Board of Health Re-Appoints Dr. Solberg for Three Year Term

At the recommendation of the Board of Health Advisory Committee, the Board of Health (BOH) chose to re-appoint Dr. Don Solberg for a second three year appointment. Dr. Solberg is a physician with Valley Clinic in Ellensburg. On other business, the BOH approved a West Nile Virus (WNV) emergency response plan that had been amended slightly from a version of the plan adopted for the 2008 WNV season. The WNV plan includes mosquito and dead bird surveillance to identify the presence of WNV in Kittitas County, coordination with the state Department of Health for testing, and communication with local veterinarians, among other things.

There was one positive case of WNV in Kittitas County during 2008; this case was in a horse though humans can also be affected.

Health Department Staff Update BOHAC on Program Activities

The Board of Health Advisory Committee (BOHAC) heard from several Kittitas County Public Health Department programs at their monthly meetings during the first quarter. In January, the school and playground inspection program requested the support of BOHAC for a new inspection form and updated policy.

In February, staff from the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program presented the activities of the Teens Against Tobacco Use group. This group, reported on in the previous newsletter, trains teens to be peer educators about the risks of tobacco use. Finally, in March, staff from the HIV program updated BOHAC about current work being done. The HIV program includes a wide variety of work including testing and counseling, case management, and a prevention intervention program known as Partnership for Health. BOHAC also reviewed the West Nile Virus emergency plan that they had supported and recommended to the Board of Health during 2008.

QILT Works On Immunization Reminders

The Quality Improvement Leadership Team, or QILT, continues to work on projects designed to increase the efficiency of services offered by the health department. During the first quarter of 2009 the administrative division was chosen as the QILT focus, with a desired output of implementing a reminder/recall system to let clients know when they are due for additional doses of vaccines that are given in a series. HPV vaccine, for example, is given in three doses, with the additional doses spaced at two and six months after the first dose. This system should increase client compliance with multi-dose series, according to Candis Blackford, Administrative Assistant. Administrative staff have finished planning for the reminder/recalls and hope to begin implementation after the health department transitions to the use of a software system for client management.

Pertussis Outbreak Hits Kittitas County

Kittitas County Public Health Department has been investigating pertussis, or whooping cough, in Kittitas County since February 10. At the end of the first quarter, a total of 26 cases of pertussis had been identified and the health department had contacted or attempted to contact 997 individuals who might have been exposed to the illness.

Pertussis is a highly contagious airborne illness that can be severe in children under one year of age, pregnant women, and those with chronic respiratory illness. It is also a “noticeable condition.” This means that health care providers diagnosing the illness are required by law to contact the health department. “This allows health department staff to begin an investigation, contact those who may have been exposed, and hopefully prevent further spread of illness,” according to Dr. Mark Larson, Kittitas County Health Officer.

The health officer has been busy during this outbreak. Two health orders were issued during the first quarter, postponing field trips and scheduled events including other schools, school districts or family members of students at Kittitas Secondary School and all schools in the Cle Elum-Roslyn School District. These orders were issued to help stem the spread of illness outside of the affected school communities.

Kittitas County Public Health Department continues to recommend pertussis containing vaccines as the most effective way to prevent the illness.

A Note From the Administrator: Management Team Plans for 2009

The Management Team of the Kittitas County Public Health Department met for a half-day of planning on February 13 to revise our 2009 goals. To help prioritize the goals for 2009, the team reviewed the recommendations given during the last department evaluation, known as a standards review.

Standards reviews occur every three years; all local health jurisdictions are visited by two evaluators who assess the department’s adherence to the Standards for Public Health in Washington State (available on the Washington State Department of Health website, www.doh.wa.gov). Strengths of each department are noted, as well as areas for improvement. The Management Team used information from this evaluation, as well as observations from their own daily work, to compile a list of goals including:

- Spending more time in the community presenting Public Health work.
- Publishing food inspection reports on the Kittitas County website.
- Developing and/or updating county code for on-site sewage systems.
- Developing and/or updating county code for isolation and quarantine requirements in the event of a communicable disease outbreak.
- Developing a future technology plan to become an ‘almost’ paperless department.
- Creating division level plans that summarize program level work plans and connect the budget to planning documents.
- Continuing to work with the Kittitas County Auditor’s office

