

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

HEALTH COMMITTEE

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026
6:10 PM (Approximately)**

Chairperson: Chris McGuire

Vice Chairperson: Louis Rossman, Michael Daly

AGENDA

1. **AUTHORIZATION TO DISTRIBUTE HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL NOTICE REGARDING KRATOM**
2. **AUTHORIZATION TO DISTRIBUTE HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL NOTICE REGARDING MEASLES**



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Health

ITEM: **AUTHORIZATION TO DISTRIBUTE HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL NOTICE REGARDING KRATOM**

The Committee will review and determine whether to authorize distribution of a notice from the Health Advisory Council regarding Kratom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Issue Briefing - Kratom Advisory](#)

[Draft Kratom Advisory](#)

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Health Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Authorization to Post and Distribute Kratom Advisory Notice

Prepared By: Brandon Ford, Assistant Township Manager
On behalf of the Lower Merion Health Advisory Council

Date: July 24, 2026

I. Action To Be Considered by the Board:

Review and determine whether to authorize the distribution of a Kratom Advisory Notice prepared by the Health Advisory Council.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Notices by advisory boards on sensitive topics should be reviewed by the appropriate Committee of the Board prior to distribution.

III. Current Policy or Practice (If Applicable):

No policy exists.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Township's Health Advisory Council reports that Kratom is increasingly advertised at mini-markets, smoke shops, and gas stations throughout Lower Merion Township. It is sold in a variety of forms, including loose powder, capsules, and extracts. Kratom is an unregulated and unstandardized substance with reported significant health impacts. The Health Advisory Council desires to raise public awareness of Kratom and warn of potential health outcomes related to the substance.

V. Impact On Township Finance:

None. The notice would be distributed through existing communication channels at no additional cost.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff does not have a recommendation pertaining to the Board's authorization to post and distribute this advisory.

FROM THE HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL OF LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP

July 2026

What is Kratom and Why is it So Dangerous?

You may have noticed signs advertising **Kratom** at mini-markets, smoke shops, and gas stations in Lower Merion Township. It is derived from a plant and it is also made in a lab as a synthetically manufactured and semi-synthetic product. It behaves as a stimulant at lower doses, like an opioid at higher doses and as a sedative at even higher doses. Kratom is sold in Pennsylvania as loose powder, capsules, gummies, and “shots” or liquid extracts. It is not regulated and doses are not standardized and can vary widely despite what is indicated on the label and could contain other harmful products.

It is not prescribed by health care providers; it is used by people who are trying to self-manage pain, anxiety, fatigue, or opioid withdrawal who often do not understand the dangers of Kratom.

Kratom has caused **fatal** overdoses, most often when it has been mixed with other substances. An advisory from the Pennsylvania Department of Health noted a dramatic increase in Kratom overdose calls to poison centers. Medical organizations including the National Institute on Drug Abuse have documented that Kratom can cause serious adverse effects including seizures, confusion, dizziness, hallucinations, high blood pressure, rapid heart rate, respiratory depression, vomiting, and liver injury, and can create withdrawal symptoms when users try to stop. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) strongly discourages its use and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) lists Kratom as a drug of concern.

Although it has not been approved by the FDA and has no proven medical indication, Kratom is not illegal in the United States. As of May, 2026, six states (Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Vermont and Wisconsin) have chosen to ban its use and 22 other states and the District of Columbia have put in place some degree of regulation. However, Kratom is not yet regulated or restricted in Pennsylvania. Currently, even minors can legally purchase it in Lower Merion Township. Pennsylvania lawmakers are considering new regulations such as restriction of Kratom sales to people over 21 and strict labeling requirements but, meanwhile, Kratom is widely available in our area and state-wide.

This substance may be labeled with words other than ‘kratom.’ It may be sold using other street or convenience store nicknames such as:

- Gas Station Heroin (Gas Station Crack)
- Herbal Speedball
- K-Train
- Jungle Tea
- Herbal High
- Maeng Da
- Trainwreck
- Bali, Thai, or Malay
- Green Leaf / Energy Leaf
- Thang, Kakuam, Thom, Ketum, and Biak (or Biak-Biak)

The Lower Merion Health Advisory Council urges you to talk with your teens, your family members, and your friends about the serious dangers of Kratom and learn more about Kratom here:

- [Kratom | National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#)
- [Increased Volume of Calls Related to Kratom/Mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine \(7-OH\) to Pennsylvania's Poison Centers](#)
- [Kratom Summary of State Laws](#)

