

ST. CLAIR COUNTY
COMMUNITY SERVICES COORDINATING BODY
A Community Collaborative



Over forty years of working collaboratively to meet the needs of our community.

Est. 1984

May 26, 2026

St. Clair County Advisory Board of Health

St. Clair County Administrative Office Building
2nd Floor
200 Grand River Avenue
Port Huron, MI 48060

Elizabeth King, RN, BSN, Health Officer

Remington Nevin, MD, MPH, DrPH, Medical Director

St. Clair County Health Department
220 Fort Street
Port Huron, MI 48060

Dear Advisory Board of Health, Ms. King, and Dr. Nevin,

On behalf of the St. Clair County Community Services Coordinating Body (CSCB), I am writing in response to Dr. Nevin's May 13, 2026, memorandum titled "Proposed Reform of the CHNA and CHIP Process," which was distributed to the Advisory Board of Health and Ms. King. While we respect the Health Department's authority to evaluate and modify its internal planning processes, we are concerned by several characterizations of the CSCB and its relationship to the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

For more than four decades, the CSCB has served as a voluntary, community-based collaborative comprised of human service agencies, healthcare organizations, educational institutions, municipalities, nonprofits, businesses, and other invested community stakeholders working together to identify needs, reduce duplication, strengthen coordination, and improve outcomes for the residents of St. Clair County. The CSCB continues to exist not because it is mandated, but because organizations across this county continue to see value in collaboration and collective problem-solving.

Public health and community wellness challenges do not exist in silos, and meaningful progress rarely occurs in isolation. Collaboration among organizations with overlapping missions and shared community concerns should not be viewed as improper influence or institutional control. Rather, it reflects a community invested in working together to address issues such as mental health, substance use, housing instability, suicide

prevention, transportation barriers, employment, food insecurity, and childhood wellbeing. Concerns consistently identified by residents and community stakeholders throughout St. Clair County.

Because this memorandum contained several statements regarding the CSCB and its role within the community, we believe clarification is necessary.

1. The CSCB does not direct, govern, supervise, or control the St. Clair County Health Department, the Advisory Board of Health, the CHNA process, or the CHIP process. The CSCB has never claimed statutory authority over any governmental body or department.
2. It is correct that the CSCB is no longer required under Michigan statute. However, when the state mandate was repealed, local member organizations voted to continue the collaborative because they believed the coordination of services and community partnerships remained valuable to St. Clair County residents. The CSCB's continued existence reflects sustained community support and voluntary participation.
3. Membership in the CSCB is entirely voluntary. Organizations choose whether to participate, contribute dues, serve on committees, or align initiatives with broader community efforts. Any organization, municipality, business, nonprofit, or governmental entity interested in participating is welcome to join. Likewise, organizations may discontinue participation at any time.
4. St. Clair County Community Mental Health has served as the fiduciary and administrative lead for the CSCB since its inception because the membership collectively agreed to continue that arrangement following the repeal of the state mandate. This administrative structure allows for operational continuity, financial accountability, and staffing support. The CSCB budget is audited annually as part of CMH's financial audit process.
5. Participation by organizations whose representatives may also be CSCB members should not be interpreted as evidence that the CSCB directs or controls those organizations or their participation in community initiatives. Community leaders throughout St. Clair County routinely participate in multiple civic, nonprofit, professional, and governmental organizations simultaneously. Their involvement in a CHIP stakeholder meeting or community planning effort reflects their professional expertise and community investment, not organizational control by any one collaborative body.
6. The CHIP stakeholder meeting minutes attached to your memorandum do not identify individuals as representatives of the CSCB. The individuals listed attended in their capacities as representatives of their respective agencies and organizations. Suggesting otherwise inaccurately conflates independent professional participation with organizational direction.
7. The CSCB did not create the CHNA or the CHIP process, nor did it direct the Health Department's priorities. The CHNA and CHIP were initiated and led by the Health Department. Community organizations participated because they were invited to participate in a community health planning effort. Many organizations subsequently aligned portions of their own strategic priorities with the CHIP because the identified needs reflected concerns already being experienced throughout the community. That alignment demonstrates coordination and shared commitment – not control.
8. The CSCB's purpose is to foster communication, collaboration, and coordination among organizations serving St. Clair County residents. It exists to help identify gaps, strengthen partnerships, share resources, and reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts. It does not function as a governmental authority, nor does it seek to replace the statutory responsibilities of any public agency.

9. We believe it is important to recognize that collaboration itself is a widely accepted and encouraged practice within public health, behavioral health, and human services. Communities achieve stronger outcomes when organizations work together, communicate openly, and align efforts around identified community needs. The CSCB has spent more than 40 years attempting to foster exactly that kind of collaboration in St. Clair County.
10. We also believe that productive community leadership benefits from engagement, dialogue, and relationship-building. As the May 13th memorandum demonstrates significant concern regarding the structure and influence of the CSCB, it is disappointing that these concerns were publicly raised before direct conversations with CSCB leadership, staff, or membership about the collaborative's history, structure, operations, and community role. As with any longstanding community collaborative, understanding its value and function requires meaningful engagement with the individuals and organizations involved.

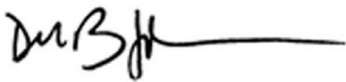
The CSCB respects the Health Department's authority to determine how it wishes to conduct future CHNA and CHIP activities. If the Health Department chooses to pursue a different planning structure or level of community involvement moving forward, that decision rests within its leadership authority. However, we strongly disagree with the suggestions that the CSCB has improperly influenced or controlled public health planning in St. Clair County simply because community organizations chose to collaborate around shared concerns affecting local residents.

At its core, the CSCB reflects something positive about this community: organizations, leaders, and residents who believe complex issues are best addressed together rather than independently. That collaborative spirit should be encouraged, not characterized as problematic.

The CSCB remains committed to transparency, collaboration, and improving outcomes for the residents of St. Clair County. We remain willing to work constructively with the Health Department and all community partners in ways that respect both statutory responsibilities and the value of voluntary community collaboration.

Should any member of the Health Advisory Board, Ms. King, or Dr. Nevin wish to discuss the CSCB further or learn more about its structure, membership, or history, we would welcome that conversation.

Respectfully,



Debra Johnson, Chair
St. Clair County Community Services Coordinating Body