BOH Welcomes New Member and Approves Fee Changes

This spring, the Board of Health welcomed a new member: Linda Huber, County Commissioner District #1. Huber was appointed to fill David Bowen’s vacant position in May, and as commissioner, must sit on the Board of Health. “We’re happy to have her join us,” said Cathy Bambrick, Administrator. “She brings a new perspective and fresh ideas.” The Public Health Department must update its fee schedule on a regular basis to ensure the department operates on a cost recovery basis, not for profit, not at a loss. In 2008 several fees in the Immunization Program and several Environmental Health Programs were revised to match reimbursement rates and cost of business. The Board of Health unanimously approved the revised fee schedule after clarifying several points and thanking the administrator and accountant for their attention to this matter.

BOHAC Providing Guidance for Data Driven Decisions

After the Key Health Indicator Report was published in 2007, BOHAC prioritized areas where Kittitas County scored worse than the Washington State rate. Most of these areas, including tobacco use, obesity, and medical care access, were already being addressed by one or more agencies in the county. There was one area, however, that was not being addressed. Youth depression and suicide were areas BOHAC felt needed additional focused attention. Data in the indicator report showed higher rates of depression in Kittitas County than other counties around the state. With BOHAC’s direction, Amy Claussen, BOHAC member and Planned Parenthood educator, and Sara Burnet, Assessment Coordinator with the Public Health Department, organized and facilitated a brainstorming session.

“We had a good turn-out of many different groups,” said Claussen. “It was a very good discussion about personal and agency experience with youth depression and suicide, challenges faced in addressing the issue, and available resources.” Claussen and Burnet will follow up with the initial brainstorming group to ensure this training reaches the identified parties.

Also this quarter, BOHAC has reviewed several policies including the Animal Bite Policy and Environmental Health Fee Schedule, and has provided insight into issues such as the Memorandum of Agreement regarding exempt wells in Kittitas County. Most recently, BOHAC voted on Environmental Key Health Indicators, representing the community as they voiced their opinion about the relative importance of a variety of potential Environmental Health indicators.

A Note From the Administrator, Continued

error and to increase efficiency of systems. When staff have completed a year of quality improvement efforts, the public health department will be more efficient and effective by use of automated systems, improved internal and external customer service, and ongoing quality improvement addressing identified deficiencies of audit findings.

Cathy Bambrick

To complete a customer satisfaction survey, please visit: www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health

PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

Summer Foods Offer Great Nutrition, Taste

With a plethora of local, fresh produce, Shape Up Kittitas County and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are working to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in the county. This summer, as in the past, WIC clients will receive checks to redeem at the local Farmers’ Market to purchase fruits and vegetables. Participating vendors will display signs with the WIC logo. “Clients really appreciate the Farmers’ Market checks,” said Christine Scharpenberg, WIC Coordinator. “The quality of local produce is unbeatable, and with the WIC checks, it’s available to everyone.” As harvest jumps into full gear, Shape Up Kittitas County will increase garden gleaning promotion efforts in collaboration with local food banks. Garden gleaning programs encourage everyone with extra produce, farmers and backyard gardeners alike, to donate the extra produce to local food banks. “FISH [food bank] has a hard time getting enough fresh fruits and vegetables,” said Robin Read-Ochoa, Health Promotion Manager.

“Many gardeners have a lot of extra fruits and veggies in the summer, and we’re trying to help them put their produce to good use helping people in our community who don’t get enough.”

A Note from the Administrator: Quality Improvement Follows Standards Review

In May of 2008, Washington State Department of Health via the Public Health Improvement Partnership conducted a Public Health Standards review of the Department. Preliminary feedback indicates that our department did well on the review due to the hard work and dedication of staff. The site reviewers identified several documents and processes within the department that will be used as recommendations for other health jurisdictions state wide. In addition to positive feedback we received recommendations for improvement.

