



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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MDHHS launches county-level substance use vulnerability index *Supports equitable decision-making for spending opioid settlement funds*

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has launched a new tool, the [Michigan Substance Use Vulnerability Index \(MI-SUVI\)](#), to help stakeholders target efforts to address substance use issues specifically facing their communities.

Previously, overdose mortality data alone was relied on to identify areas with higher substance use. This method does not consider a community's access to resources, the impact of nonfatal overdoses or social determinants of health. MI-SUVI uses data on access to services, social vulnerability and substance use burden. Together, these data create a county-level vulnerability score or index. The index shows areas that are more vulnerable to adverse substance use outcomes.

"We know substance use disorder programming is most effective when it is community-focused and data-driven," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, MDHHS chief medical executive. "However, measuring the community impact of substance use is complicated, and no single indicator reflects its true impact. MI-SUVI is an innovative tool for communities to address the opioid crisis and other substance use disorder issues they specifically face. With the disbursement of opioid settlement funds across Michigan, we foresee the index playing a vital role in facilitating community conversations and developing targeted efforts to assist vulnerable individuals."

Michigan will receive about \$800 million over 18 years, as a part of the \$26 billion [nationwide settlement with the three largest pharmaceutical distributors](#). According to a [joint statement](#) from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel, 50% of the settlement amount will be sent directly to county and local governments.

MI-SUVI provides an overview, county scorecards and the ability to compare data points. Sub-county level information will be added later, allowing counties to tailor work and resources even further. MI-SUVI was developed by consulting with subject matter experts, individuals with lived experience and community organizations working to address substance use disorder and overdoses.

According to MI-SUVI, Michigan's most vulnerable counties are currently Oscoda, Wayne, Clare, Schoolcraft and Oceana. While not all of these counties have the highest fatal overdose rates in the state, some counties may have fewer resources and higher

social vulnerability, meaning they are more susceptible to adverse outcomes linked with substance use. MI-SUVI information allows programs to tailor the work done in each county, prioritizing highly vulnerable counties.

“As the Luce-Mackinac-Alger-Schoolcraft District Health Department continues to address the opioid crisis, the availability of the Michigan Substance Use Vulnerability Index will assist us in moving our harm reduction and Eastern Upper Peninsula Opioid Response Consortium work forward and addressing gaps and vulnerabilities to bolster our efforts,” said Nick Derusha, director and health officer of the LMAS District Health Department.

For more information about MI-SUVI, visit Michigan.gov/OpioidsData.

For additional SUD resources, visit Michigan.gov/opioids/find-help.

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