



Democracy and Public Health

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Ingham County
Health Department

Special Thanks

- Central Michigan University (Jodi Brookins-Fisher, PhD, MCHES, FESG)
- Health & Democracy Michigan Partners (Gnora Mahs, DrPH)
- Ingham County Board of Health (Marcus Cheatham, PhD)
- Ingham County Clerks Office
- Ingham County Health Department (Cristin Larder, MSc)
- Michigan Public Health Institute
- Region 7 Social Determinants of Health Hub



TODAY'S PRESENTERS



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Today's Agenda

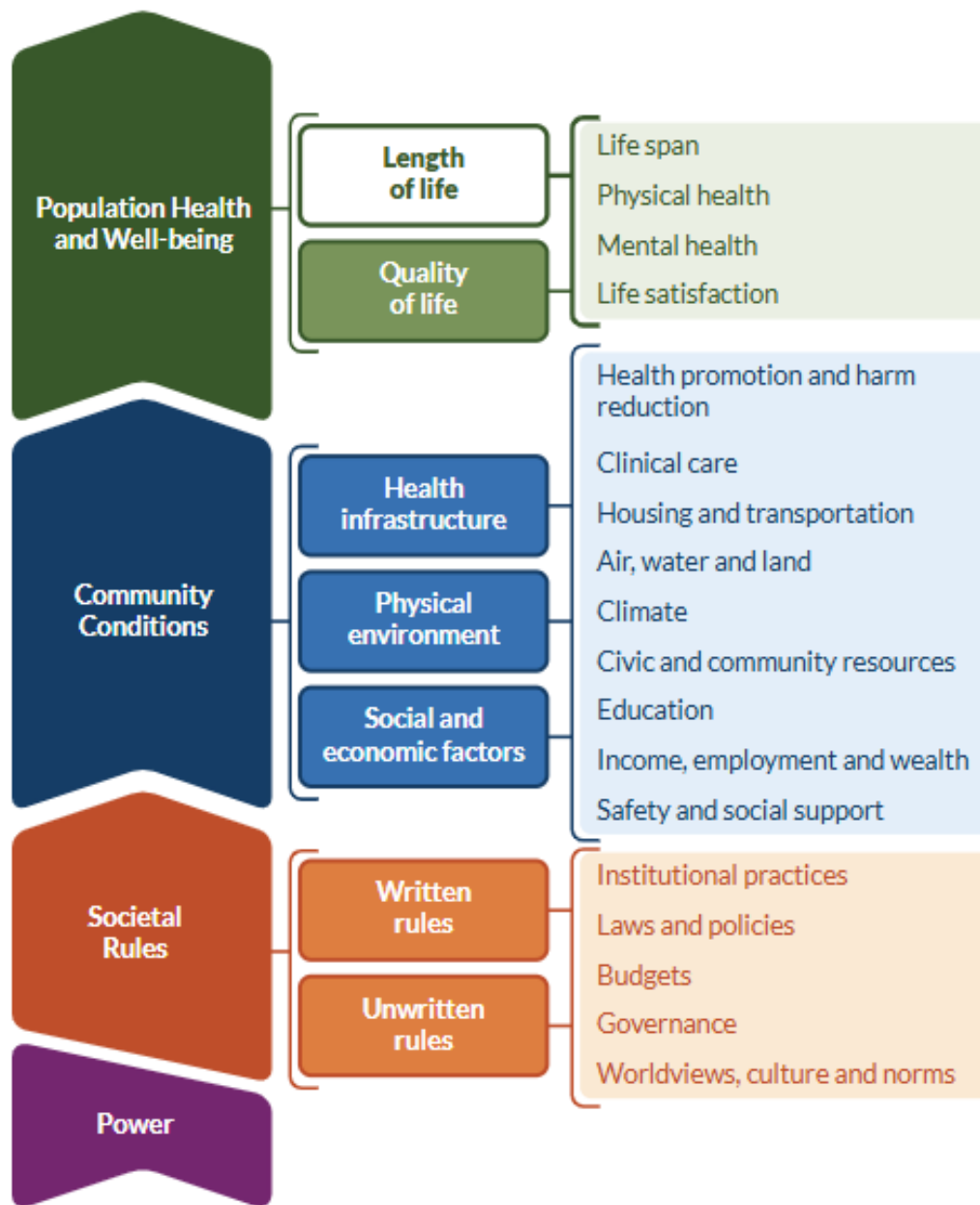
- Welcome
- Relationship between health outcomes and voter access
- Earning and maintaining community trust
- Frameworks and resources
- Case study and future vision
- Questions



The Relationship Between Public Health, Policy and Law

- Policy and law influence access, systems, and the built environment
- Health in All Policies
- Power balance/imbalance
 - Who makes the policies?
 - Who enforces them?
 - Who has the ability to change them?

