

The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

November 2023



DPH hosts 2023 Immunization Summit on December 7 in Dover

The 2023 Immunization Summit will be held on December 7, 2023 from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Bally's, located at 1131 N. Dupont Highway in Dover, Delaware.

Sponsored by the Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Delaware Academy of Medicine, the event will update doctors and nurses on the immunization status of Delawareans, current vaccine coverage rates, and new and future vaccines. Organizers expect up to 150 providers to attend.

Confirmed guest speakers are Stephen Eppes, MD, who will address Respiratory Syncytial Virus; and Captain Sarah Schillie, MD of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention who will address Hepatitis A and B. Jennifer Vodzak, MD of Nemours Children's Health will present "Emerging Vaccine Pipeline."

Heather Simpson and Lydia Greene from Back to the Vax will speak on vaccine hesitancy. A panel will discuss vaccination rates and requirements, DPH initiatives for flu, HPV, COVID-19, Vaccines for Children, and the Bridge Program.

"Attending this summit will keep you informed about current vaccines and what is to come," said James Talbott, manager of DPH's Immunization Program.

Registration is \$40.00 for Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits and \$20 without CME. Public Health and Medical Residents attend for free.

Registrations are being taken until December 6. To register and for an agenda, visit the [Immunization Coalition of Delaware](https://immunizedelaware.org/upcoming-events/2023-immunization-summit/) at <https://immunizedelaware.org/upcoming-events/2023-immunization-summit/>.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

DPH encourages flu vaccination in the face of a potentially active flu season

As temperatures drop and leaves fall, the Division of Public Health (DPH) reminds Delawareans that this is also flu season.

Infection with flu can cause mild to severe illness, and sometimes even death. Getting an annual vaccine reduces the chance of becoming ill, missing work and fun family events, and developing complications that could lead to hospitalization.

For the 2023-2024 flu season, everyone who is 6 months of age or older should receive a flu vaccination. Children under the age of five, older adults, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic underlying medical conditions should get a flu vaccination as soon as possible. DPH emphasizes vaccination for those who live or work with infants under six months of age, as well as for those who live or work in congregant settings such as long-term care and correctional facilities.

Within the past few months, Australia and New Zealand had a particularly active flu season. In addition, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and COVID-19 variants continue to circulate.

Pharmacies, participating medical provider offices, Federally Qualified Health Centers (for their patients), and DPH clinics offer flu vaccines. DPH provides flu vaccines at locations where DPH mobile units also provide health care.

DPH recommends preventing getting vaccinated for the flu, COVID-19, and RSV if eligible. Stay home if sick, seek treatment if you test positive for any of the illnesses, and wear a mask if you or someone close to you is at higher risk of illness.

For more information about the flu and vaccination sites, visit flu.delaware.gov or call 1-800-282-8672.



2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine urged for age 6 months and older

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized and approved the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna, and Novavax. The updated vaccines are better designed to protect against the currently circulating COVID-19 variants to prevent severe illness.

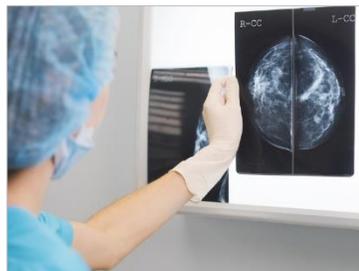
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months and older get the updated vaccine. Anyone whose last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine was at least two months ago, including those who have never been vaccinated, are eligible. Those younger than 5 years may require more than one dose of the vaccine depending on their previous vaccinations, but those 5 years and older will only need one dose regardless of previous status.

Everyone can obtain the vaccine free of charge in one of three ways:

1. Many commercial insurance plans available through the government or a private employer are required to provide the vaccine at no cost.
2. For those without health insurance or their insurance does not provide the vaccine at no cost, vaccines are available free of charge at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), public health clinics, local pharmacies, and certain providers through the State of Delaware's Immunization Program and at Walgreens, CVS, and other ETrueNorth network pharmacies through the federal government's Bridge Access Program.
3. Children from low-income families who receive their vaccines from the CDC's Vaccines for Children program can get their updated COVID-19 vaccine where they traditionally receive all their vaccines.

To locate vaccine sites participating in the Bridge Access Program, visit vaccines.gov or call 1-800-232-0233. To learn more about the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines and find locations where administered, visit de.gov/covidvaccine. Visit the Division of Public Health at de.gov/coronavirus for all COVID-19 information.

