



Message from the Secretary

In January 2015, Tom Wolf was sworn in as the 47th governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and nominated me to be the Secretary of Health. My first year as secretary has been incredibly rewarding and productive. I have enjoyed building relationships with department employees and our many partners and discussing our shared visions for improving the health of all Pennsylvanians.

I'm very proud of the Department of Health's major accomplishments over the past year:

- We reorganized the department to help align our resources to better meet the needs of the public, streamline our services, and do an overall better job of regulating health policy. As part of this reorganization, we reinstated our division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and created a new one focused on Health Innovation.
- We have engaged more than 200 stakeholders across the state representing health care providers, payers, consumers and public health officials to create the "Health Innovation in Pennsylvania Plan."
- We worked with our fellow state government agencies to establish ongoing initiatives to combat the state's heroin and overdose epidemic.
- We enhanced our efforts to improve childhood immunization rates in Pennsylvania.
- We created a Nursing Home Quality Improvement Task Force.
- We collaborated with doctors, policymakers and scientists from across the state to address the issue of Lyme disease, as Pennsylvania leads the nation in cases.

The goal of this newsletter is to inform our partners – hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities, public health professionals, and all Pennsylvanians – about the department's ongoing activities and initiatives, emerging health threats, trends, etc. I'm looking forward to utilizing this newsletter to inform each of you about the exciting outreach and projects that the department is developing to build a stronger, healthier Pennsylvania.

I feel certain that what we have accomplished thus far under Governor Wolf is just a small sampling of the many advances we will spearhead in the near future.

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DOH EXECUTIVE STAFF SWEARING-IN PHOTOS

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Department of Health Executive Staff took their oaths of office at the Pennsylvania State Capitol. We have gathered a diverse staff of exceptional leaders, and we are proud to recognize the occasions of their swearing-in days below:



Dr. Karen Murphy's swearing-in as Secretary of Health



Dr. Rachel Levine following her swearing-in as Pennsylvania Physician General



Post-swearing-in photo of the Department of Health's Executive Staff. From left to right: Secretary of State Pedro Cortes; Governor Tom Wolf; Secretary of Health Dr. Karen Murphy; Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance Christine Filipovich; Executive Deputy Secretary Corey Coleman; Deputy Secretary for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Dr. Loren Robinson, and Deputy Secretary for Health Innovation Dr. Lauren Hughes.



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DOH EXECUTIVE STAFF UPDATES



Dr. Karen Murphy is Pennsylvania's Secretary of Health. Dr. Murphy is the top health regulator in Pennsylvania and is responsible for carrying out the department's mission to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent injury and disease, and assure the safe delivery of quality health care for all Pennsylvanians.



Dr. Rachel Levine is Pennsylvania's Physician General. Dr. Levine advises the Secretary of Health and Governor on medical issues. She also oversees the Department of Health's Bureaus of Epidemiology and Laboratories.



Corey Coleman is the department's Executive Deputy Secretary. Mr. Coleman supervises the department's deputy secretaries and serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Health on all matters relating to departmental program services. He also works with the secretary to formulate agency goals and develop strategic plans.



Christine Filipovich is the Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance. She oversees the Bureaus of Facility Licensure and Certification and Community Program Licensure and Certification, as well as the Healthcare Associated Prevention Program.



Richard "Dick" Gibbons is the Acting Deputy Secretary for Health Planning and Assessment. He oversees the Bureaus of: Community Health Systems; Emergency Medical Services; and Public Health Preparedness.



Dr. Lauren Hughes is the Deputy Secretary for Health Innovation. She oversees the Bureaus of Health Planning and Managed Care, as well as the Health Innovation Office, Health Research Office, and the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Office.



Terri Matio is the Acting Deputy Secretary for Administration. She oversees the Bureaus of: Administrative and Financial Services; Health Statistics and Registries; Human Resources; and Informatics and Information Technology.



Dr. Loren Robinson is the Deputy Secretary for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. She oversees the Bureaus of: Communicable Diseases; Family Health; Health Promotion and Risk Reduction; and WIC, as well as the Health Equity Office.



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DOH INITIATIVES



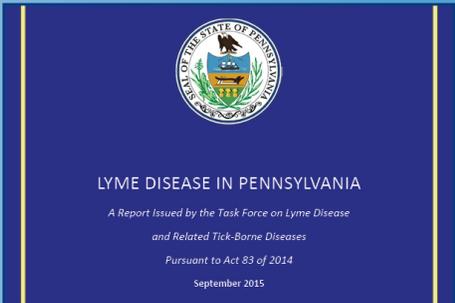
Naloxone

Nearly 2,500 Pennsylvanians died from a drug overdose in 2014. One of the ways the commonwealth is fighting back against the **opioid epidemic** in Pennsylvania is to make the lifesaving drug naloxone more readily available. Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine signed two standing orders making naloxone, a medication that safely reverses the effects of an opioid overdose, available initially to all first responders and, later, to all Pennsylvanians.



