

# Evaluating Our Progress: The Delaware State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Annual Report 2026

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## INTRODUCTION

- What is a State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)?
  - A SHIP is a strategic framework for state health departments and is a requirement for accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).
  - The SHIP identifies a state's health priorities and outlines the actions needed to address them.
- Who is responsible for conducting the SHIP?
  - The SHIP is led by the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) in partnership with the University of Delaware's Partnership for Healthy Communities (PHC) and Epidemiology Department.
  - The Delaware SHIP engages with stakeholders, partners and communities statewide to assess and address the health needs of Delawareans, forming a coalition to develop and implement the SHIP.

## PURPOSE

- The purpose of the SHIP Annual Report is to assess progress toward goals, address gaps, and inform data-driven decision-making to strengthen public health initiatives across Delaware.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Delaware Division of Public Health
- The Delaware SHIP Coalition

## METHODS

- The Delaware State Health Assessment (SHA) evaluated the health of Delawareans and identified the state's health strengths and areas of improvement. The identified urgent challenges and needs informed the SHIP.
- The SHIP follows the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) guidance for sorting the strategic plan into priorities, goals, objectives, and strategies (ASTHO, 2014).
- The SHIP Team and Partnership Coalition collaborated to establish the plan.
- The SHIP team established measurable goals, objectives, and strategies for five priority health outcomes—mental health, chronic disease, maternal and infant health, premature death, and avoidable injury—to be achieved by 2028.
- Progress for the Annual Report 2026 was evaluated using state and national data sources to assess health trends, identify gaps, and measure alignment.

## RESULTS

- Of the 42 SHIP objectives:



12 showed measurable improvement



6 met their targets



15 objectives worsened

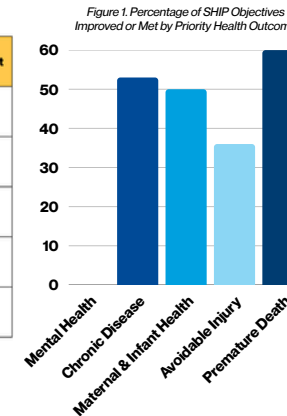


3 remained unchanged

- Performance varied across priority health outcomes, with Mental Health and Avoidable Injury demonstrating the lowest proportion of improved or met objectives.

Priority Health Outcome	Total Objectives	Objectives Improved/Met	% Improved/Met
Mental Health	5	0	0%
Chronic Disease	15	8	53%
Maternal and Infant Health	6	3	50%
Avoidable Injury	11	4	36%
Premature Death	5	3	60%

Table 1. Performance of SHIP Objectives by Priority Health Outcome



## DISCUSSION

- Evaluation of SHIP objectives indicates mixed progress across Delaware's priority health outcomes
  - **Chronic Disease:** achieved goals of increasing physical activity, reducing tobacco use among children, and expanding mammogram screenings. Targets related to adult and child obesity, adult smoking, routine check-ups, and adult diabetes have also shown progress.
  - **Premature Death:** objectives related to adult opioid use have been met, and shown improvements in adult binge or heavy drinking and child alcohol use.
  - **Maternal and Infant Health:** shown improvements in objectives related to reduction in preterm births and an increase in pre- and post-natal care
  - **Avoidable Injury:** targets for walking and bicycling to work improved, and the goals for reducing homicide and firearm-related deaths were achieved
  - **Mental Health:** 0 of the 5 objectives meeting targets represents persistent challenges in this priority health outcome.

## CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Findings demonstrate overall meaningful progress towards meeting the SHIP goals by 2028, while underscoring the need for continued, data-driven action to achieve the goals.
- Findings highlight the importance of continued community partnerships, prevention programs, and expanded behavioral health resources to improve population health outcomes through the remainder of the SHIP cycle.

Scan the QR Code or visit the Delaware SHIP website at [delawareSHIP.org](http://delawareSHIP.org) to learn more.

