



PUBLIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER

BASTROP COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Take it from a person who grew up in the 60s; that's, 1960 friends!!! Everything someone learned, lived or laughed at during this decade can be captured in a song title. And so can public health when it comes to our August newsletter. We are taking a lighthearted approach to this issue, and we hope you like it and pass it on to a friend. Thanks, BCPHD *"We will, we will rock you!"*

As the iconic song from the WHO goes, "Talking About My Generation,"

As a Baby Boomer, I remember the day President Kennedy was shot. That tragic day in 1963 is forever etched in memory. And just six years later, the moon landing stirred something profound, a belief that anything was possible when we worked together.

For Gen Xers, you probably remember the Berlin Wall falling, the Challenger explosion, or the rise of personal computing.

Your era helped redefine independence and innovation—values still reflected in our local businesses and public health initiatives today.

Millennials came of age in a digitally connected world and witnessed 9/11's impact not only on national security, but on civic responsibility. You were the first to grow up with both global awareness and an evolving understanding of health equity—principles now baked into how our county responds to crises.

Gen Z, you've grown up amid climate movements, pandemic response, and calls for racial and health justice. You carry the torch of resilience and inclusion, pushing all of us to think more boldly about what a healthy community truly means.

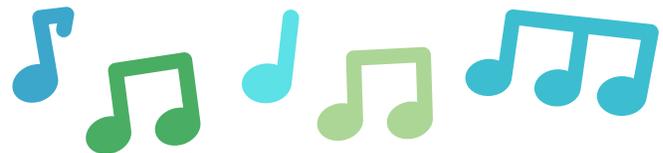
TALKING ABOUT MY GENERATION (CONT.)

From boardrooms to clinics, from pine forest trails to family-owned storefronts, we're all part of this shared story. Each generation brings a unique lens to our local challenges, but it's our collective wisdom and partnership that will shape a thriving, resilient future in Bastrop County.

As we reflect on these shared experiences—from moon landings to pandemics—it's worth remembering that every generation sees the world through a different lens. As the song *The Living Years* reminds us, '*Each generation blames the one before.*' But here in our county—in our local businesses, in our school districts and in our public health efforts—we're writing a different story.

We're building bridges between generations, not walls. We're honoring the wisdom that came before while embracing the energy and fresh perspective of those rising now. In doing so, we don't dwell in division—we live in the possibility of shared understanding.

Because the health of our community doesn't depend on perfection. It depends on connection. And today, each of us, from every generation, has something vital to offer—something that keeps our county strong, resilient, and ready for whatever comes next." Another great from the BEATLES, "*Come Together, Right Now...*"



AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH — BASTROP COUNTY HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE: CREATE A JOB, SAVE A JOB

When Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell sang "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," they weren't just talking about love—they were singing about resilience, unity, and the unstoppable power of people working together toward a common goal.

That same spirit now pulses through Bastrop County, where a bold new initiative is climbing the steep terrain of economic instability and workforce shortages to build a healthier, more equitable future.

☀️ A Grant-Fueled Leap Toward Equity In early 2025, St. David's Foundation launched its Pathways to Economic Stability for the Healthcare Workforce open call, seeking collaborative, region-wide efforts to uplift those struggling to make ends meet by creating sustainable employment pathways in healthcare. Out of 122 letters of intent, only 10 organizations were awarded grants—and Bastrop County Public Health Department was one of them, receiving \$2,000,000 over two years to launch the Bastrop County Healthcare Workforce Collaborative: Create a Job, Save a Job.

AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH (CONT.)

👜 Why This Matters Healthcare is one of Bastrop County's largest industries, yet many residents face barriers to entering and thriving in this field. Advancing health equity means more than improving access to care—it means ensuring the people delivering that care reflect the community they serve and have the support they need to succeed. This initiative aims to:

- Build a diverse, locally rooted healthcare workforce
- Create financially sustainable career pathways
- Support economic stability for families
- Address individual and systemic barriers to employment and health

👉 Collaboration at the Core The “Create a Job, Save a Job” vision is modeled on the successful SWTC Career Tracks approach, blending employer engagement, student recruitment, and case management with a county-led, multi-agency strategy.