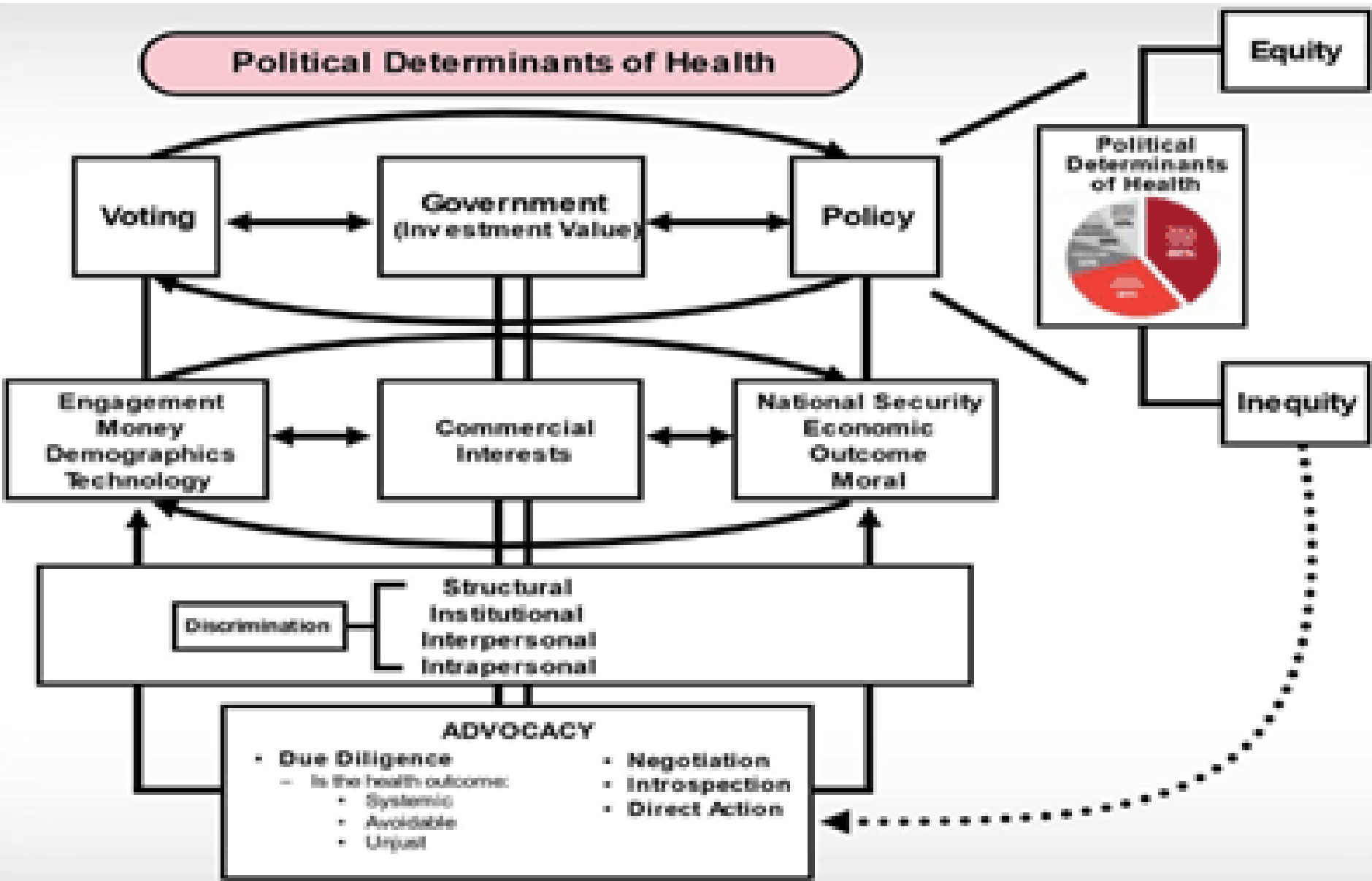




Health Outcomes and Voting Access

- Voting as a Political Determinants of Health
 - Empowering individuals to impact decision makers (Dawes, 2022)
- How a community votes, influences the policy decisions that impact their individual and community health (Health & Democracy Index)





