

Director's Update to the Board of Health

August 2026

Protecting Health – Preventing the Spread of Infectious Disease

Mobile Outreach Clinical Services

Our Mobile Outreach Clinical Services (MOCS) unit will take part in our first event on Saturday, August 15th, 2026 at the WALC Annual Health Village Fair. MPHD is excited to bring additional opportunities to our community through extended hours and mobile operations through our state-of-the-art mobile unit. The unit will allow increased access to services like immunizations, sexual health screenings, family planning, Naloxone distribution, gun locks, and more. A schedule for mobile service offerings is located at Nashville.gov/mobileservices. Organizations and entities interested in hosting the mobile services unit at their location should contact MOCS.Health@nashville.gov to schedule a visit from the unit.

Improve and Sustain Family and Child Well-Being

School Health returns

Students returned to the classroom this week, and the Metro Public Health Department's School Health program helped ensure those students will have their health needs met throughout the year. This year, more than 120 nurses are assigned to schools across the county, the most with which we have ever started a school year. To get ready, the school health team hosted several days of back-to-school training and orientation. Many nurses also participated in their school's Back to School Bash events, allowing students to meet their school nurse and learn more about the program. Schools with a nurse in them had a return to class rate of more than 90 percent last school year, much higher than schools without a nurse staffed there.



Back-to-School Vaccine Clinics

Preventive health has extended hours at all three clinic sites (East, Woodbine, and Lentz 120) to increase access for children needing back to school vaccines. These extended hours will last until August 28, 2026. We ask that all children needing vaccination call ahead of time for an appointment, bring their shot record with them, and present with their parent or legal guardian. MPHD is also offering community-based pop-up clinics for back-to-school vaccines and physicals. Community-based clinics are largely being held in portable classroom buildings, allowing families another option for getting immunized ahead of the school year.

School-Based Dental

The return to class was also the return of the school-based dental team, complete with the return of team mascot Pearl E. White. The team sets up pop-up oral health clinics at schools all across the county, performing exams and placing sealants on the teeth of students with signed consent forms. The team now has a new magnet to attach to their vehicle when they go to schools, letting the community know that Pearl E. White is on the way to their school.



Promote and Support Healthier Living

World Breastfeeding Week

The first week of August is World Breastfeeding Week, an annual celebration of individuals and organizations dedicated to protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding. WIC is the largest breastfeeding support program in the nation, and our Davidson County WIC program works hard year-round to support moms with their breastfeeding goals. Breastfeeding rates among post-partum women on WIC in Davidson County have increased from 56% in 2021 to 70% in 2026. Additionally, Metro Davidson County WIC had the highest rate of infants being breastfed across the state according to the USDA's WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Dashboard (data from 2024).

Red Sand Project

For the 8th straight year, MPHD has participated in the Red Sand Project, an art installation targeted at increasing awareness of human trafficking and highlighting individuals that are "falling through the cracks." This year, participation occurred at East Public Health Center, Lentz Public Health Center, Metro Animal Care and Control, South Nutrition Center, and Woodbine Public Health Center. Please see a highlight of photos from the week's events [here](#). Thanks to all that participated in raising awareness of this important issue.

Create Healthier Community Environments

Community Safety Task Force

MPHD will be working with the Community Safety Task Force as we finish drafting the the community safety report with the recommendations from the task force.. The plan is informed by the recommendations made by the task force to make Nashville a safer place. Once completed, the plan will be presented to the Task Force before it is presented to Mayor Freddie O'Connell. The Task Force, made up of a diverse group of people with a wide spectrum of perspectives, met for roughly six months, reviewed data, resources and gaps in Nashville and evidence based violence prevention models and policies to inform their development of recommendations.

MACC Rabies Clinic

On July 25th, Metro Animal Care and Control hosted a rabies vaccination and microchip clinic, as it does several times a year. This time, instead of the usual 30-40 attendees, more than 150 people came for vaccinations and microchips. The staff at MACC stayed an extra three hours to ensure the attendees' needs were met. A local media outlet's promotion of the event likely played a role in the large response. MACC will be redesigning how they operate rabies clinics to prepare for similar numbers in the future.

Organizational Updates

Grand Rounds

Planning is now underway for the first in Dr. Areola's Grand Rounds series. The first edition will be held on October 5th. MPHD is bringing in public health leaders from across the country for discussions around public health matters. The October 5th edition of Grand Rounds will be centered around vaccination. The community, members of the board and employees will be invited, and we are working toward ensuring MNN can broadcast the event. Grand Rounds is an event MPHD held in the past, designed around hosting and participating in discussions about public health issues of significance to Nashville.

CDC Site Visit

The team at MPHD hosted representatives from the CDC to discuss some of the improvements made to the department through the Public Health Infrastructure Grant. The site visit was a chance to discuss ways the grant has been helpful while planning for the final year of the grant. The grant has been useful in making several one-time purchases to help update the department's technology and infrastructure, along with paying for training and travel expenses to help employees continue to advance their careers and grow their capacity to serve our community.

Meeting with Jody Lentz

Dr. Sanmi Areola met with Jody Lentz, the grandson of Dr. John Lentz, Nashville's first public health director. Jody and Dr. Areola spoke about some of the changes that have happened at the Lentz Public Health Center and what his grandfather's legacy is like here at MPHD. At the meeting, Jody was wearing a watch that was given to John Lentz in 1958 to commemorate 30 years as Nashville's Director of Health.



Meeting with Dr. Leslie Dauphin

Members of the MPH leadership team met with Dr. Leslie Dauphin recently, discussing our workforce development programs, health priorities, and opportunities for students. Dr. Dauphin retired as founding director of CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Center, leading national workforce development and capacity building initiatives. Dr. Dauphin's current work with the Meharry Medical College School of Global Health makes her a great connection as we discuss ways of better integrating the work of our local academic institutions into the work of the Metro Public Health Department.

