

Public Health IMPACT

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING PUBLIC HEALTH TOPICS & EVENTS FOR THE MARION COUNTY COMMUNITY • SPRING 2026 • ISSUE NO. 8



(L to R) -- Andi Cox, Tobacco Program Coordinator; and Sandra Cummings, Chronic Disease Department Administrator; at an informational table.

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Sidney and Lois Eskenazi

Tobacco Program focuses on reducing youth smoking rates

Despite some public health wins in recent years, tobacco use continues to be the leading risk of heart disease, cancer, and strokes among Marion County residents.

Efforts of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indiana Department of Health, MCPHD, and partners have reduced smoking rates, especially among youth.

However, our most recent data review in 2023 shows the percentage of current smokers in Marion County was 16.1%, compared to 10.8% for the United States and 18.2% for Indiana. In 2023, e-cigarette use is also higher in Marion County (8.6%) than in the United States (7%) and in Indiana (7.8%).

“So, while there has been great progress, there is much more work to be done,” said Sandra Cummings, the

Administrator of MCPHD’s Chronic Disease Department.

MCPHD’s Tobacco Program team promotes youth prevention activities, adult cessation resources, reduction of secondhand-smoke exposure, and works with the Nicotine Free Communities to improve public health in Marion County.

“We talk with teens about the harmful effects of tobacco use on their bodies,” said Andi Cox, MCPHD’s Tobacco Program Coordinator. “They know that tobacco is bad for them, but messaging around e-cigarettes or vaping devices is misleading, and once they start, it isn’t easy to quit.”

Addiction is tough for anyone to overcome. People report that it can take eight to ten tries before they are able to

> *Continued on page 2*

Northeast District Health Office move allows for service growth

The Marion County Public Health Department’s Northeast District Health Office – located at 6042 East 21st Street – will relocate later this spring to the former Eskenazi Health Center North Arlington Health Clinic building at 2505 North Arlington Avenue.

“We are thrilled to be expanding the collaboration between Eskenazi Health and the Marion County Public Health Department with the move of the Northeast District Health Office,” said Virginia A. Caine, MD, Director and Chief Medical Officer. “This will allow us to meet the needs of Marion County’s underserved and high-priority populations in a more clinical atmosphere, while maintaining the same friendly service.”

> *Continued on page 2*

Angela E. White Named CEO of Eskenazi Health Foundation

Angela E. White has been named President and CEO of Eskenazi Health Foundation. She succeeds Ernest Vargo II, who retired after serving as President and CEO of the foundation for 15 years.

Before joining the Eskenazi Health Foundation in August 2024 as Executive Vice President, White served as a Senior Consultant and CEO of Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates (JGA), a consulting firm specializing in philanthropy and strategy for clients across the United States. Before working at JGA, White served in leadership roles at the University of Indianapolis and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.



The Eskenazi Health Foundation raised more than \$87 million for the construction of the public hospital campus, which included support from more than 3,500 contributors, including a monumental \$40 million gift from Sidney and Lois Eskenazi, for whom the

health system was renamed.

Since the hospital opened in 2013, Eskenazi Health Foundation has raised philanthropic funds to improve life expectancy for residents across Central Indiana.

Established as a 501(c)(3) in 1985, the foundation contributes leadership, guidance and philanthropic resources to Eskenazi Health and the Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County.

To learn more about the Eskenazi Health Foundation, please visit www.EskenaziHealthFoundation.org.



Program offers variety of ways to quit nicotine, *Continued from page 1*

successfully quit, and teens sometimes have less access to tobacco cessation programs.

Indiana's Quitline offers a variety of services to tobacco users. People can talk with counsellors, communicate by text messages, and can receive nicotine replacement therapies.

"You pick how to quit," Cox said. "No matter where you are in your quit journey, we can provide free resources to get you there."

After State legislators increased taxes on tobacco products, the number of people reaching out to the Quitline increased.

It is important for the tobacco prevention team to address tobacco use through compassion and evidence-based resources. Quitting cold turkey is a valid way to quit but is not easy. Combining counseling and medication gives people the greatest chance to quit and stay quit.

For more information about the Tobacco Program, call 317-221-3007.

