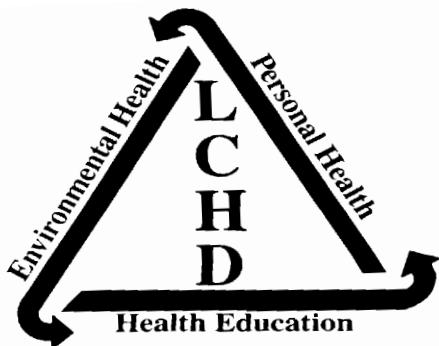


# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: January 3, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **"January is National Radon Action Month"**

**Ottawa, IL** – The LaSalle County Health Department is encouraging residents to test the radon level in their home. Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in most soil. As radon travels through the soil, it can easily move through small spaces in a foundation and enter a building, where it becomes trapped and accumulates in the air.

Radon has no taste, smell, or color. Testing is the only way to find out if there is a dangerous level of radon in your home. The best time to test for radon is during cold weather when windows and doors are closed.

Most radon exposures occur in the home. When people breathe in radon, it damages the lungs, which can cause lung cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. Radon can be found throughout Illinois and levels can vary from one home to another, even in the same neighborhood. It's estimated more than 1,160 people in Illinois develop radon-related lung cancer each year according to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established the radon action level at 4 picocuries per liter of air (4 pCi/L). At or above this level, it is recommended that corrective measures be taken to reduce indoor radon levels. Radon mitigation is the only effective way to reduce levels and decrease the risk of lung cancer. The most common radon reduction system involves the installation of a vent pipe and fan, which draws air from underneath a building and displaces it outside. The cost of a system varies depending on the reduction method chosen and building size. Radon is a preventable health threat through testing and mitigation.

According to a study conducted by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), 41 percent of homes tested for radon in Illinois had levels higher than the action level of 4.0 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L). In addition, per the IEMA Public Radon Dashboard, the average radon measurement in LaSalle County is 7/pCi/L. "Testing for radon is simple and inexpensive, and it's the only way to know if your family is at risk. Testing takes 3-7 days. Tests should be done

on the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. Tests should not be done in kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, or utility rooms. A short-term test is very easy to use and is best completed during the winter months, when windows and doors are generally closed.” said Jennie Osborn, Director of Environmental Health at LaSalle County Health Department. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) recommends you test your home for radon every two years.

In 2023, LaSalle County Health Department gave out 249 test kits. One hundred fifty-three (153) of those test kits have been submitted for analysis, for a 61.4% usage rate. One hundred thirty-three (133) have produced valid results, with eighty-one (81) having a result above 4.0pCi/L. The average result of the kits analyzed in 2023 is 7.57 pCi/L.

LaSalle County Health Department, through a grant from the IEMA, has free radon test kits available to residents of LaSalle County. Test kits can be picked up at the health department during regular business hours (Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at 717 E. Etna Road in Ottawa. A staff member will assist you with the instructions on using the test kit, as well as provide information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation. Additionally, should your radon test results show a high level of radon in your home, the health department can provide you with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up. Call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366, for more information on radon test kits.

#### **Additional Resources:**

Visit <https://www.radon.com/instructions/> to view a testing kit instructional video.

IEMA Public Radon Dashboard

<https://ilema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/93e4f4824a4046b48d1f35b7226069a8>

For additional information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/radon>.

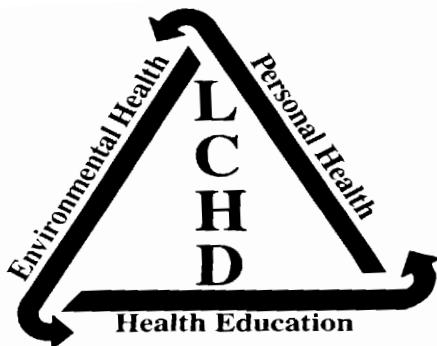
# # #

<http://www.facebook.com/LaSalleCountyHealth>

<http://www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth>

<http://www.lasallecountyil.gov/>

# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: January 4, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex. 74315)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

## **"January is Cervical Cancer Month"**

OTTAWA, IL—In recognition of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, the LaSalle County Health Department is urging female residents to get screened for Cervical Cancer. We encourage women over the age of 21 to be tested for cervical cancer. The goal is to eradicate cervical cancer in Illinois by women taking charge and getting screened. During 2023 an estimated 13,960 women in the United States were diagnosed with cervical cancer, according to the State of Illinois. Cervical cancer, when caught early, is nearly 100 percent curable.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) reports that between 60 and 80 percent of American women with newly diagnosed invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap Smear in the last five years and /or may have never had one. Cervical Cancer is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide and one of the most preventable and treatable when detected early. In addition to increasing awareness of cervical cancer there are some preventative steps that women can take. Studies have shown, regular exercise, a healthy diet, routine screenings and getting the cervical cancer vaccine to help prevent Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), decreases the risk for cervical cancer. Licensed HPV vaccines for females and males are available. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 11 or 12 year old girls and boys begin the HPV vaccine series. (Vaccination can begin at age 9.) The vaccination series must be completed by age 45. HPV vaccination is offered at LaSalle County Health Department by appointment and those who are interested in vaccination or want more information can call the Health Department.

