

ANNUAL REPORT

20

HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

ERIE COUNTY

COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTER

24

A YEAR OF
GROWTH & RESILIENCE



A Message to our Community

The Erie County Health Department team includes your loved ones, friends, neighbors, and community members like you. We live here, we work here, and quite simply, we use health data to build programs that we know our community needs. Thank you to everyone who uses the ECHD/ECCHC in any way. Our difference is clear, we are about our patients and customers because we are you!

The Erie County Board of Health made a community commitment years ago to slow down our care model, to absorb what our patients and customers are saying to find the best solutions to their issues. Complete, comprehensive care and service delivery is here. Now, one will see the new Senior Health Initiative begin as we move into 2025.

The Senior Health Initiative is an effort to help seniors maintain their independence by providing a person-to-person approach. ECHD/ECCHC will be providing staff members to answer seniors questions when they call. Our goal is to stomp out ageism in healthcare by eliminating the barriers that people face – things in digital/online health portals, using medical jargon, and pushing people through a health appointment quickly to meet productivity quotas.

Instead, we want to ensure our patients understand not just what their diagnosis is, but how to better care for their needs.

The ECHD/ECCHC is going to eliminate ageism in our facilities by providing good, old-fashioned, face-to-face, personalized care. If you need additional time to talk with your doctor, we will provide it. If you need connections to services outside of health care, we will connect you. Our goal is to make sure everyone understands their personal health needs – not only what is happening right now, but how you may



become healthier with the right care and attention. We find this initiative to be quite motivating! The ECHD continues to lead in numerous areas, as our staff excels at education, professionalism, and a strong work ethic.

Please call my cell phone directly at 419-656-2796 any time that I may assist you or your family in one of the many services we provide. Our goal is to elevate the quality of life for all.

Yours in Good Health,

Peter T Schade MDH, RPHS





Building a Legacy

DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Erie County General Health District is a combined district, meaning that it serves all of Erie County. The District Advisory Council membership consists of the chief executive of each municipality (mayors of our three cities and five villages), and the chairperson of our nine board of township trustees, or their designated representative, for each township within the Erie County General Health District. The County Commissioners are also represented by their Chairperson.

The purpose of this council is to elect its officers, appoint members to the Erie County Board of Health, receive and consider the annual or special reports of the Erie County Health Department and make recommendations to the Erie County Board of Health regarding health and sanitation matters within the District, or for needed legislation. The District Advisory Council meets annually in March.

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Erie County Board of Health is a separate body politic operating under the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Administrative Code in Erie County, Ohio. The Erie County Board of Health members are appointed by the three principal cities and the Erie County District Advisory Council. The Board of Health, in turn, appoints the Health Commissioner. The purpose of the Erie County Board of Health is to define the organization's goals and objectives; evaluate the accomplishments of the programs; hire the chief executive officer (Health Commissioner); take a lead in the development of financial resources and represent the public interest in terms of good governance and disease prevention policies.

The Erie County Health Department and Erie County Community Health Center (ECHD/ECCHC) employs 175 people across eight service sites in Erie, Huron, and Ottawa Counties. However, our reach expands beyond the borders of the North Coast. Through our Lead Hazard Control & Healthy Homes Division we serve residents from Lorain, Sandusky and Seneca Counties, in addition to our tri-county base, and through the Erie County Detox and Kaptur Rogowski House, we provide inpatient addiction and crisis stabilization care to individuals from across the state.

The Erie County Community Health Center is the area's only comprehensive health center - providing not only primary health care and dental services, but mental health and addiction treatment services. This means that our agency functions as both a public health department and a Federally Qualified Health Center. We are accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Joint Commission, certified by Ohio Department of Aging, and further recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as a Patient-Centered Medical Home.

In 2025, we begin our Senior Health Initiative, a project that will ensure our seniors have the support they need to continue a vital life at home. This includes our new Accessible Entry with a covered drive-up and dedicated waiting area where our staff come to YOU, and a new full-service pharmacy at our Main Campus.





