



# HealthLine

(A newsletter of the Darke County Health Department)

**Message from the Health Commissioner  
Dr. Terry Holman, DVM, RS:**

## **Darke County Health Department works towards Accreditation**

The Darke County Health Department is working towards being nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). There is a movement throughout the country for state and local health departments to become accredited. As reported in the October/November 2017 PHAB Newsletter, **Benefits of PHAB Accreditation Now Reaching 66 Percent of U.S. Population.**

*Demonstrating a consistent and continued commitment to improving public health in their communities, nine governmental public health departments in September were awarded five-year accreditation status through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). These accreditation decisions mean that the benefits of being served by a PHAB-accredited health department now extend to more than 203 million people, or 66 percent of the U.S. population.*

The accreditation process is an excellent tool for all local and combined health districts to shed light on the importance and amount of work that goes into keeping the public and their environment healthy and safe. Darke County will be submitting all required documentation in May 2018 to PHAB. The process then involves a site visit by trained volunteers representing PHAB. Look for future updates on our accreditation status.



## **Clinic to Help Families Meet School Vaccine Requirements**

Darke County students entering seventh and twelfth grades next school year should soon be receiving a letter from the health department. The letter will invite them to receive their needed school vaccines during an upcoming health department clinic. The clinic is going to take place on March 24<sup>th</sup> from 8-1 at Spirit Medical Transport. The vaccines are offered at no cost to those that attend. For questions related to this clinic, feel free to call (937)548-4196 x224.



*The Health Department is now on Facebook & Twitter.  
Please "Like us" to receive up to date messages.*



### **Staff Highlight: New Employee**

My name is Traci Owens and I am new to Darke County, new to Ohio actually. I was born and raised in Silvis, Illinois. Home of John Deere Headquarters and the TPC Deere Run Golf Course and the PGA's John Deere Classic. The area I am from is also the true home of the Maid Rite, so it's nice to have something here to make me feel at home. I have 2 children, a son who is a US Marine and a teenage daughter who will be starting high school next fall. I have a BS degree in Family and Consumer Sciences (Nutrition), thirteen years of public health experience and recently (2015) obtained a Master's in Public Administration from Drake University (Des Moines, Iowa). I love dogs and I have a mutt named Marli. I am very happy to be a part of DCGHD.



*Picture of Traci Owens*

### **Influenza on the Rise in Darke County**

In the past six weeks, Darke County has seen a drastic increase in Influenza, primarily Influenza A cases. In December, there were 14 flu-associated hospitalizations and in the first week of January, there have already been 12 hospitalizations. These numbers are expected to continue to rise over the next couple of months. The flu is different than the common cold. Symptoms of the flu include: fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, and fatigue. Children can also have vomiting and diarrhea. Most people recover from the flu; however, it can lead to more serious complications such as pneumonia and respiratory failure. Pregnant women, young children, people over 65, and those with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are considered high risk for the flu.

Emergency warning signs of the flu in children include: difficulty breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids, difficulty waking up, irritability, and fever with a rash. In adults, more serious symptoms include: chest pain, difficulty breathing, dizziness, and confusion. Emergency symptoms in infants are being unable to eat, trouble breathing, no tears when crying, and significantly less wet diapers than normal. If you have any of these symptoms, it is important to seek medical attention.

There are many ways to prevent getting, or spreading, the flu. If you are already ill, it is important to avoid contact with people for 24 hours after the fever subsides, cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, wash your hands frequently, and take antiviral drugs if prescribed by your doctor. In order to protect yourself from the flu, the most effective way is to get immunized. Other ways to prevent contracting the flu are: avoid close contact with sick people, wash your hands frequently, disinfect surfaces at home, get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, and eat a nutritious diet.

It is not too late to get your flu shot. The Darke County Health Department is offering flu shots on a walk-in basis, Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Immunizations are also offered at many doctor's offices and pharmacies.

## Free Radon Test Kits Available

The Regional Air Pollution Control Agency, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, Union County Health Department, and local Health Departments, is offering free radon test kits for Miami Valley homeowners to check their homes for elevated radon levels.

Radon is a colorless, odorless soil gas that can build up in homes and may pose an increased risk of lung cancer to occupants. The Ohio Department of Health estimates about half of Ohio families live in homes with elevated radon levels. Radon enters buildings through cracks and holes in the foundation so homes with basements are at a higher risk.

Testing is the only way to know if elevated levels exist in a home. The Darke County Health Department recommends all homes be tested, regardless of age, location, or construction type. Elevated radon levels can be corrected with the installation of a ventilation system to direct the gas outdoors.

Homeowners interested in obtaining a free test kit can visit [www.drhomeair.com/OH](http://www.drhomeair.com/OH) or [www.rapca.org/programs/radon](http://www.rapca.org/programs/radon) or obtain a mail in coupon from the Darke County Health Department at 300 Garst Avenue, Greenville. More radon information is available by visiting [www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon) or <http://radon.utoledo.edu>.

Help Me Grow is a FREE voluntary family support program for pregnant women or new parents. Offered in every county of the state through a well-established network, Help Me Grow is an evidence-based program that promotes healthy growth and development for babies and young children. Our home visitors are well-trained professionals who use a non-judgmental and compassionate approach that empowers parents with skills, tools and confidence to nurture the healthy growth of their children



*Picture of Sophie Hurley, RS*

## Staff Highlight: Sophie Hurley

Sophie has been with the Health Department in the Environmental Division for 9 ½ years. This year Sophie was in charge of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund money. The funds are used to repair/replace failing sewage treatment systems in the county.

Homeowners qualified for the grant money based on total household income and being up-to-date on mortgages/taxes/utilities. The houses were required to have a failing septic system and be homeowner-occupied.

With that \$300,000, the Health Department was able to repair/replace 25 septic systems in the county. This has removed approximately 10,000 gallons per day or more of untreated sewage from ground and surface waters in Darke County.

With Sophie's help, the Health Department has been fortunate enough to be awarded another \$300,000 to be used in the same manner before the end of 2018 and an additional \$200,000 to be used by the end of 2019. Thanks Sophie!

For more information, please contact Sophie Hurley, RS: 937-548-4196 ext. 208 or [sophie.hurley@darkecountyhealth.org](mailto:sophie.hurley@darkecountyhealth.org).

## February is American Heart Month



The perfect gift this Valentine's Day is the gift of heart health. Along with Valentine's Day, February marks American Heart Month, a great time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make small changes that can lead to a lifetime of heart health. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. For more information visit <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>.

### Do you purchase baked goods from a home bakery?

If you buy baked goods from a home bakery, do you check to see if the bakery has a home bakery license through the Ohio Department of Agriculture? There are currently 12 licensed home bakeries in Darke County. If a home bakery license does not exist, the home may be a cottage food production operation.

Cottage Foods is when a person in their home produces food items that are not potentially hazardous. Items would include: bakery products, jams, jellies, and candy. These items are still required to be properly labeled with the following information on each food product for sale:

1. The name and address of the business of the "Cottage Food Production Operation";
2. The name of the food product;
3. The ingredients of the food product, in descending order of predominance by weight;
4. The net weight or net volume of the food product;
5. The following statement in ten-point type: "This Product is Home Produced."

Cottage Food Products that are properly identified and labeled may be sold directly to the consumer from the home where the products are produced. They may also be sold through grocery stores, registered farm markets, registered farmers markets, and sold and/or used in preparing food in a restaurant.

If you have any questions regarding approved sources or if you found someone operating without a license please call the Health Department at 937-548-4196.