The LaSalle County Health Department has an Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) available which can pay for Pap Smear tests for LaSalle or Grundy County women, ages 21-64 who have no insurance or who have high deductibles regardless of income. We invite and encourage anyone who needs more information on cervical cancer and the importance of Pap Smear tests, the IBCCP program, or the cervical cancer vaccines to contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov)



# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: January 30, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (#74314) or Jenny Barrie (#74315)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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**OTTAWA, IL** – National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 2, 2024. Together, we can wear red to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and help save lives. Why? Because losing even one woman to cardiovascular disease is too many.

February is American Heart Month, a month to spread awareness about the importance of heart health. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in Illinois, and the U.S. While heart disease has traditionally been seen as a “man’s disease” one in three women dies of heart disease each year. Women are also more likely than men to exhibit signs of heart attack such as shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting or back and jaw pain. Heart attacks are life and death emergencies where every second counts so we encourage people to know their risks. Factors that may increase your chances of getting heart disease include:

- High Blood Cholesterol
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- Being Overweight
- Family history of early heart disease
- Age (55 or older for women)
- Being physically inactive
- Smoking

Some steps you can take to decrease your risks of heart disease is to know your numbers when it comes to cholesterol and blood pressure. In addition, controlling your weight, being physically active and decreasing your stress level can also have added benefits.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, do not wait before calling for help. Call 911 or get to the hospital right away if you experience any of the following.

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Sudden dizziness or lightheadedness
- Unusual upper body pain (arms, back, jaw)
- Skipped heartbeats
- Unusual or unexplained fatigue

For more information about heart disease, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov).

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## MEDIA RELEASE

Date: March 5, 2024

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department  
OSF HealthCare

Contact: Jenny Barrie | LaSalle County Health Department | (815) 433-3366  
Leslie Dougherty | LaSalle County Health Department | (815) 433-3366  
JoEllyn Gahan | OSF HealthCare | (815) 539-1659

### For Immediate Release

#### Healthier LaSalle County Initiative

The LaSalle County Health Department and OSF HealthCare are pleased to announce a new initiative called Healthier LaSalle County. Healthier LaSalle County (HLC) is a county-wide effort with representation from a variety of health and social service organizations who have come together to implement and promote activities to help improve the health and wellness of LaSalle County. Over the last year, the members of HLC have been collaborating on a regular basis and have focused on three priority areas:

- Healthy Behaviors (Activity and Nutrition/Health Eating)
- Behavioral Health (Mental Health and Substance Use)
- Healthy Aging

The HLC initiative has been fortunate to have representation from the following organizations and agencies who are willing to work together to create awareness of activities in our area that are available to help us find balance in our everyday lives – physically, mentally, and socially. During this time, committee and action team members have developed a mission and vision statement, worked to create a webpage, and held a logo contest.

Alternatives for the Older Adult/Bridges Community Center	North Central Area Transit (NCAT)
Alzheimer's Association	North Central Behavioral Health Systems
Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (BEST)	Oglesby Public Library
Community Health Partnership of Illinois (Mendota)	OSF HealthCare
Habitat for Humanity	Ottawa YMCA
Housing Authority of LaSalle County (HALC)	Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce
Illinois Valley Community College	Safe Journeys
Illinois Valley PAD Shelter	Streator Salvation Army
Illinois Valley YMCA	Streator Family YMCA
LaSalle County Health Department	The Perfectly Flawed Foundation
LaSalle County 708 Mental Health Board	Tri-County Opportunities Council
LaSalle County Regional Office of Education	University of Illinois Extension – Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, and Putnam Counties
LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission	United Way of Eastern LaSalle County
Mendota YMCA	Voluntary Action Center of Northern Illinois

In January, HLC reviewed close to a dozen logo entries submitted by 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Committee members were looking for a logo that would identify the initiative, the priority areas, and help the collaboration move forward in promoting the healthy event and activities that can be found throughout LaSalle County. Healthier LaSalle County would like to thank and commend Nate Kaminski, a Senior at Ottawa High School, for designing our logo (see attached pictures).

