

Connecting Point

A MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



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Visit www.mmdhd.org for more information on agency programs, services and health issues.



West Nile Virus

Mosquitoes are annoying, but they can also be dangerous. Mosquitoes are carriers of West Nile Virus (WNV), a disease which is contracted while feeding on infected birds, and then passed on to humans. In August of this year, four Michiganders contracted WNV and were hospitalized. Two of the four individuals were from Montcalm County.



Symptoms of WNV include high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, and a severe headache. More serious complications include neurological illness, such as meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and brain linings) and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Last year, there were 43 serious illnesses and three deaths related to WNV in Michigan. Nationally, there were 2,038 human cases of the virus and 94 deaths.

At this time, there is no specific treatment for WNV infection, so it's important to take precautions to avoid getting infected. One of the best ways to protect oneself is to take extra care during peak mosquito-biting hours, which are dusk and dawn. Applying insect repellent to everyone over six months of age (following manufacturer's directions), especially at dusk and dawn, is essential.

Additional precautions include:

- Maintaining window and door screens to help keep mosquitoes out of buildings.
- Emptying water from mosquito-breeding sites such as buckets, unused kiddie pools and old tires.
- Wearing light colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants at dusk and dawn.

As warm weather continues into the fall season, mosquitoes and WNV will continue to be a concern. It is important to remain vigilant. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/westnile or www.michigan.gov/westnile.

Promoting Flu Vaccine

Convincing patients to get their annual flu shot can be a challenge for physicians and other health care professionals. During the 2016-2017 flu season, fewer than 30% of residents in the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) region received a flu shot. This low coverage leaves the majority of the population at risk, especially affecting the elderly, very young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions. The flu can lead to pneumonia and other serious complications.

There are many excuses for not getting vaccinated. Some fear needles, falsely believe that the vaccine contains harmful toxins, or think they are somehow immune. Some falsely believe that getting the flu shot will actually give them the flu. While the flu shot cannot cause flu illness, it may cause some minor side effects that patients should be aware of.

Michigan Flu Focus is a weekly newsletter offering health care providers information on influenza surveillance, updates of interest and educational resources. To be added to the listserv, providers can contact Jalyng Ingalls at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, at ingallsj@michigan.gov. Health care providers can assist with reporting by making sure all vaccinations are recorded in the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR).

The flu vaccine is safe and effective. The more individuals who receive the vaccine, the better the protection is for the rest of the community. For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu or contact Sarah Doak, RN, at sdoak@mmdhd.org

WIC Guidelines

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal health and nutrition program that has proven to show a positive impact on pregnancy outcomes and child growth and development. For pregnant women and children under the age of five, WIC provides:

- Nutritious foods valued at \$30-\$112 per month
- Nutrition education
- Healthcare referrals
- Breastfeeding promotion and support

In order to qualify for WIC benefits, pregnant women and children under the age of five must be Medicaid eligible or meet these income requirements:

2017-2018 WIC Annual Income Guidelines

Family Size*	Hourly	Monthly	Annual
1	\$10.72	\$1,860	\$22,311
2	\$14.44	\$2,504	\$30,044
3	\$18.16	\$3,149	\$37,777
4	\$21.87	\$3,793	\$45,510
5	\$25.59	\$4,437	\$53,243
6	\$29.31	\$5,082	\$60,976

*Pregnant women are counted as one + the number of infants expected when determining income eligibility for the total economic unit effective 6/22/17.

For more information about the WIC program, contact Jennifer Stratton, RN, at (989) 831-3609 or by email at jstratton@mmdhd.org.

Zika Prevention Kits

The Zika virus continues to be a threat to pregnant women. Babies born to women who have contracted Zika are at high risk for microcephaly, a birth defect in which the brain is undersized and malformed.

The mosquitoes that spread Zika have been found throughout the United States, but are in high concentration in areas of Florida and Texas. If traveling to these warmer climates, pregnant women should consult with their physician and take precautions. A Zika Prevention Kit for pregnant women should include:

- Bed Net: Keeps the mosquitoes away in unscreened rooms and at night
- Mosquito Spray: Repels the mosquitoes from skin
- Condoms: Zika can be spread by sexual contact
- Standing Water Treatment Tablets: Kills mosquito larvae in standing water and is not for drinking water
- Permethrin Spray: Repels mosquitoes from clothing

For more information on Zika prevention, visit: www.cdc.gov/zika or www.michigan.gov/zika

Pathways to Better Health

The *Pathways to Better Health* program connects individuals and families to community resources and programs to help better their health and lives. Managing multiple chronic conditions can be overwhelming, and people often do not know where to turn to for help. With the aid of the Mid-Michigan District Health Department's (MMDHD) community health workers, that help is available.

The Pathways Program is free to those who qualify. To be eligible, one must be 18 years or older; have Medicaid, Medicare, the Healthy Michigan Plan, or be eligible; have two or more chronic health conditions; and live in Clinton, Gratiot, Montcalm, Eaton or Ingham Counties.

All services are provided at no cost in the client's home by a professional Community Health Worker (CHW), who has received specialized training. The CHWs help their clients with assistance in:

- Finding family doctors and specialists
- Finding counseling services
- Providing medication assistance
- Applying for health insurance
- Accessing community services (clothing, transportation, housing, food, etc.)
- Provide health condition education and management
- And much more

If you or someone you know could benefit from the services of Pathways to Better Health, or to check on eligibility, call 1-866-291-8691 or visit:

www.carehubihp.org. Individuals who are approved for the program will be referred to their county CHW. For more information on MMDHD's program, contact Wendy Currie, RN at (989) 875-1028 or by email at wcurrie@mmdhd.org.



For more information about these and other Health Department programs, contact:

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