

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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MOVING FORWARD WITH ACA

Signed into law on March 23, 2010, by President Obama, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is the most significant federal health care reform legislation since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid over 50 years ago. Because of certain important dates concerning implementation of the ACA coming up in the next several months, the next several issues of *Public Health Points* will highlight those important benchmarks as well as explain what local individuals can do to become informed and where they can seek assistance to sign up for health insurance coverage.

First, it is important to understand that the ACA has already brought important and several much needed changes to the U.S. healthcare system, including:

- Coverage for children with preexisting conditions
- Allowing children to remain on their parents' health insurance plans until age of 26
- The end of lifetime limits on coverage
- Prescription drug discounts for seniors
- Free preventive care for people with health insurance and seniors on Medicare free well-women visits

New ACA regulations that will affect both healthcare providers and their patients are rolling out in the coming months and years, while other rules that have already taken effect will continue to evolve. Among the new and/or evolving regulations are:

- Medicaid expansion in certain states (but sadly not in Pennsylvania, at least for now)
- The Individual Mandate
- Tax credits to ease the cost of purchasing insurance
- State-based insurance exchanges, also referred to as marketplaces, where different health insurance plans can be compared and purchased if desired
- Medicare quality performance targets
- A new clinical trail mandate on insurance companies
- Revised physician payment schedules, some of which will favor physicians in primary care settings

The next major deadline in the ACA rollout plan will be October 1, 2013. As of that date the public will be allowed to begin shopping for health insurance on either state-based or federal-run insurance exchanges, or marketplaces, which are expected to lower insurance costs through competition. Business owners will also be allowed to shop for themselves and their employees on the marketplaces. Unfortunately again, in Pennsylvania only the federal-run Health Insurance Marketplace will be available since there has been no effort by our State government to create its own insurance marketplace.

Future issues of this newsletter will deal more with the October 1st deadline as well as further mileposts down the road on this exciting journey. Interested persons can log on to the federal ACA website at this time to begin to learn more – www.HealthCare.gov

Reportable Conditions – 2013 City of York, Pa		
Reported Cases	July	Total
Animal Bites	12	63
Campylobacter Enteritis	0	2
Chlamydia	43	316
Cryptosporidiosis	0	2
Gonorrhea	20	113
Hepatitis A	0	1
Hepatitis B	1	1
Hepatitis C	7	53
Histoplasmosis	0	1
HIV Infection	1	12
Influenza, Type A	0	33
Influenza, Type B	0	17
Influenza, Not Specified	0	1
Invasive Group A Beta-Strep Disease	0	1
Lead Poisoning	1	13
Lyme Disease	1	2
Meningitis – Bacterial	0	1
Meningitis – Fungal	0	1
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	1	41
Salmonellosis	0	3
Total Case Reports	87	677

West Nile Virus Still A Threat

It's been a busy summer with mosquitoes and West Nile Virus (WNV)! At this time, of the 3 cases of WNV infection in humans in Pennsylvania, 2 are from York County. And even though summer weather will soon be coming to an end and the cooler days and nights of fall are just round the corner, infected mosquitoes pools and the threat of more West Nile Virus (WNV) infections will be with us until a few hard frosts kill off the mosquitoes and their larvae.

Until then, property owners and renters need to continue their persistence in emptying standing water so that mosquitoes can't breed and therefore transmit WNV to humans.

- Identify and eliminate all sources of standing water that collects on your property. Mosquitoes can breed in any puddle that lasts more than four days.
- Dispose of or at least empty water out of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers.
- Pay special attention to discarded tires that may have collected water.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Clean clogged roof gutters regularly, especially if trees are nearby, to prevent blocked downspout drains.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and plastic wading pools when not in use.
- Do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths. Empty and refill your birdbath every 3 to 4 days.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish. For ponds without aeration or fish, garden supply stores sell products to keep mosquitoes from breeding.
- Keep swimming pools clean and chlorinated. Once your pool is covered after swim season is over, remove water that collects every several days until hard frosts hit.

Contact the York County West Nile Virus Program for more information about local efforts to monitor and control WNV by calling (717) 840-2375. Useful websites on WNV include: www.westnile.state.pa.us and <http://york.extension.psu.edu/york>.

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