“Stopping the Flu Starts with YOU” Campaign

This campaign highlights the important measures everyone should take to ensure they don’t get or spread the flu, including getting a yearly flu vaccine and other preventive measures. Visit: www.flufreepa.com for more information and to download campaign materials such as posters, infographics, and memes in both English and Spanish.



ABC-MAP

Making sure prescription drugs are not being overprescribed is a necessary first step in curtailing drug addiction and also curbing the supply of excess drugs that can be used illegally. Pennsylvania’s **ABC-MAP** program is an expansion of the state’s pre-existing prescription drug monitoring program. This program will also aid regulatory and law enforcement agencies in detecting and preventing fraud and abuse.

Lyme Disease in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania’s statewide Task Force on Lyme Disease and Related Tick-Borne Diseases recently released a first-of-its-kind **report** that recommended ways to improve education, prevention and surveillance in the commonwealth. Pennsylvania has led the nation in reported Lyme disease cases for the past five years.



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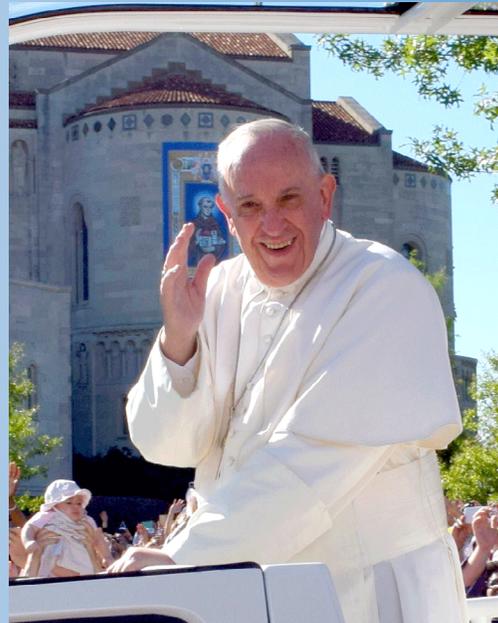


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DOH EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Thanks to all Pennsylvania Department of Health employees involved in the 2015 Papal visit to Philadelphia!



Coming in 2016 – DOH “Employee of the Month!”



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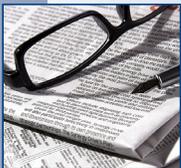
Changes Proposed to Pennsylvania’s School Immunization Requirements

The Departments of Health and Education announced plans to revise the immunization regulations for school children in Pennsylvania to ensure all students are better protected from illness. Current state regulations require Pennsylvania children to get immunized against certain diseases in order to attend school. These requirements presently include a provisional period, which allows students who have received the first dose of a multi-dose vaccine to attend school for up to eight months while they complete all of the required immunizations. The proposed changes will require students to receive their final dose or, if the medical schedule does not allow, a medical certificate that includes a plan for completing the multi-dose immunization within the first five school days. The proposal also changes some of the state’s vaccination requirements, such as requiring a pertussis vaccine and a dose of meningococcal vaccine for students before entering 12th grade. Read more [here](#).



Expedited Ordering Process in Place for Veterans’ Vital Records

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has updated online ordering through the Division of Vital Records to allow active military personnel, veterans and their eligible family members to order veterans’ birth and death certificates online at a significantly reduced cost. Active military members and veterans may apply using www.vitalchek.com and have the \$20 birth certificate fee waived. This innovative idea allows Pennsylvania-born military personnel stationed throughout the country and the world to order and receive the same processing time as those who are stateside. The waiver also applies to veterans and their spouses if requesting the death certificate of their spouse. To visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health website and order birth or death certificates, [click here](#). If you have any questions about online ordering, please call 866-712-8238.



Department of Health News from December

- **Agriculture Department warns consumers to discard raw milk purchased at northeastern Pennsylvania dairy – 12/30/2015**
- **PA Department of Drug and Alcohol programs, Department of Health respond to CDC report on record number of nationwide overdose deaths in 2014 – 12/23/2015**
- **Department of Health issues statement on CDC report on infection cluster at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center – 12/22/2015**
- **Pennsylvania’s Physician General highlights “Stopping the Flu Starts With YOU” campaign during visit to Harrisburg vaccine clinic – 12/15/2015**
- **Department of Health provides grants for community-based primary care health centers – 12/09/2015**
- **Department of Health offers low or no-cost flu vaccine for eligible Pennsylvanians – 12/07/2015**



Fun Health Facts

In Greek mythology, the Rod of Asclepius is a serpent-entwined rod wielded by the Greek god Asclepius, a deity associated with healing and medicine. The symbol has continued to be used in modern times, where it is associated with medicine and health care.



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