May is Hepatitis Awareness Month

Each year, May is observed nationally as Hepatitis Awareness Month. This year, the Governor of Virginia, Glenn Youngkin, has issued a proclamation recognizing May 2023 as Hepatitis Awareness Month in Virginia and calling this observance to the attention of Virginians.

To learn more about Hepatitis Awareness Month, visit the DDP highlights page.

Virginia Medicaid Mails Out Important Information

Virginia Medicaid is beginning the renewal process for all Medicaid members. The Department of Medical Assistance Services is mailing letters to members when it is time to renew. These letters contain important information on actions needed for members to keep their health coverage.

The letter being sent will include a notice on the envelope that states, “Open Immediately Application Enclosed.” An example of the letter is parallel to this article. If Medicaid recipients do not complete their renewal correctly, they may lose their health coverage.

It is important that Medicaid members have their mailing address and contact information correct in the Medicaid system so they receive important updates, such as this.
mailing. It is important that they carefully read and follow the instructions from this letter. They must respond by the
due date listed in the letter.

If you have clients or patients that are Medicaid recipients, please help share this information with them so they can
keep their healthcare coverage. If they have questions or need help regarding their Medicare coverage, they can:

- go online to commonhelp.virginia.gov,
- call Cover Virginia at 1-855-242-8282, or
- call their local Department of Social Services.

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**New Cases of Mpopx Identified may be Signaling a Resurgence**

There have been a recent cluster of new cases of mpopx identified in Chicago. These new cases raise concerns of a
resurgence of mpopx infections this summer. We encourage community partners to ramp up prevention services.

What we currently know about the recent new mpopx cases:

- 12 new cases were identified between April 17 and May 5, 2023
  - Additional cases are under investigation
- 8 of the new cases were identified at Howard Brown
  - Of these 8, at least 7 were fully vaccinated; 1 was partially vaccinated
- At least 2 of these new cases are patients living with HIV
- 1 new case is associated with travel
- There is no immediate epi connection between cases

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) wants to reiterate that:

- Mpopx tests and vaccines are widely available
- Use all tools in the prevention toolbox
- Federal funding stream flexibilities are available; request their use to address mpopx

While cases continue to occur in vaccinated people, it is important to
realize that the vaccine reduces the severity of symptoms. The vaccine
also reduces hospitalizations from mpopx infection.

It is crucial that populations which are the most “at risk”, particularly
gay/bisexual men of color, are being served by partner organizations.

DDP will continue to provide updates on the situation as they become available. Updates will be available through
the monthly ebulletin and/or the DDP homepage.

For mpopx shareables please check the VDH mpopx resources page.
National HIV Testing Day

National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) is coming up on June 27. You can find resources to share on your social media channels through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or Greater Than HIV.

Several community-based organizations throughout Virginia are once again offering free HIV testing through the Greater Than HIV and Walgreens NHTD event. On June 27, Virginians can visit participating Walgreens stores and get tested for free by a Virginia agency. More information on this event and participating locations will be provided on the DDP highlights page once it becomes available.

Wound Care and Medical Triage for People who use Drugs

NASTAD Drug User Health Group has created a new resource: Wound Care & Medical Triage for People Who Use Drugs. This comprehensive guide provides information and recommendations regarding general health; safer use practices; common viral, fungal, parasitic, and other injection-related infections; overdose and overamp; tapering; withdrawal; medications for opioid use disorder; and seeking medical care.

Wound Care & Medical Triage for People Who Use Drugs is intended to be used by people who use drugs and the community-based organizations, grassroots programs, health departments, and other harm-reduction service providers who work with them. This guide is formatted to be easily viewed electronically and printed both in its entirety and in sections.

If you have questions or suggestions about this resource, you can reach out NASTAD's Drug User Health team at druguserhealthta@nastad.org, or Bruce Taylor, Drug User Health Coordinator, DDP, at bruce.taylor@vdh.virginia.gov.

E-Learning Course on HIV Self-Testing

HIV self-testing is a strategy that supports ending the HIV epidemic. It is being more fully supported to meet clients where they are.

HealthHIV has designed an eLearning course on HIV self-testing. This 60-minute course will provide knowledge and skills around HIV self-testing. Additionally, it will also support the design, protocol development, and implementation of an HIV self-testing program.

You must have, or create, a CDC TRAIN account to access this course. To create an account, visit the CDC Train Register page.

To access the training (once you have a CDC TRAIN account):

- Join the HIV CBA Learning Group through the CDC TRAIN guidelines.
Register for the course online through CDC TRAIN (Course 1104991)

For more information on the course, and other offerings from HealthHIV’s E-Learning Center, visit the HealthHIV website. For any questions regarding the HIV Self-Testing Course, please contact Marissa Tonelli, Director of Health Systems Capacity Building, at marissa@healthhiv.org.

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**Personnel**

*Welcome*

Kimberly Gyimah started as a Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) in the Northern Region on April 17. Kimberly will be primarily working at the Arlington Health Department after completing training in July. She studied Health, Physical Education, and Exercise Science with a concentration in Health Science at VCU. While at VCU, Kimberly interned at the VCU Hospital HIV/AIDS Resource Consultation Center. In the last three years, she’s worked in communicable diseases as a contact tracer, case interviewer, and an Mpox Infection Specialist. In her free time, she enjoys exploring the city and trying new restaurants, working out, reading, and going to the movies. Kimberly can be reached at kimberly.gyimah1@vdh.virginia.gov.

STD Prevention and Surveillance (SPS) welcomes Reagan Overeem as the newest addition to the Central Registry Unit (CRU). Reagan started her position as Data Management Technician on April 3. Reagan is currently pursuing her Master of Public Health with a concentration in epidemiology. She is in her second year of a program through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Reagan received a Bachelor of Science in Community Health concentrating in Clinical Science from George Mason University in May of 2022. She is originally from New York and is extremely interested in the field of medical research from a public health lens. In her free time, she enjoys reading and exploring the hiking trails of Richmond. Reagan can be reached at reagan.overeem@vdh.virginia.gov.

**Congratulations**

Congratulations to Felencia McGee who was promoted to DDP Deputy Director, effective May 10. She will be working with both the HIV Care Services (HCS) and HIV and Hepatitis Prevention (HHP) units. Felencia has more than 18 years of public health experience, including 15 years working with HIV and STIs here at VDH. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Community Health Education, a Master of Arts degree in Health Education and Promotion, and a Doctorate in Health Administration. She previously worked as the Syphilis Reactor Coordinator, HIV Case Surveillance Epi, Clinical HIV Testing Specialist, Clinical HIV Testing Coordinator, and Health Promotion Coordinator. Since February 2021, Felencia has served as the Director of HHP. During her tenure with VDH, Felencia led DDP efforts on third-party billing and an STI Clinical Improvement project, both conducted in collaboration with the Office of Community Health Services.

**Farewell**

Jackie Otieno’s last day with the Division of Disease Prevention was May 4, 2023.

**Employment Opportunities**

Employment opportunities are listed on jobs.virginia.gov. Additionally, current contract positions are listed on the DDP website, including:

- Public Health Program Evaluator
- Regional STD Program Coordinator
- Program Support Technician
• HIV Services Coordinator
• HIV Case Surveillance Data Support Technician
• Health Counselors/Disease Intervention Specialists (Multiple Openings)
• Retention Coordinators
• Virginia Medication Assistance Technicians

Please visit either site to see detailed information for available positions.