

The Latest News From MCDPH - February 2020

Dear Colleagues;

Communities across the nation are facing critical public health issues, including the threat of a global disease outbreak, rising flu rates and important ballot questions.

The World Health Organization has declared China's outbreak of the novel respiratory disease coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. While there have been a few imported cases, it is important to know that COVID-19 is NOT currently spreading in the United States. However, the nation's healthcare and public health communities are prepared to respond to COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the impact of this year's flu continues to remain on the rise in the U.S. The federal CDC estimates that there have been at least 26 million flu illnesses, 250,000 hospitalizations and 14,000 deaths from flu so far this season. Getting the flu vaccine continues to be the first and most important step in protecting our communities against influenza.

In addition to tracking disease outbreaks, many states are facing important public health policy questions on upcoming state ballots. For example, in Maine, there is Question 1: Religious and Philosophical Vaccination Exceptions Referendum. Other states have upcoming ballot measures that address tobacco and e-cigarette measures, as well as marijuana possession and use.

It's important for all of us to stay on top of public health activity, so we can make informed decisions and help keep our communities safe, healthy, and successful. The **National CDC** is a great source for up-to-date information about coronavirus and flu outbreaks. For state-based public health topics, such as ballot measures, connect with your state's public health department and public health association. [Click here](#) to locate your state's health department website. And you can locate your state's public health association [here](#).

As always, we are here to help and we hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter.

Best Regards,
Danielle Louder & Elizabeth Foley
Co-Directors, MCD Public Health

February is Heart Health Month: Join the #OurHearts Movement

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. About 90 percent of middle-aged people and more than 74 percent of young adults have one or more risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, or being a smoker or overweight. Having multiple risk factors increases your risk for heart disease.



Feeling connected with others and having positive, close relationships benefit our overall health, including our blood pressure and weight. Having people in our lives who motivate and care for us helps, as do feelings of closeness and companionship.

Follow these heart healthy lifestyle tips with your friends, family, coworkers, and others in your community and you'll all be heart healthier for it:

- Be more physically active.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a nutritious diet.
- Quit smoking.
- Reduce your stress.
- Get enough quality sleep.
- Track your heart health stats.

You don't have to make big changes all at once. Small steps will get you where you want to go. [Read more](#)

Remember: MCDPH offers numerous online trainings that address heart disease risk factors, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol. Available nationally, healthcare workers can earn CNEs or CMEs upon completion.

Blood Pressure Training Program

Earn up to 3.5 continuing education credits.

Cholesterol Online Training

Earn 1 continuing education credit.



Other News

MCDPH's own Rachel Sukeforth helps launch Maine's Radon Data Tool

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now provides an [online data tool](#) that summarizes radon test results at the town, county, and state levels, as well as eight years of household survey data about testing, levels above normal, and whether those levels were fixed. Project Assistant within ME CDC's Radon Program, Rachel Sukeforth, helped to get more towns visible on this map by adding approximately 70,000 new data points.

An infographic titled "Protect Your Family from Radon". It features a grid of 15 house icons, with 1 icon highlighted in orange to represent "1 out of 15 homes have high radon levels". Text on the right states: "Radon is a gas that you can't see, smell, or taste — but it can be dangerous. It's the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S." At the bottom, it says "Learn more by calling the National Radon Hotline: 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800-767-7236)" and "Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency". Logos for the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the CDC are also present.

Radon is naturally-occurring colorless, tasteless, odorless gas and is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second most common cause of lung cancer overall. People are exposed to radon by breathing in air that seeps into buildings through cracks and holes in foundation. Rachel's work helps to demonstrate that, while radon is found everywhere in Maine, there are communities where more than 50 percent of households have elevated levels of radon. Locating these hotspots helps target resources and information to the communities most affected.

Homeowners can test for exposure with do-it-yourself kits from local laboratories and hardware stores. Costing between \$30 and \$40, they are a simple way to find out if your home is exposing you to radon. [Read more](#)

Meet Our Team

Dara Fruchter - Maine CDC



Dara is the Project Manager for infant and maternal substance use prevention coordination at the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. For almost 10 years Dara volunteered as a cuddler for substance exposed newborns. Dara's volunteer work led to collaboration with doctors in Boston to implement best care practices for substance exposed infants along with community outreach and advocacy to improve support for their mothers and families. A graduate of the University of Vermont, Boston University, and the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies at Maine College of Art, Dara's professional background has led to strategic, innovative collaborations between individuals and groups in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

Sarah Elmer - Maine CDC



Sarah is the Project Coordinator for the Maine CDC, Suicide Prevention NSSP Project. Before joining MCD, Sarah worked for Mental Health America of the Mid-South as the Regional Director for the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network. In addition to Sarah's work experience, she is also one of the co-founders of the Natchez Trace Bridge Barrier Coalition (NTBBC). Sarah and Trish Merleo co-founded the NTBBC in September of 2018. In 2015, Sarah lost her sister to suicide at the Natchez Trace Bridge, and in 2017 lost a friend/colleague to suicide at the bridge. Sarah believes the impact of a great loss was the catalyst for change.

Join Our Team

Domestic Public Health



[Click here](#) to see current opportunities.

International Public Health



[Click here](#) to see current opportunities.

Partner Events

Vote for MCD International to be recognized at the World Vaccine Congress - Voting deadline: February 21, 2020 - Please consider voting for i-PfSPZ-C in the Best Clinical

Trial Network Award category. This would be another big honor for MCD, Sanaria and its partners. For more information, [click here](#).

Recovery in Maine: Short Films and Community Discussion - February 24, 2020 - Portland, ME. Special guest: Governor Janet Mills. For more information, [click here](#).

Beyond the Basics in Suicide Prevention Annual Conference - April 10, 2020 - Augusta, ME. For more information, [click here](#).

National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) Annual Conference - May 19-21, 2020 - New Orleans, LA. For more information, [click here](#).

Northeast Regional Telehealth Conference - June 8-9, 2020 - DoubleTree by Hilton, Manchester, NH. [Registration and Sponsorship Opportunities now open!](#)

American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting - October 24-28, 2020 - San Francisco, CA. For more information, [click here](#).

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