

Celebrating National Public Health Week

By Heather Fink-Stambaugh

National Public Health Week begins today. As your local city-county public health department, RiverStone Health wants to say thank you for your partnership and support for our community's health.

Public health starts with each of us making a difference in our homes and communities. It's how the places we live, work and play affect our well-being. Here are a few ways we can be healthier together.

Support mental health in your community

Volunteer for a local mental health organization. Attend events like walks and fundraisers that support the mental health movement. If you or someone you know needs mental health services, contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's national helpline at 1-800-662-HELP. You can also call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org to connect with a trained counselor through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

RiverStone Health Clinic offers behavioral health services as part of your primary health care. Connect with one of our providers at 406-247-3350. RiverStone Health is a proud member of the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone Valley, which offers free suicide prevention trainings, counseling sessions for seniors and other resources.

Get to know your neighbors

Having a resilient community is one of the strongest indicators for healthy aging. Social cohesion means building strong connections with the people around you, which strengthens your community's well-being. Consider offering a helping hand to your neighbors, like running errands for someone without transportation or sharing extra garden produce. Looking to get involved? Check out the Healthy By Design Coalition's workgroup, Healthy Neighborhoods. Learn more at HealthyByDesignYellowstone.org.

Keep yourself and others protected

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends several adult and childhood immunizations. History shows that vaccines are the safest, most effective way to protect yourself and your family from many preventable diseases. RiverStone Health's immunization team can offer free and low-cost vaccinations to children who are not insured or underinsured with support from the CDC's Vaccines for Children program. They also offer adult vaccines, including travel vaccines. Call 406-247-3382 or make an appointment at RiverStoneHealth.org/Immunizations.

Support building accessible parks and community gathering spaces

Parks and green spaces foster healthy communities by offering safe environments for people of all ages and abilities to connect and stay active while supporting their mental and physical well-being. Creating more accessible parks ensures that everyone can enjoy these benefits, promoting both individual health

and community well-being. Learn more about local efforts at yellowstonecountysaferoutestoschool.org or billingsmt.gov/3093/Mobilize-the-MAGIC-City-Project.

Invest in the public health workforce

We can strengthen the public health workforce by providing more training and support for public health professionals. This investment ensures that workers have the skills and resources to respond to current and future health challenges. Interested in knowing more about public health professions? Contact our Eastern Montana Area Health Education Center to get connected: RiverStoneHealth.org/health-education-center or call 406-247-3297.

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