

DHMIC presents 2022 Kitty Esterly, MD Health Equity Champion Awards

Before a 360-person audience, the Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium (DHMIC) presented the 2022 Kitty Esterly, MD Health Equity Champion Awards during its 16th summit, held virtually on April 26. Dr. Esterly, a pediatrician who specialized in neonatal care, provided quality health care to all people, especially vulnerable populations.

Westside Family Healthcare and Planned Parenthood of Delaware tied as the 2022 organization champions.

Westside Family Healthcare ensures that patients have access to affordable housing, job placement, healthy food, clothing, and other necessities.

Westside offered patients rapid on-site COVID-19 testing and critical postpartum and infant wrap-around services for families facing unemployment and other hardships. Westside raised private and state funds to deliver boxes of diapers, pack-n-plays, car seats, sleep sacks, infant hygiene items, breastfeeding pumps, and breastfeeding supplies to support moms most in need. To reduce unnecessary visits, Westside launched a remote prenatal blood pressure monitoring program.

Planned Parenthood of Delaware (PPD) ensures that the community can access quality, affordable health care and information to protect their health. PPD strives to improve health outcomes by increasing access to prenatal care and reducing rates of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Their new Seaford clinic provides reproductive health care services. In an atmosphere of diversity, equity, and inclusion, PPD clinicians ensure that patients receive needed services, that wishes are addressed, and that patient concerns are at the center of every health care visit.

State Representative Melissa Minor-Brown, a staunch advocate for vulnerable women and children, received the individual champion award. Her policy agenda addresses disparities for Black and Indigenous People of Color. Representative Minor-Brown removes barriers and galvanizes stakeholders in various sectors, such as legislating for an extended postpartum period and including doulas as an integral part of the health care delivery team. She works on the DHMIC's Social Determinants of Health Committee to address issues such as housing for homeless pregnant women.



Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long organized a COVID-19 Remembrance Memorial Ceremony, held May 3 at the Jesse Cooper Building in Dover. A pink dogwood tree honors mission essential personnel, COVID-19 survivors, and the 2,919 people who have died from COVID-19. From left: the Rev. Carol E. Harris, Director of Pastoral Care, Bayhealth; Governor John Carney; Division of Public Health Director Dr. Karyl Rattay; Lieutenant Governor Hall-Long; Charonda Johnson of COVID Survivors for Change; and Rosie Davis of Yellow Heart Memorial. Visit de.gov/covidmemorial to submit the names of loved ones lost to COVID-19, those living with long-haul symptoms, and those who worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

Photo by Sean Dooley.

Delaware infant mortality data

Delaware's infant mortality rate fell from 9.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2004 to 7.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019, a 22.6 percent drop.

In Delaware in 2019, the infant mortality rate in the City of Wilmington was 14.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to 6.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in the balance of New Castle County; 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in Kent County; and 6.0 deaths per 1,000 live births in Sussex County.

In Delaware in 2019, the Black rate of 12.5 deaths per 1,000 live births is three times as high as the White rate of 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births; the Hispanic rate is two times as high as the White rate.

Visit <https://dethrives.com/> for more information.

Source: DPH Vital Statistics (2019)



RespondDE announces Outstanding County Volunteers for 2022

The Division of Public Health's Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness Section manages RespondDE, a statewide volunteer corps of medical and non-medical professionals who are trained to respond to local public health emergencies and promote health education. In 2021, 785 RespondDE volunteers gave over 4,377 hours to assist DPH's COVID-19 response, for an estimated economic impact of \$133,000.

"Your training and skills expand the reach of the Division of Public Health, especially during the ongoing COVID efforts," DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay told the volunteers.

During an April 27 appreciation event RespondDE honored three of its 1,700 volunteers:



Marion Osborne, RN

Marion Osborne, RN, New Castle County RespondDE Volunteer of the Year – Osborne has been a RespondDE volunteer since March 2017. In 2021, she assisted with COVID-19 testing and vaccination Points of Distribution (PODs) and Food Bank First Aid Stations.



