

## Join us in celebrating National Public Health Week

By Kristen Bonner, RN, BSN

**National Public Health Week**, observed April 6–12, 2026, recognizes more than 150 years of public health efforts that have shaped how people live, work, and thrive in our nation. Whether it's reducing child mortality, improving food safety, responding to emerging threats that impact communities, or understanding and providing opportunities for connection, public health has been there. The progress made in these, and many other, areas is the result of deliberate, sustained work by a dedicated workforce committed to protecting the population's health.

The 2026 national theme, **“Ready, Set, Action,”** reflects both the significant progress achieved and the continued effort to advance health and well-being. Meaningful progress is possible only through coordinated collaboration among government agencies, public health professionals, community organizations, and advocates. Effective strategies and lasting outcomes depend on shared responsibility and collective action toward healthier futures.

In partnership with government leaders, public health professionals help establish and enforce safety and sanitation standards that protect communities. Scientific and technological advances have led to life-saving interventions such as vaccines, seatbelt laws, and safer workplaces. Work with community leaders has also improved access to clean air, safe sidewalks, and park resources that promote health, equity, and quality of life for all residents.

Community members play an essential role in advancing public health. Individual choices, along with group advocacy, help influence policies and environments that support long-term health. Public health is woven into nearly every aspect of daily life, including restaurant and childcare safety, information on community health threats, education on suicide prevention and tobacco use, and direct support services for individuals across all ages and backgrounds.

As National Public Health Week approaches, residents are encouraged to recognize and thank public health professionals for their vital contributions to the quality of everyday life in our community. Their work, often conducted behind the scenes, is foundational to building resilient communities and a healthier future for all.

The Yellowstone City-County Health Department, doing business as RiverStone Health, has served the residents of our community since 1974. It has been an honor, and our staff, along with our fellow public health professionals across the region, look forward to continuing to partner with organizations and residents alike to protect the public, promote health, and prevent disease for years to come.

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