



HAMILTON COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH

# HamCoHealth News

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## Hamilton County Public Health

### From The Health Commissioner



I am proud to announce that Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation's nearly 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards. HCPH is one of fewer than 200 health departments that have thus far achieved accreditation through PHAB since the organization launched in 2011. **(cont. on pg. 2)**

### Opioid Battle Wages On

There is no shortage of news coverage on the current battle to control the disease of addiction throughout Hamilton County – and the rest of the country, for that matter.

Hamilton County Public Health maintains a lead role on the Hamilton County Heroin Coalition, particularly in the area of data development and dissemination. We are currently issuing a daily report covering 911 dispatches and hospital emergency visits for drug overdoses. The report matches emergency data with a County map, which gives first responders a picture of where they may need to allocate resources. It also provides advance warning to hospital emergency departments during elevated overdose periods.

In addition, we continue to work on the bloodborne infectious disease prevention and treatment access program. With

Hepatitis C among the most-reported diseases in the County, it is imperative that we continue to work to reduce infections often shared by injection drug users.

Comprehensive programs must include referral to treatment, which will work on the root cause for the spread of infection. We remain vigilant in trying to stay in front of this crisis so as to reduce Hepatitis and avoid large-scale outbreaks of other bloodborne infections, such as HIV.

If your community would like to learn more about the opioid epidemic and the disease of addiction, call me anytime.



## Health Commissioner

“Well, that’s great, Tim,” you might say in response. “Congratulations, but what does that mean for us?”

I’m glad you asked! Accreditation means that your community is now served by an agency recognized as among the best in the nation. People expect their hospitals, schools and other agencies to be accredited. Why not public health?

The communities we serve demand and deserve high quality public health services, leadership and accountability in the provision of those services. Through the accreditation process, we solidify our position with the communities we serve by being recognized as top-performers in meeting public health needs. Accreditation also demonstrates our accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and the partners with whom we work.

Perhaps most important, accreditation demands that we continually work to improve our processes and services to communities. The accreditation process is predicated on development and execution of a continuous quality improvement program that challenges us to constantly look at our services with an eye toward bettering ourselves. Continuous Quality Improvement, or CQI as it’s known here, is a bottom-up program in which our entire agency participates.

None of us owns the franchise on good ideas. Improvement opportunities can be, and have been launched from all corners of the agency – from field staff to administrative functions. We have a formal process through which all improvement opportunities are developed and supported with data-based decision making tools. If the idea makes sense, we institutionalize it through the CQI process and ultimately share the benefits of improved service with the communities we serve.

Accreditation is a five-year designation, after which we must re-apply and complete the process all over again. As such, it does not allow us to rest on our laurels, but rather to continue to develop and refine. Providing excellent and timely services to the communities we serve is always our primary objective. So while we celebrated for a few days, it was quickly back to work for all of us. After all, re-accreditation will be here before we know it!



## Mosquito Season Almost Here

As the warmer weather arrives, we are beginning to ramp up our mosquito surveillance and trapping efforts. While West Nile Virus has been around for several years, last year’s spread of Zika Virus has led to surveillance program enhancements.

We have dedicated considerable resources to mosquito surveillance, particularly in the area of trapping the insects for quick identification. We would be happy to set up surveillance programs in your community. In addition, we will continue to:

- Provide up-to-date information as we learn more. Visit us at [www.hcph.org](http://www.hcph.org);
- Apply larvacide for areas of standing water;
- Work with homeowners to manage home sewage treatment systems to minimize mosquito breeding opportunities.
- Provide referrals to Ohio Department of Agriculture pesticide training sessions to certify your community workers to legally apply pesticides.

If you are interested in surveillance programs for your community, or any of the other services listed above, contact Jeremy Hessel, Director of Environmental Health, [jeremy.hessel@hamilton-co.org](mailto:jeremy.hessel@hamilton-co.org) or 513-946-7834.

## Food Safety

The State of Ohio has mandated that food service managers formally educate staff in safe food handling. Because of the high demand for training, we would be happy to bring the food safety course directly to your community. If you can accommodate a group of 30 or more participants to host training for two days, let us know. We would welcome an opportunity to bring our course to your community to help out your businesses.

Contact Jeremy Hessel, Director of Environmental Health, [jeremy.hessel@hamilton-co.org](mailto:jeremy.hessel@hamilton-co.org) or 513-946-7834 for details.

## WeTHRIVE!

Are you one of the 21 WeTHRIVE! communities in Hamilton County? If not, the time is now. We have added new “pathways” to the program and can have your community up-and-running in short order. Why not lead your community to make healthy living easier? To get started, contact Rebecca Stowe, Director of Health Promotion and Education, [Rebecca.stowe@hamilton-co.org](mailto:Rebecca.stowe@hamilton-co.org) or 513-946-7845.

## New Website

If you haven't already done so, please take a moment to visit our new, updated website at [hceph.org](http://www.HCPH.org). The site is organized into services for individuals, communities and businesses and is designed to quickly get you where you need to go. Our most popular features, such as online inspections and community injury and disease reports are readily available from the home page. In addition, we've streamlined our online business section, making doing business with us as simple as a few clicks. Go to <http://www.HCPH.org>.

## Annual District Advisory Council Meeting



*Springfield Township Trustee and President of the Hamilton County Public Health District Advisory Council, Gwen McFarlin, opens the annual Council meeting March 13, during which Whitewater Township Fiscal Officer, Jim Brett was re-appointed to a new, five-year term on the Board of Health. The District Advisory Council is made up of presidents of the township boards of trustees, village mayors and the president of the Board of County Commissioners.*

*The Board of Health elected Kenneth Amend, M.D. as its president and Mark Rippe as Vice President. Board meetings are scheduled for the second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m. at HCPH offices, 250 William Howard Taft, Cincinnati, 45219.*



### Call Me

I trust this brief letter provides you with the background to begin getting involved with Hamilton County Public Health. I invite you to call me anytime for more information or to discuss how you can get involved in our leadership and community involvement initiatives. Better yet, give me a call and I'd be glad to give you a personal tour of Hamilton County Public Health and the services we provide.

Tim Ingram, Health Commissioner  
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