



Keeping New Jersey Healthy

Health Matters

New Jersey Department of Health

Celebrating Milestones in Improving Public Health

By Mary E. O'Dowd, MPH, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health



New Jersey is making progress in improving the health of our residents by investing in our health care safety net and supporting proven strategies that advance public health. This month, we celebrate our safety net providers, community health centers, and preventive health efforts including vaccinations and breastfeeding.

Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd, takes a tour of the Henry J. Austin Health Center (HJAHC) in Trenton as part of National Health Center Week (August 5-11). She is joined by Jennifer Hayes Brown, Operations Manager, HJAHC and George Stokes, President & CEO, HJAHC. The tour took place on August 9.

During National Health Center Week, August 5-11, we celebrated community health centers for the comprehensive and preventive care they provide to 450,000 of the state's most vulnerable residents. [Governor Christie signed a proclamation](#) recognizing National Health Center Week highlighting the critical access to care they provide in our urban and rural communities. Governor Christie has further demonstrated his commitment by investing a record \$50 million in the current state budget to reimburse health centers for the medical care they provide to the uninsured. Since taking office, the Governor has increased funding to health centers by \$10 million.

New Jersey is home to 20 community health centers that in 2011 provided care during 1.4 million patient visits – regardless of their ability to pay. These centers and their 105 satellite offices are providing medical homes and coordinated care to migrant workers, the homeless, those with HIV and other vulnerable patients who either may not receive care or may go to emergency rooms for primary care.

During the past several weeks, my staff and I have visited six health centers throughout New Jersey to talk to patients, doctors and nurses about how they are providing health screening, diverting patients from the ER, counseling HIV patients, ensuring prenatal and gynecological care for women and giving infants immunizations. Whether these centers are providing routine medical care to children and families, treating chronic illnesses or educating those in need on how to prevent illnesses—one thing is clear—these centers are treasured assets in our communities.

August is also National Immunization Awareness Month, when we highlight the contributions that vaccines have played in preventing and reducing the spread of diseases. Immunization has virtually eliminated many diseases that once killed thousands of people each year including polio, smallpox, measles, rubella and diphtheria.

During National Immunization Awareness Month, I encourage residents throughout

Whether these centers are providing routine medical care to children and families, treating chronic illnesses or educating those in need on how to prevent illnesses—one thing is clear—these centers are treasured assets in our communities.

New Jersey's Medicinal Marijuana Patient Registry is now open.



MEDICINAL MARIJUANA

For complete information on the Medicinal Marijuana Program please visit the [Medicinal Marijuana home page](#)

Focus on Summer Workplace Blood Drives

This summer, the Department has been calling on New Jersey employers to hold blood drives to help New Jersey through its annual summer blood shortage. On May 31, during a media teleconference, Commissioner of Health Mary E. O'Dowd launched a statewide campaign, *"The Need for Blood Doesn't Take a Vacation,"* with the New Jersey Workplace Blood Donor Coalition (NJWBDC) to highlight the need for employers to take a more active role in helping the state address this shortage.

The campaign encourages employers to hold more blood drives or join with other businesses in the community to host a drive during the traditionally slow summer months.

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In addition to an [op-ed](#) written by Commissioner O'Dowd and sent to newspapers across New Jersey reminding employers of the importance of workplace drives, the Department produced 15- and 30-second public service announcements to air on radio stations throughout New Jersey. The website, www.njsave3lives.com, offers downloadable campaign materials produced by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation that employers and workers can use to publicize their blood drives. Novartis co-founded the NJWBDC with the Department in 2008 and has promoted the work of the Coalition through community and workplace blood drives, press conferences, speaking engagements, promotional videos, print materials and joint campaigns with the Department.

