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National Health Observances

April

Alcohol Awareness Month

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

National Donate Life Month

National Minority Health Month

Department of Health Accreditation



The department achieved national public health accreditation on March 21, demonstrating its continued commitment to protecting and improving the health and safety of Pennsylvanians.

“This is a very important milestone in our continued efforts to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent injury and disease and to assure the safe delivery of quality health care to Pennsylvanians,” Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine said. “Each day, we are working to address health issues in a wide range of areas, including ensuring Pennsylvania has healthy moms and healthy kids, protecting seniors in nursing homes and addressing the opioid crisis. We are committed to working toward a healthy Pennsylvania.”

The department began preparing for accreditation several years ago. Before submitting its application, the department completed several crucial steps, including finalizing the state’s health improvement plan and its organizational strategic plan, addressing challenges identified in a self-assessment and strategy maps for health reform and health equity.

School Immunizations Update

DOH is responsible for making decisions regarding which immunizations are required for school-aged children to protect them and the public’s health. In March 2017, the **school immunization requirements** were revised to further protect commonwealth residents. The provisional period was changed, decreasing it from eight months to five days. The new requirement mandates that a child must have all single-dose vaccines or have at least one dose in the case of a multi-dose vaccine upon entering school or they risk being excluded. In comparing school years 2016-2017 to 2017-2018, a 5.9 percent decrease was noted in provisional status for kindergarten and an 11 percent decrease in seventh grade. Of 3,659 schools reporting in 2016-2017 with 256,063 students enrolled, and 3,717 schools reporting in 2017-2018 with 259,649 students, the provisional enrollment numbers decreased from 9,793 to 2,641 in kindergarten and 18,694 to 3,890 in seventh grade respectively.

Opioid Disaster Declaration

On March 20, Governor Wolf signed the sixth renewal of his 90-day opioid disaster declaration. Since signing the initial opioid disaster declaration on January 10, 2018, the following have been achieved:

Sexual Assault
Awareness and
Prevention Month

STI Awareness
Month

15th National
Prescription Drug
Take Back Day

22nd-26th Every Kid
Healthy™ Week

May

Mental Health
Month

National Teen
Pregnancy
Prevention Month

Preeclampsia
Awareness Month

9th Bike to School Day

12th 18th National
Women's Health
Week

June

Men's Health Month

National Safety
Month

Events

Survivor Led Symposium

April 11 and 12
Radnor PA

Warm Hand-Off Regional Summits

April 11
Wilkes-Barre PA
April 16
Williamsport PA
April 17
Erie PA

- emergency medical service providers have administered 18,560 doses of naloxone, leaving behind 657 doses;
- hospitals and birthing centers have reported 2,359 cases of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) in newborns, following adding NAS to reporting requirements in 2018, thereby improving data collection;
- more than 1,500 birth certificate fees have been waived for patients to get into treatment;
- more than 19,300 residents have been admitted to emergency rooms because of a suspected opioid or heroin overdose;
- the Get Help Now hotline (800-662-HELP), which started in November 2016, has received more than 19,500 calls looking for information or to connect someone with a local treatment provider; and
- more than 258 tons of drugs were collected and destroyed by law enforcement from the more than 800 drug take-back boxes across the commonwealth.

Data on opioid overdose prevention, rescue and treatment can be tracked at the Pennsylvania [opioid data dashboard](#).

Warm Handoff

Warm hand-off is the seamless transfer of care of an opioid overdose survivor (almost always after a naloxone dose) from emergency care to treatment. While the concept may sound simple, there are several challenges (insurance, transportation, stigma, etc.) to making that happen. Guidelines, protocols and resources can be found at the [warm hand-off link](#). The departments of Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs partnered to execute **eight regional summits** across Pennsylvania to bring together stakeholders for a half-day of learning, collaboration and networking.

Addressing Opioid Addiction

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recently released the publication [Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Save Lives](#). The publication identifies barriers to the use of medications for opioid use disorder, including:

- High levels of misunderstanding and stigma toward drug addiction, individuals with opioid use disorder, and the medications to treat it;
- Inadequate education of the professionals responsible for working with people with opioid use disorder, including treatment providers, law enforcement and other criminal justice personnel;
- Current regulations around methadone and buprenorphine, such as waiver policies, patient limits, restrictions on settings where medications are available, and other policies that are not supported by evidence or employed for other medical disorders; and
- The fragmented system of care for people with opioid use disorder and current financing and payment policies.

