

Howard County Health Improvement Plan 2023-2026

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For information about this plan:

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Topic 1

Substance Use

Substance Use

Goal 1

By 2026, strengthen community awareness and educate the residents of Howard County on substance use disorders.

Alignment with National Plans

Healthy People 2030

Alignment with State/Other Plans

Healthy Iowans,

Substance Use

Objective 1.1

Reduce or maintain the percentage of adults using tobacco in the last 30 days from 24.6% in 2023 to 23% in 2026.

Baseline Year	Baseline Value	Target Year	Target Value
2020	24.6%	2026	23%

Data Source and Location

Helping Services: Howard County Community Survey 2023

Substance Use

Strategy 1.1-1

Collaborate with Helping Services to educate the public and provide cessation resources on Quit line Iowa and My Life my Quit.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: Internal data

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Helping Services, Regional Health Services of Howard County

Target Date

12/31/2026

Substance Use

Strategy 1.1-2

Partner with Helping Services to offer presentations on substance use disorders, stigma with substance use disorder and prevention to 25 participants.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: Internal data

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Helping Services, Regional Health Services of Howard County

Target Date

12/31/2026

Substance Use

Strategy 1.1-3

Partner with Helping Services, Howard Winneshiek School, and the local Hero group to provide peer support and smoking cessation support initiatives to 10 students.

Strategy Source and Location

Existing plan: HEROS group

Strategy Type: Professional/provider-focused

Who's Responsible

Helping Services, Prevention 5, Howard Winneshiek School

Target Date

12/31/2026

Substance Use

Strategy 1.1-4

Partner with Howard Winneshiek School and Cresco Police Department to offer a mock crash annually.

Strategy Source and Location

Existing plan: Mock Crash

Strategy Type: Demographic/socioeconomic-focused

Who's Responsible

Howard Winneshiek School, Cresco Police Department, EMS

Target Date

12/31/2026

Topic 2

Mental Health

Mental Health

Goal 1

Increase awareness to suicide prevention and expand mental health resources in Howard County by 2026.

Alignment with National Plans

Healthy People 2030, <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/mental-health-and-mental-disorders>

Alignment with State/Other Plans

Healthy Iowans, <https://hhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/idphfiles/Published%202023-2027%20State%20Health%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf>

Mental Health

Objective 1.1

Maintain or decrease the percentage of poor mental health days in Howard county from 4.1 % in 2020 to 3.8% in 2026.

Baseline Year	Baseline Value	Target Year	Target Value
2020	4.1	2026	3.8

Data Source and Location

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/iowa/howard?year=2023>

Mental Health

Strategy 1.1-1

Work with community partners on mental health initiatives to identify, leverage resources, and build programs to align approaches to reduce behavioral health stigma by offering 4 QPR trainings annually.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: QPR Training

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Community Health Services and Regional Health Services of Howard County

Target Date

12/31/2026

Mental Health

Strategy 1.1-2

Work with community partners and school systems to identify, leverage resources, and build programs to align approaches to reduce behavioral health stigma among 150 school age children.

Strategy Source and Location

New strategy: School presentations and internal data

Strategy Type: Demographic/socioeconomic-focused

Who's Responsible

Helping Services, Howard Winneshiek Schools, and Community Health Services

Target Date

12/31/2026

Mental Health

Strategy 1.1-3

Work with community partners to develop support for those who have experienced traumatic loss and make meaning full contact to 50% of families.

Strategy Source and Location

Current Strategy: Grief Support Programing, Greif in the holidays

New Strategy: Post Suicide support

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Regional Health Services of Howard County, Howard County Sheriff, Cresco Police department

Target Date

12/31/2026

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Goal 1

By 2026, increase awareness of healthy behaviors and lifestyles of residents of Howard County.

Alignment with National Plans

Healthy People 2030, <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/overweight-and-obesity>

Alignment with State/Other Plans

Healthy Iowans, <https://hhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/idphfiles/Published%202023-2027%20State%20Health%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf>

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Objective 1.1

Maintain or decrease the percent of the population in Howard county who are considered obese from 39% in 2020 to 37% in 2026.

