

# The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

November 2021



Terrance Banks of Milton received a COVID-19 vaccination during the “Race to End COVID” event held at Dover International Speedway on the weekend of October 16 and 17. He was one of 335 individuals who were vaccinated. The event was sponsored by the Speedway, DPH, and the CDC Foundation. Photo by Sean Dooley.

## FDA/CDC recommend COVID-19 boosters for adults 18+

The Division of Public Health (DPH) is encouraging all fully vaccinated Delawareans 18 and older to get a booster dose of Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccines.

On Nov. 19, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration expanded booster dose eligibility to all adults 18 and older, who were originally fully vaccinated with either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines at least 6 months prior. Those 18 and older who initially received J&J were already approved for a booster vaccine two months after their initial dose.

“We applaud the latest federal action to make all adults eligible for a booster vaccine,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “COVID-19 cases are again rising and having this tool in our arsenal can help us in holding off another winter surge that could come with people gathering inside more often as the weather turns colder.”

The three authorized vaccines can be administered to qualifying individuals as a booster in a “mix and match” approach to the vaccine originally received.

For more information on second, third, and booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [de.gov/boosters](https://de.gov/boosters). Find a vaccine location near you at [de.gov/getmyvaccine](https://de.gov/getmyvaccine).

## FDA, CDC approve pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11 years

On Nov. 2, 2021, the CDC and its advisory committee approved the use of a pediatric dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11. As of Nov. 16, Delaware vaccine providers have administered 4,875 doses of the vaccine. The dosage, reduced by one-third of the adult dose for children under 12, was also approved by the Food and Drug Administration in late October.

There are approximately 77,500 children in this age group in Delaware.

During clinical trials nationwide involving more than 3,000 children ages 5-11, the vaccine was found to be more than 90% protective against developing symptomatic COVID-19. No severe vaccine-related side effects such as myocarditis or severe allergic reactions were identified. Side effects were found to be similar to, or fewer than, those experienced by adults and included sore arms, fatigue, headaches, muscle pain, chills, and low-grade fevers lasting a day or two.

Written parental consent is required for people younger than 18, but either a parent or other adult may attend with the child.

Parents or guardians are encouraged to first contact their child’s pediatrician to see if they are administering the vaccine. Vaccines will also be available at Federally Qualified Health Centers (for patients), standing DPH Vaccine sites, and DPH’s community-based vaccine sites.

Additionally, vaccines are available at major and independent pharmacies. DPH recommends parents check pharmacy websites for scheduling options and availability before going.

Find vaccine locations for ages 5-11 at <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/vaccine-information-for-ages-5-11/>.





## Pediatric case is one of four confirmed flu cases of the 2021-2022 season

A Kent County child under the age of 5 was one of the first two laboratory-confirmed influenza cases of the 2021-2022 flu season, the Division of Public Health (DPH) announced. The child, infected with influenza strain B, was hospitalized. The other case occurred in a 26-year-old Sussex County woman, with influenza strain A, who was not hospitalized. Neither individual had received the flu vaccine. Since then, the total number of lab-confirmed flu cases has risen to four.

"This first case of the flu is an excellent reminder for us to get our flu vaccine as soon as possible," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "We must not get lulled into a false sense of security with last year's unusually low case numbers."

Delawareans resuming pre-pandemic activities, the flu is a definite threat to our health. Because hospitals and physicians' offices are already taxed with COVID-19 cases, we must do everything we can to prevent adding more to their burden and the flu vaccine is a very good start."

The flu vaccine is recommended for Delawareans 6 months of age and older and can be administered at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine. It takes approximately two weeks after vaccination for antibodies that protect against influenza virus infection to develop in the body.

DPH is offering flu vaccine at community-based events where COVID-19 vaccine is offered; visit [de.gov/getmyvaccine](https://de.gov/getmyvaccine). Uninsured and underinsured people can find flu vaccine at Public Health clinics (<https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/fluclinics.html>.) Physician offices, many pharmacies, and some grocery stores also offer flu vaccine.

