

Director's Update to the Board of Health
March 2026

Protecting Health – Preventing the Spread of Infectious Disease

In-School Vaccine Clinics

The MPHD Mobile Services team is in the middle of their in-school vaccine program, visiting MNPS middle schools to offer vaccines to students with signed consent forms. This is the first year our team is offering all required and recommended vaccines, ensuring those who are out of compliance with vaccine requirements can become compliant ahead of the 2026-2027 school year. The program was conceptualized to ensure current sixth graders would be able to receive their Tdap booster, required for entry into seventh grade, as well as recommended vaccines HPV and MCV. This year, all required vaccines have been added to the offering. Clinics began in early February, and in the first month of the program 117 students received a total of 281 vaccines. In-school clinics will continue into May, after which the mobile services team will begin holding their annual summer vaccine and physical clinics.

World TB Day

The Tuberculosis Elimination Program will be marking World TB Day on Tuesday, March 24th. The worldwide observation of TB Day is designed to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease. While treating active TB is a priority, ensuring the infection does not spread uncontrolled in the community is also a key part of MPHD's TB Elimination team. Contact investigations involve identifying those who might be at risk of contracting TB and offering each individual testing and treatment. The TB Elimination team conducts contact investigations for every case of TB disease, showing that fighting TB goes beyond a drug regimen.

Improve and Sustain Family and Child Well-Being

School Health

The school nurse program has undergone many changes over the past 3 years with exponential growth in the number of school nurses, expanded management team for increased support of the nurses and a new program manager. In an effort to provide engagement and opportunity for connectedness, the school health program has implemented a "Wellness Wednesday" email newsletter to promote a healthy workplace

and self-care. School health has also designed and implemented a monthly "nursing excellence spotlight" to share stories of the wonderful work we are providing with each other. The spotlight is a nomination from a peer or member of the school community, and this means that the work our nurses are doing is being recognized by those we serve and those whom we share the calling of public health. Working as a school nurse can sometimes feel isolating, hearing what other school nurses are doing is one way to bring a sense of connectedness to our team.

Community Baby Shower

This year's community baby shower will be held March 28th at Nissan Stadium. This year's event, called Bellies, Babies and Beyond: A Celebration of Motherhood Community Education, will combine the fun and support of previous year's baby showers with some new aspects like a Maternal Mental Health Panel and a Shower Event Store. The Nashville Strong Babies program holds a community baby shower each spring as a way of showcasing resources available to expecting families and those who have recently given birth. Nashville Strong Babies offers Davidson County residents who are pregnant or have recently given birth resources like care coordination, breastfeeding support, blood pressure checks and more. Initially offered to those in specific zip codes where infant mortality was highest, Nashville Strong Babies expanded countywide in 2024. Since 2019, no maternal deaths have been recorded among program participants.

Promote and Support Healthier Living

Drug Overdoses

Opioid Response and Harm Reduction grant awards will be in the hands of the community soon, after a process that began in the fall. Notices of intent to award have been distributed to organizations that were selected, and contracts are now being drawn up. Nine different community organizations were chosen as grant recipients, with grants ranging from \$42,000 to \$1,500,000. This work follows some encouraging signs in the world of overdoses, as fewer suspected fatal overdoses were reported in Davison County in 2025 than in any year since 2019.

Create Healthier Community Environments

Community Health Improvement Plan

The most recent Community Health Improvement Plan is now available to the public, created by the Nashville Health and Well-being Leadership Council with the assistance of MPH and Metro Social Services. The plan is developed every three years by the Leadership Council, a mayoral-appointed council made up of representatives from local healthcare entities, nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies and other

stakeholders. The plan, which runs from 2026 through 2028, focuses on four key strategic issues: housing, awareness and navigation of community resources, food access/food insecurity and economic opportunity and job skill development. The CHIP was developed by the Nashville Health and Well-being Leadership Council over the course of 2025, using information gleaned from the 2024-2025 Community Health Assessment. A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is conducted prior to the development of each CHIP, taking data from a variety of sources to identify key health priorities. The priorities identified in the 2024-2025 Community Health Assessment became the basis for the 2026-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan. Each priority area identified in the 2026-2028 CHIP includes a definition of the issue, a goal and objectives needed to achieve that goal. Relevant data indicators are also included, showing how the goal might be judged.

Organizational Updates

Employee Engagement

Increased attention is being paid to employee engagement. Virtual Town Hall meetings are now scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month, allowing employees at MPHD to get answers to their anonymous questions. These live virtual town hall meetings will be recorded and shared with the team at MPHD each month. Efforts are also being made to offer more informal availabilities with Dr. Areola, specifically at lunchtime. This will allow employees to bring their concerns to the Director of Health in an informal way without disturbing their workday. Follow-up meetings with bureau leadership have been

Continuing Education Learning Series

The next edition of the MPHD Continuing Education Learning Series will be held on March 31st. The title of this edition will be A Public Approach to Community Engagement and Outreach. Objectives include defining engagement, describing partner-level community engagement and applying engagement strategies to our own programs at MPHD. Attendees can earn up to 3.75 CEUs. A flyer for the session can be found below.

Metro Public Health Dept
NASHVILLE/DAVIDSON COUNTY
Protecting, improving, and sustaining health

Continuing Education Learning Series
Session 4

Public Health Approach to Community Engagement & Outreach

SESSION LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Define the term community engagement.
2. Describe partnership level community engagement.
3. Apply community engagement strategies to your program or organization.

Date: March 31, 2026

Time: 8:15 am - 12:20 pm
Doors open at 7:45 a.m.

Location: Lentz Centennial Rooms & Online

Earn up to 3.75 CEUs

SCAN HERE:

Use the link below to create your ICEP account and register for the event:
<https://ce.icep.wisc.edu/MPHD-PH-approach-community-engagement-outreach-march-31-2026>

JOINTLY ACCREDITED PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
INTERPROFESSIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Interprofessional Continuing Education Partnership (ICEP) and the Metro Public Health Department Nashville-Davidson County. The University of Wisconsin-Madison ICEP is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Meeting with lawmakers

Director of Health Dr. Sanmi Areola and Board Chair Tene Franklin met with several members of Nashville’s congressional delegation recently. Chair Franklin was in D.C. for NALBOH and Dr. Areola was attending the Big Cities Health Coalition meeting. All lawmakers representing Nashville and our area have been extended an invitation to tour the Metro Public Health Department and learn more about our work.

