



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## National Public Health Week How You Can Affect Health In Your Community

**SPRINGFIELD** - If you have ever eaten at a restaurant, used a public swimming pool, gone to a hospital, needed an ambulance, or received a flu shot, you've received public health services. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), in conjunction with 97 certified health departments across the state, works every day to control infectious diseases, ensure food safety, conduct newborn screenings, provide immunizations, regulate hospitals and nursing homes, compile birth, death, and other statistics, and educate communities on how to live healthier lives. April 4-10, 2016 is National Public Health Week, a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving the health of our nation.

"Public health officials around Illinois work hand-in-hand with other government officials to ensure the health of the community is always in mind," said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. "Being healthy is about more than just going to the doctor for a check-up. It's about looking at our surroundings and deciding how to make them healthier, like how sidewalks and bike paths in neighborhoods encourage physical activity, which can help lower rates of obesity and heart disease."

- [Building safe, healthy communities](#) - Health must be a priority in designing communities, from healthy housing to parks and playgrounds. Walking and biking should be as accessible as cars and public transportation. Communities can support farmers markets and local businesses that value health.
- [Education Graduation](#) - Make high school graduation a priority. Graduates tend to lead longer and healthier lives than their peers who drop out. This is partly due to a graduate's ability to earn more money and afford better health care and housing in safer neighborhoods. Education also provides graduates with the opportunity to learn more about promoting healthy behaviors and reducing risky behaviors.
- [The choice of healthy foods](#) - Our food system should provide affordable food with nutritious ingredients. We can work to eliminate food deserts, support measures like menu labeling that help people make healthier choices, or start a community garden.
- [Quality care](#) - While continuing to pursue options for expanded access to quality care, we can shift the main focus of our health system from one that treats illness to one that equally emphasizes prevention.

To learn more about steps you can take for a healthier community, go to <http://www.nphw.org/>.

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