

The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

November 2022

Delawareans urged to get vaccinated as 1,404 flu cases reported statewide

Flu cases in Delaware soared to 1,404 laboratory-confirmed cases as of November 12, according to the Division of Public Health (DPH). Of the total number of flu cases, 598 were reported between November 6 and 12.

Slightly more than a quarter of the state's population (26.2%) had received a flu vaccination as of November 12. DPH urges all Delawareans 6 months of age and older to get their annual flu vaccine as soon as possible to protect against flu-related illness, hospitalization, and death.

Flu vaccination also frees the state's health care providers to address other respiratory viruses such as COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), which are especially dangerous to infants, young children under 2 and seniors.

To find vaccine sites, use DPH's Flu Vaccine Finder at flu.delaware.gov. Uninsured and underinsured individuals can get flu vaccinations at [Public Health Clinics](#) and at community-based locations where DPH mobile units provide additional health services.



DPH launched its flu dashboard on My Healthy Community earlier this month. The flu dashboard will share the state's weekly and seasonal data on positive cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and for the first time,

vaccinations. Updates will occur weekly on Thursdays for local data, and monthly for other geographies. Access the flu dashboard at <https://myhealthycommunity.dhss.delaware.gov/home> or click on the 'Weekly Flu Data' link at flu.delaware.gov.

For more information, visit flu.delaware.gov or call 1-800-282-8672.



Three individuals were recognized for their contributions to the Help Me Grow program, now in its 10th year. From left: Paulina Gyan of the Division of Public Health's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Doug Tyan with Bryn Mawr Psychological Associates, and awardees Dr. Aguida Atkinson, Norma Everett, and Matthew Denn. Photos by Sharon Smith.

Help Me Grow celebrates 10th anniversary

The Division of Public Health's (DPH) Maternal Child Health (MCH) Bureau, Delaware 2-1-1, and other state and community organizations proudly recognized the 10th anniversary of the Help Me Grow Delaware program on November 9 at the Route 9 Library & Innovation Center in New Castle. Help Me Grow connects families with children at risk for developmental and behavioral challenges to community-based programs and services.

The MCH Bureau presented plaques to three individuals for their contributions to the program:

- Matthew Denn: During his tenure as Insurance Commissioner, Denn helped pass legislation that mandated insurance coverage of developmental screenings and provided funding to promote screenings in primary care, improving access across the state.
- Norma Everett: As the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager, Everett built community stakeholder relations to improve conditions for Delaware families and opened the door for collaboration that resulted in the passing of developmental screening legislation in 2009.
- Dr. Aguida Atkinson: She spent her career advocating for community health and, as Help Me Grow Physician Champion, continues to work toward improving Delaware's early childhood system through collaboration and innovation.

Of 19,693 calls to Delaware 2-1-1, a confidential, toll-free help hotline, 17,076 children were served. Learn more at DEThrives.com/Help-Me-Grow.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health



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Telehealth: a new public health tool

Telehealth is the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to provide long-distance health care. Live videoconferencing, remote patient monitoring, streaming media, and land and wireless communications are examples of telehealth technologies.

Telehealth is a service delivery option that enables physicians and practitioners to provide health care throughout Delaware. Patients may be able to avoid lost wages, travel expenses, and childcare costs; overcome transportation barriers; and access services privately without worrying about any perceived stigma.

In Delaware:

- Telehealth services can be accessed, provided there is an established physician-patient relationship. This relationship can be established through previous in-person visits or through an initial telehealth visit.
- Informed consent is required and must comply with current HIPAA requirements.
- Prescriptions may be prescribed through a telehealth visit once the physician-provider relationship is established.
- Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance carriers reimburse for telehealth services if those in-person services are covered.
- Telehealth appointments can occur through the use of audio-only technologies.

Visit the [2022 National Telehealth Conference Summary B](#) and [Telehealth.HHS.gov](#) for how to use telehealth, prepare for a virtual visit, policies, reimbursement, and best practices.

Other sources are the Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center (<https://www.matrc.org/>) and the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration's Office for the Advancement of Telehealth: <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/topics/telehealth>.

