

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

## Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) Works Hard to Keep Fair Safe

Labor Day weekend in Ellensburg draws 75,000 people to our county. With thousands of people visiting and enjoying food at the Kittitas County Fair, the Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) ensures that all food vendors are inspected throughout the event.

KCPHD staff completed 78 inspections on 30 establishments during the entire weekend. Establishments that are considered high risk, such as locations that prepare raw beef, poultry, or fish/shellfish, were inspected each day throughout the Kittitas County Fair Thursday through Monday.

Environmental Health Supervisor Holly Myers stated that, “the vendors were

incredibly easy to work with. There were no major violations during the entire event.”

Any violations that were observed were addressed and fixed on the same day. Issues ranged from missing thermometers to making sure there was adequate soap near hand-washing stations.

According to the Washington State Department of Health there are more than 250 different foodborne diseases. If a foodborne disease outbreak occurred during the Kittitas County Fair, our county could be overwhelmed by the number of people possibly needing care. KCPHD wants to make

certain that everyone visiting the fair has a safe and fun experience in our county.



## A Note from the Health Officer: Ebola Virus Disease Prevention in the US

The largest outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), since the virus was discovered in 1978, has brought the issue of Ebola to the attention of the world. People across the United States are listening carefully to information about the current epidemic.

Preventing the rapid spread of infection is the core function of the Kittitas County Public Health Department. With the first confirmed case of Ebola diagnosed in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed September 30th), we want Kittitas County residents to know

that we have already reviewed our ability to respond if Ebola should reach our community.

Locally, KCPHD staff has communicated with medical providers and Central Washington University to ensure that anyone who has travelled to the affected areas, is properly screened. Although it seems unlikely that our small community would face the issue of an individual who has been exposed to or is ill with Ebola, we are a global society and literally an airplane ride away from diseases that typically affect distant parts of the world.

We are confident that KCPHD, Kittitas Valley Healthcare, and Central Washington University are prepared, should an exposed or ill individual travel to Kittitas County.

Proper patient evaluation, use of personal protective equipment, and following other CDC guidelines will prevent the spread of Ebola here and worldwide.

-Dr. Mark Larson,  
Health Officer



**Department-Wide**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| New Grants /Fund Sources               | 0   |
| Active Volunteers                      | 6   |
| Health Data Requests                   | 1   |
| Quality Improvement Projects Completed | 0   |
| Media Contacts                         | 27  |
| Health Provider Releases               | 6   |
| Community Engagements                  | 139 |
| Code/Policy Updates                    | 0   |

**Vital Records**

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Births Registered         | 96  |
| Birth Certificates Issued | 228 |
| Deaths Registered         | 57  |
| Death Certificates Issued | 63  |

**Access to Baby and Child Dentistry**

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Outreach Contacts     | 52 |
| Referrals to Dentists | 2  |

**Communicable Disease (CD)**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Tuberculosis Investigations (TB)       | 0  |
| CD Investigations                      | 24 |
| Confirmed CD cases                     | 19 |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases Reported | 31 |
| TB Tests Administered                  | 30 |

**Immunization**

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Total Vaccinations         | 197 |
| Flu Vaccinations           | 0   |
| Travel Vaccinations        | 7   |
| Adults Receiving Vaccine   | 106 |
| Children Receiving Vaccine | 17  |
| Travel Consultations       | 24  |

**HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C**

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| HIV Tests                     | 3   |
| Hepatitis C Tests             | 3   |
| Syringe Exchange Participants | 27  |
| Syringes Exchanged            | 504 |
| Education Participants        | 78  |

## Kittitas County Breastfeeding Coalition Provides Oasis at Fair

The Kittitas County Breastfeeding Coalition provided a baby feeding station at the Kittitas County Fair for the second year.

Last year, the breast feeding station was a screened off space with seating, fans, and bottled water. This year, the station was located within the newly remodeled armory. The space included comfortable seating, air conditioning, as well as some toys and activities for children.

The baby feeding station was very well received and greatly

appreciated. A comment box was available for patrons. Every comment was positive and portrayed how appreciative visitors were for the space.

One comment from a visitor to the fair stated that, “I am visiting from Kirkland, WA. I have infant twins 8 months old and this place was such an unexpected

baby oasis! I so appreciated being able to feed my babies in a calm space. Water and toys so thoughtful. Thank you!”



## Upper County Shingles Vaccine Clinic

On June 25, KCPHD staff assisted by a student nurse hosted a free Shingles and Pneumonia vaccine clinic at the Cle Elum Putnam



Centennial Center. The clinic was well attended and the nurses worked diligently to administer 153 doses of vaccine. Of the total vaccines given, 123 were for Shingles and 30 were for pneumonia. Clients appreciated the opportunity to receive the Shingles vaccine free of charge, as this vaccine can be quite costly.

A resurgence of the same virus that causes Chicken Pox, Shingles can be very painful and debilitating for those who are affected. The Shingles vaccine is recommended for eligible individuals age 60 and over and is the best measure available to protect someone against a case of Shingles.

## Rapid Hepatitis C Testing Available at KCPHD

KCPHD received sixty rapid hepatitis C tests in addition to our other hepatitis C screening tests that we have available at the department.

The screening tests will be used for a specific and targeted group of patients. Patients must have a risk factor for hepatitis C as well as trouble with accessing care, whether from lack of insurance or no local

provider. Risk factors may include being a “baby boomer,” injected or snorted illegal drugs at least once, ever shared injection drug equipment, or had a blood transfusion prior to 1992.

Patients who come in for a rapid screening tests will have the results within twenty to thirty minutes.