Cathy Bambrick, Administrator

(Continued on page 8)
Communicable Diseases

- CD Cases Confirmed: 37
- Other Investigations: 8
- Food Illness Complaints: 3
- Lead Poisoning Cases: 0
- Chlamydia Reported: 30
- Gonorrhea Reported: 3
- Herpes Reported: 1
- INH Preventive TX New 1
- Infectious Diseases New: 1
- TOTAL TB Tests: 70
- Meningococcal: 9
- HPV: 15
- Hepatitis A: 17
- Hepatitis B: 1
- IPV: 15
- Immune Globulin: 0
- Influenza: 16
- Meningococcal: 9
- MMR: 2
- Pediarix (DTaP + Polio + Hep B): 3
- Pneumococcal Conjugate: 2
- Pneumococcal Polysaccharide: 1
- Polio: 3
- PreQuadr (MMR + Varicella): 0
- Rotavirus: 0
- SC: 0
- Tdap: 17
- Varicella: 10

Tuberculosis Program

- TOTAL TST Tests: 79
- TOTAL Positive TST Tests: 1
- Cases Active TB: 0
- Suspect TB Investigations: 0
- NH Preventive TX New: 1
- NH Preventive TX Finished: 0

Free Children’s Immunization Clinic to be Offered April 18

Administrative staff have been busy planning a children’s immunization clinic to be held on Saturday, April 18. Kittitas County Public Health Department has been able to offer immunizations for children through age 18 free of charge during a yearly Saturday clinic for the past several years. This year’s clinic will offer recommended vaccines and those required for school or licensed child care entry. Requirement may vary by age and can be found on the Washington State Department of Health website at www.doh.wa.gov/chl/Immunize/schools/vaccine.htm.

Also available will be fluoride varnishes for children to help prevent tooth decay and helmet fittings from Safe Kids.

Budget Impact Competition Undertaken by Health Department Staff

Staff of the Kittitas County Public Health Department are working to lower costs and raise revenues of the health department through a creative competition.

The competition was suggested by the Business Manager, Amber Simon, after she experienced its impressive impact at a previous company she worked for. The premise of the competition was presented to the Board of Health during the March meeting, along with some of the early ideas that had been suggested. The Board of Health complimented the health department on their pro-active efforts to positively impact the budget.

Employees are divided into three teams and are challenged to recommend money-saving or revenue-generating opportunities. Teams submit lists of ideas to the Business Manager biweekly. Each of the ideas proposed is reviewed for feasibility and budget impact. If implementing an idea is possible and it will have a positive impact on the budget, the task will be put into practice.

The team that generates the most impact on the budget will “win” the competition. The competition began February 18 and has generated enthusiasm from staff. As of March 31, 76 ideas have been submitted from requesting an energy analysis for the building to sharing vehicles between department divisions. Other ideas include review of equipment leases and working to increase teleconferencing capabilities, which would have a positive impact on the travel budget.

One revenue-generating opportunity suggested is to increase applications for outside grant funding.

Sharon Smith Retires January 30

Sharon Smith retired January 30 after five years of service to the community through her position as a Public Health Nurse at Kittitas County Public Health Department. Sharon was involved in several programs offered by the Health Department including First Steps, immunizations, the Early Intervention Program, and in investigation of communicable diseases like salmonella.

Sharon touched a lot of hearts in the community with her strong dedication to helping others,” said Cathy Rambrecht, Administrator. “We consider ourselves lucky to have worked with her, and wish her the best of luck during her retirement. Sharon plans to continue with her quilting and travel the country during her retirement. The team that generates the most impact on the budget will “win” the competition. The competition began February 18 and has generated enthusiasm from staff. As of March 31, 76 ideas have been submitted from requesting an energy analysis for the building to sharing vehicles between department divisions. Other ideas include review of equipment leases and working to increase teleconferencing capabilities, which would have a positive impact on the travel budget.

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HIV/AIDS and Hep C

- Presentations: 11
- People in Attendance: 57
- Blood Borne Pathogen Classes: 1
- People in BBP Classes: 12
- Case Management Clients: 2

Public Health Department

Environmental Health Responds to January Flooding

Environmental Health staff at the Kittitas County Public Health Department were kept busy during the flooding of January 2009 caused by unusually warm temperatures. Staff were divided between two main tasks: assisting the Community Development Services department with assessment of damages and providing information to homeowners about flood impact on private water and on-site sewage systems.

Environmental Health Specialists accompanied staff from Community Development Services to assess property and building damage after the floodwaters receded. This assessment was required for the county to qualify for FEMA disaster recovery funds. It also provided Environmental Health staff a chance to view affected areas of the county first-hand to better understand the impacts to public health.