The Healthier LaSalle County webpage was developed with the goal of creating a centralized location for all information related to the county-wide collaborative effort. Currently, on the webpage, there are easy to find links/resources to the U of I Extension's Walking Guide, Mental Health and Substance Misuse Disorder Resources -developed by the 708 Mental Health Board, and the Find Food IL Community Food map. Additionally, a calendar is available for agencies and organizations to submit events that focus on the health and well-being of people living in LaSalle County. For more information, <https://www.lasallecountyil.gov/740/Healthier-LaSalle-County>.

In conclusion, Healthier LaSalle County expects to continue to grow and develop in 2024. The initiative welcomes the opportunity to work with communities in LaSalle County to help showcase the healthy activities and opportunities that are right outside our door and build a Healthier LaSalle County!

# # #

Attachment 1: Healthier LaSalle County logo

Attachment 2: Logo Contest Winner





**Healthier  
LaSalle  
County**

## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: March 28, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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### **"LaSalle County Health Department Recognizes National Public Health Week"**

**OTTAWA, IL** - During the first full week of April each year, the American Public Health Association (APHA) brings together communities across the US to observe National Public Health Week. National Public Health Week, with the theme "Protecting, Connecting and Thriving: We Are All Public Health," will be observed April 1-7, 2024. Making communities safe and healthy is public health's top priority. Public Health serves as an invisible shield of protection to promote and protect the health of people in the communities where they live, learn, work, and play for generations to come. The APHA states "when we all come together to support public health, all of us — individuals, families, communities and the public health field — can achieve the goals of public health."

As a reminder, here are a few of the programs and services the Health Department offers on a regular basis. Citizens are encouraged to call and speak with a staff member for additional information and questions.

- Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) – Do you qualify for a free mammogram and pap smear? Our IBCCP staff are available to answer eligibility questions and enroll qualified women.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) - The mission of the LaSalle County WIC program is to improve the health status of women, infants, and children; to reduce the incidence of infant mortality, premature births and low birth weights; and to aid in the development of children. This program serves income eligible pregnant, post-partum, breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five years. The WIC program provides health screening, nutrition education and counseling, and supplemental foods including formula for infants.
- Family Case Management Program (FCM) provides outreach, comprehensive case management, and support services to prenatal women, infants and children. The primary objective of the program is to reduce infant mortality by ensuring early and consistent prenatal care for women throughout their pregnancy. Education on a healthy pregnancy is ongoing and individually structured to meet the needs of the client. After the baby is born, FCM staff assure that the infants and children are receiving periodic well baby/child check-ups and immunizations.
- The Blood Pressure Monitoring Program is open to anyone wants their blood pressure taken and is followed up with education on control measures including nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation

**-more-**

and prescription medications. The program operates on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm.

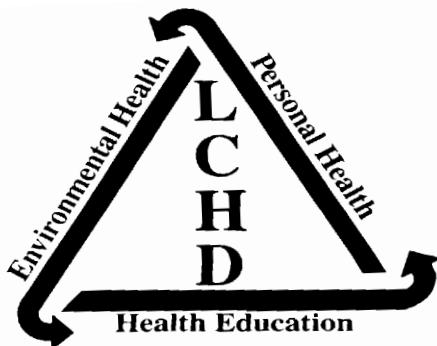
- Free HIV tests and Hepatitis C Screening (finger stick test) – If you feel you should be tested or have questions regarding your risk factors, our communicable disease nurse is available to answer questions in a confidential setting.
- Low-cost childhood and adult immunizations - Please call the Health Department to schedule an appointment.
- Flu, RSV, and COVID-19 Vaccinations – are available at the Health Department on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Free Radon Test Kits – The Health Department, through a grant from the IEMA, has free radon test kits available to residents of LaSalle County. Test kits can be picked up at the health department during regular business hours (Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at 717 E. Etna Road in Ottawa. A staff member will assist you with the instructions on using the test kit, as well as provide information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation. Additionally, should your radon test results show a high level of radon in your home, the health department can provide you with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up.
- Free Larvicide to Property Owners – The Health Department, through a grant, offers larvicide to property owners looking to reduce mosquito breeding sites. With West Nile virus season right around the corner, property owners are encouraged to pick up a package of NATULAR® DT. NATULAR® DT, is a mosquito larvicide that controls larvae of mosquitoes for up to 60 days. Manufactured by Clarke, Natular® DT is an easy-to-use, bi-layer tablet that prevents mosquito breeding in standing water sites around yards. The larvicide can be picked up at the Health Department (717 Etna Rd. Ottawa – 8:00 a.m.-4:30p.m.). Each package contains 12 tablets. At this time, **supplies are limited to one per household.**

The LaSalle County Health Department will also utilize social media to help increase awareness of public health issues and National Public Health Week during the month of April. The Health Department's Facebook page will be updated frequently with posts that offer tips on a variety of public health issues and also highlight some of the programs available at the Health Department. For additional information on programs and services offered, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department's website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov).

