

# The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

January 2022

## Governor Carney begins 2022 with State of Emergency and indoor mask mandate

Governor John Carney issued a new State of Emergency on January 3, 2022 to enable Delaware National Guard (DNG) members to work as certified nursing assistants (CNAs) in skilled nursing facilities. Roughly 110 DNG members are training to serve as CNAs to alleviate pressure on hospital systems.

On January 10, Governor Carney issued a universal indoor mask mandate, effective January 11, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. Delawareans must wear masks in indoor public settings such as convenience and grocery stores, gyms, restaurants, bars, hair salons, malls, and casinos.

“...I know we’re all exhausted by this pandemic,” Governor Carney said. “But at the level of hospitalizations we’re seeing, Delawareans who need emergency care might not be able to get it...It’s time for everyone to pitch in and do what works.”

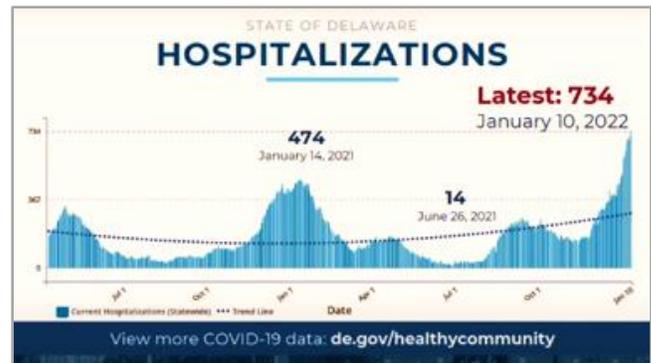
Masks are not required outdoors or while eating or drinking in restaurants and bars, but otherwise should be worn. Churches and other houses of worship are exempted from the mask requirement.

Division of Public Health Director Dr. Karyl Rattay recommends wearing masks in private settings as well, especially when people are unvaccinated people or not in your household. She recommends multi-layer masks that fit snugly over the nose and mouth, with a wire to prevent gaps around the face. KN95 masks should be FDA- or NIOSH-approved, she said.

The governor announced plans to extend mask requirements for K-12 public and private schools and child care facilities, which expire in February. Mask requirements apply to those kindergarten age and older. Children age 2 to 5 years are strongly encouraged to wear masks in public indoor settings. Children younger than 2 years should not wear masks due to the risk of suffocation.

The State of Emergency also eased State regulations to allow and incentivize recently retired educators to return to the classroom as substitute teachers.

View the declarations at <https://news.delaware.gov/>.



Source: Governor John Carney’s January 11, 2022 COVID-19 briefing, <https://de.gov/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mfRutQFRaM>

## COVID-19 hospitalizations skyrocket

Delaware continues to have record numbers of positive COVID-19 cases and tests. As of January 10, 2022, Delaware’s seven-day average for new COVID-19 positive cases was 2,753 and there were 734 hospitalizations. Division of Public Health Director Dr. Karyl Rattay reported that 70 percent of hospitalized patients are unvaccinated and 90 percent do not have their booster doses.

“Our hospitals are over capacity,” Dr. Rattay said. “On average, they are operating right now at 117 percent of their capacity; ChristianaCare and Beebe are at approximately 130 percent of their capacity. And while Nemours is not over capacity, this past Sunday, they hit a high-water mark for children hospitalized with COVID at 70.”

For the first time in its history, ChristianaCare (CC) implemented the Crisis Standards of Care on January 10, said Dr. Ken Silverstein, CC Chief Physician Executive, during Governor Carney’s January 11 briefing. The standards guide decision-making when the demand for care surpasses the available resources and contingency strategies are exhausted. Other local hospitals are also operating under Crisis Standards of Care, Dr. Silverstein said.

The State of Emergency deployed 70 additional DNG members to assist with non-clinical operations within hospitals.

Delawareans who are sick should assume it is COVID-19, stay home, and get tested five days after exposure if possible, Dr. Rattay said. Do not go to the emergency room unless experiencing severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or chest pain.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health

## COVID-19 testing suggestions

According to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), insurance companies and health plans are required to cover eight over-the-counter, at-home COVID-19 diagnostic tests that are authorized, cleared, or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, beginning January 15.

Follow this advice from the Division of Public Health (DPH):

1. Check the testing calendar and DPH social media for closures.
2. Do not go to a hospital Emergency Room for COVID-19 tests.
3. Not everyone needs a rapid test. Those with symptoms and children needing a return to school are eligible for rapid tests.

Get tested if:

1. You have symptoms, especially if you are unvaccinated (test once weekly) or have serious or underlying health conditions.
2. You were exposed. (Wait to test until five days after exposure, if tests are available.)

Be patient and kind to testing staff.

Visit <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/testing/> for testing sites. Check that they are open. Some sites are open until 7:00 p.m. Testing at State Service Centers is by appointment only.

