

# Current events: the essential elements of local public health



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO), has assigned ten essential services to guide local health departments on what programs they should be offering to meet the needs of the people living in their communities.

To adhere to the second essential standard of “ Protecting people from health problems and health hazards,” Michigan partners up with other government agencies such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to conduct its Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) (Michigan Department of Human Services [MDHHS], n. d.; NACCHO, 2005). This public health driven program is designed to provide awareness to what life is like living with HIV/AIDS by examining health records and interactive data locally and nationally.

With careful observation, researchers can determine how many people with HIV are receiving medical attention, how accessible is their care, are their needs satisfied, and lastly, how is their treatment regimen affecting their lives? The data collected by MMP provides understanding to what health disparities this population faces and shares it with medical providers, other preventative groups, and policy leaders to lobby for the adequate resources to provide change.

The seventh standard “ Help people receive health services” is an example of Michigan’s Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) service (NACCHO, 2005). This service establishes a system of personal health and preventative care to its residents. According to Michigan. gov

(2019), “ About 1 million Michigan adults have diabetes, and another 2. 6 million have prediabetes.”

These numbers are a cause for concern because those who have prediabetes can easily fall into the category of a true diabetic if certain preventative measures are not taken. This service focuses on implementing strategies to support those living with diabetes and teach these patients how to manage the disease to ensure a better quality of life. An ideal candidate for this program is an individual who has been recently diagnosed with diabetes, a patient getting acquainted with a new medical team, or someone who has never had a comprehensive diabetes plan explained to them, or someone due for their annual diabetes education review.

Admittance to this program involves a referral from a medical provider and this service may not be covered under one’s insurance despite qualifying under all eligible categories. By meeting with trained healthcare providers, this service describes how patients are properly referred to other medical providers to tailor a health program suited to their specific needs. The strategies put in place by this local health program ensure Michigan residents are receiving accessible, preventative, and personal care.

The sixth standard” Enforce public health laws and regulations”

demonstrates Michigan’s Drug take Back Day (NACCHO, 2005). Each year the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) declares national

Drug Take Back Days in which you can dispose of your residual prescription drugs to a specific site or “ authorized collector” in your community (Drug Enforcement Administration [DEA], n. d.). An authorized collector could be a

site such as pharmacy, clinic, or hospital that is lawfully registered through the DEA to gather unused pharmaceuticals for the purpose of destruction (DEA, n. d.). The DEA (2018), emphasized, that they have attained “ 4982 tons” of unused prescription drugs since 2010.

I assume most people are unaware that there is a proper way to dispose of prescription drugs and that there is a “ Disposal Act” to ensure that unused pharmaceuticals are disposed in a manner that does not pollute the environmentsuch as flushing pills down the toilet or just carelessly throwing tablets away in the trash. Michigan’s participation in this program enforces the essential service of protecting the public and the environment while complying with DEA regulations. These types of programs educate the public on the importance of not letting these lethal drugs get into the wrong hands as sadly the United States is in the “ worst drug crisis in American history” (DEA. gov, 2018).

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