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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
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KIDS COUNT in Delaware “Data to Action” Series: September 2021 Exploring Delaware’s My Healthy Community Database

INTRODUCTION

Delaware’s My Healthy Community database offers up to date data concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and United States Census-based population health in Delaware. The community forum is a data sharing platform, that gives information to Delawareans in a format that is easy to use and simple to understand.¹ From this information, policymakers can translate data into action. Upon entering the [site](#), the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Data Dashboard is displayed. Users can then toggle to the Population Health Dashboard, where information can be viewed by state, city, or county. Narrowing a search to a city focus on the Population Health dashboard (to Newark, for example), narrows the focus of the Coronavirus dashboard as well.

As a result of an increase in Delawareans, both students and faculty, returning to in-person classes in recent months it is essential to keep track of in-

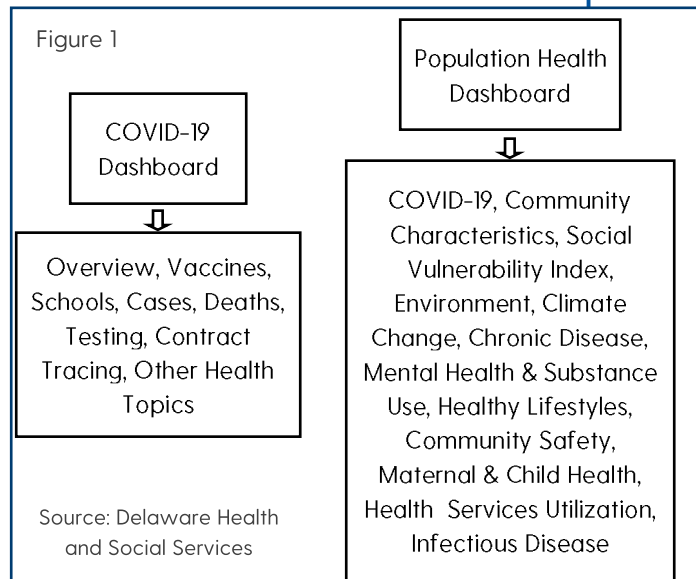
person cases in schools to ensure the knowledge gained throughout the pandemic not be lost but rather applied to prevent a large increase in cases of COVID-19.

My Healthy Community will offer actionable insights to help Highmark better understand the needs of our members, patients, and communities in Delaware. When we understand the social needs of families and individuals, we can take action to connect them with the appropriate care and resources to improve the overall health and vitality of our communities.

-Highmark Health



Delaware's My Healthy Community Dashboard: COVID-19 and Population Health Components



POPULATION HEALTH DASHBOARD

Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH) within Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) understood the state's need for and the advantages of using public health informatics to use current, accessible data to make decisions about public health interventions, especially in the field of epidemiology³. The Population Health Dashboard, presents timely data about various topics related to public health within Delaware's communities. It does so in a cohesive and accessible manner that allows people, including researchers and all Delawareans alike, to analyze data pertaining to the well-being of Delaware's communities and more.

Not only is this data easily accessible through this online platform but there is plenty of transparency on the website as to where the data come from and from what year. For instance, while navigating the community characteristics page and viewing content about Delaware's total population as well as its demographic and socioeconomic makeup, it is indicated what year corresponds with each data set. The Community Characteristics tab uses the newest data available (currently 2019) regarding population, race, diversity index, life expectancy, average age, graduation rate, and average income. The sources used for said information can also be found on the same page. The same is true for the other subjects listed. In addition to being able to explore data related to these distinct topics, one can also access data specific to varying geographical areas throughout Delaware. Users can connect statewide data to data from their town. Figure 1 details the subtopics explored on both the Population Health section of the website and the COVID-19 side. The COVID-19 section within Population Health directs users to the full COVID-19 interface.

