



Friday, February 2

Hi there,

Every February, Black History Month is a time to honor and celebrate Black individuals' accomplishments. Trust for American's Health notes 13 African Americans whose contributions to public health are marked throughout history. Check it out [here](#).

While we celebrate Black leaders and progress of the past, we are reminded of how much work remains to achieve our mission of racial equity.

Black residents in Oakland County are faced with several types of health inequities, including disproportionate rates of chronic disease and food insecurity. Additionally, there has been a persistent trend of Black babies dying at higher rates than white or other racial and ethnic groups. There are several contributing factors that lead to health inequities including systemic racism and discrimination, lack of access to adequate and culturally appropriate health and preventative care, and socioeconomic status.

Oakland County's Department of Health & Human Services is [committed to equity](#) and ensuring everyone has a fair opportunity to thrive. We are working hard to address differences and eliminate any barriers causing health disparities among our residents. You will find these efforts present in our offering of programs such as [Nurse Family Partnership](#) or [Health 360 Partnership](#) with Honor Community Health just to name a few.

Just a friendly reminder that it is not too late to get vaccinated against respiratory viruses like flu and COVID. For example, it's better to get a flu vaccine late than to skip it entirely. Flu season runs from October to May, with a peak usually occurring in February. Getting vaccinated at any time during the season can keep you from falling ill and missing work or school. If you would like to visit us for an immunization, [here](#) is more information.

In good health,

Leigh-Anne Stafford, Director, Health and Human Services

Find and treat childhood dental problems early

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. Cavities are the most common chronic disease of childhood, yet they are preventable. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who don't.

Michigan law now requires students to have a dental screening before or shortly after their first school year begins. Finding and treating dental problems early helps children to be well-rested, able to eat, and ready to learn! Schedule an appointment with your child's dentist for a screening. We also offer [Kindergarten dental screenings](#) for children who live or learn in Oakland County. Schedule an appointment for your child [online](#) or call 800-848-5533 with questions.



Protect against certain cancers - Get the HPV vaccine today!

[Human papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. Most HPV infections go away on their own and don't cause any health problems. However, if HPV does not go away, it can cause health problems like genital warts. It also can cause [certain kinds of cancer](#) including cervical and throat cancers.

Anyone who is sexually active can get HPV. Most people don't know they have the virus. Fortunately, there is a vaccine to prevent HPV infection. Early protection works best. Children ages 11–12 years (can start at age 9) can get two doses of [HPV vaccine](#), given 6 to 12 months apart. Teens and young adults can be vaccinated too. Everyone through age 26 years should get HPV vaccine if they were not fully vaccinated already.

College students are at an increased risk for HPV infection. HPV vaccination rates are generally lower in men than women. [For women aged 18–26, vaccination rates are around 30–40%. For men aged 18–26, vaccination rates are around 10–15%.](#)

There are two steps you can take to lower your chances of getting HPV and diseases from HPV:

1. **Get vaccinated.** The HPV vaccine is safe and effective. It can protect against warts and certain cancers caused by HPV.
2. **Use condoms the right way every time you have sex.** This can lower your chances of getting all STIs, including HPV.

Get the HPV vaccine today! [Walk-in to our Health Division offices](#) in Pontiac or Southfield Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m., or Thursday from 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Self-care tips for heart health

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, but there's a lot you can do to prevent it. Small acts of self-care, like taking walks, getting quality sleep, and cooking healthy meals help your heart. Research shows that self-care can help you keep your blood pressure in a healthy range and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

You can improve and protect your health overall when you:

- Get a daily dose of physical activity, such as a brisk, 30-minute walk.
- Cook meals that are low in sodium and unhealthy fats.
- Take medications as prescribed and keep medical appointments.
- Sleep 7-8 hours a night.
- Manage stress through activities like meditation, yoga, a warm bath, or quiet time with a good book or funny movie.
- Maintain a healthy weight by moving more and having snacks like fruits and veggies ready to grab when hunger hits.

#OurHearts

**Self-care
helps keep
your blood pressure
in the healthy range
and reduces your risk
of heart disease.**



NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



Black History Month and National Cancer Prevention Month

February marks both [Black History Month](#) and National Cancer Prevention Month. [Henrietta Lacks](#), a black woman from Baltimore, made a lasting impact on cancer research, yet her story highlights the disparities among cancer rates and medical mistreatment within the Black community, especially with Black women. Lacks was seen at Johns Hopkins Hospital for cervical cancer, where her cells were taken without consent and used in biomedical research. Her cells were the first to be reproduced successfully in a lab and have been used thousands of times over in research while the family was left without monetary reimbursement. In August 2023, [Lacks' family finally was awarded settlement dollars](#) for the illegal use of her cells (HeLa cells) in research.

Even though black and white women have similar chances of being diagnosed with cancer, [black women are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage](#) and [more likely die from breast cancer compared to white women](#). The [National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program](#) is a national program designed to reduce barriers to recommended cancer screening tools and cancer treatment. [Find a provider](#) close to you or someone you love.

More Health Division info

Check out our [webpage](#) page for information about our services and various health topics. You can also call our Nurse on Call hotline at 1-800-848-5533 (Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.).

Oakgov.com/health is the best place to receive the latest information. Add, update, or opt out of Health Division email or text communications by clicking [here](#).

