

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & VIEWS

A Regional Health Professional Newsletter



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FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S DESK

Spring is often noted as the season for hope. Hope and optimism are everywhere with blooming flowers, gardens coming to life, and people walking around their communities. Spring is a great time to start a new healthy habit – a walk on the bike path, a run in the park, walking the dog a bit longer, or strolling a few houses down to check on a neighbor. Talk to your patients about taking the time to create new spring healthy habits.

We also need to begin to think about health issues that arise in spring and summer. We need to be discussing car seat safety prior to summer trips as well as tick-borne illnesses before those longer walks. Spring is a great time to talk about healthy eating, but also taking great care to avoid foodborne illness, especially during the picnic season. I hope that you read this spring installment of the newsletter and that it sparks conversations with your patients about vaccinations, healthy habits, spring and summer safety, and hope.

Please feel free to contact me with any public health issues or just to talk about healthcare issues that you might be seeing in our communities. Building healthy communities is our focus.

May hope spring eternal,
Karen Luparello, DO, Medical Director

CAR SEAT SAFETY:

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), car crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. Proper seat installation is important to prevent deaths. Our agency has a certified child passenger safety technician (CPST) who can assist parents and/or guardians with proper installation and education. For qualifying families, a free car seat may be provided. Patients must call ahead of time to schedule an appointment, at 517-964-0079.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2024). Car Seats and Booster Seats. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats>

LOCK IT UP:

The Lock-It-Up campaign is funded by the State of Michigan Marijuana Operations and Oversight Grant. Our campaign includes partnering with other community organizations to provide free lockable prescription bags to the tri-county area. Our goal is to reduce the potential harm of marijuana for all residents of all ages within Branch, Hillsdale, and St. Joseph County. If you have any patients who need safe storage for marijuana or other medications, we have lock-it-up bags available at all of our agency locations.

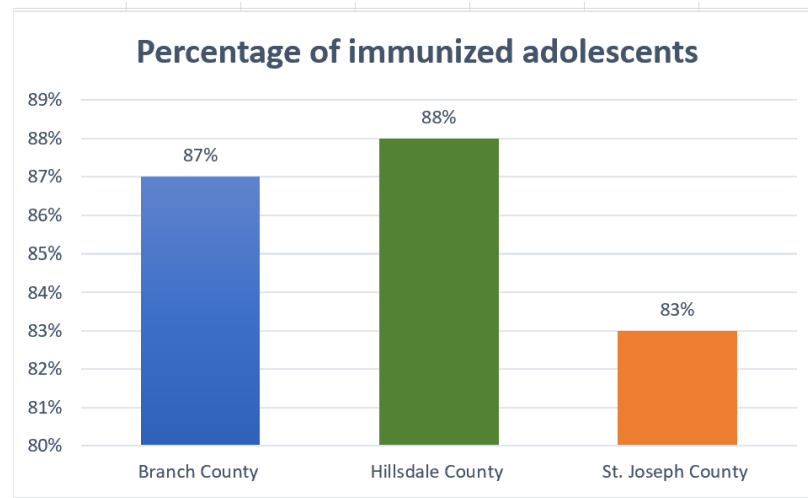
For more information on Lock It Up visit:
<https://bhsj.org/programs/107>

MEASLES:

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issued a press release on February 23, 2024, that a measles case has been reported in Oakland County, Michigan. This is the first confirmed case of measles in Michigan since 2019. Following this press release, additional Michigan counties have reported cases in both Wayne and Washtenaw Counties.

MDHHS is recommending individuals ages one year and older receive measles vaccination to protect themselves and those around them. Please encourage families who haven't received the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine to do so. The CDC recommends that if patients are **not traveling internationally** they receive their **first dose** at age **12-15 months** and their **second dose** at age **4-6 years**. In addition, teenagers and adults with no evidence of immunity, receive their first dose, as soon as possible. For families that are planning to travel, please see the CDC's guidance: [Plan for Travel](#).