Latino Health Summit

April 17 and 18
2019 in York PA

Pennsylvania Data User Conference

May 9
Middletown PA

Pennsylvania Health Literacy Coalition Meeting

May 14 and 15
Harrisburg PA

Pa. Coalition for Oral Health spring stakeholder meetings – two choices

May 15
Danville PA
May 17
Collegeville PA

Mass Casualty Conference

May 16
Philadelphia PA

Third Annual Pennsylvania LGBTQA Health Conference

June 18 and 19
Cranberry Township, PA

Human Trafficking Summit

June 26 and 27
State College PA

2019 Pediatric Conference

May 4 and 5
Grantville, PA

Substance Use Disorder Loan Repayment Program

The substance use disorder loan repayment program offers educational loan repayment to practitioners who provide behavioral health care and treatment for substance use disorder and opioid addiction in designated **Health Professional Shortage Areas** and designated high substance use counties. The program aims to increase access to behavioral health care services associated with opioid use in underserved and high-use communities and improve recruitment and retention of health practitioners in these communities. Loan repayment is provided for practitioners in exchange for two years of past service and a commitment to two additional years of full-time or half-time service at an approved practice site.

- Physicians and psychiatrists can receive up to \$100,000 of educational loan repayment for a full-time service commitment and/or up to \$50,000 of educational loan repayment for a half-time service commitment.
- Certified alcohol and drug counselors, certified advanced alcohol and drug counselors, physician assistants, certified registered nurse practitioners, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed social workers and licensed professional counselors can receive up to \$60,000 of educational loan repayment for a full-time service commitment and/or up to \$30,000 of educational loan repayment for a half-time service commitment.

For more information contact the Bureau of Health Planning at (717) 772-5298 or e-mail RA-DHSUDLRP@pa.gov.

County Health Rankings

The University of Wisconsin’s Population Health Institute’s County Health Rankings & Roadmaps recently released its annual report ranking the health of nearly every county in the nation. It includes actionable data for each county, evidence, guidance and stories for communities to make it easier for people to be healthy in their neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. The reports illustrate what we know when it comes to keeping people healthy or making them sick and shows what we can do to create healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. Among the findings in the **2019 Pennsylvania report** are:

Key factor	Healthiest Pa. county	Least healthy Pa. county
People reporting fair or poor health	13%	20%
Low birthweight babies	5%	11%
Children in poverty	7%	34%
Key factor	White	Black
People reporting fair or poor health	14%	25%
Low birthweight babies	7%	13%
Children in poverty	12%	36%

Speaking Up for Community Water Fluoridation

July 10

Pittsburgh PA

July 10

Lancaster PA

July 11

Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers Annual Conference

Oct. 15 through 17

Lancaster PA

Disclaimer

The information provided in this newsletter is intended to be of general information to Pennsylvania's HIPP partnerships. It is not intended as an endorsement or recommendation of any specific process, service, product, company, or funding source outside of the Department of Health auspices. Further examination and research of information is recommended.

WalkWorks

WalkWorks is a physical activity program that promotes community walking routes and walking groups. It identifies and promotes safe walking routes, offers guided walking groups, helps schools develop walk-to-school programs and helps communities develop local policies for safe walking routes.



Lunchtime **webinars** are being conducted to help improve walking, bicycling and driving routes in communities. Previous webinars are archived on the WalkWorks webpage linked above. **Applications** for new WalkWorks programs are being accepted and are due on April 12.

State Data Center

The **Pennsylvania State Data Center** is Pennsylvania's official source of population and economic statistics. The 2019 Pennsylvania Data User **Conference** will be held at Penn State Harrisburg on May 9, 2019.

The data center can help with population projections that can be used for planning, policy evaluation, and program management decisions. Grant writers may find reports useful to plan for needs state-wide and by county. Data includes population projections by five-year age cohorts and gender through 2040. The state and county population projection report can be purchased at their **website**.

Communities in Action



Blue Zones Project: The City of Corry in Erie County has embarked on a community health improvement project. Partnering with the Erie County Department of Health and with funding support from Highmark Health, LECOM Health Corry Memorial Hospital and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the **Corry Blue Zones Project** is bringing together worksites, schools, restaurants, faith-based organizations, grocery stores, local government and individuals to develop programs so people can make healthier choices by encouraging changes in the community that allow healthier options. The original **Blue Zones** were identified as places where people live an average of 10 years longer. Their lifestyles were studied and principles for healthier lives were identified. These include moving naturally, having a purpose, relieving stress, eating mindfully (more fruits and vegetables), family first, belonging to a social group and surrounding oneself with positive people. The project is moving forward as the community identifies and adopts ways to achieve healthier lifestyles that will result in measurable health improvements.

