



HAYS COUNTY LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE THREE | MAY 2023

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HCLHD to relocate to new, larger building

The Hays County Local Health Department (HCLHD) is gearing up to provide more services to the rapidly growing Hays County community.

The expanded offerings include a larger space in a new building, located at 101 Thermon Drive in San Marcos. The expansion of the health department, both in terms of services and space, has been a priority for Health Department Director Tammy Crumley for quite a while.

She said the expanded services at the HCLHD will include childhood immunizations and adult safety net for uninsured, underinsured, and low-income residents as well as STI treatment.

Crumley said the health department will celebrate the grand opening of the new location with a ribbon cutting at its annual Back-to-School Fair in the summer. She added that more details will be shared with the public in the coming months.

"I'm excited to see the positive change that this move will inspire within the health department and look forward to welcoming residents at our Back-To-School Fair," she said.

Events this month

May 3: Fentanyl Awareness Event | 6 - 7 pm | Gemstone Palace

May 11: Healthy Hays Discussion Series: Introduction to the HCLHD | 6 - 8 pm | Barnabas Connection in Wimberley

May 12: Party in Your Park | 5 - 8 pm | Franklin Square Park in San Marcos

May 13: Healthy Hays Discussion Series: Introduction to the HCLHD | 3 - 6 pm | Sentenia Vera Cultural Hub in Dripping Springs

May 19: Outdoor Safety Pop-Up Event | 2 - 5 pm | Sewell Park in San Marcos

May 20: Keep Wimberley Strong Health Fair | 10 am - 2 pm | Wimberley Community Center

May 20: Outdoor Safety Pop-Up Event | 10 am - 1 pm | Cypress Creek Nature Trail & Preserve in Wimberley

The **Summer Health Fair on June 10th** is shaping up to be an exciting and informative event. Set to take place at the Dripping Springs Ranch Park & Event Center, the fair promises to offer a wealth of community resources and free services, as well as entertainment for all ages. One of the valuable services available at the fair will be vision screenings provided by the Lion's Club. In addition, Hays Latinos United will be on hand to administer COVID-19 vaccines. With so much to see and do, the Summer Health Fair is sure to be a hit among local residents looking to learn more about their health and well-being. See end of newsletter for flyers and more information.

CHA Survey Results

The Hays County Local Health Department and Initium Health have concluded their public health survey as a part of the Community Health Assessment. The steering committee will utilize the results of the survey to develop the final portion of the community health assessment which is the development of a community health improvement plan. The community health improvement plan utilizes the results of the community health assessment to create a culturally inclusive and community driven plan to address the health needs residents expressed.

The following are the average scores for surveyed residents towards the questions below. 1 being very poor and 5 being very good.

Ratings also varied across different areas of Hays County. For example, the question "How would you rate the availability of public transportation?" had an average rating of 2.4 from San Marcos respondents, but only a 1.6 from Dripping Springs respondents. This shows that people living in different areas of the county have different perceptions of public health.

Survey Question	Average Rating	Standard Deviation
How would you describe quality of life in Hays County?	3.9	1.1
How would you describe the ability to get medical care when it is needed?	3.5	0.8
How would you describe the ability to get mental health services when they are needed?	2.7	1.0
How would you rate the availability of spaces for physical activity such as walking, running, biking, etc.?	3.6	1.2
How would you rate the accessibility of places and resources in Hays County for community members living with disabilities?	2.8	1.0
How would you rate the availability of public transportation?	1.9	1.1
How would you rate the availability of affordable housing?	2.0	1.0
How would you describe the cost of living in Hays County?	2.6	1.0
How would you describe health equity in Hays County? Health equities are fair and just opportunities to receive the highest quality of care.	2.9	1.1

COVID CORNER

End of Public Health Emergency

The Public Health Emergency Declaration concerning COVID-19 is set to expire on May 11, 2023. This does not mean that the pandemic is over, rather that we are transitioning to a new phase. How will the end of the Public Health Emergency effect you?

COVID-19 Countermeasures

Depending on the COVID-19 countermeasure you are trying to access and your type of insurance coverage (Medicare, Medicaid, private, none, etc.) you may see little change, higher costs, or more limited coverage when it comes to accessing vaccines, tests, and treatments. See below for a brief overview of expected changes:

Vaccines

- Covid vaccines will remain free to everyone regardless of insurance status until the current federal stockpile runs out.
- Once the federal stockpile of vaccines runs out, the cost will depend on the type and level of insurance that an individual has. Most people will continue to pay nothing for the vaccines. Those with private insurance will need to use in-network providers. Those on Medicare and Medicaid will still be able to access vaccines at no cost. Uninsured and underinsured children will be able to access vaccines through the Vaccines for Children program (VFC). Uninsured adults may be able to access free vaccines through the Adult Safety Net (AFN) program but there may be a limited supply of vaccines.

