



THE MINNESOTA STATEWIDE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP:

Making Real Differences
in Lives and Dollars

2021

mn DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

www.health.mn.gov/ship

Tackling the root causes of chronic disease

In 2008, in a bipartisan vote in response to rapidly accelerating and costly chronic diseases, the Minnesota Legislature created the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership. The partnership was tasked with working at the local level throughout the state to create and expand opportunities for Minnesotans to be more physically active, eat healthier foods and live free from commercial tobacco,¹ the key ingredients to reducing chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes. Since its creation, SHIP has had a significant and positive impact on reducing obesity, commercial tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure throughout Minnesota, thereby helping to improve the lives of Minnesotans and reduce the enormous annual costs associated with chronic disease.

90%

NINETY PERCENT OF THE NATION'S HEALTH CARE COSTS ARE FOR PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS, AND THE MAJORITY OF THOSE COSTS ARE PREVENTABLE.

THE COST OF OBESITY
\$3.2 BILLION
IN MINNESOTA



THE COST OF TOBACCO
\$3.3 BILLION
IN MINNESOTA

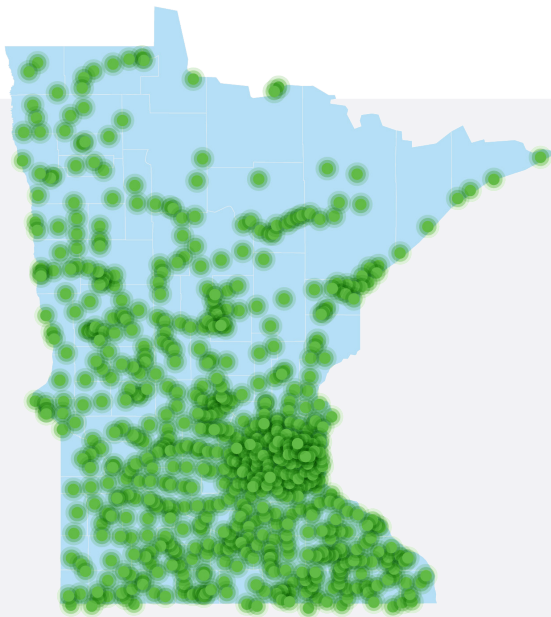
In addition to its work to improve healthy eating and active living and to reduce commercial tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure, SHIP added an additional mission that focuses on well-being. The existence of well-being, which includes mental, physical, social/emotional health and resiliency, is a key factor in health and the prevention of chronic diseases in Minnesota, especially among those faced with existing health inequities. The focus of the well-being mission, which began in the fall of 2020, is to work within Minnesota communities to implement evidence-based, approved strategies to create equitable, healthy and positive conditions that promote well-being and resiliency for all Minnesotans.

“SHIP recognizes, as does CentraCare, that good health does not begin in a clinic or physician’s office but rather in the community and in the ability of Minnesotans to easily obtain healthy and affordable foods, safe and accessible options to live more active lives and the opportunity to live commercial tobacco-free.”

– Jodi Gertken, Community Wellness Program Director, CentraCare

Local partnerships improving health at the local level

SHIP is unique in that to achieve its goal of reducing chronic disease in Minnesota, it operates at the community level through the use of local partnerships. The program recognizes that local organizations know best how to positively impact health in their communities. SHIP's work is directed by local community leadership teams that bring to the table expertise, strong relationships and connections in a variety of fields. Operating in all 87 counties and within the 10 tribal nations, SHIP works with and engages city, county and tribal leaders; schools and day care settings; rental housing; workplaces and businesses; and local and regional health care organizations, in multiple settings throughout the community. SHIP has also partnered with local hospitals and health-care systems to better link their patients with community-based prevention services designed to improve health through healthy eating, physical activity and commercial tobacco reduction assistance and prevention.



**MINNESOTA
STATEWIDE**

87 COUNTIES

10 TRIBAL NATIONS

5,860 PARTNER SITES

608 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

911 ENGAGED COMMUNITY LEADERS

“In its focus on the factors that lead to preventable diseases, including heart disease and stroke, SHIP is a smart investment in the lives of Minnesotans that will pay long-term dividends in better and more equitable health.”

