





# Public Health Pulse

Mercer County Health Department Newsletter



## HEALTH NEWS

 As of January 1, 2024, e-cigarette use is no longer permitted in indoor public spaces. “E-cigarettes contain nicotine and other chemicals which can be harmful to both those who use them and those who are exposed to them,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. Bars, restaurants, and other retail establishments can get more information on the requirements of the updated law, and can download signage for their establishments at [www.smoke-free.illinois.gov](http://www.smoke-free.illinois.gov). Consumers can use that same website to register complaints if they witness non-compliance with the indoor smoking/vaping ban. You may also contact MCHD with any questions regarding this law or to submit a complaint.

 April 1-7th is National Public Health Week (NPHW)! The American Public Health Association (APHA) is sponsoring NPHW to recognize the contributions of public health. This year’s theme, “Protecting, Connecting, and Thriving: We Are All Public Health,” focuses on the interconnectedness of health and community well-being. From preventing disease to assisting with healthcare access, our team at the Mercer County Health Department is dedicated to improving the well-being of our community every single day. Follow along on our Facebook page @MercerCountyHD for tips and resources throughout the week, and let’s continue working together to make Mercer County a healthier place to live, work, and thrive!

## Upcoming Events

**Mental Health First Aid**  
April 19th, 2024  
9 AM - 5 PM at MCHD  
Cost: FREE (Sponsored by Mercer Foundation for Health)

**Certified Food Protection Manager’s Course**  
May 9th, 2024  
8 AM - 5 PM  
at the Aledo United Methodist Church  
Cost: \$150 - license is valid for 5 years

## Health Jokes

**Q:** Why do your heart, liver, and lungs all fit in your body?

**A:** Because they are well organized.

—  
The plague, the flu, and common cold walk into the room. I asked, “What is this? Some kind of sick joke?”

## EXCITING THINGS IN THE WORKS

### MCHD Garden Collaboration with Merco Momco

Merco Momco has teamed up with the Mercer County Health Department staff to plant the community garden located at Mercer County Health Department. The families will be involving their young children to help plant seedlings of fruits, veggies, and flowers. It will be fun for the kids to learn about the foods they enjoy eating. What a great win for the community garden! Once the garden is ready to be harvested, the items will be placed in the cooler and shelves at the health department for anyone in the community to enjoy. The Girl Scouts may also have their hand in planting and maintaining the flowers/garden as a community project.

If anyone in the communities of Mercer County would like to “Grow a Row” of extras and donate to your local food pantries or Mercer County Health Department please do so. The need for healthy free food is big. If you have fruit trees but are unable to pick the fruit, please contact MCHD as we may be able to help if you would like to donate the fruit.



## READINESS REMINDER

### Preparing for a Tornado

- **Know your area's tornado risk.** In the U.S., the Midwest and the Southeast have a greater risk for tornadoes.
- **Know the signs of a tornado**, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar like a freight train.
- **Sign up for your community's warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, then become familiar with the warning tone.
- **Pay attention to weather reports.** Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.
- **Identify and practice going to a safe shelter** such as a safe room built using FEMA criteria or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room, or basement on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- **Plan for your pet.** They are an important member of your family, so they need to be included in your family's emergency plan.
- **Prepare for long-term stay at home or sheltering in place** by gathering emergency supplies, cleaning supplies, non-perishable foods, water, medical supplies, and medication.

# MCHD Health Happenings

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

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## Signs of Suicide

SOS is a crucial mental health education and screening tool, helping to connect students to resources they may need. On January 30th, our MHAP team assisted the Mercer County Junior High School with SOS Signs of Suicide Training for the 7th grade class. The program reached 76 students on this day, resulting in 20 requiring additional one-on-one follow up with MHAP staff. 15 of those 20 students were further referred for new or continued services with a mental health provider (20% - national average is 8%).

On February 27th, our MHAP team assisted the MCJH with SOS training for the 8th grade class. The program reach 92 students on this day, resulting in 15 requiring additional one-on-one follow up with MHAP staff. 11 of those 15 students were referred for new or continued services with a mental health provider (12% - national average 8%).



## Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid Training was held on March 1st at MCHD. Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. If you are interested in taking this class, please call to sign up for our next one on April 19th!



**Mental Health  
FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR  
MENTAL WELLBEING

## Homelessness in Mercer County

Our Mental Health Action Program's Nurse Navigator, Krissy Dixon, is one of many people and agencies that are teaming up to fight homelessness in Mercer County. WRMJ shared their article: "Many are surprised to learn that homelessness is a problem in Mercer County, that's according to Cathy Jordan, Homeless Coordinator for Project Now. She, along with Kyle McEwen, of Mercer County Better Together, and Krissy Dixon, a Nurse Navigator with the Mercer County Health Department, were guests on WRMJ's Focus program Wednesday [February 7th]. There is a collaborative effort to address homelessness in the county and find ways to help those in need." To listen to the interview, please visit <https://wrmj.com/agencies-team-up-to-fight-homelessness-in-mercer-county/>.

## Tooth Mobile

Our Tooth Mobile was busy this quarter visiting the Mercer County and Sherrard Schools with both dental cleaning services and dental education. Our dental program was able to educate 517 kids in Pre K-5th Grade. With help from local dentists, Mackenzie Clawson and Luke Lower, the Tooth Mobile was able to complete preventative dental care on 125 kids Pre K-12th Grade.

## Heart Health Month in February

On February 13th, our Women's Wellness program staff was interviewed by WRMJ for Heart Health Month to remind women that they are at an increased risk for heart disease. Our staff discussed ways to prevent heart disease, such as eating a healthy diet, exercising, reducing alcohol consumption, and not smoking. The Women's Wellness staff also explained the navigation services that they can provide; including scheduling, transportation, and insurance assistance for preventative healthcare appointments. If you or someone you know needs services, please call MCHD at 309-582-3759.





## FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

### In loving memory

Bill Glenn was a devoted volunteer at the Mercer County Health Department and was the one responsible for ensuring our food pantry was stocked with fresh produce each week. Unfortunately, Bill passed away this past February. Bill volunteered more than 209 days for a total of 765 hours and contributed a total economic value to Mercer County of \$21,833. He was such a caring man and a valued member of our team at MCHD. He loved serving this community and it showed in everything he did. We are truly going to miss him!

Due to his passing, we have been exploring ways to continue the fresh produce in the food pantry. Thankfully, we have had some amazing people volunteer to continue on his mission.

- Colleen Smith
- Gary Long
- Kyle Matlick
- Ed Griffin
- Myron Higgins

Thank you for stepping in and allowing us to continue to offer fresh produce to our community. We are so thankful for your service!

Stay tuned for more updates to our food pantry in the next quarter!

## 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!



## The Project of the Quad Cities

Every 4th Monday from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, the Project of the Quad Cities visits the Mercer County Health Department to serve the Mercer County community. 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

\*A full calendar can be found on page 5.



The Project  
4101 John Deere Rd.  
Moline, IL 61265  
(309) 762-5433



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

# 2024

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