Leading with Vision

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS

- Ms. Linda Miller-Moore, President
- Dr. Dina C. Bauer, DPM, President Pro-Tem
- Mr. Michael Bixler
- Mr. Ron Brown
- Dr. Richard Keller, MD
- Ms. Natalie Felter
- Mr. Bob Lippert
- Mr. Adam Machoukas
- Mr. Charles Murray
- Mr. Leroy Sizemore
- Mr. Joey Supina

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

- District Advisory Council
- City of Vermilion
- District Advisory Council
- District Advisory Council
- City of Sandusky
- City of Sandusky
- City of Huron
- District Advisory Council
- City of Sandusky
- City of Sandusky
- City of Sandusky



ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER BOARD

- Mr. Dave Jenkins, President
- Ms. Regina Pool, Vice President
- Ms. Flora I. Irby, Secretary
- Mr. Robert Carter, Treasurer
- Ms. Janet Mesenburg
- Ms. Frankie Byrd
- Mr. Nestor Rave
- Ms. Mary Bohn
- Ms. Karen Balconi-Ghezzi

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

Erie County Community Health Center Board members are representative of each of our Erie County Communities and service areas.



Inspiring Success

ECHD collaborated with Bowling Green State University’s Center for Regional Development, Firelands Health, and the ADAMHS Board of Erie County to complete another cyclical Adult and Youth Community Health Assessment. While most Erie Countians have a primary healthcare provider and report participating in health screenings like blood pressure checks and cancer screenings, the costs of health services continues to prevent many from accessing services. The costs of prescriptions is also an issue for many in our communities, and the stresses that come with these high costs has taken a toll on the mental health of our communities.

This is why more people are choosing ECCHC - it is a quality, affordable healthcare provider.

The Adult assessment also highlighted that our area continues to age more rapidly than other areas in Ohio. About 33% of residents are over age 60 while only about 37% are between the ages of 20 and 44. ECHD uses this data to develop new initiatives and programs within the Health Department and our eight Community Health Centers.





Uniting Talents

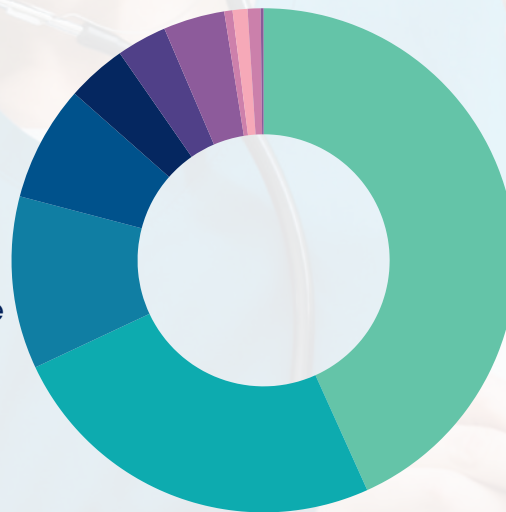
The Erie County Health Department operates, in part, from three separate levies: a 0.2, 0.3, and 0.5 mil levy. These levies account for 11.7% of our annual budget. The remaining 88.3% comes from outside funding through grants and other sources. What does that mean for the average homeowner in Erie County?

On average, for a home valued at \$100,000, the annual cost of supporting essential community health services through a .2 mil levy is **approximately \$20.00 per year**. This modest investment ensures the continued availability of vital public health resources that protect our families and contribute to a healthier community for all.

ECHD provides services including health and dental, infectious disease tracing, food service trainings, restaurant inspections, water testing, septic replacements, healthy homes assessments, lead hazard control, and more!

Funding Innovation

- 2024 Revenue: \$21,720,083.61
- Grants
 - Medicaid
 - Levies
 - Contracts
 - Program Fees
 - Permits, Licenses
 - Private Insurance
 - Medicare
 - Other Income
 - Vital Statistics
 - State Subsidy

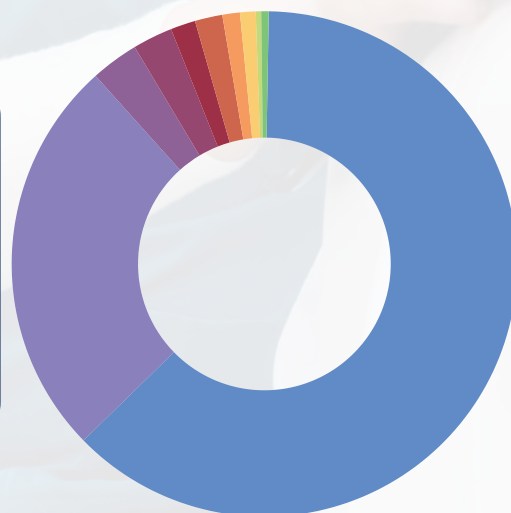


Like most businesses, ECHD's largest expenditure continues to be salary and benefits. The agency employs 175 people - nurses, medical assistants, doctors, dentists, community health workers, sanitarians, public health educators, clerks, lead risk assessors, and more!