Children, older adults, and those who have chronic underlying medical conditions are most at risk for complications from the flu and are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated now.

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## Latest data report: Delaware's cancer mortality rates continue to decrease

Delaware's mortality rate for all cancer sites combined (all-site cancer) improved in most categories during the last decade, according to the Division of Public Health's (DPH) annual data report, [Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Delaware, 2013-2017](#). The state remains 15<sup>th</sup>-highest in the U.S. for the period 2013-2017, which is unchanged from 2012-2016. Delaware also remains second-highest nationally for all-site cancer incidence during the same period, which may be partly due to the state's continued increases in early detection and screening.

This year's report, presented to the Delaware Cancer Consortium on October 11, analyzes all-site cancer and eight site-specific cancer types: breast, colorectal, lung, cervical, kidney, leukemia, oral, and prostate. DPH also issued a compendium report, [Census Tract-Level Cancer Incidence in Delaware, 2013-2017](#), which presents modified calculations and detailed maps with all-site cancer incidence rates by census tract.

For 2013-2017, the state's all-site cancer mortality rate (171.0 deaths per 100,000 people) was higher than the U.S. rate (158.3 deaths per 100,000) and higher among both sexes. For all-site cancer incidence in 2013-2017, Delaware saw statistically higher rates (484.3 per 100,000) than the U.S. (435.0 per 100,000) and among both sexes.

Noticeable improvements exist among many racial and ethnic groups, likely due to Delaware's health equity initiatives.

"In order to address the disparities that persist in cancer incidence and mortality, we must address the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age and the systems put in place to deal with illness," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "These social determinants of health include housing and neighborhood conditions, educational and economic factors, transportation systems, social connections, and other social factors. We must look at the racial disparities across the cancer continuum from prevention to end-of-life care that result from differences in the social determinants of health as no longer endurable."

## Delaware data by cancer type

The following data were pulled from [Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Delaware, 2013-2017](#):

### BREAST CANCER

Delaware's percentage of female breast cancer cases diagnosed at the local stage increased from 42% in 1980-1984 to 68% in 2013-2017.

### CERVICAL CANCER

In 2013-2017, Delaware ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. for cervical cancer incidence, a six-place improvement from 14<sup>th</sup> in 2012-2016. Non-Hispanic Caucasians accounted for 70% of Delaware's cervical cancer cases in 2013-2017.

### COLORECTAL CANCER

Between 2003-2007 and 2013-2017, incidence rates for colorectal cancer decreased by 26% in Delaware and 21% in the U.S. In the same period, mortality rates for colorectal cancer decreased by 21% both in Delaware and in the U.S.

### KIDNEY AND RENAL PELVIS CANCER

From 2003-2007 to 2013-2017, mortality rates for kidney cancer increased 17% in Delaware females and decreased 15% in U.S. females.

### LEUKEMIA

From 2003-2007 to 2013-2017, incidence rates for leukemia increased 19% in Delaware and increased 8% in the U.S.

### LUNG AND BRONCHUS CANCER

Non-Hispanic Caucasians accounted for 82% of lung cancer cases in 2013-2017. Hispanics had a lower lung cancer incidence rate than non-Hispanic Caucasians and non-Hispanic African Americans.

### ORAL CAVITY AND PHARYNX CANCER

From 2003-2007 to 2013-2017, incidence rates for oral cancer increased 18% in Delaware and increased 7% in the U.S., with a 19% increase in Delaware males and an 18% increase in Delaware females.

### PROSTATE CANCER

In 2013-2017, Delaware's non-Hispanic African Americans had a much higher prostate cancer incidence rate compared to non-Hispanic Caucasians and Hispanics, as well as a higher prostate cancer mortality rate than non-Hispanic Caucasians.

## Cancer Resources

Risk factors, screening, state of diagnosis, data trends, and cancer survivorship are included in the [Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Delaware, 2013-2017](#) report.

