Our Mission

“To assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities we serve.”

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2007 – Michigan’s Year of Public Health
March is Healthy Beginnings Month

Good health before pregnancy helps to protect a baby’s growth and development. March is designated as “Healthy Beginnings” month, and the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department officials are reminding women to take good care of themselves before, during, and after pregnancy to give their babies a healthy start.

“Long before a woman is ready to be pregnant, the decisions she makes, such as using effective family planning methods and taking steps to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, help her chances of having a healthy pregnancy,” said Margie Surface, WIC Public Health Coordinator.

Once a woman is pregnant, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers many services to help ensure a healthy baby, especially for low-income women.

“We offer maternal support programs, including the Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, not only because we care about women and babies but because they are good investment,” said Surface. “In fact, for every dollar spent on WIC, $3.50 is saved in future costs; saving lives means saving dollars.”

Good nutrition prevents many health problems in babies. The best food for most babies is breastmilk. Breast-feeding lowers a child’s risk for many types of infections and allergies and may also help protect children from some health problems, such as eczema and asthma. Health Department officials encourage moms to breastfeed until their babies are 12 months old, or longer.

“The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is always working to promote healthy babies, encouraging good nutrition, sleep routines, and lots of TLC,” said Surface. “Promoting healthy babies also means making sure parents know they need to secure their child in a car seat when riding in a motor vehicle.”

Despite the best preparation, some babies are born with disabilities. Then, Health Department staff coordinates Children’s Special Health Care Services, which provides financial assistance for health care for certain medical conditions, with other services from Intermediate School Districts, hospitals, and others in the community.

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APHA Will Urge Americans to Prepare for Health Emergencies During Public Health Week 2007

The American Public Health Association (APHA) and hundreds of partner organizations will encourage Americans to prepare effectively for public health threats, from bioterrorism and natural disasters to disease outbreaks, during Michigan Public Health Week, April 16-22, 2007.

As part of the week-long observance, themed “Preparedness and Public Health Threats: Addressing the Unique Needs of the Nation’s Vulnerable Populations,” communities across the nation will explore ways to connect vulnerable populations, including mothers with young children, hourly-wage workers and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes and asthma, with resources to help them prepare for health emergencies. Despite growing threats and a host of awareness campaigns, Americans remain largely unprepared for public health emergencies in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and other recent events. A September 2006 poll conducted by Marist College Institute for Public Opinion noted that only 31 percent of Americans have any emergency plans in place.

During the twelfth annual event, APHA will reach out to policy-makers, public health officials and partner groups across the country to empower them to share tools and resources that will enable residents to overcome barriers to create preparedness plans. The week will focus on five core audiences who are vulnerable to health dangers: mothers with young children; local food banks; hourly workers and employees; schools serving children in kindergarten through 12th grade; and individuals with chronic health needs, such as diabetes, asthma, cancer and high blood pressure.

Last year’s National Public Health Week focused on ways that Americans could build healthier communities and address health threats associated with built environments, including air pollution and neighborhood design. More information on National Public Health Week 2007 may be found at www.nphw.org.

Founded in 1872, the APHA is the oldest, largest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world. The association aims to protect all Americans and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and strives to assure community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States. APHA represents a broad array of health providers, educators, environmentalists, policy-makers and health officials at all levels working both within and outside governmental organizations and educational institutions. More information is available at www.apha.org.
Big Tobacco’s lies are everywhere. They’re in advertising messages like “Be Kool,” “Pleasure to burn” and “Stir the senses.” They’re in the magazines we read, the movies we watch, even the stores where we shop, and they are killing nearly half a million Americans every year.

Like we said, Big Tobacco’s lies are everywhere, and now even the U.S. government is speaking out about it. On August 17, 2006, U.S. District Court Judge Gladys Kessler issued a final opinion in the U.S. government’s landmark lawsuit against the major tobacco companies. According to Judge Kessler, “Over the course of more than 50 years, Defendants lied, misrepresented and deceived the American public, including smokers and young people they avidly sought as replacement smokers about the devastating health effects of smoking and environmental tobacco smoke.”

It doesn’t stop there! On the heels of U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler’s ruling that the tobacco companies have lied - and continue to lie - to the American people about the health risks of their products, the fact that their products are addictive and that they market to children, a new report finds that tobacco companies have secretly and significantly increased the levels of nicotine in cigarette smoke between 1998 and 2004.

The report finds that nicotine levels in the three cigarette brands that are most popular among youth smokers - Marlboro, Newport and Camel - have increased significantly between 1998 and 2004. Additionally, nicotine levels in R.J. Reynolds’ menthol Kool brand increased by 20 percent during the six-year time period. More than two-thirds of African American smokers use menthol brands, providing further evidence that tobacco companies are continuing to aggressively target minority communities.

And that’s not all! These lies cost us billions of dollars every year in medical bills. In the U.S. alone, tobacco use costs $96.7 billion in health care every year. This means the average American household pays $606 a year as part of their taxes just to cover smoking related government spending — even if no one in that house smokes!

The tobacco industry addicts more than 1,000 youth every day - and one in three of them will die prematurely because of tobacco.

So what does Big Tobacco see when they look at teens? They see “replacement customers” for the smokers they kill every single day. As a 1981 Philip Morris marketing report notes, “Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential regular customer.”

During a difficult time for services to low income families, we recently heard some good news about the WIC Program, and felt it worth sharing with you. On February 5, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released WIC’s Program Assessment tool used by staff to assist them in making budget assessments and recommendations. The news is good. WIC was rated by OMB as Effective, which is the highest rating a program can achieve. This rating was achieved because WIC has ambitious goals, achieves results, is well managed and improves program efficiencies. WIC is also taking the following actions to further improve the performance of the program by initiating changes to the food package to reflect current nutritional guidelines, promotes breastfeeding, and better address the health risks facing the WIC population, including childhood obesity, monitoring State food package costs and cost containment efforts to promote continued cost efficiencies and promoting efforts to address childhood obesity by supporting special State projects which will build on previously developed WIC-specific obesity prevention interventions.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, and protecting the environment. For additional information about preparing for a healthy pregnancy and baby visit our website at www.didhd.org or call the Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

Additional information about the “Public Health – For Michigan. For You” slogan and “2007: The Year of Public Health” can be found at www.malph.org.

“Public Health: Healthy Beginnings to Ensure a Healthy Community”
Michigan Public Health Week, April 16-22, 2007
Prepare Your Family

PREPAREDNESS STATISTICS:

- Flooding is the nation’s most common natural disaster. You are four times more likely to lose your home to a flood than a fire.

- Despite an increase in number of disasters, data show that average annual death tolls have dropped from over 75,000 per year (1994 to 1998) to 59,000 per year (1999 to 2003) indicating that, to some degree, mitigation and early warning provisions may be having an impact.

- Investment in preparedness pays. Investing in strategies to lessen the impact of disasters is not only compassionate, but it also makes economic sense.

- Every year in the United States, on average:
  - 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
  - more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and;
  - about 36,000 people die from flu.