# # #



# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: April 29, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **“Kidney Screenings available in LaSalle County”**

**Ottawa, IL** - The LaSalle County Health Department in collaboration with the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois and in partnership with Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) will be offering FREE Kidney and Diabetic screenings. The screenings will be offered at IVCC located at - 815 N. Orlando Smith Street, Oglesby. They will be held on Thursday, May 23, 2024 from 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

One in three Americans are at risk for kidney disease. This screening will provide results for blood pressure, blood sugar, body mass index (BMI), urinalysis, and a blood draw (if necessary). At the screening you will receive your results from a healthcare professional.

Those wishing to be screened should go register at <https://mobilescreening.nkfi.org/preregistration> and complete your questionnaire prior to the screening.

You must be 18 years or older to register. Fasting is not required but they will require a urine sample. For more information regarding the screening, contact the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois at (312) 321-1500 or [www.nkfi.org](http://www.nkfi.org).

For any additional information please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov).

# # #



-More-

# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 2, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## "May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month"

**OTTAWA** – In observance of Lyme Disease Awareness month and the warmer weather our area has been experiencing, it's important to take precautions against tick bites and the illnesses they can carry. Illnesses like Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme disease, Tularemia, and Ehrlichiosis can cause mild symptoms or severe infections. In LaSalle County, Lyme disease is the tick-related illness seen most commonly. There were 14 cases of Lyme disease confirmed in the county in 2023.

YEAR	NUMBER OF HUMAN CASES
2018	4
2019	8
2020	5
2021	2
2022	4
2023	14

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. The risk of exposure to ticks is greatest in the woods and in the edge area between lawns and woods; however, ticks can also be carried by animals onto lawns and gardens and into houses by pets. Campers, hikers, outdoor workers, and others may be exposed to infected ticks in wooded, brushy, and grassy places. People who spend time in heavily wooded areas where infected ticks are common are at higher risk for exposure.

"People should conduct a thorough tick-check for themselves, their children and their pets after spending time in areas where ticks could be found. Removing ticks within a 24-hour period reduces the risk of potential disease transmission. Wear closed-toed shoes and light-colored clothing so you can see ticks on your clothing, additionally apply an EPA-registered insect repellent when spending time outdoors. Talk to your doctor if you have been bitten by a tick and experience fever, chills, muscle and joint aches, or a rash," says Jennifer Osborn, Director of Environmental Health at LaSalle County Health Department.

Simple tips to avoid tick exposure include:

- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to find. Tuck long pants into socks and boots.
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing 20% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus according to label directions.
- Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and sleeping tents. Or look for clothing pre-treated with permethrin.
- Walk in the center of trails. Avoid wooded, bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Conduct full-body tick checks on family members (underarms, ears, belly button, behind knees, between legs, waist, hair and scalp) every two to three hours. Also check any gear or pets taken on outings.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes) to kill ticks.
- Bathe or shower within two hours after coming indoors.
- If you find a tick on yourself, it is often helpful to keep the tick for species identification. Place the tick in rubbing alcohol or in a sealed bag/container to bring to your healthcare provider or local health department for submission to IDPH. A submission form can be found on the [IDPH website](#).

If you find a tick attached to your skin, there's no need to panic. Remove the tick as soon as possible to reduce your chances of getting an infection from the tick bite. The CDC recommends the following steps to remove a tick:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove the tick. Avoid twisting or jerking. If the mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days.  
Don't use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or a hot match to make the tick detach.
3. Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

If you become ill with a fever and/or rash after being in an area where ticks may be, please contact your health care provider. The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses can include fever, chills, aches, pains, and rash (not in all cases). Early recognition and treatment of the infection decreases the risk of serious complications.

For additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit their website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov). Also, please visit the Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) interactive tick surveillance map created by their Vector Control staff. The map shows what ticks have been identified in Illinois by county, in addition to the diseases they were tested for and number of positive results.

