

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2030



city of
CINCINNATI
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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Message from the Commissioner



In Cincinnati, where a person's ZIP code can determine decades of difference in life expectancy, we face a challenge that speaks to the very heart of public health. A 25-year gap between neighborhoods - driven by preventable diseases - reminds us that health disparities are not just statistics; they reflect lived realities that impact families, communities, and the future of our city.

Improving that gap isn't just a moral imperative - it benefits everyone. When we reduce barriers to care, prevent chronic disease, and improve access to essential services, we create a healthier, more vibrant Cincinnati for all. A city where every resident, regardless of where they live, has the opportunity for a longer and healthier life.

This strategic plan is our roadmap for action. It reflects not only the lessons we've learned - particularly through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic - but also the voices of the community and the pressing public health needs of today. We have synthesized these insights into a focused, measurable, and holistic plan that advances our mission. Through key priorities - health outcomes, access, experience, operational excellence, and safety - we are building an accountable and results-driven system to make real, sustainable improvements in the health of our city.

This plan represents our commitment to doing the hard, necessary work to close the life expectancy gap. And by doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to Cincinnati where everyone has the chance to live a full and healthy life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Mussman', written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Grant Mussman, MD, MHA
Health Commissioner, Cincinnati Health Department

Executive Summary

The Cincinnati Board of Health adopted its previous Strategic Plan on **April 28, 2020**, covering the period of **2020–2021**. The original intent was to conduct a comprehensive update in 2022; however, the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic required a shift in focus, delaying the update. This **new Strategic Plan** not only builds upon the progress made during the previous planning cycle but also incorporates key lessons learned from the pandemic response.

In 2020, the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) partnered with **Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's James M. Anderson Center for Health Systems Excellence** to establish a set of metrics and a dashboard representing organizational standards across all departmental levels. As part of that effort, CHD developed a framework consisting of organizational-level domains, service lines, and eight foundational areas known as **"Big Dots."** This framework was intended to drive both strategic planning and performance management; however, full implementation was also delayed due to the demands of the COVID-19 response.

The current Strategic Plan fully implements this foundational framework and refines it by focusing on **five functional domains**, also referred to as **Big Dots**. These domains were chosen for their relevance across all areas of the department and their alignment with the strategic priorities of the Board of Health and CHD's mission. The five domains are:

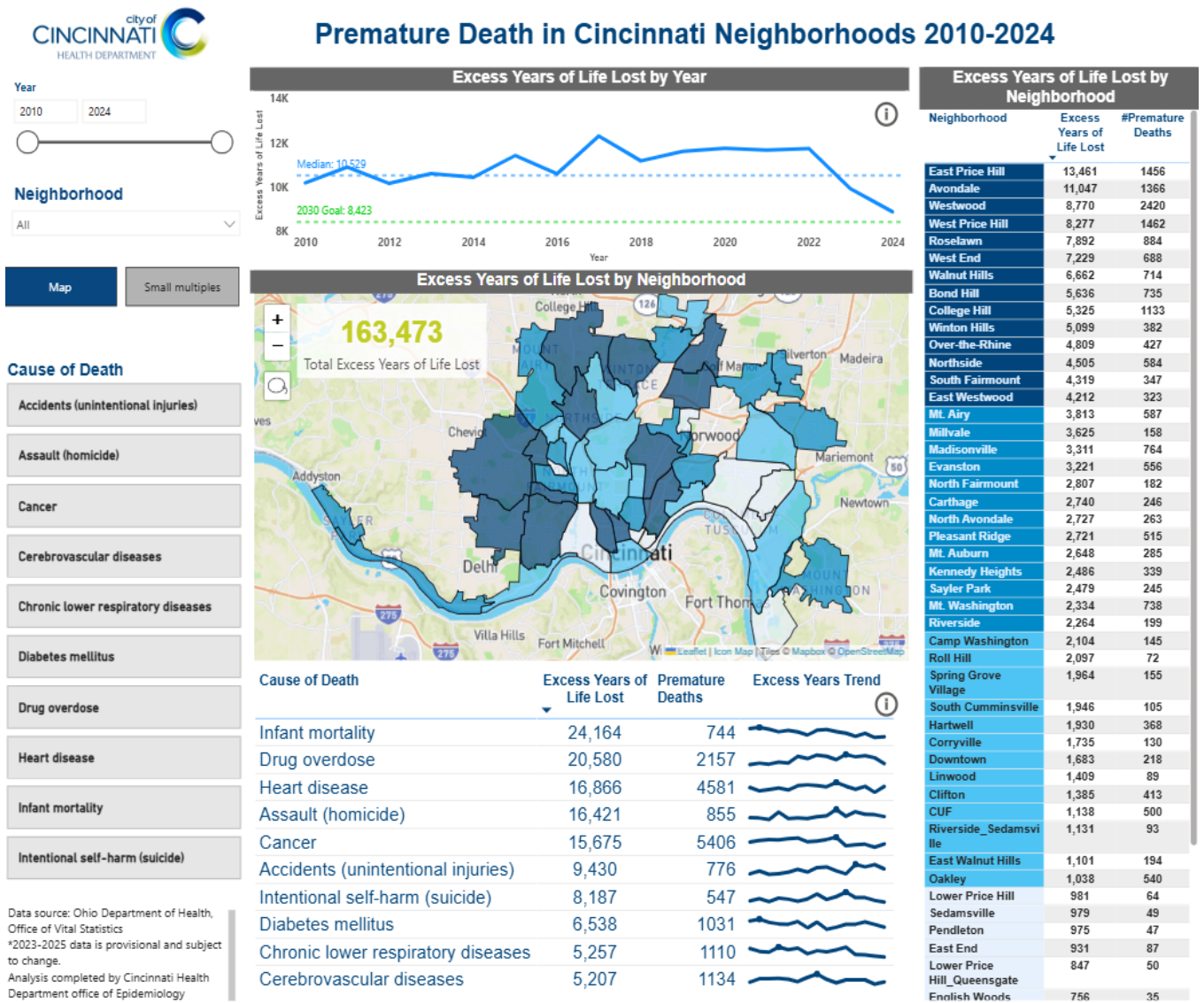
- **Health Outcomes**
- **Employee and Client Experience**
- **Access to Services**
- **Operational Excellence**
- **Employee and Client Safety**