Baseline Year	Baseline Value	Target Year	Target Value
2020	39%	2026	37%

Data Source and Location

County Rankings

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/iowa/howard?year=2023>

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Strategy 1.1-1

Work with community partners to educate 30 people on healthy behaviors or lifestyles.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: Heart Healthy Ambassador Program, Employee Wellness, Community Programs

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Community Health, Regional Health Services of Howard County, Prevention
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Target Date

12/31/2026

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Strategy 1.1-2

Increase the monthly average number of patrons by 5% to the Open Air Market and Farmers Market by offering healthy food choices.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: Internal data

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Open Air Market, Cresco Chamber of Commerce

Target Date

12/31/2026

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Objective 1.2

Maintain or decrease the percent of the population in Howard County that are considered physically inactive from 23% in 2020 to 21% in 2026.

Baseline Year	Baseline Value	Target Year	Target Value
2020	23	2026	21

Data Source and Location

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/iowa/howard?year=2023>

Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles

Strategy 1.2-1

Increase community engagement by local agencies sharing community resources for opportunities related to physical activity through flyers and social media quarterly.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: Internal Data for Park and Rec and Cresco Fitness Center

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Community Health Services, Cresco Fitness Center, Regional Health Services of Howard County

Target Date

12/31/2026

Topic 4

Strengthen the Health Infrastructure

Strengthen the Health Infrastructure

Goal 1

By 2026, strengthen the health infrastructure in Howard county by enhancing health equity.

Alignment with National Plans

Healthy People 2030

Alignment with State/Other Plans

Healthy Iowans, <https://hhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/idphfiles/Published%202023-2027%20State%20Health%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf>

Strengthen the Health Infrastructure

Objective 1.1

Decrease the impact of poverty in Howard County by providing resources to reduce the percentage of people with low income and food concerns from 7.8% in 2021 to 7.2% in 2026.

Baseline Year	Baseline Value	Target Year	Target Value
2021	7.8	2026	7.2

Data Source and Location

https://datausa.io/profile/geo/howard-county-ia?clinicalCareOptions=accessQualityOption&dietAndExerciseOptions=indicator_4&healthBehaviorsOptions=dietAndExerciseOption&race-income-income_geo=incomeRace0&sexAgeRacePoverty=ageSexOption

Strengthen the Health Infrastructure

Strategy 1.1-1

Collaborate with local community partners and share community resources at least quarterly through flyers and social media.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: internal data

Strategy Type: Demographic/socioeconomic-focused

Who's Responsible

Community Health Services, Regional Health Services of Howard County, County Social Services, North East Iowa Community Action, Helping Services

Target Date

12/31/2026

Strengthen the Health Infrastructure

Strategy 1.1-2

Partner with community partners (Helping Services, Youth mentoring, local schools, etc.) to provide resources to 25 at risk students.

Strategy Source and Location

Current Strategy: Cadet Cares Program, Backpack Program, Mentoring Program, Hearing Checks

Strategy Type: Demographic/socioeconomic-focused

Who's Responsible

Howard Winneshiek Schools, Regional Health Services of Howard County, Helping Services

Target Date

12/31/2026

Topic 5

Prevent Injuries and Violence

Prevent Injuries and Violence

Goal 1

By 2026, increase awareness and educate the youth of Howard County on electronic device safety.

Alignment with National Plans

National Prevention Strategy, Injury and Violence free living, <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/disease-prevention-wellness-report.pdf>

Alignment with State/Other Plans

Healthy People 2030, <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/violence-prevention>

Prevent Injuries and Violence

Objective 1.1

Decrease the percentage of reported cyberbullying in middle school children by 47% in 2020 to 45% in 2026.

Baseline Year	Baseline Value	Target Year	Target Value
2020	47%	2026	45%

Data Source and Location

https://iprc.public-health.uiowa.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/BullyingIowa3-MR-EDITS.as_.12-17-17.pdf

Prevent Injuries and Violence

Strategy 1.1-1

Provide education to 90 students in 6th - 8th grade on internet safety and bullying online/offline.

Strategy Source and Location

New Strategy: Internal data

Strategy Type: Demographic/socioeconomic-focused

Who's Responsible

Community Health Services

Target Date

12/31/2023

Prevent Injuries and Violence

Strategy 1.1-2

Partner with local community groups to offer device free entertainment to the community annually.

Strategy Source and Location

Current Strategy: Family fun nights

Strategy Type: Community-focused

Who's Responsible

Cresco Chamber of Commerce, Howard Winneshiek Schools

Target Date

12/31/2026