<https://idph.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=976061db733441eb977ef5cf2facd5c4>



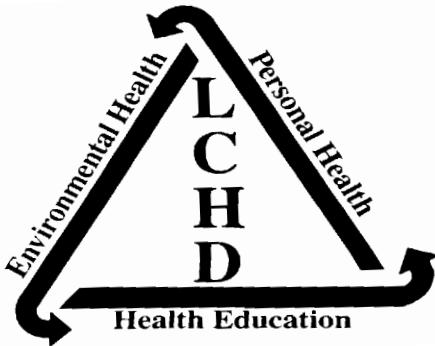
[www.facebook.com/LaSalleCountyHealth](http://www.facebook.com/LaSalleCountyHealth)

# # #



[www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth](http://www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth)

# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 6, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **"Health Department Begins Dead Bird Surveillance"**

**Ottawa, IL**—The LaSalle County Health Department has begun collecting dead crows, blue jays, and robins and will continue this process until October 15, 2024. Dead birds are important sentinels for early detection of West Nile virus activity. West Nile virus generally appears in birds and mosquitoes before it is transmitted to humans. Over the past twenty years, West Nile virus activity has been documented throughout LaSalle County. If you find a dead bird, please contact the Health Department's Environmental Health Division at 815-433-3366. Below are the criteria the Health Department uses to determine if a bird is eligible to submit for testing:

1. The bird is dead and the carcass is in good condition. Birds should be dead for less than 48 hours prior to collection, and have not started decomposing (no strong odor, no bloating, no maggots, eyes are not deflated or dried).
2. The bird has no obvious cause of death. Birds with obvious injuries such as wounds or missing parts should not be submitted for testing. Crushed carcasses and birds found along roadways are not acceptable.
3. The bird must be one that is acceptable for testing. At this time the Health Department is **only** collecting **crows, blue jays, and robins**. To help identify the type of bird, please visit <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/dead-bird-collection> for bird identification information.

As in past years, Health Department staff are getting ready to begin testing mosquitoes for West Nile virus. The mosquito collection and testing equipment was purchased with grant money. The Health Department also utilizes grant money to purchase a large quantity of mosquito larvicide, which is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites. The larvicide will be distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

Additionally, the Health Department, through a grant, offers larvicide to property owners looking to reduce mosquito breeding sites. Property owners are encouraged to pick up a package of NATULAR® DT. NATULAR® DT, is a mosquito larvicide that controls larvae of mosquitoes for up to 60 days. Manufactured by Clarke, Natular® DT is an easy-to-use, bi-layer tablet that prevents mosquito breeding in standing water sites around yards. The larvicide can be picked up at the Health Department (717 Etna Rd. Ottawa –8:00 a.m.–4:30p.m.). Each package contains 12 tablets. At this time, **supplies are limited to one per household**.

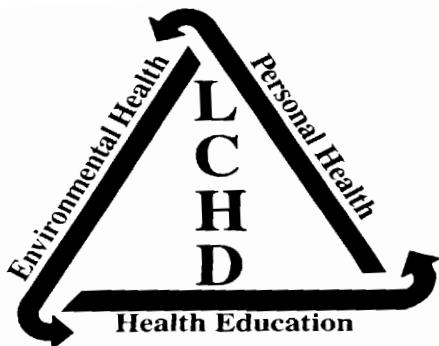
For additional information on West Nile virus, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov).

# # #



[www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth](http://www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth)

# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 24, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **“Bird Tests Positive for West Nile virus”**

**Ottawa, IL** – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that a robin from Somonauk tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird was collected on May 15, 2024, and was tested by the University of Illinois Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (U of I VDL). This is the first documented West Nile virus activity in LaSalle County this year.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a Culex mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov) under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

# # #

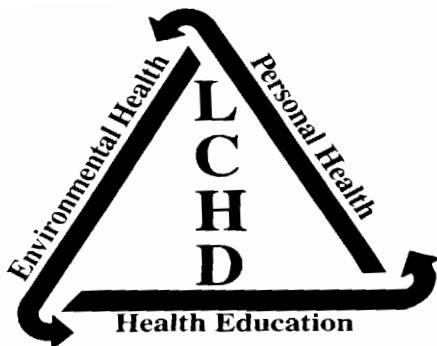


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# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: June 20, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 4314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 4315)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **"NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY"**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS**, contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366. Ottawa, IL – June 27 is National HIV Testing Day, an annual occasion to encourage people to get an HIV test. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care. People at higher risk should get tested more often. The goal of the campaign is to identify people who don't know they are HIV positive so they can access treatment. LaSalle County Health Department offers free rapid HIV finger stick tests and encourage interested individuals to come on June 27th between 9:00 am – 3:00pm. Appointments are strongly recommended to ensure adequate staffing. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), currently almost 40 percent of people with HIV are not diagnosed until they already have developed AIDS. That can be up to 10 years after they have become infected with HIV. In the United States, nearly 1.2 million people are living with HIV, and about 13 percent of them don't know it and need testing.

