

Health Happenings

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Spring 2021 Newsletter

Crook County Health Department

Director's Message

Muriel Delavergne-Brown,
Public Health Director



Crook County Health Department has updated our interpretation services. Crook County Health Department is very excited to announce that the clinical team can now offer live video interpretation services for non-English speaking clients, as well as American Sign Language for deaf or hard of hearing clients.

Providing services in a client's primary language is important for increasing access to care for all. The video interpreting service allows both the client and clinic staff to see the interpreter, providing high quality of care that facilitates clear communication. Now everyone in Crook County, no matter their language or interpretation needs can receive the following services at the Crook County Health Department clinic:

- Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) services
- Reproductive health services (well-women visits, birth control and family planning services, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, PrEP)
- Childhood and adult vaccinations

For more information or questions, contact Lauren Simmons at 541-447-5165.



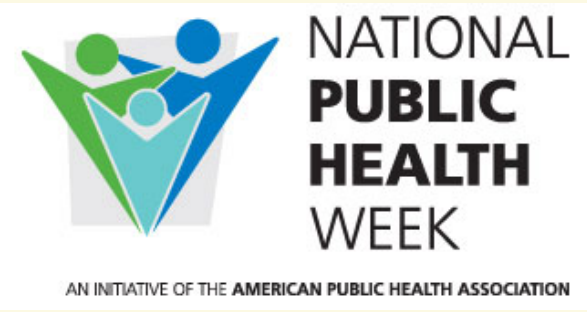
CCHD Employee of the Quarter

Jill Weidenkeller was nominated Employee of the Quarter at Crook County Public Health. Jill acts as a Public Health Nurse who has made a huge impact in helping with COVID case investigations and has supported the local vaccination clinics.

"Her abilities to think critically, communicate clearly, and act fearlessly have been an incredible asset to our department and the whole community here in Crook County".

Thank you Jill for all you do!

Building Bridges to Better Health



In the first full week of April, the American Public Health Association highlights specific public health topics, challenges, and initiatives by hosting National Public Health Week (NPHW). Public health faces new challenges every year, but over the last year public health professionals across the U.S. – and the globe – have been working nonstop to limit the burden of COVID-19 in our communities.

The pandemic has presented new and existing challenges for the public health profession. In small communities like Crook County, public health agencies, like ours, are being pushed to capacity time and time again as we work to lower the spread and prevent COVID-19 illness and deaths in our community.

The NPHW theme **“Building Bridges to Better Health”** resonates with all public health professionals this year. Public health has always worked as a system, partnering with agencies, organizations, and community members on important community health issues, but COVID-19 has reiterated how important it is to work as a system because we cannot solve health problems on our own. We want to take time this year during NPHW to recognize all of our community partners who have prioritized the public’s health.

The weekly themes for NPHW 2021 are:

Monday

Rebuilding

Tuesday

Advancing Racial Equity

Wednesday

Strengthening Community

Thursday

Galvanizing Climate Justice

Friday

Constructing COVID-19 Resilience

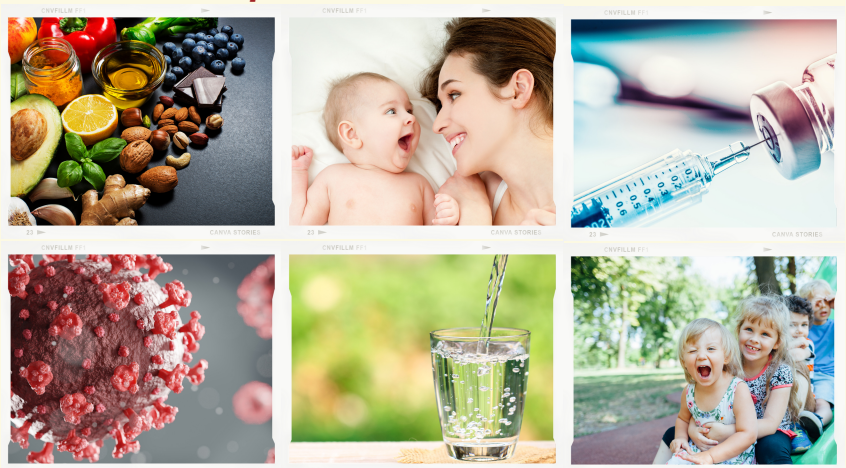
Saturday

Uplifting Mental Health and Wellness

Sunday

Evaluating the Essential and Health Workforce

What can you thank public health for?



#ThankYouPublicHealth

During NPHW we are using **#ThankYouPublicHealth** to show our appreciation and gratitude for our public health workforce and the *many* public health accomplishments!



Monday - Rebuilding

Investing and cultivating public health infrastructure

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to push health care workers and public health professionals to capacity. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of focusing on specific factors that increase health disparities, such as social, economic, and other environmental factors. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy and prosperous life, public health infrastructure needs to be built to address these social determinants of health.

