

In This Issue:

The Future of Academics and Research – Public Health Success Stories

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When we planned for this issue of the DJPH back in 2025, we thought that public health would be under fire, and a lot of programs—both federal and state wide—would be diminished, or even shuttered by this time. And there have been a lot of public health upsets recently.¹ Rising vaccine hesitancy driven by mis- and dis-information and declining childhood vaccination rates have led to resurgences in measles and whooping cough. North America and Canada have lost their measles elimination status, and the United States will likely follow soon. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) recommended (without any change to science-based recommendations) a new vaccine schedule, shifting several vaccines from the “recommended” category to the “shared decision-making” category, and removing the recommendation for a universal Hepatitis B vaccine dose at birth. Large changes to national public health agencies in the US have led to reductions in workforce and decreased data collection in critical areas such as avian influenza and food-borne illnesses. Meanwhile, global health has been critically affected: even during a period of record-high global conflict, the agencies charged with foreign aid and development (notably, USAID) have been shuttered, with thousands of jobs lost and hundreds of thousands for lives abroad at risk; a double whammy since the same groups delivered significant benefits worldwide for high dollar value.²

The good news is that public health has fought back (albeit with limited resources). Almost two hundred countries signed a global pandemic treaty after three years of negotiations and rewrites. There were only 39 cases of wild-type polio reported in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the two remaining country reservoirs of endemic polio. The CDC changes to vaccination recommendations were halted by the courts. And private companies like the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) have stepped up to collect the data the federal government has largely ignored.

The articles submitted for this issue echo the uplifting of public health successes. Our guest editor Jennifer Horney, PhD, has helped us curate an issue of feel-good public health work in Delaware, with submissions ranging from the newest nurse fellowship cohort in robotics to the 20 year celebration of the Delaware Healthy Mother & Infant Consortium. We hear from the State Health Improvement Plan, the Early Care and Education System, and how Health Literacy is emerging as a priority in Community Health Needs Assessments.

Public health is always engaging, interesting, and challenging. For an update on the latest thinking nationally, check out the Public Health State of the Union 2026, as presented by the American Public Health Association.³

As always, we look forward to your comments on this and every issue.

References

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