While we have made tremendous strides in treating HIV disease and related infections, those advances mean little to someone who doesn't know they are infected. If you have ever had unprotected sex with someone who uses injectable drugs, if you have ever shared needles, if you are a man who has ever had sex with another man, or if you have other factors that put you at risk for HIV infection, you should consider getting an HIV test. Today more tools than ever are available to prevent HIV. In addition to limiting your number of sexual partners, never sharing needles and using condoms correctly and consistently, you can reduce your risk.

To learn more information about HIV, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366. You can also access our website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov), or like us on Facebook/Twitter.

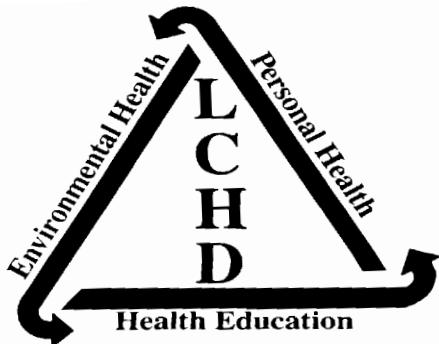


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# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 9, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext.74314)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext.74315)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## “Illinois Breastfeeding Month”

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL— The State of Illinois recognizes August as Breastfeeding Promotion Month. The 2024 theme is “Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All.” bringing focus to breastfeeding and working parents and how individuals and organizations can protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the work environment. LaSalle County Health Department along with medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists support and encourage all new mothers to embrace breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding for the first year of life. Illinois’ Breastfeeding initiative helps focus on the lifelong benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and infant. Research is clear that breastfeeding is the optimal nutrition and the perfect life-sustaining food for babies. Breastfeeding provides both nutritional and non-nutritional benefits to the infant and mother.

Breast milk is the basic foundation for infant nutrition for the first year of life. It also provides many benefits to the mother as well by helping to protect against breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and weak bones later in life. Another benefit worth mentioning is that it also helps the mother get to her pre-pregnancy shape faster.

Breastfeeding also allows you and your baby to get closer- physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger. All the while you will be helping to protect your baby from medical conditions from mild to severe, such as ear infections, gastro-intestinal problems, to childhood cancers and many other conditions. According to the AAP breastfeeding is also associated with a reduction in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies are born expecting to breastfeed! However, there is a “learning curve”

-MORE-

for mother and baby as they initiate breastfeeding. This is a key opportunity for friends and family to provide support to the new mom. Expert professional support and education is also available if needed.

Practice the ABC's of Breastfeeding.

- A – Awareness to when your baby is showing signs of needing to feed and responding to those cues.
- B – Be patient and allow your baby to guide you on the journey in the early days of breastfeeding. Unlike formula feeding which is typically more scheduled, breastfeeding is driven by the baby's demand.
- C – Comfort. The more comfortable and relaxed the mom is, the more enjoyable feedings will be.

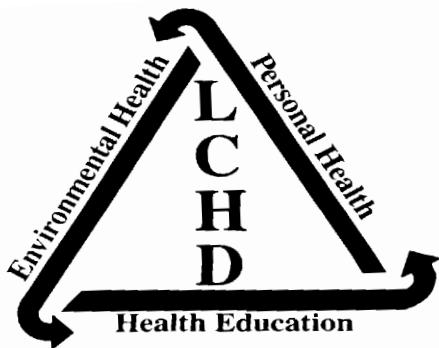
In addition there are things that Fathers can do to support breastfeeding. They can provide support to the mother and make sure she feels comfortable. Encourage her to breastfeed. Learn about breastfeeding and how it works. Learn what the hunger cues of the baby are. Attend breastfeeding classes. Help with other tasks around the house, and bond with the baby when they are not being breastfed.

Breastfeeding for any amount of time benefits both moms and babies. We congratulate all breastfeeding moms on making this choice! For more information on breastfeeding you can contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366.

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# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 4, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## “30<sup>th</sup> Annual Food Service Seminar”

**Ottawa, IL** – The LaSalle County Health Department will be sponsoring their Thirtieth Annual Food Service Seminar on September 23, 2024. The seminar will be held at Senica’s Oak Ridge, Rt. 6, LaSalle. Everyone is welcome to attend. Registration is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m. The day will consist of speakers from Zink Foodservice, Bell Laboratories, Inc., Edgar County Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Streator Fire Department. They will provide information on food contact surfaces, pest control, cultivating relationships between regulators and rural food producers, IDPH program updates, and fire safety.

