The Health of Kittitas County” Report Published

Kittitas County Public Health Department has recently updated a key health indicator report that tracks health data in six different categories. A total of 83 different health indicators are presented and the data are specific to Kittitas County.

The categories that were chosen, and the indicators selected within those categories, were chosen with care. Health department staff solicited input from members of the Board of Health Advisory Committee and health department staff to narrow down the categories to Health Care Access, Illness and Injury, Behavioral Risk Factors, Environmental Health, Maternal and Child Health, and Social and Mental Health.

Most of the indicators have data at the county, state, and national level. Some do not. A few have no data at all because a reliable source for data does not exist.

In the recently released report, the most current data is available and presented alongside the set of data used for the first key health indicator report in 2007. The report will continue to be updated every other year. When four datasets are available trended data can be presented to look at patterns. This information will help the health department and the community focus on areas where improvement is needed.

“The Health of Kittitas County” is available on the department website at [www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health.asp](http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health.asp). Paper copies are also available.

A Note from the Administrator: 2009 H1N1 Influenza Response

The 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic that began in April 2009 was a very unique experience for Kittitas County Public Health Department.

In the past, emergency events have been relatively short-lived, such as the flooding in January 2009. Occasionally, events that last a few months have occurred like the pertussis outbreak that required investigation and follow-up of over 1000 individuals in February and March 2009.

The influenza pandemic that began in April 2009, however, required a high priority and time consuming response between April 2009 through January 2010. Ten months!

Federal funding assistance was made available in time to hire two temporary employees for the months of November, December, and January. This coincided well with the release of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine.

By the time the temporary employees were hired, staff were already exhausted from the continuous strain of fielding questions from the public and media or trying to prepare health care providers and pharmacies for the distribution of vaccine without knowing the details of the vaccine arrival themselves.

Now that the number of cases has dramatically decreased, vaccine is available to all, and the illness appears to be no more serious than seasonal influenza strains, we can review some of what we have accomplished:

- Held weekly updates with emergency management partners from August through January;
- Vaccinated 1340 people with the assistance of volunteers;
- Distributed Strategic National

(Continued on page 8)
Communicable Diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease Type</th>
<th>Cases</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD Cases Confirmed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Investigations</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Illness Complaints</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead Poisoning Cases</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia Reported</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonorrhea Reported</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herpes Reported</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syphilis Reported</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia Reported</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gonorrhea Reported</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herpes Reported</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syphilis Reported</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Child Vaccine Administered
| DTaP                         | 1     |
| DTaP                         | 1     |
| H1N1 (2009)                  | 472   |
| Hep A                        | 10    |
| Hep B                        | 1     |
| HIB                          | 4     |
| HPV                          | 5     |
| Immune Globulin              | 0     |
| Influenza                    | 8     |
| Meningococcal                | 7     |
| MMR                          | 1     |
| Pediartix (DTaP + Polio + Hep B) | 2 |
| Pentacel (DTaP + Hep B + HIB)| 2     |
| Pneumococcal Conjugate       | 3     |
| Pneumococcal Polysaccharide  | 0     |
| Polio                        | 2     |
| Rotavirus                    | 3     |
| Td                           | 0     |
| Tdap                         | 8     |
| Varicella                    | 8     |

Tuberculosis Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Tests</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Suspect TB Investigations</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Preventive Treatment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished Preventive Treatment</td>
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<td>Cases Active TB</td>
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<td>Suspect TB Investigations</td>
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<td>New Preventive Treatment</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environmental Health Specialist Holly Duncan has been busy with school and playground inspections in early 2010.

According to Washington Administrative Code, the health department shall make periodic inspections of each existing school in the jurisdiction.

Kittitas County Public Health Department, however, is one of only nine local health jurisdictions that make these inspections at least once per year.

School inspections can cover up to 115 items, depending on the school. Among the many items that are checked:

- Drinking fountain water clears nozzle;
- Hand washing water does not exceed 120° F;
- Facility is heated to minimum of 65° F (gymnasiums to minimum of 60° F);
- Gym walls behind basketball backboards are padded during play;
- Coat hooks are safely located or protected.

Playground inspections are also conducted for elementary schools that have play equipment. At least 37 items are checked during each playground inspection.