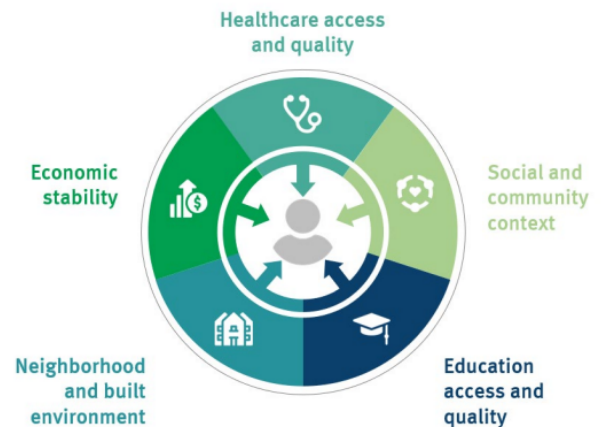
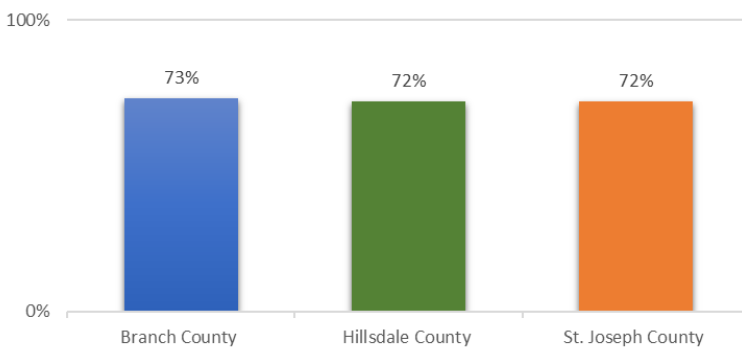
As of March 26, 2024, the charts below display our jurisdiction's percentages of immunized children and adolescents.



SOCIAL DETERMINATES OF HEALTH (SDOH):

Social Determinates of Health (SDOH) are the non medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, racism, climate change, and political systems (CDC, 2024). SDOH can be grouped into five different domains:

Percentage of immunized children- ages 19-36 months



If you suspect that a patient has Measles. Follow this guidance for [Healthcare Providers: Suspect Measles?](#)

Michigan experiences first case of measles since 2019 (2024) Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/inside-mdhhs/newsroom/2024/02/23/measles>

Vaccine for Measles (2024) Center for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccination.html>

Implementing tools to determine SDOH factors, the American Academy of Family Physicians, [Social Needs Screening Tool](#) can help improve health equity in the communities you serve. Sending patients this screening tool before a visit can help you determine underlying SDOH factors that could be influencing the individual's health. In addition, [SDOH codes](#) can be used as data to identify patient needs, connect them to appropriate resources, or create resources to assist with these needs.

American Academy of Family Physicians (2022) Screening for Social Determinants of Health in Daily Practice. <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/issues/2022/0300/p6.html#:~:text=Social%20determinants%20of%20health%20%28SDOH%29%20can%20have%20a,identify%20social%20needs%20and%20facilitate%20conversations%20with%20patients.>

FREE CME:

[Social Drivers of Health Considerations for Network Care Providers](#)

VAPING:

The growth of e-cigarette devices, or vapes, after their initial promotion as safer alternatives to traditional cigarettes, brought about the trend of vaping. This trend uses marketing tactics directed towards the younger age groups with the emphasis that vaping is “safer” than traditional cigarettes. In fact, “66% of adolescents who prefer vaping over smoking marijuana believe that vaping is healthier” (Knapp et al., 2019). Current cigarette use by high school students steadily decreased in the past 20 years, and vaping, especially nicotine vaping, continues to rise.

Vaping among youth has also seen a steady increase due to the legalization of marijuana products in Michigan. A common practice is when marijuana is broken down into a thick substance, or “dab” and vaped. Due to the need of an oily substance found in Vitamin E to make the “dab”, there have been numerous *E-cigarette Vaping Associated Lung Injuries (EVALI)*, cases nationwide. This is because the lungs cannot break down the oily vapor which leads to scarring in the lungs, called “popcorn lung”. Education and awareness are the best course of action to give patients, especially youth, the opportunity to make an educated decision about vaping.

