



A Year in Review

As we welcome a new year, we are pleased to share our January newsletter, dedicated to reflecting on the progress and accomplishments of the past twelve months. This Year in Review issue provides an overview at the programs, initiatives, and achievements that shaped the Academy's work in 2025. We are grateful for the collaboration, engagement, and support from our partners and community members, all of which have made these efforts possible.

Wishing you a healthy and successful New Year as we move forward with renewed purpose!

A Message From Our President



Dear Fellow Academy Members:

It has been an interesting and challenging year for public health in this country. I thought it would be appropriate to include a brief review (perhaps not brief enough) of salient issues in public health and how we have responded in Delaware and nationally. I want to also highlight the accomplishments of the Academy related to its ongoing mission:

To enhance the well-being of our community through education, the promotion of public health, research, and targeted investments in human capital and development through our student financial aid program.

We accomplish this mission through professional and lay education, advocacy efforts, partnerships with like-minded individuals and entities, and with guidance from national organizations, including the

American Public Health Association and the National Academy of Medicine.

Activities of the Academy

In terms of some of the core functions and programs of the Academy, I can't say it any better than Kate does in her Executive Director's reports: "All programs proceeding without issue." This includes, of course, the Mini Medical School, Student Financial Aid, the Immunization Coalition of Delaware, Delaware Health Force, and the Delaware Journal of Public Health.

- The Journal continues to put out several excellent issues a year, and we anticipate adding podcasts as a way of disseminating information in the very near future.
- We had a very successful Annual Meeting at the end of April, with our keynote speaker Dr. Said Ibrahim, Dean of Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, and with our yearly awards going to Dr. Anand Panwalker and Delaware State University.
- The Academy has been very involved with the DIMER program, and now Dr. Smith has a seat at the table of the Board of Directors.
- Under the leadership of Dr. Piper, we are making progress with finding homes for many of the Academy's archives.
- We have had several very successful conferences, including the PFAS meeting \ (developed in collaboration with DPH), Delaware Healthcare Workforce Summit (in which the Academy played a major role), the 2025 Stroke Summit, and the 2025 Immunization Summit.
- The Academy is continuing its important work in the healthcare workforce section with the Delaware Health Force program, made possible by the ARPA funding, which we anticipate will be exhausted in late 2026.

Many thanks to the staff of the Academy, as well as the board members who make all of these programs and activities so successful.

In the last couple of years, we have refocused some of our efforts on public health. The Public Health Advisory Council, under the leadership of Dr. Omar Khan and Ms. Peggy Geisler, has been re-energized and we look forward to their important input into public health issues in Delaware going forward.

As most of you are now aware, we underwent a rebranding process in 2025, leading to the new name of our organization, Delaware Academy of Medicine and Public Health, "The Academy" for short. This represents an important opportunity for us as well. In October, Kate sent a letter to all key Delaware elected and appointed officials outlining our emphasis on public health and inviting these individuals to consider the Academy as the go-to source for public health information and advocacy in the state. We have recently developed a number of formal and informal partnerships with various organizations including the Medical Society of Delaware, the Delaware Healthcare Commission, First State Health Leaders Alliance, Partnership for Healthy Communities (University of Delaware professor Dr. Jen Horney is an Academy Board member), as well as the Delaware Division of Public Health. And, of course, we are the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association.

New Public Health Challenges in 2025 and Going Forward

I don't want to get too political, but on a national level it is hard not to see the effects of the regressive policies of the current administration. Some of the executive orders and policy changes with implications for public health include, but are not limited to:

- HHS removal of thousands of websites and numerous federal databases with public health information deemed to be related to DEI, LGBTQ, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and health disparities;
- The establishment of the MAHA Commission and its policy agenda, which many in the field of public health consider a major threat and a step backwards (in particular, the May 2025 document regarding child health was very flawed and did not even address some of the key threats to children's health);
- The DOGE-instigated reduction in force resulting in the elimination of thousands of important positions across public health agencies
- Removal of the gun violence public health advisory, and rollback of gun safety measures; and



- The decidedly anti-vaccine positions of the HHS secretary resulting in confused messaging about COVID-19 vaccinations, with the intent of making the public afraid and less likely to get vaccinated; a complete revamp of the ACIP with most of the current membership having anti-vaccine backgrounds and making recommendations which are not scientifically based; and removing the recommendation for universal birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine in early December, which will result in untold numbers of cases of chronic and fatal hepatitis B in children. The secretary has also proposed new restrictive and unreasonable requirements for FDA approval of vaccines.
- The removal of the CDC director; there is still no director as of the end of 2025;
- A clawback of billions of dollars which had been previously appropriated for funding state and local health departments;
- Deactivation of pandemic response preparedness efforts, including for H5N1 influenza (bird flu); and
- Multiple actions taken regarding autism spectrum disorder, including implication of acetaminophen use during pregnancy as a cause, and rescinding the previous conclusion that vaccines do not cause autism.

What We Are Doing

The State of Delaware has taken proactive measures which should safeguard against some of the negative public health consequences of these federal actions. This includes joining the Northeastern States Public Health Coalition as well as the Governors' Public Health Alliance. There are also national initiatives that have been developed to provide good science-based health recommendations, including the Vaccinate Your Family initiative and CIDRAP (Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy), which has also stood up the Vaccine Integrity Program. At our recent 2025 Immunization Summit, we had the director of CIDRAP, Dr. Mike Osterholm, as our inspirational guest speaker. We also look to the excellent guidance from well-established organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Infectious Diseases Society of America for their science-based recommendations.