“It takes quite some time to do a thorough school inspection,” said Duncan, “but with my own children attending schools in Kittitas County I understand the importance of protecting the health and safety of the students.”

Smart Growth Can Lead to Improved Health

Health Educator Sarah Bedsaul recently attended a nationwide conference on “smart growth”, a growing movement that advocates compact, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use.

Kittitas County Commissioner Paul Jewell and City of Ellensburg council member Nancy Lillquist accompanied Bedsaul to the conference, held in Seattle on February 4–6.

“Having community decision-makers attend this conference was essential,” said Bedsaul. “A major component of establishing smart growth is policy-level work that needs to be done at the city and county level. It just cannot be accomplished without the support of our policy makers.”

The smart growth work is a major component of Bedsaul’s work with the Shape Up Kittitas County program, which aims to promote wellness through physical activity and good nutrition.

Creating a physical environment that lends itself to physical activity will help Kittitas County residents maintain an active lifestyle, leading to lower rates of obesity and overweight individuals.

KCPHD Informatics Toolkit Posted by NACCHO

Kittitas County Public Health Department created a toolkit for use by other local health jurisdictions about the process of joining a community wide health information exchange network.

This toolkit has been posted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) on their website, www.naccho.org/toolbox.

The toolkit covers the experiences of the health department over the previous year and includes challenges, factors for success, and lessons learned.

It also includes materials that can be used by other local health jurisdictions preparing to implement an electronic medical records system or integrate with a health information exchange. These materials include surveys for health care providers regarding project reception and progress as well as presentations that can be used to explain the process and importance of community-wide health exchange integration to local community groups or governing entities.
Collaborative Hepatitis C Testing Efforts at Chelan County Jail

In early 2010, Kittitas County Public Health Department was faced with a supply of free hepatitis C testing kits provided by Washington State Department of Health that were nearing their expiration date. Rather than wasting the free testing kits, Outreach Worker Julia Karns organized a co-county collaborative testing day for inmates housed at the Chelan County Regional Jail in early February. “We have been testing inmates of the Kittitas County Jail for hepatitis C using the free test kits for some time,” according to Karns. “We have worked with the Chelan County Jail in the past when Kittitas County inmates who test positive for hepatitis C have been transferred to their facility.” Staff had an overall positive experience with the collaborative effort. They were able to see how other jails operate, leading to new ideas on how to work with the Kittitas County Jail more efficiently.

Co-county collaboration is also important for communicable disease reduction strategies. Understanding what is happening in our county and adjacent counties gives nursing staff insight into where preventive efforts are needed. Hepatitis C is a disease spread by blood that has no vaccine. Inmates are sometimes at higher risk for contracting the disease due to previous behaviors such as intravenous drug use.

Kittitas County Public Health Department plans to continue offering hepatitis C testing for high-risk Kittitas County inmates until the free test kits run out or expire.

Look and Listen for KCPHD Program Information in 2010

Kittitas County Public Health Department staff are trying to get the word out about the work done every day at the health department.

In 2010, each program at the health department will be featured in either a 20-minute radio session on KXLE AM radio or a 600-word article in the Daily Record Scrapbook section. Since there are more programs than staff members at the health department, they will be busy this year!

Radio shows on KXLE AM are hosted by Terry Cubbins on the first Tuesday of the month beginning at 12:30 p.m. Four programs have been featured in the three sessions so far this year, including immunizations, assessment, school and playground health, and the camps and parks program.

Health Watch articles are featured in the Daily Record Scrapbook section that is delivered with the Wednesday paper on the third Tuesday of the month. Oral health, assessment, and the Healthy Child Care Washington program have been featured in guest articles written by program staff this year.

Staff appreciate the opportunity to get the word out in a variety of ways. According to one staff member, “I love that I can share my work through an article that I can write, edit, and think about before submitting. I am just not comfortable sitting for a radio show!”

Kittitas County Public Health Department appreciates the opportunities as well. “We are very lucky to have the Daily Record and KXLE as community partners,” commented Administrator Cathy Bambrick. “Their dedication to this community and the public’s health is impressive.”

