



Harford County Health Department

LHIC E-Newsletter

November, 2015

National Recovery Month

The month of September included a number of events highlighting prevention, treatment and recovery for mental health and substance use disorders. These included the Health Department Division of Behavioral Health's Second Annual Run 4 Recovery 5k race and fun walk; and a candlelight vigil, National Drug Take Back Day, and the Human Rope to Stop the Dope, sponsored by Harford County Government's Office of Drug Control Policy.

5th Annual Healthy Harford Day



On Saturday, September 26th from 9:00am-1:00pm, Healthy Harford hosted its 5th Annual Healthy Harford Day in downtown Bel Air in collaboration with the Bel Air Farmers' Market. This year's event boasted approximately 140 vendors and 2,500 attendees. Those in attendance were able to take part in activities such as exercise classes, rock wall climbing, cooking demonstrations, health screenings, and much more. The event offered more of an emphasis on behavioral health this year by including vendors with information on mental health and addictions. The Human Rope to Stop the Dope, an event sponsored by Harford County Government to raise awareness of drug addiction, was even included in Healthy Harford Day this year.

4th Annual Local Health Improvement Coalition Meeting

The 4th Annual Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) meeting was held on Tuesday, October 13th at the Chesapeake Center at Harford Community College. The meeting kicked off with an update on the State Health Improvement Process (SHIP), provided by Ann Walsh, Director of



Public Health Performance and Funding, followed by a data update from Dr. Russell Moy, Harford County Deputy Health Officer. Then, updates were provided by the Chairs of each of the LHIC Workgroups including Bari

Klein for Obesity, Sharon Lipford for Behavioral health, and Vickie Bands for Tobacco. The Chairs shared the previous successes of their Workgroups as well as the future direction of their Workgroups. A panel highlighting community partnerships was also featured at the meeting. Presenters included:

- Colin Ward, Director of Population Health at University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health
- Sharon Lipford, Executive Director of Healthy Harford
- Mark Rajkowski, President and CEO of West Cecil Health Center and Beacon Health Center
- Baron Young, Pastor at St. James A.M.E Church
- Carol Taylor, Pastor at Word of Faith International Outreach
- Mary Jo Beach, Director of Care Coordination at the Harford County Health Department

The agenda, notes, presentations, and handouts can all be accessed on the Health Department's website via [this link](#).



Public Health Data Update

The report on [Drug and Alcohol-Related Emergency Department Visits in Maryland, 2008-2014](#) was released in September 2015. This report contains data on drug and alcohol-related emergency department visits for Maryland residents who visited a Maryland emergency facility or specialty hospital during the period 2008-2014. Trends are examined by age, race/ethnicity, gender, county of residence, and type of substance. Notable data from the report include:

- There were a total of 11,242 drug and alcohol-related emergency department visits among Maryland residents in 2014. From 2008-2014, the age-adjusted rate for drug and alcohol-related emergency department visits increased by 37.5%.
- Alcohol-related emergency department visits were more than three times higher among men than women. Additionally, almost half of all alcohol-related emergency department visits were among individuals aged 45-64.
- From 2008-2014, a five-fold increase occurred in the age-adjusted rate for heroin-related emergency department visits from 5.3 to 26.4 per 100,000 population. Additionally, during this same timeframe, nearly 74% of heroin-related emergency department visits occurred among individuals covered by Medicaid or without any health care coverage.
- The age-adjusted rate for prescription opioid-related emergency department visits doubled from 2008-2014.
- From 2008-2014, the age-adjusted rate for benzodiazepine-related emergency department visits increased by 51%

Research Update

In 2013 in Harford County, the rate of newborns exposed to maternal drugs/alcohol was 36.7 per 1,000 newborns. In 2014, there was 22% reduction from the previous year to a rate of 28.6 per 1,000 newborns. Despite this decrease, there has still been a 142% increase in newborn

exposure to drugs/alcohol over the past 14 years for Harford County residents. This concerning Harford County data coincides with the recent statistics published in the September 25, 2015 issue of the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Article, Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking Among Women of Childbearing Age - United States, 2011-2013](#) , which found that one in ten pregnant women (ages 18-44) in the United States reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

The study used data from CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to estimate the prevalence of alcohol use and binge drinking for women aged 18-44 years. The article explains that, in addition to the one in ten pregnant women that report drinking alcohol, 3.1 percent of them report binge drinking (defined as four or more alcoholic beverages on one occasion). This means that about a third of women who consume alcohol during pregnancy engage in bring drinking. Among pregnant women, alcohol use was highest among:

- Those aged 35-44 years (18.6%);
- College graduates (13 percent); and
- Unmarried women (12.9%).

As the article emphasizes, alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects and developmental disabilities in babies, as well as an increased risk of other pregnancy problems, such as miscarriage, stillbirth, and prematurity. This serves as an important reminder that women should not drink any alcohol while pregnant.



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**Harford County
Health Department**

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