The federal government is offering free COVID-19 test kits for home delivery. Visit covidtests.gov to request your shipment.



DPH releases annual cancer data reports

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public

Health (DPH) presented its data report, [Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Delaware, 2016-2020](#), to the Delaware Cancer Consortium (DCC) in October. A compendium report, [Census Tract-Level Cancer Incidence in Delaware, 2016-2020](#), presents incidence rates by census tract for all cancer sites combined (all-site cancer), as well as the 23 top site-specific cancer types for incidence and mortality.

Between 2006 and 2020, mortality rates for all-site cancer decreased an average of 1.8% per year in Delaware and decreased an average of 1.7% per year in the U.S. Delaware's current ranking of 15th among the states for highest all-site cancer mortality is the same ranking as in the 2022 report.

In this report, cancer incidence rates are compared for the period 2006 to 2019 because the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays and reductions in cancer screening and diagnosis, leading to a decline in 2020 incidence counts and rates that was considered an anomaly.

Between 2006 and 2019, all-site cancer incidence rates decreased an average of 1.1% per year in Delaware and an average of 0.6% per year in the U.S. While progress continues to be made, Delaware's 2016-2020 all-site cancer incidence rate (457.6 per 100,000 population) is higher than the U.S. rate (442.2 per 100,000 population).

The Screening for Life (SFL) program provides payment for cancer screening tests to qualified Delaware adults. Eligible individuals can receive mammograms, Pap and HPV tests, and screening tests for prostate, colorectal, and lung cancer when recommended by a doctor. Contact SFL at <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/dpc/sfl.html> or call 302-744-1040 to speak with a case manager or enrollment specialist.

To learn how to prevent, detect, and treat chronic diseases and obtain assistance with a cancer screening, visit the Healthy Delaware website at HealthyDelaware.org or call the [Delaware Comprehensive Cancer Control Program](#) at 302-744-1040. For more information about the DCC, visit <https://www.healthydelaware.org/Consortium>.

Preparedness tools help Delawareans with Access and Functional Needs

Caregivers, relatives, and advocates of Delawareans who have access and functional needs should help them plan for natural disasters and other emergencies such as hazardous materials accidents, disease outbreaks, and power outages.

Persons with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) are defined as persons with a variety of visual, hearing, mobility, cognitive, emotional, and mental limitations. AFN also includes older people, children, those with limited or no English language proficiency, persons from diverse cultures, individuals who use life-support systems, people who use service animals, and people who are medically or chemically dependent. Delawareans with access and functional needs may require additional support in one or more of the following functional areas: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, self-supervision, and medical care before, during, and after an incident.

Delawareans who live alone or have access and functional needs should ask someone dependable to serve as their preparedness buddy, and another to be an alternate buddy. The preparedness buddy should regularly check in on their designated buddy to ensure they have enough medication, oxygen, medical supplies, food, and water.



There is also a Preparedness Buddy brochure to use for creating a personal emergency plan for all persons, including those with access and functional needs. The Preparedness Buddy brochure gives a step-by-step template to complete an emergency plan using a personal support network or buddy system. Find this document at

<https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/php/preparednessbuddy.html>.

Use another tool, the Travel Buddy brochure, to design a personal travel plan for all persons, including those with access and functional needs. Travel Buddy provides a step-by-step template to complete a travel safety plan using a personal support network. Access this travel brochure at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/php/files/TravelBuddy.pdf>.

PUBLISHED
IN 2023



The Division of Public Health, Family Health Systems Section published three data briefs in 2023 that are posted to the Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium's website:

1. [Birth Defects, Delaware Profile 2010-2019](#)
2. [Reproductive Health, Delaware Profile, 2012-2021](#)
3. [Sudden Death in the Young, 2017-2021.](#)

Family Health also published two doula reports that are posted to the Delaware Thrives website under the [Doula Ad Hoc Committee's landing page](#):

1. [Doula Stakeholder Engagement: Focus Group Study Report, July 2023](#)
2. [Doula Stakeholder Engagement: Report on Interviews with Licensed Providers of Maternal Health, July 2023.](#)

This year, DPH also published two oral and dental health documents:

1. Read about the Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services' data brief, *The Oral Health of Delaware's Kindergarten and Third Grade Children, 2022* in the [April 2023 issue of the Delaware Journal of Public Health](#).
2. The Bureau of Health Planning and Resources Management published the [Delaware Dentists Survey, 2022](#).