Learn how to prevent, detect, and treat chronic diseases and obtain assistance with a cancer screening. Visit the Healthy Delaware website at [HealthyDelaware.org](http://HealthyDelaware.org).

Delaware residents 18 and older who want help quitting smoking should contact the Delaware Quitline at 1-866-409-1858 or <http://www.quitsupport.com>.

Eligible Delaware adults can receive office visits, mammograms and clinical breast exams, Pap tests and screening tests for prostate, colorectal, and lung cancer when recommended by a doctor. Contact the Screening for Life Program at <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/dpc/sf.html> or call 302-401-4212 to speak with a screening nurse navigator.

Delaware Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, 302-744-1020, <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/cancer.html>

Delaware Cancer Consortium, <https://www.healthydelaware.org/Consortium>

For population health, environmental and social determinant of health data at the smallest geographical area available, visit the My Healthy Community data portal at [de.gov/healthycommunity](http://de.gov/healthycommunity).

## Health Insurance Marketplace opens

Delawareans seeking health insurance, especially those who have lost coverage, can shop for 2022 coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. The marketplace's ninth open enrollment period ends Saturday, Jan 15, 2022. Consumers can renew existing coverage or sign up for a new plan at [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov). Coverage for enrollees who sign up by Dec. 15 and pay their first month's premium will take effect Jan. 1, 2022.



Tropical Storm Isaias damaged many properties on August 4, 2020, such as these homes on New Burton Road in Dover. Pruning trees can lessen damage from severe weather. Photo by Donna Sharp.

## Prune trees to withstand winter storms

Pruning can strengthen trees and minimize damage from severe weather, such as high winds, ice, and snowstorms. While it is best to prune or trim trees in late winter, a tree's growth may require immediate action.

Branches should be pruned if they obstruct visibility for vehicles or pedestrians, if they interfere with power lines, and if they might cause damage to a house or other structure. Determine if there are any dead trees or branches that could become airborne daggers during high winds. Safely remove them with pruners or a tree saw, following directions within the Delaware Department of Agriculture's *2021 Tree Owner's Manual*.

The Forest Service advises to hire an arborist if pruning cannot be done with both feet on the ground, or if a chainsaw is required. In addition:

- Because electricity flows through branches, never prune trees or branches that are within 10 feet of utility lines. Contact the local utility company.
- Do not remove more than 25 percent of the tree's live branches (and therefore leaves) at any one time.

To read the *2021 Tree Owner's Manual*, visit <https://delawaretrees.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Tree-Owners-Manual-2021-1.pdf>.

To contact the Delaware Forest Service, call 1-800-282-8685 toll-free.

## 2021 Communicable Diseases Health Summit to be held on December 13

The 2021 Communicable Disease Summit, co-sponsored by the Delaware Academy of Medicine/ Delaware Public Health Association and the Division of Public Health, will be held on December 13 as a virtual event. In-person attendees must show proof of COVID-19 vaccination upon entry.



Dr. Kate Smith, Program Manager of the Immunization Coalition of Delaware, will moderate.

The fee for health care professionals is \$45 and the fee for non-health care professionals is \$25. To register, visit <https://delamed.org/cd2021/>.

## "Medicare & You" handbook available in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) "Medicare & You" handbook is now available in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Asian Americans currently represent the fourth largest demographic enrolled in Medicare.

The handbook is being released as part of this year's Medicare Open Enrollment Period, which kicked off on December 7, 2021.

Download the translated CMS handbooks at [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or order them from 1-800-MEDICARE for free. Several other documents are available in 23 languages, including Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, at <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/information-in-other-languages>. These

documents provide detailed information about Medicare basics, preventive services, supplemental insurance, and COVID-19 vaccine coverage. Live assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except some federal holidays), both via Live Chat on Medicare.gov and by phone at 1-800-MEDICARE, which offers language interpreter services.