– **Justin Bell**, Vice President of Health Strategies,
American Heart Association



SHIP's unique, locally based structure has allowed it to pivot in its work to help local communities in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has engaged with local emergency operations centers, helped staff community hotlines and coordinated emergency food response initiatives. SHIP has also continued in its mission to create and support opportunities for Minnesotans to stay physically active, eat healthy, reduce commercial tobacco use, stay mentally strong and reduce inequities while staying safe during the pandemic—factors that will positively affect individual health outcomes associated with future pandemics.

Positive impacts in lives and dollars

The Trust for America's Health reports that in order to solve the nation's obesity crisis it is critical to address the conditions in people's lives that lead to food insecurity and create obstacles to healthy food options and safe physical activity. It is also vital to reduce commercial tobacco use and exposure, the leading cause of death and disease in Minnesota. Since it became operational in 2010, SHIP has worked to do just that and as a result has positively impacted the lives of Minnesotans in all reaches of the state. In doing so, it has been able to not only help control accelerating rates of obesity but also commercial tobacco use, the two key preventable factors in a host of chronic illnesses, factors that also increase the risk of the most serious COVID outcomes. SHIP is also working in local communities to help overcome the factors that lead to significant health inequities for many Minnesotans.

TOBACCO - 2017
**\$260 MILLION
IN SPENDING
AVERTED**

by accelerating the drop in
adult smoking rates



OBESITY - 2017
**\$365 MILLION
IN SPENDING
AVERTED**

by putting the brakes on the
rising adult obesity rates

Since its inception, SHIP has worked at the local level to expand and establish farmers markets; increased physical activity and healthy eating opportunities in schools; worked with employers to implement worksite wellness initiatives; assisted communities in making their towns and cities more walkable and bikeable; partnered with child care providers to increase physical activity for babies and toddlers; implemented activities to improve well-being and reduce inequities; assisted cities and counties with implementing policies to raise the minimum tobacco sales age to 21; partnered with schools to address the youth vaping epidemic; and worked with rental housing managers to protect residents from the dangers of commercial tobacco smoke.

THE RESULT HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT SHIP-BASED CONTRIBUTION TO THE SAVINGS OF HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN HEALTH CARE COSTS FOR MINNESOTA SINCE 2011.

These savings have occurred in spite of aggressive, ongoing marketing campaigns by the tobacco industry, which spends over \$100 million annually marketing in Minnesota, and the sugary drink industry, which spends over \$1 billion annually in advertising in the United States.



“Investing in reducing preventable chronic diseases and eliminating racial and health inequities, as SHIP is doing, holds the significant long-term promise of improving the lives of all Minnesotans while reducing the substantial human and financial costs associated with those diseases.”

– **Dr. Mark Steffen**, Chief Medical Officer of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota



Advancing health equity in partnership with Tribal Nations in Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Health's Tribal SHIP and Tribal Tobacco Grants Program works to provide opportunities for tribal communities to implement culturally driven healthy eating, active living and traditional and commercial tobacco efforts. Tribes throughout Minnesota are improving the health of their communities by elevating cultural wisdom and initiating intergenerational engagement. Tribes are also actively changing the culture of health within their communities by enacting culturally appropriate and community-specific commercial tobacco cessation services and policies, planting and expanding agricultural, medicinal, and community gardens, educating members on the importance of healthy lifestyles, ensuring the built environment is conducive to healthy behaviors and establishing health policies as well as other initiatives. Tribal SHIP and Tribal Tobacco grantees are working in collaboration with other tribal programs (SNAP-Ed) with similar goals to make a larger impact within their communities. To address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many tribal communities have innovatively transitioned their work to continue their progress and sustain their relationships within their communities. Some tribes have created social-marketing campaigns to promote healthy eating and commercial tobacco prevention while highlighting the importance of culture. Most tribes have also utilized social media platforms to share these messages within their communities.



TRIBES THROUGHOUT MINNESOTA ARE IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF THEIR COMMUNITIES BY ELEVATING CULTURAL WISDOM AND INITIATING INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT.

**HONORING
INDIGENOUS
LIFEWAYS**



Expanding access to healthy, affordable foods for Minnesotans

What Minnesotans eat has a direct effect on their health and well-being. People who eat a healthy diet that is rich in fruits and vegetables are at lower risk for obesity, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, tooth decay and some cancers. Healthy eating also helps control weight, lower blood pressure, increase energy levels, strengthen bones and improve brain function. Unfortunately, too many Minnesotans cannot find fresh fruits and vegetables near their homes, or what they can find is limited and expensive. But SHIP is changing that.



