



# Aitkin County Health & Human Services

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## Media Release

April 4, 2018

### *National Public Health Week 2018: Changing Our Future Together*

Each year, during the first full week of April, communities across the United States come together to observe National Public Health Week. April 2-8, 2018 will be a time to recognize the contributions of Public Health and highlight issues that are important to improving our Nation's health. Everyone deserves to live a long and healthy life in a safe environment. To make this happen, we must tackle the causes of poor health and disease risk among individuals and within our communities. Where we live, work, worship and play impacts each of us and can determine our health and how long we live. Within our communities, let's start new conversations with our neighbors and be advocates for positive change. Working together, we can build healthier communities and, eventually, the healthiest nation. But we need your help to get there. During this week, let us celebrate the power of prevention.

**Advocate for and promote well-being:** Do what you can to focus on and advocate for improved access to mental and behavioral health services. Help de-stigmatize mental health diagnoses and encourage people experiencing mental illness to seek treatment. Coverage for mental health services must be on par with physical health services in all health insurance coverage.

**Learn about ways to prevent disease transmission:** Wash your hands. Encourage employers to support and provide sick leave so sick workers can care for themselves and avoid spreading disease to others. Support comprehensive health education in schools, which can help reduce rates of sexually transmitted disease, as well as teen pregnancy. Keep yourself and your family immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases---and get your annual flu shot!

**Help to protect and maintain a healthy planet:** Help reduce our collective carbon emissions footprint. Consider transitioning to renewable energies. Protect our natural resources, including our air, water and food. Support environmental health efforts that monitor our communities for risks and develop health-promoting interventions. Be a champion for programs that call for transportation planning, encouraging routes and opportunities that promote walking, biking and public transit--it not only reduces emissions, but helps us all stay physically active.

**Learn about the effects of injury and violence on health:** Support and encourage funding to programs that reduce and prevent community violence. Advocate for occupational health and safety standards that keep workers safe on the job. Support policies that save those struggling with addiction from fatal drug overdose. Many injuries are preventable with the appropriate education, policy, and safety measures in place.



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**Advocate for everyone's right to a healthy life:** Everyone deserves an opportunity to live a life free from preventable disease and disability. The places where we live, learn, work, worship and play should promote health, not threaten it. That is why achieving health equity for all requires a focus on Changing Our Future Together!