Tune in or pick up a paper during the second quarter of 2010 to learn more about food safety, HIV and hepatitis C, the pool and spas program, on-site septic systems, drinking water safeguards, and a local produce gleaning project. You’ll learn about how the health department works to protect you and your family from illness and injury in ways that you might not expect.
A free children’s clinic will be held for the fourth year in a row. This year’s clinic will be held at the health department on Saturday, April 17, from 9 a.m. until noon.

The children’s clinic is an opportunity for parents to ensure their children are up-to-date with the immunizations required for school entrance. Children usually need to have their vaccines updated before entering kindergarten and sixth grade.

All of the vaccines required for school entrance will be available at the clinic free of charge to any child 18 years of age or under.

Other children’s clinic events will include:
- Free fluoride varnishes;
- A Hallway to Health with educational information for parents and children;
- Free children’s activities (including seed planting);
- Free car seat checks and helmet fits (provided by Safe Kids Kittitas County).

Appointments are not needed. For more information call (509) 962-7515.

Planning Underway for Community Food Assessment

Health Promotion Manager Robin Read helped organize a planning workshop for the Food Access Coalition of Kittitas County. The event, held January 23, was part of the planning process for a community food assessment.

A community food assessment examines a broad range of food-related issues to tell the story of what is happening with food in a community. It can be as involved or as simple as the community wants, but typically answers questions such as: Where do people in our community get food or shop for food? What kinds of food are people eating? Are people eating healthy foods?

Some communities choose to conduct community food assessments by surveying residents. Other communities choose to map residential areas and food supplies such as grocery stores, food banks, and farmer’s markets.

The planning meeting on January 23 was well attended, with 25 participants. As a result, participants are beginning to plan a survey regarding community food.

To get involved, contact Robin Read at (509) 962-7003.

Recent Pool Inspections Show Improper Sanitizer Levels

Four of ten inspections of permitted pool and spa facility inspections in Kittitas County during February and March showed improper sanitizer levels.

Environmental Health Specialist Melissa Schumaier, who conducts the inspections, said, “Sanitizer is important to reduce the likelihood of recreational water illnesses in pools and spas, so the number of recent inspections with improper sanitizer use is concerning.”

Proper use of sanitizer protects swimmers and spa users against waterborne illnesses, most frequently diarrheal illnesses. The most frequently used sanitizer is chlorine, though other products such as bromine and ozone are approved.

Schumaier conducts re-inspections of each facility with improper sanitizer levels within two weeks to make sure levels are within the required range.
Annual Training and Emergency Exercise Day Held March 31

Staff of Kittitas County Public Health Department attended an annual training and emergency exercise day on March 31. Though the event was planned weeks in advance, staff did not know the emergency scenario that was used in the exercise until the night before when they were notified using an after-hours telephone tree.

This year, the emergency scenario presented to staff was a serious flood. This natural disaster can affect many areas of public health. Drinking water supplies and on-site sewage systems may be affected and loss of power may affect the available food supply (if refrigeration or freezing is required). In addition, many people may be displaced from their homes and require medical attention.

Staff work together to practice the response of the health department, including writing "test" press releases. In an actual event, informing the public of possible health implications and steps on how to protect themselves and their families is a critical component of the public health response.

Other items covered during the annual training day included a refresher course on the National Incident Management System, quality improvement and evaluation strategies and techniques, and a review of the laws that govern public health departments.

“The emergency exercise day makes me feel much more prepared to respond to an emergency,” according to Public Health Nurse Tiffany Beardsley. "Getting the chance to actually practice is key for me. This way, I won’t have to stop to think about what I should be doing, because I’ve already practiced and know what to do.”

The health department office is closed to the public on the annual training and emergency exercise day to allow all staff members to participate.

Department Expects to Lower County Fund Contribution in 2011

As a governmental office, Kittitas County Public Health Department strives to match expenses and revenues, achieving a break-even bottom line for the yearly budget. Above and beyond this goal, the health department has been working to minimize the contribution to the health department budget received from the Kittitas County general fund.

In 2009, the health department received about $250,000 in funding from the Kittitas County general fund, accounting for about 15% of the yearly department budget. The remainder of the funding that supports the health department comes from state and federal grants and fees for services provided.