Contact Us

Bureau of Health
Planning

Pennsylvania
Department of Health

Room 1031, Health and
Welfare Building

625 Forster St.

Harrisburg, PA, 17120

717-772-5298

Please send comments,
articles and
subscription requests
to:

RA-DHHIPP@pa.gov

Grant Opportunities

- **Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) grants:** PSN grants are distributed by the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency](#) and are currently available for the Middle & Western districts. Projects are intended to foster safer neighborhoods through a sustained reduction in violent crime, including, but not limited to, addressing criminal gangs and the felonious possession and use of firearms. Applications are due April 15.
- **Middle School Opioid Misuse Prevention grants:** The Opioid Misuse Prevention Project Cohort 2 grants are available from the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency](#). Grants of \$275,000 with four-year renewals are available for organizations to participate in a pilot program that will use evidence-based approaches addressing youth engagement in substance use and other problem behaviors. Selected applicants will form a partnership between the Single County Authority, the local school district, local non-profit service delivery agencies, and the community at large to help address the risk factors that can lead youth into trouble and to build protective factors that can help buffer them from those risks. Applications are due April 16.
- **Children's Health grant:** The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) is accepting applications for fiscal year 2019 for Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health Grant Program. Includes awards of \$800,000. This program promotes the wellness of young children, from birth to 8 years old, by addressing the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioral aspects of their development. Applications are due April 19.
- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls grants:** The [NoVo Foundation](#) is offering \$600,000 grants, renewable for three years, for its Life Story: Moments of Change program for ending the vulnerability of girls and women to all forms of exploitation and violence. Applications are due April 19.
- **Small Health Care Provider QI Grant:** The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) is offering a \$200,000 grant renewable for three years to support planning and implementation of quality improvement activities for rural primary care providers or providers of health care services, such as a critical access hospital or a rural health clinic, serving rural residents. Applications are due April 22.
- **Minority Aids Initiative:** The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) is accepting applications for the Substance Use Disorder Treatment for Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations at High Risk for HIV/AIDS grant. Grants of \$500,000 per year up to five years are available to increase engagement in care for racial and ethnic minority individuals with substance use disorders and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorders who are at risk for

HIV or are HIV positive that receive HIV services/treatment. Applications are due April 22.

- **Food Bank Evaluation and Grant Program:** The [Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#) is offering five grants totaling \$100,000 and technical assistance valued at approximately \$25,000. This program will fund eligible food banks working to support innovative and dynamic programming to improve the health and dietary quality of emergency food recipients. Applications are due April 26.
- **Nursing-Driven Interventions grant:** The [Hillman Emergent Innovation Program](#) provides \$50,000, one-year grants to accelerate the development of nursing-driven interventions targeting the needs of vulnerable populations, including the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ people, people experiencing homelessness, rural populations and others. Applications are due April 29
- **Networks for Oral Health Integration grant:** The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) is offering three Oral Health Integration within Maternal and Child Health grants of more than \$1 million, renewable for five years. The purpose of this program is to improve access to and delivery of comprehensive, quality oral health care for children 0-17 years old. Applications are due April 29.
- **Domestic Violence Shelter grant:** The [Mary Kay Foundation](#) is offering \$20,000 grants to at least one women's domestic violence shelter in every state that applies. Applications are due April 30.
- **Nonprofit Capacity Building grants:** [Berkshire Bank Foundation](#) is offering \$5,000 grants to help non-profit organizations in communities served by Berkshire Bank build their capacity. Berkshire has locations in Montgomery and Bucks Counties. Applications are due April 30.
- **Reproductive Health Program grants:** The [Lalor Foundation](#) offers grants of \$10,000 to \$35,000 for projects that focus on young women who have inadequate access to information regarding sexual and reproductive health, including comprehensive and unbiased information on contraception. Applications are due May 1.
- **Rural Communities Opioid Response Program:** The [Health Resources and Services Administration's](#) (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) will be making approximately 75 awards of up to \$1 million each to rural communities to enhance service delivery for substance use disorder, including opioid use disorder. An [evaluation phase](#) grant will also be available. Applications are due May 6.
- **Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants:** The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) is offering two funding opportunities of \$500,000 for rural distance learning and telemedicine. One is for

traditional services, due May 15, and the other for opioid programs, due April 15.

- **Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award:** The [Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards](#) support projects that encourage active integration of patients, caregivers, clinicians and other healthcare stakeholders as integral members of the patient-centered outcomes research/clinical effectiveness research enterprise. Applications are due May 31.
- **Geriatrics Gerontology Group Respite grants:** Grants from the [Brookdale Foundation](#) of \$10,000 in year one and \$5,000 in year two, are available to agencies interested in establishing a group respite or early memory loss program for elders with dementia. Applications are due May 26.
- **Sterile Syringe Programs grants:** [AIDS United](#) is accepting applications for grants of \$5,000 for projects aimed at reducing the spread of HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne pathogens among people who inject drugs and their sexual partners through expanded access to sterile syringes. Applications are due June 14.
- **Free Clinics grant:** The [American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation](#) is accepting applications from new and existing Volunteers in Medicine organizations for \$10,000 to purchase tangible items, such as exam tables, EHR systems, and medical equipment. Applications are due July 15.
- **Pioneering Ideas proposals:** [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) is accepting proposals for its Pioneering Ideas program for projects that seek to explore how cutting-edge ideas and emerging trends could help or hinder progress toward a culture of health. Proposals will be reviewed and RWJF may invite applicants to submit a full proposal for consideration for grants ranging between \$150,000 and \$350,000 over one to three years. Proposals are due October 15.