



# Public Health Newsletter

A quarterly update from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Administration.



Welcome to the **MDHHS Public Health Newsletter**, a quarterly update for public health professionals, academics, health care providers and anyone interested in population health in the state of Michigan. (Issue 1.3. Distributed Dec. X, 2025).

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## THANK YOU, PUBLIC HEALTH

On Nov. 24, we marked [Public Health Thank You Day](#).

It was an opportunity to appreciate Michigan's exceptional public health workforce.

While our health promotion and disease prevention efforts often take place behind the scenes, we know they are key in [helping all in Michigan lead healthier lives](#). Public health is about partnership and collaboration, and we thank you for your dedication, even when faced with challenges or uncertainty.

We are proud of Michigan's strong public health network, and we look forward to working with you in the year ahead. If you have questions or require support, email [MDHHS-pophealth@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-pophealth@michigan.gov).

In health,

The MDHHS Public Health Administration



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## WINS for MICHIGAN PUBLIC HEALTH

2025 was a big year for Michigan public health. Some highlights:

- Michigan recorded its [lowest rate of infant mortality](#) in history in 2025. Many public health efforts contributed to this success, including, but not limited to:
  - Expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage to one year after birth.
  - Increasing access to [doula services](#).
  - Sites adopting the [CenteringPregnancy](#) approach to prenatal care.
  - Improving [care at birthing hospitals](#).
  - Providing more education on [infant safe sleep](#).
- MDHHS adopted [updated vaccine recommendations for Michigan](#), aligning with guidance from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) and the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#).
  - MDHHS reinforced the science that supports vaccine safety and efficacy – emphasizing the overwhelming body of evidence that clearly shows that there is no causal link between [vaccines and autism](#).
- A recently published MDHHS study showed how our state’s [harm reduction efforts](#) have made significant impacts in reducing overdose deaths, hospitalizations and cases of hepatitis C – ultimately, saving more lives.
- The [We Treat Hep C](#) initiative received the prestigious Health Policy Innovation Award from the [Center of Evidence-based Policy](#) for their actions toward eliminating hepatitis C in Michigan by increasing access to curative treatment for all Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Local, regional and state health partners coordinated to protect Michigan residents from [environmental health hazards](#) including:
  - In the beginning of 2025, [universal blood lead testing](#) rules went into effect – requiring providers to order blood lead testing for all 1- and 2-year-olds in the state of Michigan.
  - The MDHHS Environmental Health Bureau assisted the Livingston County Health Department with a drinking water investigation following an oil tank explosion. The resulting fire was suppressed with foam containing PFAS compounds; and state and local staff worked together to notify local residents of the potential harm and to test their drinking water for PFAS (results showed drinking water quality was not impacted by the event at that time).

Public health is a broad area of public service, and there is much more work being done throughout our state. If you would like your program or team’s work to be featured in our next newsletter, email [MDHHS-pophealth@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-pophealth@michigan.gov) with the subject line “WINS for MI PUBLIC HEALTH.”

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

**Press releases:**

- [State's Chief Medical Executive makes Standing Recommendation regarding children's vaccines.](#)
- [MDHHS issues statement on hepatitis B vaccine.](#)
- [MDHHS encourages urgent flu vaccination as influenza activity increases and new variant emerges.](#)
- [Consumer Advisory: Michiganders encouraged to check their homes for recalled ByHeart Whole Nutrition Infant Formula due to potential contamination.](#)
- [MDHHS sees promising expansion for doula care access.](#)
- [Michigan's Take Control of Your Birth Control campaign provided more than 460,000 free contraceptives and resources.](#)
- [MDHHS directs SNAP vendor to resume issuing full payments for November.](#)
- [State of Michigan and key medical partners urge Michigan residents to get the COVID-19 vaccine this fall.](#)
- [MDHHS encourages parents to practice safe sleep guidelines in honor of Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month.](#)

#### **Email bulletins, reports and dashboards:**

- **Public Health Bulletins for Health Care Providers:**
  - [MDHHS adopts updated vaccine recommendations for Michigan.](#)
  - [COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for Michigan.](#)
- **Opioids Bulletin:**
  - [Reemergence of carfentanil and the rise of emerging substances in Michigan's drug supply.](#)
- **Reports:**
  - [Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Statewide Integrated Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment.](#)
- **Dashboards:**
  - **New [Injury and Violence Data](#) dashboards, including:**
    - The [Nonfatal Suicide Dashboard](#), providing data on suicide attempts and suicide ideation.
    - The [AVERT Firearm Injury Dashboard](#) that provides near real-time data on non-fatal firearm injuries.
    - The [Michigan Injury Indicators Dashboard](#) that provides data on deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits for numerous injury causes (e.g., falls, motor vehicle crashes, assault/homicide).
  - [Opioid Settlement Data](#) dashboard.
  - [Michigan Overdose Data to Action](#) dashboard.

#### **Infographics and other resources:**

- [The Talk – Firearm Secure Storage flyer.](#)
- [Cold Health and Safety - Michigan Winter Weather resource packet.](#)
- [Respiratory Virus Season Vaccine Recommendations \(Arabic\) \(Spanish\).](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations \(Arabic\) \(Spanish\).](#)

- New [Immunization Recommendations for Michigan webpage](#).
- Updated [COVID-19 webpages](#).

