

HEALTH &
WELFARE

Minnesota Health and Education Leaders Launch Vaping Dangers Campaign

10-07-19

Minnesota health and education leaders around the state will launch a joint information campaign to help spread the word on the dangers of vaping. It comes on the heels of a new student survey that suggests one in four 11th graders used e-cigarettes in the previous 30 days.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz says the surge in vaping among young people is unacceptable. Walz says the blame lies squarely on the shoulders of big tobacco companies....

75107 ...exactly that." :13

Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm says the "epidemic" in youth vaping comes at a time when the use of conventional tobacco products is at record lows....

75105 ...kids grow." :24

Malcolm says legislative actions could include: greater restrictions for online sales...enactment of tobacco 21 laws...and prohibiting sales of flavored products.

Minnesota has 55 confirmed or probable cases of vaping-related lung injuries – including one death.

Minnesota Hemp Association Calls for Legislative Action on Vaping, e-Cigs

09-19-19

The Minnesota Hemp Association is joining health officials and anti-smoking advocates in calling for more changes in the wake of recent lung injuries and deaths tied to vaping.

Spokesman Joe Radinovich (ruh-din-UH'-vitch) says they've asked for lawmakers to consider additional funding to promote research behind some of these illnesses and to help better understand what the impact of vaping could be on a person.

The M-H-A is also urging a statewide ban on vaping products for people under 21. A 65-year-old man's death in August was related to a lung injury associated with vaping an illicit T-H-C product. No illnesses have linked to state regulated medical cannabis products.

>>Passionate Debate in House Hearing on Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill

(St. Paul, MN) -- A bill allowing assisted suicides in Minnesota is drawing passionate debate in the state House. Doctor Brian Callister testified against the proposal at an informational hearing Wednesday. He told the committee, "What message are we saying? We're saying we don't value life, you're disposable." But Doctor David Plimpton said the Minnesota Medical Association determined in 2017 it would not oppose legislation to authorize medical aid in dying "as long as it adequately protects physicians and patients." The Senate Health and Human Services chair called it "dangerous policy" and said it won't get a hearing.

>>Sibley County Authorities I-D Man Killed in Grain Bin Accident

(Faxon Township, MN) -- Authorities are identifying the man killed in a grain bin accident Tuesday afternoon west of Belle Plaine. The Sibley County Sheriff's Office says 74-year-old Roger Slater from Eagan was unloading soybeans and became trapped inside the grain bin. Deputies cut open the side of the bin to release the beans. Slater's body was located after an hour of searching. Slater was working on his own farming operation at the time.

Walz To Prepare Minnesota For Pot Legalization

08-27-19

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz says he's ordered state agencies to be prepared to legalize recreational marijuana next year if the Legislature approves a bill. But Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka says he'll block the bill in the Republican-controlled chamber. Walz says that he's relying on supporters to continue pushing for legalization.

House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler says he plans to sponsor a legalization bill next year. Minnesota's Senate rejected a bill last session that would have decriminalized recreational marijuana in 2022. Critics highlighted concerns about marijuana's effect on traffic accidents, underage use and drug treatment. Legalization proponents say opposition in the Senate should be removed in the 2020 election.

Eleven states and the District of Columbia have already permitted recreational marijuana for adult use.

Red Cross Sends More Minnesota Volunteers to Assist With Hurricane Dorian

09-05-19

More American Red Cross volunteers from Minnesota are headed to the East Coast to help in the Hurricane Dorian relief effort. American Red Cross Communications Officer Sue Thesenga says right now they have 49 volunteers from the Minnesota region deployed and that number will certainly increase. As well as giving blood, she says people can donate financially...

Sue Thesenga American Red Cross Hurricane Dorian Response 28 SEC

OUTCUE: "...recovery planning and other assistance."

Minnesota volunteers are in Georgia, the Carolinas and Florida. Thesenga says the aid effort will likely last for months. If you would like to give, you can visit redcross.org or call 1-800 -Red Cross or text the word Dorian to 9-0-9-9-9 and you can make a \$10 donation which goes directly to help the relief effort.