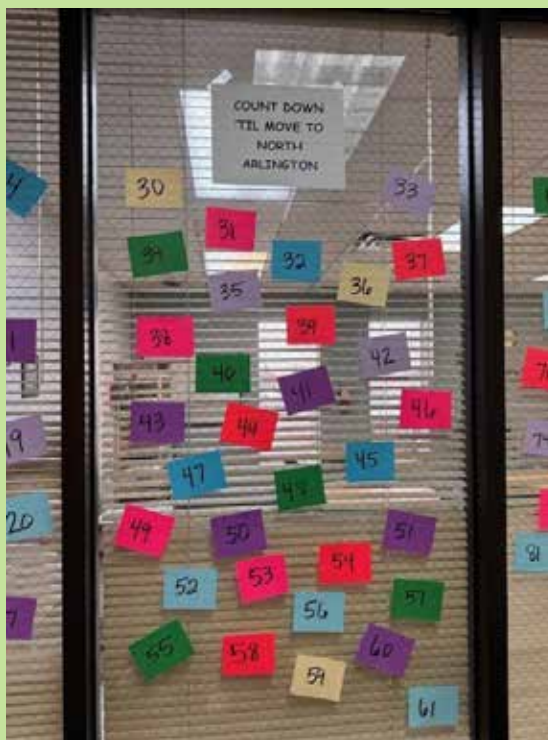
NEDHO move scheduled for May, *Continued from page 1*

While the two buildings are only a half-mile away from each other, the move to a newer, larger building will open up possibilities for MCPHD's district health office.

The Northeast District Health Office currently has about 30 employees, and offers routine and school-required immunizations, TB testing, blood pressure screenings, maternal and child health services, nutrition education, counselling, and home visits from nurses and social workers.

After the move, the Northeast District Health Office will continue to offer those same services, and will have a full test kitchen for nutrition classes. MCPHD's ACTION Health Center and The Global Health & TB Control Program will also provide clinical services at the health office on a part-time basis.

To contact the Northeast District Health Office, please call 317-221-7300.



Northeast District Health Office staff are so excited about their move they came up with a creative countdown in the office.

Covering Kids assists with insurance enrollment

Pamela Humes, Director of the Health & Hospital Corporation's Covering Kids and Families Program, understands that choosing the right health-insurance plan can be complicated.

"Our team is certified and licensed to help people as they explore the plans," Humes said. "We don't steer people towards a particular plan, but we can help them understand the pros and cons of the different plans, and we can help with the application process."

Covering Kids and Families assists families – at no cost -- with enrollment into health-insurance plans. Team members do not sell insurance, but are trained to help navigate the various affordable options.

Although the program was originally focused on helping uninsured children access healthcare, Humes said she and her team of eight staff now assist uninsured or underinsured people of

any age who live in Marion County or the surrounding seven counties.

Some of the people who reach out to Covering Kids and Families have never had insurance. Others may be facing a change in their family situation, or in their income, or the insurance offered through their workplace may not be a good fit.

To help reach community members in need, the department employs three bilingual, Spanish-speaking navigators, uses a translation service for those who need help understanding English, and offers health insurance assistance and education more than 100 times each year at school registration events, health fairs, WIC clinics, family planning clinics, shelters and other sites.

"We accept referrals from more than 80 community agencies across our eight Central Indiana counties, but people can just call or walk



Qiana Stigler, a Certified Navigator Enrollment Specialist with CKF, talks with a client about health-insurance plans.

into our office to get help accessing health insurance," Humes said.

The Department also takes the lead in organizing the annual Back to School and Community Resource Day, where people can get backpacks loaded with school supplies and healthy snacks, can receive immunizations, sports physicals, dental and vision checkups, diapers,

car seats, birth certificates, and information about other Marion County Public Health Department services and community services.

The 2026 Back to School Community Resource Day will be held on Saturday, July 11, at 3838 N. Rural St.

HHC's Covering Kids and Families Program can be reached at 317-221-2464.



Saturday, July 11 - 8:30am-12pm

Marion County Public Health Department (Parking Lot)
3838 North Rural Street, Indianapolis, IN 46205

For more info, call 317-221-2464, scan the QR or visit
<https://hhcorp.org/covering-kids-and-families>

Supplies • Screenings • Entertainment
Free Car Seats and Education • More!!!



Medical Reserve Corps provides support during emergencies

Kristin Basey-Abel, the new Volunteer Program Manager for MCPHD's Medical Reserve Corps, said she looks forward to building on the strong foundation of the program.

"We have a great group of volunteers, and strong support from the health department's Public Health Emergency Preparedness team," she said. "We are brought together by a shared love of the community."

Basey-Abel, who served in the volunteer program, stepped up as the program manager following the passing of Christopher Cooley last year.

T.J. Agnew, a Logistics Manager with MCPHD's Public Health Emergency Preparedness program, serves as the MRC's Coordinator.

He said the two dozen active members



of Marion County's MRC provide medical and non-medical support during emergencies.

