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## Department of Health Programs

### National Folic Acid Awareness Week



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 3,000 pregnancies nationwide are affected by neural tube defects and other congenital anomalies annually. Folic acid supplementation has been associated with a 36 percent decrease in brain and spinal cord birth defects. Since approximately 50 percent of

pregnancies are unplanned, folic acid use in the interconception period reduces the risk of neural tube defects. In collaboration with the IMPLICIT Network, a family medicine health collaborative, the department has been working to expand the use of the IMPLICIT Interconception Care (ICC) model of care during well-child visits (WCVs) at 12 sites in Pennsylvania. ICC screenings identify and provide interventions for maternal behavior risks including folic acid use. Since 2016, almost half of women seen at Network WCVs have screened positive for not using folic acid, and over half of these women began taking folic acid as a result of intervention. For information contact [sklucar@pa.gov](mailto:sklucar@pa.gov).

### February is American Heart Month: Let's Take Care of Our Hearts Together

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and in Pennsylvania. In 2018, an average of 90 people died per day in [Pennsylvania](#) due to heart disease. Studies show that if you join forces with people at home, at work, in your community, or online, you have a better chance of staying motivated. Gather your friends and family and make a commitment to your heart health together.



To get started, move more, eat healthy foods, aim for a healthy weight, quit smoking, reduce stress and improve sleep, and know your numbers.

## National Health Observances

### February

American Heart Month

National Children's Dental Health Month

African Heritage and Health Week (February 1 – 7)

### March

National Nutrition Month

### April

National Minority Health Month

Find details on how to take small steps towards any of these goals here: [Taking Care of our Hearts, Together.](#)

For more details on heart health, please visit [www.hearttruth.gov](http://www.hearttruth.gov), and at the Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction contact [kfaley@pa.gov](mailto:kfaley@pa.gov).

## Environmental Health Capacity

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) environmental health team recently received funding from CDC to strengthen its environmental health capacity (EHC) to address environmental public health issues. A major component of the grant is to make environmental health data publicly accessible. As part of the five-year program, DOH will create an environmental health map for public use and address issues including radon, harmful algal blooms and harmful contaminants in private well water, and identify vulnerabilities among families with young children. By partnering with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Environmental Justice, Women for a Healthy Environment and other stakeholders, the program will apply an environmental justice lens to all program activities and their development. DOH will be asking the Healthy Pennsylvania Partnership for feedback on grant activities. Information about the program and the other state and local health departments that are participating is on CDC's website. For information contact [c-shasanal@pa.gov](mailto:c-shasanal@pa.gov).



## Clean Hands Save Lives



The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible. Frequently sharing this message with the public is intended to change behavior and prioritize this basic practice. If soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. When washing, lather soap on your hands, rub your

hands together, get the soap between your fingers, and clean underneath your nails to ensure you reach any germs that may be hiding.

To prevent the spread of germs during the COVID-19 pandemic and flu season, you should wash your hands before and after:

- Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth;
- Touching your mask;
- Eating or cooking;
- Entering and leaving any public place; and

## Events

2021

Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association Annual Conference, September 28-October 1, Hershey

Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers (PACHC) 2021 Annual Conference & Clinical Summit, October 12-14, Lancaster

American Planning Association – Pa. Chapter, October 17-19, 2021, Pittsburgh, call for presenters

- Touching an item, animal or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens.

## COVID Alert PA App



The COVID Alert PA app will help reduce the spread of infection by providing users with exposure alerts while maintaining their privacy. It is available at no cost on the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#).

The app is available for all aged 13 and older, however those 13 to 17 will need [parental permission](#) to download this helpful tool. All are encouraged to use this free [COVID Alert PA app](#) to help slow the spread of COVID-19. It is

available in English, Spanish, German, and Traditional Chinese and is currently compatible with 17 other states including Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Virginia, Wyoming, and Washington.

The app protects the users' privacy by not using GPS, location services, or any movement or geographical information. It does not collect, transmit, or store your personal information and is completely anonymous.

For any questions call 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).

## Smoking and Youth

The state Tobacco Prevention Program seeks to reduce smoking among residents, and youth are at particular risk of beginning to smoke if they use e-cigarettes. A recent study published in [Pediatrics](#) found that e-cigarette use is associated with increased odds of cigarette smoking among adolescents who had no previous smoking intention. E-cigarette use may create intention to smoke and/or nicotine use disorder that lead to onset of cigarette smoking.



Cigarette smoking is a leading preventable cause of morbidity and mortality. With e-cigarette use associated with higher risk of cigarette smoking among adolescents who had no previous smoking intention, strategies to prevent youth from starting to use e-cigarettes can prevent adolescents from progressing to cigarette smoking.

For more information contact [wsunday@pa.gov](mailto:wsunday@pa.gov).

