City Health Department</p>	

<p>Activity 9: Provide programs and wraparound services after criminal justice system involvement among those with a background of substance misuse; provide opportunities and prevent future substance misuse issues</p>		<p>Bridget Stuntz, OhioMeansJobs</p>	
<p>Collaborative Partners: PCHD, Kent City HD, UH Portage, Townhall II, Mental Health & Recovery Board, OhioMeansJobs, Axess Family Services</p>			
<p>Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Access to harm reduction items, Workplace policies</p>			
<p>Target Population: Adults, Youth, Substance users, Residents arrested for DUI, Bartenders, Residents involved in the criminal justice system</p>			
<p>Ohio SHIP Alignment: Health behaviors, Mental health and addiction</p>			

CHNA Priority 3: Population Health and Safety

<p>CHNA Priority 3: Population Health and Safety</p>			
<p>Strategy 1: Provide educational programming about various unintentional injuries and distribute safety devices.</p>			
<p>Goal: Reduce unintentional injury incidence.</p>			
<p>Objective: By December 31, 2028, reduce unintentional injuries and related deaths in Portage County by decreasing youth ingestions, fall-related emergency department visits among older adults, and motor vehicle crash fatalities.</p>			
Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<p>Activity 1: Continue distributing car seats, providing installations, and providing car seat checks</p>		<p>Rachel Belvin, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>PCHD - Distributed 17 convertible, 4 booster seats; performed 9 car seat checks. KCHD – one car seat check event held ACH -</p>

		Sara Slanina, Kent City Health Department Akron Children's Hospital	
<u>Activity 2:</u> Continue Safe Communities Grant: Click it or Ticket, Drive Sober Get Pulled Over, distracted driving (Phones Down) Continue "Save a Life" high school tours – use simulators demonstrating distracted driving risks (Safe Communities grant)		Kylee McCracken, Portage County Health District	6 Safe Communities events hosted
<u>Activity 3:</u> Promote bike safety for adults and children (e.g., helmets, safe cycling routes) Continue Safe Mobility Project, Put a Lid On It Campaign, Safe Bike Week, Safety Town		Kylee McCracken, Portage County Health District	Planning walk and bike to school day in May. Awarded Put a Lid on It grant (90 bicycle helmets). There is opportunity to apply for an additional 40 bike helmets through Safe Kids Worldwide
<u>Activity 4:</u> Hold events to promote pedestrian safety among children including Safe Kids Portage County's Walk to School Day in October		Kylee McCracken, Portage County Health District/Safe Kids Coalition	No events January-March.
<u>Activity 5:</u> Distribute home safety checklists, flyers, and kits		Mario Marelos, Akron Children's Hospital Portage County Metropolitan Housing	Flyers will be reprinted to include firearm safety. Gun cable locks are available. Seeking funding for biometric gun locks. ACH continues to partner with PMHA – no events January-March. Outdoor events will start up soon.

<p><u>Activity 6:</u> Distribute safety items received through Safe Kids (gun locks, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, medicine boxes, lock boxes, and/or prescription disposal pouches) and other entities</p>		<p>Kylee McCracken, Safe Kids Portage County, PCHD</p> <p>Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board</p>	<p>No updates.</p>
<p><u>Activity 7:</u> Provide education to prevent unintentional ingestions (e.g., swallowing button batteries)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand unintentional ingestion education at Safety Town: Poison prevention education (event for kids entering kindergarten). Provide stickers and magnets to reinforce messaging. - Expand education at community fairs (i.e., through Portage Park District and Fire Dept). Provide stickers and magnets to reinforce messaging. - Child injury awareness month – extra social media promotions - Educate through Community Paramedicine 		<p>Kylee McCracken Portage County Health District/ Safe Kids</p> <p>Sara Slanina, Kent City Health Department</p>	<p>Scheduling poison prevention classes at Safety Towns – summer/fall. First class is June 9 at Ravenna Schools.</p> <p>No updates – KCHD.</p>
<p><u>Activity 8:</u> Provide education to prevent unintentional ingestions of medicines and THC</p>		<p>Kylee McCracken Portage County Health District/ Safe Kids</p>	<p>Safe Kids Coalition meeting 4/24. Guest speaker will present poison prevention related to unintentional ingestion of marijuana/THC.</p>

