

# The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

April 2024

## CDC updates recommendations for COVID-19 and respiratory viruses

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made several changes to its guidance for COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses.

At the end of February, the CDC recommended that adults 65 years of age and older receive an additional updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine dose if it has been at least four months since their last dose. CDC noted that adults 65 years and older are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, with more than half of COVID-19 hospitalizations from October 2023 to December 2023 coming from that age group. Now, those 65+ and people who are immunocompromised are eligible for additional doses to restore protection that might have waned since their last dose and help prevent severe illness. With an updated version of the vaccine expected late this summer or early this fall, now is the time for those eligible to update that protection.

The CDC also made its COVID-19 prevention and isolation guidance consistent with that of all respiratory viruses. The Division of Public Health's (DPH) messaging aligns with the CDC's: to get vaccinated; stay home if you are sick and get tested; if you test positive, seek treatment; and consider masking and other extra measures if cases are high or you or someone close to you is at high risk for illness. Sick individuals should stay home for at least 24 hours after they are fever-free and their symptoms improve without fever-reducing medications. Then, for the next five days, they should take added precautions such as masking and distancing in public.

For more respiratory virus-related information, visit DPH's [de.gov/coronavirus](https://de.gov/coronavirus) and [flu.delaware.gov](https://flu.delaware.gov) sites.

**\*Stay home and away from others until:**



Your symptoms are getting better + You are fever-free (without meds)

for 24 hours each



**Then take added precautions for the next five days**



## April is National Donate Life Month

Over 400 Delawareans are awaiting organ transplants, yet less than 50% of Delawareans are registered donors, according to [Donate Life](https://donatelife.org)

[Delaware](https://donatelife.org). Eight or more lives can be impacted by one organ donor, and hundreds of lives can be impacted by one tissue donor, says the Gift of Life Donor Program, a 501c(3) non-profit organization.

Individuals who apply for or renew a Delaware driver's license or identification card can sign up to become an organ and tissue donor by submitting a protected online application to the [Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](https://dmv.delaware.gov). Applicants receive a red heart on their license as their driver's record is updated. The donor designation may not be revoked according to state law. DMV suggests that donors inform their family of their decision to avoid confusion at death.

Each potential donation is considered individually. While some organs or tissue may be compromised by illness or age, others may provide healthy, viable donations. Illicit drug use or overdose death does not prevent someone from being a donor.

Learn more about organ and tissue donation at [donatelife-de.org](https://donatelife-de.org).

## Governor's Office seeks nominees for Compassionate Champion Awards

[Nominations are open](https://delaware.gov) for the State of Delaware Compassionate Champion Awards. The Compassionate Champion Awards recognize individuals, organizations, and educational institutions across the State of Delaware that provide trauma-informed services in a manner consistent with the Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care.

Nominations must be submitted on the Governor's website by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 12, 2024. Award winners and details for the recognition ceremony will be announced at a later date. For award categories and nomination forms in English and Spanish, visit [Delaware.gov](https://delaware.gov).



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health

## April is Cancer Control Month and Minority Cancer Awareness Month

Governor John Carney and Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long declared April as Cancer Control Month and Minority Cancer Awareness Month. They urge Delawareans to get screened for cancer when advised to do so and encourage health care providers to promote cancer screening as a powerful opportunity to save lives.

Detecting cancer early improves survival rates. According to the Delaware Cancer Registry, for 2016-2020, 22.4% of new cancer cases in Delaware were detected in the distant stage, compared to 48.3% diagnosed at the local stage, when cancer is most treatable. In Delaware, for 2016-2020, breast cancer was the leading cause of cancer death among women, prostate cancer was the leading cause of cancer death among men, and lung cancer was the leading cause of cancer death among men and women, according to the Delaware Cancer Registry.

Only 12% of eligible Delawareans met the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force lung cancer screening recommendations, according to the 2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey.



The Delaware Cancer Consortium at the DPH Bureau of Cancer Prevention and Control work

to ensure every Delawarean has access to timely cancer screenings and cancer treatment if they cannot afford it. Cancer screenings are covered by insurance or by the State's Screening for Life (SFL) Program. Delawareans can determine their eligibility for SFL by visiting [Healthy Delaware.org](https://www.healthylife.org) or calling SFL at 302-744-1040.

Inequities can be observed in cancer data by race and ethnicity. According to the Delaware Cancer Registry, for 2016-2020, the all-site cancer mortality rate among non-Hispanic Black Delawareans (171.7 people per 100,000 population) was higher than for non-Hispanic White Delawareans (158.9 people per 100,000 population).

