

Lake County General Health District **NEWSLETTER**

Featured Highlights:

New Data Dashboards

WIC Ohio Mother’s Milk Bank program and Breastfeeding in the Workplace funding

Be #WinterReady: Tips to stay safe this winter

Safe Communities: Drive Sober Event with local police

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning this winter

Mobile Food Pantry Collaboration

Health Commissioner Update

New Year, Same Mission

Happy New Year! We hope your holidays, time off, and celebrations were safe and relaxing.

In this first issue of 2024, we have some exciting program updates from WIC, winter safety tips from our Emergency Preparedness team and Environmental Health Specialists, as well as highlights from our Safe Communities Coalition, updates on our collaboration with the Lake County Mobile Food Pantry, and a Note from the Commissioner.

Thank you for being a subscriber to our newsletter and for supporting the work we do to make Lake County safer. Keep a look out for future newsletters highlighting special collaborations, data, topics, resources, and the incredible work of our staff that continues to push our mission forward.



**Lake County
General Health District**

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Health Data Feature

Data Dashboards: A New Way to Understand Lake County

The Lake County General Health District’s Epidemiology (disease investigation) Team created three data dashboards that will be live on our website in the coming weeks. These dashboards will replace the current long form reports on our Health Data page and will make it easier for the public to understand trends and patterns, as well as gain insights about public health issues in Lake County. The dashboards are interactive, and you will be able to filter data easily. The Opioid dashboard is live, and the COVID and Influenza dashboards will be live by the end of the first quarter of this year.

COVID-19 Dashboard

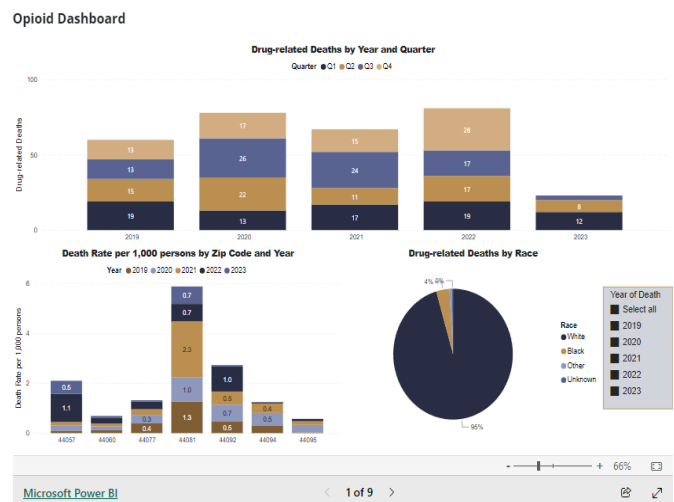
This dashboard provides an overview of current COVID-19 trends for Lake County, including trends based on data from previous years to help give a clearer picture of the direction of COVID cases – if it’s trending up or down. It includes case counts, hospitalizations, and vaccine information with a breakdown of various data points by demographics to show how certain groups may have been affected by COVID.

Influenza (Flu) Dashboard

During flu season, the dashboard is updated weekly with current flu-associated hospitalization counts, emergency room data for flu-like illness visits and other flu activity markers. It includes a breakdown of some of the indicators by demographic information. The dashboard also includes trends from previous years' data.

Opioid Dashboard

The opioid dashboard provides a snapshot of the opioid crisis (drug-related overdoses) happening in Lake County. The dashboard includes information and data about deaths caused by an overdose as well as demographic data. It also includes data about prescription drugs dispensed in Lake County, emergency department visits, and the number of naloxone kits and fentanyl test strips supplied by LCGHD.



Look for the dashboards:
www.lcghd.org/reports/healthdata

Health District Updates

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)

WIC has exciting news for 2024!

This year, Lake-Geauga WIC will be partnering with the Ohio Mother's Milk Bank to accept pre-screened breastmilk donations from mothers in the area who are willing and able to donate their breastmilk to help babies in need.

To become a milk donor, mothers must take part in a screening process to ensure the quality and safety of the milk. This process includes a phone screening to verify eligibility, completion of a medical and lifestyle history review, a signed medical release from the donor and physician, and consent to receive a blood test to screen for HIV, Human T-lymphotropic Virus (HTLV), Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis. The donated milk is pasteurized, frozen, and distributed by physician prescription.

Last year, the Ohio Mother's Milk Bank processed over 463,023 ounces of breastmilk to hospitals and outpatients across Ohio and 11 other states. That's a 7% increase from the year before. Just one ounce can feed a premature baby for 3 days, so every donation counts!