Erin Fink, RN

Erin Fink, RN, Kent County RespondDE Volunteer of the Year – Fink has been a RespondDE volunteer since January 2021. In 2021, she assisted with COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and volunteers multiple times weekly, providing student COVID-19 testing at the University of Delaware.



Christopher Miller, RN

Christopher Miller, RN, Sussex County RespondDE Volunteer of the Year – Miller has been a RespondDE volunteer since May 2020. In 2021, he assisted with COVID-19 testing and vaccination PODs, Food Bank First Aid Stations, and other opportunities.

For more information, visit respondde.org. To contact RespondDE or request volunteers at your event, send an email to respondde@delaware.gov or call 302-223-2939.

The infographic features the RespondDE logo (a blue star with 'medical reserve corps' and 'RespondDE' text) in the top left. The main title 'RespondDE COVID-19 response, Delaware, 2021' is in a blue box at the top right. Below this, statistics are presented: '785 volunteers' and '> 4,377 hours' in large red font, with a clock icon to the right. The 'Estimated economic impact: \$133,000' is shown in green. A list of activities includes 'Vaccine distribution events', 'Test kit assembly', and 'Data entry'. A gold ribbon at the bottom says 'Thank you'. The source 'Source: RespondDE, 2022' is at the bottom right.

Stay one step ahead of COVID-19

Delaware's seven-day average of new positive COVID-19 cases rose to 157.1, a 94.0 increase, between March 25, 2022 and April 22, 2022, according to the Division of Public Health (DPH). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 991,439 deaths due to COVID-19 in the United States as of May 2, 2022.

Stay one step ahead of COVID-19 with these tips:

- Get vaccinated and boosted when eligible. Vaccines are readily available. Find a vaccination site at de.gov/getmyvaccine.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Get tested if you have symptoms, as some mirror those of flu and seasonal allergies. Find a testing location or where to get a home test kit at de.gov/gettested.
- If you test positive, check with your health care provider to determine if you should get treatment.
- Mask up in crowded indoor spaces with poor ventilation and if you have a weakened immune system or live with someone who does.
- Everyone age 2 years and older is encouraged to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator when on public transportation.

For the latest COVID-19 data trends, visit <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/>.

Outdoor workers risk getting skin cancer

Skin cancer is a serious risk for outdoor workers, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Farmers, construction and road crews, and other outdoor workers are exposed to damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays that could lead to skin cancer. If you work outdoors or care about someone who does, remember and share these key points:

- 1. Skin cancer is serious.** According to the most recent data available for Delaware, melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, accounts for 2 percent of cancer deaths in the state, with 63 percent of those deaths occurring in men. Limiting outdoor exposure is so important that the U.S. Occupational and Safety Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to minimize workers' sun risk by providing shade on the job and allowing breaks for sunscreen application.
- 2. "Protect and check" is a winning combination.** Shield your skin from head to toe by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and wide-brimmed hats to cover your head, face, neck, and ears. Wear sunglasses that block 99 percent or more of UV light. Use a water-resistant sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and a broad-spectrum Sun Protective Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. If you wear cosmetics, choose a high SPF/broad spectrum label.
Check your skin regularly for new growths and moles and changes in mole shape and color. Contact a dermatologist immediately if anything unusual appears.
- 3. It can take years for skin cancer to develop.** Many adults are diagnosed with skin cancer that started when they were younger. No matter what your age, protect yourself every day, even if you feel and look fine.

Sun safety toolkits specific to schools, camps, and employers are available at DPH's Sun Safety website: <https://www.protectyourskinde.com/>.



Women and girls: prioritize physical and mental health



National Women's Health Week (May 8-14, 2022) reminds women and girls to prioritize their health.

