



NEWSLETTER



Bureau Spotlight: Maryland Cancer Registry

By: Erica Smith

The Maryland Cancer Registry (MCR) receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR) and the State of Maryland to collect data on all incident (new) cancers diagnosed or treated in Maryland residents. The MCR is an essential resource for decision-making in cancer prevention and control throughout the State and for cancer research. The data are used to assess the cancer burden in Maryland and nationally, including identifying priority cancers and populations or geographies experiencing higher cancer incidence and late-stage disease.

The MCR developed the Kimberly Stern Case Completeness Award to honor the MCR's late Program Manager, Kimberly Stern. Given annually, the awards highlight facilities that have met specific case completeness criteria for their timely reporting of cancer cases to the MCR. Awardees receive certificates and are highlighted on various channels, including newsletters, email blasts, and Tumor Registrars Association of Maryland (TRAM) meetings. (Continued on page 7)

The Center for Cancer Prevention and Control (CCPC)

By: Ken Lin Tai

CCPC staff continued to show their dedication and hard work in 2024 – what a superstar team! CCPC had a busy final quarter in 2024.

In November 2024, CCPC helped organize the 31st Annual Maryland State Council on Cancer Control conference in Anne Arundel County. The conference saw 141 attendees from various cancer stakeholder organizations in Maryland. Kudos to the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and the conference volunteers for another successful conference!

The Epidemiology Team rolled out changes in how race and ethnicity are reported in MDH cancer reports and will continue to look for ways to improve usability of its published reports.



The Cancer Screening Programs Unit increased its efforts to roll out changes to the CRF-CPEST program to improve cancer outcomes of low-income, uninsured or underinsured Maryland residents. It also worked with the Epidemiology Team to replace outdated databases used by its grantees.

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Program team continued to work hard on replacing their existing systems with Salesforce, with the goal of launching it in the middle of 2025.

CCPC's Medical Director was busy reviving the Advance Directives Program and preparing for the implementation of the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund. The Maryland Professional and Volunteer Firefighters Innovative Cancer Screening Technologies Program saw participation from fire departments throughout the state.

CCPC started planning the implementation of 2024 Senate Bill 938, which requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop and implement a 3-year public education campaign on prostate, lung, and breast cancer prevention that targets communities disproportionately impacted by prostate, lung, and breast cancer. (Continued on page 6)

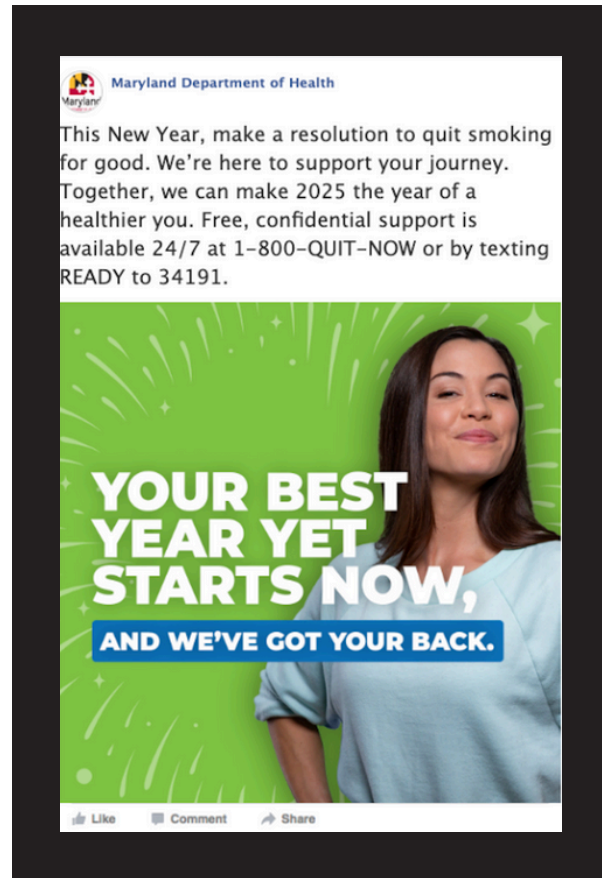
CCPC Welcomes Benjamin Leo

CCPC welcomed Benjamin Leo, the center's new Program Manager for the Maryland Cancer Registry (MCR). Ben will be overseeing MCR's operations and working closely with MCR's data management and quality assurance contractor, Myriddian, to ensure timely and accurate collection and reporting of cancer cases in Maryland. Thanks to efforts from MCR and its contractor, Maryland saw an improvement in their data submission metrics.

The Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control (CTPC) By: Sara Wolfe

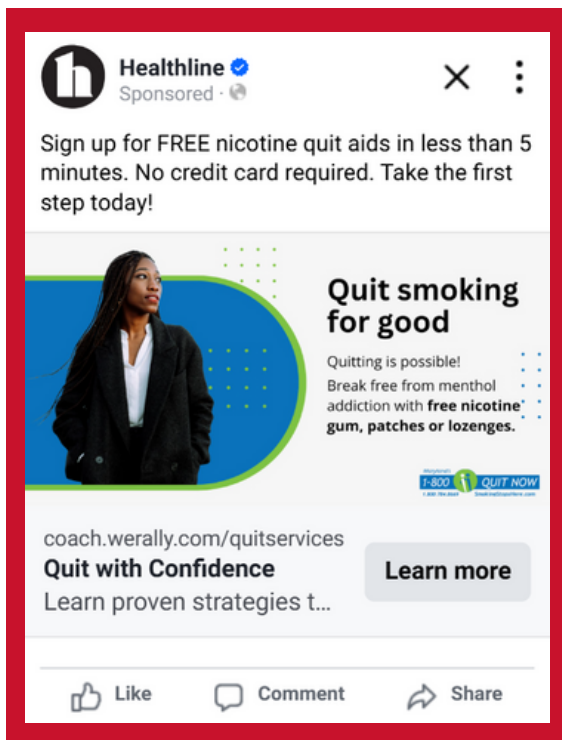
With the commencement of the new year and resolutions, The Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control (CTPC) continues to promote healthy living and the significance of quitting tobacco and vape use by offering Marylanders free resources to support cessation through a variety of methods.

All 24 Maryland jurisdictions provide tobacco prevention and cessation services. The Maryland Tobacco Quitline, provides round the clock tobacco cessation treatment services free of charge for all Marylanders over the age of 13, including access to free nicotine replacement therapy for adult participants, shipped directly to their homes. Marylanders can access these services through phone, text, online enrollment, or through provider referral. Personalized coaching and support tracks are available for participants who are living with one or more behavioral health conditions, are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding, those who use menthol tobacco products, youth and young adults.



CTPC's running a new campaign promoted by Consumer Wellness Solutions, LLC this year that started on December 2, 2024, that features targeted messages on Facebook to find Maryland residents age 30-65+ in specific geographies within the state that are likely nicotine & tobacco users. The campaign will run for one calendar year (ending December 2025). The purpose of running a campaign during this time is to continue promotion during the CDC TIPS off-season to keep Quitline enrollments elevated.

CTPC ended 2024, on a high note! In December, CTPC attained its highest monthly media impressions this fiscal year with the assistance of its media contractor, GKV, earning over 12 million impressions. These efforts to reach Marylanders included targeted ads to reach those considering tobacco cessation as part of New Year's resolutions, Quitline services promotion and tobacco-use prevention messages via social media, in-app and streaming audio advertising.



The Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control (CCDPC)

By: Adeloal Alayande

CCDPC has spent the past three months developing a State Chronic Disease Action Plan (CDAP) that encompasses a statewide plan for risk reduction focusing on tobacco use, alcohol use, physical activity, and healthy eating. The CDAP is currently with PHPA leadership for review and we hope to have it finalized soon.

CCDPC's diabetes and heart disease CDC cooperative agreements are in their second year of funding with highlights including implementing a Healthy Heart Learning Collaborative with our internal and external stakeholders, release of a National Diabetes Prevention Program Disability Inclusion grant to our LHDs, and continued collaboration with internal and external partners to improve health outcomes for patients at risk for diabetes and heart disease through team-based care incorporating social determinants of health.



CTPC Welcomes Chad Dodge

Chad Dodge joined our Enforcement Team in November 2024, as the new Synar Program Coordinator and the Backup Coordinator for the FDA Tobacco Compliance program.

Chad brings five years of experience working with the FDA's CTP Tobacco Compliance Program across several states including Florida, the US Virgin Islands, Alaska and Tennessee. Prior to working with CTP, Chad worked alongside the US Marshals Asset Forfeiture teams, assisting with the nationwide seizure of crime-related property.

The Center's Evaluation Team is currently focused on completing the Community Health Worker (CHW) interviews finalized in 2024. These interviews capture years of impactful work that CHWs have contributed to improving the health and well-being of Marylanders. The team is now synthesizing the findings into a comprehensive report that highlights the key achievements, challenges, and outcomes of CHW efforts across the state. This report will serve as a valuable resource for future program planning and demonstrate the vital role CHWs play in addressing health disparities.

Finally, preparations for the 2025 BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) survey are underway. The survey is scheduled to launch in mid-January, continuing its critical role in collecting data on health behaviors, chronic disease prevalence, and associated risk factors among Maryland residents. The insights gained will inform public health strategies and programs across the state.

The Office of Oral Health (OOH)



OOH Welcomes Dr. Mahabub Anwar, Epidemiologist II

By: Debony Hughes

The Office of Oral Health ended 2024 with continued encouragement that we are improving the health and oral health of Marylanders.

The collaborative efforts with MDH programs, LHD's and other non-profit programs across the state, we are addressing access issues, workforce shortage issues in designated shortage areas, fluoridation, sealant programs, obesity in the dental setting, HIV dental referrals, tap water consumption, fluoride application in the pediatric office setting, loan assistance repayment, plain language educational materials, infection control protocols, emergency preparedness protocols and improved data collection to better understand the shortfalls in care and access to dental care.

