



JULY 2017 | A quarterly newsletter from Public Health Madison & Dane County

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## Introducing Our New Director of Policy, Planning & Evaluation

We are pleased to announce that Mark Edgar, MPH, PhD, has recently joined our staff as the Director of Policy, Planning and Evaluation (PPE) Division. Mark will lead our PPE staff in their work on health policy, research, evaluation, public health surveillance, community assessment and community health improvement planning.

Mark brings with him a wealth of public health knowledge, experience and technical skills. Over the last 30 years, he has worked in local health departments, public health institutes, academic institutions, and as a consultant. The responsibilities of his new position closely match his previous experiences and work around assessment, workforce development, evaluation, policy and program development, and public health research in both academic and practice settings.

Just before moving to Madison in 2010, Mark was Assistant Professor of Public Health Policy at the University of Illinois at Springfield. More recently, he served as Evaluation Researcher at the UW Population Health Institute, Coordinator for the Wisconsin Center



for Public Health Education and Training, as well as faculty for the MPH program. In addition, Mark has been a PHMDC champion and on our Board of Health for the past 4 years.

Mark says it is truly a dream for him to be part of a health department that is doing such great work and is so focused on issues of equity and social justice. "Having staff dedicated to using data, assessment processes, and evaluation in community health improvement efforts is very forward looking and provides the opportunity to do very interesting and effective work."

Mark and his wife Carrie (Director of Dane County UW-Extension) enjoy living in Madison and Dane County for many reasons. "Biking, the beautiful lakes, the friendly people - but being a long-term vegetarian, one of the best things is that it's food heaven here!"

## What Summer Looks Like at PHMDC

During the summer months, PHMDC takes on a number of seasonal activities. Here's a peek into our busy summer!



We monitor local swimming beaches for bacteria and blue-green algae to determine if they're safe for swimming and recreation, and to reduce chance for illness.



Our Sanitarians inspect food stands around town and at special events, making sure hand washing and safe food handling techniques are followed and food is at safe temperatures.



Our Lab staff monitors mosquito populations, treating water on public land that has high numbers of mosquitoes known to carry and



To make it easier for WIC participants to access fresh fruits and vegetables, we have partnered with local produce farmers to have stands right outside

transmit West Nile Virus. We also monitor for the species of mosquito that carries Zika virus.

our WIC offices.

## Community Engagement to Promote Breastfeeding

Public health staff have been collaborating with members of the Centro Hispano staff as part of a Maternal and Child Health breastfeeding grant focused on community engagement. Centro Hispano has a Community Health Worker program which aims to create connections between their agency, community organizations and hospitals, training future leaders in the community. Public Health staff have conducted trainings for their Community Health Workers, or Promotoras, sharing information about Public Health's WIC and immunization services and providing information and answering questions about breastfeeding.



The Promotoras have created a postpartum support group where they share the information and resources provided in the trainings. As this collaboration continues, further opportunities for our staff and community members to engage around the topic of breastfeeding will be developed.

## Recommendations for Schools and Childcare Centers About Lead in Drinking Water

Public health efforts have made significant progress in reducing lead exposure and decreasing blood lead levels in children over the last several decades. Despite this success, lead is still a challenge in our community and efforts to identify and reduce potential sources of exposure continue to be a priority.

Based on the emerging evidence that suggests that even low levels of lead in blood can have negative health impacts on children's health, PHMDC is recommending that school districts and childcare centers in Dane County aim to reduce potential exposures to lead in their water systems.

Our new policy statement, [School & Childcare Center Recommendations to Minimize Lead in Drinking Water](#), recommends that all sources of drinking water in facilities is tested, and that water has a maximum of 5ppb (parts per billion) of lead in water. This is a third of the current EPA limit.

There is no penalty for not achieving 5ppb. It is a recommended protective measure until there is a better understanding of how low concentrations of lead in drinking water contribute to measurable changes in blood lead levels. Regardless of age, there is no safe level of lead and efforts to eliminate or reduce this potential source of exposure are essential to the health of our children and our community.

Staff in our Environmental Health Division are available to discuss the recommendations and consult on testing plans. They may be contacted at 608-242-6515.



## Measles Outbreak in Minnesota--PHMDC Prepares

Since early April, Minneapolis and the surrounding area has been experiencing the worst [measles outbreak](#) that Minnesota has seen in 30 years. As of July 13, there were 79 cases, mostly affecting unvaccinated children. Many of the children were seriously ill and hospitalized.

The news of the outbreak in neighboring Minnesota triggered action at PHMDC to reduce the risk of people in Dane County getting the measles, and control the spread of measles if there is a suspected or confirmed case of measles in Dane County.



### **Communicating to provide information and promote immunization:**

Key to preventing an outbreak here is making sure everyone is immunized with the recommended number of doses of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

- Information was sent to parents and guardians to encourage vaccination of children 2-5 years of age who, according to Wisconsin Immunization Registry records, had not received the MMR vaccine.
- A press release was sent out notifying the general public
- A letter was sent to childcare providers stressing the importance of checking immunization records and making sure children are immunized.
- Communication was sent to healthcare providers to be on the watch for measles cases, to report any cases to us to prevent the spread of the disease in the community, and to be sure to immunize.

### **Controlling the spread of measles if a case is identified in Dane County:**

In the event that we do get a case of measles in Dane County, plans are in place to

- Set up a immunization/serology clinic
- Identify and follow-up with persons who have the measles and those who may have been exposed,
- Prepare for possible quarantine
- Work with area health care providers

Although the measles may not cross the border, rest assured that we will remain diligent in our efforts to prevent measles in our community through immunization, and be ready to respond effectively if measles does appear in Dane County.

## News of Note



## PHMDC Staff Present at Statewide Conference

Several of our staff presented at the annual statewide WPHA and WALHDAB Public Health Conference in May.

Their presentations highlighted some of the work we are doing to address health and racial equity and increasing opportunities for everyone to have good health.

Presentations included:

- A poster presentation highlighting our work on the ConnectingChildren to Nature project.
- Disparities in tobacco use and tobacco point of sale advertising in Madison, where neighborhoods of color and those that are low-income are exposed to higher amounts of tobacco advertisements at the point of sale.
- Collaborating across the community to promote equity in sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
- Implementing recommendations from the Prenatal Care Coordination Program Evaluation.



## Summer Meals Program

The Madison Summer Meals program kicked off on June 19. PHMDC's Food Security Policy Analyst, Nick Heckman, is working closely with partners from the City of Madison, MMSD School Nutrition, and REAP Food Group on program improvements and evaluation designed to get more eligible children to participate this year and in the future.

There are 50 sites city-wide where any child under 18 can get a free meal, and 2 sites (Elver Park and Southdale Park) where adults accompanying minors can also get a free meal. You can see where sites are located [here](#).

Summer is a particularly challenging time for families struggling with food insecurity because children are out of school and no longer receiving meals through school breakfast and lunch programs.



# Public Health

MADISON & DANE COUNTY

*Healthy people. Healthy places.*

