

April 2025

Health Officer's Update

Hello Spring! I hope you are enjoying the start of this vibrant season- one of newness. It's a perfect time to focus on our health and well-being. With longer days, blooming flowers, and warmer weather, Spring offers an opportunity to embrace new beginnings and take proactive steps to improve our health.

It's also timely for me to remind the County of **World Immunization Week (April 24-30)**. This is a global effort to highlight the importance of vaccines in preventing disease, and **National Infant Immunization Week (April 19-26)**, which focuses on the importance of vaccinating infants and young children. April 2nd is also Autism Awareness Day and an opportunity to remind everyone that extensive research over the last two decades has determined [no link between autism spectrum disorders and vaccines](#).



Photo by CDC: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/girl-getting-vaccinated-3992931/>

This is important as recently, Washington, D.C., confirmed a new case of measles during the last week of March- this is in addition to the three cases previously reported in Maryland. Measles is a highly contagious virus that can spread easily, especially in communities with low vaccination rates. Vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent measles, and the CDC recommends that everyone receive 2 doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine (or have been born before 1957 or have documented history of measles).

The vaccine is safe, effective, and critical for protecting individuals and communities. If you or your child haven't yet been vaccinated, now is a good time to schedule a visit with your healthcare provider. We are fortunate to live in an area with such high vaccination rates. As a result, these have all been isolated cases and have not spread more broadly.

We are finally moving away from cold and flu season. Influenza is trending down as is COVID-19 and RSV. We are just on the cusp of having [2 consecutive weeks with respiratory virus hospitalizations being continuously <10/100,000](#). As respiratory viruses wind down, allergy season is winding up and the runny nose and sneezing just don't quit. Norovirus, which can cause vomiting and diarrhea, has been persistently present robust this year. Washing your hands is the best way to prevent spread, hand sanitizer is not very effective against it.



April also marks the American Public Health Association (APHA) [National Public Health Week \(April 7-13\)](#). Montgomery County's theme is ***"Success in Community. It Starts Here."***

We are encouraging individuals to take personal responsibility for their health and well-being, while also recognizing the collective efforts needed to improve public health at the local, state, and national levels.

Throughout this week, communities across the country will host events to raise awareness about public health challenges and solutions. We will also have several local activities in Montgomery County, the main being the [Dr. Ulder J. Tillman National Public Health Week Symposium](#).

Dr Tillman was appointed Public Health Officer for the Department of Health and Human Services in October 2003 and served until 2017 when she unexpectedly passed away. As County Health Officer and Chief of Public Health Services, Dr. Tillman oversaw a comprehensive array of public health services with more than 500 staff. She was the chair of the Maryland Association of County Health Officers from 2010 – 2012 and served on the National Association of County and City Health Officials Board as an interim At-Large member in 2009.

Simultaneously, the American Heart Association encourages physical activity throughout April which is also National Move More Month. In alignment with this initiative, I am hosting a [Walk with a Doc event](#) on April 12th! This event encourages people to walk together while engaging with the community.



April 11-17 is [Black Maternal Health Week](#), a crucial observance dedicated to raising awareness about the disparities that Black women face in maternal health outcomes. The 2025 theme is ***“Healing Legacies: Strengthening Black Maternal Health Through Collective Action and Advocacy”***. This week brings attention to the need for improved maternal care, better access to

healthcare, and greater support for Black women during pregnancy and childbirth.

Right here in Montgomery County, I want to encourage support of our Babies Born Healthy Program, the Improved Pregnancy Outcomes Program, and the African American Health Program of Montgomery County as they host **the [5th Annual Right From the Start](#)** Perinatal Education Fair & Workshop. The 2025 event is being held on Saturday 12th April from 11 am.



As a precursor to this, the Montgomery County Advancing Maternal Health Summit took place on March 14th, 2025. This gathering united healthcare leaders, policymakers, community advocates, and families to foster partnerships, examine systemic issues, and develop actionable strategies to improve maternal health equity.

Additionally, the County’s Maternal and Infant Health report, serves as a key resource to our understanding of our maternal health challenges and identifying opportunities for intervention and improvements. You are encouraged to read the report [here](#).

All the themes for the events mentioned previously, focus on preventive actions that make a real difference in the long term and remind us that the steps we take today can lead to a healthier tomorrow for ourselves

and our communities. Both themes are united in their message: by prioritizing prevention, whether through vaccinations, healthy habits, or regular screenings, we can prevent many health issues before they develop, creating healthier individuals and communities worldwide.

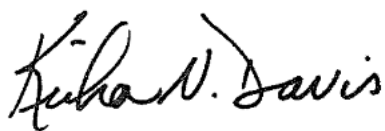
Other April Observations:

- **Autism Awareness Month** is a time to increase understanding of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and support individuals with autism and their families.
- **Earth Day (April 22)** highlights environmental issues and the importance of sustainable practices for a healthier planet. Clean air and water are integral to public health.

In closing, I am heartened to share that our County continues to perform well in terms of population health and well-being, surpassing the average rankings for counties in Maryland and nationwide. According to the latest [County Health Rankings](#), [Montgomery County](#) outpaces both state and national averages when it comes to factors such as life expectancy, access to healthcare, and the overall health of its residents.

In addition, the county excels in community conditions, including access to clean air, safe housing, and supportive social environments. These positive outcomes highlight Montgomery County's commitment to public health initiatives and creating a healthier, more vibrant community for its residents. By continuing to prioritize these key factors, Montgomery County will remain a leader in fostering an environment where its people can thrive.

As we celebrate Spring, staying informed and proactive will help ensure the continued well-being of our communities to make Montgomery County community a healthier, happier place to live, work, and play!



Kisha N. Davis, MD, MPH, FAAFP