To reach out directly to employers, Commissioner O'Dowd and Kevin Rigby, Vice President and Head of Public Affairs and Communications at Novartis, who co-chairs the NJWBDC, signed a joint letter that was sent to approximately 400 CEOs of medium-to-large New Jersey businesses asking them to conduct workplace drives between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Commissioner wrote to her colleagues in state government asking them to hold summer drives. As a result, several agencies are holding blood drives for the first time and others are renewing their blood drive program and sharing drives with sister agencies to increase donations.

The Department welcomes feedback on the summer campaign from readers who conducted or participated in workplace blood drives in June or July. Please contact Lillian Pfaff at Lillian.Pfaff@doh.state.nj.us with your observations and experiences.

**The Need for Blood
Doesn't Take a Vacation**

SAVE 3 LIVES
ALL IN A DAY'S WORK



Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd meets with medical staff at the Motor Vehicle Commission work place blood drive on July 11.

**Click the
Map to
Find the
Blood
Drive
Nearest
You**



Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd meets with Raymond Martinez, Chairman and Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission at their work place blood drive on July 11.

Community Outreach & Events

July/August 2012



On July 20, Commissioner O'Dowd toured the Monmouth Family Health Center in Long Branch to highlight increased funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to care for uninsured and underinsured residents.

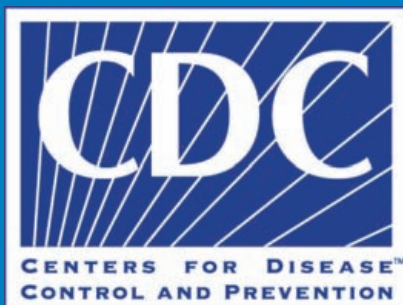


On July 17, as part of the Department's ongoing Summer Blood Drive Campaign, Assistant Commissioner Christopher Rinn joined Red Cross officials at a Madison Volunteer Ambulance Squad's Blood Drive to highlight the need for residents to donate blood.



Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner, presents the Asthma Perspective in NJ to participants at the Asthma Symposium, that was held August 9, at the NJ Hospital Association in Princeton.

- July 11** – Commissioner O'Dowd attended a workplace blood drive at the Motor Vehicle Commission Offices in Trenton to promote New Jersey's summer blood drive campaign.
- July 12** – Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner of Public Health Services, promoted the launch of a pilot program to screen more children for lead poisoning in Passaic.
- July 17** – Christopher Rinn, Assistant Commissioner, joined Red Cross officials at the Madison Volunteer Ambulance Squad's blood drive to promote New Jersey's summer blood drive campaign.
- July 20** – Commissioner O'Dowd toured the Monmouth Family Health Center in Long Branch to highlight a record \$50 million in funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to care for uninsured and underinsured residents.
- July 24** – Dr. Arturo Brito met with staff at the North Hudson Community Action Corporation, in West New York to highlight the quality care the center is providing to area residents.
- July 30** – Dr. Arturo Brito took part in a ribbon cutting and open house at Southern Jersey Family Medical Center (SJFMC) in Salem to celebrate SJFMC's renovations to its dental and exam suites.
- August 1** – Dr. Arturo Brito gave opening remarks at the Monmouth/Ocean Breastfeeding Consortium meeting at Jersey Shore Medical Center, in Neptune.
- August 2** – Dr. Arturo Brito visited a farmers market in Washington Township to encourage healthy eating prior to Farmers Market Week, August 5- 10.
- August 6** – Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner, attended the National Health Center Week kickoff event at the Neighborhood Health Services Corporation in Plainfield to celebrate the impact that health centers have on the state's health care safety net.
- August 8** – Commissioner O'Dowd provided remarks and toured the Henry J. Austin Health Center in Trenton to celebrate National Health Center Week.
- August 9** – Dr. Arturo Brito gave remarks at the New Jersey Asthma Symposium at the New Jersey Hospital Association offices in Princeton.
- August 14** – Gloria Rodriguez attended a breastfeeding and baby care learning fair at Capital Health in Hopewell.



