



*To protect and promote the health and the environment
of the people of Kittitas County.*

Annual Report



Photo by Bill Abbott

2015

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Letter from the Administration

Our mission at the Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) is to protect and promote the health and the environment of the people of Kittitas County. Everything that we do on a daily basis is linked to this mission statement. It is all about the mission!


Paul Farmer, American anthropologist and physician, is famously quoted, “the idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world.” Dr. Farmer’s famous quote captures the essence of our mission. At KCPHD, we believe that everyone who lives in Kittitas County has the right to be healthy. We believe that everyone should have equal access to health and be able to live in a healthy place.

We know that different groups in Kittitas County have different levels of health or health problems. Health disparity is the term used to describe those differences. Although we are concerned with everyone’s health, in order to create health equity in Kittitas County, some programs focus on specific groups of people.

Our work is a balance of protection and promotion. Protection work includes prevention like vaccines, and routine permitting and inspections of local food establishments. Promotion includes work with partners to raise awareness about universal developmental screening, or workplace wellness promotion, or encouraging flu vaccines.

The mission may sound benign, but our work can often be controversial. Enforcing actions on a failing septic system may anger the septic owner, but our mission is concerned with their health as well as their neighbor’s. The idea that everyone deserves health, including individuals who use intravenous drugs or other risky behaviors, often receives opposition, but we believe everyone deserves to be healthy. Our mission does not pinpoint young or old, poor or rich, educated or uneducated. Our mission is about everyone in Kittitas County.

We hope that you enjoy reading our second annual report. We hope that as you read, our mission of health for everyone in our county is on your mind. Most importantly, we hope you know how much our staff and organization love working towards a healthier county.



Robin Read, MPH
Public Health Administrator



Mark Larson, MD
Health Officer

We Are Kittitas County Public Health

Our mission is to protect and promote the health and the environment of the people of Kittitas County.

Our vision is that all Kittitas County residents have the freedom and ability to pursue healthy lives in a healthy environment.



ROBIN READ, Public Health Administrator

Ms. Read oversees all divisions and is responsible for departmental decisions, ensuring a competent workforce, and the accountability of public health in our community.



DR. MARK LARSON, Health Officer

By law, Dr. Larson's role is to protect the public. Dr. Larson enforces public health laws, educates the public about health issues, and takes steps to prevent the spread of disease in Kittitas County.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Programs in the environmental health division include drinking water, food safety, on-site sewage, solid waste, vector borne disease, air quality, camps and parks, schools and playgrounds, public pools and spas, and water resources. Supervisor Holly Myers recently received the 2015 Environmental Health Director of the Year award for outstanding leadership and dedication.

HOLLY MYERS
Environmental Health
Supervisor



TRISTEN LAMB
Environmental Health
Specialist



HOLLY DUNCAN
Environmental Health
Specialist



ERIN MOORE
Environmental Health
Specialist



FISKE FIREBAUGH
Environmental Health
Specialist



MELISSA SCHUMAIER
Environmental Health
Specialist



ASSESSMENT

AMY FULLER, Assessment Coordinator

Ms. Fuller oversees quality improvement and performance management. She also coordinates community related health assessments and monitors the implementation of the agency's strategic plan including preparation for accreditation.



FISCAL

KAITLYN REDDICK, Fiscal Analyst

Ms. Reddick oversees all things money: customer billing, program budgets, grant management, purchase requests as well as working with the Public Health Administrator to create the annual budget.



THE FRONT DESK

The front desk staff is the face of KCPHD. Services provided are done with skill and courtesy. Staff oversee vital records, food handler cards, and have a general knowledge of all departmental programs.



CANDI BLACKFORD
Administrative Supervisor

LISA MORIN
Public Health Technician



HOLLIE CASEY
Public Health Technician

HEALTH PROMOTION

The health promotion team works on programs such as community health assessment, chronic disease prevention, maternal & child health, Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD), tobacco prevention, and emergency preparedness.



KASEY KNUTSON
Health Promotion Supervisor

AMY KOCHER
Community Health Specialist



ZACH VAVRICKA
Community Health Specialist

COMMUNITY HEALTH

The community health division oversees various health related programs including communicable disease, HIV and hepatitis prevention, overdose prevention, tuberculosis, immunizations and travel consultations.



LIZ WHITAKER
Community Health Supervisor



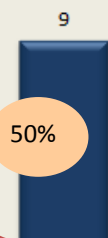
TIM ROTH
Public Health Nurse



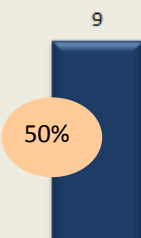
JULIA KARNS
Community Health Specialist

We Are Residents Too! Out of 19 KCPHD employees...

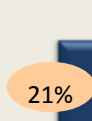
Staff with kids
in a local
school district



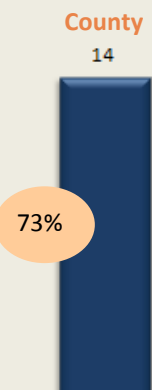
Staff who
graduated
from CWU



Staff that
grew up in
Kittitas
County



Staff that own a
house in Kittitas
County



KCPHD Governance

Who makes local laws about health?

