

PREVENT DISEASE AND INJURY. PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS. PROTECT YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY.

## What's in This Month's Issue:

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- Jim Watkins's Parting Thoughts & Retirement
- Program Spotlight: Environmental Health & Recalls

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- Connect to Thrive: The Benefits of Social Connection
- Schedule a Vaccine Appointment Online
- COVID-19 Test Kits for Agencies
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## American Heart Month: How to Prevent High Blood Pressure

February is American Heart Month! Use this month to spread awareness, make healthy choices, and prioritize your heart health. Regularly monitoring your blood pressure with support from your healthcare team can help lower your risk for heart disease and stroke. Getting your blood pressure checked regularly at your doctor's office is important to staying on top of your heart health. Preventing high blood pressure can reduce your risk for heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes, which are leading causes of death in Williams County.



### Take these steps to prevent high blood pressure:

- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week
- Don't smoke
- Get enough sleep
- Track your blood pressure by visiting your doctor annually

## Jim Watkins's Parting Thoughts & Retirement



I have been reading lately about how we tend to put the past on a pedestal and think it was a simpler time, not so frustrating or complicated. Having a long career in public health I have been part of and seen many changes. Change is always a loss of something familiar and comfortable. As we age, I also think we can resist change because we have gone through so many changes in our lives. I was privileged to be

elected several times by my fellow health commissioners to serve on our state association (AOHC) board as the representative for the NW Ohio Health Departments. Later, I was elected by my fellow health commissioners from across the state to serve as President of AOHC. For the last 10 years, I have had the privilege of serving on our board for the Local Public Health Services Collaborative. These experiences allowed me to bring a Williams County perspective to conversations and the privilege of learning from many great people.

During the past 17 years, the Williams County Health Department has:

- Passed an operational levy that has made the department much more financially stable.
- Became one of the first 20 health departments in the state to meet the state requirements of national accreditation.
- Delivered vaccinations to the community through two pandemics.
- Founded a successful, statewide, collaborative to provide services to local communities at a reduced cost.
- Affiliated with BGSU as an academic health department. This has allowed us to attract staff.

Overall, I am proud of the fantastic staff we have had over the years who have cared about the Williams County community. Their dedication to working with the community has made it a pleasure to serve in the capacity of health commissioner.

Retirement after 17 years as health commissioner will be a major change for me, but life is all about change. It's a matter of how we choose to react to change.

Wishing the community all the best,  
James D. Watkins

## Program Spotlight: Environmental Health & Recalls

Food recalls are actions taken to remove or correct food products from the market that may pose a risk to public health. It is important to be aware of recalls because recalled foods may cause serious injury or illness. Health departments play a crucial role in coordinating and overseeing various actions to keep everyone safe.

Here is an outline of the actions health departments take in the event of a recall:

- 1. Communication:** Health departments work to spread awareness of the recall to the public via social media or a press release.
- 2. Investigation:** Health departments may investigate the cause of the food safety issue and verify the accuracy of the information.
- 3. Inform:** Health departments communicate with local businesses and retailers to ensure they are aware and take appropriate action.
- 4. Monitor:** Health departments monitor the progress of the recall to make sure all products have been removed from the shelves and that retailers comply with the recall instructions.
- 5. Data:** Health departments collect the number of affected products, how many were sold, and any reported illnesses.
- 6. Guidance:** Health departments help consumers identify and dispose of the products and provide information on potential health risks and symptoms associated with the recalled food.
- 7. Engage:** Health departments provide community education to raise awareness about general guidelines for safe food practices and the importance of checking for recalls.

