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A quarterly newsletter from Public Health Madison & Dane County

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Safeguarding Our Community Against Measles

We often hear the phrase “It takes a village to raise a child”, but it also takes a herd. When a high percentage of people in a community get recommended vaccines the community benefits from what we call “herd immunity.” This means that we’re all well protected from vaccine-preventable diseases, and that protection includes our most vulnerable friends, neighbors, and family members —those who can’t be vaccinated because they’re too young, are pregnant, or have compromised immune systems or complex health issues.



In the face of this recent outbreak of measles (over 1,200 cases in 30 states) and beyond, it’s crucial to maintain herd immunity in our community. We are working with the community and community partners to ensure that, should

measles appear in our community, our response is swift, coordinated, and works to minimize spread of this highly contagious disease.

We routinely work with local health care providers and school districts to conduct outreach activities in an effort to achieve herd immunity for our community. We have also been preparing ourselves, and our community, in case we see a case of measles in our area. We already have good mass clinic plans and emergency preparedness plans in place for such an event, which resulted from our previous responses to measles cases. We have now reviewed and assessed those plans to assure that they are accurate and up to date. Additionally, we've done media outreach and social media messaging to the public about the importance of getting immunized for measles.

Make sure you're part of the "herd!" Contact your healthcare provider or check the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry](#) to be sure that you and your family have had the recommended amount of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines.

Food Access in South Madison



Madison has a variety of food access options: supermarkets, mid-sized grocery stores, corner stores, and numerous farmers markets and farm stands. And yet, for families with limited time, resources, and access to transportation, location drives where they buy food. Having easy access to a grocery store with a wide range of healthy, affordable, and culturally

appropriate foods can help families get the food they need for active and healthy lives.

Aware of the connections between food insecurity, malnutrition, hunger, and other negative health outcomes, our Policy, Planning, and Evaluation division has been monitoring food access in Dane County. Recently, a potential challenge arose in Madison: suddenly and unexpectedly to many local residents, The Pick 'n Save grocery store on Park Street seemed likely to close as part of long-term development plans in the area. PHMDC Policy Analyst Nick Heckman had previously prepared a [Food Access Improvement Map](#) to examine areas with high densities of low-income people who live greater than a mile from the nearest supermarket. This particular store falls squarely within an area of focus, suggesting that it would be a problem to lose grocery access at this location.

Kroger, who owns Pick 'n Save, does not have a long-term lease on the building. They previously indicated that modernizing the decades-old building would not be feasible, but choose to keep the store open because of the importance it serves the community. Recognizing this as vulnerable location, the City of Madison, who owns the adjacent Truman-Olson site, issued a request for

proposals (RFP) to develop that plot of land which includes a requirement that proposals include grocery retail space. When SSM Health entered the conversation to announce that they would be purchasing the Pick ‘n Save site to locate their new south Madison clinic, it seemed that the Pick ‘n Save would be lost within the year, well before a new grocery store would be built

Heckman and other staff from the Planning, Economic Development, and Mayor’s offices engaged with stakeholders at Kroger and SSM to facilitate discussions about the best course of action. At the same time, community organizers on Madison’s south side mobilized to show support for retaining grocery access on Park Street. Amid the attention, SSM decided to establish their new clinic on Fish Hatchery Rd, thereby delaying the immediate threat to sell and demolish the Pick ‘n Save site. Crisis temporarily averted.

The City is currently reviewing proposals to develop the Truman Olson site. In the meantime, Heckman and the City’s Food Policy Director, George Reistad, meet regularly to research short-term grocery gap solutions in case pressure to close Pick ‘n Save resumes. Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway has expressed her commitment to retaining grocery access in this area, and the Madison Food Policy Council, which Heckman and Reistad staff, is paying close attention to the situation in case Healthy Retail Access Program funds are needed to help support a temporary grocery gap solution.

While the city’s involvement at Truman Olson promises a long term solution for food access in south Madison, PHMDC and our governmental and community partners’ involvement will help design solutions in case there are any anticipated—or unanticipated—challenges in the short term.

Violence Prevention Team Work

Violence Prevention efforts within Public Health Madison & Dane County began to take shape in a variety of ways over the past year. The violence prevention (VP) team within the Policy Planning and Evaluation division is currently involved in 13 different projects that address a spectrum of violence prevention across the County.

Projects include several youth-focused initiatives in neighborhoods and schools, cross-sector collaborations like the Community Safety Intervention Team (CSIT), which responds to violence incidents and works to prevent further violence and retaliation, and the development of five work groups that will develop and present recommendations to address disproportionate minority contact in the criminal justice system.

Also significant is the VP team’s work to move upstream and prevent violence before it occurs, rather than merely responding to violence. A recent kickoff of



police/resident listening circles coordinated by the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion is a great example of looking at upstream strategies for violence prevention. The police/resident listening circles, which are community led, will be occurring 12 times throughout the year in two different neighborhoods in Madison, with the hope of expanding to other areas of Dane County in the future. This upcoming year, the VP team will remain busy collecting and compiling VP data, reconvening and growing systems thinking and action capacity within the VP coalition, and releasing a county wide multi-sector violence prevention 2020 plan.



Action to Address PFAS

In the Spring when PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) were detected in a few Madison Wells, we created an informational webpage and took part in a number of community meetings to discuss potential health concerns.

In the last year, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has been conducting a literature review of currently available scientific information about PFOA and PFOS, two of the most historically popular PFAS. As a result, they recently recommended a Wisconsin groundwater standard of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and PFOS either separately or combined to protect health. This standard would be much lower than the current EPA Health Advisory Level of 70ppt from 2016, but levels of PFOA and PFOS currently detected in Madison Wells are below this interim guidance.

In accordance with state statute, the Department of Natural Resources will now start the rule-making process to make this standard enforceable. This process typically takes about two years and includes a public comment period. In addition, Governor Evers has signed an executive order to curb PFAS pollution and develop an action plan for dealing with PFAS.

Despite this action, in the absence of a current standard, most water utilities and private well owners in Wisconsin don't test for PFAS. The Madison Water Utility will continue to test their wells and educate their customers about the contaminant and we are also making changes to our PFAS webpage to provide more health education on this emerging topic.

News of Note

Remodel Complete!

After nine months, the remodel of Public Health offices at the City County Building is now complete, with staff from the Operations and Policy, Planning, and Evaluation Divisions back in their newly remodeled space.



Summer Beach Monitoring

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, our Laboratory staff monitors water quality at Dane County area beaches for *E. coli* bacteria and blue-green algae. Our goal is to prevent harmful bacteria and toxins from making people ill while they enjoy our area lakes and beaches.

Preventing Food Poisoning

Several foodborne illness outbreaks in restaurants kept our Sanitarians, Epidemiologist, and nurses busy this summer, determining the source of illness, and providing continuing education on prevention of foodborne illnesses so that businesses can thrive. You can look up food inspection reports any time here.



Healthy people. Healthy places.