This isn't just one organization's effort—it's a coalition. Partners include:

- Bastrop County Public Health Department
- SWTC Career Tracks
- Six Bastrop County nonprofit organizations
- Texas A&M School of Public Health, Office of Public Health Practice

Together, they're building a pipeline that doesn't just fill jobs—it transforms lives.

🌱 From Struggle to Stability This initiative is more than a grant. It's a promise: that no mountain is too high, no valley too low, and no barrier too wide when a community comes together. Bastrop County is proving that with vision, collaboration, and heart, we can create jobs that heal—and save jobs that matter.



HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT: BACK-TO-SCHOOL VACCINATIONS

Back-to-school means a long to-do list in a short time. That's why it's smart to make an appointment to get your child immunized now. Whether heading to kindergarten, junior high or college, children need all CDC-recommended

vaccines. Ask your healthcare provider about your child's protection against diseases that can be prevented by vaccines. This includes diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, and rubella, among other diseases.



HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT (CONT.)

Some vaccines need several doses to be effective. Ask your healthcare provider about your child's schedule and make sure it is up to date. Immunizing your child against diseases which can be prevented by a vaccine helps stop others in their schools from becoming ill. It helps all children in Texas be healthier. **[CLICK HERE for current Texas vaccine requirements for kindergarten through 12th grade.](#)**

Little ones attending childcare and pre-kindergarten programs are also required to receive vaccinations to protect their health. Like school age children, some vaccines require several doses to give protection. Immunizing your child against vaccine-preventable diseases helps stop others in daycare and preschool settings from becoming ill. **[CLICK HERE for current Texas vaccine requirements for childcare and pre-kindergarten.](#)**

Talk with your healthcare provider about any vaccination questions. If your doctor does not provide immunizations, you may ask them for a prescription for the vaccinations needed by your child. Some local pharmacies, such as H-E-B and Walgreens, will provide vaccinations for children based on age. Ask the pharmacy if the vaccines you need are available.

Always check first with your insurance to see if vaccines are covered when given at the pharmacy.

A number of Bastrop County vaccine providers currently participate in the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) program.

TVFC serves any child 18 years & younger who is:

- Enrolled in Medicaid or is Medicaid eligible
- Uninsured
- An American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Underinsured (insurance does not cover all vaccines)
- Enrolled in Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Once you've found a TVFC provider, schedule an appointment for your child.

- Bring your child's immunization records to the appointment
- If your child is eligible, they will receive the necessary vaccines at no cost to you
- Providers may charge a fee to administer vaccines, but no child who is eligible for the TVFC program should be denied vaccination due to an inability to pay the fee

TVFC vaccine providers keep vaccination records in a secure computer system called 'ImmTrac2', the Texas Immunization Registry. You can request vaccination records for your child through the registry. Talk to your vaccine provider about ImmTrac2 and agree to use ImmTrac2 to help keep track of these important records.

[CLICK HERE for a list of TVFC Providers in Bastrop County as of July 2025.](#)



WALKING ON SUNSHINE: SUMMER FOOT SAFETY

Summer would not be complete without a day at the beach or lounging at the pool. Your shoe gear is important to add protection to your feet on these hot summer days.

- **Wear water shoes** in the pool, shower, beach, and sand to protect your feet from sunburn, cuts, blisters and other injuries.
- **Wear shoes in the ocean or on boats** – breathable mesh sneakers, or other open toed sandals allow for ventilation while preventing excessive sweating.

- **Avoid walking barefoot**, especially in public areas.
- **Use sunscreen** on the tops and sides of your feet and ankles and reapply after being in water.
- **Test the temperature** of surfaces such as cement and sidewalks to prevent burns.

Remember: healthy feet are happy feet!



STAYIN' ALIVE: SUMMER FOOD SAFETY

Foodborne illnesses tend to increase during the summer months as we spend more time outside. As food heats up in summer temperatures, bacteria multiply rapidly. To protect yourself and your families from foodborne illnesses, safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical.

Keep Cold Food Chilled. Store cold items in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. To prevent bacteria growth, keep temperatures at or below 40 °F. Packing meat, poultry, and seafood while still frozen can help them stay cold longer.

Separate Cooler Contents. Use one cooler for drinks and another for perishable foods. This way, frequent access to beverages won't expose perishable items to warm air.