Fergus Falls Woman Speaks at Insulin Roundtable at Capitol

08-15-19

A bipartisan group of Minnesota lawmakers held a roundtable discussion Wednesday to discuss ideas for improving access to affordable insulin.

Proposals for better access to emergency insulin stalled out during the last legislative session amid Republican opposition.

Fergus Falls resident Michele Cmela (kuh-MEL-uh) said she was diagnosed with Type-1 diabetes a year ago, but found that Medicare and some health care providers do not cover enough of her needs.

#75295 out: can be gone :23

Cmela said she and her husband spent their grocery money to attend Wednesday's meeting at the Capitol. Last month, Minnesota lawmakers said they've agreed on a plan to get emergency insulin to diabetics, but not on how to pay for it.

Celebrate Aging Expo To Be Held August 14th

08-07-19

An event you don't want to miss is coming soon. Celebrate Aging Expo is being held at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls on August 14th and will feature all the resources and opportunities you need to enable you to enjoy life as you age.

Some of the informative seminars include:

9:30am-Spirituality In the Life of an Elder(presented by the Lake Region Healthcare Chaplain),

10:15-Tips on Downsizing (presented by LB Homes),

11am-Choosing The Best Medicare Plan (presented by U Care),

11:45am-Dementia and Memory Care (presented by Lake Region Healthcare),

12:30-Arthritis of The Foot and Ankle (presented by Park Gardens).

Live music will provided by The Friends of Al Siegle Band starting at 1pm. As well, the Lake Region Healthcare Radiology Department will offer Varicose Vein Screening, along with free blood pressure reading provided by Mill Street Residence.

Celebrate Aging Expo will be held from 9am to 1pm with free live music from 1 to 2pm at the Bigwood Event Center on Wednesday, August 14th. Free Tickets will be available for the event in advance at LB Homes-Broen Home, LB Homes-Eisenhower Office, and Northwestern Bank at 402 West Lincoln in Fergus Falls, or \$5 at the door the day of the event.

Celebrate Aging Expo presented by Lake Region Health Care and sponsored in part by NewsTalk 1250 KBRF, LB Homes, U Care, Humana, and Park Gardens Senior Living.

West Nile Virus Reported In Minnesota And North Dakota

08-15-19

First cases of West Nile Virus in Minnesota and North Dakota reported this week.

In Minnesota the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District says pools in Ramsey County and Hennepin County tested positive. Only two of 496 samples taken turned out positive for the virus, compared to last year when 57 out of 600 samples were testing positive around this time of year. The Minnesota Department of Health says a Dakota County resident is the first human West Nile case in the state, but the person may have contracted the disease while traveling.

In North Dakota, the first human case of West Nile Virus has been identified in Grand Forks County. Health officials urge residents to take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Human cases of W-N-V tend to peak in August as populations of the *Culex tarsalis* mosquito become more prevalent. Statewide five cases have now been confirmed. Health officials did not specify where in Grand Forks County the case was identified. In the city of Grand Forks health teams have sprayed six times this summer season for mosquitoes.

United Way Kicks Off 2019 Campaign

08-19-19

The need is greater than ever with the United Way of Otter Tail and Wadena Counties after kicking off their 2019 Campaign late last week in Perham, with the goal to keep the numerous essential programs they offer funded for another year. Executive Director Mary Phillipe says what is given here, stays here...

UW Kick Off Perham 15 SEC

OUTCUE: "...support those programs."

Between the two counties, forty-one programs help children and families have a stable life. The goal this year \$420,000.

A Number of New Laws Take Effect Thursday

07-31-19

Along with laws governing motorists to use hands-free devices if they want to talk on the phone while driving and slower drivers fined if they don't move over to let faster drivers pass, as well as other laws going into effect Thursday in Minnesota.

Vaping in public indoor spaces and workplaces will become as illegal as cigarette smoking.

In other changes, residents of assisted living homes and their families will now have the right to install hidden monitoring cameras for two weeks before being required to notify the facilities. And certain parents who have lost their parental rights will have a little easier time trying to get them back.