Get Tested for Hepatitis C

CDC now recommends that all U.S. baby boomers get a one-time test for the hepatitis C virus. Data show that 1 in 30 baby boomers has been infected with hepatitis C and this population is five times more likely than other adult Americans to be infected with the virus. In addition, more than 15,000 Americans, most of them baby boomers, die of hepatitis C-related illness each year.



Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

- 1** The number of times that individuals should receive the seasonal influenza vaccine each year
- 16** Potentially harmful diseases that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges parents to have infants, children and teens immunized against
- 27** The number of vaccine-preventable diseases
- 90** The percentage of people that could get measles if exposed to an infected person
- 92** Raccoons, bats, skunks and foxes account for 92 percent of the wild animal rabies cases in the United States. Rabies is a vaccine-preventable disease, be sure to have your pets vaccinated against rabies.
- 222** The number of measles cases reported in the United States in 2011
- 428** The number of confirmed and probable pertussis cases in New Jersey as of 8/20/2012
- 13,000 - 20,000** The number of polio cases reported each year in the United States before the Salk polio vaccine was introduced in 1955
- 20 million** The number of people worldwide that get measles each year

225 Cases of Swine Flu Reported Nationally *No reported cases in New Jersey*

As of August 17, 225 cases of the new variant of swine flu (H3N2v) have been reported in nine states (Hawaii, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin) since January 2012. The reported cases of H3N2v have been associated with swine exposure, primarily at agricultural fairs. No human-to-human transmission of the virus has been identified.

The Department recommends that people who may be feeling ill, or suffering from flu symptoms after contact with swine, tell their doctors about the exposure. Additionally, the Department recommends preventive actions that reduce the spread of influenza viruses between pigs and people, including frequent hand washing with soap and running water before and after exposure to swine.

For more information on H3N2v, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/influenza-variant-viruses-h3n2v.htm>.



Department of Health Staff Notes



Mary Ann Ellsworth, Public Health Consultant, and **Lisa Asare**, Coordinator of New Jersey's Cooperative Agreement on Obesity, took part in the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors Conference where they discussed how *ShapingNJ* is building effective public/private collaborations in New Jersey. Additionally, Ms. Asare presented on the Department's **Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative**. The conference took place from 6/10 – 6/12.

Scott Shone, PhD, Research Scientist, Newborn Screening Program, presented at the Annual PerkinElmer Newborn Screening Symposium on improvements at the state's Newborn Screening Laboratory. The symposium took place from 6/9 – 6/13.



Carolyn Providence, Public Health Consultant, attended the MARO Food Distribution Programs Conference that provided information on legislation, regulations and how to prepare for a national, regional or statewide disaster. The conference took place from 6/12 – 6/14.

Gary Centifonti, Research Scientist, and **Donald Gerber**, Program Specialist, attended the American Industrial Hygiene Conference that provided workshops on the design, development and implementation of health and safety policies for the certification of child care centers and educational facilities. The conference took place from 6/12 – 6/16.

Kimberly Smith, Health Care Services Evaluator Nurse; **Anna Sousa**, Public Health Consultant and **Timothy Smith**, Research Scientist, attended End Stage Renal Disease Core Survey Pilot Training to identify problem areas more efficiently while assuring that quality of care standards and patient safety are met. The training took place from 6/25 – 6/27.

Beverly Sce, PhD, RN, Director, Children's Oral Health Program, has been selected to be a member of the National Nursing Workgroup on Oral Health. The group will serve as an expert advisory committee on a nurse's role in advancing oral health. As a member, Dr. Sce will highlight the state's efforts to improve the oral health of children, and the educational efforts being implemented to educate school nurses about oral health assessments.

Teresa Hamby, MSPH, Data Analyst, Communicable Disease Services, developed a poster for the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists conference that presented research on carbon monoxide visits to emergency rooms during and after Hurricane Irene. The conference ran from 6/3 – 6/7. [More on Teresa's presentation is available here.](#)



Mary Ann Ellsworth (back row on right) at the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors Conference that took place on 6/10 - 6/12.



Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd (second from the left), Beverly A. Kupiec-Sce, Ph.D., NJDOH Children's Oral Health Program and Debbie Tracy, RDH (with puppet), take part in the NJDOH Children's Oral Health Program at the Clifton Ave. Elementary School in Lakewood.



Doreleena Sammons-Posey, Training and Marketing Director, presents the 2012 State/Community Collaboration Award on behalf of the Directors of Health Promotion and Education, to Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner of Family Health Services; Lisa Jones, AAEP Director, Melissa Santorelli, Research Scientist; and Laura Hernandez-Paine, Acting Service Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Program.

Congratulations

Community Program Model for Asthma Wins National Award

In July, the Department's Asthma Awareness and Education Program (AAEP) received the national 2012 *State/Community Collaboration Award* for "A Community Approach to Improving Asthma Self-Management" from the Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE) in Washington, D.C. Cited for "an innovative program that has helped many New Jerseyans manage their asthma," the AAEP works with community partners through the Pediatric/Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey to improve the health of people with asthma in the State.



Milestones, *continued from page 1*

New Jersey to make sure they are up to date with their immunizations. Immunization rates in New Jersey are not where they need to be. The national average is 72.4 percent, but New Jersey's rate lags at 71 percent.

I would also like to remind parents to make sure their children have all the shots they need for school or day care. Ensuring that all children are immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases helps protect everyone, both young and old. Recently, New Jersey and the nation have seen increases in pertussis (whooping cough)—a vaccine-preventable disease. By ensuring that both children and adults are immunized, we can greatly reduce the spread of pertussis, which can be fatal in young children.

The first week of August also marked "World Breastfeeding Week," which highlighted the health benefits of breastfeeding. Exclusively breastfeeding your baby until at least six months of age reduces the risk of a child being overweight, decreases the number of infections in infants and protects babies against chronic illnesses.

During World Breastfeeding Week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its [2012 Breastfeeding Report Card](#) that showed New Jersey's breastfeeding initiation rate of 79.7 percent was above the national average of 76.9 percent in 2009. This is significant improvement from New Jersey's breastfeeding initiation rate in 2008, which was 75.3 percent with a national average of 74.6.

Increasing the number of mothers who breastfeed is a key initiative for the Department. Last year, the Department invested \$100,000, as part of its [Shaping NJ program](#) initiative to support 10 hospitals in their pursuit of a Baby-Friendly™ designation. The [Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative](#) is a World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) program that encourages and recognizes hospitals that promote and support breastfeeding.

In order to receive the designation, hospitals must implement a program called the ["Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding."](#) Two New Jersey hospitals achieved Baby-Friendly status this year—the first was South Jersey Health Care Elmer Hospital. The second was Capital Health Medical Center in Hopewell, which was one of the Department's grantee hospitals.



Commissioner O'Dowd toured South Jersey Healthcare Elmer Hospital, which recently received a Baby-Friendly designation. Pamela Boehme, left, holds daughter she delivered at South Jersey Healthcare Elmer Hospital as she talks with Nurse Manager Robin Taylor, center, and Commissioner O'Dowd.

New Jersey



OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
Department of Health

DOH Responds to Pre July 4th Storm that Left 200,000 Without Power

South Jersey Gets Federal Disaster Declaration

The Department of Health activated its health command center in late June in response to two major crises in the central and southern parts of the state. On June 29, a major water main break led to boil water advisories in 22 municipalities in Monmouth County and the following day, powerful thunderstorms caused tremendous damage in Atlantic, Cumberland and Salem Counties.

A day before the powerful South Jersey storms hit, more than 90,000 residents in Monmouth County suffered a water emergency when on June 29 the county's major water main ruptured.

In addition to the 200,000 homes that lost power, the storms affected nine long-term care facilities that needed to ensure the safety of its residents during and after the storms. Downed telephone wires and trees played havoc with communications and made patient evacuation and transfer difficult. The

Department activated its EMS Task Force, which deployed staff at the state, local and county level who together assisted with patient transfers and facility evacuations.