Explore possibilities and partnerships to provide this education.		Karyn Kravetz, Mental Health & Recovery Board	
<u>Activity 9:</u> Explore options for connecting with Townhall II, churches, and schools and partnering to enhance parent education and unintentional injury prevention through the teenage years		Kylee McCracken Portage County Health District/ Safe Kids	No update.
<u>Activity 10:</u> Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) program offered at senior centers and other locations in Portage County		Kim Plough, Portage County Health District Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Department Mindy Gusz, UH Portage	PCHD: 41 classes served 529 residents. KCHD: Provide two classes weekly at Four Seasons, seeking additional location. UH: 182 SAIL classes taught by UH Portage staff.
<u>Activity 11:</u> Provide safety awareness education for teen drivers (e.g., Safe Mobility Project, None 4 Under 21, 4-H CARTEENS)		Catie Noyes- Johnson, OSU Extension 4H Kylee McCracken Portage County Health District/Safe Communities	ACH/Heather: Safe Mobility Project: JAG, Aurora; CARTEENS- June-August PCHD: None for Under 21 to be held April 16 at KSU. Assist with planning prom promise at Field Schools, planning Safe A Life tours for local schools this fall. "100 Deadliest Days" Memorial Day to Labor Day
<u>Activity 12:</u> Provide unintentional injury awareness education to first year Kent State students		Dr. Marie Walters, UH Portage ED Physician	Reached out to "Rachael's First Week" about bringing their programming to Portage County universities and am awaiting a response. Mindy has also reached out to me stating that her and Bob have some ideas. Mindy, Bob and I need to

Explore options for expanding to other colleges/universities and high schools			meet to collaborate and put something together and we also need to contact Kent State, Hiram, and NeoMed to see when/how they'd be able to facilitate this educational programming.
Collaborative Partners: PCHD, Kent City Health Department, Akron Children's Hospital, Portage County Metropolitan Housing, UH Portage, OSU Extension 4H			
Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Access to child safety equipment, Access to unintentional injury education			
Target Population: Youth, Adults, Seniors			
Ohio SHIP Alignment: Community conditions, Access to care, Maternal and infant health			

CHNA Priority 3: Population Health and Safety

Strategy 2: Monitor communicable and vector-borne disease rates, increase access to vaccines, and offer educational programming.

Goal: Reduce communicable and vector-borne diseases.

Objective: By December 31, 2028, reduce the burden of communicable diseases in Portage County by decreasing flu hospitalizations and cases of priority infectious diseases, increasing vaccination uptake, and strengthening surveillance for emerging diseases.

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<u>Activity 1:</u> Provide immunization clinics throughout Portage County		Morgan Cole, Portage County Health District Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Department	PCHD: Held 4 community immunization clinics, weekly clinics at PCHD; provided 140 vaccines KCHD: One high dose Flu, 4 MMR vaccines provided



<p><u>Activity 2:</u> Continue with Get Vaccinated Ohio Grant – Educate providers about vaccine coverage disparities using the IQIP tool, which identifies under-vaccinated groups and supports targeted provider outreach to increase vaccination rates</p>		<p>Morgan Cole, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>IQIP tool completed at PCHD, ongoing efforts to meet grant requirements</p>
<p><u>Activity 3:</u> Monitor flu, measles, and pertussis vaccination rates</p>		<p>Morgan Cole, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>Progress: Requested and received the following vaccine data from ODH regarding Portage County school vaccination rates.</p> <p>For the 2025-2026 school year: 87.7% of Portage County kindergartens met all vaccine requirements for 2025-2026.</p> <p>For the 2025-2026 school year: 78.0% of Portage County 7th graders met all vaccine requirements (including MMR, Hep B, Men ACWY).</p> <p>For the 2025-2026 school year: 75.0% of Portage County 12th graders met all vaccine requirements. (including 2nd Meningococcal for 12th graders).</p> <p>Discussion: How can we improve rates and avoid the drop between kindergarten and 12th grade?</p>
<p><u>Activity 4:</u> Continue monitoring STI rates</p>		<p>Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Department</p>	<p>Confirmed cases of STIs Q1 of 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69 Chlamydia cases • 14 Gonorrhea cases • 0 HIV cases • 0 Syphilis cases
<p><u>Activity 5:</u> Continue Sexual Health Educational Program – Provide condoms and other safer sex items to (a) individuals and (b) organizations. Offer classes at</p>		<p>Josh Sexton, Portage County Health District</p>	<p>Items distributed (does not include vending machine)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condoms: 569 • Safer sex kits: 7 • Dental dams: 50 • Internal (Female) condoms: 54

