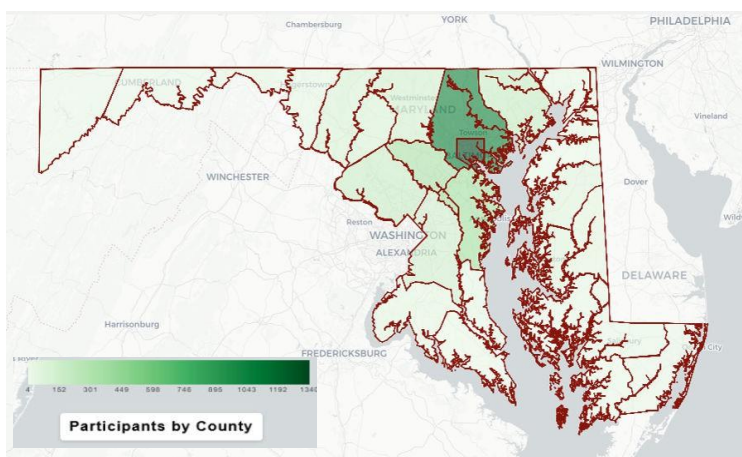




# My Healthy Maryland Fall Newsletter

## By the Numbers

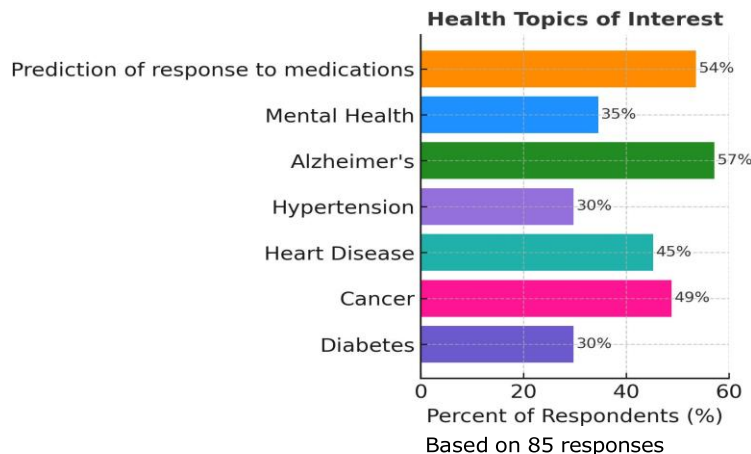


Every participant and sample brings us one step closer to building a healthier Maryland. Thanks to you, participation is growing across the State and beyond!

This map shows where My Healthy Maryland participants live across Maryland. Your involvement is helping us build a diverse resource to improve health statewide.

## Spring 2025 Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who took the survey in our Spring newsletter! We asked which health topics and genetic insights you're most interested in, and your feedback will help guide the kinds of updates we share in the future. Most respondents were especially interested in **Alzheimer's disease** and **response to medications**, followed by other areas like **cancer** and **heart disease**. This helps us focus on the topics that matter most to you, so stay tuned for more information and health tips related to these areas!



## Help Shape Our Next Newsletter!

We want to hear from you - what type of content would you most enjoy in future newsletters?

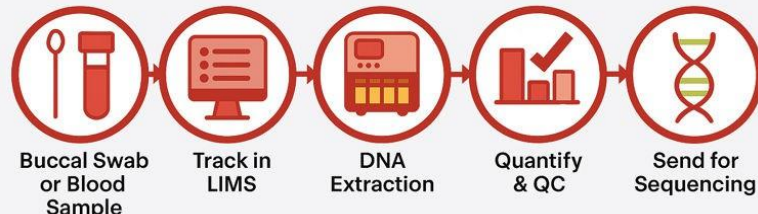
**Let us know here!**

## Behind the Scenes: Our Lab Process



Alejandra Gutierrez, PhD  
UMB Biobank Director

### How Your Samples Help Advance Research



When you provide a cheek swab or blood sample for the *My Healthy Maryland* study, it begins an important journey through our state-of-the-art laboratory. Each sample is stripped of your name and other identifying information and labeled with a study number. The whole process is tracked using a **Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)** to ensure accuracy and confidentiality at every step.

Buccal swabs are processed to release cells from the inner cheek, while blood samples are used to isolate white blood cells (both excellent sources of DNA). Using advanced automated equipment, we extract DNA efficiently and consistently, minimizing human error and improving quality.

After extraction, we carefully measure the DNA to confirm there is enough material and that it meets purity standards for genetic analysis. Once verified, your DNA will be prepared for sequencing, enabling researchers to **better understand health conditions** and **develop new treatments**.

Your contribution is essential to advancing science that benefits Maryland communities, and beyond.

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### Seasonal Health Tips

#### **Keep Moving, Even as Days Get Shorter**

Now that daylight savings is over, shorter daylight hours can make it harder to stay active. Try quick walks during lunch breaks or family activity time indoors.

#### **Mind Seasonal Changes**

Cooler weather and shorter days can affect our mood. Staying connected socially and getting outside when possible can help support mental health.

### Thank You for Your Interest!

We recently asked for volunteers to join our **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**, and we are so grateful to everyone who took the time to respond. Your interest and perspectives are essential to ensuring that *My Healthy Maryland* reflects the voices and needs of the communities we serve.

In addition to expanding our Community Advisory Committee, we're also designing a new initiative to engage a broader group of participants. We'll share more soon about how you can contribute to *My Healthy Maryland's* success!

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### Questions?

Contact us at 410-706-6140 or [myhealthymaryland@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:myhealthymaryland@som.umaryland.edu)