In addition to the domain framework, CHD has introduced a key **"roll-up"** performance measure centered on reducing **life expectancy disparities**, emphasizing the department's commitment to addressing systemic health inequities in Cincinnati.

This Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive, department-wide **dashboard for performance management and quality improvement.**

Each service line and program within CHD will be responsible for tracking progress, measuring outcomes, and communicating performance data regularly. The plan establishes an internal infrastructure aimed at fostering **sustainable change, organizational focus, and long-term resilience.** The department's goal is to reduce the number of excess years of life lost in Cincinnati by 20% by 2030.

<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/public-health-hot-topics/life-expectancy/>



Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was initiated by the Health Commissioner, who presented the foundational framework for the new plan to the Board of Health. This planning framework was originally introduced during the previous strategic plan cycle; however, full implementation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the current plan, the framework was refined to focus on five core functional domains:

1. **Health Outcomes**
2. **Employee and Client Experience**
3. **Access to Services**
4. **Operational Excellence**
5. **Employee and Client Safety**

These domains were selected based on their alignment with the strategic priorities identified by the Board of Health and insights gained from the Community Health Assessment (CHA).

Throughout the planning process, regular updates were presented to the Board of Health during selected monthly meetings. These meetings were broadcast to the public through multiple platforms, and public comments were available via online submission through the CHD website.

Additionally, the Board President received regular one-on-one briefings to ensure ongoing communication and alignment.

In December 2024, feedback was actively solicited from all department employees. They were asked to provide input on the proposed strategic domains and to share their perspectives on a variety of public health focus areas, including:

- Provision of clinical services
- Building community trust
- Policy and legislation
- Harm reduction
- Improving life expectancy
- Targeted health programming for marginalized populations
- Communicable disease investigation

- Connecting the community to healthcare
- Other key public health priorities

To further inform the strategic planning process, members of the management team, along with clinical and administrative staff, conducted a series of meetings to perform a comprehensive **SWOT analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The findings of this analysis can be found in **Appendices A**.



Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities outlined here have been informed by the input and feedback received, including findings from the SWOT analysis, relevant health data, and contributions from key stakeholders. Together, these elements ensure that our priorities are evidence-based and aligned with both organizational goals and our broader public health mandate.

Strategic Goal 1: Health Outcomes

Reduce excess years of potential life lost due to heart disease in Cincinnati.

