



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



The Leeward Initiative was founded in 2016 and serves Mason County, Michigan. The Leeward Initiative uses the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) to plan and implement initiatives that engage youth, families, and community stakeholders in working together to prevent youth substance abuse and promote community wellness.

The SPF framework requires a community to identify intervening variables and local community conditions that influence the use and consequences of youth substance use in the community. This information allows for targeted action to address the root causes.

This strategic plan will guide the coalition over the next five years to address identified community needs.

**Our Vision:** Creating a healthy community through collaborative prevention and awareness.

**Our Mission:** To reduce and prevent substance misuse and support recovery in Mason County through action, education, and coordination.

**Planning Process:** Development of this plan was facilitated by Kori Bissot of KWB Strategies over three planning meetings between April and May of 2023.

Throughout the planning process, coalition stakeholders reviewed data and provided input to inform prioritization of goals and objectives. Additional data was then collected to better understand local conditions contributing to each prioritized issue.

Following a review of findings, the coalition identified and prioritized strategies for inclusion.

# YOUTH SUBSTANCE MISUSE

## GOAL 1

Reduce substance misuse among youth by 2030, as measured by decreases in high school students that report the following, as measured by the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth for Mason County students:



### Alcohol:

- Ever used alcohol by 12% (from 28.4% in 2022 to 25.0% in 2030)
- Used alcohol in past 30 days by 12% (from 16.3% in 2022 to 14.3% in 2030)



### Vaping:

- Used an electronic vaping product in the past 30 days by 12% (from 21.5% in 2022 to 18.9% in 2030)





# REDUCE ACCESS



## OBJECTIVES:

Decrease in high school students (grades 9 & 11) reporting the following by 2030 as measured by the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth for Mason County students:

- Decrease in those reporting it would be easy to get alcohol by 13% (from 58% to 50.4%)
- Decrease in those reporting it would be easy to get vaping products by 13% (est. baseline)

## STRATEGIES

1. Educate parents on social host laws and the consequences of providing substances to a minor.
2. Promote and support fun, substance-free activities for youth such as post-prom events.
3. Identify locations where youth are misusing substances and implement intervention(s) to deter use in those locations.

# UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS



## OBJECTIVES:

Increase in middle and high school students who report the following by 2029 as measured by the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth for Mason County students:

- Increase in those reporting that binge drinking once or twice each weekend has 'moderate' or 'great risk' by 10% (from 43% to 47.3% for MS and from 39% to 42.9% for HS).
- Increase in those reporting that a parent or other adult in their family has ever talked to them about alcohol or drugs (from 38.6% to 42.6% for MS and from 20% to 22% for HS).

## STRATEGIES

Provide education to youth and parents on the risks of substance use and encourage them to talk with their children:

- Promote TalkSooner.org materials to support conversations between parents and youth.
- Work with youth leadership groups to develop and promote messaging for peers.
- Support school assemblies for students around substance use.

# YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Research suggests that people with a mental disorder, such as anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), may use drugs or alcohol as a form of self-medication. [1](#)

In addition, brain changes in people with mental disorders may increase the rewarding effects of substances, increasing the likelihood of continued use. Mental illness may precede a substance use disorder, suggesting that better diagnosis of youth mental illness may help reduce comorbidity. [2](#)

## OBJECTIVES:

Decrease high school students who report seriously considering suicide in the past year by 12% (from 42% to 36.9%) by 2029.

## STRATEGIES

1. Improve identification of youth who are struggling and enhance access to behavioral health services:
  - Partner with schools to advocate for *restorative practices that connect youth* with mental health and substance use disorder services.
  - Advocate for enhanced mental health services and support for youth (regardless of insurance type).
2. Provide education for youth on effective coping skills, how to find support, and the risks of substance misuse.
3. Support parents to promote positive youth mental health:
  - Educate parents on available resources and how to support their youth in developing positive coping skills.
  - Provide educational tools to help parents talk with youth about mental health.

# MENTORING



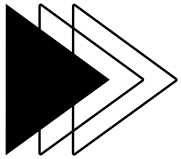
## OBJECTIVES:

80% of youth and young adults participating in the mentoring program report their mentor is a supportive adult that they could turn to if they had a personal problem.

## STRATEGIES

1. Develop a mentorship program for youth and young adults In the community (ages 10-19).
  - Recruit and train community members to serve as mentors.
  - Incorporate virtual support groups.
  - Incorporate information about the program into presentations and programming.
  - Targeted promotion of the availability of the program to engage high risk youth and young adults.
2. Partner with and support existing programs within the community who are supporting high risk youth.
3. Educate teachers, parents, and community stakeholders about the importance of youth programs and ways to get involved.
4. Develop and disseminate messaging to promote available resources and supports:
  - Peer-to-peer messaging to support and encourage young adults to make healthier choices.
  - "You are not alone" assemblies and/or messaging to promote available resources and how to access supports.
  - Social media campaign to reach high risk youth and young adults with educational information and available resources for support.

# REDUCE OPIOID POISONINGS



## GOAL 2

Between 2016 and 2021, a total of 29 Mason County residents died of an accidental opioid related overdose.

Over the next five years (2023-2029) we aim to reduce this to less than 22 total deaths.

(Source: <https://mi-suddr.com/blog/2018/09/26/opioid-heroin-poisonings/>)

### OBJECTIVES:

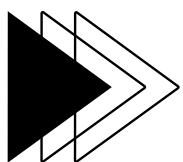
Increase community awareness of opioid overdose risks, including Fentanyl related risks.

### STRATEGIES

1. Raise community awareness to prevent accidental Fentanyl related opioid poisoning deaths:
  - Messaging on dangers of Fentanyl within the community.
  - Provide information and community alerts regarding substances being laced with Fentanyl.
  - Promote the use of Fentanyl testing strips and where to get them locally.
2. Research and develop effective community education strategies regarding:
  - Risks of opioid misuse.
  - Harm reduction strategies including the use and purpose of Naloxone and where to get it locally.
  - Misperceptions about substance use.



# SUPPORT RECOVERY



## GOAL 3

Increase access to recovery support and recovery services within the community.

### OBJECTIVES:

Increase community awareness of available recovery supports.

### STRATEGIES

Align and support recovery efforts in the community:

- Promote availability of recovery services and support.
- Issue advocacy calls to action to engage community support for recovery related efforts.
- Support efforts of community organizations working to support recovery.





For more information or to get involved

visit [leewardmason.org](http://leewardmason.org)

or contact Grace at [grichardson@dhd10.org](mailto:grichardson@dhd10.org)