## COVID-19 vaccination QR Code

A QR code enables individuals vaccinated in Delaware to download their digital COVID-19 vaccination record from the DelVAX Public Portal: [https://delvax.dhss.delaware.gov/delvax\\_public/Application/PublicPortal](https://delvax.dhss.delaware.gov/delvax_public/Application/PublicPortal), a site where those vaccinated in Delaware can access their immunization records. The technology allows anyone to show proof of vaccination with a digital or printed QR code.

Parents and legal guardians can access official immunization records for their child/children up to age 17. Adults age 18 years and older can access their own official immunization records.

Watch step-by-step instructions at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLC9vAVO7s>. Individuals who need assistance can call 1-800-282-8672, or email [DelVAX@delaware.gov](mailto:DelVAX@delaware.gov).

## VaccineAccessDE.com helps those with Access and Functional Needs

Individuals living with disabilities, or those with Access and Functional Needs (AFN), can find tailored COVID-19 information on [VaccineAccessDE.com](https://vaccineaccessde.com), available on the state coronavirus website: [de.gov/coronavirus](https://de.gov/coronavirus).

[VaccineAccessDE.com](https://vaccineaccessde.com) offers information about accessing COVID-19 vaccines, accommodations at vaccine sites, and video testimonials of vaccinated individuals and their caregivers. It also includes information about the new Homebound vaccination program for eligible seniors and people with disabilities who cannot leave home to access a vaccination location because of disability, age, or severe illness.

To request a homebound vaccination or booster, call 1-888-491-4988 toll-free. Live operators staff the toll-free line from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday, and 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. Homebound vaccinations are provided by Ivira Pharmacy in Wilmington and Milford, Camden Pharmacy, Seaford Pharmacy, and Express Pharmacy in Laurel.



## DEFINITIONS

**“Fully vaccinated”** – You completed your primary series of vaccine.

**“Up to Date”** – You also got your booster dose, or additional dose if immunocompromised.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

## Isolation and Quarantine guidance updates

For Isolation and Quarantine guidance, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#closecontact>.

A Frequently Asked Questions document is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation-background.html>.

## Code Purple shelters



Code Purple volunteer groups open temporary shelters to keep homeless individuals and families safe during extreme winter weather. To find Code Purple shelters, call 1-800-560-3372 or 2-1-1; text needs to 898211 between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.; or visit [Delaware211.org/](http://Delaware211.org/).

### **Code Purple New Castle County: 1-833-346-3233**

Code Purple in New Castle County opens for families with children and single women at the Salvation Army in the City of Wilmington when the weather is severe, or the temperature or wind chill is below 32 degrees at night. Call Housing Alliance Delaware at 1-833-FIND-BED (1-833-346-3233) to find out if Code Purple is open in New Castle County on any given night. Visit the Friendship House at <https://fhcodepurple.org> to see if they are offering Code Purple shelters.

### **Code Purple Kent County: 1-800-733-6816**

In Kent County, now through April 1, 2022 regardless of the weather, rotating churches host separate shelters for men and for women with or without children. For shelter in Kent County during Code Purple, call Code Purple Kent County at 1-800-733-6816.

Code Purple Kent County shelters offer breakfast and dinner daily. A food pantry and COVID-19 testing are available at each site, with showering and laundry access by appointment.

For more information about emergency housing in Kent County, visit [codepurpledelaware.com](http://codepurpledelaware.com) or the [Code Purple Kent County Facebook page](#).

### **Code Purple Sussex County: 302-519-0024**

In Sussex County, shelters open every night now through March 15, 2022, regardless of the weather, for men and for women with or without children. The former Troop 7 Building at 18006 Coastal Highway in Lewes operates all winter.

For shelter in Sussex County during Code Purple, call the Code Purple Sussex County Hotline at 302-519-0024 to reserve a bed. For more information about emergency housing in Sussex County, visit [codepurplesussexcounty.com](http://codepurplesussexcounty.com).

## Protect pets during wintry weather

If it is too cold for you, it is too cold for your pets. To protect pets from frostbite and hypothermia, the Division of Public Health's Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) advises pet owners to bring pet dogs and cats indoors, regardless of breed, when the temperature falls below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit). Pets with health issues, short-haired breeds, the young, and the old can have a harder time regulating body temperature and are most susceptible to extreme temperatures.

Delaware law requires dog owners to provide a dry, draft-free animal shelter that is raised off the ground and appropriately sized for the dog. Dog owners must provide ample moisture-resistant bedding, such as straw or cedar shavings, and a windbreak over the doorway for protection from wind and precipitation. Delaware law prohibits dogs from

being left outside and unattended for longer than 15 minutes when not in the owner's visual range and physical presence during a hazardous

weather advisory or warning issued by the National Weather Service for your area; or when weather conditions pose a serious adverse risk to the dog's health and safety.