Did you know?

In Ohio, you can go to any health

department to receive healthcare or other services - even if you don't live in the same county!



- 2024 Expenses: \$22,418,772.86
- Salaries & Benefits
 - Contractual Services
 - Supplies
 - Lab Fees & Medications
 - Equipment
 - Communications
 - State Fees
 - Travel & Training
 - Other Expense
 - Maintenance





A Success Story Three Years in the Making

The phone rang in the nurse's station, cutting through the usual hum of activity. One of our nurses answered, then turned to me. "There's a man on the phone. He'd like to speak with you."

The name rang a faint bell. The only person I knew by that name was a young man who had been a frequent patient in our Detox unit between 2019 and 2021, cycling through treatment again and again. I asked his last name, and when she confirmed it was him, I cautiously took the call. I wondered what state I would find him in now.

"Hello?"

His voice was clear and strong. "I just wanted to talk to the people who helped me. I'm three years clean now."

I was taken aback. Three years. He went on to tell me about his two children, his partner, and the landscaping/pressure washing business he now owned. He even mentioned his girlfriend, who had been pregnant with their first child the last time he was with us.

He wanted to thank us for not giving up on him. He was hoping to visit sometime, perhaps after the holidays, and share his story.

I was stunned. This had been someone I had tried to help countless times, and it had often felt like I was getting nowhere. And now, three years later, he was calling out of the blue with this incredible news. It was a powerful reminder of the impact we can have, even when we don't see it right away.

Centering Healthcare

In Erie County, 599 babies were born in 2024; 310 were female and 289 were male. ECHD/ECCHC provide health services for all people, from birth through senior years. 2024 was an incredibly busy year for us. Our doctors, nurses, mental health providers, dentists, dental assistants, and dental hygienists provided care at more than 22,000 visits. This includes 10,126 medical, 7,979 dental, 2,363 mental health or counseling, 5,609 immunization, and 6,228 Medically Assisted Treatment visits. ECHD/ECCHC staff also participated in more than 118 community events. Our Outreach & Enrollment staff, which help people find insurance coverage, provide Good Faith Estimates, and other financial assistance services. In 2024, they connected 1,900 community members to health coverage or other financial resources.

Also in 2024, ECHD/ECCHC expanded our Community Health Worker staff to three, including a bilingual Community Health Worker. Our Community Health Workers are connectors, working our community to ensure everyone has the resources they need to thrive. They also work in several grant programs like Cribs4Kids, which distributed 72 cribs, and Ohio Buckles Babies, which provided 113 car seats for area families.

ECHD/ECCHC staff includes 3 Physicians, 5 Nurse Practitioners, 44 Nurses (LPN and RN), 3 Community Health Workers, 2 Counselors (LISW-S), 2 Clinical Psychologists, 4 Dentists, 3 Dental Hygienists, and 8 Dental Assistants.





Serving Our Community

ECHD/ECCHC adopted a “Circle of Care” within the community more than ten years ago. Our Circle of Care means that whatever the reason for an individual to attend an appointment with us, if additional services are needed, staff will immediately connect that patient to the right person. ECHD’s Community Health Workers are key in this initiative, and work throughout ECHD facilities, including ECCHC, the Erie County Detoxification Center, Kaptur Rogowski House, and Compass Point Adult Day Center. In 2024, our Community Health Workers met with 577 ECHD/ECCHC patients, connecting people with needed services including additional health services, grant programs within ECHD, and community programs and services throughout the area.

In 2024, 694 individuals were admitted to the Erie County Detoxification Center; of those 181 were also connected with Medically Assisted Treatment, and 207 with additional outpatient services.