COVID-19 DASHBOARD

According to the Delaware Journal of Public Health, My Healthy Community's coronavirus data dashboard was created only eleven months after the platform itself had been operating². The pandemic and its impact caught people all over the world by surprise and it was of utmost importance that pertinent data be available in order to address the issue of COVID-19 and its effects in an efficient and timely manner. As of February 2022, the coronavirus dashboard found on the My Healthy Community platform contains data about numerous topics that are relevant to remaining informed about the coronavirus pandemic, including vaccination rates, testing, hospital visits and stays, COVID-related deaths, and overall trends pertaining to both past and present cases.

It is unique because of its interactivity and ease of navigation. Interactive maps and graphs allow interested parties to learn more about the impact of COVID-19 on both a larger and smaller geographical scale. Users can investigate COVID-19 cases, vaccination rates, deaths, and hospitalizations by state, county, city, and zip code. Being able to easily go between geographic levels helps users compare data.

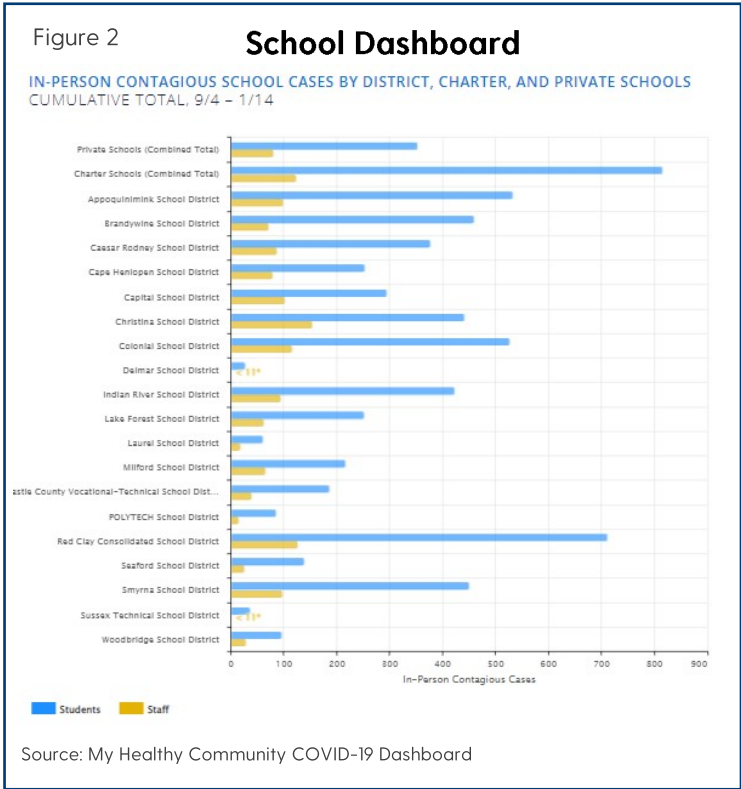
Delaware's My Healthy Community Dashboard: School Cases Dashboard (an Element of the COVID-19 Dashboard Component)

COVID-19 SCHOOL DASHBOARD

Towards the end of 2021, the My Healthy Community platform added a COVID-19 in-person contagious school cases dashboard, which defines in-person contagious as “persons who were present at school as far back as 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms (or test date if no symptoms)⁴.” Seeing how this past school year saw Delaware children and faculty returning to in-person classes in recent months, it is essential to be able to keep track of in-person cases in schools to ensure that the knowledge gained throughout the pandemic not be lost but rather applied to prevent a large increase in cases of COVID-19.

This dashboard makes it easier to compare data as there are visual representations that approach the topic of school cases in various ways. One of these includes showcasing the percentages of in-person contagious school cases per week and it is done in a manner that takes protecting personal health information into account. For example, it is mentioned that “counts in which there were fewer than two-hundred fifty in-person learners in the week are not shown” for this reason⁵. In addition to this, the school cases dashboard allows one to see differences based on changes in students versus in faculty using charts and color-coded histograms. All of these visual elements state when they were last updated as well as when they will be updated next, allowing people to keep up with newfound information. This is important in the management of cases through contact tracing and prevention, for which the My Healthy Community has a web page.

