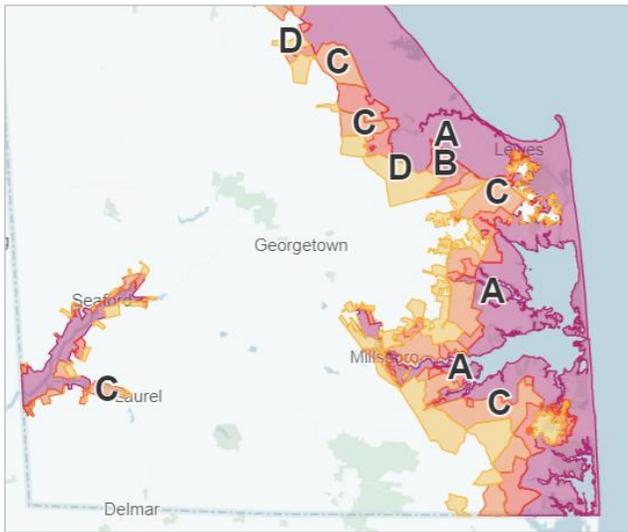


The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

September 2023



Know your Evacuation Zone

The Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) wants everyone to know their Evacuation Zone. State officials will be using Evacuation Zones A, B, C, or D when issuing evacuation warnings or mandatory evacuation orders.

The zones encompass low-lying areas susceptible to flooding and storm surge and are in the hurricane evacuation plan that DEMA updated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and planners in all counties. Evacuating by zone reduces unnecessary travel and roadway congestion, allowing faster and safer movement for those at risk.

Use the [Know Your Zone](#) locator on the PrepareDE.org website to identify your Evacuation Zone. Write it down and keep it in on the refrigerator or with the household and vehicle emergency kits. Become familiar with your zone before a disaster, as it features evacuation routes for your area.

When an alert is issued for an Evacuation Zone, the [Delaware Emergency Notification System \(DENS\)](#) will send an emergency alert to individuals who have signed up to receive them. DENS alerts will come by text, call, email, or social media, depending on the preferences selected. [Local television and radio stations](#) will also announce when evacuation warnings or orders are issued.

If your address is not within an Evacuation Zone, stay informed about emerging dangers in your area.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

Homeowners with drinking water problems eligible for treatment

Delaware homeowners with private wells whose drinking water tests high for Total coliforms, *E. coli*, fluoride, nitrate, nitrite, and sodium can apply to receive a free water treatment system through the Division of Public Health (DPH). Funded through the State of Delaware's Fiscal Year 2023 capital budget (Bond Bill), this program will operate on a first-come, first-served basis until its \$200,000 budget expires or additional funds are secured.

Eligible individuals must provide proof of enrollment in State or Federal assistance programs such as SNAP, WIC, Supplemental Security Income, LIHEAP, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Applicants must also provide water quality test results from the Delaware Public Health Laboratory. Successful applicants can receive a treatment system, installation, and the first year of maintenance. Homeowners and tenants with landlord approval/sign-off can apply.

Starting Sept. 1, 2023, all Delawareans can receive free bacterial and chemical water test kits for their primary residence. Previously, they cost \$4 per kit. Drinking water test kits can be picked up at the Delaware Public Health Laboratory, located at 30 Sunnyside Road, Smyrna, DE; and at the following three DPH Environmental Health Field Services offices:

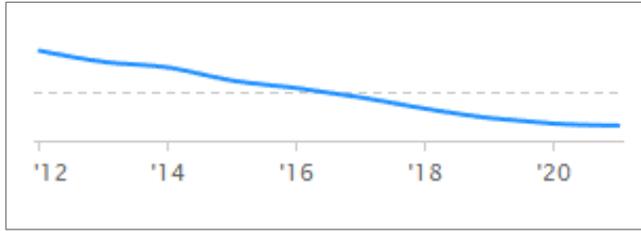
- 258 Chapman Road, Newark, DE 19702
- Thomas Collins Building, Suite 5, Dover, DE 19901
- Thurman Adams State Service Center, Suite 1700, 544 S. Bedford St, Georgetown, DE 19947.

DPH reminds residents that water quality standards for private wells are not regulated by the federal or state government; they are the responsibility of the homeowner. [Click here](#) for contaminants covered by the Safe Drinking Water Act and their health impacts.



For more information about the new program, email DHSS_DPH_PrivateWell@delaware.gov or call 302-744-4546 Option 9.

Figure 1. Rate of people who filled high-dose opioid prescriptions (≥ 90 MMEs) per 1,000 people, Delaware, 2012-2021



Source: Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, My Healthy Community, August 2023.
Note: There was an 83% change between 2012 and 2021.

Prescription drug dispensing data updated on My Healthy Community

The [My Healthy Community \(MHC\) Dashboard](#) includes a color-coded matrix of communities that may be at higher risk of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). The matrix and other recent updates present prescription drug dispensing trends in Delaware.

The Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Delaware Division of Professional Regulation Office of Controlled Substances made Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) data publicly available. The agencies updated the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder [section](#)'s PMP tab with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Overdose Data to Action grant. The grant also funds the Delaware PMP.