ECHD opened the Kaptur Rogowski House in September of 2024; this facility offers crisis care and stabilization for people experiencing mental health crises. Since opening, 58 individuals have been admitted for treatment, spending an average of 6.52 days within the facility before being released to another level of care.

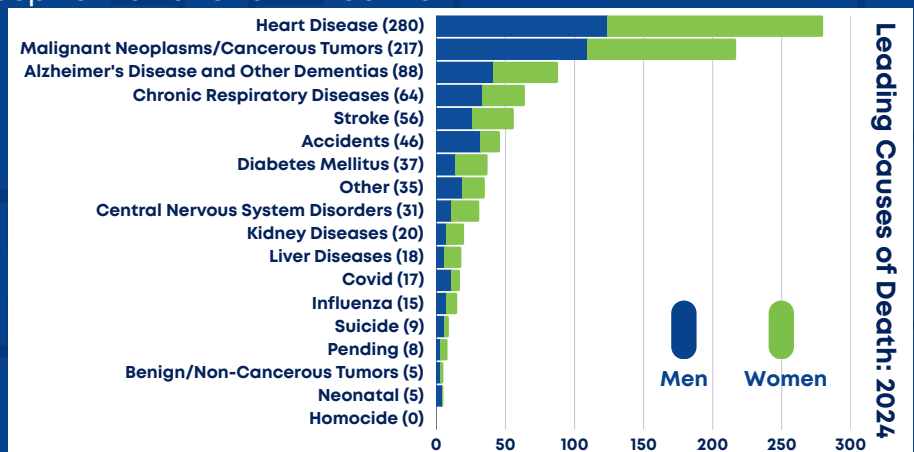
ECHD’s Compass Point Adult Day also continues to have a significant community impact by providing daily respite for families dealing with Alzheimer’s or Dementia diagnoses. In 2024, 1,265 individuals participated in these services, including 10 referrals from the Ohio Passport program.

Erie County Health Statistics

In Ohio, there are more than 80 diseases that are reported to health authorities to investigate so that disease outbreaks can be more easily contained. In 2024, ECHD’s Epidemiologist investigated 2,666 Class A, Class B, and Class C diseases. Chapter 3701-3 of the Ohio Administrative Code, Ohio Laws requires all healthcare providers and laboratories to report any occurrence of cases or suspected cases of reportable infectious disease to the local health department where the patient resides. Once reported, the Epidemiologist contacts the patient and begins investigating the illness. In 2024, ECHD’s epidemiologist helped to curtail 27 disease outbreaks including 18 COVID-19 outbreaks. Other outbreaks investigated included RSV, Hand-Foot-Mouth, Influenza A, Influenza B, three unknown Gastrointestinal, Scabies, and Unknown Respiratory in our communities including healthcare and institutional facilities. In all, our team investigated 2,501 cases of COVID-19 and 71 hospitalizations for Influenza.

Communicable diseases can impact the community in many ways, including increasing the risk of death for people who have chronic diseases.

In 2024, 986 people died. Heart Disease, Cancers, and Dementias were the three leading causes of death for area residents.





Making Connections for Families

As we move forward, ECHD/ECCHC's primary focus is on connecting our community members with health services, especially our vulnerable seniors. To do this, we are expanding our services to include more screening and education opportunities for our community. We have expanded our Health Center locations to include the Sandusky Career Center, we have expanded oral health services available at our EHOVE School-Based Health Center, and will continue bringing our Mobile Health Vehicle into communities to make it easier for individuals to reach care. In addition, we are partnering with the Cleveland Clinic to offer new geriatric services for our patients, we are expanding our Kelleys Island Health Center, and will open a new pharmacy at our Main Campus location.

ECHD/ECCHC contract with 10 area school districts to provide school nursing services. Our nurses provide both 1-to-1 care for children with health conditions, and provide sick visits for children who become ill during the day.

One of our nurses saved a young man's life at one of our high schools when he overdosed after accidentally ingesting a tainted substance. She quickly administered Naloxone, provided by an ECHD grant program, to reverse the overdose.