Tuesday - Advancing Racial Equity

Building systems, institutions, policies and practices that advance racial equity

The COVID-19 pandemic is highlighting long-standing health care inequities and other factors that influence health and well-being. Crook County Public Health partners with The Central Oregon Health Council and other organizations in Central Oregon to implement a Regional Health Improvement Plan (RHIP). The RHIP developed for 2020-2024 has a variety of projects that strive to create a health system where all people can reach their full health potential and are not disadvantaged by their race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender identity, or any other socially determined circumstances.



Wednesday - Strengthening Community

Removing community barriers to health and well-being

Creating strong, resilient, and healthy communities does not occur overnight. Public health works to cultivate the built environment, advocate and educate leaders on healthy policies, and change systems that create inequities to ensure communities have a solid foundation. A good foundation makes it easier for people to be healthy and have a good quality of life.

Thursday - Galvanizing Climate Justice

Understanding the changing climate's impact on health

Rising temperatures, changing weather patterns, and other effects of global climate change put human health at risk. Crook County Public Health is addressing climate change by understanding the current and future health impacts of the changing climate, building community resilience, and ensuring our community has local emergency preparedness and response protocols in place to ensure essential health services for vulnerable populations in the event of a public health emergency. We hope to procure funding to continue local research and analysis of climate change's impact on our local community and how it could impact the health of individuals.



Friday - Constructing COVID-19 Resilience

Giving our community the tools they need to recover and thrive

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a collective trauma across the globe. In response to this trauma, Crook County remains resilient and continues to draw on the strengths of our community. For example, organizations like Mountain Star and Family Access Network are working to support families and youth by increasing access to material and social resources that are critical. As a community we must continue to do what we can to take care of our own mental and physical health throughout this difficult time, as it is essential to build both individual and community resilience.



Saturday - Uplifting Mental Health & Wellness

Advocating for mental and behavioral health services

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, in a year one in five Americans will experience mental illness. This is why increasing research, education, and advocacy for mental health is important. Mental health has been a major focus during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the impact it is having on individuals, communities, and the world; however, there are some positive changes to note as well.



More people are discussing and consciously attending to their mental health. In addition, our behavioral health organizations in Crook County have worked hard to continue providing services to the growing demand of individuals seeking mental health treatment while simultaneously adjusting their implementation of services to meet the COVID-19 safety protocols. Though this change has not been easy, they are a passionate group of professionals who continually striving to meet the needs of the community they serve. We are grateful for their partnership and work to keep Crook County healthy!

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Sunday - Evaluating the Essential and Health Workers

Understanding gaps and support for public health workforce

When people trust public health leaders and their health providers, better health outcomes can be achieved. We strive to earn the trust of our community members by providing evidence-based information, ensuring patient confidentiality, and being transparent in the work we do. Funding public health support programs protect our community and help people stay mentally and physically healthy.



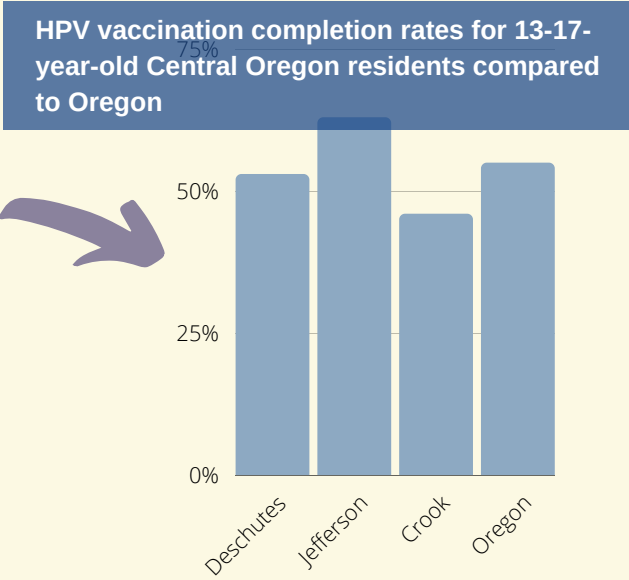
Additionally, our essential workers have worked tirelessly throughout this crisis to maintain our most important services while putting themselves at risk to the virus. Like our public health workforce, it is vital that essential workers have the support they need to keep our communities safe and healthy.

Crook County locals aim to lower their community's risk for HPV related cancers

The human papilloma virus, known as **HPV**, is a sexually transmitted infection that causes six different types of cancer. Most people will be infected with HPV at least once in their lifetime without even realizing it – with over **80 million people infected annually in the U.S.** Every person infected with HPV is at risk for developing cancer later in life. Two of the cancers most prevalent are cervical cancer and oropharyngeal (back of the throat) cancer ([CDC](#)).

The HPV vaccine can prevent the six different types of cancers the HPV virus causes; but unlike other adolescent vaccines, the HPV vaccine is highly underutilized. This puts millions of people at risk for developing these types of cancers.

For the highest level of protection, the CDC recommends youth receive the HPV vaccine between the ages of 11 and 12, but all genders can get the HPV vaccine until the age of 45. In 2020, Crook County's HPV vaccination completion rate for ages 13-17 was 46%. Crook County's rate is lower than other Central Oregon counties and 19% lower than the state's HPV vaccine completion rate ([Oregon Health Authority Adolescent Immunization Rates](#)).