DRAFT



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Health

ITEM: **AUTHORIZATION TO DISTRIBUTE HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL NOTICE REGARDING MEASLES**

The Committee will review and determine whether to authorize distribution of a notice from the Health Advisory Council regarding measles.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Issue Briefing - Measles Advisory](#)

[Draft Measles Advisory](#)

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Health Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Authorization to Post and Distribute Measles Advisory Notice

Prepared By: Brandon Ford, Assistant Township Manager
On behalf of the Lower Merion Health Advisory Council

Date: July 24, 2026

I. Action To Be Considered by the Board:

Review and determine whether to authorize the distribution of a Measles Advisory Notice prepared by the Health Advisory Council.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Notices by advisory boards on sensitive topics should be reviewed by the appropriate Committee of the Board prior to distribution.

III. Current Policy or Practice (If Applicable):

No policy exists.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Lower Merion Health Advisory Council reports that the United States is experiencing a significant increase in measles activity. As of June 2026, more than 2,000 confirmed cases have been reported nationally, including 67 cases confirmed in Pennsylvania. Measles is a highly contagious infectious disease. Early symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and red or watery eyes, followed by a characteristic rash beginning on the face and spreading downward. Children face elevated risk of complications such as pneumonia. Raising awareness of this disease is intended to help in preventing disease spread and save lives through early mitigation and detection.

V. Impact On Township Finance:

None. The notice would be distributed through existing communication channels at no additional cost.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff does not have a recommendation pertaining to the Board's authorization to distribute this advisory.

FROM THE HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL OF LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP

July 2026

Measles Update for Township Residents

Measles cases doubling

The United States is experiencing a significant increase in measles activity. As of June 2026, more than 2,000 confirmed cases have been reported nationally, nearly equaling the total number reported during all of 2025. Pennsylvania has also seen a substantial increase in cases this year. As of today, the Pennsylvania Department of Health has confirmed 67 measles cases of which 40 have occurred in Lancaster County and, with a recent case, now 20 in Lebanon County. There were 3 cases in **Montgomery County** earlier this year as well.

Local detection of measles virus

Over the past week, measles virus was detected in **wastewater samples from neighboring Delaware County**. Wastewater surveillance has become an important public health tool that can identify the presence of viruses in a community before patients become ill.

Residents should understand what a wastewater detection means—and what it does not mean. Detection of measles virus in wastewater does not indicate that wastewater is a source of infection, nor does it confirm that an outbreak is occurring in a particular neighborhood. Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes. However, the presence of measles virus in wastewater suggests that one or more infected individuals may be present in the community and serves as an **early warning signal that warrants increased awareness**.

Measles highly contagious

Measles is one of the most contagious infectious diseases known. Up to 9 out of 10 susceptible individuals who lack immunity and are exposed to an infected person may become infected. The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after an infected individual leaves an area.

Getting the MMR vaccine critically important

Because of its extraordinary contagiousness, **high vaccination rates** are essential to preventing outbreaks. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine remains the most effective means of protection. Two doses provide approximately 97% protection against measles. Public health experts generally recommend that at least 95% of a community be vaccinated to provide "community immunity," helping to **protect our most vulnerable: infants, pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals**, and others who may be unable to receive the vaccine or may not respond adequately to it. Unfortunately, vaccination rates in many communities throughout Pennsylvania and across the nation have fallen below this important threshold, increasing the risk of outbreaks when the virus is introduced.

Signs and Symptoms of Measles

Residents should be **familiar with the signs and symptoms of measles**. The illness typically begins with fever, cough, runny nose, and red or watery eyes. Several days later, a characteristic red rash develops, usually starting on the face and spreading downward to the trunk and extremities. Children are at especially higher risk for hospitalization and complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis. Individuals who develop symptoms, especially after a known exposure or recent travel, should contact their healthcare provider promptly and call ahead before arriving at a medical office, urgent care center, or emergency department.

As we enter the summer months, there is reason for cautious optimism. School vacations, fewer crowded indoor settings, and increased outdoor activities may reduce opportunities for transmission. Nevertheless, measles can spread rapidly whenever susceptible individuals gather, and continued vigilance remains important.

We encourage all residents to review their vaccination records and ensure that they and their family members are up to date with recommended immunizations. **Maintaining high vaccination rates is the most effective way to protect our families, our neighbors, and our community from this highly contagious disease.**