The Department Quality Improvement Leadership Team (QILT) which directs quality improvement efforts throughout the department, implemented strategies to address the recommendations from the review team. Specifically, they have implemented Customer Satisfaction Surveys within all programs which include an online survey located on the public health department website. Internal program audits have been implemented in the Communicable Disease and Environmental Health programs to help improve systems within those programs. In the process of planning the program audits, it became clear that standard operating procedures needed to be developed or revised for certain programs. The program audits have also identified a need for increased use of technology to reduce human (continued on page 8)
Kittitas County Staff Assist with Grant County Measles Control

After receiving notice of their eighth confirmed case of Measles, Grant County Health District called Kittitas County Public Health to ask for help controlling the spread of this communicable disease. Grant County did not have enough trained staff to complete standard disease control measures, including phone calls to the parents of potentially exposed children and follow up with families that were difficult to reach.

There are actions Kittitas County Public Health can take now to be prepared, including updating all immunization databases and working closely with school nurses and primary care providers in the county.

CHILD Profile, an online immunization registry, would be invaluable in case of a communicable disease outbreak. Medical providers, public health professionals, and school nurses have access to the database, which records immunizations of children and adults in Washington State. In an outbreak, this database would easily identify those needing immediate immunization.

Immunization Clinic for Incoming 6th Graders

Before school starts this fall, incoming 6th grade students need to be up to date on all required immunizations. The Public Health Department will host several immunization clinics to ensure all students have a chance to get up to date. Students may attend any immunization clinic, regardless of school enrollment.

The immunization database, CHILD Profile, will be updated on-site as students receive immunizations. This database is accessible to primary care providers and school nurses as well, and includes both adults and children. In the case of a communicable disease outbreak, this database would help public health officials determine an appropriate course of action.

Holly Duncan—20 Years with Public Health!

Holly Duncan, Environmental Health Specialist II, reached her 20 year anniversary this spring. Holly was initially hired in April of 1988 as an Environmental Health Specialist I in Food Safety and Camps and Parks Permits and Inspections. Within 1 year she was promoted to Environmental Health Specialist II. Holly was also cross-trained into the On-Site Sewage program as the county began to grow. Since 1993, Holly has worked in the Drinking Water and school health and safety programs. Holly has a tremendous amount of historical knowledge that has been invaluable to the Department.

Holly has been a semi-pro baseball player, who, as a result of chewing tobacco, lost a third of his tongue, half of his jaw, and all of the flesh connecting the right side of his neck with the rest of his body. Never drawn to smoking, Rick got his nicotine fix from a little flat tin of what he calls “spittin’ tobacco.” But spittin’ tobacco still is full of benzene, lead, acetone, formaldehyde and about 30 other ingredients that might belong in a car or in paint remover, but certainly not in your body,” said Bender.

It took 10 years for Rick’s cancer to signal that it had taken over. “The first sign was a little sore on the side of my tongue. It was enough to spoil my Christmas. I thought it might have something to do with the tobacco and I went to the doctor. They did some tests and he said they’d have to operate and take out this cancerous dime-size bump on my tongue.”

Rick was scheduled for a two-and-a-half hour operation. It took over 12 hours. It also took away the possibility of Rick looking normal ever again. “Even after the operation, they didn’t think they’d got it all. They never thought I’d be talking to kids about what I did, and what I’ve gone through.”

Rick Bender is spreading the word about his experience, hoping to keep today’s youth from tobacco—the puff or the pinch. This message is especially critical in rural communities like Kittitas County where chewing tobacco rates are often double the statewide rates.

In April, Bender visited Cle Elum-Roslyn, Ellensburg, and Kittitas High Schools to spread the word.

“Af, d what I did... don’t believe them... don’t wind up looking like I do.”

Vaccines for Children is a federal program providing all recommended and required childhood vaccines free of charge for Medicaid eligible, uninsured, American Indian or Alaska Native, and underinsured children through age 18. The vaccines are distributed by the State Department of Health, and the local Public Health Department is responsible for distribution to local providers. As a condition of vaccine distribution, the local Public Health Department is required to perform a site visit on two locations annually, ensuring the vaccine is properly handled, stored, and administered.

A second component of this visit is the Assessment Feedback Incentive Exchange (AFIX). The AFIX component is performed by Amy Diaz, Assessment Coordinator.