Preliminary budget reports for the 2009 calendar year indicate that both revenues and expenses were lower than expected. In fact, the health department was able to set aside about $70,000 of funding from the 2009 fiscal year that can potentially be used to offset some of the contributions from the Kittitas County general fund in 2011.

“We are very pleased that we were able to set aside this funding,” said Amber Simon, budget manager for the health department. “We hope to continue carefully managing our budget in the future.”

Incoming federal funds received by the health department related to H1N1 influenza activities and lower payroll expenses contributed to the surplus. A vacant Public Health Nurse position was vacant for the majority of the year, and a Public Health Clerk position was not filled when it became vacant.

Simon points out that the department also did a better job managing grant funding in 2009 than in previous years. The use of grant funding replaces funding that would otherwise be required from the county.

Many of the grant funds received by the health department will be lost if not spent within a specified time frame. Better tracking systems allowed staff to manage the program budgets more efficiently in 2009.
Increase in Number of Food Handler’s Cards Issued

The health department saw a 25% increase in the number of food handler’s permits issued in 2009 compared to 2008. Food handler’s permits are required to work in a food establishment such as a restaurant even if the employee doesn’t handle food.

“The increase in permits last year may be a result of the down economy. People want to expand their options when it comes to finding a job,” according to Kodi Still, Environmental Health Specialist.

Completion of a short computer course followed by a passing score on a 32 question exam fulfill the requirements to obtain a food handler’s permit. The course is available at the health department from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. It takes about one hour. The fee is $10.

Call (509) 962-7515 for details about computer classes in Cle Elum or instructor-led classes in Spanish.

Follow-Up School 2009 H1N1 Vaccinations Completed

Children through age nine (including age nine) have been recommended to receive two doses of vaccine against 2009 H1N1 influenza to provide the best immunity to the illness.

Kittitas County Public Health Department aimed to make that recommendation easier to achieve for parents of children who had received a first dose of vaccine at a school based clinic. During the month of January, health department staff visited each elementary school to provide vaccine on-site for a second time.

The process for the second vaccination was the same as the first – packets were sent home with children, parent signatures and health histories were again required, and, when the day arrived, children received vaccine in the nasal spray form whenever possible.

Over 75% of children that had received a first vaccine at school and were age nine and younger got a second vaccine; this is well above the national average for second immunizations of about 50%.

“I noticed that there was less anxiety during the second set of clinics,” said Public Health Nurse Linda Navarre. “The kids knew what to expect this time around and it went very smoothly.”

The health department even received thank you cards from children who attend Damman School. A nasal spray or shot instead of the flu? Yes, please!

Shape Up Kittitas County Receives $40,000 in Stimulus Funding

Shape Up Kittitas County recently received word that they were awarded $40,000 in federal stimulus funds for work to be completed over the next two years.

The work to be completed using stimulus funding covers two focus areas related to the priorities of the program – promoting wellness through physical activity and good nutrition.

One focus area, safe routes to school, will allow Shape Up staff to work with up to two low-income schools to test the walkability of the recommended school walking maps. If unsafe or unwalkable routes are discovered, staff will work to revise the walking maps with the cooperation of the school district.

The other focus area, nutritional food access, will allow Shape Up staff to work with up to two retail stores to improve food choices. This can be done by such activities as replacing unhealthy foods with healthy foods, increasing the availability or quality of produce, or improving store layout.

These focus areas overlap with work that Shape Up regularly performs and will build on work already completed.
Water Moratorium Continues, New Water Availability Forms

The Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) has extended an emergency rule that imposes a moratorium on permit-exempt wells in Upper Kittitas County for an additional 120 days from a March 23 effective date. The current moratorium rule was set to expire on March 25.

Kittitas County Public Health Department has revised the water availability forms required as part of the Kittitas County residential and commercial building processes to reflect the changes that have occurred since the first moratorium went into effect on July 16, 2009.

The new water availability forms will apply to the entire county, even though the moratorium is confined to Upper Kittitas County.

Differences include separate forms for proposed building projects served by individual wells and group water systems and additional sections for group water system applications.

The revised forms include an additional section covering the intent to mitigate exempt well use that applies to the entire county. For Upper Kittitas County users only, new sections related to water metering as required by the emergency DOE rule have been added.

The new form is available on the Kittitas County website and will be mailed to purveyors (managers) of group water systems.

