

**Two Rivers Public Health Department
10 Essential Services Board Report
August 2010**

- **Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community.**

The last of our health department surveys was conducted in Minden on May 28th. Those surveyed in Minden seemed pleased with their community and considered it a low stress environment. Most seemed surprised that there was a health department. A few suggested publishing our phone number in the front of area phone books for handy reference.

Surveying 251 residents among the seven counties we serve does not constitute a scientific survey, but a few themes stood out. First, only 1/3 surveyed knew about the health department. In many ways, this is positive, since public health tends to be invisible when it works. Education was considered by residents surveyed to be our most important task, followed by a request to provide services such as immunizations, screenings, and other prevention-focused options. Helping the elderly also generated discussion. It should also be noted that many of the categories used in other surveys, such as suicide or homicide, were never mentioned as concerns. This could give weight to using a survey with a more rural focus or adding questions with a rural focus to larger state or national surveys.

Two Rivers partnered with the DHHS Office of Health Equity and Health Disparities to hold a focus group on infant mortality with Hispanic mothers. Hispanics have a low rate of infant mortality in Nebraska and the purpose of the meeting was to gather information about habits and lifestyle that might impact the health of the infants in a positive way. 17 women participated in the discussion and the information gathered will be part of a statewide study that is being conducted to improve birth outcomes in Nebraska.

TRPHD worked with the UNL Department of Sociology to encourage participation in the SHARP survey in District Schools this fall. SHARP is the newly developed program which includes the Nebraska Behavioral Risk and Protective Factor Survey, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Youth Tobacco Survey. To increase voluntary participation and decrease interference in the school's schedules, these tests will all be administered in the fall, every other year starting this September 2010.

Kerrey conducted a total of 30 communicable disease investigations. Campylobacter topped the case count with a total of 11 cases. Campylobacteriosis usually occurs in single, sporadic cases, but it can also occur in outbreaks, when a number of people become ill at one time. Most cases of campylobacteriosis are associated with eating raw or undercooked poultry meat or from cross-contamination of other foods by these items. None of our cases were associated to an outbreak situation. Other communicable disease cases included; cryptosporidiosis, group B strep, hepatitis C, pertussis, salmonella, and e coli. There were also 2 cases of animal rabies that resulted in 2 people receiving post exposure prophylaxis.

- **Protect people from health problems and health hazards.**

As of June 30, 2010, the Two Rivers Public Health Department and their district partners have administered 27,258 doses of H1N1 vaccine.

TRPHD worked with NDEQ and the City of Lexington to address the septic system in a rental property that was not functioning properly and was creating a situation that was not

healthy or safe for the area. The City has vacated the property until the situation is remediated by the landlord.



Heather and Amy held Medication Take Back events in Franklin, Minden, Holdrege and Kearney. These events were very successful. We plan to continue to do one in each county annually.



A formal offer to facilitate the fit testing of hospital employees for N-95 respirators to protect against airborne infectious disease per CDC recommendation was extended to 6 district hospitals without such capability on June 17th. An OSHA compliant Respiratory Protection Program template and supporting documents developed specifically for hospitals was delivered to the hospitals.

Education related to the administration of the program and training in the use of the fit testing equipment was provided to 2 hospitals in late June and early July.

Fit testing is scheduled for 2 hospitals and training dates are pending for a 3rd.

A similar program was developed for EMS and submitted to Carol Jorgenson for review before forwarding on to TRIMRS and ultimately to the state level. The initial revision to the EMS program documents has been completed at this date and first responders in Franklin will be fit tested in August.

Seven members of the department were successfully fitted for N-95 respirators in the month of June. Reagent grade alcohol used during the fit testing process was contained in a metal cabinet to protect the health of department staff and fire fighters in the event of a building fire.

A comprehensive guideline for the management of TB patients in hospital and clinic settings developed by University of California at San Francisco was delivered in June to 4 clinics and hospitals within the district deemed to be at increased risk for encountering TB positive patients.

Daily monitoring of FDA, USDA and CPSC information on recalled foods, drugs, medical devices and consumer goods began in June. This information is screened for recalls that effect Nebraska and direct links are posted under the new "Recalls" tab on the website.