Women and girls who are [caregivers](#), have chronic illnesses or [disabilities](#), and are [lesbian, bisexual, and transgender](#) are at greater risk for poor physical and mental health, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health. Take the following steps to prevent disease and detect problems early:

- 1. Catch up on your exams and screenings**, such as a pap test for cervical cancer and breast cancer [screenings](#). Visit [HealthyDelaware.org](https://www.healthydelaware.org) to contact a Nurse Navigator for assistance in scheduling cancer screenings.
- 2. Learn the basics of [healthier eating habits](#).** Maintain weight with a healthy and balanced eating plan; if planning pregnancy, take folic acid daily to help prevent major birth defects; and [limit alcohol](#) to one drink or less daily.
- 3. Get and stay active.** [Physical activity](#) has many health benefits, including lowering your risk of [heart disease](#).
- 4. Prioritize your [mental health](#).** Get enough [sleep](#), be smoke free, unwind with enjoyable activities, and connect with others. Find services at the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' [Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health](#). If you are overwhelmed with sadness, anxiety, or depression, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others, visit <https://www.suicidehotlines.com/delaware.html> or call: Kent/Sussex Mobile Crisis Unit: 1-800-345-6785 Mobile Crisis Intervention Service New Castle: 302-577-2484 or toll-free: 1-800-652-2929.

Individuals struggling with a substance disorder can visit <http://www.HelpisHereDE.com> or call the Delaware Hope Line at 833-9-HOPEDE.

Seek help for domestic violence and intimate partner violence from the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence at these 24-hour hotlines:
New Castle County: 302-762-6110
Kent and Sussex counties: 302-422-8058
Abriendo Puertas: 302-745-9874.



Getting a comprehensive dilated eye exam can save your sight

May is [Healthy Vision Month](#) and a good time to make an appointment for a comprehensive dilated eye exam to detect eye diseases early – before they cause vision loss and when they are easier to treat.

Diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, and glaucoma can be detected with a comprehensive dilated eye exam. It is a simple and usually painless test.

The eye care professional uses eye drops to view the inside of the eye. The drops dilate (widen) the pupil, which is the opening in the center of the iris, the colored part of the eye. Once dilated, each eye is examined using a special magnifying lens that provides a clear view of important tissues at the back of the eye, including the retina and the optic nerve, which connects the retina to the brain.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommends a dilated eye exam every year for people with diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness in American adults. The CDC recommends a dilated eye exam every two years for Black Americans 40 years and over, individuals over age 60, especially Mexican Americans; and people with a family history of glaucoma.

The [National Eye Institute](#) recommends asking a friend or family member to drive you home from the eye appointment, since your vision may be blurry for a few hours. Bring your sunglasses because your eyes will be temporarily sensitive to light.

For more information, talk to your eye care provider and visit the [CDC](#) or the [National Eye Institute](#).

Research suggests Mediterranean Dietary Plan reduces chronic disease

Four of the top five leading causes of death in Delaware are [chronic diseases](#), according to the Division of Public Health. Chronic diseases progress slowly and persist for a long time. Examples are cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic lower respiratory diseases. At the center of many strategies for managing chronic disease are nutritional and/or dietary interventions, physical activity, and healthy lifestyle changes.

Improving nutrition and a healthy diet are critically important to manage chronic disease. According to [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025](#), one healthy dietary option is the Mediterranean Diet, based on the traditional meals of Italy, Greece, and other countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. [Research](#) suggests that this healthy dietary plan can help prevent heart disease and stroke and reduce risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure.

The Mediterranean dietary plan features plant-based foods like whole grains, vegetables, beans, fruits, herbs, and spices. Fish, seafood, dairy, and poultry are eaten in moderation (up to twice weekly), and red meat only occasionally. Olive oil replaces butter as the main source of fat. Other healthy fats come from nuts and seeds, and from fatty fish like sardines, tuna, and salmon. If dessert is served, it is usually fresh fruit.

Visit Healthy Delaware's [Healthy Lifestyles Map](#) at <https://www.healthydelaware.org> to find local produce at farmers' markets and farm stands. Those seeking physical activity options can also use the Healthy Lifestyles Map to find nearby fitness centers and parks.