Walz Declares "Farmers Market Week"

(St. Paul, MN) -- Governor Tim Walz announced the first-ever statewide celebration of farmers markets, proclaiming now through the 10th as Minnesota Farmers Market Week. It also coincides with National Farmers Market Week. "At the heart of strong children, strong families, we also know farmers markets provide that opportunity to make sure nutritious foods get to everyone," Walz told a gathering at the Minneapolis Farmers Market Sunday. There are an estimated 185 farmers markets that run throughout the summer across the state.

>>SBA Opens Temporary Disaster Loan Office in Southeast Minnesota

(Kasson, MN) -- The U-S Small Business Administration opens a temporary office at Kasson (CASS'-un) City Hall today to take low-interest loan applications from those hit by heavy rains and flooding in late June and early July. The S-B-A's Jack Camp says for homeowners that can include not only their home, but also their personal property and their cars. Loans are also available to renters with property damage. Businesses and non-profits can get loans for physical damage and also for operating capital needed because of economic injury from the storms. Residents of Dodge, Goodhue, Mower, Olmsted, Rice and Steele counties are eligible.

Minnesotans Question, Praise Trump Drug Import Plan

08-07-19

Minnesota residents are praising and questioning the Trump administration's plan to allow the importation of cheaper prescription drugs from Canada. The proposal would enable states to launch their own drug importation programs as long as they ensure medicines are safe and consumers see a "significant reduction" in costs. The plan says insulin could be imported only if manufacturers agreed to allow reimportation of their own drugs from foreign countries. That isn't unlikely because drugmakers called reimportation dangerous.

Insulin prices have soared in recent years, driving some diabetics to ration medicine or seek black market sources and Minnesota advocacy groups hope the plan will help patients struggling with high and rising drug prices.

Red Cross Issues Urgent Call For Blood And Platelet Donors

07-10-19

With less than a three-day supply of most blood types available, the American Red Cross is facing a blood shortage and has an emergency need for blood and platelet donors to give now to replenish the blood supply. Sue Thesenga, American Red Cross Communications Manager for Minnesota says the situation is critical...

Sue Thesinga Red Cross Blood Donation Emergency 30 SEC

OUTCUE: "...blood and platelet donations."

The next collection is scheduled for next Monday July 15th at the Fergus Falls VFW and in Perham on July 31st at Bongards. Donors of all blood types, especially type O, are urged to make an appointment to donate using the Blood Donor App, at RedCrossBlood.org.

More Than 1,000 Essentia Health Patients Data May Have Been Stolen

07-11-19

Essentia Health is notifying more than 1,000 patients that their protected health information may have been at risk when a former vendor of Essentia Health's fell victim to a phishing incident.

In an email, Essentia Health warned it was not aware of any actual or attempted misuse of this information.

Essentia Health previously worked with a third-party vendor, Nemadji Research Corporation (aka "Nemadji"), to assist with billing services. To ensure prompt and appropriate delivery of these services, Essentia Health provided Nemadji with information about some patients.

Respecting its contractual obligations to Essentia and the strict federal privacy requirements imposed on third party vendors, Nemadji recently notified Essentia Health that patient information may have been compromised during an email phishing incident.

Essentia Health says steps are being taken to thoroughly investigate the incident and ensure that the privacy of patient information is maintained.

"Please be assured that Essentia Health is taking this incident very seriously," says Julene Brown, Essentia Health Chief Compliance Officer. "Patient privacy is crucially important to us and we apply significant time and resources to safeguard all patient-related information. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause our patients."

All patients affected are being offered free credit monitoring services.

While letters were mailed to all patients who were impacted by this incident, questions from patients and the community about this incident can be directed to 218-786-6404, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Shop, Move and Groove In Downtown Fergus Falls Today

07-11-19

A fun-filled day of activities takes place in downtown Fergus Falls today with Shop Move and Groove which features music and lots of activities. Chamber President Lisa Workman says it will showcase all that's available downtown...

shop move and groove 28 SEC

OUTCUE: "...come downtown."

Workman also said there will be many different food vendors, live music, and lots to do. A schedule of events can be found at the Fergus Falls Chamber of Commerce website at fergusfalls.com