



# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Thomas D. Eggebrecht**  
*Health and Human Services Director*

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February 28, 2018

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board of Supervisors  
Adam Payne, County Administrator

I am pleased to present the Sheboygan County Health and Human Services Department's 2017 annual report. For the ninth consecutive year, with the guidance of the County's Health and Human Services Committee and the contributions of our community partners and staff, the Department was able to once again achieve a positive year-end budget variance while honoring its core mission and delivering services in line with its statutory responsibilities and community needs.

The year saw the expansion of integrated care and community partnerships formed in response to known and emerging priorities. Among them, detoxification and recovery services were developed and offered to addicted parents of children in out of home care; financial support was secured to promote the expansion of staffing in the District Attorney's Office and assure the timely filing of court petitions on behalf of affected children when reunification is not possible; our Public Health staff led a community call to action directed at achieving responsible alcohol and drug use, improving community mental health, and addressing chronic health conditions over the next three years; and our leadership in promoting trauma informed practice continued to evolve.

Our achievements would not be possible without the tremendous talents and contributions of our staff or your support. We invite your inquiries and feedback anytime throughout the year and will be happy to provide additional information beyond that contained in our report should it be desired.

We thank you for the trust you have placed in us and for the continuing opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Eggebrecht  
Director

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

*To improve the quality of life and self-sufficiency of Sheboygan County residents...*

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 2017**

The Department's focus in 2017 was directed in response to community feedback and need.

- A commitment to improving the Department's understanding of and professional practice related to adverse childhood experiences and trauma continued. Among highlights, a second major conference organized by Katy Pruitt of the Department's staff was held at Blue Harbor Resort and was opened to the community with over 400 persons attending. Through it and other activities, the Department's leadership role in the arena of trauma informed care was cemented earning Katy press recognition as a difference maker in 2017.
- The Department established an opioid detoxification and treatment program as part of a comprehensive effort to combat opioid abuse, related deaths, and the impact of addiction on individuals, families, and the community. Priority enrollment was extended to addicted parents of children in foster care in an effort to promote recovery, achieve family reunification, and to reverse the growing trend of out of home placements associated with the epidemic.
- Bolstered by the work of Healthy Sheboygan County 2020 and a Community Call to Action, integrated department and community teams expanded to identify needs, promote access to treatment, and improve health outcomes. Collaboration included the establishment of a formal relationship with the Lakeshore Community Health Center to better support persons in need of medical homes, participation in a Welcome Baby initiative for first time parents, and Zero Suicide planning with Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center targeted to achieve improved practice in preventing suicide.
- The Department supported the addition of personnel in the District Attorney's Office so that children deemed unable to return to their birth families can move more rapidly to permanency through the filing of necessary court petitions. Significant under-staffing in the DA's Office in recent years had otherwise been contributing to a multi-year backlog of children awaiting adoption and other forms of permanence.
- A Medicaid funded Community Support Program (CSP), serving persons with the most severe and persistent mental illnesses, was recertified in response to stakeholder request. The program's certification was previously allowed to lapse in favor of alternative

voluntary program models. Through the recertification, individuals unwilling to receive treatment may still be enrolled under court order, allowing the Department to achieve treatment outcomes with them while partially offsetting the costs of their care.

- A youth and family mentoring program was piloted in partnership with Sheboygan South High School. The effort targeted at-risk students whose families moved to the area from larger metropolitan areas. The effort and experience gave rise to the Department's current pursuit of improved behavioral health care for youth and support for the community's PATH initiative, embedding mental health therapists in schools.
- Expanded employment options were made available to parents having Child Support obligations and to mental health consumers served in the Department's Behavioral Health Case Management program. The effort was supported by additional financial planning and counseling assistance when needed.

## **Budget**

The Department's 2017 budget was set at \$33,335,529 for the year and later amended to \$33,524,901 to allow for adjustments involving state and federal grant awards that were unknown at budget time. The budget reflected a decrease of \$69,000 compared to 2016. Levy contributions accounted for \$13,350,351 which was a decrease of \$90,451 over the prior year.