Establish a Community Collective Cardiovascular Group			
Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
Gain commitment from key stakeholders and establish the group by July 1, 2025	Recruit key stakeholders Review the Years of Life Lost Life Data and recommend priority neighborhoods Leverage large group to develop collective action efforts	Number of Stakeholder Organizations • Number of Community Collaborative meetings	Cincinnati Health Department University of Cincinnati Hospital The Health Collaborative
Conduct a community and collaborative scan			
Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program

Document best practices for community collaboratives focused on heart disease within the Ohio Collaboratives by December 31, 2026	Document current community efforts and best practices from partner cities	# of community collaboratives profiled	Cincinnati Health Department
	Neighborhood comparisons (social and environmental)	# of health provider practices profiled	University of Cincinnati Hospital
	Understand the similarities and differences between those neighborhoods and the rest of Cincinnati as it relates to cardiovascular outcomes (linkage)	Completed environmental scan	The Health Collaborative
	Seek feedback from the community to better understand and address barriers (i.e., medicine compliance)		
	Develop a theory of change		

Develop and implement a collective plan of action

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
Action Plan completed by July 1, 2027.	Identify process for writing the plan	Process identified and agreed upon	Cincinnati Health Department
Action Plan implemented by December 31, 2027.	Write and finalize the plan	Completed plan	University of Cincinnati Hospital
	Assign implementation and monitor progress	Plan implemented. Progress monitored and in place	The Health Collaborative

Strategic Goal 2: Customer and Employee Experience

Create a feedback-rich culture throughout the organization that focuses on client and employee experience.

Continually seek feedback from customers (clients) and employees			
Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program

Conduct a CCPC patient survey by June 30, 2025, and annually thereafter	Develop and/or update surveys	Report on survey results	Health Commissioner Senior Leadership
Conduct a staff feedback survey by June 30, 2025, and at least every 2 years thereafter	Implement surveys Analyze results	Results shared with Board of Health, leadership, and staff	CCPC Leadership QI Committee
Conduct at least 1 QI project per year based on feedback beginning June 30, 2025.	Share results for transparency with leadership and staff Refer results to QI Committee for potential projects	Feedback is incorporated into programs and services Completed QI projects	

Strategic Goal 3: Access to Services

Assure community alignment and modernization of CHD's public health and health center facilities.

Perform an internal assessment of current facilities. (Based on Jensen Report, February 2024)			
Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
<p>Conduct an internal assessment of CHD functions, current facilities, and facilities needs by February 2024 (completed)</p> <p>Report will be made public by June 2024 (completed)</p> <p>The report will be shared with the public by August 2024 (completed)</p>	Objectives completed	<p>Report available on our website https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/chd-reports-and-publications/</p>	Health Commissioner
Engage the public directly before plan development to further understand community needs.			

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
<p>Identify most pressing facilities needs by December 2025</p> <p>FY 26 and 27 Budgets will reflect the need for additional capital</p> <p>Conduct engagement of CHD customers and constituents for feedback on plan by June 30, 2026</p>	<p>Engage with and collect data from BHSC (Bobbie Sterne Health Center) customers. Distribute a survey to gauge public and patient needs for facilities and neighborhood concerns.</p> <p>Work with the City Manager's Office to place capital expenditures of appropriate amounts in FY26 and FY27 budgets. Include replacement or repair of BHSC (Bobbie Sterne Health Center) identified as top priorities.</p>	<p>Obtain survey results from 300 or more BHSC patients</p> <p>FY26 and 27 budgets will include capital expenditure and be publicly available.</p>	<p>Health Commissioner</p> <p>CHD Leadership</p> <p>City Manager's Office</p>

Consolidation of non-clinical facilities

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
<p>Identify and obtain new location for public health administration by December 2026</p> <p>Consolidate administrative and public health functions in a single building by June 2027</p>	<p>Work with City Mgr.'s Office and real estate to identify property</p> <p>Engage with architects to evaluate property relative to current needs</p> <p>Complete all necessary work</p> <p>Complete movement of personnel.</p>	<p>Purchase of property completed by December 2026</p> <p>Relocation completed by June 2027</p>	<p>Health Commissioner</p> <p>CHD Leadership</p> <p>City Manager's Office</p>

Planning for health facilities modernization; replace or repair of Bobbie Sterne Health Center

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
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Analyze data from patient engagement (collected in Phase 1) by June 2026	Identify staff to analyze data; implement	Data analyzed and compiled	Health Commissioner
Develop future scenarios based on patient needs by September 2026	Identify staff and partners to develop scenarios; implement	Future scenarios completed	CHD Leadership and City Manager's Office
Work with the Office of Community Planning and Engagement to begin public engagement and survey by September 2026	Identify steps and methods to begin community engagement; implement	Public engagement initiated by September 2026	

Planning for health facilities modernization: Millvale Hopple Street and Northside Health Centers

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
Begin patient engagement and surveys for these clinics by June 2027	Develop and implement engagement strategies and survey	Completed patient engagement results	Health Commissioner CHD Leadership and
Develop a plan for these clinics by July 2027	Conduct a planning process for health facilities modernization	Plan is completed	City Manager's Office

Strategic Goal 4: Operational Excellence

Advance a culture of quality or advancing use of performance management concepts.

