

In This Issue

Omar Khan, MD, MHS¹ and Tim Gibbs, MPH²

1. Editor-in-Chief, Delaware Journal of Public Health; President, Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association; President & CEO, Delaware Health Sciences Alliance
2. Executive Director, Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association

A goal of this publication is to make things visible, and further, to explain them in a manner both scientific and accessible. To that end, we always include a lexicon of terms for the reader, as well as relevant resources for additional information and action. As we make things visible, we deepen our understanding and appreciation for the nuance of situations and solutions. At the heart of it, this is the core of public health.

In past issues we have helped to make more visible the lives of those living with substance use, those within the LGBTQ community, and this past fall, those who have lived the Black/African American experience. In this issue, we make visible another group – those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). As you will read in this issue, there are two major “tsunamis” facing us: our aging demographic and its unique public health challenges, and – the one many are not as aware of – the growing population of those with IDD.

Why is this second tsunami occurring? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one factor is much better early diagnosis of specific types of developmental disability.¹ It is further theorized that many children who would have failed to thrive in the past now can, due to medical advances. Finally, there are the social determinants of health, coupled with a growing population. The odds and the risk factors of the different factors compound each other, and the population of those with IDD increases.

We have one overarching goal for this issue: to encourage everyone to think of people with IDD as differently-abled; as full members of our community who deserve our compassion, our respect, and our support. Our guest editors for this issue are the President-Elect of the Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association – S. John Swanson, III, MD (himself a parent of an adult with IDD), and Charmaine Wright, MD, MPH, Director of the Center for Special Health Care Needs at ChristianaCare.

As always, we welcome your feedback, which you can provide at www.djph.org. In closing, we acknowledge the “elephant in the room:” we have now lived with, suffered and died from the COVID-19 pandemic for one full year. With vaccines approved from three pharmaceutical giants, there is more hope for the future with every dose given. We encourage you to do your part when the time comes, and get a vaccinated for yourself, for your loved ones, and for your community. Until then, mask up, wash your hands, and stay well!

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Increase in developmental disabilities among children in the United States. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/increase-in-developmental-disabilities.html>

Copyright (c) 2021 Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.