We also continue to support community programs such as Head Start with educational and dental supplies to help reinforce the importance of good oral health habits beginning at a very young age. The OOH provides an annual update of the Oral Health Resource Guide that provides a statewide view of the dental resources that are available to the under/uninsured Marylanders.

OOH Program Spotlight: Pathways to a Bright Future

HRSA funded Pathways to a Bright Future, which addresses the workforce shortage in Western Maryland, Baltimore City and the Eastern Shore. It is an exciting opportunity to educate high school students about the dental profession and even more exciting when they express interest. OOH Regional Oral Health Coordinators visit schools in these regions to provide information about all level of careers in dentistry. We continue to look for opportunities to provide this fantastic educational resource.

The Kidney Disease Program (KDP)

By: Carol Manning

The Kidney Disease Program is scheduled to go live in 2025 with an updated Patient Enrollment, Case Management and Claims Processing System on the Salesforce platform. This new system shall provide a number of upgrades, enhancements, and additional development for KDP in order to expedite a smooth transition away from the current electronic claims processing system, (eCMS). This new system will include an online Provider Portal and Patient Portal enabling providers to view claims status and patient eligibility and also allow patients to apply for patient certification with the Kidney Disease Program online.



CTPC Program Spotlight: What is Synar?

The Synar Tobacco Inspection Program was developed from the July 1992 Synar Amendment which requires all states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to underage youth. The Synar Program plays an essential role in limiting youth access to tobacco as well as assisting in monitoring the effectiveness of tobacco control policies within the state. This is accomplished by conducting unannounced compliance inspections using approved minors throughout the course of a year. Routine education and enforcement through the program ensure retailers comply with age restrictions and create good tobacco sales policies. The program also supports public health initiatives aimed at reducing the long term effects of tobacco addiction. Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Services Block Grant (SUBG) awards are available to assist states with achieving the goals of the program. These funds require states to maintain a noncompliance rate of less than 20% or face penalties in SUBG funding. The Synar Program is operated alongside, but independently of the FDA's Tobacco Retail Compliance program.

The Maryland Synar program had a noncompliance rate under 20% this year! The program anticipates noncompliance rates to decrease with supporting local health department efforts, providing retailer education and enforcement activities throughout the state.

CCPC Update Con't.

Lastly, CCPC is in the process of drafting its continuing application for the CDC's Cancer Prevention and Control Programs for State, Territorial, and Tribal Organizations funding opportunity, which funds the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, the Comprehensive Cancer

Control Program, and the Maryland Cancer Registry. CCPC is also in the process of applying for the new CDC colorectal cancer program's funding cycle named Changing Health Systems Using Evidence-based Interventions to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening.

Bureau Spotlight Con't.

The most recent TRAM meeting was held on December 9, 2024 in Anne Arundel County. Staff from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Cancer and Chronic Disease Bureau (CCDB), including the MCR, attended in person along with staff from the MCR's quality assurance and data management contractor, Myriddian, LLC. At the meeting, eight awardees received Kimberly Stern Case Completeness Award certificates, handed out by the CCDB Director, Pamela Williams.

These awards were developed as part of a concerted effort - which included other changes such as increased utilization of the Health Information Exchange and increased follow-up with non-compliant facilities - by the MCR and Myriddian, LLC to improve data quality, timeliness, and completeness. As a result, the MCR anticipates meeting the 90% completeness threshold for observed-to-



expected cases required for the Advanced National Data Quality Standard for the first time based on its most recent data submission to NPCR.

CCPC Program Spotlight: Advance Directives

Advance directives help individuals receive medical care consistent with their values and can improve one's quality of care at the end of life. Advance directives also decrease the financial burden on the health care system by reducing the likelihood of unwanted, costly life-sustaining treatments. Despite decades-long efforts to improve advance care planning through public education and technological infrastructure enhancements, two-thirds of Maryland's population has yet to complete an advance directive. In 2017, the Maryland legislature created the Maryland Advance Directive Program and directed the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to implement an educational and outreach program to increase completion, access, and use of advance directives, especially digital advance directives, across the state. Between 2017 and 2023, the Program was helmed by MDH's Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control (CCDPC), and through various community engagement activities, reached more than 16,000 people statewide. Notably however, participation lagged among men, minority groups, youth under age 35 and rural residents. Program activities were curtailed during the COVID-19 pandemic, but in 2024 the Program was transferred to CCPC and relaunched with aims to:

1. target underutilizing groups with emphasis on message delivery from trusted individuals like faith-based and other community organization leaders, Community Health Workers; and
2. underscore a simple call to action: Start by naming a healthcare agent, start now, and use online/cloud-based storage for your advance directive.

Every adult should have an advance directive. For more information, visit the [Advance Directives Program webpage](#).