Local community leaders come together to lower Crook County's risk for HPV related cancers

In 2019, parents and youth who live in Crook County volunteered to participate in a two-year project that will increase awareness of the HPV vaccine among youth and parents in Crook County.



They wanted to know **"Why?"** Why are HPV vaccination rates low in Crook County? Are there specific **barriers** keeping youth and parents from being vaccinated against HPV? What are they?

They started their research in 2020 when COVID-19 made it impossible to meet in person or conduct the research they had envisioned. The group reevaluated, adjusted, and continued their research no matter the new obstacles brought on by COVID-19.

Their dedication and commitment to this project has been a joy to be a part of. Each and every one of the community leaders (**short bios on page 6**) have made this project a priority because they are passionate about the health and wellbeing of their community.

"I mean...if you had a way to prevent cancer, wouldn't you want everyone to know about it?"

- Community Leader quote on why they volunteered for the project



Ana lives and attends Crook County High School where she is a sophomore. She is part of a few local groups, including Better Together Youth Group. Ana enjoys spending time with her family and traveling. She continues to volunteer because she likes challenging herself and learning new things.

"I love working with this team as we strive to make the community more aware of the HPV vaccine and virus."



Cecily lives and attends school in Crook County. She is a sophomore at Crook County High School where she stays busy playing tennis and practicing cheerleading. She joined the project because she wanted to educate her peers about the HPV vaccine and ensure they never have to deal with HPV related cancer later in life.

"HPV vaccine prevents many types of cancer, and getting the vaccine is a good way to ensure a happier and healthier life!"



Kaylee is a senior at Crook County High School where she is very active in student leadership, tennis, and choir. She decided to dedicate herself to this project because she loves her community and would like to go into the medical field one day.

"I will be able to take so many things that I have learned from this internship into college, my professional life, and own family in the future."



Isabel lives in Crook County and is a sophomore. She has volunteered with Crook County Health Department in the past and was excited to work on a new project to help her community be healthy. Isabel is dedicated to reaching her peers and helping them understand why it is important to get the HPV vaccine.

"I decided to take part in this project to gain experience and make a difference in our community"



Melissa works and lives in Crook County and is the mom to two teenage boys. She volunteered because she loves Crook County and dose not want anyone to be forced to deal with the pain of cancer treatment.

*"The vaccine prevents CANCER!
That is pretty amazing"*



Tony lives and works in Crook County. His family is active in the community and was excited to help increase awareness about the HPV vaccine. Tony is very busy working and running his local dental practice, but he volunteered to be part of this project because HPV can prevent throat cancer.

"It is awesome to work with community members committed to preventing cancer and impacting lives"



Katie Walsh, Project Coordinator

Katie is a health strategist with Crook County Health Department. She has been working closely with the community leaders and guiding them through each step of their project since it started in 2019.

"The community leaders make my job easy and fun. It has been amazing to see them learn and grow throughout the research process - especially the dedication and work of the youth volunteers. If you are a parent or friend to one of the youth on this project you should be very proud!"

This project is funded by OHSU Knight Cancer Institute whose mission is to "end cancer as we know it". Their partnership allows small communities like Crook County to increase their capacity and resources to prevent cancer related health disparities!



March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month Be aware. Take action.



For the 19th year, the Oregon Council on Problem Gambling dedicates March to help increase public awareness of problem gambling and the availability of prevention, treatment, and recovery services. This coincides with the National Problem Gambling Awareness Month whose campaign theme is “Awareness + Action.”

“We’ve expanded our efforts to build awareness that gambling is an activity that comes with risks, and it’s crucial we provide both free education and judgment-free treatment for those who develop gambling problems, as well as resources for those impacted by a loved one’s gambling,”
~ Greta Coe

Greta Coe, Problem Gambling Services Manager with Oregon Health Authority’s Health Systems Division, notes the COVID pandemic has made this “a very trying and isolating time for many people.” Because of this, she says, it was important for Oregon Problem Gambling Resource (OPGR) and other local community sources to ramp up their outreach activities and media presence to address the increase in gambling activity and addiction.

To get help for a gambling issue, anyone can call 1-877-MYLIMIT. Treatment is free, confidential and it works. For more information about problem gambling treatment resources or to chat with a specialist, go to Oregon Problem Gambling Resource at opgr.org.



National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month occurs every March and "focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits".

Making healthy decisions is not always about personal behaviors. A variety of factors can influence good nutrition, including the availability of affordable healthy food and having the resources and education on how to eat healthy. That is why we have services, classes and resources to help people live a healthy and balanced life!



The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program helps pregnant and postpartum women, their families, and children get the healthy food they need.

Did you know?

Foster parents, single fathers, and grandparents who are legal guardians can access WIC services? Give us a call to learn more (541) 447-5165, or visits our website!

Thank you for reading. Look for our Summer 2021 Newsletter scheduled to come out in June!



For more information between now and June, like CCHD on Facebook or follow us on Instagram.



Or just visit our website!
co.crook.or.us/health

Questions or Concerns?
Contact Katie Plumb
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