Most members receive training to volunteer in three primary areas: supporting Points of Dispensing sites that provide medical countermeasures to the public, assisting at Family Reunification Centers after emergencies, and supporting

Family Assistance Centers in connecting affected individuals and families with needed resources.

Members can receive training to provide care until skilled medical help arrives, including basic life support, CPR, and the use of Narcan and Automated External Defibrillators. They also learn how to complete and process documents and how to guide people to appropriate assistance following an emergency. The MRC also provides support at other events, such as operating a first-aid booth at the annual Susan G. Komen walks.

"We are always looking for volunteers who can add their medical, organizational or compassionate skills to our team," Basey-Abel said.

To learn more about the MRC, please call 317-246-9590.

Substance Use Outreach Services strives to reduce risk-taking behaviors

The Marion County Public Health Department's Substance Use Outreach Services (SUOS) program seeks to help residents lead healthier, longer lives by reducing risk-taking behaviors and connecting them with services and resources.

To accomplish this, SUOS team members talk to middle-school and high-school students about drugs and alcohol. In the wider community, they distribute Narcan, drug-testing strips and other harm-reduction resources to reverse overdoses and reduce the effects of opioids. Additionally, the Outreach Team provides testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, and assists people in accessing supportive services.

"We do more than people realize," said Toby Miller, a Diversion Program Coordinator. "Just our work distributing Narcan and drug-testing strips in the community alone gives us small wins

which are big in terms of helping the community."

Miller said the program recorded more than 600 fatal overdoses in Marion County last year, and about 6,300 non-fatal overdoses. Every life saved is important.

Joshua Brown, HIV Outreach Coordinator, said that partnering with community organizations, workplaces and faith leaders allows team members better access to the community.

"We want to meet people where they are," Brown said.

The program also participates in special outreach events, like February's National Black HIV Awareness Day, and National HIV Testing Day, which is observed annually on June 27. These events, among others, raise awareness of substance-use problems and sexually-transmitted diseases – topics that can be awkward to discuss.

"We face a headwind of stigma," Miller said.



(l to r) Stephanie Edmonds, MCPHD's SUOS Health Educator; Joshua Brown, MCPHD's HIV Outreach Coordinator; and Natasha King, MCPHD's SUOS Health Educator at the informational table at the HIV Awareness event.

Byron Reynolds, SUOS's Program Manager, pointed to a weekly mobile clinic hosted by MCPHD on the city's near-south side as an example of a successful event. Staff provide dental services, immunizations, HIV testing and Narcan medication distribution at the mobile clinic.

"Consistency is a powerful currency. Over time we can build relationships and gain trust," Reynolds said. "Lots of people need help. When they are ready to seek help, we will be there."

The SUOS program can be reached at 317-221-4618.



Public Health Lab on target to open Fall 2026

Construction work on the new Marion County Public Health Laboratory is on schedule, and the project is expected to be completed this summer.

Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County (HHC) is constructing a new two-story public health laboratory at 38th and Rural streets to enhance community services, improve efficiency, and expand capacity.

The new facility will also house the Bell Flower Clinic, Vital Records and Immunization Records.

The building's generators are now in place, and the fire-suppression system and the first-floor window frames and glazing are being installed.

Another project, the construction of a new headquarters building for the Indianapolis Emergency Medical Service (IEMS), is also progressing.

IEMS will move from its current westside headquarters on Georgetown Road to the Avondale Meadows neighborhood in early 2027.

The building's foundations and steel structure are completed, and lighting, heating, venting and air-conditioning work is taking place.

Link to a recent video of the project taken by drone: <https://youtu.be/Qkv9RyqqepE>

For the additional updates and project information, please visit <https://hhcorp.org/construction-updates/>.



Alexia Seniors, MCPHD's Senior Care Manager talks with a senior about local resources that are available.

Senior Care Management program can be reached at 317-221-5901

Senior Care Program helps older adults remain in homes with independence

Alexia Seniors, MCPHD's Senior Care Manager, said she has always been drawn to the older population.

She remembers visiting older relatives in nursing homes, watching soap operas and game shows with her grandma, working in dietary services at nursing homes in high school, and helping with guest relations in an adult day care serving as a Director of Social Work for a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility after graduating from college.

When an opportunity presented itself in late 2024 to join MCPHD's Senior Care Management program, it seemed like a natural fit.

MCPHD's Healthy Homes, Environmental Consumer Management & Senior Care Department, addresses a wide range of environmental threats to the community from childhood lead poisoning to aging in place.



