



Public Health Pulse

Mercer County Health Department Newsletter



HEALTH NEWS

 MCHD's immunization program will be out in the schools this spring to provide students with their required immunizations for the next school year. Apollo and New Boston 5th grade students will be eligible for Tdap (tetanus) and meningitis vaccines. Both of these are required for entrance into 6th grade. This vaccine clinic will be held on May 6th, and MercyOne Genesis will be onsite to provide school physicals. Mercer County High School juniors can get their second meningitis vaccine, which is required to have before their senior year. This clinic will be held on April 29th. Contact your child's school nurse for questions.

 April 7th – 14th marks National Public Health Week (NPHW). Each year, the American Public Health Association (APHA) brings communities across the country together to celebrate NPHW, recognize public health contributions, and address important health issues. Your health is our mission. Public health isn't just about one person—it's about you, your friends, your family, and everyone in your community. It impacts how we all live, work, and play.

At the Mercer County Health Department, our mission is to promote health and well-being, prevent and manage disease, and protect the community through education, intervention, and inspection management. Our dedicated team at MCHD is committed to improving the well-being of our community. We continually stay informed about the latest developments in public health to ensure that our clients receive the best possible services. Together, let's continue working to make Mercer County a healthier place to live!

Upcoming Events

Certified Food Protection Manager's Course:

- May 7th, 2025
8am - 5pm

at the Mercer County YMCA

Cost: \$150 - license is valid for 5 years

Strike Out Cancer Breast Cancer Awareness

- April 24th, 2025
4:30pm

at Northside Ball Diamond

Health Jokes

Q: What's the condition of the boy who swallowed the quarter?

A: No change yet.

I felt super exhausted after giving blood. It's such a draining procedure.

MCHD Health Happenings

In addition to our day-to-day duties, here are some activities our staff have been up to!

PHEP Coordinator Activities

Our Emergency Response Coordinator, Todd Walthall, presented a Retail Security Awareness session at the Regional Healthcare Coalition Meeting in Peoria. During the presentation, Todd discussed items that can be legally purchased locally but may be used for illegal purposes. He also covered topics related to Bio, Chemical, and Aggroterrorism. Bioterrorism involves the intentional release of harmful biological agents (such as bacteria, viruses, or toxins) to cause illness or death in humans, animals, or plants. Aggroterrorism targets the agricultural sector, aiming to disrupt food supply chains through similar methods. Chemical terrorism involves the deliberate use of chemicals to cause harm. Additionally, Todd furthered his emergency management education by attending a two-day All Hazards Liaison Officer Course at the Office of Emergency Management in Kewanee, as well as the Quad Cities Disaster Conference in Bettendorf.

Women's Health Pop Up

The Well Woman and Breast Cancer Navigation programs were active again this past quarter, making appearances at Rocky's in New Boston and City Limits in Viola. These events provided opportunities to engage with community members across the county, share information about our programs, and educate on our available resources. Additionally, we spoke with local residents and encouraged them to complete the Mercer County Community Health Needs Assessment Survey, which helps us identify and understand the community's needs and develop strategies to address them.

February Heart Awareness Month

Each year, February is honored as Heart Health month. To discuss the importance of this, Annette Doonan and Melissa Hajostek from the Mercer County Health Department, Office of Wellness Navigation, met with Terry James of WRMJ during their Focus segment. Mercer County residents were educated on the risks and symptoms of heart disease, and also preventative health care every woman should know to help reduce their risks. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in the United States. One in five female deaths is attributed to heart disease.

Adolescent Health Program

The Adolescent Health Program has been VERY busy this past quarter! As we work towards our goal of educating the youth of Mercer County, we provided education to Sherrard High School seniors on transitioning their healthcare from pediatric to adult care. We have been visiting with students at High Roads and teaching them the importance of safe dating. Also, we initiated a Peer Advisory Group at Mercer County High School. This group consists of high school students who want to help educate fellow students on health topics they feel are important to the school. See the attached flyer about the Hygiene Drive the students have organized!

Blood Drive

MCHD hosts ImpactLife blood drives throughout the year. Our most recent drive was on March 27th. We love having this opportunity to help serve our community and others. Donors can be scheduled ahead of time or taken as walk-ins if appointments are available. Check Facebook for our next event.



More activities on the next page!



Tooth Mobile

Stephanie Retherford, Dental Coordinator, has been traveling across the county to visit local schools, educating students about dental care. More than 1,070 students from Winola, New Boston, Apollo, Sherrard Elementary, and the Mercer County YMCA Children's School participated in a dental education presentation and demonstration. Additionally, the Tooth Mobile visited three schools in March, providing dental cleanings to 68 students. Future clinics are planned at Sherrard and Mercer County school districts, so reach out to your child's nurse to get signed up!