- **Give people information they need to make healthy choices.**

Interviews:

NTV June 10th-Bone Scan Screening information; June 17th Flood information; June 24th Fireworks Safety; July 1st Food Safety for 4th of July; July 15th Make Play Part of Your Day on site in Harmon Park; July 21 Pertussis; July 22 West Nile Virus
KRVN – West Nile Virus
KUVR – July 22 and August 27 Health Talks

Press releases:

Mold
Firework safety
TRPHD County Picnics

Kearney Hub June 23rd rabies with Kearney Police Dept – a learning experience with the media; West Nile Virus interview for article
Whooping Cough Vaccine for 7th graders

On June 7th, Two Rivers exhibited at the School Health Conference in Grand Island. Each year about 100 School Nurses attend the conference. This year, we provided information regarding our yearly theme. Many commented on the Activity Pyramid that we used on our display.



On June 19th, Two Rivers participated in the Holdrege Swedish Days Festival with a float in the parade and had an informational booth at the Street Fair. “Houston, we have lift off.” No, we did not launch a space shuttle; it was only Kim and Marsha lifting off as they attempted to set up the department tent during a quickly moving storm! Visitors to the booth

received helpful information and useful giveaway items. Our Wellness theme –“Make Play Part of Your Day” was highlighted. Two Rivers also hosted and open house on June 18th to celebrate their 8th anniversary. Healthy snacks, health education resources and give a-ways were shared with the 75+ attendees.



July is National Picnic Month. In support of Picnic Month and as part of our yearly theme, “Make Play Part of Your Day”, the Department organized seven picnics, each from 12-1 pm during the month of July. Participants of all ages were invited to bring their own brown bag lunch and beverage and to join us for brief health talks and activities. The West Nile Virus, Sun Safety, and Nutrition were covered in the health talks and activities included Frisbee throws, hula hoop, bubbles and other simple and low cost activities. DEET wipes and lip balm with sun screen were provided to all participants. Two lunch bags and two t-shirts were given as door prizes.

Heather and Kerrey have been working with the Holdrege Public Swimming Pool on a grant project titled “Pool Cool”. The program contains simple lessons concerning sun safety and the curriculum is designed to be incorporated into swimming lessons. The project also includes signage to display at the pool and policies that the pools can adopt concerning sun safety. Holdrege is our pilot pool and we hope to expand the program to other pools in our area.

Amy coordinated with Dawson County Emergency Management and the South Central Economic Development District to present 2 Business Lunch and Learns about Continuity of Operations Planning and Weather Preparedness. One was held in Lexington and the other was in Gothenburg.

- **Engage the community to identify and solve health problems.**

TRPHD participates in the BCCP CHAT (Community Health Access Team) which is currently focusing on developing a “pathway” system for diabetics in the healthcare community to increase access and decrease the morbidity and mortality caused by the disease.

TRPHD participates in the Dawson County Juvenile Justice Community Team which develops a plan for the county in addressing the promotion of the safety and well being of the community and its youth.

The quarterly Region 3 Behavioral Health Coalition meeting was held on July 15th. The seven visiting nursing students from Yale University received an earful as a community support worker spoke of her visit to a homeless man's home with a dirt floor and no running water or toilet facilities and the support worker at the jail described his experiences helping offenders.

During the month of June, TRPHD conducted its annual Walk Out On Your Job campaign. This year's walks were held in Franklin, Cozad and Holdrege. All sites had higher than expected participation, and during the Holdrege event, NTV came and did a live broadcast of the weather and covered the event as well. The crew had a great time and the participants enjoyed the attention!

- **Develop public health policies and plans.**

Two Rivers PHD Updates were provided to the County Boards in Gosper and Dawson Counties.

The Director participated in a Local Health Directors meeting with Drs. Schaefer and Miller at DHHS in June.

The Director participated in a community Immigration Meeting in Lexington with USCIS officers.

The Director met with each of our District's State Senators (Carlson, Christensen, Hadley and Wightman) to share information about Two Rivers and answer questions.

The Director has been asked to serve on the UNMC College of Public Health Panel of Advisors to represent the rural local health departments.

Kim offered a response to the OSHA request for information on the proposed OSHA Infectious Disease Standard. OSHA will review the public commentary and render a decision on whether a standard is needed and if so, whether to take regulatory action step up enforcement and or provide compliance assistance to employers to protect healthcare workers from infectious disease.

