

HEALTH OFFICER UPDATE

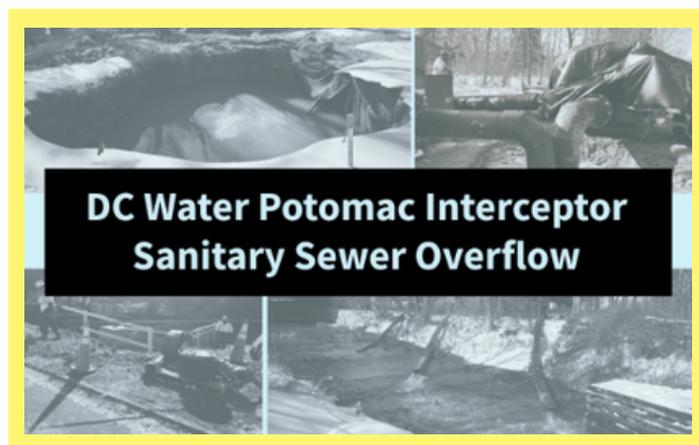
MARCH 2026

With spring right around the corner, March brings longer and sunnier days. It is a wonderful time to embrace the outdoors and enjoy the season's fresh start. This month, we are recognizing Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, honoring National Doctors Day on March 30, and highlighting National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Each of these observances offers a chance to learn, reflect, and take proactive steps toward supporting our well-being and the health of our community.



Before we move onto health observances, we are highlighting two public health priorities in our communities: DC Water Potomac Interceptor updates and mumps updates.

DC WATER POTOMAC INTERCEPTOR UPDATES



Montgomery County Departments of Health and Human Services and Department of Environmental Protection are actively collaborating with DC water to address the sanitary overflow near the Clara Barton Parkway. On February 27, we released a Health Guidance for areas affected by the Potomac Interceptor Collapse:

- **Avoid Contact:** Do not come into contact with the water or shoreline in impacted areas. Keep children and pets away from the water's edge and ensure pets do not drink from the river.
- **Hygiene and Exposure:** If exposure occurs, wash skin and hands immediately with soap and clean water. Pet owners should thoroughly rinse their pet's paws and fur.

- **Consumption Risks:** Do not consume any food or water that may have been exposed. Additionally, avoid collecting or eating fish, shellfish, or any other wildlife from the river.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Residents served by the interceptor are encouraged to avoid flushing wipes or disposing of grease down drains. This simple action helps support ongoing emergency operations and reduces strain on the system.
- **Medical and Veterinary Care:** Anyone experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, a rash, or skin irritation after exposure should contact a healthcare provider immediately. Pet owners should contact a veterinarian if their pet becomes ill after exposure.

You can visit our website to stay updated on the emergency response, health guidance and sampling results: https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Photo_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=20873

MUMPS

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has confirmed an increase in mumps cases in the state. As of February 19, there are a **total of 26 cases reported** in 2026: **19 confirmed** and **7 probably** causes in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Mumps is a viral disease that spreads easily through tiny drops of saliva when someone coughs or sneezes. Common symptoms include:

- Swelling on one or both sides of the face, near the cheeks and jaw (parotitis)
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite

Symptoms appear about 2 to 4 weeks after exposure. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your healthcare provider or your child's pediatrician. There is no specific medicine to treat mumps aside from fever and pain relief.



Most patients experience a full recovery, although serious complications can occur and may require immediate medical attention, including inflammation of the testicles, ovaries or breasts, pancreatitis, hearing loss, meningitis, and encephalitis. Some of these complications are more common in adults.

Mumps is vaccine preventable through the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine that is routinely recommended at 12 to 15 months of age for the first dose and the second dose at 4 to 6 years old.

- Other ways to stop the spread of mumps:
- Don't share things that have saliva on them
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Stay home when you are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Clean and disinfect surfaces

Mumps is not considered to be as contagious as measles.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services offers childhood immunizations for eligible children through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Learn more on how to make an appointment and eligibility criteria:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/PHSImmunizations-p275.html>

MDH Mumps Fact Sheet: https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/IDEHASHaredDocuments/MDH-Fact-Sheet_Mumps.pdf

COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Figure 59. Cancer Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates by Sex and Race, Colon and Rectum, Montgomery County, 2018-2022

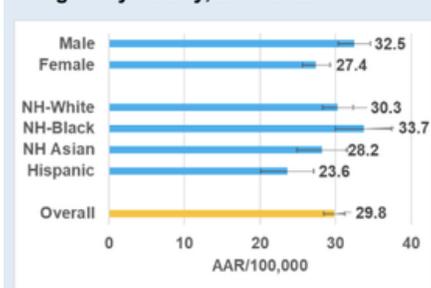
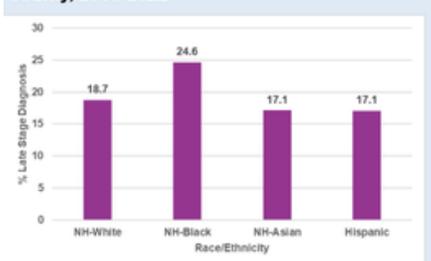


Figure 63. Colon and Rectum Cancer: Late-Stage Diagnosis* by Race/Ethnicity, Montgomery County, 2018-2022



Did you know that Colorectal Cancer is now the deadliest cancer in people under 50?