By law, the **Kittitas County Board of Health** is responsible for overseeing public health in the county. The Board enforces public health laws and supervises public health within Kittitas County. The Board can also create rules, regulations, and set fees for permits to protect and promote health within our county.



BOH (from left to right): Obie Obrien, Dr. John Asriel, Gary Berndt, Paul Jewell, Rich Elliot.

Who advises the Board of Health?

The **Kittitas County Board of Health Advisory Committee (BOHAC)** provides community feedback and formal recommendations to the Kittitas County Board of Health. BOHAC has a range of nine to twenty voting members at one time. Members represent different interests in the county including private citizens, non-profit social services, the university, and several other health related community organizations.



BOHAC members (from left to right): Dr. Rebecca Pearson, Brad Bastian, Elizabeth Frederick, Dr. Judy Hennessy, Julia Romanelli, Teague McKamey, Dr. Anne Johansen, Andrew Lyons, Hartvig Vatheuer

2015 Year in Review: Top Stories

Biosolids Spill into Swauk Creek

On January 19, a truck carrying biosolids on Highway 97 skidded on black ice and rolled into a ravine. The truck spilled the biosolids into Swauk Creek. It was our job to make sure that people were protected from any environmental hazards related to water contamination. The Kittitas County Public Health Department coordinated with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the transportation company to make sure the spill was contained and cleaned. We notified residents to avoid the area and followed up with water testing of the creek.



KCPHD Works to Improve Air Quality

People exposed to fine particles over a long period of time have more heart and lung problems than people who are not exposed (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), which is why KCPHD cares about air quality. In 2015, we continued to collect information and provide education around air quality. For example, the 2015 survey shows that 67 percent of Kittitas County residents came into contact with outreach materials around air quality.

Ellensburg is on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) watch list because of concerns with air quality. In coordination with Ecology, KCPHD is working to prevent Kittitas County from reaching a point where the federal government considers our air pollution above an acceptable standard for pollution.

2015 Year in Review: Top Stories

Water Mitigation in Kittitas County

Access to clean drinking water is key to health. Because of the Growth Management Act's new requirements, new uses of water require mitigation or to be offset with a senior water right.

In 2015, the Water Quantity Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended a water allocation amount for the proposed public water bank. KCPHD requested proposals for metering contractors, meter reading equipment, and software.

On December 2, the Kittitas County Water Bank and Metering Program was put into place. The program offers mitigation packages for green and yellow zones in Kittitas County. Customers begin the water mitigation process with an eligibility review. Based on the review, new customers will find out which water bank zone their property is located in.



Dr. Mark Larson is Recognized for Excellence

Dr. Larson, Health Officer for Kittitas County, is devoted to helping people in Kittitas County. His devotion and excellence within his profession were recognized with two statewide awards. In 2015, Dr. Larson received the Dr. John Anderson Memorial Award for Outstanding Rural Health Practitioner. This award is based on leadership and dedication to provide quality healthcare in rural communities. Later in 2015, Dr. Larson was named the Family Physician of the Year.

Dr. Larson has practiced at KVH Family Medicine (formerly Valley Clinic) since 1998 and has been the Health Officer at KCPHD since 2006.



2015 Year in Review: Top Stories

Rats in Kittitas County

KCPHD works to prevent diseases passing between animals and humans. Our goal is to limit exposure and the chance for spreading disease. In 2015, residents complained about seeing rats and evidence of their presence in neighborhoods. This is the second year in a row that residents voiced worries about these rodents. In response to concerns, KCPHD provided information to residents about how to prevent infestations. Information was distributed to the public in addition to receiving and logging complaints. KCPHD did not receive any reports of human exposure or disease transmission.



West Nile Virus in Kittitas County



In 2015, Kittitas County had one person, eight horses and one bird test positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). WNV is spread through bites from infected mosquitos. KCPHD traps mosquitos and sends samples to the Washington State Department of Health. None of the samples submitted tested positive this year. In addition to WNV mosquito sample collection, KCPHD tracks reports of community sightings of dead birds. The only dead birds tracked are crows, ravens, magpies, jays, or hawks.

2015 Year in Review: Top Stories

Food Inspections over Kittitas County Fair Weekend

An average of 70,000 people visit the Kittitas County Fair each year. With that many people, including residents, visiting the fair, it is important that food vendors are inspected. KCPHD staff completed 117 inspections over four days at the 2015 Kittitas County Fair.



EH Specialist Melissa Schumaier inspects food vendors at the 2015 Kittitas County Fair.

County Considers New Tax - To Support KCPHD

In 2015, the Kittitas County Commissioners proposed putting a new county admissions tax in place. The tax would be collected on tickets, equipment rentals, and facilities used for recreation and amusement. Each year Kittitas County would collect those funds and distribute the first \$100,000 to support KCPHD.

For years, the Kittitas County Public Health Department has continued to see funding cuts. Without the necessary funds, KCPHD is not able to provide the full range of services to achieve our mission. Programs and services affected include chronic disease prevention, overdose prevention, HIV and hepatitis C testing, immunizations, tobacco prevention, and health data collection and analysis.