Interested donors are encouraged to email milkbank@ohiohealth.com or call (614) 566.0630 to arrange a screening.

One More Announcement!

Lake-Geauga WIC has also been selected to receive the Breastfeeding in the Workplace Funding Opportunity through the Ohio Department of Health. The goal of the project is to educate local businesses on the importance of breastfeeding and to help them increase the lactation support that they offer to their employees to encourage the adoption of a new or better lactation support policy.

Using the Ohio Workplace PLUS Toolkit as an education guide, WIC will identify businesses in Lake County that could benefit from increased lactation training. Lake-Geauga WIC will complete an outreach plan and meet with 10 businesses to create or update their breastfeeding support policy.



For more information, find and contact your local WIC:
www.lcghd.org/wic/

Health District Updates

Preparedness: Be #WinterReady

When cold weather comes, you may want to try different ways to stay warm or you may even continue to use methods that you've used for years. Did you know that there are some risks to some common ways to get warm? Winter is when the most fires happen, many because of home heating, which is the second leading cause of home fires. Follow these tips to stay safe and warm this winter:

- If you use a generator, only use it outside and away from windows.
- Do NOT use a gas stove, oven, or lantern to heat or light your home. This can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Be careful with open flames with candles.
- Keep items at least three feet away from open flames.
- Make sure your chimney is cleaned annually.

Winter storms can also bring power outages, cause dangerous travel, or make travel impossible at times. Ready.gov has additional practical tips to use this winter:

- If you have medication that must be refrigerated or medical equipment that needs electricity, make sure you have a plan.
- If your home gets too cold and you cannot heat it, know where to find information about local warming stations.
- Unplug appliances and electronics in case of electrical surges.
- Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working.



For more tips about preparing your home, car, and family for winter weather, please visit www.ready.gov/winter-ready



Food Safety During Power Outages

If the power goes out, keep your freezers and refrigerators closed. Throw away food that has been exposed to temperatures of 40 degrees or higher for two or more hours, or if food has any strange odor or texture. Food that has not been kept at appropriate temperatures can make you sick.

Health District Updates

Safe Communities: Drive Sober Event

To welcome in the holiday season, the Lake County Safe Communities Coalition (LCSCC) teamed up with the Lake County Police Chiefs Association and Lake County Crime Prevention Taskforce to host the 28th Annual Protect and Serve Tavern event at Great Lakes Mall to remind drivers about the dangers of drinking and driving.

Did you know that since 2021, over half of the motor vehicle crash fatalities were Operating a Vehicle Impaired (OVI)-related? At least 15 motor vehicle deaths involved an impaired driver. The Protect



and Serve Tavern was held to educate the public about driving sober not only during the holidays, but all year long. Members of the LCSCC shared fun “mocktail” (non-alcoholic cocktail) ideas to help encourage Lake County residents to drive sober. Here are more tips to use during the holidays, special events, or on a night out:

- Before drinking, designate a sober driver.
- If you are impaired, take a taxi, rideshare, or call a sober friend or family member for a ride home. Remember: buzzed driving is drunk driving.
- If you happen to see an impaired driver on the road, call #667 to reach law enforcement.

The LCSCC prides itself on being active in Lake County, helping seasoned and new drivers alike understand the dangers of drinking and driving, and showing how each Lake County resident can do their part to make roads safer at all times of the year, especially during the holidays.

In 2024, the LCSCC looks forward to continuing educating Lake County residents about ways to drive safely while having fun, increasing the use of seatbelts, and lowering the amount of drunk and distracted driving.

If you are interested in joining the Safe Communities Coalition, please contact:
Emily Kolacz at (440) 350-2451

Health District Updates

Environmental Health

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning, A Silent Killer

Did you know that more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning each year? Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled.

CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by furnaces, water heaters, small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. People and animals in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces with these items can be poisoned and die from breathing in CO.

How do I know if I have CO poisoning?

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Chest Pain
- Confusion



These symptoms may subside when you leave the contaminated area and return when you reenter the area. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol while exposed to carbon monoxide can die from CO poisoning before they even have symptoms.

How do I check for CO in my home?

Have at least one working carbon monoxide detector (They make great gifts!). Check the detector's batteries twice annually, at the same time smoke detector batteries are checked. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately, and call 911. Also, check the end of life date on the detector, as it may need to be replaced. If you think you have CO poisoning, call your doctor right away.