Other efforts being taken by health department staff surrounding the moratorium issue include continuing work on investigating the use of cisterns or water storage tanks for residences as an alternative water source. In order for this method to be approved, county code that clearly allows the process would need to be developed and adopted.

For the most up-to-date information on the moratorium visit the DOE website www.ecy.wa.gov. Background information is also available.

Immunization Status of Adolescents in Kittitas County

Kittitas County Public Health Department focused its attention on adolescent immunizations in 2009 using three approaches. Chart audits of health department files and those of local health care providers were conducted, health care providers who care for adolescent patients age 13 – 18 were questioned, and parents of children in 9th – 12th grade were surveyed.

The information obtained through these activities is presented in the recently published report “Immunization Status of Adolescents in Kittitas County.” Surprisingly, this is the first estimate of adolescent immunization coverage rates that is specific to Kittitas County.

The results of the health care provider survey show that the top three things that make it difficult to keep adolescents up-to-date on vaccines are:

1. Incomplete immunization records for patients.
2. Lack of routine health care visits for adolescents.
3. Patients receive care at multiple facilities.

Also in this report are estimates of adolescent coverage rates for each recommended vaccine; a list of the vaccines that are required for school entry in Washington State, by grade; recommendations and information for each vaccine; and things parents can do to help health care providers make sure all recommended vaccines are administered.

The information presented is useful to all parents, not just the parents of high-school aged children.

To access the report online, visit www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/assessment.asp.
BOH Receives Regular Updates on Health Department Work

In addition to passing several contracts related to health department work, the Board of Health (BOH) received regular updates on work completed by the health department from the department administrator. “We began providing Administrator’s Reports to the Board of Health in mid-2009, and I think the board members truly appreciate this addition to the regular agenda. The goal is to give a broad overview of the work done by the department during the previous month in a concise format,” said Administrator Cathy Bambrick.

BOHAC to Hear More Program Updates in 2010

Program staff are dedicated to improving the program update process for the Board of Health Advisory Committee (BOHAC) this year. The 2010 BOHAC schedule includes a short presentation from each program offered by the health department. This will result in at least 19 program updates over the course of the year! In past years, BOHAC staff heard about some programs infrequently or indirectly. Programs are frequently discussed as they appear in quarterly reports, but these updates sometimes only cover a single activity or accomplishment of the program rather than the overall program purpose and goals. It will be a busy year for the committee in 2010, but hopefully members will find the updates informative.

QLLT Presents 2010 Plan to BOH and BOHAC

The Quality Improvement Leadership Team (QLLT) presented the 2010 plan to BOH and BOHAC during the first quarter of 2010. Items on the 2010 quality improvement agenda include:

▸ Rapid cycle improvement projects (one per division);
▸ Creation of logic models for the few remaining programs without them;
▸ Review of the Key Health Indicators by BOHAC; and
▸ Modification of current program planning tool that to better align with revised state standards for public health.

As items on the 2010 QILT plan are completed, they will be presented to BOHAC.

A Note from the Administrator, continued

(Continued from page 1)

Stockpile supplies to 90% of local pharmacies;
▸ Provided immunizations during school-based clinics to 1498 students at 14 schools;
▸ Provided 480 follow-up immunizations for children age nine and younger during school based-clinics; and

Did you know?

▸ One in five Kittitas County high school seniors reported using a pain killer like Vicodin, OxyContin, or Percocet, to get high in the past 30 days. This is higher than the state average of 12%. (HYS 2008)
▸ Between January and October of 2009, 6.2% of Kittitas County food establishment inspections required a re-inspection because of health related violations. This is similar to the statewide rate of 7.0% in 2008.
▸ Only 45.7% of Kittitas County high school seniors say that they have never smoked a whole cigarette. (HYS 2008)
▸ Only 14.9% of Group B water systems in Kittitas County had received the required water tests. A bacteriological test is required each year, and a nitrate test is required at least every three years.
▸ In 2007, 57.5% of Kittitas County adults were considered overweight or obese. (BRFSS)

Provided weekly updates to media and health care providers. This list does not encompass all of the work that was accomplished or show how staff from all fields of public health worked together, but provides an overview of our work.

Cathy Bambrick, Administrator