different facilities covering anatomy, menstrual health, and healthy relationships			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lubricants: 153 <p>15 classes/outreach events occurred this quarter. Locations include Root House, Southeast Schools, Center of Hope, Independent Teen Living, and 2 individual sessions.</p>
<p><u>Activity 6:</u> Offer tick and vector-borne illness education and events. Monitor (e.g. mosquito trapping)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park RX - Tick walk and talk Kent City Health Department – conduct case interviews and pass out tick information. Portage Park District work with PCHD – educates residents to wear bug spray, check for ticks, etc. Tick stations – signs and collection of ticks at park entrances. QR code to provide information. Passive tick surveillance (goes to PCHD) 		<p>Olivia Artman, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Natalie Menke, Portage County Health District</p> <p>Jennifer White, Portage Park District</p> <p>Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Department</p>	<p>(Vector-borne)</p> <p>PCHD tick dashboard Lyme disease data has been updated for 2026</p> <p>1 confirmed Lyme Disease case during Q1 of 2026, no other confirmed cases of vector-borne disease yet this year</p> <p>PCHD: Planning tick event 5/21 with OSU Extension and State Vet for 4H. Created a video for standing water and how to reduce mosquito breeding. Will provide vector education at summer reading kickoff event. Awaiting notice of award for mosquito grant.</p> <p>KCHD: No updates</p> <p>Portage Park District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained Tick Collection and reporting stations at park trailheads Tick Safety information on park website Tick Safety information link included in all park program registration confirmation emails
<p>Collaborative Partners: PCHD, Kent City Health Department, Portage Park District</p>			
<p>Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Health equity, Access to vaccines, Access to sexual health education, Access to vector-borne disease education</p>			
<p>Target Population: Adults, Youth</p>			
<p>Ohio SHIP Alignment: Community conditions, Access to care, Maternal and infant health</p>			

CHNA Priority 3: Population Health and Safety



Strategy 3: Track maternal, fetal, and child health outcomes; provide support to families.

Goal: Improve maternal, child, and infant health.

Objective: By December 31, 2028, strengthen maternal and child health outcomes in Portage County by increasing participation in WIC and family support programs, promoting healthy growth and development for infants and children, and expanding community engagement in child abuse prevention and family relationship support services.

Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<u>Activity 1:</u> Increase enrollment in WIC program		Amy Cooper, Portage County Health District	Caseload = 1,773. Last quarter = 1,800. Winter weather and illness impacted caseload January-March. We are noticing an increase in caseload and new participation in April.
<u>Activity 2:</u> Track initial birth weight and growth/development of WIC participants		Amy Cooper, Portage County Health District	Low birth weight = 57 (15%)
<u>Activity 3:</u> Track breastfeeding rates of mom WIC participants		Amy Cooper, Portage County Health District	Breastfeeding initiation = 81.4% State Average = 68% Mothers' Milk Bank Drop Site is very popular. Over 11,000 ounces collected and shipped to Mothers' Milk Bank of Ohio in 2025 to feed infants in NICU.
<u>Activity 4:</u> Provide PRC (Prevention, Retention, Contingency) Family Support Services – child development, safety, nutrition education and material goods for infants/children birth to age 3		Rachel Belvin, Portage County Health District	Referrals have been down, possibly due to staff transition at OMJ. PRC FSS completed 7 milestone education sessions with families.
<u>Activity 5:</u> Juvenile Detention Center - track child absenteeism and provide specific outreach to those parents		Jessica Tamba, Juvenile Detention Center	Estimated 500 cases in 2025. Truancy, at-risk truancy programs offered. Diversion programs for nonviolent misdemeanors, truancy.



<p><u>Activity 6:</u> Offer Parenting Classes (Triple P)</p>		<p>Sarah Gehring, Townhall II</p> <p>Lori Pamer, Children's Advantage</p>	<p>"Parenting Wisely"</p> <p>Children's Advantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple P 5 week Group (0-12 years old) was offered from Jan. 26-Feb. 23, 2026. No enrollment, group was cancelled. Discussion Group Series was offered on Feb. 27 (Guiding Behaviors), Mar. 4 (Developing Good Bedtime Routines), and Mar. 24 (Guiding Behaviors). All Discussion Group sessions were cancelled – no enrollment
<p><u>Activity 7:</u> Offer Nurturing Families program – one-on-one sessions with prenatal and age 0-5 categories</p>		<p>Heather Trnka, Akron Children's Hospital</p>	<p>Openings available to serve 8 families in Portage County. Can be co-enrolled in Help Me Grow and Nurturing Families. Program offers 7 virtual sessions with incentives.</p>
<p><u>Activity 8:</u> Provide presentations on child abuse prevention/awareness</p>		<p>Leanne Biltz, Children's Advocacy Center</p>	<p>No presentations this quarter.</p>
<p>Collaborative Partners: Portage County WIC, PCHD, Juvenile Detention Center, Townhall II, Children's Advantage, Akron Children's Hospital, Children's Advocacy Center</p>			
<p>Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Food equity, Juvenile justice policy</p>			
<p>Target Population: Adults, Youth, Families, Pregnant people, WIC participants</p>			
<p>Ohio SHIP Alignment: Community conditions, Access to care, Maternal and infant health</p>			

CHNA Priority 3: Population Health and Safety

Strategy 4: Raise awareness of and educate on online safety.



