

# CHISAGO CONNECT

Connecting Your Community, While Protecting Your Health

# NEWSLETTER



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CHISAGO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

For current updates on Coronavirus (COVID-19) please visit:

[Chisago County COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#)  
[Chisago County Public Health Facebook](#)



January 2023 ISSUE 29



## Fighting the "Tripledemic"

COVID, Flu, and RSV resources

### Prevention Strategies:

1. Avoid close contact
2. Stay home when you are sick
3. Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
4. Wash your Hands
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
6. Practice Healthy Habits
7. Get vaccinated

### Chisago County Public Health:

- Chisago County Public health will be offering the new Bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine on Tuesdays by appointment. To set up an appointment, please call 651-213-5233.
- Free COVID-19 testing kits are available at either the North Branch Health and Human Services building front desk or the Chisago County Government Center in Center City front desk. One test per family member is available.

### Minnesota launches new COVID-19 telehealth treatment pilot program:

- After testing positive for COVID-19, utilize the Cue Health app and sign up with your Minnesota address to have a virtual consultation with a licensed clinician who will evaluate you to determine if therapeutic treatment is a good option. If you are a good candidate for therapeutics, the clinician can issue that prescription to the patient's local pharmacy. All services, come at no cost to the Minnesotans who use this service. This pilot program is available to all Minnesota residents.
- For more information on how to access this program and for instructions on downloading and getting started with the Cue Health App, please visit [care.cuehealth.com/mn](https://care.cuehealth.com/mn).

### Biden Administration Announces New Round of Free COVID Tests Ahead of the Holidays:

- COVIDTests.gov is open for a limited round of ordering this winter. The Administration will also make tests available to individuals who are blind or have low vision through this program.
- If you need additional support placing an order call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) to get help in English, Spanish, and more than 150 other languages – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. E.T., Monday to Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. E.T. on weekends.
- For more information, visit: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

### Symptom Checker

- Check out the symptom checker to learn how serious symptoms are, if a healthcare visit is needed, or steps you can take to relieve your symptoms at home
- Check Your Symptoms ([mhealthfairview.org](https://mhealthfairview.org))

## January Radon Awareness Month

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that is odorless, tasteless, and colorless, and it can be both dangerous and deadly depending on the level of exposure. Radon forms when uranium and thorium in the soil decays and becomes radium, which then turns into radon gas and rises through the soil to enter buildings through cracks in the walls, the foundation, basement floors, or other openings in the building. Radon exposure is a serious environmental health risk, both nationally in the United States and globally. People are typically exposed to radon in their homes, at work, or at school, and because it is a naturally occurring gas in the soil, people are always exposed to it in some degree, whether they be indoors or outdoors. Because it is impossible to detect through scent, smell, or taste, it is important to regularly test homes for radon to know the extent of an individual's radon exposure.

There are no widely available medical tests to test an individual for radon exposure (American Cancer Society, 2015). The only way to know the extent of radon exposure is to test the buildings. The Environmental Protection Agency (2020) recommends taking steps to reduce the amount of radon in buildings that have a radon level at or above 4 picocuries – the unit for measuring the amount of radioactivity – per liter (pCi/L) of air. It should also be noted that levels below 4 pCi/L can still pose a risk to an individual's health, and it is recommended to consider taking action to reduce the radon levels even further (EPA, 2020).

MDH is partnering with local public health departments to make test kits available to all Minnesotans at low or no cost. Check out MDH's Radon Test website for more information on getting a Radon Test. Radon Testing - MN Dept. of Health ([state.mn.us](https://state.mn.us))

# PUBLIC HEALTH HAPPENINGS

- Our community health team has completed our Opioid Focus Groups. Please check the Chisago County website for more information about our next steps or reach out to Madelyn with questions.
- The next MAPP meeting will be on March 2nd, 2023, from 1-3pm at the Lakes Region EMS in North Branch. Please reach out to Madelyn if you would like more information about attending.
- MN WIC Monthly Vegetable & Fruit Benefit increase extends through December 2023!
  - Apply for WIC- <https://www.chisagocountymn.gov/FormCenter/Health-Human-Services-14/Women-Infants-and-Children-WIC-Applicati-86>
- Please note that the hours of Baby Cafe have CHANGED to 10-11:30am at the North Branch Education Center: 38705 Grand Avenue in North Branch, MN 55056. If you have any questions please contact us at 651-213-5235. We look forward to seeing you!

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

### MCH updates from 2022:

Family home visiting nurses were trained in two new home visiting curriculums that they will use with families: MECOSH (Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home visiting) and Mothers and Babies program. MECOSH is a long-term home visiting program starting in pregnancy or up to 6-8 weeks postpartum and continuing to the child's second birthday. Each family will receive around 25 visits with a nurse and will receive information about how to have a healthy pregnancy and delivery, teaching about child growth & development, connections to community services, and answers to their questions about feeding, sleeping, and discipline. Mothers and Babies Program is an evidence-based perinatal depression prevention program that has demonstrated positive outcomes in preventing postpartum depression, reducing depressive symptoms, and reducing perceived stress. This stress management program can be used one-on-one or in a group setting and has been very popular with moms so far!

If you know of a family that could benefit from either program, please call 651-213-5229 or email [mchnurses@chisagocountymn.gov](mailto:mchnurses@chisagocountymn.gov) to refer them.

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

### Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) updates from 2022:

Check out our updated SHIP/Community Health website by the end of the month for more information about SHIP, the projects we are currently working on, our Community Leadership Team, and possible funding opportunities. SHIP also welcomes Mackenzie Halfen to the team as our new Community Health Specialist. Mackenzie has been with our Public Health Team as our Contracted Community Health Services Lead since the end of May and brings a wealth of knowledge on equity, community health, and data-driven projects.

#### Events to look forward to this month:

- January 19th –Workplace Wellness Collaborative Kickoff (Interested in workplace wellness, but not registered for the collaborative? Contact Liz for more details!)

To connect with the SHIP team, please email or call:  
Elizabeth Stenson (SHIP Coordinator) - [Elizabeth.stenson@chisagocountymn.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.stenson@chisagocountymn.gov) (612) 476-4785  
Mackenzie Halfen (Community Health Specialist) - [Mackenzie.halfen@chisagocountymn.gov](mailto:Mackenzie.halfen@chisagocountymn.gov) (651) 302-8120

## PUBLIC HEALTH RECOGNITION

We are so thankful for all of our partnerships that make the work we do within Chisago County Public Health possible. We have relied heavily on these partnerships especially throughout times of Public Health crises in the past three years. This month we would like to highlight the Chisago County Sheriff's Office for their commitment to supporting Chisago County Public Health.

Currently members of the Chisago County Sheriff's Office serve on the Public Health MAPP committee and Community Leadership Team. Their role on these committees is essential as we evaluate community health and safety needs and work to create our Community Health Improvement Plan for the next five years.

Additionally, law enforcement from the Sheriff's Office as well as municipal departments across the county provided invaluable participation on COVID-19 unified command meetings as well as security and support with other COVID-19 activities such as vaccine clinics during the COVID-19 response. We are thankful for the ongoing support and partnership provide by the department in effort to work collaboratively to make Chisago County a healthy and safe place to live, work, and play.

Follow them on Facebook for more information, and to learn more about how they support the community.

