

## Communicable Disease Service Mission Statement

Our mission is to prevent communicable disease among all citizens of New Jersey, and to promote the knowledge and use of healthy lifestyles to maximize the health and well-being of New Jerseyans.

We will accomplish our mission through our leadership, collaborative partnerships, and advocacy for communicable disease surveillance, research, education, treatment, prevention and control.

Phil Murphy, Governor  
Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor  
Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA  
Commissioner

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SERVICE

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## Quick Tick Update

**D**on't let a tick make you sick is the key message of the New Jersey Department of Health's (NJDOH) ongoing #TargetTicksNJ campaign launched in 2018. Preventive measures to protect against tick-borne diseases include using insect repellent on skin/clothing and checking children/pets after time outdoors. Posters are available for download on the Communicable Disease Service (CDS) Lyme Disease [webpage](#). Additional NJDOH tick-borne disease health education resources include FAQs, brochures, videos and fact sheets available on the main Vector-borne Illness [webpage](#).



On April 12, 2019, Ed Lifshitz, MD, Medical Director for the NJDOH Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program, presented "Ticks: Tiny but Troubling" via webinar as part of the Rutgers monthly webinar series. This webinar explored the types of ticks present in New Jersey and the illnesses they carry.

May 2019 was officially proclaimed "Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month" in New Jersey, a modification from "Lyme Disease Awareness Month" promoted in previous years. The adjustment was made to better reflect tick-borne diseases in the state. From 2004-2016, human disease cases from ticks have doubled in the United States. While Lyme disease accounts for 82% of all reported tick-borne diseases, spotted fevers, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis/ehrlichiosis have become increasingly prevalent. More information is available from the

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## Winner of the New Jersey 2018-2019 College & University Flu Challenge Announced

**T**he College of New Jersey (TCNJ) was recently announced as the winner of the second annual New Jersey College & University Flu Challenge! This year, there were 11 participating schools from across the state (*Centenary, TCNJ, County College of Morris, Kean, Montclair State, New Jersey City, Rider, Rowan, Rutgers-Camden, Rutgers-New Brunswick, and Seton Hall*).

Getting the flu vaccine every year is the best method of flu prevention, yet state and national estimates show that few young adults are choosing to get vaccinated. According to the National Immunization Survey (NIS-Flu) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), only 30.1% of New Jersey adults 18-49 years old received the flu vaccine during the 2017-18 flu season. National coverage is 26.9% for the same age group. Unfortunately, vaccination coverage both nationally and in New Jersey is well below the Healthy People 2020 target of 70%.

To address these low immunization rates, the New Jersey Department of Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program launched the Flu Challenge during the 2017-18 flu season in an effort to increase students' flu awareness and vaccination rates. The Challenge encourages each school to develop an awareness campaign and to circulate an online survey link to collect student self-reported vaccination information.



Many of the participating schools hosted on-campus clinics at various times to accommodate busy student class schedules. For the 2018-19 Challenge, TCNJ reported the highest flu vaccination coverage among their undergraduate student population based on the survey data. The traveling trophy will relocate from last year's Challenge winner, Seton Hall University, to TCNJ for the next year.

The third annual Challenge will kick-off in August 2019. Colleges and universities can learn more about the Challenge by visiting <https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/flu.shtm>, or by contacting [erika.lobe@doh.nj.gov](mailto:erika.lobe@doh.nj.gov).



### The NJDOH Communicable Disease Service includes:

Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program (IZDP): 609-826-5964

Regional Epidemiology Program (REP): 609-826-5964

Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP): 609-826-4860

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## New Jersey's 2018 HPV Champion!

**T**he HPV Vaccine Is Cancer Prevention Champion is an annual award given jointly by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Cancer Society, and Association of American Cancer Institutes. HPV, or human papillomavirus, is a common virus that can lead to HPV-associated cancers. This award recognizes clinicians, clinics, practices, groups, and health systems that are going above and beyond to foster the prevention of those cancers through HPV vaccination.

In the fall of 2018, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Vaccine Preventable Disease Program solicited nominations for an HPV Champion. Of the nominations, the Pediatric Primary Care Clinic at the DePaul Center was selected as New Jersey's first HPV Vaccine is Cancer Prevention Champion. The clinic is a part of St. Joseph's Children's Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey.