While a Public Health Nurse examines vaccine handling, storage, and administration processes, Diaz helps clinics determine their vaccine coverage level, or calculating the percent of clients that receive all shots in a series. Specifically, Diaz calculates the percent of patients between 19 and 35 months of age who have received all 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 HsvB, and 1 Varicella vaccine.

Based on these findings, Diaz helps clinics develop a plan to ensure all patients receive every shot in each recommended and required series.

Immunizations are most effective when the series is completed; this ensures the antibodies are fully developed in the vaccine recipient.

Communicable Diseases

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Cases Confirmed</th>
<th>Other Investigations</th>
<th>Lead Poisoning Cases</th>
<th>Shigellosis Reported</th>
<th>Herpes Reported</th>
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Child Vaccine Administered

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<td>Varicella</td>
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Tuberculosis Program

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Shape Up Receives Community Award from Kittitas Schools

Earlier this spring, Shape Up Kittitas County was honored with an award from the Washington Association of School Administrators Community Leadership Award. This award is given to an individual or group who has made an impact on education, as nominated by the local school districts in each county. Each district is free to nominate different agencies, but all districts in Kittitas County collaboratively nominated and awarded Shape Up Kittitas County the Community Leadership Award.

"This award was totally unexpected," said Sarah Bedsaul, Health Educator. "It’s very flattering." Awards were presented at a ceremony in Yakima, attended by regional school administrators and award recipients.

Hepatitis C Event Increases Community Awareness

May was National Hepatitis Awareness Month, so in recognition, the Public Health Department’s HIV Prevention program hosted an awareness event. The HIV Prevention Program also works with Hepatitis C testing, counseling, and prevention, set up in the main corridor of the Morris Sorensen Building, representatives from the Kittitas County Public Health Department, Washington State Department of Health (DOH), People of Color Against AIDS Network (POCAAN), Roche Pharmaceuticals, and a nurse practitioner specializing in hepatitis shared knowledge and answered questions throughout the afternoon. The culminating event of the day was a talk by Nurse Practitioner Anne Croghan of Seattle.

Addressing a crowd of about 20 people, Croghan provided background on Hepatitis C, discussing risk factors for infection, stories from Hepatitis C patients. Participants were engaged and asked questions throughout her hour-long talk.

Breastfeeding Going for the Gold!

In an effort to promote breastfeeding and raise awareness about its benefits, the Breast Feeding Coalition is hosting its annual "Breast Fest” at Ellensburg’s Farmers Market on August 2nd. The theme of this year’s promotional activities is “Breastfeeding, Going for the Gold!” in celebration of the 2008 Olympics.

By increasing awareness, the Breastfeeding Coalition hopes to help new moms feel comfortable breastfeeding and increase community support. Breast Fest activities include:

- Prenatal and post-natal exercises led by The Gym staff
- Diaper Derby: race crawling babies across a blanket
- Prizes: Give-aways, blankets every 30 minutes, manual breast pumps, diaper bags, ice cream cone cards from Winegar’s, baby’s first haircuts, and nursing bras from ‘Birth & Baby’

Oral Health Provides Dental Care and Screenings

This spring, the Oral Health Program focused on attention on seniors, providing free preventive dental services at the City of Ellensburg Adult Activity Center for 34 senior clients.

"Periodic dental cleanings and oral cancer screenings help keep Seniors healthy by identifying problem areas in the mouth and teeth, and giving the client a referral to a specialist or general dentist if needed," said Christie Waddington, Oral Health Coordinator. “We found that people over the age of 65, who are restricted by fixed incomes, let their routine dental care lapse and only address the urgent needs when they arise.” Medicare does not pay for dental service.

By providing routine check-ups at no cost, seniors can save money for further care if it’s needed.

Addressing ‘suspicious areas’ in the early stages can save clients time and money, as treatment for serious problems can be much more expensive and painful. These preventive measures lessen the impact on the community’s medical facilities by reducing the number of urgent care visits to the local Emergency Department.