Moustafa, A. F., Rodriguez, D., Mazur, A., & Audrain-McGovern, J. (2021). Adolescent perceptions of E-cigarette use and vaping behavior before and after the EVALI outbreak. *Preventive medicine*, 145, 106419. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106419>



CHILDREN'S SPECIAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES:

As discussed in the previous issue, we offer many services for the public beyond immunizations and WIC, one of these is Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS). CSHCS covers more than 2,700 physical conditions when certain criteria are met. Severity, chronicity of the condition, the need for treatment by a specialist, and being 26 years of age or under. Persons with a diagnosis of cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, and sickle cell disorders may be eligible to be enrolled for life. CSHCS does not cover developmental, behavioral, or intellectual conditions. CSHCS is not income-based and can complement private insurance.

If you know of a patient or family who could benefit from CSHCS service, please fill out this [referral form](#) with the parent/guardian and email it to Terri Penney at penneyt@bhsj.org.

Visit our website for more information on CSHCS: <https://bhsj.org/programs/11>

VECTOR BORNE ILLNESSES:

Vector-borne illnesses are on the rise during spring, summer, and fall months. Mosquitos and ticks are an emerging infectious disease concern for all.

Mosquitoes can carry viruses such as, West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). In 2023, no human WNV or other arbovirus cases were reported in our jurisdiction. Although, other counties near our tri-county area have reported WNV cases. For additional information about mosquito activity in your area visit: [Arbovirus* Activity, Including West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis](#).

According to our 2023 Annual Report, 27 cases of Lyme disease were reported across our jurisdiction. This is a significant increase from the 5 cases we saw in 2022. Encourage patients to avoid tick-infested areas, use insect repellent, and perform daily tick checks.

We are looking for Vector Technicians for Branch, Hillsdale, and St. Joseph counties. If you know of anyone who may be interested and wants to help keep the community safe from vector-borne illnesses have them visit our website for more information: <https://bhsj.org/resources?cat=6>

SPRING SKIN SAFETY:

With Memorial Day and warmer weather approaching, public health will be bringing awareness to “Don’t Fry Day” on **May 24th**. We will message to the public to protect their skin from the sun and share tips on sun safety awareness.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Nearly 5 million people are treated for skin cancer each year in the United States.

Remind patients to use sunscreen, even if the weather is overcast. Share the importance of wearing protective eyewear and hats during prolonged sun exposure. In addition, educate patients on the dangers of using tanning beds.

Patients who have lighter skin are at an increased risk of developing melanoma. Inform patients with a family history of melanoma or other skin cancers that they could be at an increased risk of developing skin cancer. Previous sun burning, particularly experienced at younger ages, is a strong predictor of future skin cancer.

Encourage patients to do frequent skin checks. Giving patients a handout on how to check for [signs of cancer](#) is important for prevention. In addition, this video can help patients to identify the [ABCDEs of skin cancer](#).

Educating patients on prevention and early identification of skin cancer is important to reduce cancer deaths in our jurisdiction.

CDC (2024) Melanoma of the Skin Statistics. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/statistics/index.htm>

American Cancer Society. (2024) Cancer Statistics Center. https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/?_gl=1*7539f6*_ga*NTAzMjk2NDE4LjE3MTIyMzQ5ODE.*_ga_12CJLLFFOT*MTcxMjlzNDk4MC4xLjEuMTcxMjlzNTAxMi4yOC4wLjA.&_ga=2.158734842.1310098269.1712234981-503296418.1712234981

FOOD BORNE ILLNESSES:

During warmer months, we see an increase in food-borne illnesses across our jurisdiction such as Campylobacter, Salmonella, and E. Coli.

When a patient visits and has food-borne illness symptoms, it’s important to find out if your patient has:

- Been in recent contact with animals
- Been in contact with sick friends or family
- Has traveled abroad or has had exposure to a body of water
- Recently eaten at restaurants or events with groups of people served common foods

If you or your patient suspects foodborne illness, please contact your Local Health Department, [Environmental Health Division](#). We will begin an investigation right away to help prevent the spread of foodborne illness.

For detailed CDC guidance for diagnosing a foodborne illness visit: [Steps for Diagnosing Foodborne Illness](#).

Report any confirmed foodborne illness cases to the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS), which reports communicable diseases to our public health system. For more about communicable disease reporting requirements, please see the [Health Professional's Guide to the Michigan Communicable Disease Rules](#).

Lastly, educate patients on the dangers of improper food storage. Here’s a helpful handout for patients: [food-borne illness prevention tips](#).

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