THANKS TO SHIP, MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES ARE:

- **Increasing access** to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at farmers markets, local corner stores, emergency food programs, mobile markets and other food retailers.
- **Expanding the availability** of healthier foods and increasing access at schools and child care facilities.
- **Supporting new moms** so it's easier for them to breastfeed after they return to work or school.

SHIP HEALTHY EATING SUCCESS STORY: Bringing healthy foods back to a rural Minnesota community

Butterfield, in southwest Minnesota, lost its only grocery store more than a decade ago, leaving local residents, many of whom are elderly, without easy access to healthy and affordable foods. The only options were to drive to other towns, a significant challenge for many, especially in the winter, or to buy highly processed foods at the local convenience store. That changed when the new owners of the local hardware store wanted to fill the void by also selling groceries. With the help of a startup grant from SHIP, in 2019 the hardware store owners bought a cooler, signage and the initial purchase of food products. The new hardware/grocery store became an instant hit with residents, because they now have a local place to buy healthy food. It has also become a community gathering spot, which has helped to strengthen the local economy.



“A grant from SHIP helped us fill a significant void that existed in Butterfield when it came to the ability to buy basic, healthy food items.”

– Barb Mathistad Warner, co-owner of Butterfield Hardware





SHIP HEALTHY EATING IMPACTS AT A GLANCE:



Farm to School efforts at 352 schools are purchasing and **SERVING LOCALLY GROWN FOODS TO OVER 121,000 MINNESOTA STUDENTS.**



SHIP partners with over 1,000 schools to **INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD, SERVING OVER 330,000 MINNESOTAN STUDENTS.**



Communities are utilizing 211 SHIP-supported farmers markets, **INCREASING ACCESS TO FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR OVER 740,000 MINNESOTANS.**



In the past five years, SHIP has worked with more than 27 farmers markets to accept or expand their SNAP/ Electronic Benefits Transfer card programs to **INCREASE FOOD ACCESS TO THE BENEFIT OF CONSUMERS AND FARMERS ALIKE.**

Communities are utilizing 247 SHIP-supported emergency food organizations, such as food shelves, **INCREASING ACCESS TO FOOD FOR OVER 2 MILLION MINNESOTANS.**



SHIP partnered with approximately 200 food retail outlets, **SUPPORTING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGES FOR OVER 1 MILLION MINNESOTANS.**



SHIP partnered with over 320 child care providers **TO SUPPORT HEALTHY EATING, SERVING OVER 6,400 CHILDREN.**



Increasing opportunities for Minnesotans to become physically active

Regular physical activity helps improve the overall health of Minnesotans while reducing their risk for heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, depression and cancer. Other benefits of regular physical activity include improved mood, increased energy levels, better sleep and strengthened bones and muscles. SHIP is working at the community level to make it easier for Minnesotans of all ages to improve their health by being physically active. In addition to improved health, making communities more walkable and bikeable has led to economic resurgence in rural communities. A full 97% of communities that SHIP has partnered with for five years or more have increased physical activity opportunities at the local level.

WITH THE HELP OF SHIP, COMMUNITIES ARE:

- Expanding the Walk! Bike! Fun! Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Curriculum in schools.
- Implementing and expanding Safe Routes to School Programs.
- Creating safer and more accessible places and spaces for residents to walk and bike.
- Implementing active school initiatives to increase the time students are physically active.
- Creating physical activity programs in child care settings.

**PEDESTRIAN
AND BICYCLE
SAFETY**

SHIP ACTIVE LIVING SUCCESS STORY: Creating a free bike-share program in Rochester

Seizing upon a donation of 200 Nice Ride bicycles to Rochester Parks and Recreation, Olmsted County SHIP began a collaboration with organizations throughout the city to use the bikes to create a free bike-share program and thereby fill a transportation void in that city. Implementing a pilot program in 2018, the coalition learned that bikes were being used to run errands and shop for groceries. In 2019 an electric bike with cargo capacity was added to the fleet. This made it easier for community members to run errands using active transportation. Bikes were made available at a library. Its central location made it easier for low-income and homeless residents who rely on the bikes as their primary form of transportation. As a worksite wellness initiative, Olmsted County also offered eight bikes at four locations to encourage employees to bike to meetings. With over 1,300 rides, the overall program has been highly successful.



“I used the bike to go to a job interview. It was my lucky day, I got the job!”

– Rochester bike-share program user



SHIP ACTIVE LIVING IMPACTS AT A GLANCE:



Worked with 39 local public health partners, resulting in over 172,000 students in over 530 schools being reached through SHIP’s **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**.