Indicators of a high need for treatment are the rate of prescriptions for high dose (greater than or equal to 90 Morphine Milligram Equivalents (MMEs) (Figure 1) and extended-release opioids. These indicators are shown by count and rate of prescriptions and include data on the number of people filling those prescriptions. Trend data for filled prescriptions indicate a steady decline in dispensed opioids and an increase in OUD treatment medications.

DPH continues to educate physicians and pharmacists on best practices for pain management. This includes offering one-on-one education and continuing education opportunities and working with Delaware providers to create educational materials for providers and patients. DPH compiled an inventory of Delaware-specific, evidence-based pain management resources for prescribers and dispensers at [Prescription Medications | Help is Here Delaware](#). For more information on acute pain management and alternatives to opioids for pain, read the [CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain](#) published in 2022.

Delaware State University offers Trauma Healing workshops and certificate program

Delaware State University (DSU) provides healing workshops on Trauma 101 and other topics at the request of organizations, according to Kim Graham, MA, LMSW, Director, DSU Trauma Academy.

DSU also offers a six-course, 18-credit certificate program, "Healing Trauma from an African Centered Healing Approach." Its goal is to give students who study mental health intervention, as well as mental health practitioners and other professionals, the opportunity to explore healing from an African-Centered paradigm. The alternative healing paradigm is designed to build resilience in children, adults, and communities exposed to trauma and toxic stress.

For more information on the certificate program, visit DSU's Trauma Academy at <https://wchbs.desu.edu/research/trauma-academy>.

Suspected drug overdose data now available on My Healthy Community

The Division of Public Health (DPH) added suspected drug overdose data to the [My Healthy Community \(MHC\)](#) data dashboard. It can be viewed on the Drug Overdose Deaths tab within [MHC's Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder section](#).

The Centers for Disease Control and Disease Prevention Overdose Data to Action grant funded the addition, which was completed in collaboration with the Delaware Division of Forensic Science.

Suspected drug overdose death counts are an early signal of changing trends in Delaware's opioid overdose epidemic. Suspected drug overdose deaths based on forensic investigator scene impressions are reported to DPH within a week of occurrence and are considered preliminary until further tests are conducted.

For free 24/7 counseling, coaching, and support, as well as links to mental health, addiction, and crisis services call the Delaware Hope Line at 1-833-9-HOPEDE.

September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Ovarian cancer starts in the ovaries, the walnut-sized organs located on both sides of the uterus. Often there are no symptoms until it spreads.



Ovarian cancer symptoms are vaginal bleeding, pain or pressure in the pelvic area, bloating, abdominal or back pain, feeling full quickly, needing to urinate more often or urgently, and/or constipation. Talk to your doctor if you have unexplained signs or symptoms of ovarian cancer.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), in Delaware for the period 2016-2020, among females of all races and ethnicities, the age-adjusted incidence rate of ovarian cancer was 9.8 per 100,000 women (95% Confidence interval: 8.7-11) and 332 cases were reported.

The CDC notes that while any woman can get ovarian cancer, [risk factors](#) are:

- being middle-aged or older
- having close family members (such as a mother, sister, aunt, or grandmother) who had ovarian cancer
- having a genetic mutation such as the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations or one associated with Lynch syndrome
- had breast, uterine, or colorectal cancer
- are of Eastern European or Ashkenazi Jewish background
- having endometriosis
- never gave birth or had trouble getting pregnant
- took estrogen by itself (without progesterone) for 10 or more years.

Providers might consider genetic counseling and genetic testing for females who have a first degree relative with the disease, whose family members have more than one type of cancer, or if multiple generations of close family have any cancer. Those with a genetic predisposition of ovarian cancer can be prescribed more frequent ovarian cancer screenings (such as ultrasound and blood tests), as well as surgery and medications to reduce risk. No ovarian screening test is currently reliable for the general population.

The [Delaware Cancer Treatment Program](#) covers ovarian cancer treatment for women enrolled in the program.

Prevent injury and disability from falls

Governor John Carney and Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long proclaimed September 18-22, 2023, as Falls Prevention Awareness Week.

Broken bones, head injuries, and temporary or permanent disabilities can result from falls. In the U.S., falls are the leading cause of trauma-related hospitalizations among U.S. adults aged 65 and older, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries for older adults and young children and cause over 95% of hip fractures. In Delaware in 2022, 2,954 falls occurred to adults aged 65 and older, and 568 of them resulted in a head injury, according to the Division of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services.

The Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention's Falls Prevention Team encourages adults of all ages to prevent falls by visiting their health care provider annually to review medications and physical activity levels, and to get a falls risk assessment. Adults, especially seniors and those using wheelchairs and walkers, should have annual vision and hearing exams to reduce their risk of falling.

Delawareans can improve coordination, balance, strength, and flexibility by taking a balance class. A Matter of Balance[®] classes are held in communities throughout the state. Call Volunteer Delaware 50+ at 302-515-3020 or Bayhealth at 302-744-7135 for a schedule. ChristianaCare offers BingoCize, an evidence-based fall prevention program integrating Bingo and exercise, and the ThinkFirst to Prevent Falls[®] program, which addresses medications, balance, healthy eating, and home modifications. These classes are available in person and virtually at no cost. To schedule these programs or for more information, contact injuryprevention@christianacare.org.



For more information, visit <https://www.ncoa.org/>, <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/index.html>, and <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/ems/trauma.html>.