If you have any questions regarding the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and what it might mean for you, contact HCLHD epidemiologist Juli Barksdale, at 512-393-5534 or by email at juli.barksdale@co.hays.tx.us.

COVID CORNER

COVID-19 Countermeasures

Treatments

- Antivirals and other treatments that were purchased with federal funds will remain free for everyone regardless of insurance status until the current stockpile runs out.
- Once the federal stockpile of antiviral treatments runs out, most treatments will be subject to cost sharing requirements regardless of insurance coverage type (private, Medicare, Medicaid). Those without insurance will have to pay the full cost of the medication plus any physician and office fees.

Tests

- Private insurers will no longer be required to cover the cost of at-home tests. Medicare and Medicaid plans will vary in their coverage of at-home tests.
- If a test is ordered by a physician and provided in a medical facility, it will be covered by insurance but may be subject to cost-sharing.
- Uninsured individuals will have to pay the full cost of testing and testing-related services.

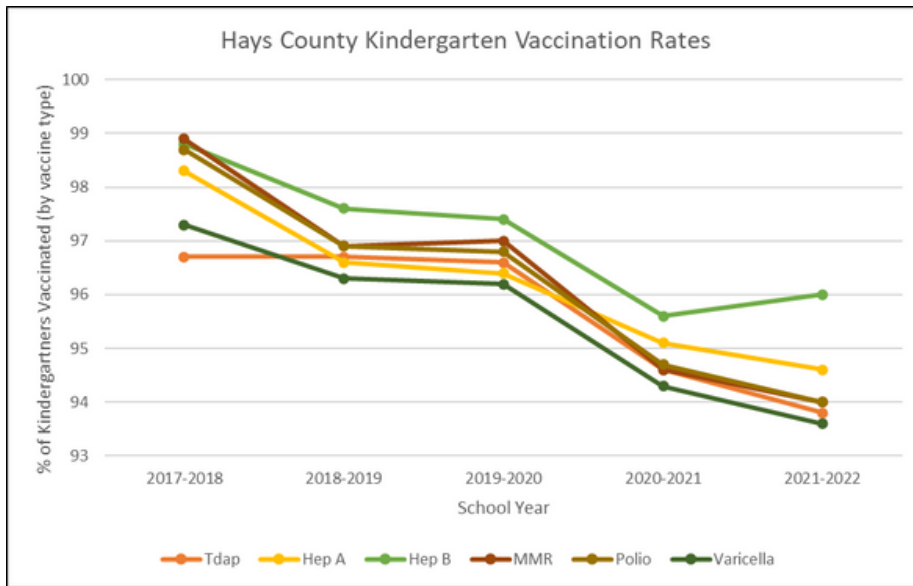
Another area that will be affected by the end of the Emergency Health Declaration is a change in the way that COVID-19 data is collected and reported. Laboratories will no longer be required to report negative test results. This will impact the ability to calculate test percent positivity. Hospitalization data will also change as some previously required metrics are being eliminated.

Expect to see changes to the county COVID dashboard as a result of this reduction in incoming data. Less comprehensive data will be collected from a variety of sources (rather than just medical facilities) and the focus will shift to monitoring COVID trends rather than capturing all cases.

EPI INSIGHTS

Childhood Vaccinations

The COVID-19 pandemic brought upheaval to many aspects of normal life. One area that saw an especially large disruption is **childhood vaccinations**. Many children fell behind on routine vaccinations due to delays in well-check visits, pandemic related barriers to care, and increasing misinformation surrounding vaccines. Hays County was not immune to these issues. Rates for routine vaccinations for kindergarteners in Hays County have **dropped by about four percentage points** over the past few years. (See chart).



Because of successful vaccination campaigns in the US over the past 50 years, most vaccine preventable diseases such as measles and polio are rarely seen here. Unfortunately, many of these diseases still circulate in other parts of the world and are only a plane ride away.

If enough people are unvaccinated, these diseases will have an opportunity to **reemerge and cause outbreaks** in the United States. Most parents understand the importance of routine childhood vaccination and make sure that their children are vaccinated. If your child has missed any of their recommended vaccines, schedule a visit with their healthcare provider so that they can “catch-up” on their vaccines **as soon as possible**. If you do not have a healthcare provider or do not have insurance, contact the Hays County Local Health Department for more information about how to find free and low-cost vaccines.