Goal: Improve cybersecurity and internet safety for youth and adults.			
Objectives: By December 31, 2028, promote youth safety and digital well-being in Portage County by reducing electronic bullying, increasing youth awareness of online safety risks, and expanding community participation in cybersecurity and sextortion prevention education programs.			
Action Step:	Timeline	Lead Person or Organization(s)	Progress
<p>Activity 1: Explore partnerships and best practices for improving cybersecurity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is happening in the state/other geographies? - What is Townhall II doing? - What is CAC doing? - Incorporate the Do It For James Foundation? - What is JFS doing? - Partner with Kent State students - Incorporate 50+ Support Committee - Explore how to delay time when youth start using social media - Partner with We Care Seniors - Mental Health and Recovery Board can provide information about cybersecurity with its senior substance use education 		<p>Portage County Health District</p> <p>Townhall II</p> <p>Children's Advocacy Center</p> <p>Mental Health and Recovery Board</p> <p>Kent State University</p>	<p>PCHD – Olivia Artman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am overseeing two KSU master's students for their practicums during the summer semester (approx. June – August) to work on this project. • They will be developing two cybersecurity behavioral risk assessments, one for seniors and one for youth. • If there is enough time during their practicums, they will administer the assessments and begin analyzing the response data.
<p>Activity 2: Provide community education on cybersecurity and sextortion.</p>		<p>Leanne Biltz, Assistant Director, Children's Advocacy Center</p>	<p>Held one online Safety presentation (for 10 children).</p>

Collaborative Partners: PCHD, Townhall II, CAC, Mental Health and Recovery Board, Kent State University

Specific Opportunities to address Policy, Equity or Access: Cybersecurity policy

Target Population: Adults, Youth, Seniors

Ohio SHIP Alignment: Community conditions, Access to care



Townhall II School Programs

Too Good for Drugs: January 1, 2026-March 31, 2026

School & Grade	Student Numbers
JAG Kindergarten	105
JAG 3rd Grade	83
JAG HS	52
Aurora 1st Grade	182
Rootstown 4th Grade	74
Waterloo Kindergarten	60
Waterloo 2nd Grade	59
Southeast HS	103
Windham 5th Grade	28
Streetsboro HS	78
Kent HS	120
Ravenna HS	110

Project Alert: January 1, 2026-March 31, 2026

School & Grade	Student Numbers
Streetsboro 8th Grade	18
JAG 7th Grade	49
JAG 8th Grade	52
Windham 6th Grade	34
Ravenna 8th Grade	21
Rootstown 6th	74
Crestwood 6th	107
Kent 6th	48

SOS: January 1, 2026-March 31, 2026

School:	Grade	# of Students	# Spoke w/ Counselor	# of High Risk	Date
Kent	12th	150	4	1	2026
Kent	6th	50	6	2	2026
Kent	7th	48	5	0	2026
Kent	8th	48	1	0	2026
Southeast	6th	110	12	5	2026
Southeast	7th	110	9	3	2026
Southeast	8th	120			2026
Southeast	10th	103	1	0	2026
Crestwood	6th	107	14	7	2026
Windham	6th	36	10	5	2026
Windham	7th	34	1	0	2026
Windham	8th	23	1	0	2026
Windham	9th	27	0	0	2026
Windham	10th	45	0	0	2026
Windham	11th / 12th	19	0	0	2026

Townhall II School Programs

Personal Body Safety: January 1, 2026-March 31, 2026

Grade:	Student Numbers:	Schools:			
Kindergarten	189	Streetsboro & Rootstown			
1st Grade	135	Streetsboro			
2nd Grade	272	Rootstown, Streetsboro, JAG			
3rd Grade	145	Streetsboro			
4th Grade	315	Rootstown, Southeast, Streetsboro			
5th Grade	308	JAG, Biomed, Brown, Streetsboro			
Head Start	98	Portage Learning Center			
4th Grade	34	Crestwood			

Stand Up: January 1, 2026-March 31, 2026

School & Grade	Student Numbers:
JAG HS: 10th	50
Streetsboro HS:9th	72
Kent: 8th	33
Brown: 7th	19
Windham HS: 9th	31
BioMed: 6th	76