(l to r) Alexia Seniors, MCPHD's Senior Care Manager; and Larry Lobdell, MCPHD's Environmental Health Specialist Intermediate; give a presentation to residents of a senior housing complex.

The Senior Care Management program focuses on all aspects of senior health, including barriers to health and wellbeing. The program provide practical assistance in the form of case management and low-cost home modifications.

"Aging in place isn't just about staying home, it's about staying safe," said Karla Johnson, Administrator of the Lead Safe, Healthy Homes and Senior Care Department. "This program helps older adults overcome environmental barriers so they can remain in their homes with dignity and independence."

Seniors receives referrals about seniors in need from 2-1-1 operators, MCPHD departments like housing and social work, and other healthcare agencies.

"A lot of seniors live by themselves, but then get to a point where they need help to do so," she said. "My role is to advocate for seniors. If our department can't provide the help, I will try to find it for them."

Seniors can provide a home assessment, looking for fall risks and accessibility issues. She can also refer people to home-repair services for seniors, guide them towards home-health services, and sometimes partners with the department's bedbug inspector, Larry Lobdell, to help provide resources to seniors with bedbug infestations.

"I am familiar with a lot of services in the area, and I have a network of organizations that work with seniors," Seniors said. "All they have to do is call."

UPCOMING EVENTS

DIABETES MANAGEMENT

The ABCs of Diabetes Self-Management Education/Support program of the Marion County Public Health Department is committed to providing adults with ready access to educational services and information in the area of managing and preventing diabetes.

Participants should plan to attend all classes for the month. This program is **FREE**, but registration is required.

QUESTIONS

Email: diabetes@marionhealth.org

Call: 317-221-2094.

REGISTER

www.marionhealth.org/diabetes

SCAN
TO SIGN UP TODAY!



Healthy Families'

Virtual Breastfeeding Webinar

JOIN MCPHD HEALTHY FAMILIES CLC, MIRIAM, TO TALK ABOUT BREASTFEEDING FROM THE BEGINNING. THIS FREE CLASS IS OPEN TO ALL NEW AND EXPECTANT PARENTS AND PARTNERS THINKING ABOUT OR PLANNING TO BREASTFEED.

What you will learn:

- How to get breastfeeding off to a good start
- Common breastfeeding challenges
- Latching & positioning
- Feeding frequency
- Breastfeeding management
- Storage

Dates and Times:

A class is offered virtually every 3rd week of the month!
*Some exclusions may apply
Visit Eventbrite for the most up-to-date information

- May 19th @ 9:30am-10:30am
- June 18th @ 5:00pm-6:00pm
- July 21st @ 9:30am-10:30am
- Aug 20th @ 5:00pm-6:00pm
- Sept 15th @ 9:30am-10:30am
- Oct 15th @ 5:00pm-6:00pm
- Nov 17th @ 9:30am-10:30am
- Dec 17th @ 5:00pm-6:00pm



How to Register:

- Open your Camera app on your phone
- Hold the camera over the QR code so it is clearly visible within the screen
- Click on the link
- Fill out the survey completely



After registration is complete, download the Webex app on your phone for easy access to join the webinar.

JUNE
2026

Lawrence Library

7898 Hague Rd., 46256

Tuesdays 9, 16, 23, 30

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

JULY
2026

Online

Wednesdays 8, 15, 22, 29

1:30 - 3 p.m.



Follow us on
facebook
@MarionHealthInd



NURSE-OF-THE-DAY SCHEDULE

Call clinic location to schedule an appointment.

SERVICES PROVIDED: Immunizations, TB testing, blood pressure screenings, general health counseling and referrals to community services.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU: Parent/guardian must be present with children under 18 years of age. Copy of current shot records, medicaid or insurance card and client/parent/guardian ID.

NORTHEAST DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICE

6042 E. 21st St. • 317-221-7300

Monday • 8 a.m.- 12 p.m.

Tuesday • 2-6 p.m.

Wednesday • 8 a.m.- 12 p.m.

Thursday • 12-4 p.m.

Friday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICE

6940 N. Michigan Rd. • 317-221-7500

Tuesday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Thursday • 2-6 p.m.

SOUTH DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICE

7551 S. Shelby St. • 317-221-5700

Monday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Tuesday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 2-6 p.m.

Wednesday • 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Thursday • 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Friday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

EAGLEDALE CLINIC

2802 Lafayette Rd, Suite 13 • 317-221-7500

Monday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Wednesday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Friday • 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.



