

STRENGTHENING THE DATA CAPACITY OF A RURAL LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

A Success Story from Healthy Northeast Ohio

AT A GLANCE

Prior to Ashland County joining the Healthy Northeast Ohio region, the Ashland County Health Department (ACHD) faced multiple barriers to accessing local secondary data to inform decision making related to priorities and programming, and support their Community Health Assessment (CHA), Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), and Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) requirements.

In late 2021, Ashland County was added to the Healthy Northeast Ohio platform (www.healthyneo.org), providing the ACHD with access to 300+ health and quality-of-life indicators, along with other community health improvement tools and resources. The ACHD has utilized the platform to support its health improvement efforts, and has seen the value Healthy Northeast Ohio provides, including easy access to vetted data, and cost and staff time savings.

CHALLENGE

The [Ashland County Health Department](#) serves Ashland County, a rural county with the smallest population size in the nine-county Healthy Northeast Ohio region. Small local health departments, like the ACHD, oftentimes have limited financial and staffing resources, and lack access to local data to support data-informed decision making. Vickie Taylor, the ACHD Health Commissioner, commented that **“even though small health departments have limited resources, they still have the same CHA, CHIP, and accreditation requirements as larger health departments who may have more capacity.”**

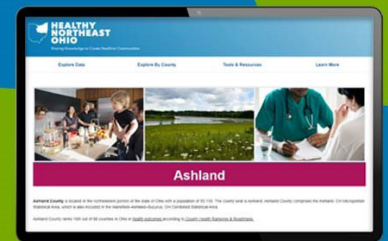
The ACHD staff lacked easy access to local secondary data to identify the key issues facing their community, inform where their limited resources should be directed, and to support their CHA, CHIP and PHAB accreditation requirements. This required staff to filter through statewide data, or navigate multiple websites to find credible and up-to-date data for Ashland County. Due to these barriers, the ACHD staff were limited in their ability to determine what efforts they should engage in to improve the health of their community, and back up those decisions with data.

SOLUTION

In July 2021, the ACHD became an official partner of [Healthy Northeast Ohio](#). Staff at the ACHD now have access to 300+ health and quality-of-life indicators from more than 30 sources, 250 demographics variables, tools to visualize data, and other resources to support their community health improvement efforts. Additionally, a custom webpage was created for [Ashland County](#) that includes links to Ashland County data, and showcases their current and prior CHA and CHIP reports.



Photo Credit: @elliottgiff on Instagram



WELCOME TO HEALTHY NEO ASHLAND COUNTY!



Health / Tobacco Use

County: Ashland

Metric	Value	OH Value	U.S. Counties	OH Value	U.S. Value	Prior Value
Adults Who Bought Medications to Quit Smoking	1.8% (2021)	OH Value (1.8%)	U.S. Counties (1.7%)	OH Value (1.4%)	U.S. Value (1.4%)	Prior Value (20.8%)
Adults who Smoke	23.6% (2019)	OH Counties (21.8%)	U.S. Counties (21.8%)	OH Value (21.8%)	U.S. Value (21.8%)	Prior Value (20.8%)
Adults Who Used Electronic Cigarettes: Past 30 Days	4.6% (2021)	OH Counties (4.2%)	U.S. Counties (4.2%)	OH Value (4.7%)	U.S. Value (4.2%)	Prior Value (20.8%)
Adults Who Used Smokeless Tobacco: Past 30 Days	3.3% (2021)	OH Counties (3.2%)	U.S. Counties (3.2%)	OH Value (3.2%)	U.S. Value (3.2%)	Prior Value (20.8%)

RESULTS

Healthy Northeast Ohio serves as a one-stop shop for the ACHD staff to easily find credible and up-to-date data specific to the community they serve. Due to limited resources, the ACHD would not have been able to launch a platform like Healthy Northeast Ohio on its own. The platform has saved the ACHD staff time, by not having to pull data from multiple sources, and by providing ready-made data visualizations, like maps and charts, to assist with presentations, grants applications, reports, and accreditation.

The secondary data on the Healthy Northeast Ohio platform has provided the ACHD with a broader picture of health in Ashland County, and has been used to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. Healthy Northeast Ohio has helped the ACHD staff to use data to drive their programmatic decisions, rather than relying on anecdotal evidence. **“Having access to this data has allowed the ACHD to make data-informed decisions, and know where to focus our limited resources where we really need them, rather than guessing,”** stated Taylor.

The ACHD has used the data on the platform for their recently released [2022 Ashland County CHA](#), and plans to use it for their upcoming CHIP. Healthy Northeast Ohio has also allowed them to pull baseline data, to use for tracking progress on their health improvement efforts, as updated data becomes available. Additionally, the platform has supported the ACHD’s PHAB accreditation process by providing up-to-date demographic information, and demonstrating how they are using data to drive decisions. The platform also supports the ACHD’s accreditation efforts by providing the ACHD with a way to share data with the community.

“Now that I have this data readily available, I am focusing on how we can better communicate this data to the community. In the CHIP process we hope to bring the community together to look at Healthy Northeast Ohio to see what they can do with it, as well. This platform is not just for me, it is for the whole Ashland community,” commented Taylor.



ABOUT HEALTHY NORTHEAST OHIO

Healthy Northeast Ohio provides hospitals, public health departments, community-based organizations, philanthropic agencies and other stakeholders with data and resources to support regional and community health improvement activities and strengthen collaboration in the region. Healthy Northeast Ohio serves as a neutral repository of de-identified health information that highlights the collective impact toward positive health outcomes. It allows for easy identification of areas with the highest impact and greatest need. Vetted and verified data comes from more than 30 sources.



Visit us at www.healthypo.org

Questions? Please contact us to learn more or to share your own success story.

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