## Updates:

### The MDHHS Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) finds missed opportunities to test for lead

The MDHHS Environmental Health Bureau's (EHB) CLPPP continues to identify innovative strategies to support implementation of Michigan's [universal blood lead testing law](#). The law requires all children to be tested for lead in blood at 12 months and 24 months of age and at other ages depending on certain risk factors.



Physicians are accountable to test or order a test to be compliant with the requirements of the law.

Considerations around how physicians could incorporate testing into their clinic workflow led EHB staff and an evaluation team at the University of Michigan to consider current missed opportunities to test kids for lead at well-child visits.



The team conducted a study to determine how many children enrolled in Medicaid completed a well-child visit without a lead test being ordered and/or completed.

Thousands of missed opportunities were identified through this study, which is now informing future strategies to engage families, physicians and health plans in lead testing. The findings from this study were presented at a 2025 [Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists](#) conference in Grand Rapids and a manuscript is being developed for submission to the [American Journal of Public Health](#).

For more information about this study, contact the CLPPP at MDHHS-CLPPP@michigan.gov.

### Updated MDHHS Perinatal Screening Recommendations

Given the recent increases in early syphilis among heterosexual females and congenital syphilis cases, **MDHHS has strengthened its syphilis recommendations to include screening at delivery.**

Michigan Law, [per section 333.5123 of Michigan's Public Health Code, Act No. 368](#) of the Public Acts of 1978 (amended 12/2018) requires prenatal HIV, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and syphilis screening for all women during the first trimester AND rescreening during the third trimester. MDHHS recommends third trimester screening to be done between 28 and 32 weeks. Medical facilities are encouraged to have written policies and procedures, as well as standing orders in place to ensure that testing for HIV, hepatitis B and syphilis are done. While 333.5123 does not

require hepatitis C (HCV) screening at this time, it is recommended by MDHHS, based on [American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology](#) and [Centers for Disease Control as Prevention](#) recommendations.

While 333.5123 does not require additional screening at **delivery**, MDHHS has updated its recommendations to screen for syphilis at delivery for all women. This update was informed by recent increases in Michigan congenital syphilis epidemiologic data. Screening at delivery provides an opportunity for the mother and baby to receive proper treatment before being discharged. This is especially important to identify late pregnancy infections in people who previously tested negative or were reinfected during pregnancy.

### **Bicillin recall**

MDHHS has been monitoring a recall by King Pharmaceuticals LLC., a subsidiary of Pfizer, of specific referenced lots of **Bicillin® L-A** (Penicillin G Benzathine Injectable Suspension). Penicillin is the only recommended treatment for pregnant women and babies with congenital syphilis. Considering this recall and high levels of syphilis diagnoses in the United States, a limited supply of Bicillin® L-A is possible. MDHHS has recommended that local health departments and health systems consider reserving Bicillin® L-A for treating patients who are pregnant until sufficient levels of Bicillin® L-A are in circulation, which is predicted to be spring/summer 2026.

### **Changes to Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) guidance**

In response to Michigan's local health department capacity during COVID-19, the MDHHS Bureau of HIV and STI Programs (BHSP) temporarily expanded recommendations on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance for EPT to include *T. vaginalis* (trichomoniasis) and EPT for men who have sex with men (MSM) diagnosed with uncomplicated gonorrhea (GC) on April 15, 2020.

Since local health department capacity is no longer compromised by COVID-19, MDHHS/BHSP removed the temporary addition of *T. vaginalis* (trichomoniasis); the expansion of EPT for men who MSM diagnosed with GC is unchanged.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health of your patients and communities. EPT resources can be found on the [MDHHS HIV/STI website](#), including the [2021 CDC STI Treatment Guidelines](#) and MDHHS Guidance on EPT in addition to CDC's [Clinical Guidance for STIs](#).

If you have questions regarding STIs please contact Karen Lighthouse, STI Interventions Unit Manager, at 313-969-5094 or [lighthousek@michigan.gov](mailto:lighthousek@michigan.gov).

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MDHHS PROJECT and PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

**Project Spotlight: Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies Network**

Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies Network (SET NET) is a surveillance project that monitors the impact of emerging and reemerging health threats on pregnant women and their infants. Michigan's project focuses on pregnant women diagnosed with syphilis and their infants, conducting extensive medical record abstraction of women during pregnancy and delivery and follows their infant through the first three years of life. This includes both infants diagnosed with congenital syphilis (CS) and those without CS. This longitudinal study collects data through infant follow-up, including developmental screenings, health complications, referrals to specialists, laboratory testing, well-child examinations and findings from radiology, audiology, and ophthalmology exams. Between 2020-2023, 557 pregnant individuals with syphilis and their infants were identified for the SET NET project.

To learn more about SET-NET, please visit the [CDC's Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies webpage](#). To learn more about how the data we collect is used, see the publication [Syphilis Treatment Among People Who Are Pregnant in Six U.S. States, 2018-2021](#).

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Thanks for reading the MDHHS Public Health Newsletter. For more information on state and local public health visit [Michigan.gov/PublicHealth](https://Michigan.gov/PublicHealth).

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