

## Michigan Department of Community Health

### **Summary of proposed rules: “Reporting of Traumatic Injuries”**

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is proposing new rules to establish requirements for reporting of injuries. The purpose of these rules is to facilitate collection of information about injuries so that follow-up actions can be taken to prevent further morbidity and mortality.

The rules follow traditional public health surveillance practice first established for communicable disease. This practice includes the mandatory reporting of individuals with certain health conditions, followed by the application of this information to public health disease control and prevention activities. These proposed rules have one feature that distinguishes them from most other mandatory public health reporting systems. They specify that health professionals and health facilities are required to report **only when asked to do** so by MDCH or a local health department. This reduces the burden of reporting, and allows MDCH and local health departments to direct limited resources to surveillance and prevention of injury types of immediate public health concern as needed.

There are approximately 50,000 traumatic injury hospitalizations and 4,500 traumatic injury deaths in Michigan each year. Injury is the number one cause of death for persons age 1 through 35 and the fifth leading cause of death overall in Michigan. The number of people injured and treated as outpatients can only be estimated from survey data, and it is likely that one in four people will have a significant injury every year. Injuries cause much physical and emotional suffering and are very costly in terms of medical care expenditures, lost income and lost productivity. There is a need to obtain information about individuals who have been injured in order to target and evaluate prevention programs. The Department has been able to provide statistical summaries based on administrative data collected for other purposes, does not currently have the authority to conduct in-depth investigations through contact with injured individuals to identify the risk factors that would lead to evidence-based prevention strategies. By these proposed rules the Department and local health departments would receive authority to collect information similar to that already mandated by the Public Health Code for chemical poisonings and communicable diseases. These regulations are also important for the state’s overall preparedness to identify and respond to potential acts of terrorism, including radiation and traumatic mass casualty events. Public health surveillance for selected traumatic injuries will provide the Department and local health departments with data to identify causes of the problem and high risk groups and target prevention activities effectively.