The Academy has put out position papers regarding issues such as public health disinformation and the recommendation for birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine. We anticipate becoming more involved with health care-related legislation in the state, and may be taking on lobbying in addition to other advocacy efforts. Kate and I will be attending the state's Legislative Summit in early January, in an effort to make contact with key lawmakers involved with public health legislation.

In closing, on a national level there are some public health victories to celebrate:

- While the U.S. is likely to lose its measles elimination status next year, the major outbreaks have largely been contained through vaccination and other public health efforts;
- Obesity rates have recently declined;
- Red flag gun laws have expanded to 22 states and D.C., including Delaware; and
- Lawsuits have been filed against HHS for unilateral changes to vaccine policy and cancellation of peer-reviewed health related research grants.

Happy New Year, Academy! I am looking forward to a productive 2026! Steve

Stephen C. Eppes, MD
President, Delaware Academy of Medicine & Public Health

Conferences & Events

In 2025, **the Academy** hosted six conferences and events, partnering with five organizations and associations across Delaware to advance education, collaboration, and

public health.

- **2025 Frank M. and Robert R. Hoopes Medical/Dental Lecture**
March 27, 2025 | In partnership with ChristianaCare and the Delaware State Dental Society
- **95th Annual Meeting**
April 30, 2025
- **PFAS: The Forever Chemical**
September 11, 2025 | In partnership with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control
- **2025 Delaware Healthcare Workforce Summit**
September 24, 2025 | In partnership with Delaware Health and Social Services, Office of Healthcare Provider Resources
- **2025 Immunization Summit: “Navigating Vaccine Recommendations in the Current Political Climate”**
December 18, 2025 | In partnership with the Delaware Division of Public Health

Delaware Journal of Public Health

In 2025, the **Delaware Journal of Public Health** published issues highlighting emerging public health topics, sharing research and best practices, and elevating voices from experts and community partners across Delaware.

- **Global Health in an Interconnected World** | April 2025
- **LGBTQ+ Health** | July 2025
- **Substance Use, Abuse, Treatment, and Recovery** | September 2025
- **Nutrition and Malnutrition as a Determinant of Health** | November 2025

Delaware Health Force

The **Delaware Health Force** program continues to mature with the addition of employment and recruiting data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, our ongoing collaboration with the Delaware Health Information Network, and new contracts with the Office of Healthcare Provider Resources and the Delaware Healthcare Commission.

- Advocated for **Senate Bill 122**, which will empower the Division of Professional Regulation to ask additional workforce-related questions as a part of license awards and renewals
 - Research into Delaware dental education and survey of Delaware dentists
 - Creation and launching of a new Community Health Worker Survey instrument
 - Application of NUCC Taxonomy coding values to all license types
 - Development of mapping tools for Health Care Provider Shortage Areas
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Delaware Mini Medical School

This year, the Academy offered five webinar series, reaching over a thousand students through our fully online **Mini Medical School program** — making participation accessible to learners statewide and beyond.

- **Early Spring 2025** in partnership with Nemours
419 participants
- **Late Spring 2025** in partnership with ChristianaCare
433 participants
- **Summer 2025 Special Series** in partnership with Nemours, TidalHealth, Beebe Healthcare, Bayhealth, and ChristianaCare
298 participants
- **Early Fall 2025** in partnership with Bayhealth
310 participants
- **Late Fall 2025** in partnership with Beebe Healthcare
160 participants

Delaware Youth Medical Academy

In 2025, the **Delaware Youth Medical Academy** participated in 11 skills-building events, giving students hands-on opportunities to explore healthcare careers, develop confidence, and connect with healthcare professionals across the state.

- **Physical Exam Workshop (JeffMentors | In-person)**
Hands-on introduction to cardiovascular, pulmonary, and neurological exams, including blood pressure, reflexes, and heart/lung sounds.
- **Clinical Reasoning Workshop (JeffMentors | Virtual)**
Students practiced history-taking and developed differential diagnoses through a mock standardized patient encounter.
- **Case-Based Learning (JeffMentors | Virtual)**
Small-group case discussions focused on diagnostics, imaging, labs, and treatment planning.
- **Student Summer Skills Sessions (ChristianaCare & Delaware Health Sciences Alliance | In-person)**
Activities included CPR practice, an introduction to radiology, suture and intubation demonstrations, a “Lunch & Listen” panel with healthcare professionals, and dedicated time for mentoring and networking.
- **Seizure First Aid Certification (Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware | In-person)**
Students learned seizure recognition and response and earned Seizure First Aid certification.
- **Suturing & Hospital Tour (Nemours Children’s Hospital | In-person)**
Hands-on suturing practice with residents and interns, plus an optional hospital tour.

- **Intro to Public Health (The Academy | Virtual)**
Students explored public health history and careers through an interactive “Disease Detective” activity.
- **Well-Child Visits (Nemours Community Health | Virtual)**
A myth-busting session on child health, preventive care, and health literacy.
- **Tobacco Use & Addiction (Delaware Quitline | In-person)**
Explored addiction science, vaping/smoking risks, and strategies to support quitting.
- **Preparing for Undergrad & Medical School (JeffMentors | Virtual)**
Guidance on coursework, prerequisites, volunteer experiences, research, leadership, and building a competitive application.

Additional Resources

Delaware Health and Social Services - [Public Health Information Portal](#)
Trust for America’s Health: Wellness and Prevention Digest - [Subscribe](#)

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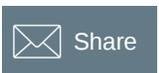
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