September is National Food Safety Education Month. It provides an opportunity to raise awareness about steps that can be taken to prevent food poisoning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each year roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Food safety is an important public health priority. Foodborne illness is a common and costly problem; however, it is preventable. National public health surveillance data provides some insight into the causes of foodborne illness, types of implicated foods, and where foodborne outbreaks occur. This information is routinely evaluated by local health departments in an effort to implement food safety strategies to prevent and control foodborne illness

within our community.

Per CDC guidelines, as you prepare and handle food, follow these four steps to help prevent foodborne illness (also called food poisoning):

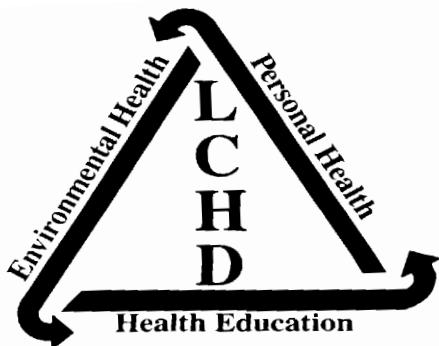
- Clean: Wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often when you cook.
- Separate: Raw meat, turkey, chicken, seafood, and eggs can spread germs. Separate them from cooked food and fresh produce.
- Cook: Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to an internal temperature that kills germs.
- Chill: Refrigerate perishable foods (foods likely to spoil or go bad quickly) and leftovers within 2 hours, or within 1 hour if the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F (like a hot car or summer picnic).

For more information about National Food Safety Education Month, visit the CDC website at [https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/education-month.html](https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/education-month.html). To pre-register for the food service seminar, please call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366 or visit [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov).

# # #



# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 10, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **"Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus"**

**Ottawa, IL** – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Marseilles tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected late last week and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. This is the second documented West Nile virus activity in LaSalle County this year. In May, a robin collected from Somonauk tested positive for the virus.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a Culex mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov) under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

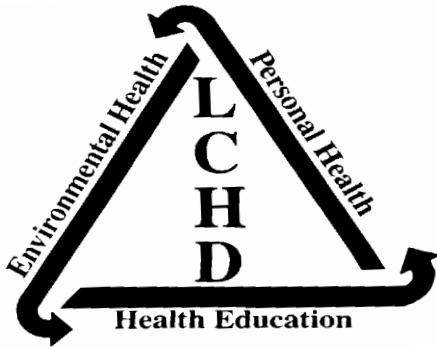
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## MEDIA RELEASE

Date: September 16, 2024

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366

**For Immediate Release**

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### **“LaSalle County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) – Volunteer Recruitment”**

**Ottawa, IL** - Looking for a way to become more involved and give back to your community? In note of September being Emergency Preparedness Month, learn more about the LaSalle County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC is a national network of volunteers who help make their communities stronger and healthier during disasters, and every day. MRC programs are organized into community-based units that work to improve local emergency response capabilities, reduce potential public health risk/vulnerabilities, and build community preparedness and resilience.

Do MRC volunteers need to have a medical or public health background? No, the specific role a volunteer plays will depend on their background, interests, skills, as well as the needs of the MRC unit and community. A well-balanced MRC unit will include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds who wish to donate their time and expertise. MRC volunteers regularly contribute to community preparedness (ex. Naloxone training and community vaccination clinics) while also preparing to respond to natural disasters, emergencies, and disease outbreaks. MRC volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources.

Local health, safety, and preparedness begins with you. For more information about the MRC and becoming a volunteer, please contact Monica Strzalkowski at the LaSalle County Health Department. Monica can be reached at 815-433-3366 or [mstrzalkowski@lasallecountyil.gov](mailto:mstrzalkowski@lasallecountyil.gov).

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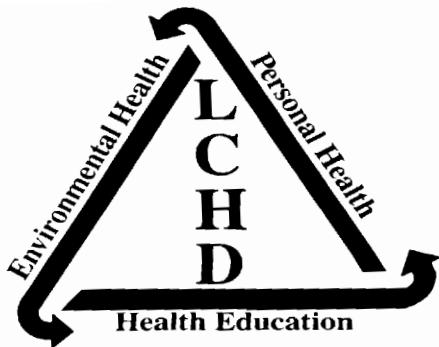
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## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 23, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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### “Flu Vaccination Clinics Scheduled – No Appointment Needed”

**Ottawa, IL** - The LaSalle County Health Department is offering flu vaccination clinics. These clinics are open to the public and no appointment is necessary. Flu vaccines will be available:

- Tuesday, September 24, 2024 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 9, 2024 1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 22, 2024 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

The Health Department is located at 717 Etna Rd., Ottawa.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine and Influenza HD (High Dose) Vaccine for persons 65 and older are available, in addition to VFC (Vaccines for Children) Flu vaccine is available.