Limit Cooler Openings. At the picnic site, try to open the cooler as little as possible. This helps maintain a cold internal temperature and keeps food safe longer.

Avoid Cross-Contamination. Wrap raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely to prevent their juices from contaminating ready-to-eat foods like fruits, vegetables, or cooked dishes.

Wash Produce Before Packing. Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables under running water, even those with inedible skins or rinds. Firm produce should be scrubbed with a clean brush. Dry items with a clean cloth or paper towel. Packaged produce labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" does not need to be rewashed.

Outdoor Hand Cleaning. If running water isn't available, bring a water jug, soap, and paper towels for handwashing. Alternatively, moist disposable towelettes can be a quick and convenient solution for cleaning your hands.

Utensils and Serving Dishes. Ensure all utensils and platters stay clean during food prep to avoid contamination.



WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE: GRILLING AND PICNICKING SAFETY TIPS

Similar to cooking indoors, following food safety guidelines is essential to prevent foodborne illness.

Marinate Safely. Always marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the kitchen counter or outside. If you plan to use some of the marinade as a sauce on cooked food, set aside a portion before adding raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Never reuse marinade that's touched raw food.

Cook Immediately After Partial Cooking. Partial cooking before grilling is only safe if the food is placed on the hot grill immediately afterward.

Cook Food Thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to ensure your food is cooked to the proper temperature. (You can refer to a [Safe Food Temperature Chart](#) for guidance.)

Keep "Ready" Food Hot. To keep grilled food hot until ready to serve, move it to the side of the grill, away from direct heat. This prevents overcooking while maintaining the temperature.

Avoid Reusing Platters or Utensils. Never use the same platters or utensils that held raw meat, poultry, or seafood for cooked food.

Check for Foreign Objects. If you clean your grill with a bristle brush, make sure no bristles have detached and ended up in your food.



HELP!: AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE BASTROP COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Warn Central Texas

"Receiving Local Emergency Alerts & Warnings"

Sign Up NOW to receive emergency alerts, warnings, and notifications!

Knowing when an emergency or a disaster could happen or is imminent will save lives. The Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), serving Bastrop County and surrounding counties, offers Warn Central Texas, which is a free Regional Notification System (RNS). Warn Central Texas enables public safety officials to send the community life-saving emergency alerts, warnings, and notifications. You have the ability to select the manner in which you receive these warnings/notifications (email, text, telephone, etc.).

You can also help keep your loved ones who live in the CAPCOG region safe. Warn Central Texas gives you the opportunity to register up to five different addresses for your account. This allows you to be informed about what is taking place in their neighborhoods as well as your neighborhood. Warn Central Texas services Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

Creating an account is easy and only takes a few minutes. **Sign Up NOW** by registering at: <https://warncentraltexas.org/> or by using the **QR code below**.



Get Local
Emergency Alerts



DANCING IN SEPTEMBER: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH



Emergencies and Disasters, whether natural or man-made, are inevitable. But, even with just a little preplanning and knowledge, these hardships can be more manageable and less life-threatening.

September is National Preparedness Month, a time for individuals and communities to focus on disaster preparedness. It is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and encourages people to take steps to prepare for various emergencies, both natural and man-made. The goal is to increase awareness, encourage planning, and build community resilience. Each September, we observe National Preparedness Month and emphasize the need for individuals to create emergency plans, build supply kits, and understand potential hazards in their area.

All Bastrop County residents are encouraged to: develop a family emergency plan; build a disaster supply kit; learn about potential hazards in their area;

get involved in community preparedness activities; stay informed about local emergency alerts; review and update insurance coverage; and know your neighbors.

Visit the Bastrop County Office of Emergency Management Website and follow us on Facebook for more helpful tips on emergency preparedness and much more.

Website:
<https://www.co.bastrop.tx.us/page/em.home>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/BastropCountyOEM/#>



CONTACT US

The Bastrop County Public Health Department is here to provide support in all aspects of Public Health. As we are a newly established health department, we are not yet functioning at full capacity. Please allow us some time to respond to any comments, questions, or feedback. We look forward to hearing from our community. While you are welcome and encouraged to share this newsletter with your networks (with credit to the BCPHD), we ask that you seek permission to distribute or reproduce this work in other formats. Thank you!

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