



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Celebrates Public Health Month in April

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, April 2019 - It's clear: People's health, longevity and well-being are connected to their communities — the places we live, learn, work, worship and play. For example, national health officials report at least 4 million U.S. households are home to children who are being exposed to high levels of lead, and about 6 million U.S. homes are considered substandard. Exposure to air pollution is linked to serious respiratory conditions such as asthma, and millions of Americans still get their drinking water through lead pipes. Communities of color often face greater community health risks — such as poorer air quality — and have fewer health-promoting opportunities — such as safe places to walk — than their white counterparts.

For action.

Defend the critical role of strong public health systems in creating healthier communities and urge decisionmakers to make health a priority in all policymaking. Work across sectors and outside of traditional public health circles to expand health-promoting opportunities. For example, help employers organize flu shot clinics, partner with transportation planners to expand safe biking and walking opportunities, or work with environmental justice groups to reach particularly vulnerable residents. Apply a health equity lens to ensure your efforts reach those most in need.

For health.

Smart local policies that prioritize health can make a difference. For instance, research shows that well-maintained sidewalks can encourage physical activity and that safe biking networks lead to more cycling and fewer injuries among bicyclists. Rates of preventable deaths — such as deaths from heart disease, diabetes and cancer — typically go down in communities where local public health spending goes up. Other research finds that deaths from cardiovascular disease, diabetes and the flu decline significantly in communities that expand their networks in support of population health goals. Removing leaded drinking water service lines would save billions of dollars in future health and productivity. Also, *where* people live — not just *how* they live — impacts their health, income, education and life expectancy.

To learn more about the Health Department's public health programs and services we offer, including immunizations, please call the Kingsford office at 774-1868 or the Iron River office at 265-9913.

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