Unlike other databases, the statistics are updated daily, making the data as accurate as possible. This is especially helpful when it comes to contact tracing. This includes all schools in Delaware's 19 school districts and 23 charter schools. Since vaccines now recommended for people ages 5 and over, this is a very important feature for parents and guardians to be up to date on COVID-19 status. My Healthy Community contact traces by collecting data on students who were in school 48 hours before symptoms appeared. In addition, the school dashboard breaks down the data comparing private, public, and charter in person, as well as non-in-person data. It also looks at staff in different settings. Now that school is primarily in person, parents can be more informed when sending their



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Delaware's My Healthy Community Dashboard: Enhanced Data Feature: Social Vulnerability Index

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

My Healthy Community examines the health of communities in Delaware using a measure called the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) established the Social Vulnerability Index to use Census variables to examine and identify socially vulnerable communities, or communities that may need assistance prior, during, and after disasters have occurred⁶; by understanding how many emergency staff members and overall resources may be needed by a particular community, those with the ability to decide on what aid is provided before, during, or after a disaster has happened, such as community leaders and government officials, can plan ahead.

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) was created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the purpose of identifying communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters. Socially vulnerable populations are identified using factors such as socioeconomic status, household composition, minority status, and housing type and transportation.

*-My Healthy Community
Population Healthy Dashboard*

Reducing social vulnerability can decrease both human suffering and economic loss⁷. The Social Vulnerability Index looks at 14 different factors and groups. These are distributed into 4 different

themes, which include: Socioeconomic Status, Household Composition and Disability, Minority Status and Language, and Housing and Transport. The more SVI themes a location has, the more socially vulnerable it is. With the My Healthy Community dashboard, social vulnerability is explained and ranked by county. This page is different from other databases because not only does it give a definition and explain the SVI, but factors that play a role in this are also explained.

With the help of My Healthy Community's social vulnerability index web page, community members can look at data and come out with conclusions on how this affects the community. It is especially important that users can look at their specific zip code and see how it compares to other zip codes in the state. On said web page, Delawareans can also see how counties in Delaware are ranked and how these rankings were determined, allowing the everyday Delawarean as well as experts to be able to gauge the impact an emergency could potentially have on their county. Having all this data keeps the community informed and leads to change in what the community offers.

A Special Thanks...

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Delaware's My Healthy Community Dashboard: Enhanced Data Feature: Data Suppression

HIPAA PROTECTION ALGORITHM

When navigating the public health world, one must always take the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, more commonly known as HIPAA, into account to make sure that personal health information is not misused and the information that is distributed is done so consensually⁸. Considering the fact that My Healthy Community must gather data about large groups of people over different geographical regions, it was essential to think about how a platform that must share information based on both geography and topic⁹ could do so in a way that takes HIPAA into account.

The My Healthy Community Dashboard makes it a priority to protect the security of the community. HIPAA laws and regulations are followed and enforced. The CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) details [Frequently Asked Questions about the HIPAA Privacy Rule](#).

Overall, the rule works to protect the health information of individuals, while also detailing the rights that citizens have to understand and control how their health information is used. These standards are employed to safeguard health information while allowing the flow of health information needed (for example, in an aggregated form) to observe trends so high quality healthcare can be provided¹⁰.

The My Healthy Community platform uses a data suppression algorithm that follows HIPAA's. This is a great tool considering how important HIPAA is and how often My Healthy Community updates their data. The platform also has a page explaining HIPAA and privacy details, which is something that differentiates from other databases. Since My Healthy Community is very interactive and makes it so a specific zip code can be located, there is room for error when it comes to privacy and hackers. Data is not presented if there is even a

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KIDS COUNT is a national and state-by-state effort of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the well-being of children in the United States. KIDS COUNT in Delaware, a project of the University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service, is a collaborative effort of over forty organizations to enrich local and state discussion concerning ways to secure better lives for all children by providing policy makers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being.

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