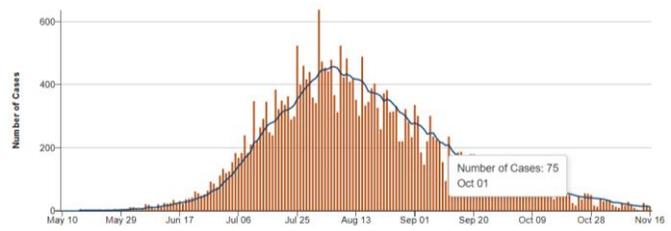
COVID-19 bivalent boosters advised

The Division of Public Health (DPH) recommends that all eligible Delawareans ages 5 years+ get vaccinated without delay for protection from severe COVID-19 disease, hospitalization, and death. Individuals ages 5+ are eligible for the COVID-19 bivalent booster if they completed their primary series (gotten both doses of a two-dose vaccine) at least two months ago.

Bivalent boosters target both the original strain of COVID-19, and BA.4/BA.5 strains of the Omicron variant. They provide better and updated protection against the virus. The original boosters (monovalent) from Pfizer and Moderna are no longer available.

For bivalent booster information, visit de.gov/boosters. For vaccination sites, visit de.gov/getmyvaccine. For COVID-19 data, visit [My Healthy Community](#). For COVID-19 information, visit <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/>, email delaware211@uwde.org, or call Delaware 2-1-1. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211 weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Daily Monkeypox Cases Reported and 7-Day Daily Average, U.S., May 17, 2022 - November 16, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus>

Monkeypox cases gradually decline

Only two new monkeypox (MPX) cases were reported to the Division of Public Health (DPH) between October 14 and November 16. As of November 18, DPH received reports of 43 MPX cases: 29 in New Castle County, five in Kent County, and nine in Sussex County. In the U.S., the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reported 29,080 MPX cases as of November 18, with New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. each having between 522 and 855 cases.

Visit de.gov/monkeypox for more information about MPX vaccination for at-risk individuals and health care workers who provide direct patient care to confirmed or suspected MPX cases. Email questions to DPHCall@delaware.gov.



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Caregiver Resource Centers offer support

Whether caring for a parent diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, a loved one who suffered a stroke, or a child with a disability, caregivers benefit from information, assistance, and support. They can find those things and more through the [Delaware Caregiver Resource Center \(CRC\) Network](#).

CRCs in all three counties help caregivers navigate services systems, find solutions to individualized concerns, make appropriate referrals, conduct support groups, and provide specialized training to caregivers. Center coordinators understand the challenges that caregivers face. The CRCs are supported by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' (DHSS) [Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities \(DSAAPD\)](#).

The six CRC locations include: [Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore](#) (which operates a CRC in New Castle and Georgetown), the [Wilmington Senior Center](#) (with a Latino outreach specialist), [Newark Senior Center](#), [Modern Maturity Center](#) in Dover, and the [CHEER Community Center](#) in Georgetown.

Caregivers seeking communication devices and modified items that support people with daily tasks, employment, and play can visit three assistive technology centers in person through the [Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative's \(DATI\)](#) or in person and virtually at [Easterseals' demonstration center](#) in New Castle. Caregivers can explore assistive devices such as medication reminders, adapted keyboards, smart devices, and other assistive technologies such as a smartphone application. Search DATI's lending inventory at www.dati.org/loan/search_inventory_new.php.

For more information, visit [Delaware's Aging and Disability Resource Center](#) or call 1-800-223-9074.

November honors family caregivers

November is National Family Caregivers Month. Caregiving is a physically and emotionally exhausting job. According to [National Today](#), most caregivers have additional jobs and most family caregiving is unpaid.

[Easterseals' respite voucher program](#), supported by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' (DHSS) Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities, gives family caregivers a much-needed temporary break. The DHSS Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance, and hospice agencies also offer respite.

Adult day care programs offer activities for seniors, veterans, and adults with physical disabilities and individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's disease. [The DHSS Division of Health Care Quality provides a list of licensed adult day services](#).