Liz Whitaker, Community Health Supervisor, asserts that “patients who may have come in for a test and not returned for results, days later, will now get their status after just waiting in our clinic.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), hepatitis C is the most common blood borne infection in the United States.

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

## Interim Water Mitigation Certificates Issued

To date, twenty five water mitigation certificates have been issued in Kittitas County. Water mitigation is required for any new water connection in the lower Kittitas County. According to Holly Myers, Environmental Health Supervisor, “we expect that the current number of certificates could double.” Sixteen was the amount the county needed in order to recover the cost of leasing water.

Kittitas County has provided customers with a leased water option in addition to the already available private water banks.

KCPHD is working with customers closely to ensure

that the process of certification goes smoothly. In addition, KCPHD is working with other agencies such as the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Washington Water Trust Workgroup, so that the current interim mitigation process goes just as smoothly when the permanent measures replace the interim measures.

The county hopes to have its own water bank available for customers by December of 2015.

Other counties

are in the Yakima River Basin and the assumption is that other counties will eventually have to mitigate for water. “We hope that the processes we have in place and the partnerships we have will be something that other counties can use,” states Ms. Myers.



## Snag Canyon Fire Response

On August 2nd, lightning caused a fire near Robbins Road that would ultimately burn approximately 12,599 acres. By August 7, another wildfire in Cle Elum would also grow to 894 acres. The Snag Canyon Fire and the South Cle Elum Ridge Fires

affected our community by damaging structures and impacting air quality.

KCPHD staff assisted in the response in regards to property damage assessment, fire camp/shelter inspections and messaging about air quality .

Air quality messages were sent to the Kittitas County Emergency Operation Center as early as August 4, in order to get information out to residents about air monitoring resources.

According to Robin Read, Kittitas County Public Health Department Administrator, “the air quality, for the most part, was not reaching unhealthy and hazardous levels in Ellensburg.” However, on August 11, KCPHD sent out messaging about very unhealthy air quality within the county as a result of the two wildfires in the area. KCPHD recommended that all outdoor recreational activities be cancelled, which included school and club sports.



### Environmental Health (EH)

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| EH Complaints | 3 |
|---------------|---|

### Living Environment

#### *Schools*

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Building Inspections | 0 |
|----------------------|---|

#### *Public Pools & Spas*

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Permits Issued | 0 |
|----------------|---|

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Inspections | 7 |
|-------------|---|

#### *Camps & Parks*

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Permits Issued | 2 |
|----------------|---|

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Inspections | 15 |
|-------------|----|

### Solid Waste

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Permits Issued | 0 |
|----------------|---|

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Inspections | 8 |
|-------------|---|

### On-Site Sewage

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Installation Permits Issued | 49 |
|-----------------------------|----|

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Finalized Permits | 27 |
|-------------------|----|

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Site Evaluations | 46 |
|------------------|----|

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Inspections | 27 |
|-------------|----|

### Food Safety

#### *Permits*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Permanent Food Establishment Applications | 35 |
|---|----|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Temporary Food Establishment Applications | 21 |
|---|----|

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Food Handler’s Permits | 806 |
|------------------------|-----|

#### *Inspections*

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Establishment Inspections | 30 |
|---------------------------|----|

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Temporary Event Inspections | 85 |
|-----------------------------|----|

### Drinking Water

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Group A Water System Sanitary Surveys | 13 |
|---------------------------------------|----|

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Group B Water System Inspections | 0 |
|----------------------------------|---|

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Individual Well Site Application Reviews | 14 |
|--|----|

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Adequate Water Supply Determination Applications | 89 |
|--|----|

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Well Delegation Inspections | 5 |
|-----------------------------|---|

? **Did you know** ?

- According to the Washington State Department of Health, suicide remains among the top causes of death in Washington State.
- Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in Washington State.
- Three people take their own lives in Washington State each day on average.
- Most people considering suicide give warnings.
- Do not be afraid to talk about suicide. Talking about suicide does not increase the risk of someone killing themselves.
- September 8 - 14 is National Suicide Prevention Week.
- Behaviors that may indicate someone is at immediate risk for suicide::
  - Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself.
  - Looking for a way to kill oneself.
  - Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.



## Board of Health Approves Emergency Plan

On July 17, the Kittitas Board of Health approved the Kittitas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The plan addresses general emergency response strategies for KCPHD.

Rich Elliott, BOH member, stated “the plan is acceptable

and dovetails nicely with Kittitas County’s Emergency Management Plan.”



## The Mission of the BOHAC

The mission of the Board of Health Advisory Committee (BOHAC) is to provide feedback, formal recommendations, and public participation in public health activities.

In order to provide feedback, the Kittitas County Board of

Health (BOH) has requested that there is a BOHAC member present at all BOH meetings.

Nancy Jewett, BOHAC member, has attended several of the BOH meetings. Ms. Jewett communicates what is happening with BOHAC as

well as relays BOH information to committee members.

Ms. Jewett believes that it is “valuable attending BOH meetings, in order to stay up to date with the latest in public health.”

## Quality Improvement Project Presented

On September 26, Robin Read and Amy Fuller travelled to Kent, Washington in order to present the quality improvement project and findings to the Learning Congress.

Ms. Read and Ms. Fuller presented information regarding strategic planning. The aim of the project was to improve the effectiveness of

our strategic plan.

The presentation to the Learning Congress was a requirement of the grant funding. Six other counties and one tribe also presented project information. In addition to presentations, the day included keynote speakers as well as networking time for the representatives from the tribes and counties.

Ms. Fuller, Assessment Coordinator, was pleased by the presentation and especially pleased to hear Secretary John Wiesman’s feedback of a “great job” in regards to the results of Kittitas County’s quality improvement mini-grant project.