Through grant funding, ECHD operates the Erie & Huron County Women, Infants & Children (WIC) programs. WIC is a USDA-funded federal assistance program available to Ohio residents who meet income guidelines including those with Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or who meet 185% or less of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. On average, WIC staff provide nutrition education and supplemental healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables, grains, and dairy products to 1,872 Erie and Huron County families every month. ECHD's WIC staff collected 42 gallons of donated breast milk for the Ohio Mother's Milk Bank, distributed 150 breast pumps, taught 204 breastfeeding classes, and was recognized by the Ohio Department of Health as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

Making Connections for the Vulnerable

Our Public Health Nurses also provide care for individuals confined to the Erie and Ottawa County Jails and the Erie County Juvenile Justice Center. In 2024, this program included more than 46,000 medical encounters at the Erie County Jail, 23,000 medical visits at the Ottawa County Jail, and 16,000 medical visits at the Juvenile Justice Center.

Medical visits in institutional settings includes not only well and sick visits, but helping individuals get control of chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Our nurses also provide screenings for mental health conditions, substance use disorder, Medically Assisted Treatment for individuals struggling with substance abuse, withdrawal management, and make referrals for additional services including dental.

In 2024, we began working with the Erie and Huron County Jails to develop the Community Reentry Initiative. This project will help to connect adults in the justice system with needed health and community services, including education and job training. This project will help to reduce recidivism rates throughout our region, and more importantly will help people build successful lives.





Connecting Our Communities

Helping ECHD/ECCHC move closer to our vision is our Grants, Marketing & Quality Assurance Division, which actively seeks out federal, state, and local funding sources to build programs that serve our community. Because of this grant funding, ECHD has not asked for additional levy dollars for 20 years!

In 2024, our grants team applied for 69 federal, state, or local grants for various health and community programs. Of those 58 were awarded, and we are awaiting award notification for 11 applications.

ECHD grant programs were responsible for connecting hundreds of community members with needed health services, community programs and services, and specialty care programs throughout Ohio. Grant programs include outreach for smoking cessation, addiction care, food pantries, and more.

Our Tobacco Cessation program provided 105 referrals to the Ohio Quitline.

The 1st Responders and Integrated Harm Reduction grants provided 22 Naloxone Response Trainings to area first responders and businesses, provided 1,365 free Naloxone kits to residents, 115 5-1-1 (trauma response) bags, and 600 AMBU bags for First Responders. The COSSAP grant was key to the collection of more than 15 pounds of unused/old prescriptions and pharmaceuticals, provided 1,457 free Deterra drug/prescription disposal bags, and supported the implementation of Botvin LifeSkills in three area school districts.

Finally, ECHD's Live & Grow Well project has provided food to nearly 1,000 families through our pop-up food pantries at the Erie County JFS Office, our Kelley's Island Health Center, and our community garden at the Main Campus.

Change In Our Communities

Public health is about much more than doctor visits, disease outbreaks, and healthy eating. ECHD's Environmental Health Division plays a vital role in our community's health by providing restaurant inspections, water testing, and investigating things like dog bites. In 2024, our sanitarians performed 1,597 restaurant and food inspections and issued 814 food licenses. We also provided ServSafe® training for 52 food service workers throughout the area. This two-day course teaches food workers about safe food handling, food storage and more; of those who took the course 90% passed!

ECHD's Sanitarians are out in the community every day - they treated 477,000 square feet of Erie County with larvicide to control mosquitos and provided education, they investigated 161 rabies complaints and 181 nuisance complaints, they licensed 25 Body Art businesses, 152 Pools/Spas/Special Use Pools, and 17 campgrounds. They also reviewed 82 sewage sites, issued 58 sewage permits, and 8 private water permits.

Through ECHD's Regional Response Water Lab, staff visit more than 20 area beaches and water access points to test for hazards; testing is done from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The lab also provides water and wastewater testing for area residents and businesses.

In 2024, staff analyzed 1,125 wastewater samples, 1,358 drinking water samples, and 1,058 bathing beach water samples. ECHD also analyzed 119 drinking water samples for Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) toxins.





Simplifying Things for Seniors

I was reviewing an application for our Healthy Homes program and saw a form which was filled out incorrectly and lacked proper documents. I made the call to the applicant, and asked her about the submission.