Signs of Suicide (SOS)

On February 4th, our MHAP team assisted the Mercer County Junior High School with SOS Signs of Suicide Training for their 7th and 8th-grade class. SOS is a crucial mental health education and screening tool, helping to connect students to resources they may need. The program for 7th-grade reached 93 students on this day alone, resulting in 17 students requiring extra follow-up and screening. Eleven of those 17 students were further referred for new or continued services with a mental health provider. The 8th-grade training reached 82 students, resulting in 10 students needing extra follow-up and screening. Eight of those 10 students were further referred for new or continued mental health serviced. This is a program we hold yearly at the High School and Junior High level with both Mercer County and Sherrard School Districts. The MHAP team will be in Sherrard schools on April 1st and 29th to provide this important training to those students as well.

Night in a Car Fundraiser

In February our staff helped fundraise for the Mercer County Emergency Housing Initiative by spending the night in our cars to simulate rural homelessness. If you are unhoused or at risk of homelessness please reach out to Mercer County Better Together! [MCBetterTogether.org/mchi](https://mcbettertogether.org/mchi)



SCAN

MENTAL HEALTH
RESOURCE
DIRECTORY



MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

Meet our Mental Health Action Program (MHAP)!

Did you know? Anyone can make a referral to our Mental Health Action Program, and it is completely FREE for all participants! We can help you navigate the mental health system, overcome barriers you may be experiencing, and assist with finding the resources you may need. Give us a call to get started!



MHAP
Mental Health Action Program



309-582-7954

MHAP Summer Outreach

During summer break the MHAP team hits the road in the Mobile Clinic to bring services to students in Mercer County. Don't let the months out of school interfere with your mental health treatment!

We will be working on the summer schedule soon!
If you are interested in this service please call us!



Pictured: Kurt Doyle and Megan Bull

READINESS REMINDER



TORNADO

Tornado facts:

- Illinois ranks fourth in the United States for the most tornadoes per square mile
- 80 % of tornadoes happen during the day
- Tornadoes have occurred every month of the year at all hours of the day
- It is critical that you monitor the ever-changing weather conditions in Illinois
- Conduct periodic tornado safety drills at home and work
- Maintain an emergency supply kit
- Check the weather forecast before traveling. Postpone plans if severe weather is imminent.



TORNADO WATCH: *BE PREPARED!*

Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans and check supplies and your safe room. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps to save lives! Watches are issued by the [Storm Prediction Center](#) for counties where tornadoes may occur. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous counties or even states.

TORNADO WARNING: *TAKE ACTION!*

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows. If in a mobile home, a vehicle, or outdoors, move to the closest substantial shelter and protect yourself from flying debris. Warnings are issued by your [local forecast office](#). Warnings typically encompass a much smaller area (around the size of a city or small county) that may be impacted by a tornado identified by a forecaster on [radar](#) or by a [trained spotter](#)/law enforcement who is watching the storm.

OTHER INFORMATION

Scan our QR code!

The Mercer County Health Department offers many programs that provide resources to those who are in need of various health services. In order to connect you with the resources you might need, please fill out the survey to the best of your ability!



309-582-3759



www.mchdil.com



305 NW 7th St. Aledo, IL 61231

2025



At Mercer County Health Department
From 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

All services are walk in

The services offered are:

- No Cost HIV, Hepatitis C, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and Syphilis testing with individual risk reduction counseling
- Free safer sex supplies
- Free Harm Reduction Supplies: Narcan, Fentanyl test strips, disease reduction substance use supplies
- Telehealth PrEP services with labs to reduce the risk of HIV

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THURSDAY, APRIL 24TH 2025 - 4:30PM

NORTHSIDE PARK

FUNDRAISER BENEFITTING JEN OLSON,
NEW BOSTON ELEMENTARY
KINDERGARTEN TEACHER.



HYGIENE DRIVE

April 1st 2025-May 23rd 2025

HELP MERCER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

The Mercer County Health Department's Peer Advisory Group is hosting a hygiene drive to help local high school students. We are asking for donations of hygiene products, including: shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, etc. Full size or travel size products. Your contributions will directly benefit those in need, with all donations going to the students.



DROP OFF LOCATIONS:

Mercer County Health Dept

305 NE 7th St, Aledo

Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm

Mercer County High School

1500 S College Ave, Aledo

Mon-Fri 8am-3pm



*** MONETARY DONATIONS
ACCEPTED AT THE
MERCER COUNTY HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**