



Health Commissioner / Medical Director Report Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County

November 4, 2015

This report provides a monthly update for the Board of Health, staff and the community. Our key activities are listed for the seven pillars that support our vision for improving the health of our community.

- Prevent the spread of disease
- Protect against health threats
- Promote healthy behaviors
- Reach out to vulnerable populations
- Mobilize community action through partnerships
- Prepare for and respond to public health emergencies
- Serve as a public health information resource

Special items

Quality Improvement (QI)

Our first agency QI Plan was finalized on October 8 and can be found on our website and the Portal. The QI Plan outlines how we will establish a culture of continuous quality improvement and includes goals and objectives so that we can track our progress. To prepare for implementing the QI Plan, our employees completed online foundational QI training. This will also be a requirement for all new employees.

On October 19, contractors from Ohio State University, College of Public Health held a one-day QI training for our Executive Team and our staff who contributed to the development of our plan. The session was informative, interactive, and well received. Attendees worked through a QI project, which allowed them to apply what they learned in their online training. Our intention is to offer this workshop again to equip staff with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to engage in formal QI projects.

Over the last two weeks, several of our QI Plan Writing Team members have made presentations to staff to provide an overview of the QI Plan and outline how everyone can participate. Our next steps include hiring a QI Coordinator and forming a Quality Council. We intend to have all staff working on some type of a QI project in the upcoming year. Special thanks to our QI Plan Writing Team members for their efforts:

Kathy Blossom	Accreditation Coordinator
Paul Clark	Supervisor, Purchasing / Facilities
Jeff Cooper	Health Commissioner
Becky Miller	Secretary to the Division Director
Eileen Moran	Unit Supervisor, RAPCA
Tara Owensby	Office Support Specialist

Kelly Scranton Laboratory Technician
Matt Tyler Registered Sanitarian
Jackie Williams Interim Supervisor, Vital Statistics

Public Health Receives “Clean” Audit Report

The Ohio Auditor of State’s office has issued its final report on the financial audit of Public Health for calendar year 2014. Public Health received an *unmodified* report, which means the auditors found no material errors in our financial statements or weaknesses in our internal procedures. Thanks to our dedicated staff members in Accounting, Purchasing, and our grant-funded programs, we have consistently received clean audit reports. The auditors also complimented our staff for their assistance in responding to questions and requests for documentation.

PHDMC Employee Receives State Award

On October 16, Public Health’s Healthy Lifestyles Supervisor, Bruce Barcelo, received the Outstanding Contributions to Health Education Award from the Ohio Society for Public Health Education. Criteria for nomination include community and professional organization leadership, health-related service, significant contributions to policy, systems or environmental change, involvement in health education projects and contributions that have received area or state recognition. Congratulations Bruce!

Prevent the spread of diseases

Local Investigations

The increase in Pertussis cases continued in October; there were 10 probable / confirmed cases in children ages 2 months to 16 years old. There were no school or daycare links between cases. Reported cases are not classified as confirmed until the cough has been present for 14 days. Close contacts were appropriately treated.

There were multiple reports of enteric illness during the month, including Campylobacter (4 cases), Shigella (2 cases), E coli/STEC (2 cases), and one case each of Giardia, Salmonella and Vibrio. The only links were brother / sister; there were no sensitive occupations involved.

Protect against health threats

Reducing Ozone Pollution in the Air

On October 1 the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lowered the amount of ozone pollution allowed in the air from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb. The new level will be more protective of public health, especially for at-risk groups of people including children, older adults, anyone who has lung diseases such as asthma, and people who are active and work outdoors. This action will also improve the health of the trees and plants.

Ozone pollution is formed in the air on warm sunny days when emissions from cars, trucks, power plants, and factories mix. High ozone pollution in the air can cause chest pain, coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath in even healthy people.

Our Regional Air Pollution Control Agency (RAPCA) monitors closely the ozone levels in the air from sites in Clark, Greene, Miami, Montgomery and Preble counties. On a daily basis, our staff uses this information to forecast the air quality in the Miami Valley using the Air Quality Index (AQI) scale developed by EPA. This color-coded tool is used for communicating the expected air quality to the public. When unsafe levels of air pollution are likely to happen and may be harmful for people, we partner with the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) to issue an Air Pollution Advisory (APA).

While an APA is occurring, at-risk people should reduce outside exercise and activities. Everyone can help avoid making the air quality worse during an APA by waiting until after 6 p.m. to refill automobile gas tanks and to mow lawns, and by using electric lawn equipment, carpooling, using public transportation, combining errands to avoid extra driving, and keeping automobiles tuned up.

There are several ways to get up-to-date air quality conditions, including the Air Quality Index: visit our RAPCA website at www.rapca.org, sign up for daily forecasts via email or text messaging at www.enviroflash.info, or download the U.S. EPA AirNow app in the Apple App Store or Google Play store.

