



Ottawa County[®]

Administrator's Office

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County Administrator

Ottawa County Statement on OCDPH Sexual Health Services

Because of recent misinformation about Ottawa County Department of Public Health's ("OCDPH") pregnancy services, we want to clarify what services the Department provides and does not provide, as well as the law under which these services are administered.

What does OCDPH provide?

- Contraceptive products and natural family planning methods for clients who want to prevent pregnancy.
- Sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment services.
- Pregnancy testing and non-directive information based on client request.

Who does OCDPH serve?

- Services are prioritized to serve low-income residents.
- Services are provided regardless of the client's ability to pay.

What does OCDPH **NOT** provide?

- Pregnancy termination.
- Funding to any organization that provides **abortion**.

Because OCDPH receives federal Title X Family Planning funds, the Department must comply with Title X rules. The rules state:

- Services must be provided to teens who request them. Parental participation and consent are encouraged by OCDPH but may not be required per federal and state laws.
- Staff may not coerce an individual to employ a particular method of family planning.
- If asked about pregnancy options, OCDPH staff may only provide neutral, factual and **nondirective** information. This means that OCDPH cannot advise or influence a client toward *any* option.
- Under current United States Supreme Court precedent and even under the draft opinion recently leaked, abortion rights or prohibitions are **not** a county issue.
- Such decisions must be made, currently at the federal level, or if the leaked opinion becomes the new Supreme Court precedent, would reside within the State of Michigan and its three branches, not Ottawa County.
- Under current federal constitutional law and under the leaked opinion, it would be constitutionally inappropriate for Ottawa County to be involved in the abortion issue, one way or another.

Access to pregnancy-prevention services in Ottawa County is working. The data in Ottawa County on both teen pregnancy and abortions are encouraging:

- In Ottawa County, teen pregnancy rates have decreased 76% over the past two decades and are currently the fourth lowest among Michigan's 83 counties. In 2020, the rate measured 10.6 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19 compared to 44.4 per 1,000 during the year 2000.
- Rates of abortions in Ottawa County have decreased by 18% among all women of child-bearing age. The rate measured 4.7 per 1,000 in 2020 compared to 5.7 per 1,000 in 2001.

If residents have further questions on this issue, we invite them to contact the Ottawa County Department of Public Health for information about services and Ottawa County Corporation Counsel for legal issues.