“I’ve been dealing with another agency for three years,” she said in a frustrated voice. “When I couldn’t understand their application, they told me to call you, but I don’t understand this one, either.”

I took a new application to her home, explained what everything meant and helped her fill it out. After, she looked at me and said, “Now that you know everything about me, will I ever see you again? Will it take you another three years to fix these problems?”

“You can call me any time you want,” I assured her. “And you’ll be seeing me again.”

She giggled and said, “Uh-huh, I’m sure.”

Well, she called me once a month to ask about her application and it took about six months, but we were able to start her project, which included replacing all of her windows, her roof, and even new siding. But better than that is that I made a new friend.

“Thank you so much,” said the homeowner when she began to see progress. “I never thought there was any hope for me in my home. I doubted you and I shouldn’t have. I hope your wife isn’t mad that I called all the time!”

Change Can Begin At Home

ECHD’s Lead Hazard Control & Healthy Homes Division uses a combination of local, state, and federal grant dollars to provide lead assessments, home renovations and modifications, and blood lead testing for residents in Erie, Huron, Lorain, Sandusky, and Seneca Counties.

The division has been awarded more than \$6,000,000 to complete various residential projects, and works with both homeowners and landlord/renters.

In 2024, the division processed 26 mobile home permits, 235 plumbing permits, and completed 28 radon tests. The team also completed 34 residential lead abatement projects, completed 40 lead assessments, completed 35 Healthy Homes projects, and 58 healthy homes assessments. Lead abatement projects eliminate lead-based paint and dust hazards from homes. Healthy Homes projects include modifications like the addition of hand rails or shower seats, ramps, and other handy projects that allow seniors to be safer in their homes as they age.

Looking ahead to 2025, the lead team plans to expand outreach to connect more area residents to needed services for their home.





A Family in Crisis

As part of a federally-funded project that allowed ECHD to build the Erie County Detox in 2018, the agency also developed a Quick Response team called the Drug Overdose Response Team (DORT). This team works with First Responders throughout Erie County to respond to homes where an overdose or suspected overdose event has occurred. In 2024, First Responders provided life-saving Naloxone at 75 suspected overdose events, and ECHD’s DORT team provided outreach to 97 individuals or families. Nearly half of these responses were linked to opiate use.

One of these calls took the team to Berlin Heights; EMS has been called there often for various mental health crises. When the DORT Team arrived at one such call, the wife of the overdose victim met them at the door.

“My husband has a lot of mental health issues. This time, he took an entire bottle of pills. When the squad arrived he asked them to give him Naloxone, and I think it saved him,” she told the team. “He doesn’t have a drug problem, it was his mental health.”

The EMS squad took the man to a local hospital for monitoring and treatment; once stable, the man was transferred to a mental health facility. The team says that during this particular event, the couple’s small children were home. Several of the children also struggle with mental health, and have begun to see one of ECHD’s counselors for their issues. The team has also been able to provide the family with a Community Health Worker, who has also connected them to ECHD/ECCHC’s primary and dental care services.



Embracing the Future

Mission Statement:

Our Mission is to promote and improve the health and safety of the communities and environment within Erie County while preventing disease through essential public health services.

Vision Statement:

We envision a thriving community where everyone has access to health services, resources, and support.

Core Values:

- Health Access, Equity & Promotion
- Compassion
- Community Innovation
- Respect
- Integrity





Healthcare ... In Your Neighborhood

420 Superior Street, Sandusky
The Erie County Health Department

221 W. Parish Street, Sandusky
At Erie County Job & Family Services

4501 Venice Heights Boulevard, Sandusky
Inside Sandusky Career Center

333 Buckeye Boulevard, Port Clinton
Inside Firelands Counseling & Recovery

34 Executive Drive, Norwalk
ECCHC/Huron County WIC Office

1250 Sanford Street, Vermilion
Vermilion School Based Health Center at Vermilion High School

316 W. Mason Road, Milan
At EHOVE School Based Health Center

117 Addison Street, Kelleys Island
Village of Kelleys Island Health Center

Erie County Detoxification Center
420 Superior Street, Door D, Sandusky

Kaptur Rogowski House
501 Superior Street, Sandusky

Compass Point Adult Day Services
795 Bardshar Road, Sandusky



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