If cats cannot be brought inside, provide access to insulated shelters that are raised off the ground. Use straw bedding as hay or blankets absorb moisture and make the shelter wet and cold.

Frequently check water bowls to ensure unfrozen water. Replace metal watering bowls with plastic, as a pet's tongue can stick to metal in cold temperatures. Since animals burn more calories in cold temperatures to stay warm, ask your veterinarian if your pet needs more food.

When your pet comes indoors, wipe off feet, legs, and stomach to prevent irritation from salt and antifreeze and accidental ingestion through grooming. Keep these chemicals out of pets' reach.

Since cats sometimes climb beneath cars to seek warmth, bang on the hood before driving.

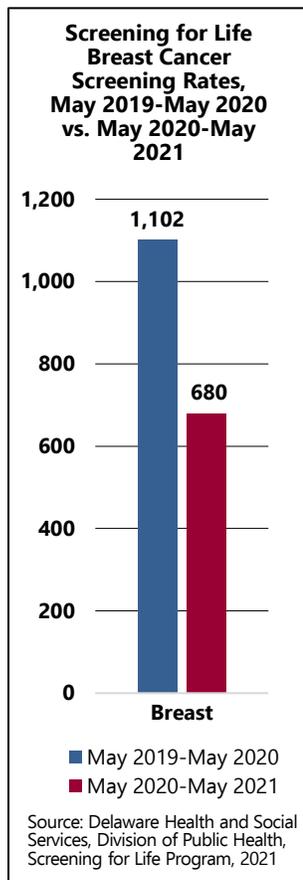
If you see a pet that has been left outdoors in cold temperatures without proper shelter or protection from the elements, report it immediately to OAW's Delaware Animal Services at 302-255-4646.



## Breast cancer screening: self-care and self-love

A breast cancer screening campaign launched by the Division of Public Health's (DPH) Cancer Prevention and Control Program teaches that preventive breast cancer screening is a form of self-care and self-love for all women.

The campaign illustrates the correlation between preventive breast cancer screening, early detection, and increased survival rates upon diagnosis. The number of breast cancer screenings among DPH's Screening for Life clients fell 38 percent between May 2019 and May 2020 (the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic), compared to May 2020 to and May 2021. Detecting breast cancer early avoids preventable death and keeps treatment costs down.



[Recommended screening guidelines](#) call for women 18 and older to have a clinical breast exam (CBE) every year. Women 40 and older should have a mammogram and a CBE every year. Women at a higher risk for breast cancer should discuss beginning mammograms at a younger age with their health care provider. Women should contact their provider to discuss breast cancer screening options and schedule a screening or call 2-1-1 and connect with a Nurse Navigator. Low-income and uninsured women may qualify for cancer care through Screening for Life, Health Care Connection, patient navigation, and the Delaware Cancer Treatment Program.

For more information, visit [www.healthydelaware.org](http://www.healthydelaware.org) for [Healthy Delaware's breast health page](#).

## February 16 webinar discusses breast cancer's environmental links

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Public Health Training Center is presenting the webinar, "Breast Cancer and the Environment: What do we know and how can we reduce exposures?" It airs on February 16, 2022 from 11:00 a.m. to noon.

The webinar will review the role of environmental chemicals, including endocrine disrupting chemicals, in breast cancer, and ways to reduce exposures.

To register, log on to or create an account at <https://lms.marphctc.pitt.edu/login/index.php>.

## Health care providers and pharmacists attempt to stop fentanyl misuse

Fentanyl is a synthetic drug that is primarily used to treat pain after surgery.

Fentanyl has been found in cocaine, marijuana, PCP, and other street drugs because it is easier and cheaper to produce than heroin and is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. A trace of fentanyl can lead to death. Individuals using unprescribed fentanyl are at risk of overdosing because they may be unaware that they are using drugs mixed with it, and because they cannot taste or smell it. Fentanyl is illegally sold as a powder, dropped onto blotter paper, put into eye droppers and nasal sprays, and made into pills that resemble prescription drugs.

The substance has affected people who work in production, maintenance, and restaurant industries and is a leading cause for the opioid crisis. In 2019, fentanyl caused the majority of 431 identified opioid deaths in Delaware. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that fentanyl caused nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of all drug overdose deaths in the U.S. during the 12-month period ending April 2021, compared to 49 percent in 2020. In response, health care providers and pharmacists are trying to stop fentanyl misuse by sharing information, strengthening understanding through public health surveillance, advancing better practices for pain management, and teaching how to use overdose-reversing drugs like Naloxone (Narcan) to help save lives.

For more information and resources about addiction treatment services offered in Delaware, visit <https://www.helpshere.com/Prevention/Facts-About-Fentanyl> or call the Delaware Hope Line: 1 (833) 9-HOPEDE.