All LaSalle County Health Department influenza vaccines are preservative free. The fee for the seasonal flu shot will be \$25. The fee for influenza High Dose will be \$70.

We offer insurance billing or cash payment. **You must have your insurance card and a Photo ID with you.** No Doctor's order is required. Children under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Pneumonia and RSV vaccines are available by appointment only at the Health Department and will not be offered at the flu clinics.

To lessen your chances of developing the flu, adults and children need to practice good hygiene measures. Teach the importance of covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and educate children about hand to mucous membrane transmission. One of the best ways to protect yourself and your children is through frequent and thorough hand washing. People who are exhibiting “flu-like” symptoms should stay home from work, out of childcare and school to minimize transmission.

Remember the 3 C's: clean, cover, and contain:

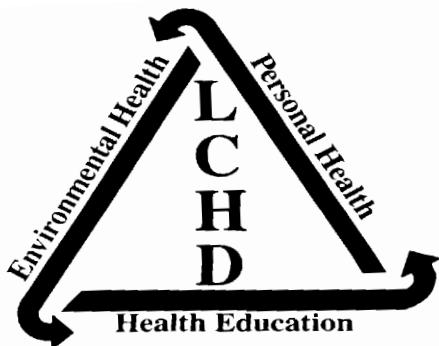
- **Clean** –frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Cover** –cover your cough and sneeze.
- **Contain** –contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

For additional information please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecountyil.gov](http://www.lasallecountyil.gov).

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## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: October 1, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex 74315)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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“October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month”

OTTAWA, IL – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women other than skin cancer, and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women. The good news is that most women can survive breast cancer if it is found and treated early.

A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. Low-income women and women with no insurance die from breast and cervical cancer more often than other women. These high mortality rates are attributed in part to the fact that these women generally do not receive regular mammograms and Pap smears. As a result, cancers are diagnosed at later stages when it is more difficult to treat and the chances for survival are less.

LaSalle County Health Department, through our Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) grant, can pay for mammograms and Pap smears for women who qualify. You may qualify if you are a LaSalle or Grundy County resident between the ages of 21-64 for breast and cervical cancer screenings. Through IBCCP, LaSalle County Health Department is working to increase breast and cervical cancer awareness and break that cycle of late-stage treatment. IBCCP provides FREE mammograms and Pap smears for those women who qualify and assistance with paying their deductible for those who are insured. Take advantage of this opportunity for early detection. You are important to your family.

Call (815) 433-3366 for further information on how to receive a free mammogram and Pap test.

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## Proclamation

WHEREAS, 2024 marks the 39th anniversary of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a season to educate women about breast cancer and the importance of early detection through mammography; and,

WHEREAS, breast cancer is one of the most common cancers diagnosed in women and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women; and,

WHEREAS, in the United States, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime and a projected 310,720 new cases will be diagnosed in women across the United States in 2024 including 11,205 women in Illinois; and,

WHEREAS, breast cancer incidence is lower among Black women than among White women but disparities persist in breast cancer mortality as more Black women die of breast cancer than any other racial or ethnic group; and,

WHEREAS, regular mammograms can help find breast cancer at an early stage when treatment is most successful; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) offers free breast exams and mammograms to uninsured and underinsured women;

THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim October 2024 as **Breast Cancer Awareness Month** and October 18, 2024, as **Mammography Day** in Illinois, and encourage all citizens to join me in the continued fight against breast cancer and health inequities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,

this THIRTIETH day of SEPTEMBER, in

the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and

TWENTY-FOUR, and of the State of Illinois,

two hundred and FIFTH.



Alexi Giannoulias  
SECRETARY OF STATE

JB Pritzker  
GOVERNOR



## MEDIA RELEASE

Date: October 17, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

“OSF OnCall Cardio screenings at the Health Department“

**Ottawa, IL** - The OSF OnCall digital health team will roll into the LaSalle County Health Department parking lot at 717 Etna Road in Ottawa on the OSF OnCall King Care-A-Van on October 30 from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. to provide FREE health screenings.

Here's what we'll be offering:

- ◆ Health screenings – blood pressure, pulse ox, blood glucose, and cholesterol (Please fast for 8-12 hours before blood glucose and cholesterol screenings)
- ◆ Health care navigation
- ◆ Technology and digital program assistance – OSF MyChart
- ◆ Connection to community resources
- ◆ Medicaid Innovation Collaborative program enrollment

No appointment needed – just come as you are! Together, let's make health a priority!

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