The number one way to prevent colorectal cancer or catch it early is by getting yourself screened **beginning at the age of 45**. Currently in the United States, about **1 in 3 people** that should get tested have never been screened.

In Montgomery County, non-Hispanic Black communities had a higher incidence and mortality than non-Hispanic Whites. Additionally, non-Hispanic Black communities had the highest diagnosis of late-stage colon and rectum cancer compared to other race and ethnicities.

48% of people hesitate to get screened for colorectal cancer as a result of cost.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Cancer Prevention, Education, Screening and Treatment (CPEST) Program provides free colonoscopies and follow-up care for eligible residents: Montgomery County residents who are uninsured or under-insured, age 45 or older, with family income up to 250% of federal poverty guidelines.

Applications are available in English and Spanish.

- General questions: 240-777-1750
- Eligibility appointments: 240-777-1222
- Website: montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/PHSCancerscreen-p262.html



Events Coming Up to Raise Awareness

- **March 14** - Free Community Event with the African American Health Program of Montgomery County (AAHP-MoCo)
 - Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church, Silver Spring
 - 10AM–1PM.
 - Register at AAHPCOLORECTALCANCER.eventbrite.com
- **March 20** - Walk for Life: Our signature awareness walk. All staff encouraged to attend. Details coming.

You are invited to a FREE event hosted in partnership with the African American Health Program-MoCo, Maryland Oncology Hematology Cancer Center, Rockville and Luminus Hospital

When: Saturday, March 14, 2026 Time: 10AM - 1PM

Venue: Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church

420 University Blvd, Silver Spring, MD 20901

<https://AAHPCOLORECTALCANCER.eventbrite.com>



COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Join us for a FREE event in recognition of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, highlighting the impact of colon cancer on African American and Latino communities. Explore a life-size anatomical model, learn about risks, symptoms, and stages of colorectal cancer, and connect with resources. Light refreshments will be served.

The African American Health Program is a proud and privileged member of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and is committed to providing high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate care to all residents.

Having Accessibility Policy Implementation Centers will provide site language interpreters and other auxiliary aids or services to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in the program. For more information, please contact the Accessibility Policy Implementation Centers at 240-777-1222 or 240-777-1750.

African American Health Program

NATIONAL DOCTORS DAYS

National Doctor's Day is on March 30, 2026! This day marks a moment to honor the physicians who devote their lives to healing communities and delivering high-quality, compassionate health care.

It's also a great opportunity to reflect on your own health. You can honor your physician by scheduling your annual wellness visit, staying up to date on preventive screenings, or working with your care team to create a personalized plan that supports your long-term well-being.

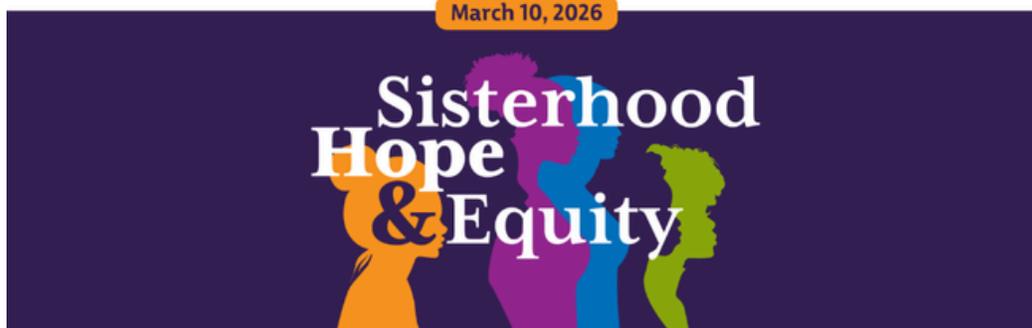
Take a moment to thank the doctors in your life, whether through a note of appreciation, a message of gratitude, or simply by taking steps to prioritize your own health. Their dedication makes a difference every day.

NATIONAL WOMEN AND GIRLS HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

(#NWGHAAD)

March 10, 2026



 thewellproject

bit.ly/NWGHAAD2026



March 10 is National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

In Montgomery County, women make up 51.3% of the population, yet they account for 24.7% of new HIV diagnoses. This day is a reminder of the importance of prevention, testing, and care to support the health of women and girls in our community.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services provides HIV and STI testing, HIV prevention and medical treatment.

Montgomery County Sexual Health & Wellness Services

Dennis Avenue Health Center

2000 Dennis Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20902
240-777-1760

8:00am to 4:00pm, Monday-Friday

Upcounty Regional Services Center

12900 Middlebrook Road, 2nd Floor
Germantown, MD 20874
240-777-1609

8:00am to 4:00pm, Monday-Friday

Website:

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/hiv/>

Education Materials:

- “So We PrEP” by Care for the Culture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfzxkfmWgoE&list=RDtfzxkfmWgoE&start_radio=1
- “Hazte la prueba sin pena” (Spanish): https://www.youtube.com/shorts/lf4RL_Jl8DY