

Detroit Health Department

Memo



To: Angela Whitfield-Calloway, District 2

From: Denise Fair Razo, Chief Public Health Officer, Health Department

Initial
DFR

Date: March 12, 2025

Re: Responses to 2025-2026 Budget Analysis

Please find below responses to your questions sent on March 11, 2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Health Department.

1. Last year, the leadership of Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) came before City Council and described the overwhelming problem of marijuana and vaping use in public schools. LPD and the Health Department prepared a report concerning the problem. What Health Department program can be developed to educate school children about the dangers of underaged use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, vaping and narcotics? What is the estimated cost of the program? What are the funding sources for the program?

Using last year's 2% marijuana tax funding allocated to the Detroit Health Department, we developed *Too Cool for Drugs*, a comprehensive, evidence-based prevention program. This six-week, school-based initiative, implemented in DPSCD schools, is designed to reduce risk factors associated with substance misuse. Through interactive lessons, games, and activities, students learn essential emotional and social skills to confidently say no to drugs

The program also engages parents through educational sessions and fosters peer support via the Youth Ambassadors peer mentor program. To date, we have reached over 1,400 students, ages 12–18 (grades 6–12), across DPSCD schools and youth organizations. The program has cost \$40,000 to date (see notes).

2. Rx Kids is a groundbreaking program to fight childhood poverty through direct cash assistance to families during the critical first year of a child's life. The program will give a mother \$1,500 before the birth of the child and \$500 a month for the first year of the child's life. This innovative approach empowers mothers to make the best decisions for their children. The estimated total cost would be \$50 Million. Private foundations and charities will cover 70% of the costs. The City of Detroit will cover 30% of the costs or approximately \$15 Million. Would the Health Department support and implement the Rx Kids program?

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In November, City Council approved Detroit's initiative to decrease preterm birth, and infant mortality called Rides to Care. With the initial \$1.2 million in funding, Rides to Care has already provided more than 5,329 rides and 2,762 of those rides were for prenatal visits for pregnant Detroit moms. Failure to get proper prenatal care has been shown to be the highest cause of pre-term birth and we look forward to evaluating the success of our program as the data comes in over the next year. Rx Kids is a state funded program, supplemented primarily by private philanthropy. It is a demonstration program with a very different and specific model. We understand Rx Kids has selected an area of Detroit and is implementing a pilot project there with state and philanthropic funds. We need to see the first-year results of the Rx Kids pilot and the results of the Rides to Care program before we are prepared to make a recommendation about the possible expansion of one or both programs. We cannot recommend a multi-million-dollar expansion of either or both programs until we get the full first year results.