Develop/update performance management system to improve data sharing and transparency			
Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program

Update the performance management (PM) system by December 31, 2025.	Review and select PM software	PM system is updated	Senior Leadership
	Update the PM system	PM software is selected	
	Populate software with updated CHD PM system data and system level dashboard	Staff are trained New PM software is implemented and in use	
	Train staff		

Conduct tracking & monitoring of performance management metrics

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
Prepare progress reports at least bi-annually beginning January 1, 2026.	Develop an ongoing PM reporting system Results shared with the Board of Health, leadership, and program staff	Completed PM reports QI Council identifies potential QI projects based on PM reports	Senior Leadership

Strategic Goal 5: Safety

Ensure a safe environment for staff, patients, and the public.

Reduce injuries through accurate reporting and data analysis

Objectives (SMART)	Action Steps	Measures	Responsible Person or Program
Develop an electronic safety reporting program by June 2025	Automate Data Transfer	All forms are digitized	Emergency Preparedness
	Digitize all reporting forms	Hot links have been established	Safety Incident Reporting Team
	Create branching logic	All staff trained	
	Roll out the program to CHD staff		

		Program has been launched	
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Linkage with the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

As the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) began developing the framework for its strategic priorities, ensuring broad stakeholder engagement was a key objective. This inclusive process began in **Spring 2023** with the organization of multiple **community conversation forums**. CHD also conducted **surveys** targeting community partners and clients utilizing CHD clinical services.

The feedback received from these engagement efforts was instrumental in shaping the **2023–2028 Cincinnati Community Health Assessment (CHA)**. Alongside this community input, all available public health data for the City of Cincinnati was incorporated to identify the city's most pressing health concerns. The top three areas of concern identified in the CHA were:

- **Food Access**
- **Mental Health**
- **Financial Stability (Employment)**

Additional concerns frequently cited: prevention and primary care access, racism in healthcare, and access to healthy foods. These insights directly informed the development of CHD's **strategic priorities**, particularly within the domains of **Health Outcomes** and **Access to Care**.

Alignment with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

In December 2023, CHD invited key community stakeholders to participate in the **Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)** process. These collaborative sessions allowed participants to engage in meaningful dialogue and help shape a shared vision for community health improvement.

Following a series of discussions, CHIP action teams identified the following community health priorities:

- **Access to Care**
- **Behavioral and Mental Health**
- **Infant and Maternal Health**
- **Food Access and Healthy Eating**
- **Housing**

These CHIP priorities are reflected in CHD's strategic domains, especially within the areas of **Access to Care** and **Performance Management**.

Additionally, CHD's strategic priorities align with the **City of Cincinnati's five strategic priorities**:

1. **Public Safety and Health**
2. **Growing Economic Opportunities**
3. **Thriving Neighborhoods**
4. **Fiscal Sustainability**
5. **Excellent and Equitable Service Delivery**

Strategic Plan Implementation & Monitoring

To ensure accountability and sustained progress, CHD will **regularly review and assess** the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives. The department will report on performance and implementation progress using multiple methods, including:

- **Quarterly updates to the governing body** during designated monthly Board of Health meetings
- **CHD program areas** will provide updates on their **quality improvement projects** during the monthly QI committee meetings.
- **Life Expectancy (Years of Life Lost)** data will be reflected on the CHD website and updated **annually**.
- **Quarterly updates** will be provided to the city manager's office on **performance measures** for identified program areas.

These structured updates will provide transparent reporting, maintain organizational focus, and allow for timely adjustments to implementation strategies as needed.

Oversight and Performance Management

Oversight of strategic plan progress will be led by the **Health Commissioner** in collaboration with the management team. As part of this commitment, CHD is in the process of selecting and implementing a new **Performance Management (PM) software system**. Once implemented, this system will support integration of strategic plan progress into routine performance management reports, strengthening accountability and transparency across the department.