## 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.

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## Health Data

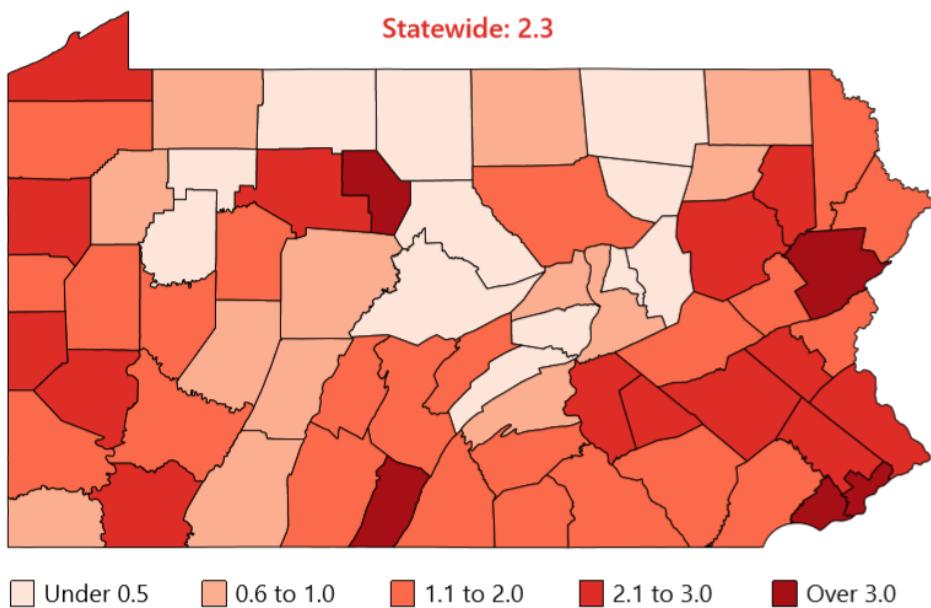
### Unemployment in Pennsylvania

COVID-19 has caused increased unemployment in the workforce during the pandemic. Employment impacts health status, mental health and health insurance status. The [Pennsylvania State Data Center](#) has prepared a summary map of the unemployment rate change in the state. Impacts include a lower life expectancy, lower future wages, depression, loss of friends, and increased crime. During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic from March to September 2020, the counties with the greatest unemployment rate change are Cameron, Delaware, Fulton, Monroe, and Philadelphia.

For more data briefs, visit the Pennsylvania State Data Center website. Recent briefs published include a Pennsylvania summary of the recently released 2015-2019 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates and a brochure of Pennsylvania facts for 2020 including population, economics, housing, health insurance, education, and other statistics.

### Unemployment Rate Change

in percentage points by county, March 2020 to September 2020



Prepared by  
**PASDC**

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA)  
Department of Labor & Industry

## Health Partners

### Children's Dental Health Month

As we celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month in February, the PA Coalition for Oral Health (PCOH) reminds us that dental care is a family affair. Parents should lead by example in teaching healthy habits by brushing and flossing daily and making good food and beverage choices. This includes drinking only tap water between meals and offering plain milk at mealtimes. It is important to encourage parents and children to visit the dentist regularly to stay healthy; visits should begin around a child's first birthday.



PCOH works to establish a dental home for all children in Pennsylvania through facilitation of school sealant programs, integration of oral health in medical homes, and utilizing newer technologies to expand teledentistry efforts. Our goal is to increase available oral health providers and improve access to quality dental care for residents. To learn more, call (724) 972-7242 or visit the PCOH [website](#).

### 2020 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment



The [LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment](#) was recently published by the Research & Evaluation Group at Public Health Management Corporation and Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center. The project identified issues around depression and mental health, provider expertise,

barriers to care, healthy living, tobacco use, discrimination, food access, homelessness, violence, and finances.

The assessment produced 10 recommendations:

- Support connections to LGBTQ-competent providers;
- Support initiatives that address social determinants of health;
- Identify community-wide mental health supports;
- Support chronic disease prevention;
- Promote tobacco cessation opportunities;
- Encourage health screening discussions and health education;
- Bolster community supports for black, indigenous, and people of color;
- Prioritize the health needs of transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, and intersex individuals;
- Continue and enhance data collection; and

- Partner with LGBT community-based organizations.

The dissemination of the findings is being coordinated by the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center through [Christina@bradburysullivancenter.org](mailto:Christina@bradburysullivancenter.org).

## Advisory Committee on Minority Health



The Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is seeking nominations of qualified candidates to be considered for appointment as a member of the [Advisory Committee on Minority Health](#). The Committee provides advice to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health. They develop goals and specific program activities for improving the health and the quality of health care minorities receive. An objective is to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities consistent with the Public Health Service Act. Nominations for membership on the Committee [must be received](#) no later than March 4, 2021.

