

HEALTH LINE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DARKE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

MISSION STATEMENT

To develop and maintain an efficient and effective system that will provide for the highest quality of public health services and to promote and protect the Darke County community's physical, mental, social, and environmental well-being.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to be an innovative leader in achieving the highest possible health and wellbeing for Darke County and the environment.

WELCOME JORDAN D. FRANCIS, MPH

The Darke County General Health District would like to welcome Jordan D. Francis, MPH, as the new Health Commissioner of Darke County.

Mr. Francis earned his bachelor's degree in Sports Management and Community Health from Malone University and went on to earn his Master of Public Health degree from West Virginia University in 2015. During his time in graduate school, he worked as a Health Educator and Health Education Specialist. Francis has vast expertise serving as Wayne Healthcare's Director of Wellness Services for seven years. He's served many community roles including Health Education section chair for Ohio Public Health Association, Everheart Hospice board member, Darke County Wellness Challenge President, and 2018 Public Health Practitioner of the Year.

A WORD FROM THE NEW HEALTH COMMISSIONER

"I received my Master of Public Health degree from West Virginia University in 2015. Two life-changing events happened during my time at WVU: I graduated with my public health degree and I met my wife, Angy. We have one daughter, who is a spitting image of her dad, and three dogs.

My favorite part of my job is supporting the mission of public health. Put simply, the Darke County General Health District's mission is to safeguard the health and well-being of our community. Being passionate about the pursuit of this mission makes it easy to be excited about being part of the day-to-day operations within the health department.

The overarching duty of my position is facilitating the achievement of our mission and vision. Achieving our mission and vision requires appropriate management of DCGHD funding, leading and coordinating efforts of the environmental and nursing divisions, and collaboration with agencies in the local public health system.

I look forward to having an opportunity to impact the health and well-being of our community, and to effectively collaborate with our community partners to work towards creating and sustaining a healthy, safe, and vibrant community.

I've also really enjoyed working with the Health Department's staff thus far and look forward to continuing to foster a great work environment and positive workplace culture."



ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Tonya Coning is a new hire to the Darke County General Health District. She is one of our Environmental Division Secretaries. Tonya is a Darke County native from Union City, Ohio. She is married to her husband, Travis, and has 3 children and 2 grandchildren, (With 2 more on the way!) In her free time, she enjoys camping, kayaking, crocheting, and spending time with her grandchildren. Tonya's favorite part of her job would be the people she works with; they really make her job fun. Her job duties include answering calls, entering data and running reports, and scheduling septic inspections. She looks forward to learning everyday and growing in her new role!

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IS PUBLIC HEALTH

Environmental Health is the science and practice of preventing human injury and illness and promoting well-being by identifying and evaluating environmental sources and hazardous agents and limiting exposure to hazardous physical, chemical, and biological agents in air, soil, water, food, and other environmental media or settings that may adversely affect human health.

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

CAREERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Multiple careers make up the Health Department team. In the Environmental Division, there are Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) and Environmental Health Specialists in Training (EHST) on our staff. To become an Environmental Health Specialist in Training (EHSIT), the minimum education is a bachelor's degree. To advance to Registered Environmental Health Specialist, REHS, you must take and pass the National Environmental Health Association REHS Exam and work for two years as an EHSIT or one year if the applicant has a master's degree and has completed the required math and science coursework. We are currently looking to hire for these roles. Below are some of the roles and responsibilities that these positions have on our team.

- Monitors food safety for food establishments by inspecting food storage, handling, preparation, and serving.
- Ensures that potable (drinkable) water is available through the treatment of water supplies, both surface water, and groundwater sources.
- Ensures that the reduction of the effects of industrial waste and other pollutants on groundwater/surface water supplies and recreational areas is accomplished by the location and pretreatment of industrial and domestic waste disposal.
- Oversees solid and hazardous waste management which involves the disposal of human waste in septic tanks and sewage treatment plants.
- Ensures that housing conditions promote the physiological and psychological well-being of humans.
- Regulates and monitors institutions and licensed establishments to prevent the spread of nosocomial and other infections and communicable diseases.
- Regulates and monitors the environment to prevent unsafe conditions at swimming pools, beaches, and other recreational areas.
- Plans, practices, and evaluates disaster planning exercises to ensure readiness for events that threaten public health, including anticipated and unanticipated emergencies.
- Ensure the readiness of individuals and the agency to respond to public health threats.



NURSING DIVISION

CENTRAL OHIO OUTBREAK

The measles outbreak continues to grow in central Ohio. As of January 9, 2023, there have been 82 cases in Ohio, with 33 hospitalizations. The Darke County General Health District urges parents to vaccinate their children to protect them from being infected. Unvaccinated individuals are at risk of infection and severe disease.

Measles is very contagious. Children infected with measles can spread it to others, even before they have symptoms. The measles virus can live for up to two hours in the air after an infected person leaves the room. Nine out of 10 unvaccinated children who are exposed to measles will become infected.

Measles can be serious, and about 1 in 5 children who get measles will be hospitalized with complications such as pneumonia, dehydration, or brain swelling.

“Vaccination is the most effective and safe way to protect children in our community from measles. I encourage parents to contact their child’s physician to ensure they are up-to-date with the MMR vaccine,” said Darke County Deputy Health Commissioner Jordan Francis, MPH.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles from infecting children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all children get two doses of the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. The second dose of the MMR vaccine is typically given during routine kindergarten vaccinations. Children over the age of 4 who have yet to receive their kindergarten immunizations may get the MMR vaccine now to boost their immunity. During the pandemic, many children may have missed receiving routine vaccinations. Parents should talk to their child’s doctor now to make sure they are up-to-date with all measles vaccinations.

The measles vaccine is safe and effective with hundreds of millions of doses given safely over the last 50 years. The Darke County General Health District offers the MMR vaccine during walk-in hours on Tuesdays from 8-10:30 a.m. and 2-5 p.m. You could also contact your local pharmacy or healthcare provider. For additional information or for any questions call 937-548-4196 ext. 224.

