

October 2024

Health Officer's Update

Hello everyone!

We are entering into pumpkin spice and respiratory virus season. The good news is that COVID rates are decreasing, and flu and COVID shots are readily available at most pharmacies and doctor's offices. You can go to www.vaccines.gov to find a pharmacy near you or go to a county sponsored site listed [here](#) (flu only). Stay vigilant about your health by getting vaccinated. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself and those around you.

In October we recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Sleep Safe Awareness Month.

[Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#) is a time to raise awareness about the impact of breast cancer. The US Preventive Services Taskforce recommends all women 40 and over get screened every other year. Regular screenings can help detect any changes early, leading to better outcomes and more effective treatment options. While Black women have a 4% lower incidence of breast cancer, they are still 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women¹. This is largely because their cancers are detected at a later stage when they are harder to treat. Latino and Asian populations also face unique challenges in access to care and early detection including language and insurance barriers. Breast cancer can affect anyone, and early detection is key. Make sure to schedule your appointment and encourage friends and family to do the same.

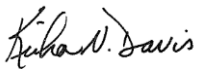
Sleep Safe Awareness Month is dedicated to raising awareness about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS). Every year in the United States, around 3,500 infants die of sleep related deaths². We urge all caretakers to be mindful of safe sleep practices, ensuring that cribs are free of soft bedding, toys, and other items that could pose a risk while infants are sleeping³. Remember the "ABC's" of safe sleep for babies: "Alone on their Back in a Crib." There are several [events](#) this month to raise awareness of safe infant sleep practices. Come join the team and test your knowledge of what is a safe sleep environment.

As we approach the upcoming elections on November 5th, remember that voting is a powerful public health activity. If you haven't registered yet, its not too late! Your voice matters and participating in the electoral process helps shape policies that impact our community's health and well-being. Voting is a fundamental way to express civic engagement and influence decisions on issues like healthcare, education, and social justice, all of which have direct impacts on community health⁴. Engaging in the electoral process helps ensure that the voices of all community members are heard, leading to more equitable health outcomes.

Lastly- Halloween! Fall is such a fun time packed with many activities including trick-or-treating, and we want to ensure everyone has a safe experience while out in the community. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Stick to familiar neighborhoods and only visit houses that are well-lit.
- Wear reflective costumes or carry flashlights to stay visible to drivers.
- With temperatures dropping, dress in layers and choose costumes that are easy to move in.

Thanks for your commitment to making our community a healthier, happier place to live, work, and play!



Kisha N. Davis, MD, MPH, FAAFP

¹ <https://www.cancer.org/research/acs-research-news/breast-cancer-death-rates-are-highest-for-black-women-again.html>

² [SIDS and Other Sleep-Related Infant Deaths: Updated 2016 Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment](#)

³ <https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/resources/toolkit>

⁴ [AMA Acknowledges Voting Is a Social Determinant of Health](#)