Since 2016, SHIP and local public health organizations worked with 396 community partners on increasing access to walking and bicycling facilities to **MAKE IT EASIER FOR MINNESOTANS TO BE ACTIVE** where they live, work and play.

In 2019, 30 local public health partners worked on **INCREASING ACCESS TO BICYCLING AND WALKING**, reaching 1,093,814 Minnesotans at 85 partner sites throughout the state.



Since 2016, SHIP has supported comprehensive and master planning efforts in 152 communities, resulting in 42% of communities **IMPLEMENTING CHANGES THAT POSITIVELY IMPACT ACTIVE LIVING**.



Helping Minnesotans to live commercial tobacco-free lives

Thanks to effective, evidence-based state policies—for example, clean indoor air policies and policies that raise the price of cigarettes, discouraging youth from starting and adults to quit—Minnesota’s smoking rates are the lowest ever recorded. However, commercial tobacco use still kills over 6,300 Minnesotans every year and costs Minnesota \$3.3 billion annually in medical costs. In addition, more kids are using new and flavored nicotine products, like electronic cigarettes, and many populations in Minnesota still use commercial tobacco at significantly higher rates than the general population.

TO HELP COMBAT COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE, MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES, WITH THE SUPPORT OF SHIP, ARE:

- Reducing youth access to commercial tobacco.
- Reducing secondhand smoke exposure.
- Increasing access to cessation resources for commercial tobacco and nicotine.
- Addressing commercial tobacco-related disparities.

SHIP COMMERCIAL TOBACCO REDUCTION SUCCESS STORY: Combating a youth vaping epidemic in Stearns County



Stearns County, like many locations in Minnesota, is faced with a vaping epidemic among its youth. To help combat the epidemic, Stearns County SHIP staff established partnerships with nearly all schools across the county to implement a broad-based health education and promotion program. The partnership developed and shared youth-focused vaping education tools through social media platforms; conducted vaping education awareness and outreach for administration, staff and parents, and community members; trained counselors, school nurses and bus companies; and disseminated health promotional pieces on vaping and e-cigarette use through existing child and teen checkup programs. This effort helped coalesce the citizens of Stearns County around the urgent and ongoing need to reduce vaping among their youth.

SHIP COMMERCIAL TOBACCO REDUCTION IMPACTS AT A GLANCE:



IMPLEMENTED SMOKE-FREE POLICIES at 618 properties, reducing exposure to secondhand smoke for over 40,000 Minnesotans.

Partnered with 97 Minnesota schools to **IMPLEMENT VAPING EDUCATION PROGRAMS**, educating over 30,000 Minnesota students.



Worked with community leaders to implement 38 policies that change where and how commercial tobacco products are sold, thereby **REDUCING ACCESS TO ADDICTIVE TOBACCO AND NICOTINE PRODUCTS FOR OVER 310,000 MINNESOTA YOUTH.**

Creating wellness in Minnesota's workplaces

Because adults spend so much of the day at work, policies and efforts that support employee wellness can play a big role in keeping workers healthy and preventing chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. Healthy, motivated employees are important to a workplace and a company's bottom line. U.S. employers lose tens of billions of dollars in health care and productivity costs due to obesity-related chronic diseases. Thanks to SHIP, more and more employers across Minnesota are seeing the benefits of establishing efforts that make healthy options possible at work. Workplace wellness can help build a healthy culture that has benefits for the employer and the employee, including increased job performance, better employee engagement, job satisfaction, better customer service and employee retention. A 2018 survey found that 92 percent of SHIP workplaces indicated that their wellness program efforts have positively advanced due to SHIP.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF SHIP, TO HELP IMPROVE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS MINNESOTA BUSINESSES ARE:

- Implementing sustainable workplace wellness initiatives that have workable and easy-to-implement tools and resources.
- Adding healthy food options onsite and at company functions.
- Creating workplace support for breastfeeding.
- Helping employers strengthen policies to support employees in stopping commercial tobacco use.
- Creating opportunities for employees to get more physical activity and to manage stress during the workday.

SHIP WORKPLACE WELLNESS SUCCESS STORY:

Implementing a multifaceted wellness program in Bagley

Working at a nursing home can be stressful at times, often leading to burnout, tobacco use and negative long-term health effects for employees. However, proactive strategies can be implemented to help reduce those negative effects and benefit employees, management and nursing home residents alike. Recognizing these facts, SHIP partnered with the management and employees of Cornerstone Nursing and Rehab Center in Bagley to improve employee health. The effort established a new walking path that staff now use on breaks, as well as assisted in the purchase of bikes, helmets and racks.