In the case of a recall, read the notice carefully and follow any product-specific instructions. Often, recalled products may be returned to the store where they were purchased for a full refund. If not, dispose of the product properly. A list of recalled products can be found on the FDA's website: [bit.ly/Recalls-Food](https://www.fda.gov/oc/recalls)

## Free Naloxone Available



Did you know that if you are in Ohio, you can get naloxone for you, someone you know, or your organization for free? Naloxone is a medicine that can save someone's life if they are overdosing on opioids — whether it's a prescription opioid, heroin, or a drug containing fentanyl. Naloxone can be given to anyone showing signs of an opioid overdose, even if you are not sure if they have used opioids. Carrying naloxone does not mean that you are encouraging people to misuse opioids or other drugs. It just means that you are ready to save a life. Order your free naloxone and learn how to use it at <https://naloxone.ohio.gov/>

## Regional Substance Use Prevention Breakfast

The ECHO Coalition is joining efforts with Defiance, Fulton, and Henry counties' substance use prevention coalitions to host the Regional Substance Use Prevention Breakfast on **February 29, 2024, 7:30-11:30am at the NWOESC**. Join us for conversations about substance use prevention and harm reduction efforts in the four county area. We will discuss:

- Impacts of marijuana legalization on youth
- ACEs and toxic stress
- Evidence-based practice in prevention and harm reduction
- Status of marijuana legalization in Ohio

Registration is required by February 15th:

[bit.ly/RegBreakfast2024](https://bit.ly/RegBreakfast2024)

**Regional Substance Use Prevention Breakfast**

Join Defiance, Fulton, Henry, and Williams County for conversations about substance use prevention and harm reduction efforts in the four county area.

- Impacts of Marijuana Legalization on Youth
- ACEs and Toxic Stress
- Evidence Based Practice in Prevention and Harm Reduction
- Status of Marijuana Legalization in Ohio

**TIME: 7:30AM - 11:30AM\***  
**DATE: Thursday, February 29, 2024**  
**LOCATION: Educational Service Center, 205 Nolan Pkwy Archbold, OH 43502**

\*Registration and breakfast will occur from 7:30am-8:00am. Presentations will begin at 8:00am.

DEFIANCE COUNTY DRUG FREE COALITION | Henry County Health Partners | ECHO

Larger flyer:  
[bit.ly/RSUPB24](https://bit.ly/RSUPB24)

## Connect to Thrive: The Benefits of Social Connection

Did you know that those who feel they have strong connections to others are less likely to experience anxiety and depression and more likely to have high self-esteem? We are social creatures by nature, which means feeling connected with others is important for our survival. When you have stable relationships you feel supported by, you are more likely to make healthy choices, which means you are more likely to have better health outcomes, mentally AND physically.

### How can I grow my sense of connection?



**Reach out!** This can be a family member, friend, neighbor, coworker, or anyone you feel you can foster a strong relationship with. Reaching out to someone can also help them increase their sense of connection and improve their mental and physical health.



**Add connection to your routine.** Make it a priority to spend time with people you care about. Plan family dinners, host game nights with your friends, attend community events, or go for a stroll with a neighbor. Planning time to connect with others will make sure this need is met.



**Build a community.** It is important to have more than one person to turn to for support. Whether you need someone for emotional support when you are feeling down or physical support when you need help moving, having a community of people that makes you feel connected is important for your mental health.



WCHD Community Talking Points are published on a monthly basis and posted on our website and social media. If you would you like to receive the community talking points directly, sign up by completing this form: [bit.ly/WCCoCommunityTalkingPoints](https://bit.ly/WCCoCommunityTalkingPoints)

## Schedule a Vaccine Appointment Online



No more waiting on the phone! We've made it easier than ever to schedule your vaccine appointments at our Bryan or Montpelier offices. Simply click [bit.ly/WCHDVaccineAppt](https://bit.ly/WCHDVaccineAppt), choose your reason for visit, and the calendar will show you the next available dates and times.



## COVID-19 Test Kits for Agencies

The Williams County Health Department has free COVID-19 test kits available for businesses, agencies, and organizations to use or distribute. If you are interested in learning more, contact Nathan at [nathan.hoffer@williamscountyhealth.org](mailto:nathan.hoffer@williamscountyhealth.org).



## Talking Points Content Survey

What would you like to learn about in future Community Talking Points? Share your feedback by taking the following survey:

[bit.ly/CTPInputSurvey](https://bit.ly/CTPInputSurvey)



For more information on WCHD programs and services, visit: [williamscountyhealth.org](https://williamscountyhealth.org)

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