New Jersey hospitals were also impacted as a result of the storms. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, Alanticare Mainland Campus, South Jersey Healthcare, Elmer and South Jersey Healthcare-Bridgeton all lost primary power, but remained open using backup power generators. The Department monitored and coordinated activities relating to patient safety for several days through its Medical Coordination Centers located at Cooper Medical Center and Alanticare Health Systems.

The damage in South Jersey was so extensive that it prompted Governor Christie to request that the region be declared a "major disaster area." The request was approved by the federal government on July 19, making federal funds available to local governments for emergency work and repairs of damaged facilities.

A day before the powerful South Jersey storms hit, more than 90,000 residents in Monmouth County suffered a water emergency when on June 29 the county's major water main ruptured. A boil water emergency was issued immediately, and one day later, Governor Christie, Lt. Gov. Guadagno, Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd, DEP Commissioner Bob Martin, BPU President Bob Hanna, State Police Superintendent Rick Fuentes and other emergency management officials held a press conference in Oceanport to outline steps being taken to repair the water main break. During the press conference, held at the Wolf Hill Recreation Area, Governor Christie joined

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Governor Chris Christie and Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno hold a press conference after meeting with Office of Emergency Management on the water emergency situation in Oceanport, NJ on Saturday, June 30.



Governor Chris Christie thanks Mark Aschettino of Long Branch for helping hand out water during the water emergency in Oceanport, NJ on Saturday, June 30.



Deputy Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito and Lis-sette Carcano, a nurse in the Passaic Health Department visit with kids in the city's new mobile health van, which provides lead testing.

Department Launches Lead Screening Pilot Program

The Department is joining with nine local and county health departments to ensure that more New Jersey children get screened for lead—preventing lifelong health and learning problems. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito launched the pilot at Passaic City Hall—where local children were screened in the health department's new mobile van.

Using the LeadCare II Blood Lead Testing System—a highly portable testing device—local health agencies are expected to test more than 2,000 children for free and identify lead poisoned children earlier and link them to appropriate medical treatment. This testing system will provide rapid results within three minutes—allowing public health officials to educate parents about the results and begin

intervention immediately. In the past, getting results could take up to a week and public health offices often found it difficult to get back in touch with families to report the results and begin intervention if the results were elevated.

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Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner, Public Health Services (center second row) pictured with health officials from Passaic, Little Falls and the City of Clifton in front of Passaic's new mobile health van, which provides lead testing.

Nine pilot program participants: Camden County Department of Health and Human Services, City of Hackensack Department of Health, Town of Morristown Department of Health, Cumberland County Department of Health, Monmouth County Department of Health, City of Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services, Middlesex County Department of Health, City of Passaic Department of Health and Salem County Department of Health and Human Services.

These sites were chosen to participate based on a population at-risk for lead poisoning, a capacity to carry out testing, and current rates of screening.

Lead-based paint and lead contaminated dust are the main sources of exposure for lead in U.S. children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children under the age of six years old are at greatest risk because they are growing so rapidly and because they tend to put their hands or other objects, which may be contaminated with lead dust, into their mouths. Children are exposed to lead by swallowing leaded dust or soil that gets on their hands on other objects that they put into their mouths such as toys; swallowing leaded paint chips; breathing leaded dust or lead contaminated air; and eating food or drinking water that is contaminated with lead.

New Jersey Early Intervention System

Helping NJ Children Reach Their Potential

While all children grow and develop in unique ways, some children experience delays in their development. If a child experiences a developmental delay, this delay can compound over time and it may become more difficult to address. The New Jersey Early Intervention Services (NJEIS) helps parents minimize the effects of delays and disabilities by diagnosing conditions early in life. This program supports families with children from birth to age 3 who are in need of speech, physical therapy or other services necessary to achieve their full potential.