Training by ODA

Environmental Health hosted a representative from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) recently. The ODA representative performed an all-day training for field staff. One of the topics covered “Variances” in our licensed retail and food service operations. Staff were instructed on what food processes require a variance, responsibilities of the operator, local and state regulators roles and how to inspect and document compliance. The second session addressed how to ask questions during an inspection. The session also covered what questions should be asked during an inspection to satisfy the requirements of the food code.

Promote healthy behaviors

The Market @Wright Stop Plaza Opens

On October 21, Public Health participated in the grand opening of the *The Market @Wright Stop Plaza*. The Market, a partnership among Montgomery County, Greater Dayton RTA, Public Health and Homefull, makes fresh fruits and vegetables, and wholesome food more available to those who may not have easy access.

For too many Montgomery County residents, especially people living in low-income communities and communities of color, finding fresh produce is hard. Many of our communities lack access to affordable fruits and vegetables and other items that make up a healthy diet. Full service grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and other vendors that sell fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods cannot be found in many neighborhoods.

These areas are considered food deserts: affordable, healthy food is difficult to get, particularly for those without a vehicle. What can be found, very easily, are convenience stores and fast food restaurants that sell high-fat, high-sugar, processed foods. Very few healthy options are available.

Why does it matter? Without access to healthy foods, a nutritious diet and good health are out of reach. A diet that includes healthy, fresh food choices can help prevent obesity in children and adults, and decrease the risk of developing cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Why is opening The Market @ Wright Stop Plaza important? Our health is influenced primarily by our personal behaviors and the environments in which we live, work, learn and play. Now, more Montgomery County residents will have access to healthy food and the opportunity to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Mobilize community action through partnerships

CDC / ODH Epi-Aid Agreement

Based on the significant increase in fentanyl-related drug overdose deaths in Ohio in 2014, the Ohio Department of Health has requested assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC is investigating recent increases in fentanyl-related unintentional overdose deaths in multiple states, and can share important information from the national perspective.

Cuyahoga, Hamilton, Montgomery and Scioto counties have been selected to participate in this joint CDC / ODH investigation. CDC and ODH representatives will be conducting interviews with key stakeholders from each county on the following dates:

October 27	Hamilton County
October 29	Cuyahoga County
November 5	Scioto County
November 6	Montgomery County

The Montgomery County stakeholders to be interviewed include the Coroner, addiction treatment providers, law enforcement, healthcare providers, ADAMHS and Public Health. All interviews will be conducted at the ADAMHS Board location on Monument Avenue.

In addition to the interviews, the investigation will include a review of our epidemiological data, a review of our current system approach to reducing overdose deaths, identification of additional evidence-based strategies to implement for prevention and treatment, recommendations on outreach strategies to reach our at-risk populations, and recommendations on public health messages.

This CDC / ODH investigation is very timely and aligns with our community health improvement plan (CHIP) process. The ultimate goal of the investigation is to enhance our public health system response to reduce unintentional drug overdose deaths in Montgomery County.

Community Health Improvement Plan Update

Public Health is working with many community partners to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Montgomery County. The Center for Public Health Practice in Ohio State University's (OSU) College of Public Health is serving as our project facilitator. The process officially began in July with an initial meeting of the CHIP Steering Committee:

- Public Health
- ADAMHS

- Montgomery County Human Services Planning and Development
- Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association

In August, a diverse group of stakeholders, in conjunction with the Steering Committee participated in a visioning exercise and established a clear vision statement.

Montgomery County: a healthy, safe and thriving community!

The vision statement reflects our guiding principles: we believe that all residents should have equal access to resources that promote health, an environment that promotes health, social support and knowledge about healthy behaviors.

The Steering Committee and Stakeholder Group subsequently selected three health improvement priorities for Montgomery County based on a review of our 2014 Community Health Assessment, the 2014 Montgomery County Community Needs Assessment, as well as the initial health and safety priorities identified in the joint Family and Children First Council's (FCFC) and United Way of the Greater Dayton Area's joint strategic planning process. The three health priorities are chronic disease prevention, birth outcomes and behavioral health.

An online survey was released to the public requesting feedback on possible actions that could be taken to address the three health priorities, and information on resources currently in-place for the three priorities.

Three CHIP Stakeholder workgroups (one for each priority) have been established and are charged with developing work plans that will include goals, strategies, objectives, measures and action steps to address each priority. In October, each workgroup met to conduct a gap analysis and to define our current state (Where we are), potential action steps (How we get there) and our future state (Where we want to be). Workgroup meetings will continue throughout the month of November. The CHIP is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Prepare for and respond to PH emergencies

Ebola Virus Disease

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa continues at decreased levels of activity. The World Health Organization reports that there have been a cumulative total of 28,575 cases (suspect and confirmed) of Ebola virus disease with 11,313 deaths, as of October 25, 2015. The countries with widespread transmission include:

Guinea 3,806 cases (1 new case in past month)
Sierra Leone 14,061 cases (177 new cases in past month)

Liberia (10,672 cases), Nigeria (20 cases), Mali (8 cases), the United States (4 cases), Senegal (1 case), United Kingdom (1 case), Italy (1 case) and Spain (1 case) have been declared Ebola free. Multiple vaccines are in clinical trials, using different strategies. One vaccine, VSV-EBOV, has been shown to be highly effective in a study being conducted in Guinea.