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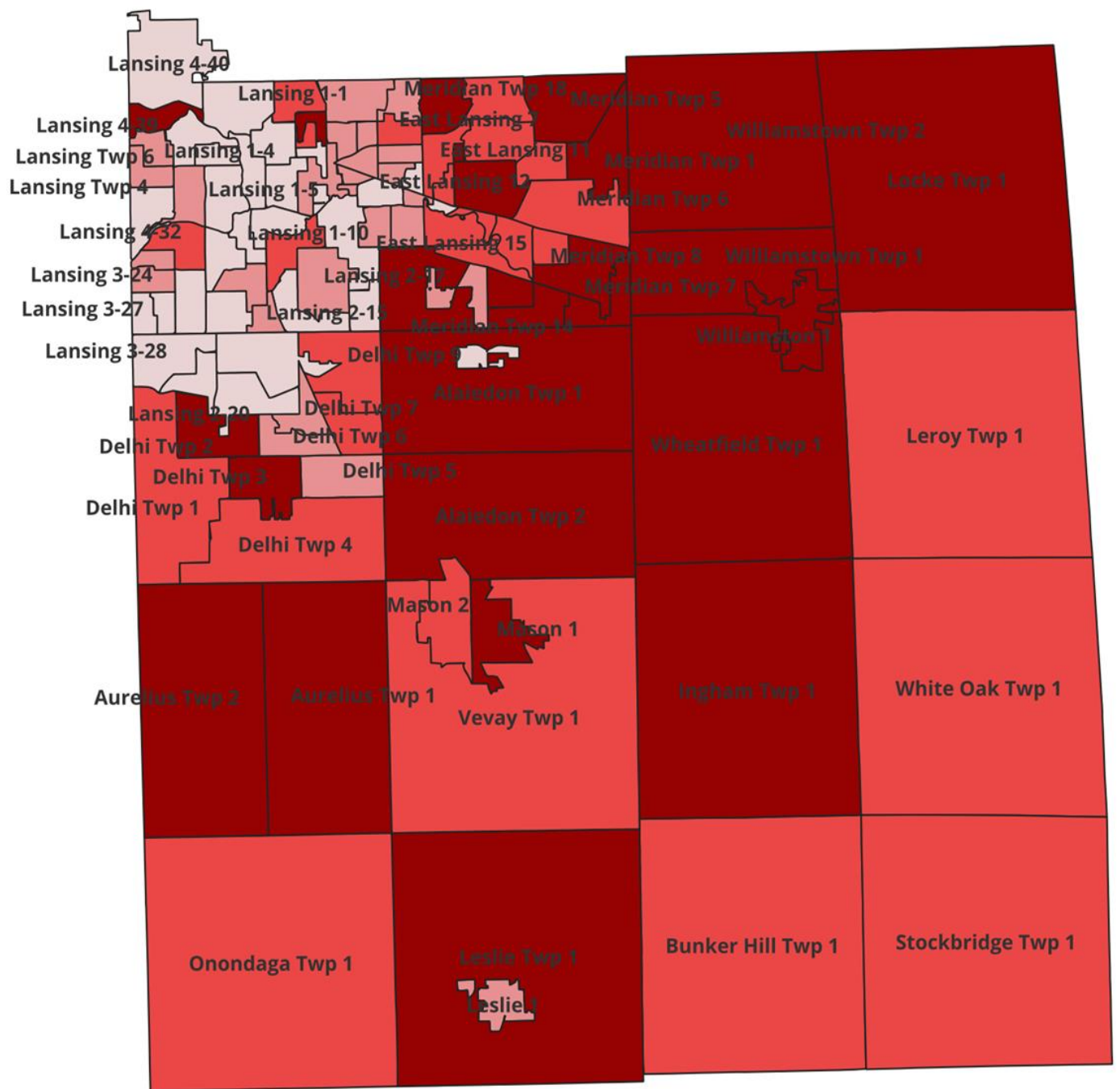
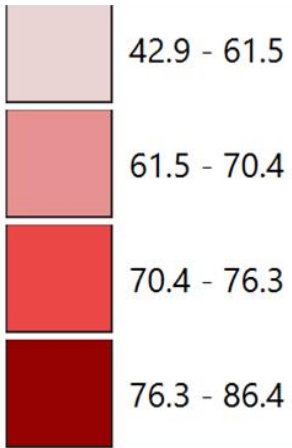
<https://oxfordre.com/publichealth/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.001.0001/acrefore-9780190632366-e-466#acrefore-9780190632366-e-466-bibitem-0013>

Health and Democracy Index

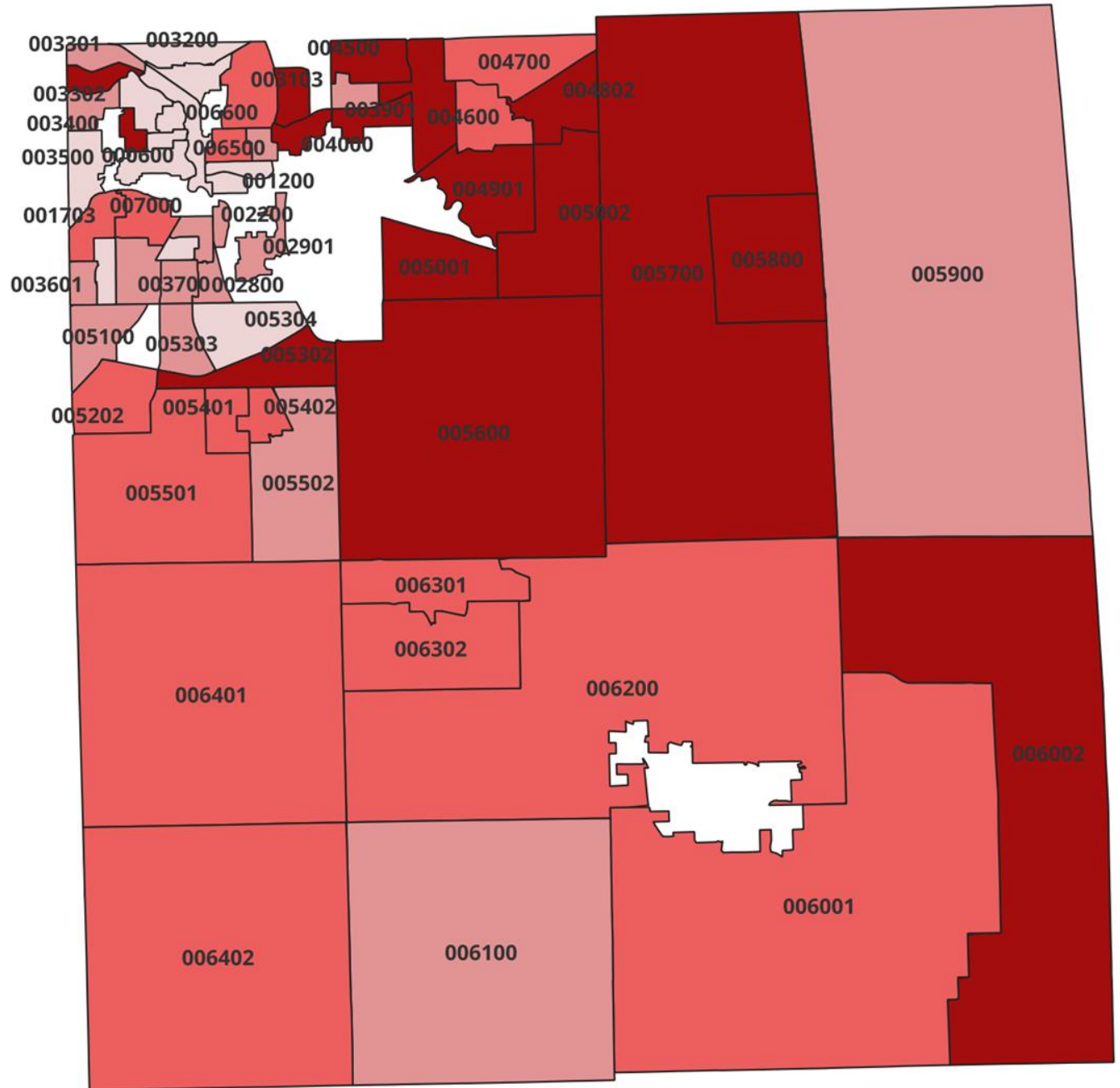
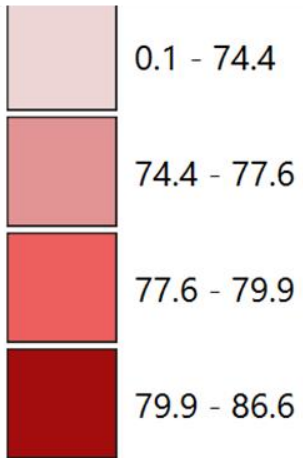
- Analyzed 12 public health indicators and how they compare to voter turnout and voter access
- Findings
 - More voter access and less restrictive voting policies leads to healthier community outcomes
 - Less voter access and more restrictive voting policies leads to less healthier community outcomes