Mission, Vision, Core Values and Services

Mission

- To work for the health and wellness of Cincinnati citizens, employing methods that include surveillance, assessment, disease prevention, health education and assuring access to public health services.

Vision

- The Cincinnati Health Department will be a public health leader for building and maintaining a healthy and safe community.

Core Values

• Collaboration

We believe in being an active member of our community, participating in conversations and engaging with each other productively and respectfully to achieve common goals.

Collaboration

We foster a culture of compassion and mutual respect among our employees and clients and recognize diversity as a strength in our organization and community.

Accountability

We demonstrate the highest level of respect, integrity, and professionalism, guided by our sense of trust and morality. We are dedicated to cultivating a sense of transparency both internally and with the general public.

Quality

We honor our mission by upholding excellence in personal, public health and patient care services. We strive to be the model for public health practice to continuously improve health and social equity for the people of Cincinnati. We measure performance outcomes and social determinants of health through continuous quality improvement.

Health Equity & Access

We strive to eliminate disparities and assure that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy. We work toward the timely availability of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes

Lead Poisoning Prevention

- Childhood Lead Poisoning Program (CLPPP) can help control lead paint, dust and soil hazards.

Technical Environmental Services

- Vector Control Program to address environmental public health concerns by monitoring the spread of vector borne diseases.
- Respond to reports of rabies animal bites, public swimming pools, pest control complaints in city buildings, etc.

Environmental Waste Unit

- Conducts inspections and investigations that are related to proper waste disposal and the environmental impact.

Communicable Disease Unit

- Investigates infectious disease outbreaks and reports.

Food Safety Inspection Program

- Licenses and inspects all food service operations and retail food establishments to ensure compliance with food safety code.

Healthy Homes Program

- Provides a healthy home assessment at no cost by a CHD inspector.
- Assessment identifies potential health risks within your home.

WIC Program

- Nutrition and education program for eligible women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum and infants & children up to age 5.

Vital Statistics

- Issues birth certificates for anyone born in Ohio.
- Provides death certificates for all death that occur in the City of Cincinnati.

Community Nursing

- Community health worker program and assistance for children with medical handicaps.

School-based Nursing

- Health screenings, vaccinations, referrals, and collaboration with community partners. Case management for chronic health problems.

Healthy Communities Program

- Health education at the individual and community level.
- Promotes sustainable healthy behavior change through policy, system, and environmental changes.

Appendices A

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to an organization.

Opportunities and Threats are external and typically outside of your organization, in the larger community.

This SWOT analysis was conducted to identify critical risks, challenges, and opportunities impacting our public health mandate. It provides a strategic overview of CHD's current positioning and offers evidence-based insights to support informed decision-making and long-term planning. This analysis is intended to guide our collective efforts in advancing health outcomes and ensuring organizational effectiveness. The results are outlined in the table below:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commitment to service; regardless of insurance and/or ability to pay.• Size of our department and diversity of effort, CHD is actively involved in a variety of activities within our community.• Ability to get things done (example COVID - 19)• Expertise in data collection and analysis• Quality Improvement and QI projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall recruitment processes• Retention of staff (particularly behavioral health & clinical staff)• Facility – aging infrastructure, parking, access to services• Succession planning• Unique needs of public health• Data infrastructure and technology (efficiency, vulnerability)• Workforce training, ongoing need• Funding – typically not enough and short-term

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationship with city leadership • Competitive employee benefits • Accredited! • Experienced, knowledgeable staff • Moving forward with technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community trust (i.e., government institutions/healthcare) • Marketing - We do not always advertise what we do. • Organizing grants
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External collaboration for greater impact • Risk management technology. • Community engagement, especially where there is no social media. • Substance Abuse – Harm Reduction • Dedicated grant writer • Additional grant funding potentially available • Ability to take a leadership role in the city. • Policy & Legislation • Legalization of Marijuana – education, fee collection, regulations 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget deficits – city, state, federal • Loss of Funding (grants) • Community mistrust of government, healthcare organizations, etc. • Facility – not stable, aging infrastructures • Physical threats – active shooters, threats in the community • Vaccine preventable deaths • Recruiting for unique needs of public health workforce • Competition from the private health care sector

Record of Revisions

The Office of the Commissioner will maintain a record of changes to this plan. The date of the revision, section/pages revised, and a brief revision description are provided below.

Revision Number	Section/Pages Revised & Description of Revisions Made	Date	Person Responsible

Plan adopted by the Cincinnati Board of Health on October 28, 2025.