Several factors, including a change in the Department's Birth to Three Program delivery model, a continued growth in children's out of home placements related to the opioid epidemic, and unusually high placement rates in state mental health institutes combined to create significant fiscal challenges. By mid-year, the Department was forecasting a potential \$1.2 million operating deficit. Several adjustments were made in response:

- Departmental staffing was reorganized, resulting in a reduction of three positions and a temporary hiring freeze.
- Birth to Three contracts were adjusted in response to lower program enrollment.
- Planned computer and furniture purchases were deferred.
- Non-mandatory staff trainings were placed on hold.
- Bed vacancies in contracted residential facilities were made available to other purchasers.
- Efforts to avoid institutional and state corrections placements of youth were redoubled.
- Private pay collections and insurance billing procedures were improved.
- Medicaid capture at the Aging and Disability Resource Center was improved to achieve higher cost reimbursement.

At year end, as a result of the adjustments and the receipt of a Medicaid reconciliation payment received for calendar year 2016 operations, the department ultimately achieved a positive net variance of \$915,033. The year was in turn the 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive one ending with a sound fiscal track record.

The Department's budget entering 2018 was set at \$33,651,899 with levy accounting for \$13,621,837. The plan reflects an increase of \$361,828 compared to the 2017 amended budget.

### **Issues and Challenges Ahead**

Poverty and dysfunction continue to impact the lives of many families served. Multiple traumas, significant mental and physical illnesses, and chronic unemployment or underemployment are at the core.

Trends involving heroin, opiate abuse, and other addictions are expected to continue as is a related out of home placement rate for children. Children removed from parental homes due to safety concern has grown by nearly 300 percent since 2010. During that interval, there has been no correlational increase in staffing resources.

Children's need for mental health supports will continue to rise in response to the adverse experiences associated with abuse, neglect, and removal from family homes. Resourcing in the arena of specialized child focused care will be challenged as a result.

The State's plan for the elimination of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake youth correctional facilities will create uncertainty at the local level. While the Department has reduced its reliance on and use of state corrections in recent years, emerging replacement models may place new demands on county operations, including the potential return of 17 year olds to juvenile jurisdiction.

Levy caps, uncertainty over social supports at federal and state levels, and the continuing growth of an aging consumer population are all expected to continue to challenge the Department in the years ahead. A continuing focus on evidence based practice, efficiency, and outcomes attainment will be required in all program areas in response.

The sufficiency of staffing resources in relationship to community needs and service demands will require critical analysis and potential adjustment in the years ahead.

### **Goals and Objectives for 2018**

The Department's focus for the coming year will be forged in alignment with known challenges and trends.

- The Department's commitment to improving its understanding of and professional practice related to trauma will be directed to the development of an updated mission, vision and values as the Department moves from a foundational understanding of principles to practice application.

- Opioid detox services will continue to be emphasized through interdivisional approaches. As a component of care and in alignment with state and federal guidance, protocols for medication assisted treatment will be expanded.
- An integrated response team will be formed and deployed in the interest of supporting youth experiencing mental health crises. The initiative will be delivered in close collaboration with schools and other community partners and will be charged with identifying opportunities for future system of care improvement.
- The Department will provide financial support to expand the availability of therapists in school settings. The initiative will be delivered in partnership with United Way and Mental Health America.
- Non-medical rural transportation will be made available to elderly and disabled individuals residing in areas of the County not currently served by public transit resources.
- Elderly Benefit Specialist resources will be expanded through the Department's Elder Services Program and made available in part through its senior meal program.
- The Department's support of an assistant attorney in the District Attorney's office will continue in the interest of children placed in foster care and awaiting permanency.
- New in-home safety services for children will be developed in an effort to prevent the need for out of home care.
- Access to employment services will be expanded for youth served in the Department's Juvenile Justice program and made available through contracted partners.
- Training in the areas of evidence-based practice, self-care, resilience, and other topics will be expanded and routinely offered in response to employee feedback on opportunities for additional learning and improved engagement.

Thanks are extended to the Department's staff and community partners for their tremendous contributions during the year and to the County Board, the Health and Human Services Committee, and Administrator Payne, for their support. We look forward to being of continued to service to the County in the year ahead.