Voter Turnout

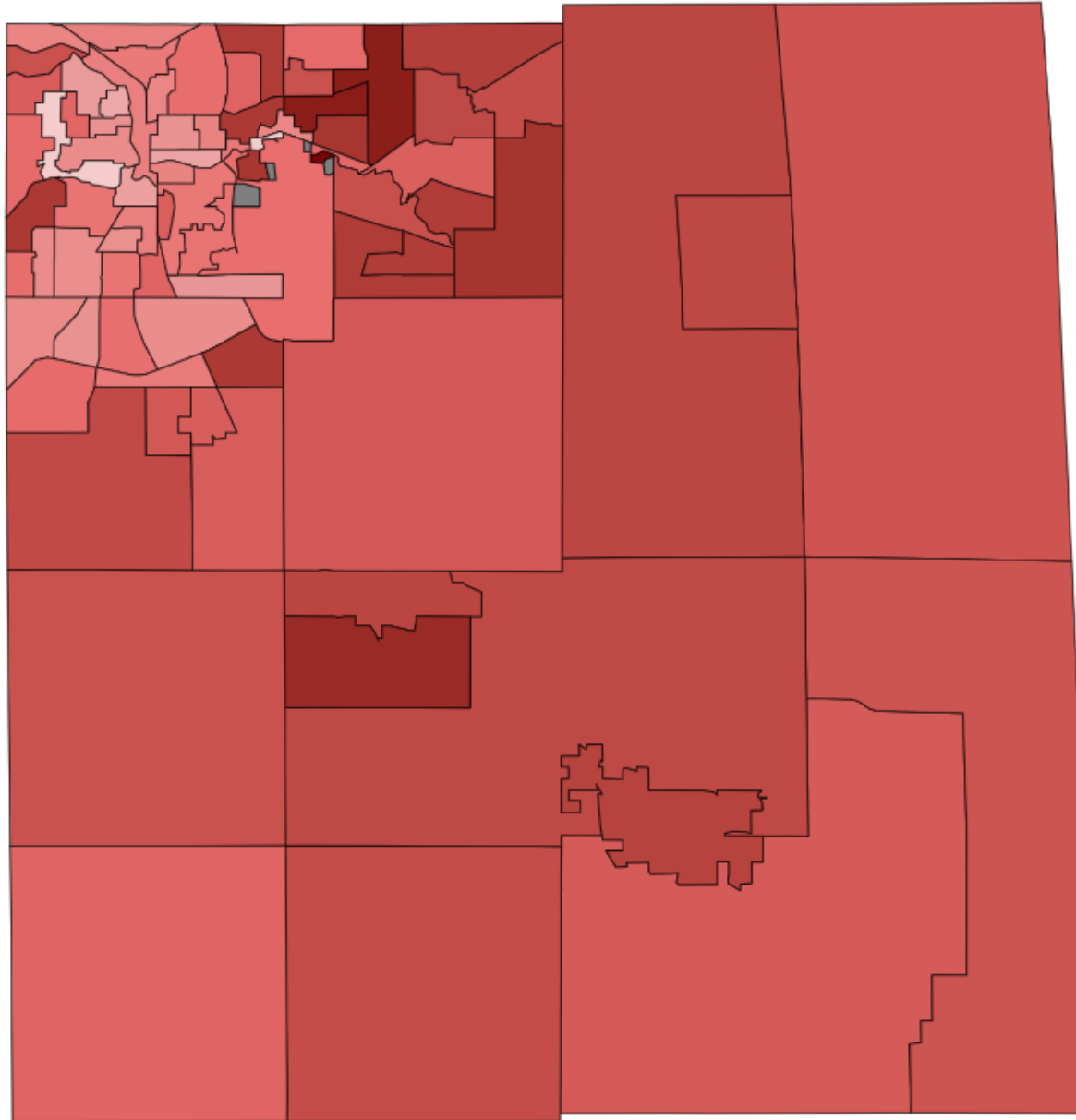
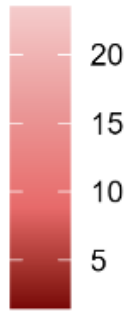


