

Director's Update to the Board of Health September 2026

Protecting Health – Preventing the Spread of Infectious Disease

Mobile Outreach Clinical Services

After a soft opening with 2 events in August, the Mobile Outreach Clinical Services (MOCS) team has 7 events on the calendar for September. While patient count at these early events isn't yet up to capacity, interactions with potential patients have been encouraging as we introduce the idea of a full-service preventive care clinic on wheels. During this early scheduling period, the team is moving around each week with the goal of finding the right locations in areas of greatest need so the mobile clinic can become the regularly scheduled clinic at these locations.

Fight Flu Day/flu shots

This year's Fight Flu TN day is scheduled for October 20th. The event, held in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Health, will be a chance for the community to access a free flu shot at locations across the state. MPH D will be hosting two separate open flu shot pods, including one at the Lentz Public Health Center. During last year's Fight Flu TN event, the Lentz pod administered more flu shots than any other pod in the state. Following Fight Flu TN, flu shots will be made free of charge at any Metro Public Health Department clinic. Flu shots will be administered in public health clinics beginning September 21st.

Improve and Sustain Family and Child Well-Being

School Health returns

School Health nurses returned to the classroom over the past month, ensuring students have a healthcare advocate in their building. This year, more than 120 nurses are assigned to schools across the county, the most with which we have ever started a school year. Nurses started their year earlier this year, allowing for more training and orientation time, as well as time to set up their individual clinical spaces. 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

The School-based Mobile Service team has finished its summer vaccine and physical program, helping a total of 545 students get their back-to-school vaccines and physicals. The team administered 1,091 vaccines and performed 188 physicals. Compared to last year, numbers of vaccines administered, physicals and students assisted all increased. The team will soon be refocusing to offer flu shots and other mobile-based health services at locations across Nashville, before the annual spring 7th grade vaccine project begins.

School-based Dental

MPHD's school-based dental team attended the state conference at Montgomery Bell State Park last month. The school-based program, which is funded by a state grant, is celebrating 25 years of service. According to the presentation at the conference, more than 6 million permanent teeth have had sealants placed on them in the mouths of more than 1 million students. Nashville was the first county to offer the school-based program, and Tennessee was the first state to introduce school-based dental. The team returned to the classroom in August, offering screenings and dental care to students at MNPS buildings all year.



Promote and Support Healthier Living

Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) team is ensuring the community understands how they can best prepare for disasters, especially as the memories of January's ice storm remain fresh less than a year later. Bags with emergency kit checklists will be available to the community, along with information about how to put one together. Information about severe weather safe rooms and home fire plans will also be made available.

Nicotine Replacement

Recent data from 2023 shows that Tennessee ranks 48th worst in smoking nationwide. With support from TDH Community Health Services division, MPH D clinics joined the ongoing nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) pilot. Beginning September 2026, our Lentz Preventive Health clinic started offering NRT to individuals requesting assistance with smoking cessation. All individuals 18 years of age and older are screened for tobacco/nicotine use by public health nurses, provided NRT in clinic (lozenges, patches, or gum), and referred to the TN Quitline through our electronic health record for those that are enrolled in the program. Pregnant individuals receive referrals through our GIFTS program. Weekly follow-up calls are made to assist with supporting individuals smoking cessation. MPH D will be expanding the program to other clinical sites throughout the department in the coming months.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The Tennessee Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (TBCSP) provides free breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to eligible individuals. The program is implemented using a network of coordinators, enrollment sites, and screening

providers across the state. During October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, TBCSP aims to spread information, education, and resources throughout the community. You will find the Davidson County TBCSP team sharing our message at numerous churches, health fairs, and screening events around town. On October 21st, we will be commemorating the occasion with our annual “Pink Out” staff photo at the Lentz Public Health Center. In addition, we will be participating in the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk on October 10th. And for a second year, we will be fundraising for the ACS through sales of our MPHD Breast Cancer Awareness Month attire. See link below. [MPHD Breast Cancer Awareness - Fundraiser Link](#).

Create Healthier Community Environments

Hope is Available

MPHD hosted its fifth annual Hope is Available suicide prevention event on Wednesday, September 9th to mark September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Speakers included Director of Health Dr. Sanmi Areola, Lt. Mike Hotze from the Metro Nashville Police Department, Founder of Manna Enterprises Sharde Curry and Mt. Zion Baptist Church Senior Pastor Bishop Walker. The event finished with presentation of the Phillip Whitehead Award, presented to Paul Augustyniak of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Three Tennesseans die from suicide each day. This Saturday, MPHD’s Behavioral Health and Wellness team will host a Hope is Available Community Day celebration at Coleman Park Community Center. The event will be a place for Nashvillians to receive information and resources about suicide prevention and participate in some fun activities. The event runs from 11am to 3pm.

Organizational Updates

Grand Rounds

Invitations have been sent to invited attendees for MPHD’s first Grand Rounds event on Monday, October 5th. Local and national voices will join a panel about vaccination following a presentation about trust and community impact. The event is designed to be the first in a series of public health conversations with key leaders and perspectives. MPHD is working with Jarrard Incorporated to put together the series, with assistance in graphic design and logistical support. Board members should have received an invitation, with an RSVP due by September 25th.

Service Awards

MPHD Employees celebrated centuries of service at the annual MPHD Service Awards. WIC employee Jamie Cooper celebrated 40 years of service with MPHD, the longest tenure honored at the award ceremony. 56 different employees were honored at MPHD’s

ceremony. Additionally, five other employees were celebrated at Mayor Freddie O'Connell's Metro Nashville service awards, with John Finke, Doretha Fykes, Rhonda Graham, Carol Jones and Dot Shipman all receiving recognition for their milestone service anniversaries.



Rainey

The family at Metro Animal Care and Control is mourning the loss of Rainey, the shelter's longtime resident cat. Rainey entered MACC's care in 2017, where she spent less than a month on the adoption floor. It was then the decision was made that she would become MACC's mouser and her new "kennel" assignment was the Bay. Rainey was known for offering small bits of affection to those in the parking lot or the supply bay. These last few months Rainey finally got to live the retired life and to experience the life of a spoiled indoor cat.