2026 WINTER SNAPSHOTS



MCPHD gave the first in a series of presentations on the results of its most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) on March 4. The CHA drew on input from surveys of more than 4,500 local residents to identify the most pressing health needs of Marion County. The top five concerns identified through the health assessment are: Mental Health/Wellbeing, Access to Health Care, Housing, Trauma/Injury Prevention, and Infant Mortality. The full 2025 Community Health Assessment report for Marion County is available at https://marionhealth.org/CHA_2025.pdf. (above) Elizabeth Bowman, PhD, MCPHD's Epidemiology Administrator, talks with reporters about the data presented at the event.



HHC & MCPHD employees (top photo) celebrated Public Health Day 2026 at the Indiana Statehouse on Feb. 12. The Indiana Department of Health convenes public health advocates each year to celebrate an investment in public health. Shanaya Macon, Maternal & Child Health Director and Virginia A. Caine, M.D., MCPHD's Director and Chief Medical Officer pose for a photo op (bottom, left.) Dr. Caine also met with Robin Shackelford, Indiana State Representative (bottom, right).

IN MEMORIAM - SIDNEY AND LOIS ESKENAZI

Sidney and Lois Eskenazi were both cherished members of the Eskenazi Health family whose extraordinary generosity and unwavering commitment to our mission transformed the lives of countless patients, families, and caregivers. Through their vision and philanthropy, the Eskenazis helped advance compassionate care, innovation, education, and hope for our community, leaving a legacy that will endure for generations.

When Sidney and Lois Eskenazi contributed \$40 million toward construction of our new hospital campus, it marked one of the greatest philanthropic gifts ever given to the people of Central Indiana, and one of the largest gifts ever made to a public hospital in the United States. In the years that followed, Sidney and Lois met and engaged with Eskenazi Health employees and physicians, toured

Eskenazi Health facilities, participated in important events, and continued to support the Eskenazi Health Foundation's philanthropic efforts while advocating for the work of Eskenazi Health. They shared our story with pride and purpose, encouraging others to learn about our important role in providing health care, education, and opportunity.

Sidney grew up on the south side of Indianapolis during the Great Depression and carried with him a deep understanding of resilience and hope. He was truly moved by Eskenazi Health's mission, and his vision was not only to make a transformative gift, but to inspire others to join in supporting our vital work.

Lois was known for her kindness, humility, quick wit, artistic talent, and deep belief in the healing power of friendship and community. She understood that health care is not just



about medicine, but about dignity and respect.

All of us at Eskenazi Health and across Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County extend our deepest condolences to the entire Eskenazi family, their friends, and all who were touched by their remarkable life.



3838 North Rural Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205

DIRECTORY OF SERVICES • GENERAL INFORMATION - 317-221-2000

ACTION Health Center Pediatric, Adolescent, Young Adult Services 317-221-3400 B.A.B.E. 317-221-3050 Bed Bug Education & Prevention 317-221-2155 Bell Flower Clinic • Sexually Transmitted Disease Testing & Prevention 317-221-8300 Birth and Death Certificates 317-221-2400 Body Art Facility Regulation 317-221-2270 Cardiovascular Health 317-221-2322 Child Car-Seat Helpline 317-221-2045 Chronic Disease Programs 317-221-2094 Dental Health 317-221-2329	Diabetes Education 317-221-2104 Environmental Health Safety & Management 317-221-7596 Epidemiology 317-221-3355 Food and Consumer Safety 317-221-2222 Foreign-Born/Refugee Health 317-221-2133 Hazardous Materials 317-221-2266 Health Education, Promotion & Training 317-221-2092 Healthy Families 317-221-2349 Healthy Homes, Environmental Consumer Management & Senior Care 317-221-2155 Housing & Neighborhood Health 317-221-2150	Immunizations 317-221-2122 Indoor Air Quality 317-221-2266 Infectious Disease Control 317-221-2117 Injury Prevention 317-221-3145 Laboratory 317-221-4670 Maternal & Child Health 317-221-2312 Mosquito/Rodent Control 317-221-7440 Northeast District Health Office 317-221-7300 Northwest District Health Office 317-221-7500 Nutrition Services 317-221-7403 Older Adult Health 317-221-2092	Ryan White HIV Services Program 317-221-3000 School Health Services 317-221-2367 Wells & Drinking Water Quality/ Sewage & Septic System Regulation 317-221-2147 Social Work 317-221-2364 South District Health Office 317-221-5701 Substance Use Outreach Services 317-221-4618 Swimming Pool Regulation 317-221-2270 Tobacco Control 317-221-3007 Tuberculosis Control 317-221-2110 WIC 317-221-7401
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