Life Expectancy

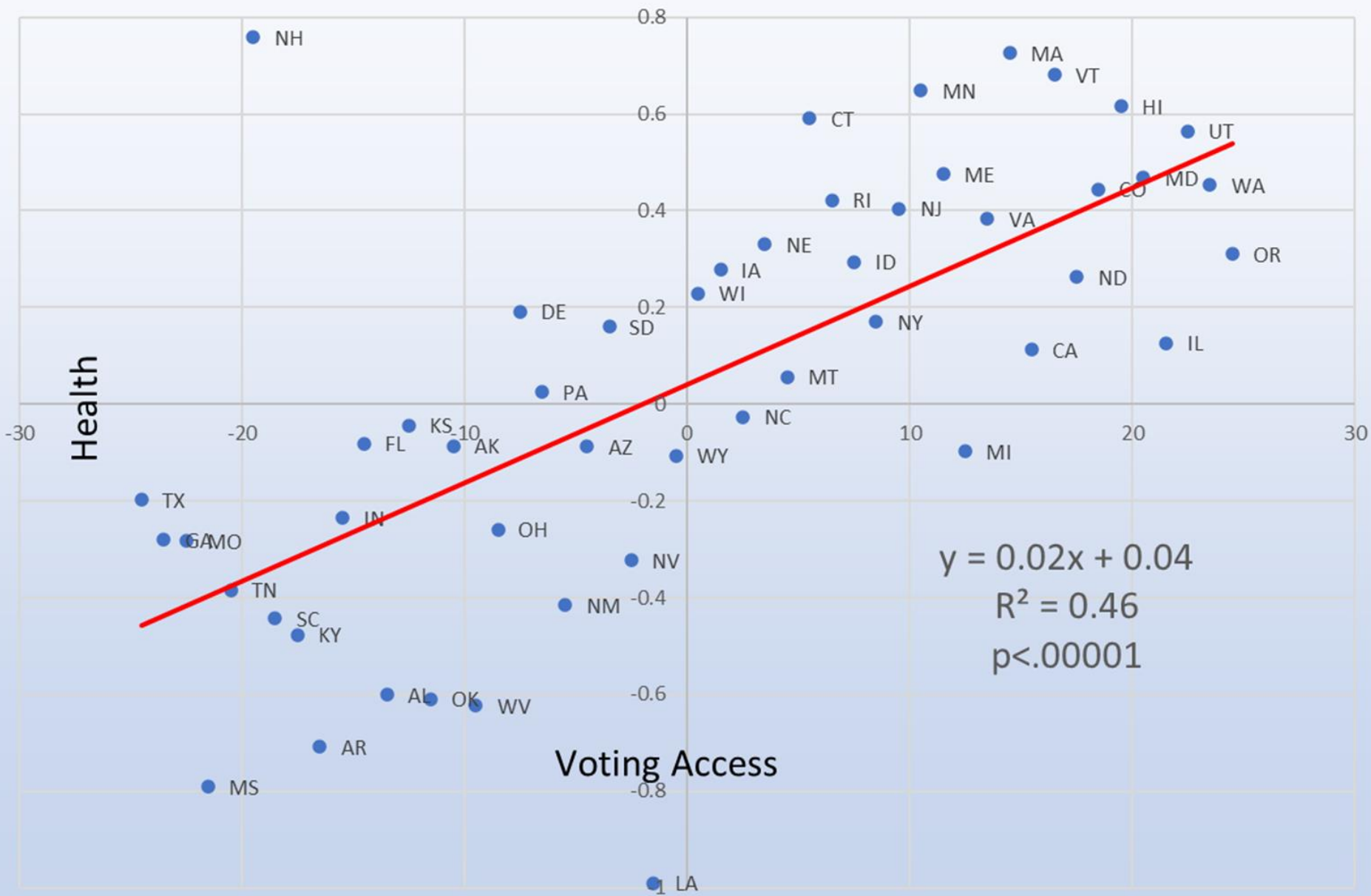


Years of Potential Life Lost (Darker = Longer Life)