Caregiving resources

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD):

[Delaware's Aging and Disability Resource Center](#) (ADRC), 1-800-223-9074, delawareadrc@delaware.gov.

[Caregiving information, including an Alzheimer's toolkit and a legal handbook for relatives raising children](#)

[The Guide to Services for Older Delawareans and Persons with Disabilities](#)

Assistive technology centers:

The Resource and Technology Demonstration Center, 61 Corporate Circle, New Castle, Delaware 19720. Open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; or take a virtual tour at www.easterseals.com. Contact them at 302-221-2087 or resources@esdel.org.

[Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative's \(DATI\)](#) lending libraries:

- University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies, 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, Delaware 19716-5901, Newcastle.atrc@dati.org, 302-831-0354
- Milford Wellness Village, 21 West Clarke Avenue, Suite 1200, Milford, Delaware, 19963, kent-sussex.atrc@dati.org, 302-739-6885.



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Display address numbers correctly

Can first responders quickly find your residence or business during an emergency?

New Castle County, Kent County, and Sussex County require structures and mailboxes to have legible address numbers that are visible from the street or road fronting the property. Structures that sit back from the road and/or are hidden are required to display address numbers on a pole, sign, monument placed where the driveway meets the street or road.

[New Castle County Code](#) requires residences to have Arabic or alphabetical characters that are at least 4" tall and a half-inch wide. They must contrast with their background and not be spelled out. Reflective numbers are not required. For more information, visit the [New Castle County Department of Land Use](#) or call 302-395-5572.

[Kent County Code](#) requires address residential numbers to contrast with their background, be either Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters, and be at least 4" tall and three-quarters of an inch wide. Reflective numbers are not required. For more information, including [commercial requirements](#), visit the [Kent County Department of Planning Services](#) or call 302-744-2451.

[Sussex County Code](#) requires address numbers on residences, townhouses, and businesses to be reflective, in block style, contrast with their background, and be visible from both sides of the street or road during day and nighttime hours. Numbers should be at least 3" tall on mailboxes and 4" tall on the side of residences, townhouses, and businesses. Apartment buildings and high-rises must display 6" reflective numbers above or to the side of the main entrance and above or to the side of the doorway of each unit. For more information, including industrial and commercial requirements, visit the [Sussex County Geographic Information Office](#) or call 302-855-1176.

Smoke detectors save lives

Your family only has four minutes or less to escape a house fire. Working smoke detectors reduce house fire deaths by as much as 70 percent.

[Del. Code Title 16, Chapter 66, Section 6631](#) requires that smoke detectors be installed at each level of the home, including the basement, and outside each bedroom or group of bedrooms. The Delaware State Fire Marshal's Office explains the law and includes placement diagrams; visit <https://statefiremarshal.delaware.gov/special-programs/smoke-detectors/>.

Occupied residences constructed before July 8, 1993, are required to have individual, single station, battery-powered smoke detectors. Owners of occupied residences constructed after July 8, 1993 are required to have a licensed electrician install hard-wired smoke detectors powered by household electricity. Multiple smoke detectors must be wired so that if one smoke detector sounds, they all will sound. Most experts recommend that homes have hard-wired smoke detectors with a battery backup to provide protection with or without power. In rented or leased units, tenants are responsible for maintaining the smoke detector battery.

The Delaware State Fire School recommends following these fire protection steps:

- Every month, test a smoke detector by pushing its test button. It should loudly beep or chirp. Dust it regularly.
- Replace batteries whenever the smoke detector chirps or beeps and when changing the clocks to daylight savings time. Ten-year lithium batteries are good for 10 years from the date of manufacture, not 10 years from installation. Mark the date of manufacture on the outside of the smoke alarm to remind you when to replace it.
- The blind and deaf can purchase smoke detectors with a strobe-light feature and a vibration appliance placed beneath your pillow.
- If you cannot afford to purchase a new smoke detector, ask your local fire company if they distribute them.



For more information, visit the [Delaware State Fire Marshal's Office](#), the [Delaware State Fire School](#) or the [National Fire Protection Association](#), which has fire safety information in different languages.