DPH Launches My Healthy Community Portal

DOVER (May 13, 2019) – Today, the Division of Public Health (DPH) launched a data portal allowing Delawareans to assess the overall health of their communities. The My Healthy Community data portal delivers neighborhood-focused population health, environmental and social determinant of health data to the public. The innovative technological showpiece, which was unveiled at the Rt. 9 Library and Innovation Center in New Castle, allows users to navigate the data at the smallest geographical area available, to understand and explore data about the factors that influence health.

"This is another example of how we are making data more transparent, accessible, and easy to understand," said Governor John Carney. "Sharing community-level statistics and data allows Delawareans to understand what is occurring in their neighborhoods, make informed decisions about their health, and take steps to continue improving our quality of life."

Delaware residents are able to explore a variety of data indicators in the following categories: community characteristics, the environment, chronic disease, and mental health and substance use. Air quality data, asthma incidence data, public and private drinking water results, and drug overdose and death data are currently available. Over the next several months, additional categories and data indicators are expected to be added including community safety, maternal and child health, healthy lifestyles, health services utilization, infectious diseases, education, socioeconomic influencers, lead poisoning, suicide and homicide, and populations vulnerable to climate change.

"Our health and the environment in which we live are

inherently connected," said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker. "The portal will allow communities, governments and stakeholders to better understand the issues that impact our health, determine priorities and track progress. Communities can use the data to initiate community-based approaches, support and facilitate discussions that describe and define population health priorities, and educate residents about their community's health and the environment in which they live."

Residents can search health indicators by street address, ZIP code, census tract, neighborhood, town/city, county and state. In addition, they can compare their community's health measures with other Delaware communities, their county, and the state as a whole, as well as view data trends over time. To ensure compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), not all data can be made available at the community level therefore, the system is designed to provide data for the smallest geographic area possible.

"Access to data is a key factor in making progress toward a stronger and healthier Delaware. The ability to easily access such crucial information like substance use and overdose data by ZIP code enables Delawareans to compare it to larger areas and examine trends," said Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long. Drug overdose deaths, non-fatal drug overdoses, and youth use of prescription pain medicines are available through My Healthy Community. Also for the first time, Emergency Department non-fatal drug overdose data from DPH, and Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) data will be available thanks to a partnership with the Division of Professional Regulation.

"Addiction, air quality, chronic disease and drinking water quality impact every one of us," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "When communities become aware of the level at which these issues are occurring in their neighborhoods, it can spur action that can improve the quality of life for current and future generations."

"People want to know detailed information about the health of their communities," said Rysheema Dixon, Wilmington City Council Member At-Large. "Providing this data with a neighborhood lens is going to open Delawareans' eyes to how healthy — or unhealthy — their communities really are."

My Healthy Community has been years in the making through a partnership among several DPH programs, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health (DSAMH), and the Delaware Health Care Commission (HCC). $138,500 in seed funding for this project was provided by DNREC in 2016, $79,000 for the initial research phase, and $59,500 for construction of the of the data portal's framework with supplemental funding from DPH through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant funds ($30,000 for development). DPH's contractor for this project was Green River of Brattleboro, Vermont.

"Health and environmental agencies have a long history of separately tracking trends, when, in fact, environmental conditions and health outcomes are often closely related," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "This public-access portal brings health and environmental data together and puts this information at the fingertips of all Delawareans, including healthcare and environmental professionals."

Additional funding was provided by DSAMH for substance use disorder (SUD) data and from the HCC to build in additional health indicators starting this summer, that will also serve to highlight Delaware's progress in meeting health care benchmarks (obesity, tobacco use, preventable Emergency Department visits, etc.) as part of DHSS's ongoing efforts to bring transparency to health care spending and to set targets for improving the health of Delawareans. Future funding has been secured from DNREC for data on vulnerable populations and climate change, and from DPH through CDC grants for violent death data and internal sharing of timely SUD data.

My Healthy Community encompasses the Delaware Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (EPHTN), and benefits from participation in an Environmental Public Health Tracking Peer-to-Peer Fellowship program through the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), with the Kentucky Department of Health as Delaware's EPHTN mentor.

Access the My Healthy Community data portal at MyHealthyCommunity.dhss.delaware.gov. Comments can be submitted via an online feedback form.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit http://delawarerelay.com.

The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.