Unfortunately the Senior Clinics will not continue for the reminder of 2008 due to a lack of funding.
School-based Seals
Kittitas Elementary 13
Lincoln Elementary 27
Art Stewart Elementary *
Thorp Elementary 5
Summan School 0
Cle Elum/Roslyn 17
Easton 0
Parke Creek Group Home 28
Morgan Middle School 0
Busy Buddies 0
Provisional Clinic 0
Frye View Elementary 0
Senior Clinic 0
* incomplete data

Public Health and Department of Ecology work collaborative on many similar projects. For more information, please call payment online, however, so clients need to pick up the certificates in person and pay cash at that time, or mail a money order before the Public Health Department can deliver certificates via mail.

WIC Enrollment
TOTAL Clients 2,677
Pregnant 360
Breastfeeding 210
Post-Partum 120
Infants 638
Children > 1 yr 1,335
Well Checks Issued 2,377
Non-participating clients 11,626

Medical Nutritional Therapy
New Referrals 0
Returning Patients 10

Veterinarians Educated on West Nile Virus Prevention
Kodi Still, Environmental Health Specialist, has been busy ensuring local veterinarians are aware of prevention measures for, and can recognize the signs and symptoms of, West Nile Virus.

Prevention measures include emptying all standing water around a home (gutters, flower pots, tires, etc.) as these are prime breeding grounds for mosquitoes who spread West Nile Virus. People should wear insect repellent when outdoors, and vaccinate horses.

This summer, Still and other public health staff will collect mosquitoes and dead birds for testing as part of public health’s monitoring efforts. West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes, and often appears in birds before humans or horses.

In 2007 there were 6 cases of West Nile Virus in horses in Yakima County. For more information, call 509-933-8225.

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Vital Records Ordering System Now Online
Vital Records, also called birth and death certificates, are now available to order online. In addition to ordering in person or over the phone, clients may now order their birth or death certificates online.

The certificates may be picked up in the Public Health Office (507 N. Namus St.) or mailed to clients upon receipt of payment.

“This is something new we’re doing to improve customer service,” said Pam Bailes, Public Health Clerk. “It’s a quicker process for some clients to order their certificates online, because the certificates are ready when they come to pick them up.

There’s no waiting.”

Kittitas County does not accept payment online, however, so clients need to pick up the certificates in person and pay cash at that time, or mail a money order before the Public Health Department can deliver certificates via mail.

2008 Financials Focused on Streamlining
So far, 2008 has been focused on streamlining systems. Amber Simon, Accountant, and Amanda Davis, Public Health Clerk, traveled to Benton-Franklin Health District to learn best practices with billing procedures for Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance companies. They returned with many ideas that will help the department maximize revenue.

Simon also traveled to Grant County Health District to learn their streamlined system of grant billing procedures to maximize revenue and create better efficiency in financial statement preparation. Finally, Simon met with Snohomish County Health District to learn how to create an acceptable indirect cost allocation plan. “It’s important that the state approve our indirect cost allocation plan,” said Simon. “With an approved plan, we can again maximize revenue through grant billing.”

Simon has also been working closely with department managers and staff to create a new budgeting tool to assist with the accuracy of the budgeting process. “This will also help the entire staff better understand and stay in alignment with their individual program budgets,” said Simon. “It’s going to be a good year.”

Emergency Preparedness Exercises Successful
Emergency Preparedness and Response staff were busy this past quarter in many forums in collaboration with regional and local agencies ensuring a cohesive response to potential emergency situations.

Jerry Harris, Emergency Response Specialist, worked with the planning team for a county-wide mass casualty exercise culminating in a table-top and functional drill at Cle Elum High School in May. The exercises involved more than a dozen agencies and county departments. On the same day, administrative staff participated in a regional drill focused on emergency response to a radiation event.

Harris also participated in Emergency Medical Services’ Trauma Council and regular Fire Chief’s meetings. She represented Public Health at the Eastern Washington Red Cross District Emergency Response Retreat and the Incident Command System 400 training.

Finally, Simon met with Kittitas County that qualify; the Department of Ecology has contacts with a private tire recycler to clean up all five locations.

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