The clinic uses a team-based approach to provide coordinated, patient-centered care. They educate the entire staff on the importance of the HPV vaccine and provide tools to effectively discuss the vaccine with patients and their families. The clinic has a policy to start the HPV vaccine conversation at an early age and frame it as cancer prevention; this anticipatory guidance is key to improving vaccine acceptance. Additionally, the staff uses reminder/recall systems, repeated recommendations, and patient



**Dr. Setlur and Dr. Tan**

rewards to facilitate completion of the vaccine series.

The Pediatric Primary Care Clinic provides leadership to others in their community. Members of the clinic staff often speak at organizations around New Jersey to give guidance to practices that may be struggling to vaccinate their adolescent populations. They have also joined forces with their chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to continually improve HPV vaccination completion rates.

These innovations have improved the Pediatric Primary Care Clinic's HPV vaccination completion rates to 81% in both 13-15-year-old male and female patients in the past two years. Their well-rounded approach to care

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**Wash  
Your  
Hands**

**NJ Health**  
New Jersey Department of Health

Get more information at  
<http://nj.gov/health/cd/handwashing.shtml>.

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## New Resource: Adolescent Immunization Reminder/Recall Postcards

**R**eminder/Recall systems are cost-effective methods to identify and notify families when children are due for vaccinations or are already behind schedule. The New Jersey Department of Health Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP) has recently developed adolescent immunization reminder/recall postcards featuring artwork from the annual Protect Me With 3+ contest. The series of four postcards feature each of the routine adolescent vaccines: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap); human

papillomavirus (HPV); meningococcal conjugate; and influenza. The back of each postcard highlights the importance of the vaccines and reminds parents to set up an appointment to keep their child protected.

These postcards are available upon request at no cost. If interested in obtaining copies to share with your patients, please contact the VPDP at 609-826-4861. If you would like more information on the Protect Me With 3+ contest, please visit

[www.protectmewith3.com](http://www.protectmewith3.com). 



## Protect Me With 3+

YOUR HEALTH IS WORTH A SHOT!

The NJDOH Communicable Disease Service includes:

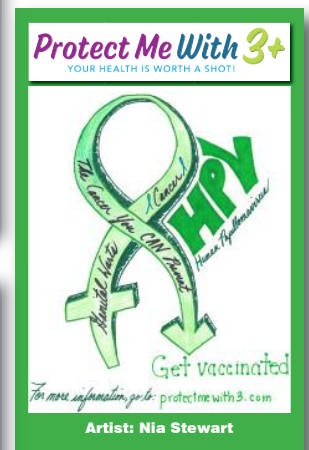
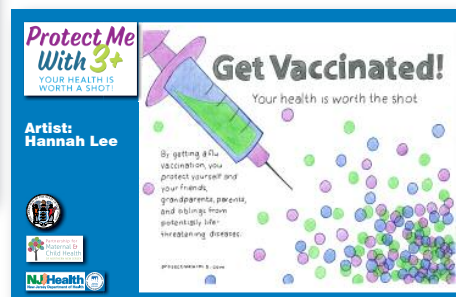
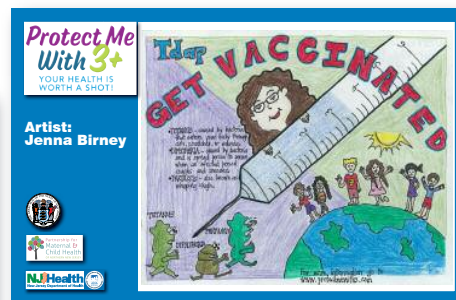
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*HPV Champion, continued from page 3*

is why the Pediatric Primary Care Clinic at the DePaul Center is New Jersey's 2018 HPV Vaccine Is Cancer Prevention Champion!

