

The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

March 2022

Governor Carney ends mask mandate in schools and most public buildings

Governor John Carney terminated the COVID-19 State of Emergency and the masking requirement in public and private K-12 schools, school buses, and child care facilities effective March 1.

He also lifted the mask requirement in most State buildings effective March 2. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced new masking [guidance](#) on February 25.

Vaccine and testing requirements for educators and state employees expired February 28.

At the same time, Governor Carney issued a narrower Public Health Emergency Order to replace the one issued on July 12, 2021 to allow hospitals and long-term care facilities continued flexibility to respond to COVID-19 cases.

“There are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about where we’re headed,” Governor Carney said. “Over the last month, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have fallen dramatically, and we are clearly moving into a new phase of this pandemic. Today’s announcement is consistent with new guidance from the CDC. And it’s consistent with the latest thinking from Delaware’s experts at the Division of Public Health. Delawareans who want to continue wearing a mask – including children in our schools – should be supported and encouraged to do so, even as we move into this new phase. We’ll also continue to encourage all eligible Delawareans to get up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations.”

The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) and the Division of Public Health (DPH) issued updated guidance to district and school leaders to aid response efforts following the expiration of the mask requirement. [Click here](#) to read the new mask guidance for schools shared by DOE and DPH. Read the latest on masking recommendations and requirements in Delaware at:

<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/guidance-for-face-coverings/>.

Delawareans may choose to wear a mask at any time and should consider it if they have symptoms, are immunocompromised or living with someone who is, and when in communities with high levels of COVID-19 transmission. To determine community transmission levels, use the CDC’s County Checker tool: https://bit.ly/community_levels.



Brickworks Brewing and Eats in Smyrna was the first restaurant to receive the Restaurant Accolade Program’s Bronze Award. Pictured from left to right are Ronald E. Harper, Jr., Mark Black, and Jefford McCutcheon. Photo by Jamaaladeen Brady.

Restaurant workers invited to take free trainings on substance use disorders and overdose response

The Division of Public Health’s (DPH) Office of Health Crisis Response (OHCR) is launching a Restaurant Accolade Program to train restaurant workers on how to recognize and respond to substance use disorders and overdoses.

The food service industry had the second highest portion of drug overdose deaths of any industry in Delaware in 2017, as reported in the *Drug Overdose Mortality Surveillance Report, Delaware, 2017*.



Through virtual sessions, restaurant owners, managers, and staff receive overdose response training and Narcan, the medication that can reverse an opioid overdose, possibly saving a life. Participants will also receive certificates and window-cling decals.

The Restaurant Accolade Program has gold, silver, and bronze tiers. Completing each tier is encouraged.

To register for a training, click on the course date:

- [March 23, 2022, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.](#)
- [March 24, 2022, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.](#)

For more information, contact OHCR at OHCR@delaware.gov.



Delaware Cancer Consortium convenes retreat on April 11

The Delaware Cancer Consortium (DCC), the legislative body formed in 2001 to address Delaware's Cancer burden, will hold its annual retreat on April 11, 2022 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. as a virtual event. The theme is *Guided by our Legacy, Forging a Path to Healthy Lifestyles*.

2022 is the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Delaware Advisory Council on Cancer Incidence and Mortality in April 2002. The DCC includes a Governor-appointed Advisory Council and three sub-committees. The Division of Public Health's Comprehensive Cancer Program facilitates the work of the Consortium and all sub-committees.

The live-streamed event is free. Medical providers, patient navigators, legislators, community members, committee members, and state officials are invited to register at <https://www.healthydelaware.org/Consortium>.

Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium Summit is April 26

The 16th Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium (DHMIC) Summit will be held as a virtual event on April 26, 2022 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The summit convenes leaders in the area of family health to discuss new approaches to enhance the health of women, children, and families of all ages.

The live-streamed event runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and is open to the public. Registration is required; visit <https://dethrives.com/summit-2022>.

During the summit, two Kitty Esterly, MD Health Equity Champion awards will be presented to an individual and an organization that work tirelessly for the well-being of mothers and children in Delaware, as well as for the health of the community, by advancing equity. Dr. Kitty Esterly, Delaware's first neonatologist, was an active voice, champion, and advocate on behalf of women, infants, and children. Nominations will be accepted until March 25 at <https://dethrives.com/summit-2022>.

Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services shares 26 fact sheets

Flossing, mouthguards, and baby teeth are some of the fact sheets created by the Division of Public Health's Bureau of Oral Health and Dental



Services (BOHDS). BOHDS recently doubled the number of its fact sheets posted at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohpfactsheetlist.html>. Now 26 are available to the public, dental providers, and other health professionals.

"We identified a need to provide more information and recommendations about additional ways to achieve optimum oral and dental health," said BOHDS Chief Nicholas Conte. "Good oral and dental health helps protect the rest of the body."

BOHDS staff updated its smoking tobacco and quitting fact sheet and added three oral cancer fact sheets, plus another about smokeless tobacco and vaping. Other new fact sheets discuss diabetes, women's health, pregnancy, antibiotic prophylaxis, infection control, denture care, and dental anxiety.

For more information about BOHDS, visit <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html>.



Four cases of avian influenza confirmed

Federal laboratory testing confirmed four cases of highly pathogenic H5N1



avian influenza (HPAI) on two poultry farms in New Castle County, Delaware, and in Cecil and Queen Anne's counties, Maryland between February 23 and March 9. The Delaware Department of Agriculture and the Division of Public Health (DPH) are closely monitoring the cases.

Avian influenza is a highly contagious airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among birds through nasal and eye secretions and manure. Persons who have direct contact with infected birds are at greater risk for infection.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the general public to be at low risk from the HPAI H5 viruses in commercial poultry, backyard flocks, and wild birds. No known human-to-human transmission has occurred with the A(H5N1) virus lineage that is currently circulating in birds in the U.S. and globally, according to the CDC. Poultry meat and egg products are safe to eat.

Follow this advice from DPH to prevent HPAI:

- Properly cook eggs and poultry products to an internal temperature of 165°F.
- Do not harvest or handle wild birds that are obviously sick or found dead.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while cleaning game.
- Wear rubber gloves while cleaning game or cleaning bird feeders.
- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after handling game or cleaning bird feeders.

Individuals who develop flu-like symptoms and were exposed to a backyard flock, poultry setting, or are involved in hunting should contact their medical provider. They should tell their medical provider about their symptoms and that they had recent contact with birds or poultry, or possible contact with bird/poultry waste due to hobbies such as hunting.

For more information about avian influenza and to access backyard flock registration forms, visit <https://agriculture.delaware.gov/poultry-animal-health/poultry/>.

Endometriosis disorders can be managed and treated

Endometriosis, a disorder where endometrial-type tissue grows outside the uterus, affects more than 11 percent of American women between 15 and 44, according to the U.S. Office of Women's Health. Women with endometriosis may have difficulty becoming pregnant.

The cause of endometriosis is unknown. Women are at higher risk of developing it if they have a mother, aunt, or sister with endometriosis, started their period before age 11, have short monthly cycles (less than 27 days), and have heavy menstrual cycles that last more than seven days. Women who have never given birth, went through menopause at an older age, and/or have any disorders of the reproductive tract are at higher risk.

Primary symptoms of endometriosis are pelvic pain often during periods, excessive menstrual cramps, abnormal or heavy menstrual flow, and pain during intercourse. Other symptoms are fatigue, diarrhea, constipation, spotting between periods, and bloating or nausea, especially during menstruation.

Endometriosis is sometimes mistaken for pelvic inflammatory disease or ovarian cysts. It may be confused with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), which causes bouts of diarrhea, constipation, and abdominal cramping. IBS can accompany endometriosis, which can complicate the diagnosis.

Laparoscopy, a minimally invasive surgical procedure, can definitively diagnose endometriosis.

Endometriosis has no cure, but its symptoms can be managed. The U.S. Office of Women's Health Talk



recommends talking to your doctor about hormonal birth control methods such as pills, patches, or rings with lower doses of estrogen. Exercise regularly (more than four hours weekly), lower body fat, and avoid large amounts of caffeinated beverages and alcohol.

Treatment options are pain medications, hormone therapy, hormonal contraceptives, conservative surgery, and hysterectomy. Finding a support group may help. For more information, call 1-800-994-9662 or visit <https://www.womenshealth.gov>.