- **Enforce public health laws and regulations.**

TRPHD worked with NDEQ and the City of Lexington to address the septic system in a rental property that was not functioning properly and was creating a situation that was not healthy or safe for the area. The City has vacated the property until the situation is remediated by the landlord.

We will be meeting with the Buffalo County Sheriff and Attorney to discuss the Nebraska Methamphetamine Regulations and ways to integrate our responsibilities in these situations. The information developed will be shared with the rest of our counties and modified as needed to continue good our working relationships with law enforcement.

- **Help people receive health services.**

On May 21st, under the Public Health Nursing Program, Kerrey and Marsha made a home visit per provider request. Concern was expressed regarding the care of twins, along with several other small children in the home. The nurses were able to assess the home situation and the mother's level of knowledge and provide feedback to the provider. A follow up drop in visit was also conducted a week later.

June is Bone Health Month. As part of our yearly theme: **Make Play Part of Your Day**, Two Rivers Public Health Department partnered with the University of Nebraska at Kearney Human Performance Lab to offer reduced rate bone density screenings the mornings of June 14-17. Bryce Abbey was able to screen about 50 clients for \$10 each, and Two Rivers paid \$10 each for the first ten callers. Each one received a colorful printout that helped them to visualize the normal loss of bone mass over time compared to their own status at present. Bryce counseled each participant to take the results to their health care provider at their next regular visit for discussion and interpretation. Bryce shared that it was particularly poignant to hear many clients explain that their health care provider had suggested a bone scan, but they could not afford it, since, they either had no health insurance or a high deductible. In addition, on Wednesday, June 16, NTV did an on-site educational segment on their "Vital Signs" program regarding bone density screening. About two weeks later, a man reported that he had taken his bone scan results to his provider who seemed surprised with the bone loss his report showed. The man and his provider are now taking several steps to halt the bone loss.



On June 19th, in conjunction with the Department's 8th Anniversary Open House, H1N1 vaccine was offered. Kim was able to provide vaccine three adults who were pleased to have the opportunity for the immunization.



For the quarter ending June 30th, the Public Health Nursing Program has followed up on 145 problem appointments, eight Emergency Room follow-ups, ten case management reports, and conducted two home visits.

- **Maintain a competent public health workforce.**

On May 27th, several staff members participated in a Nebraska Public Health Lab presentation regarding proper handling and shipping of specimens.

On June 2nd, the nurses traveled to the Douglas County Health Department to review the surveillance methods used at a large health department and determine if they were applicable to our department epidemiology procedures.

On June 11th and 25th, the nurses participated in a two-part videoconference sponsored by PHAN, entitled, "It's My Bag." Recounting the history of Public Health Nursing, the conference also spoke to present day practice.



Terry, Amy and Heather completed an American Heart Association CPR Certification class. This was done with the other tenants in the Johnson Building.



Terry and Amy attended the NACCHO Conference: 20/20 Public Health Vision – Prevention/Equity/Leadership. Sessions included Updates from the Food and Drug Administration and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a Town Hall meeting with the CDC Director – Thomas Frieden, Evidence Based Practice, LHD Information Systems,

Health Impact Assessment and more. They also attended pre-sessions on Updates for SACCHOs and Public Health Law.

- **Evaluate and improve programs and interventions.**

Began the process of completing the review of Two Rivers Public Health Department Policies and Procedures with the Nebraska Standards and Measures to determine gaps and needed policies and procedures to move toward accreditation of the Health Department when the process becomes available.

The TRPHD Staff participated in the TRIMRS Functional Exercise. It was a 4 hour exercise with a Botulism scenario. Two hospitals in the Two Rivers district were major players simulating receiving actual patients. It was a great test of communications with partners, response plans and incident command.

- **Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.**

TRPHD provided funding support for the UNK Kids obesity longitudinal research program that is tracking children over several years to monitor lifestyle and obesity relationships to overall health.

The School Employee Wellness Program, commonly called WOW (Winners of Wellness) has been approved for a third year, and we are happy to have Franklin Public School System as our newest member this year. If you recall, every year we add one school system and were very pleased to see the amount of the grant increase as well. The program incorporates physical activity and nutrition information and activities into the public school system and includes everyone from administration to bus drivers.