This past year over 21,000 infants and toddlers received services through the NJEIS. Housed within the NJ Department of Health - Division of Family Health Services, the NJEIS implements New Jersey's state-wide service delivery system.

The Department has partners throughout the state that help assist families. One of those partners is the Mid-Jersey CARES (Collaboration, Advocacy, Resources, Education and Services) which is part of the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium and serves the counties of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset, Monmouth, and Ocean.

This organization and others recently highlighted Early Intervention Services with events throughout the state for infants/toddlers with special needs, (birth to 3), their siblings and families as part of Early Intervention Week. This week, designated as the third week in May, was created to recognize that children with special needs can benefit from early identification and services. Events included story hours in partnership with local libraries to encourage early literacy and a love of reading. In some counties books on special needs were donated to local libraries supporting disability awareness. Other events included fundraisers at T.G.I. Friday's with a portion of the contributions used to purchase developmentally appropriate toys.

Other events were held in parks and locations such as JW Tumbles, a children's gym in Clinton. An essay contest for families on what they have learned about their child and family in early intervention was also held. The week concluded with an Early Intervention tent at Children's Specialized Hospital's Annual Walk and Roll event held in Johnson Park, New Brunswick. Early Intervention hosted a tent with activities including a sunflower planting station, sand art, hula hoop contest and face painting.

NJEIS plays an essential role in supporting families to ensure that all infants and toddlers with developmental delays and other diagnoses such as cerebral palsy, down syndrome and autism have the opportunity to develop, grow, learn and ultimately lead productive lives in the community.

To learn more about early intervention go to the state website at <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis> or to make a referral call the state-wide, toll free number 888-653-4463.



NJEIS plays an essential role in supporting families to ensure that all infants and toddlers with developmental delays and other diagnoses such as cerebral palsy, down syndrome and autism have the opportunity to develop, grow, learn and ultimately lead productive lives in the community.



Preterm Births Declining in New Jersey

Preterm birth is on the decline in New Jersey and the Department is proud of the role it is playing in helping overcome a condition that leads to serious health problems and even deaths of infants across the United States.

Recent data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that New Jersey's preterm birthrate fell from 12.9 percent in 2006 to 11.7 percent in 2010 (a 9 percent decrease) - representing 5 straight years of declining preterm births in our state.

The long-term decline in preterm birth rates is a tribute to the policies being instituted by the Department and our partners that are working to improve the health of women before they become pregnant.

The Department is:

- Improving access to prenatal care through the Access to Prenatal Care Initiative grants
- Co-sponsoring the Perinatal Collaborative with the New Jersey Hospital Association to help hospitals improve perinatal care
- Partnering with the [March of Dimes](#) and the Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait Initiative in Newark
- Expanding evidence-based home visiting in high risk communities
- Regionalizing perinatal care
- Promoting prenatal screening through the Perinatal Addiction Prevention Project
- Encouraging safe sleep environments for infants
- Lowering smoking rates among pregnant women

The long-term decline in preterm birth rates is a tribute to the policies being instituted by the Department and our partners that are working to improve the health of women before they become pregnant.

The decline in preterm births in New Jersey is described in ***America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2012.***



Storm, continued from page 7

emergency response officials in distributing free cases of bottled water to residents and urged customers to conserve water and observe the ban on outdoor water use until the water main was repaired.

Throughout the crisis, the Department monitored the situation through the Medical Coordination Center at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical Center in New Brunswick. Staff conducted conference calls during the week with Monmouth County hospitals, long-term care facilities, the county health department and other stakeholders assess available resources and assist with Boil Water Advisories. The towns affected were Aberdeen, Fair Haven, Highlands, Holmdel, Little Silver, Middletown, Rumson, Oceanport, Sea Bright, Tinton Falls, Shrewsbury, Long Branch, Eatontown, West Long Branch, Deal, Allenhurst, Loch Arbor, Neptune, Monmouth Beach, Lake Como, Shrewsbury and Ocean townships.

By weeks end, the water main was partially repaired and all bans lifted.