## Grant Opportunities

- **Primary care training and enhancement-community prevention and maternal health grants:** The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) is offering 26 grants of up to \$600,000 per year for five years. The opportunity is for programs that will increase the number of primary care physicians trained in public health and general preventive medicine. There are additional opportunities for those trained in enhanced obstetrical care to increase maternal health care expertise, and the number of primary care physicians trained in enhanced obstetric care. Rural and/or underserved areas are targeted. Eligible applicants include hospitals, medical schools and nonprofit organizations. Applications are due by February 22, 2021.
- **2020 Substance Abuse Education:** The [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency](#) is providing funding in several categories for youth and adults. Grants are available to nonprofit organizations to reduce substance use or provide resources to assist families in accessing services. Projects in three categories to educate youth, adults, and employers with budgets up to \$150,000 and \$275,000 will be considered. Applications are due by Wednesday, February 24, 2021.
- **Child mental health grants:** Grants of \$50,000 to \$125,000 per year for three years to address loneliness, anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention in students are available from [Cigna](#). Collaborations between nonprofit organizations and schools are encouraged to apply. Applications are due by February 26, 2021.

- **Rural communities opioid response program grants:** The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) is providing funding to nonprofit or for-profit organizations of up to \$1 million for programs to reduce the morbidity and mortality of substance use disorder. The grant includes programs for opioid use disorder in high risk rural communities. Applications are due by March 12, 2021.
- **Ryan White HIV/AIDS dental reimbursement program:** The [Health Resources & Services Administration](#) is providing 56 grants to dental education institutions for a total of \$9 million to fund improved access to oral health care services for low income, uninsured, and underserved people with HIV. Applications are due by March 12, 2021.
- **Pediatric primary care challenge:** The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) is offering challenges of \$10,000 to 50 phase 1 winners and \$25,000 to 20 phase 2 winners. The scope of the competition is to increase access to and utilization of well-child visits and/or immunizations services within primary care settings. Pediatricians, health educators, schools, and health centers are eligible. Applications are due by March 15, 2021.
- **Family medicine residency award:** Two awards from the [American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation](#) totaling \$16,500 will be given to a first- and second-year family medicine residents to address health disparities in local communities. The free clinic that sponsors the project will receive \$5,000 of the award. Applications are due by March 15, 2021.
- **Nutrition incentive program grants:** The [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) is providing grants of \$100,000 for pilot projects, \$500,000 for standard projects, and greater than \$500,000 for large projects. Projects funded will increase consumption of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Nonprofit and government agencies are eligible. Applications are due by March 16, 2021.
- **Community garden grants:** [Nature's Path Foods](#) is offering 21 garden projects \$5,000 each. The awards are for gardens in nonprofit community gardens growing organic food and serving the community. Entries are due by March 24, 2021.
- **Hillman Innovations in Care grants:** The [Rita & Alex Hillman Foundation](#) is offering two grants of up to \$600,000 for nursing-driven models of care that address racism and its impact on health. Community health clinics are encouraged to apply. A letter of interested is due by March 30, 2021.

- **Mental health visionary grants:** The [American Psychological Foundation](#) is offering grants of \$20,000 to graduate students or early career researchers affiliated with nonprofit, educational, or government organizations. Priority projects include applying psychology to at-risk vulnerable populations to prevent violence, eliminating stigma, and addressing racism, among others. Applications are due by April 1, 2021.
- **Local drug crisis grants:** The [Department of Health and Human Services](#) is providing funding for projects to community coalitions addressing opioid, methamphetamine, and/or prescription drug use/misuse by local youth. A total of 60 awards of \$50,000 will be made to nonprofit, government, faith-based, and educational organizations for up to five years. Applications are due by April 1, 2021.
- **Children exposed to violence grants:** The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) is providing seven grants of \$1,000,000 for projects to assist families and communities to help children exposed to violence. One training and technical assistance grant of \$500,000 is also available. Eligible organizations include governments, higher education, school districts, and nonprofits. Applications are due by April 5, 2021.
- **Community food project grants:** The [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) is providing funding to nonprofit organizations for planning projects and community food projects to help reduce food insecurity. Planning grants are available up to \$35,000 for three years. Community project funding is for up to \$125,000 for one year and up to \$400,000 over four years. Applications are due by May 4, 2021.
- **Home Depot community impact grants:** Non-profit organizations are eligible for up to \$5,000 in gift cards to obtain tools, materials, and services from [Home Depot](#) for projects that support improving housing for veterans, vulnerable, and underserved populations. Applications are due by December 31, 2021.
- **Birth center accreditation support grants:** The [American Association of Birth Centers](#) will assist birth center applicants with fees for accreditation by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers. Birth centers should be in a rural or low-income area, have gross revenues of less than \$100,000, and serve low income women and/or women on Medical Assistance. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.