“The unique partnerships that [SHIP] helps create between individual businesses and public health brings benefits to employers and employees alike through strategies to improve employee health, enhance job satisfaction and increase higher workplace productivity ... [it] also results in lower health care costs by helping to reduce employee-related health care expenditures.”

- Jonathan Weinhagen, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber

To encourage healthy eating, Cornerstone eliminated soda and candy vending machines and purchased a minifridge, which is now stocked with healthy options. They also serve healthier snacks instead of sweet rolls at staff meetings and have a salad bar in the breakroom. Cornerstone is also encouraging tobacco-free living by making their campus tobacco-free.



SHIP WORKPLACE WELLNESS IMPACTS AT A GLANCE:



2,232 employers have **IMPLEMENTED WORKPLACE WELLNESS INITIATIVES**, reaching more than 200,000 Minnesota employees.

SHIP staff provided technical assistance to implement the STEP process of providing Support, Time, Education and Place for breastfeeding parents. **INCREASED ACCESS TO BREASTFEEDING** in 552 workplaces for working moms in Minnesota. Seventeen employers received breastfeeding friendly recognition in 2020 bringing the overall total to 128.



Supporting Minnesota communities challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic

SHIP has long worked to reduce the root causes of obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers—health conditions that put Minnesotans at increased risk for negative outcomes associated with COVID-19 and other diseases. In addition to that ongoing work, because of how it is structured and the manner in which it operates, SHIP was uniquely positioned to seamlessly adjust its work to support communities facing health-related challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The community partnerships that SHIP built at the local level for its work in healthy eating, active living, commercial tobacco reduction and well-being were readily available to adjust the focus of their work to community-based planning, preparation and response to the COVID-19 outbreak throughout Minnesota.

SHIP projects throughout Minnesota have engaged in a wide range of pandemic-related work, often in conjunction with their ongoing work—work that will ultimately help to reduce health impacts of future pandemics.

THAT WORK HAS INCLUDED:

- Coordinating free food distribution efforts for those impacted by the pandemic.
- Promoting the availability of mental health and suicide prevention resources within communities.
- Providing information on safer physical activity guidelines.
- Providing safe access to opportunities to engage in socially distanced physical activity outside and at home.
- Striving to improve overall equitable health outcomes for Minnesotans amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as for the long term.
- Promoting the availability of commercial tobacco cessation resources for smokers and former smokers dealing with pandemic-related stress.
- Coordinating food delivery efforts for vulnerable and isolated Minnesotans.
- Providing community- and culturally based information on how to prevent COVID-19 transmission.
- Giving support to schools to adjust their meal preparation and distribution services.
- Supporting hand washing stations, signage and other transmission prevention strategies at outdoor farmers markets.
- Supporting teachers and students with physical activity resources for use in remote learning.



**REDUCE
HEALTH
IMPACTS**



SHIP COVID-19 SUCCESS STORY: Coalescing the community to help feed families in Carver County

In April 2020, Carver County SHIP started a monthly food distribution effort to provide healthy and nutritious food to local residents facing challenges putting food on their tables due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort served more than 4,500 households/families and more than 16,000 individuals. The contact-free food distribution system was organized and implemented by more than 15 organizations, including cities, churches and local law enforcement agencies. As part of the effort, a food delivery process for seniors and people living in isolation was also organized. Area residents were provided with a variety of healthy foods, including fresh produce, dairy and nonperishable goods. Many events ran out of food quickly, demonstrating the widespread need for food created by the pandemic and related job losses.

“Through this partnership we were able to bridge a gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and help create food access for all because we want everyone to have food on their tables.”

– **Mary Hernandez**, co-founder of Esperanza and community project director of Scott, Carver, Dakota CAP Agency

¹ The term “commercial tobacco” refers to tobacco products manufactured by companies for recreational and habitual use in cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, cigars, hookahs and other products that are sold for profit. Commercial tobacco does not include or refer to sacred tobaccos that are used by many Native American tribes in spiritual and cultural ceremonies and prayer.

² Through its work in every county and 10 tribal nations in Minnesota, SHIP has made significant, contributing impacts on smoking and obesity rates. These findings were updated with 2017 data. The statistics are updated every 10 years.

To learn more about SHIP, visit www.health.mn.gov/ship