YPLL

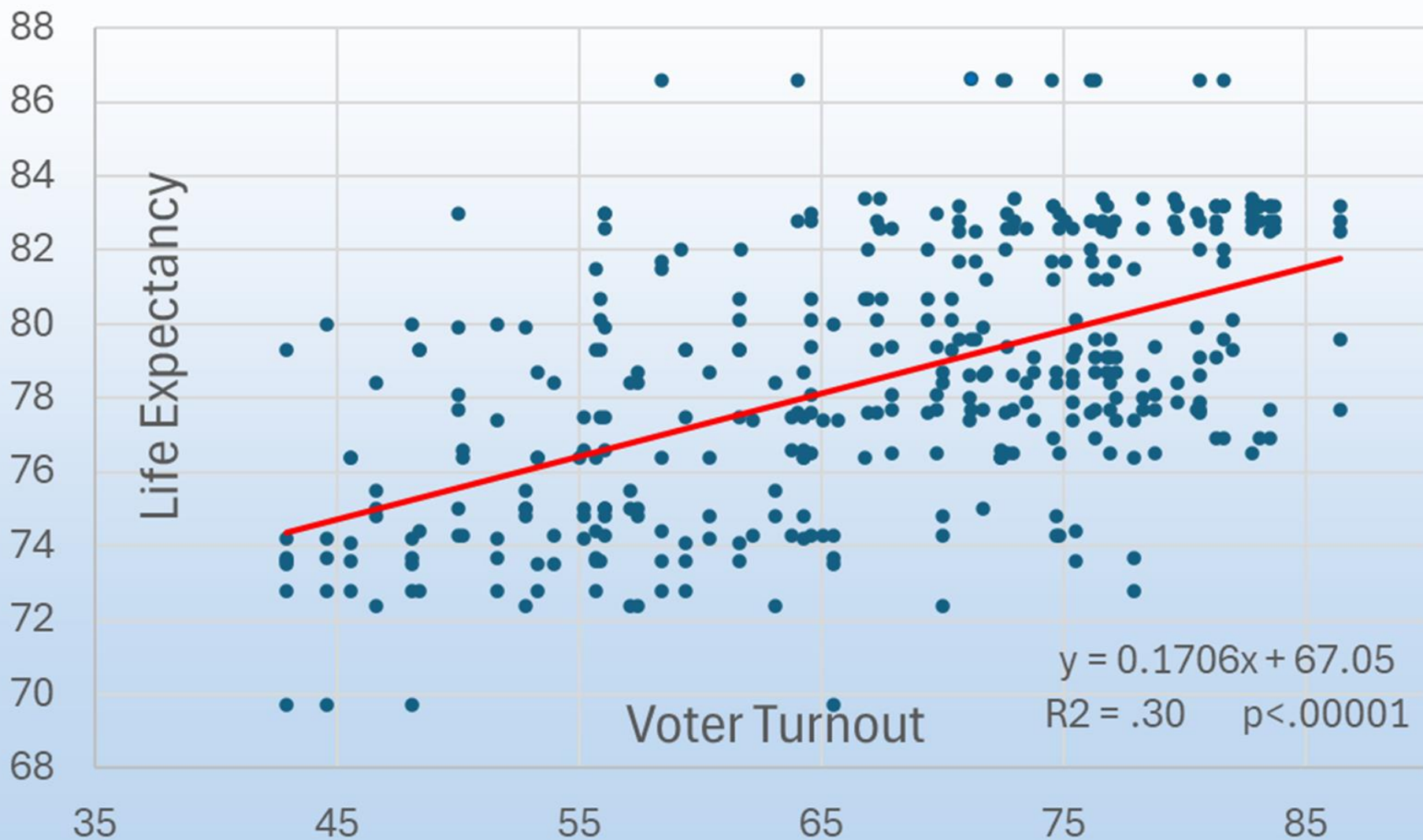


Overall Health by Cost of Voting



Life Expectancy by Voter Turnout

Ingham County, Michigan, 2024



Public Health and Health Advocacy

- Public health
 - Focus on population health intervention and policy
- Health Advocacy
 - Focus on community-led advocacy for health change and promotion



Civic Participation and Public Health

- Local public health departments have several opportunities to promote inclusive civic participation and health outcomes
 - Ability to be integrated into the community
 - Access to data and data collection opportunities



Civic Participation and Engagement

- Civic Engagement
- Civic Participation
- Civic Infrastructure
- Invitation to engage vs. Opportunity to exercise your power



Authentic Engagement

A collaborative approach that involves meaningful and genuine participation from community members, specifically those impacted by topic issues, often involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation

- Looks like:
 - Participants trust you and/or the organization
 - You are part of their world (not vice-versa)
 - Co-create solutions to the problem
 - Listening and hearing the community
 - Bringing something to the table for the community
 - Educating yourself on the history of specific communities
 - Recognize and accepting different experiences
 - Balancing and sharing power

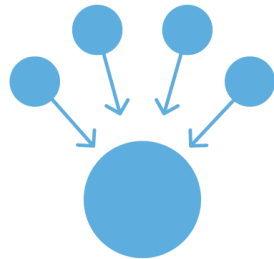


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM



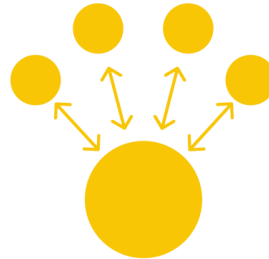
INFORM

Provide information and assistance to community to improve understanding and problem solving.



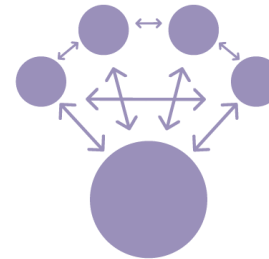
CONSULT

Obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives, and decisions.