Prevent Accidental Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

- Do install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors in your home. Check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911.
- Have your heating system, water heater, and any other gas, oil, or coal-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician each year.
- Seek medical attention if you think you have CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, lightheaded or nauseous.
- Do NOT warm up, or run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the garage door open. Make sure to shut off vehicles when parking in a garage.
- Do NOT burn anything in a stove or fireplace that is not vented.
- Do NOT heat your house with a gas oven.
- Do NOT use generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning products inside a home, basement, garage, camper, or even outside near an open window. This is especially important to remember during a power outage.

If you have questions about CO poisoning, call: **(440) 350-2543**

Special Mentions

Food Pantry Collaboration

Did you know that Lake County has a Mobile Food Pantry? The Mobile Food Pantry is a collaboration between the Board of Lake County Commissioners Senior Services, Lifeline, Lake County Council on Aging, and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Because of the work of dedicated volunteers, the Lake County Mobile Food Pantry provides fresh produce to Lake County seniors weekly for free each Tuesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.



Why is the Mobile Food Pantry Important?

Understanding kitchen basics and having access to food is key to health and is important for Lake County residents. Reducing food insecurity and improving access to healthy food are also priorities in the 2023-2025 Lake County Community Health Improvement Plan, and the Mobile Food Pantry supports both of those efforts.



After discussion with staff from Lifeline Inc., and the Lake County Commissioner's Senior Services program, the Lake County General Health District's Population Health Team learned that many food pantry clients didn't know how to cut, freeze, store, or prepare some of the items in their food box. This can, unfortunately, cause some of the items to go to waste. The Population Health team responded to this need and created recipe cards

with kitchen basics on them to help clients learn how to make the most of what's in their food box. As the needs of the Mobile Food Pantry continues to change, the Population Health Team will continue to use this kind of feedback to create different recipe cards throughout 2024 to help new and returning Mobile Food Pantry clients understand the food they get, and how to keep it fresh and safe to eat.

How can you use the mobile food pantry?

The service is for Lake County seniors, 60 years and older. They may register for one pick-up per month by calling Lifeline at 2-1-1 or the Lake County Council on Aging at 440-205-8111. Pre-registration is required for the 100 spots available each week. Participants must certify that their annual gross household income is at or below \$25,759 for a household of 1 and \$34,839 for a household of 2. Income is self-declared and verification is not required.

Explore Mobile Pantry volunteer opportunities at

www.lakecountyohio.gov/senior-services/home/lake-county-volunteer-network/

A Note from the Health Commissioner

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and great spirits. As we continue our collective efforts toward providing excellent public health services, I wanted to take a moment to again express my utmost appreciation for our staff's unwavering dedication and hard work. Their commitment to our mission does not go unnoticed, and I am truly grateful to have such an exceptional team by my side.

In these times where demands and challenges have significantly increased, it is crucial for us to prioritize self-care and personal well-being. As public health professionals, it is easy to neglect our own needs while tirelessly serving others. Therefore, in 2024, I encourage our staff to prioritize self-care activities that help them rejuvenate and recharge. Whether it be practicing mindfulness and meditation, engaging in regular exercise, spending time with loved ones, or pursuing hobbies that bring them joy, I hope they make time for what nourishes their mind, body, and soul.

Moreover, I would like to express my excitement about the opportunities tomorrow will bring. Each day is a chance for us to make a positive impact on the lives of our clients and our community. It's important that we remember why we chose this noble profession, and let our passion guide us in our daily work. Together, we can continue to provide exemplary services and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

I am truly grateful for the commitment from our staff, particularly during these challenging times. Their resilience and unwavering commitment to the Health District is unmatched.

A big thank you, again, to our staff for their exceptional work and for the compassionate care they provide to our clients.

I am privileged to work alongside such a remarkable team.

Warmest regards,

Ron H. Graham



*Health Commissioner
Ron Graham*

Get More Information from the Lake County General Health District!

www.lcghd.org



Sign up for alerts at <https://linktr.ee/lcghd>

Important Dates

January

National Glaucoma Awareness Month

Cervical Health Awareness Month

Radon Action Month

February

American Heart Month

Low Vision Awareness Month

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Feb. 11: Super Bowl-Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk

March

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

National Kidney Month

National Nutrition Month

Mar. 17: St. Patrick's Day- Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

Mar. 24: World Tuberculosis Day



Birth & Death Records

The Office of Vital Statistics offers birth and death records.

Cost: \$21.50 per copy

Walk-In Service is available Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

More details available at www.lcghd.org/birth-and-death-records/

Get our Newsletter Online!
www.lcghd.org/newsletter

