

# The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

December 2019



Division of Public Health Director Dr. Karyl Rattay presented Delaware's infant mortality strategies on Capitol Hill on Nov. 7. From left to right: Dr. Rahul Gupta, March of Dimes, Dr. Rattay, Stacey Stewart, March of Dimes, Tiffany Spina, parent advocate, Dr. Zsakeba Hendricks, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Andrew Bremer, National Institutes of Health. Photo submitted by Ellen Pliska of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

## DPH Director presents infant mortality strategies at congressional briefing

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Health (DPH) Director Dr. Karyl Rattay participated in a Nov. 7 congressional briefing on Capitol Hill regarding maternal and infant health. The briefing, "Making the Grade on Maternal and Child Health: 2019 March of Dimes Report Card" was for members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. It was part of a panel discussion hosted by the March of Dimes (MoD).

Dr. Rattay discussed Delaware's efforts to address birth equity by addressing the social determinants of health; the Delaware Contraceptive Access Now initiative; and the importance of collaboration, partnerships, and sustained federal funding. The MoD and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials invited her to participate.

Delaware received a "C" in the MoD's 2019 Prematurity Report Card, based in part on its preterm birth rate of 9.6 percent of live births, which is lower than the national rate of 10.2 percent; and a decrease from the state's own rate of 10.2 percent the year before. The MoD's preterm birth rate goal is 8.1 percent by 2020.

## Be prepared for winter emergencies

Although emergencies can occur in any season, colder temperatures remind us to be prepared for snow, ice, and extreme cold. DPH Office of Preparedness Director Timothy Cooper said that it is best to maintain a level of readiness at all times.

To begin, get a plan by visiting [PrepareDE.org](http://PrepareDE.org) for communication plan templates. Next, make emergency supply kits for home and work, and a "go bag" for the car. For recommended supply lists, visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) and [PrepareDE.org](http://PrepareDE.org) or use the Federal Emergency Management Agency app.

All households, regardless of income, should stock an emergency supply kit with drinking water, non-perishable food, essential medications, and other items. It may be easier to make weekly purchases by using the Disaster Supplies calendar (<http://delawarepreparedness.pbworks.com/w/file/126826340/Disaster%20Supplies%20Calendar.docx>).

Creating emergency supply kits for the office and the car is also recommended.

To stay informed during emergencies, register for the Delaware Emergency Notification System at [PrepareDE.org](http://PrepareDE.org). Become familiar with the state's and nation's preparedness resources.

Cooper and DPH Medical Director Dr. Rick Hong co-edited the *Delaware Journal of Public Health's* newly published Disaster Preparedness issue. DPH hopes Delawareans will read it and use its many recommendations and resources to enhance their level of preparedness. [Click here to access the Journal.](#)



**HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS**

Get CDC's updated guidance for managing patients with suspected e-cigarette, or vaping, product use-associated lung injury

[cdc.gov/LungInjuryHCP](http://cdc.gov/LungInjuryHCP) **MMWR**



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health

## Online health insurance course builds consumer knowledge and confidence

With open enrollment to the Health Insurance Marketplace running through Dec. 15 at [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov), consumers may benefit from taking a free online course.

“Health Insurance 4 U,” created by the University of Delaware’s (UD) Cooperative Extension, features short videos that answer key health insurance questions, as well as links to more information and worksheets. Visit <http://udel.edu/extension/insure/>.

UD hopes the course will improve consumers’ health insurance literacy, reduce confusion, and boost confidence, said Maria Pippidis, AFC, County Director and Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, UD Cooperative Extension.



**PREMIUMS DOWN 19%  
ON DELAWARE'S HEALTH  
INSURANCE MARKETPLACE**

Enroll before the December 15 deadline

The course is one example of how health professionals are trying to close health literacy gaps. Health literacy helps individuals “obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make informed health decisions,” says Healthy People 2020.

Recently DPH, ChristianaCare, and UD’s Partnership for Healthy Communities hosted a roundtable discussion on health literacy. DPH Associate Deputy Director Cassandra Codes-Johnson suggested to the attending hospital partners, Federally Qualified Health Center partners, and health literacy advocates that they consider health literacy from the lens of addressing health equity issues within health care. She encouraged them to pursue opportunities with high impact partners – higher education institutions, hospitals, and schools – to influence system level changes.

Providers expressed the need for more training to engage patients at the bedside and to imbed health information translation education into health providers’ higher education curriculums. The group noted the need for the public to learn basic health literacy skills early and to teach prevention at elementary and middle schools.

To learn more about health literacy, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/training/page572.html>.



## Know how to respond to overdoses

During the holidays, those who are depressed and/or in their first year of substance use recovery are most vulnerable to overdoses. Informed friends and families can help prevent and respond to overdoses.

Attend festivities without alcohol or drug temptations, bring a friend who does not use drugs or alcohol, and select non-alcoholic drinks and healthy snacks. Download the OpiRescue Delaware app for free. The app shows where to get the life-saving medication Naloxone and provides instructions on how to administer it in the event of an overdose.

Learn the signs of addiction, the symptoms of an overdose, and how to connect to prevention, treatment, and recovery resources from the Help is Here DE website, [www.helpisherede.com](http://www.helpisherede.com). The 24/7 Crisis Hotline phone numbers are:

- in New Castle County: 1-800-652-2929
- in Kent and Sussex counties: 1-800-345-6785.

In 2019, 246 suspected overdose deaths occurred in Delaware as of Nov. 20, according to the Division of Forensic Science.

## Free Social Security presentations help workers plan their finances

The U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) invites workers 18 and older who are at all stages of their careers (not just pre-retirees) to become familiar with their Social Security benefits early in their careers for financial security. Visit SSA’s website, [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Its regional events calendar, <https://www.ssa.gov/phila/community.htm>, lists free public presentations.



Co-authors Erin K. Knight, PhD, MPH, Associate Director, Center for Community Research & Service, University of Delaware; and Cassandra Codes-Johnson, MPA, Associate Deputy Director, DPH, presented *The Health Equity Guide for Public Health Practitioners and Partners, Second Edition* at the American Public Health Association’s Annual Meeting and Expo in November. They are seated first and second from left, respectively. Photo submitted by Cassandra Codes-Johnson.