Some property owners affected by the flooding had their wells contaminated by floodwaters or had damaged on-site sewage systems. Both are health concerns because of the potential for illness. The health department recommended that homes served by wells with a wellhead that had been submerged at any time should boil their water until it had been tested for contaminants. Test kits were available at the health department.

Immunizations Important for Out-of-Country Travel

Though the economy may be down and travel activity is slowing, the importance of seeking a consultation from a Public Health Nurse before traveling abroad has not decreased. Kittitas County Public Health Department offers private consultations with a nurse where clients are able to discuss health risks specific to the location they will be traveling to. Clients may also receive vaccines to protect against illnesses such as Japanese encephalitis, yellow fever, and typhoid fever, depending on their destination. Anti-malarial medications are also available through the health department.

“If you’re going to spend several thousand dollars to travel out of the country, I absolutely recommend that people protect their trip by getting the proper immunizations. You don’t want to ruin your vacation by getting sick, or bring anything home other than memories and mementos!” exclaimed Linda Navarre, Public Health Nurse.

Clients who access services at the health department are frequently travelling for a vacation or religious mission. Kittitas County Public Health Department recommends a travel consultation for those travelling to any country outside of the United States. Even travel to countries that aren’t thought of as risky areas can increase your risk of contracting vaccine-preventable diseases.

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Clients are sure to miss Sharon, especially those that adopted near the holidays. Each year Sharon would choose a family or two that could use a helping hand and organized collections of furniture, food, and clothing from other health department employees to be delivered to their home.

Sharon touched a lot of hearts in the community with her strong dedication to helping others,” said Cathy Rambrecht, Administrator. “We consider ourselves lucky to have worked with her, and wish her the best of luck during her retirement. Sharon plans to continue with her quilting and travel the country during her retirement. The team that generates the most impact on the budget will “win” the competition. The competition began February 18 and has generated enthusiasm from staff. As of March 31, 76 ideas have been submitted from requesting an energy analysis for the building to sharing vehicles between department divisions. Other ideas include review of equipment leases and working to increase teleconferencing capabilities, which would have a positive impact on the travel budget.

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**Food Access Coalition Gears Up for 2009**

“The cheapest foods you can buy are also the highest in sugar, fat, and sodium, and the lowest in nutrition,” according to Robin Read-Ochoa, Health Promotion manager. Read-Ochoa is also the facilitator of the Food Access Coalition of Kittitas County. She collaborates with other community members and agencies in Kittitas County to advocate consistent access to healthy food and understanding of nutrition for all residents. The Food Access Coalition hopes to increase support for local food banks in 2009 by promoting produce donation and gleaning programs, where farm or homeowners can give extra fruits and vegetables directly to the food banks to help support those in financial need. They were successful during 2008 and hope to expand the program in 2009. The coalition also plans to support community gardening programs during the upcoming growing season.

Food Access Coalition Gears Up for 2009

**Regional Epidemiologist Assists with Pertussis Case Investigations**

Kittitas County Public Health Department received support from an epidemiologist who covers the North Central region of Washington State during the recent pertussis outbreak. Jackie Dawson also assisted Grant County Health District during a measles outbreak in 2008. Dawson managed much of the pertussis outbreak investigation, including interviews with positive clients. “We have been so impressed with Jackie’s work,” said Cathy Bambreck, Administrator, “she has been an incredible resource for us.” Dawson spent over one month assisting Kittitas County Public Health Department full-time, and she continues to help in a part-time capacity.

**Tobacco Retailers Checks Underway**

Local youth are working with the Kittitas County Public Health Department to conduct compliance checks at local tobacco retailers. During a compliance check, a teen attempts to purchase tobacco from a retailer. Compliance checks must be done on a regular basis at random locations selected by the Washington State Department of Health. The youth who participate are trained and accompanied by the location department health staff when they attempt to purchase tobacco, though the health department staff member does not enter the establishment with the teen. Youth who participate are between 15 and 17 years of age, have photo identification on their person, and are not allowed to lie to retailers.

During the first quarter of 2009, 18 establishments have been targeted for compliance checks with four sales allowed. “We hope that with more frequent checks, the number of retailers selling tobacco to youth will decrease even further,” said Kasey Knutson, Health Educator.

About 78% of the Kittitas County establishments checked were compliant with tobacco sales laws during the first quarter.

**Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Passed, More Work Ahead**

Health Educator Sarah Bedsaul has been working with the Ellensburg city council to move forward with the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan the council accepted December 15, 2008. This plan replaced an existing plan which had been adopted in 1997.