For 2016-2020, 28.3% of new breast cancer cases were detected in the distant stage among non-Hispanic White Delawareans, compared to 36.7% diagnosed at the distant stage among non-Hispanic Black Delawareans. For the same period, the prostate cancer mortality rate among non-Hispanic Black Delawareans (32.6 people per 100,000 population) was double the rate of non-Hispanic White Delawareans (15.7 people per 100,000 population).



Photo: Birth to Three Program

## Birth to Three Program accepting public comment on formula grant until May 1

Delaware's Birth to Three Early Intervention Program invites interested parties to participate in public comment for their FFY2024 grant application to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The opportunity for public comment on the draft application is available for 30 days from April 1 to May 1, 2024.

Birth to Three helps Delaware families with infants and toddlers, from birth to age 3, by providing early intervention services for eligible children with developmental delays or disabilities. OSEP is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts.



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [Part C](#) program promotes the development of infants and toddlers with delays or disabilities, enhances the

capacity of families to meet the developmental needs of their infants and toddlers, minimizes the need for special education and related services when children enter school, and enhances children's long-term outcomes.

[The IDEA of 2004](#) authorizes [formula grants](#) to be awarded to states annually to support early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. OSEP reviews and approves state plans and monitors the IDEA C formula grant programs to ensure consistency with federal requirements. Each year, Delaware's Birth to Three Early Intervention program reapplies for their formula grant. Access this year's grant application here: [www.b23de.org](https://www.b23de.org) under Part C Reports & Data. Comment by clicking here: [Comment Form](#).

## Advancing Healthy Lifestyles Conference is June 6 in Dover

The Division of Public Health's Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention (PANO) Program is hosting its annual Advancing Healthy Lifestyles (AHL) Conference: Engaging Communities to Live Healthy Lifestyles on June 6, 2024. The conference will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Conference Center at Delaware State University, located at 1200 N. Dupont Highway in Dover, Delaware.

The AHL Conference will provide a platform for cross sectional sharing on national, regional, and local best practices, challenges, opportunities, and success stories. With a focus on engaging communities to live healthy lifestyles and advancing health equity, the conference aims to strengthen efforts to reduce obesity and other chronic diseases. The Conference will provide participants with skills and knowledge in a variety of public health topic areas to bring chronic disease and obesity prevention into their communities.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend presentations from subject matter experts and network with others in the field. The Advancing Healthy Lifestyles Conference will serve as an opportunity to close gaps in health inequities, assess progress, and further strengthen the work of community stakeholders.



Jackie Joyner-Kersey

The keynote speaker is Jackie Joyner-Kersey, who is known for her athletic achievements in the heptathlon and long jump events. Joyner-Kersey earned six Olympic medals (three gold, one silver, and two bronze) and four World Champion titles over four consecutive Olympic Games. Joyner-Kersey was the first woman in

history to earn more than 7,000 points in the heptathlon, and today, over 20 years later, she still holds the world heptathlon record of 7,291 points. She continues to hold the Olympic and national records in the long jump and her 1994 performance remains the second longest in history.

All individuals interested in health disparities, nutrition, chronic illness, and obesity prevention are invited to attend. To learn more and to register, visit [the Conference website](#).



Photo: Getty Images

## U.S. DOT seeks public comment on rule for wheelchair airline standards

The Division of Public Health's Bureau of Health Equity shared news from Kristin Harvey, Executive Director of the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) seeks public comments on a new [proposed rule](#) designed to ensure airline passengers who use wheelchairs can travel safely and with dignity.

The proposed rule would set new standards for prompt, safe, and dignified assistance; require enhanced training for airline employees and contractors who physically assist passengers with disabilities and handle passengers' wheelchairs; and specify actions that airlines must take to protect passengers when a wheelchair is damaged during transport. The proposed rule would require airlines to provide two options to repair or replace wheelchairs if mishandled by the airline.

DOT also requests input on two other topics: lavatory size on twin-aisle aircrafts and reimbursement of the fare difference between a flight someone could have taken if their wheelchair fit in the aircraft and the more expensive flight they had to take instead.

An estimated 5.5 million Americans use a wheelchair. Many encounter air travel barriers. In 2023, 11,527 wheelchairs and scooters were mishandled by carriers required to report data to DOT.

[Comments can be submitted online](#), by mail or fax, or hand-delivered through May 13, 2024. [Read DOT's press release](#) for a summary of key provisions.