Influenza Activity

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Influenza Division collects and analyzes surveillance data year-round and produces a weekly report on U.S. influenza activity from October through May. During October, overall influenza remained below baseline threshold within the United States. Pneumonia and influenza mortality also remained below the epidemic threshold. For week 41 (ending October 17, 2015), Guam reported widespread influenza activity, no states reported widespread or regional influenza activity, 4 states reported local spread of influenza, 29 states (including Ohio) reported sporadic influenza activity and 17 states reported no influenza activity. Regionally (Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, and Warren counties), there have been 5 cases of influenza A and 1 case of influenza B in October, with 4 influenza-related hospitalizations.

Serve as the public health information resource

Marijuana News Conference

On October 22, Public Health, ADAMHS, The United Way of Greater Dayton and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office participated in a News Conference to discuss the public health, behavioral health, and law enforcement positions on the issue of recreational marijuana in our community.

It is very clear that currently, Montgomery County residents are less healthy than people in many other Ohio counties. A review of our many health data sources reinforces this fact. Equally clear is the fact that Montgomery County already has an existing serious problem with drug abuse. It is so serious that it is one of the top three health improvement priorities for our county. Participants stressed that adding recreational marijuana will only make our problem worse.

Recreational marijuana has a high potential for abuse, and results in negative health and safety consequences for a community as evidenced by the findings in Colorado. Those consequences include increases in the following:

- respiratory and central nervous system problems in users
- workplace absences, accidents and injuries
- accidental poisonings, especially children
- fatal traffic accidents
- behavioral health problems
- learning and memory problems

Of note, marijuana use among Colorado children in grades 8-12 is higher than any other state. Marijuana use among Colorado 8th graders is 350% above the national average. Regarding Montgomery County's current juvenile justice system data, 62% of males and 54% of females report using marijuana. The average age of first use is 13.

Presenters stressed that Montgomery County would see similar increases in health and safety problems associated with recreational marijuana. Too many of our citizens already suffer from drug addiction. With recreational marijuana, we will see more people needing treatment for addiction. All speakers agreed that recreational marijuana use is not a healthy behavior and making it more available in our environment will make our vision of Montgomery County as a healthy, safe and thriving community much more difficult to achieve. As such, Public Health stands firmly opposed to the recreational use of marijuana in our community.

Study Shows Potential Dangers of Dietary Supplements

Dietary supplements send at least 23,000 Americans a year to the emergency room and cause at least 2,000 to be hospitalized, according to a study recently published in The New England Journal of Medicine. The true number of ER visits caused by dietary supplements, including vitamins, minerals, herbs and other products, could be even larger than the study's estimates because many patients do not mention their supplement use when visiting the doctor. The report has led some health advocates to renew calls for stronger regulation of supplements.

In the study, patients showed up at the ER with a range of symptoms, including chest pain and heart palpitations. Many supplement users do not realize the products can cause serious side effects. About 20% of supplement-related ER visits involved children who took the products while unsupervised. Supplements are not required to be packaged in child-resistant containers, with the exception of iron pills. Despite this, iron supplements were still the second-most common cause of an ER trip for children. Excluding these children's visits, about 25% of ER visits were related to weight-loss products, while 10% were related to energy supplements. Among senior citizens, 38% went to the ER after a pill or pill fragment became lodged in the back of the throat. Earlier this year, tests from New York State found that only 21% of store-brand herbal supplements actually contained what was advertised on their labels. In addition, supplement manufacturers do not have to prove that their products are safe before selling them.

The FDA does have the power to force manufacturers to recall products shown to be dangerous or containing illegal ingredients. The key difference between drugs and supplements is that supplements are regulated like a category of food, rather than medication.

Mass Media Interactions

During the past few weeks, we have had numerous contacts with TV, radio, and print.

The following are a few examples:

- Interviews with Chn 7 and DDN about CDC visiting Montgomery County to study fentanyl and heroin overdoses
- News Release on trick or treat safety
- Interview with Chn 2 on health rankings and health improvement plan
- Media release on marijuana News Conference
- News Conference with Chn 2, Chn 22/45, Chn 7 and DDN on opposition to recreational marijuana
- Interview with WYSO on recreational marijuana opposition
- News Conference on opening of The Market @ Wright Stop Plaza
- News Release on seeking public comment on Community Health Improvement Plan priorities
- Interview with Chn 2 on head lice
- Interviews on Chn 2, Chn 22/45, Chn 7 and DDN on HIV/AIDS cases related to dirty needles and needle exchange program

Jeff Cooper and Tom Herchline, M.D.