The latest Non-Motorized Transportation Plan aims to improve the environment for walkers, bikers, and hikers in the community while increasing safety, and has goals that community leaders, policymakers, and residents can work on addressing. Goals range from simple education about bicycle/pedestrian safety for local youth organization participants to items requiring amendment of city code.

Bedsaul recently approached the council about a pilot project to mark the lanes of a street well-traveled by bicycles using a sharrow stencil. A sharrow marked street does not create a separate bike lane but allows bicycles and vehicles to share a lane. Funding from a Public Health Department to conduct compliance checks at local tobacco retailers.
**Public Health Connection**

**School-based Sealants**
- Ellensburg School District 5
- Easton School District 0
- Kittitas School District 0
- Thorp School District 5
- Child Care Centers 0
- Other 0

**Fluoride Varnishes**
- Children Receiving Varnish 0

**Tire Piles Cleaned in Collaboration with Dept. of Ecology**
- Tire piles identified with Kittitas County Public Health
- Waste nine piles were identified in Kittitas County
- The pictures to the right are before and after photos of a tire clean-up in Kittitas County during 2008.

**Volunteer Oral Health Clinics**
- Dental Patients 34
- Senior Dental Patients 23

**New Compost Facility to Open in Kittitas County**
- The new compost facility will accept waste such as yard waste, grass clippings, leaves, branches, hay, and manure of agricultural origin.
- The facility will use windrow technology.
- The facility will be open by June 2009.

**Staff Prepare for West Nile Virus in 2009**
- Environmental Health staff have been working hard to prepare for the upcoming West Nile Virus (WNV) season.
- The Board of Health approved a permit for a new compost facility just 5, cultural origin.

**New Permits Issued**
- New Permits 0
- New Exempt Facility Permits 1
- Renewal Permits 7
- Renewal Permits Issued 7
- Permitted Facility Inspections 0
- Exempt Facility Inspections 2
- Complaints 35
- Incidents 1

**On Site Sewage**
- Receptor Requests 5
- Complaints 0

**Solid Waste**
- New Permits 0
- New Exempt Facility Permits 1
- Renewal Permits 7
- Renewal Permits Issued 7
- Permitted Facility Inspections 0
- Exempt Facility Inspections 2
- Complaints 35
- Incidents 1

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**Waste Programs began work in Kittitas County during 2008, recommended by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.**

**Vaccines Given to High-Risk Individuals**
- Vaccine from the Washington State Department of Health
- Individuals are at higher risk for contracting Hepatitis A or B if they have an occupational risk factor (such as health care workers), chronic liver disease, or use street drugs, among other things.
- Twinrix vaccination series.
- Twinrix was confirmed in one horse in Kittitas County during 2008, and staff expect to see activity during the 2009 season as well. Staff have made changes to the West Nile Virus emergency response plan (see p. 8) and are working on improving the Kittitas County Public Health Department website, www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/vector.asp, to include an online form that can be used to report dead birds. Some dead birds, including crows and magpies, can be tested for WNV.

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**Environmental Health**
- Environmental Health staff have been working hard to prepare for the upcoming West Nile Virus (WNV) season.
- WNV is a virus transmitted by mosquitoes. It can also infect birds, horses or other mammals, including humans. WNV was confirmed in one horse in Kittitas County during 2008, and staff expect to see activity during the 2009 season as well. Staff have made changes to the West Nile Virus emergency response plan (see p. 8) and are working on improving the Kittitas County Public Health Department website, www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/vector.asp, to include an online form that can be used to report dead birds. Some dead birds, including crows and magpies, can be tested for WNV.

**Kittitas County Public Health**
- Kittitas County Public Health Department also send mosquito samples for testing between April and September. Positive tests in mosquitoes are an early indicator that WNV is present in the county.
- Illness can also occur in humans. Of those people who do become infected with WNV, most will develop no symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they can include fever, headache, or a stiff neck. Severe illness is more likely to occur in adults 50 years of age or older.
- Steps you can take to prevent WNV include wearing a mosquito repellent when going outdoors, staying indoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, and eliminating standing water where mosquitoes can breed.

**There is a vaccine available for horses. Contact your local veterinarian for more information.**

**Complaints 0**

**Routine Inspections 0**

**New Permits Issued 26**

**Repair Applications Received 3**

**Repair Permits Issued 4**

**Renewal Applications Issued 26**

**Renewal Permits Issued 7**

**Site Evaluations Performed 12**

**Final Inspections 13**

**Final Re-inspections 4**

**Permits Issued 26**

**Short and Long Plans 6**

**Plat Applications 6**

**State Logs Performed 8**

**For more information contact James Rivard at (509) 962-7005.**