Right: HCLHD Health Equity and Community Engagement Program Manager Matthew Gonzales shares information about the Community Health Assessment at a Community Listening Session at Barnabas Connection in Wimberley.



Above: HCLHD Intern, Johana Fuentes, and ImmTrac2 Specialist, Elsira DeLeon, sharing health activity books and goodies at Farmer Fred's Garden Spring Carnival in San Marcos.

Above & Right: Winners of the HCLHD Public Health Essay Competition: Natalie Leal - San Marcos High School, Robert Farrell - Johnson High School, Owen Tippett - Hays High School, Ella Revill - Dripping Springs High School, Dorothy Pierre - Lehman High School, Emma Davenport - Wimberley High School.



Follow us on Facebook to stay updated!
Hays County Local Health Department

Saying farewell to a friend and colleague

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of our clinic manager, Margie Rodriguez, after 30 years of dedicated service to our department.

Margie has been an integral part of our team since she started with us. Throughout her tenure, she has provided outstanding leadership, guidance, and support to our staff and patients, earning the respect and admiration of everyone who has worked with her.

During her time with us, Margie has been instrumental in improving our clinic operations and ensuring that we provide the highest level of care to our patients. Her dedication and commitment to our mission have been unwavering, and we are deeply grateful for her contributions to our department.

While we are sad to see Margie go, we are also excited for her as she begins this new chapter in her life. We wish her all the best in her retirement and hope that she will continue to be a part of our Hays County Local Health Department family.

Please join us in congratulating Margie on her retirement and thanking her for her many years of service to our department.



Congratulations, Margie!

PROSPER HEALTH COVERAGE

Don't Lose Medicaid!

Everyone on Medicaid will need to renew in 2023.

COVID-19 put a hold on Medicaid renewals, but they're back!

Check to see when you need to renew Medicaid by visiting yourtexasbenefits.com or get help by contacting Foundation Communities, a Texas Health and Human Services-certified Community Partner Program.

People who no longer qualify for Medicaid and people who are currently uninsured also can learn what their options for affordable healthcare are with Foundation Communities' public health Navigator program.

To get in touch with Foundation Communities, call 512-381-4520 or text 737-209-6861.

DON'T LOSE MEDICAID
Respond and Update!

Update your information today.

Foundation Communities' Benefits Assistance program provides free application enrollment, and renewal assistance. Visit ProsperFinancialWellness.org or call **737-249-6394** to schedule an appointment.

Health Coverage
=
Good Health
+
Financial Security

Let's get you covered!
You may be able to enroll in a qualified health plan from the federal Health Insurance Marketplace. Foundation Communities can help you apply and connect you with programs and resources for other affordable health coverage options.

Schedule a **FREE** phone appointment
512-381-4520
ProsperHealthCoverage.org

FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES

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Attention Medicaid recipients:
Make sure you update your contact information. Visit YourTexasBenefits.com or call Foundation Communities at **737-249-6394** to update your information today!

FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES

TEXAS Health and Human Services

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Hays County Local Health Department Presents

Summer Health Fair

Free Admission

**June 10th
9am to 2pm**

Dripping Springs

Ranch Park & Event Center

1042 Event Center Dr, Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Free Services, Resources, and Entertainment

**Vision Screenings
STI/HIV Screenings
COVID-19 Vaccines
Community Resources**

**Crafts, Games, and Activities
Hays County Sheriff's Dept.
North Hays County
EMS & Fire Rescue**

Follow us on Facebook for further details at Hays County Local Health Department



Questions? Contact us at localhealth@co.hays.tx.us

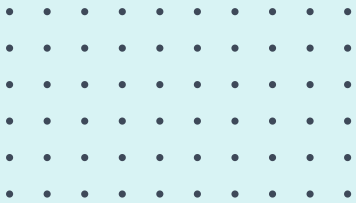
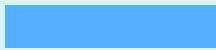


HAYS COUNTY
LOCAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENT



**Our
Office
is**

Moving
to a New Location



**101 Thermon Drive
San Marcos, TX
78666**



**TB and Indigent services will
continue at 401-A Broadway
San Marcos, TX 78666
until August 2023.**



**Follow us on Facebook to
stay up-to-date on our
move!**

**Contact Matthew Gonzales at
Matthew.Gonzales@co.hays.tx.us for more
information.**