The award was presented on January 31st at Cooper University Health Care in Camden to Dr. Setlur by the NJDOH Assistant Commissioner/State Epidemiologist, Dr. Christina Tan, at a recent NJDOH meeting highlighting HPV as part of its Partnering for a Healthy New Jersey initiative. The meeting brought together stakeholders who are committed to reducing the incidence of and mortality from HPV-associated cancers in New Jersey and to discuss the epidemiology of HPV infections, current immunization coverage rates, and key steps toward prevention.



For more information about the HPV Vaccine is Cancer Prevention Champion, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/champions/index.html>. 

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**Save the Date!**

**On August 7, 2019 there will be a statewide opioid symposium which will address blood-borne pathogen transmission through injection drug use. Stay tuned!**


*Quick Tick Update, continued from page 1*

full CDC “Illnesses on the Rise” Vital Signs [report](#).



**On May 23, 2019**, NJDOH collaborated with CDC to hold a webinar for clinicians treating patients for tick-borne diseases. The webinar focused on clinical presentations of tick-borne diseases from the perspective of patient presentation, recommended diagnostic tests and an overview of treatment regimens. Speakers included Edward Lifshitz, MD, FACP - Medical Director, NJDOH CDS Infectious & Zoonotic Disease Program and Grace Marx, MD, MPH - Infectious Disease Physician & Medical Epidemiologist, CDC Division of Vector-Borne Diseases,

Bacterial Diseases Branch. Over 220 attendees participated in the webinar and a recording is available at <https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/vectorborne.shtml>.

The NJDOH coordinates various tick-borne disease activities including surveillance, education and outreach initiatives, and works to advance workforce development and training to sustain and strengthen tick-borne disease public health practices; enhance tick-borne disease surveillance capacity; and perform and evaluate educational outreach to healthcare providers, public health partners, policy makers and the public. For more information please contact the Vector-borne Disease Program at 609-826-5964. 

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## Antibiotic Stewardship Tool Kits for Long-term Care Staff Education

**I**n the fall of 2018, the Communicable Disease Service distributed tool kits to long-term care facilities to assist in training staff to better understand the concept of antibiotic stewardship and the role they play in addressing this serious health threat. A new resource was recently added to the kit and is ready for distribution. The *Clostridioides difficile* fact sheet is the third fact sheet to be included in the kit (joining the respiratory and urinary tract infections fact sheets) and copies are available upon


request. The entire toolkit can be found on the CDS website at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/stewardship.shtml>. To order quantities of the *C. diff* fact sheet, please contact Suzanne Miro, Sr. Health Communication Specialist at [suzanne.miro@doh.nj.gov](mailto:suzanne.miro@doh.nj.gov) or by phone at 609-826-5964. 



## Jason Mehr, MPH, CIC



Jason Mehr, MPH, CIC, Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), spoke at the Northeastern Basic Course for Principles of Infection Prevention

and Control conference in April 2019. The five-day course is designed to prepare the new practitioner responsible for infection prevention. Jason spoke about injection safety in healthcare facilities, outbreaks associated with healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), public health HAI investigations, and drug diversion at healthcare facilities. The course was presented by the Northern and Southern New Jersey Chapters of APIC and the NJDOH and held at the New Jersey Hospital Association. Attendees represented acute care, dialysis, long-term care, and ambulatory surgery centers. 

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## CDS Welcomes New Staff!


**Lenora Cheston** – Lenora Cheston is joining the Communicable Disease Service, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program Surveillance Unit as a Public Health Representative 2 and will be working to help fill the gap in pertussis coverage and other vaccine preventable disease surveillance activities (TBD). She

comes to us from the Special Parent Advocacy Group in Ewing. Prior to that she worked with the Henry J. Austin Health Center for 11 years in the HIV Department providing counseling, testing and referral services as an HIV counselor. 





## Save the Date!

Join us once again for the Communicable Disease Forums! These popular programs highlight recent outbreaks, new information, tools and more. Topics will include public recreation and bathing regulations, measles, vector-borne updates, and various updates on local investigations. The next two forums will be webinars on August 13, 2019 and October 25, 2019, both from 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM. Registration information is on the New Jersey Learning Management Network at <https://njlmn.njlincs.net>. The in-person forum provides 3.0 continuing education credits for public health and nursing, the webinar version provides 2.0. 

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