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Health Department of Northwest Michigan

We Are Listening

Third-party expert hosts Community Listening Sessions for HDNW

Dr. Kari Krantz is hosting Community Listening Sessions in each of the counties served by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW). The in-person and virtual gatherings are designed to give residents the opportunity to share their experiences and perceptions of HDNW.

“The health department offers programs that help people achieve their best health and wellbeing,” says HDNW Health Officer Dan Thorell. “As an agency, we are here to serve and support our communities. The Community Listening Sessions will help us better gauge how to connect with our communities moving forward.”

At each session, Krantz, an independent professional facilitator, will listen and document the information shared. She will review her notes with attendees to make sure she has accurately captured their information. If changes are needed, she will make them. Once the sessions conclude, Krantz will prepare her findings for HDNW.

“We have been planning to offer public listening sessions for a year,” says Holly Campbell, HDNW Deputy Health Officer. “We have a lot of new staff who are working hard to meet people where they’re at: our schools, homes, clinics, building sites, and beaches. It’s important to us that people are heard. We truly are listening.”

The information shared by residents will become an important part of HDNW’s planning process. The agency has also formed a community-based Citizen Advisory Committee which contains volunteers from all four counties and various backgrounds and belief systems.

“Over the years as I’ve facilitated Community Listening Sessions for various organizations and schools, I’ve found that even gathering and being heard provides a step forward,” Krantz says. “All of our thoughts and opinions matter. We are creating a safe space for people to share sincere thoughts and observations.”

Community Listening Sessions are being scheduled in-person in each county and virtually for those who may have time constraints or transportation challenges. Residents are asked to register for the session in their county [here](#) or on the homepage of www.nwhealth.org.

Round 1 Listening Sessions will be held in person from 6-7:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- May 2 Petoskey (Petoskey District Library)

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

- May 3 Charlevoix (Charlevoix Public Library)
- May 17 Bellaire (Bellaire Senior Community Center)
- May 18 Gaylord (Otsego County United Way)

Round 2 Listening Sessions will be VIRTUAL from noon-1:30 p.m.

- May 17 Emmett County Residents
- May 18 Charlevoix County Residents
- May 24 Antrim County Residents
- May 25 Otsego County Residents

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Kari Krantz, PhD, brings a strong background of leadership service to communities through her work of spearheading *Community Listening Sessions* for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. During these sessions scheduled in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties, Krantz will be a neutral, third party, allowing her to capture authentic perceptions and thoughts about the health department from residents. Information gathered from these sessions will then be shared with officials at the health department who are eager to learn from their residents.

Kari has worked extensively in organizational development. An important part of her work involves assisting school and organization leaders and community members to forge better relationships, ensuring there is a solid foundation of trust before moving forward with comprehensive improvement plans.

Kari earned her PhD in Education Administration, her M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction, and her B.A in Education from Michigan State University. She has also participated in several advanced learning opportunities at the University of Denver's leadership certification program, at New Leaders Org. National Education Assessment training series in Alexandria, Virginia; and at the International Institute of Restorative Justice in Pennsylvania, learning how to facilitate successful *listening sessions*.

Kari resides in mid-Michigan.