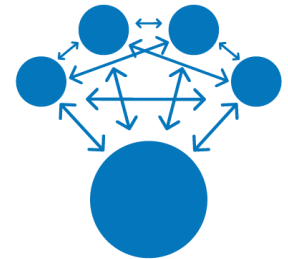
INVOLVE

Consistently work with community to consider their concerns and aspirations.



COLLABORATE

Partner with community in decision-making and identifying solutions.



EMPOWER

Community leads in making decisions and implementing solutions.



Building Community Trust

- In yourself
 - Truly listen
 - "I do not know"
 - Share the "why" - your story or the community's story
 - Follow-through
- In your organization
 - Address rumors and challenges
 - Inclusive and accessible
 - Promote action steps completed
- In the moment
 - Be flexible and present
 - Acknowledge feelings *and* facts



Examples of Authentic Engagement

- Holding your focus group at an already-occurring meeting
- Paying community members for their time
 - Food, childcare, transportation, interpreters
- Understand their values, daily life, religion, and/or culture before reaching out that community
- Invite the community to work with you or in your space
- Create the rules of the session together
- Have a reason or an action-item on the "why"
- Offer resources and/or support on the topic

Listen deeply and truly



Civic Engagement and Participation in Public Health Improvement Activities

Public health departments can use civic engagement data to inform and improve public health efforts by:

- Identifying community needs in Community Health Improvement (CHI) processes
- Understand what motivates communities
- Build trust through partnership
- Get insights into social and political factors affecting health
- Advocate for policies that promote health and health equity



National and CHI Frameworks

- Healthy People 2030 – defines civic participation as a social determinant of health, including volunteering, participating in social/community groups, and voting behaviors.¹
- MAPP Process, Partner Assessment and Community Status Assessment
 - Partner assessment:
 - Social and Community Context: The connection between characteristics of the contexts within which people live, learn, work, and play, and their health and well-being. This includes topics like cohesion within a community, civic participation, discrimination, conditions in the workplace, violence, and incarceration
 - Integrated Voter Engagement: Connecting organizing and voter-engagement strategies to build a strong base over multiple election cycles
 - Policy, Advocacy, and Communications section



¹ <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/civic-participation>

Resources and Reports

- Community Commons – provides information, resources, and tools related to:
 - Voting as related to quality of life and health
 - Civic Engagement
 - Social prescribing
- County Health Rankings
 - Civic Participation Measures
 - Civic and Community Resources
 - Social Associations
 - Census Participation
 - Voter Turnout
 - 2024 National Findings Report – Creating Thriving Communities Through Civic Participation



Community Health Improvement - Example

*Strengthen Community Capacity
and Youth Leadership*

“Institutions and community organizations need to come into the community, listen, be present and hear what the residents are talking about.”

Oakley Square Apartments focus group participant

Data Spotlight



These are findings from the data we collected for this assessment theme.

You can see more in the Data Compendium.

Young adults and those with lower incomes may face more barriers when it comes to participating in community meetings.

Source: Healthy Chicago Survey, 2018

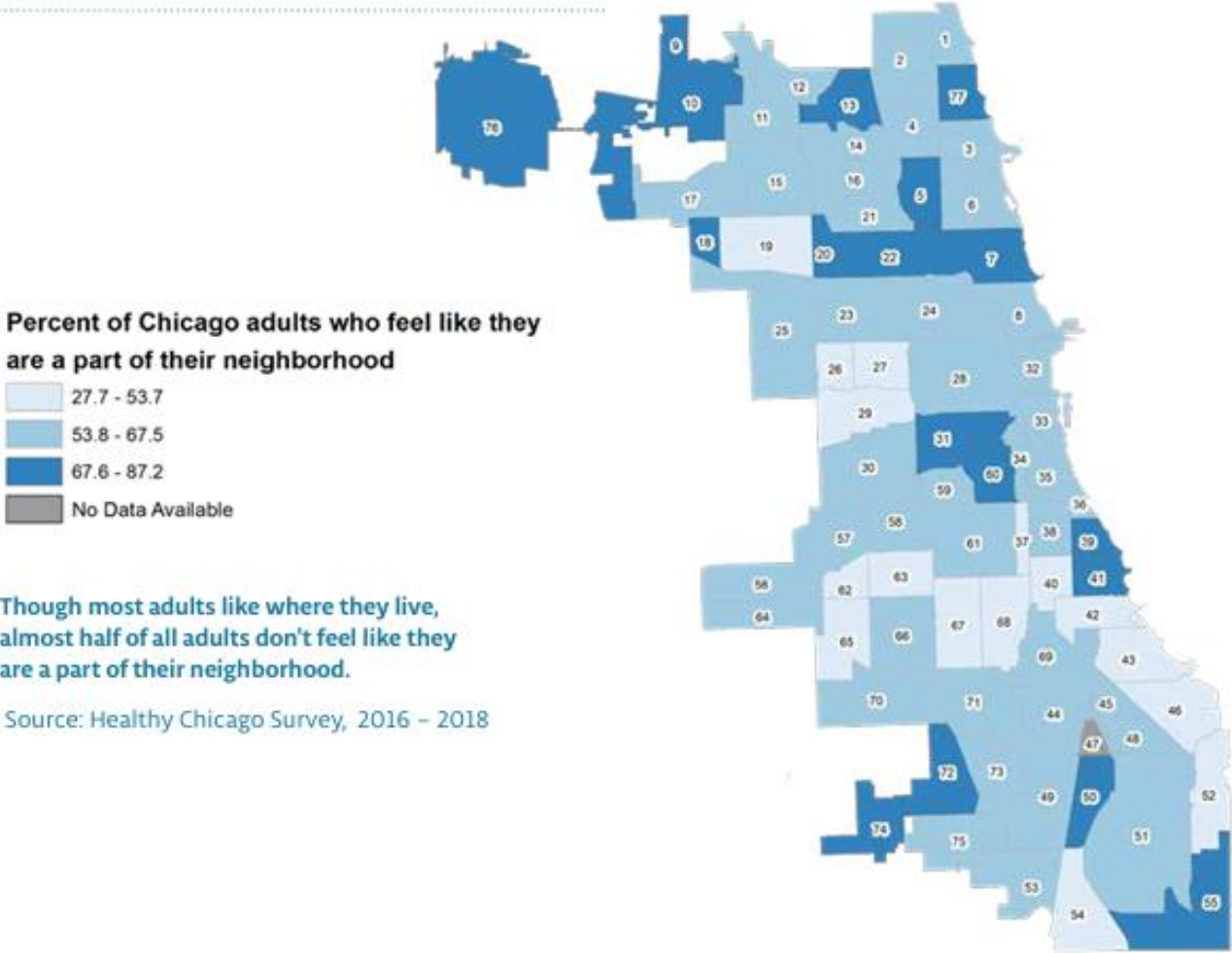
Voter turnout tends to be higher in Chicago's lakefront neighborhoods. Adults in all neighborhoods need to be mobilized to help choose the city's leaders.

Source: Chicago Board of Elections, 2019



Community Health Improvement - Example

COMMUNITY BELONGING MAP



Michigan CHA/CHIP Index

- <http://miophi.org> - under Resources tab
- Searchable by location and priorities



SOCIAL CONNECTION

Social connections and social capital are important for good health. Close relationships reduce stress and promote healthy habits. Being part of a community helps people access healthcare and information, leading to safer and healthier lives. Overall, strong connections with others contribute to better health and longer life.



BARRY COUNTY

Priority Health Need: Social Cohesion

Key Findings

- The lack of mentorship for youth has impacts on physical and emotional safety. A decrease in mentorship opportunities (both within and outside of the family unit) is related to socioeconomic pressures.
- Community members identified a need for organizations to be held accountable for the health and wellbeing of communities. This can be achieved through increased communication, outreach efforts, and by supporting community members in identifying and deploying community improvement projects.
- School systems should work to ensure an environment of safety and trust while delivering education, modeling skills, and providing opportunities to practice the skills needed to foster social cohesion.
- Leaders, organizations, and businesses need to foster relationships between each other and with the community. Key steps in this process are to increase engagement between community members and organizations and to increase community spaces for residents to gather.

SOCIAL CONNECTION & CAPITAL OVERVIEW

Survey results revealed that community members identified good schools (22.8%), low crime/safe neighborhoods (13.8%), religious/spiritual values (7.0%), and community involvement (6.0%) as factors defining a healthy community. In addition, social connection was the #5 health issue identified in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment by stakeholders and community partners.

Social connection and capital are how strongly residents feel they are connected to their community. People with an increased sense of security, belonging, and trust in their community tend to have better health. People who do not feel connected to their community or other support structures may be less likely to act in healthy ways or work with others to promote well-being for all.

Healthy People 2030 defines social and community context as the "connection between characteristics of the contexts within which people live, learn, work, and play and their health and well-being."²⁰ People with an increased sense of security, belonging, and trust in their community are found to have better health. People who do not feel connected are less inclined to act in



Collaborating with Our SDOH Hub

- Focus group with Steering Committee
- Identify community partners and stakeholders that have already been doing work in civic participation
- Using a Health in All Policies approach
- Long-term partnerships



Results - The Hot Topics

- Advocacy
- Power Imbalances
- Trust or Lack-There-Of
- Policy
- Community Representation



Lessons Learned

- Organizations, even if similar, are at varying levels of civic engagement
- Grants, settlements, SDOH, collaboration, new or changed laws, millages, inclusion of community members, are opportunities for civic engagement
- Concerns with lobbying vs advocacy
- Balance of voices is needed
- Trust needs rebuilt from Public Health
- Action Items for Community Organizations



Strategies for Local Health Departments

- Collaboration
 - County Clerks
 - Community Partners
 - Community members
- Listen to the community
- Commit - it takes time
- Consider Health in All Policies and political determinants of health



Opportunities

- Community collaboration
 - One Love Global Youth Programs and Outreach
 - SDOH Hubs Grant
 - Health Equity Council
- Cross-jurisdictional collaboration
- Use of CHA/CHIP
 - Policy recommendations
- Advocacy Trainings
- Health in All Policies



Thank you!

QUESTIONS?



Ingham County
Health Department

Sources

- <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/phqitoolbox/docs/AuthenticPrinciplesCommEng.pdf>
- <https://centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/research-projects/trust-in-public-health/building-trust/trust-checklist-priority-2>
- Center for Wellness & Nutrition. *Community Engagement Toolkit: A Participatory Action Approach Towards Health Equity and Justice*. Center for Wellness & Nutrition/Public Health Institute; 2020. https://centerforwellnessandnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL-COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT-TOOLKIT_-Upd2282020.pdf