Paul Jewell



Obie O'Brien



Gary Berndt

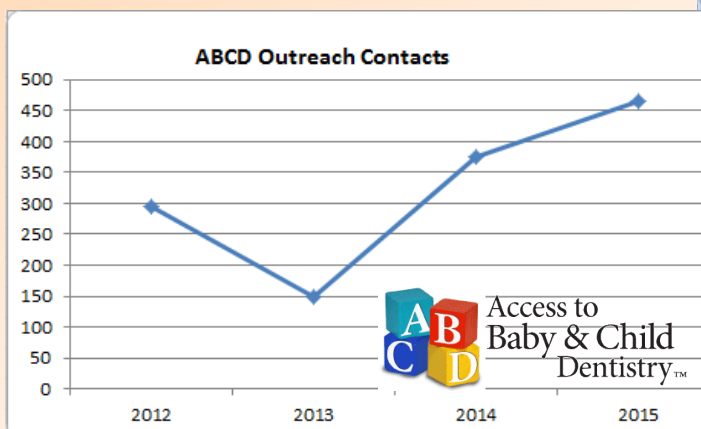
Annual Program Data

Department Wide	2013	2014	2015
New Grants and Fund Sources	8	3	5
Active Volunteers	7	7	5
Health Data Requests	9	14	17
Quality Improvement Projects	0	0	3
Media Contacts	147	112	122
Health Care Provider Releases	13	29	10
Community Engagements	578	713	535
Updates to Codes and Policies	3	7	10

Vital Records	2013	2014	2015
<i>Births</i>			
Births Registered	355	335	311
Birth Certificates Issued	934	903	1012
<i>Deaths</i>			
Deaths Registered	250	197	255
Certified Copies of Death Certificates Issued	1009	1013	1076

Access to Baby and Child Dentistry	2013	2014	2015
Outreach Contacts Made	150	376	466
Referrals to Dentists	2	18	13

The Access to Baby and Dentistry (ABCD) program helps bring needed dental services to young children. Children are eligible for the ABCD dental program if they are age birth through five and are enrolled in Medicaid. The program helps parents find a dentist as early as a baby's first month as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. There are currently five dentists in Kittitas County who participate in the ABCD program. KPCHD is responsible for conducting outreach to eligible families. In 2014, KPCHD's ABCD Coordinator implemented a new calling system and increased outreach efforts by 68% over the past two years.

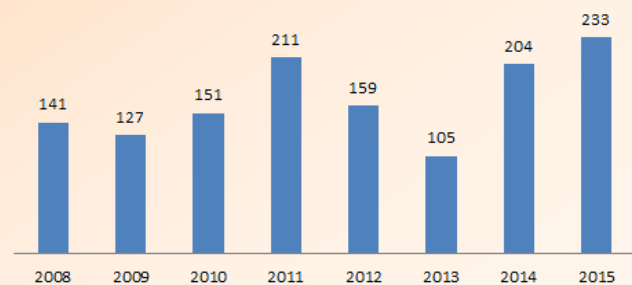


Annual Program Data

Communicable Disease (CD) & Tuberculosis (TB)	2013	2014	2015
<i>Investigations</i>			
TB Investigations	0	1	1
CD Investigations	117	139	270
<i>Cases</i>			
Confirmed CD Cases	62	69	53
Sexually Transmitted Diseases Reported	179	204	233
<i>Testing</i>			
TB Tests Administered	105	107	143

A current concern for Kittitas County is the rise in reportable Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's). KCPHD has seen a 36% increase in identified STD's in Kittitas County since 2013. This trend is being seen at the state level as well, with a 40% increase in statewide Gonorrhea cases over the past two years. KCPHD works with community partners to educate the public about potential risks and ways to practice safe sex. KCPHD also provides free condoms to the public.

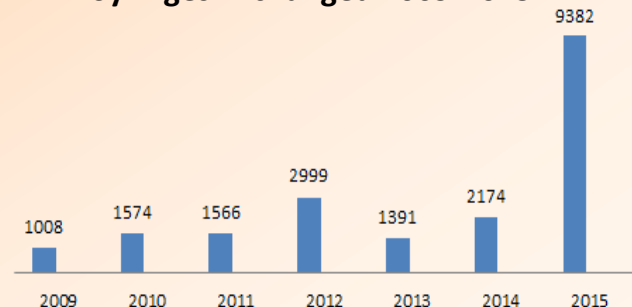
STD's Reported to KCPHD



HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C	2013	2014	2015
<i>Testing</i>			
HIV Tests	19	15	5
Hepatitis C Tests	22	9	13
<i>Syringe Exchange</i>			
Syringe Exchange Participants (duplicated)	72	103	118
Syringes Exchanged	1349	1928	9382
<i>Education</i>			
HIV and Hepatitis C Education Participants	237	371	210

KCPHD's Community Health division provides a community syringe exchange at established locations in the county. The exchange allows people who inject drugs intravenously to exchange used needles for clean needles. "Dirty" needles are a source of blood borne pathogens that can spread rapidly in a drug using community. In 2015, we saw a drastic increase in the number of syringes exchanged.

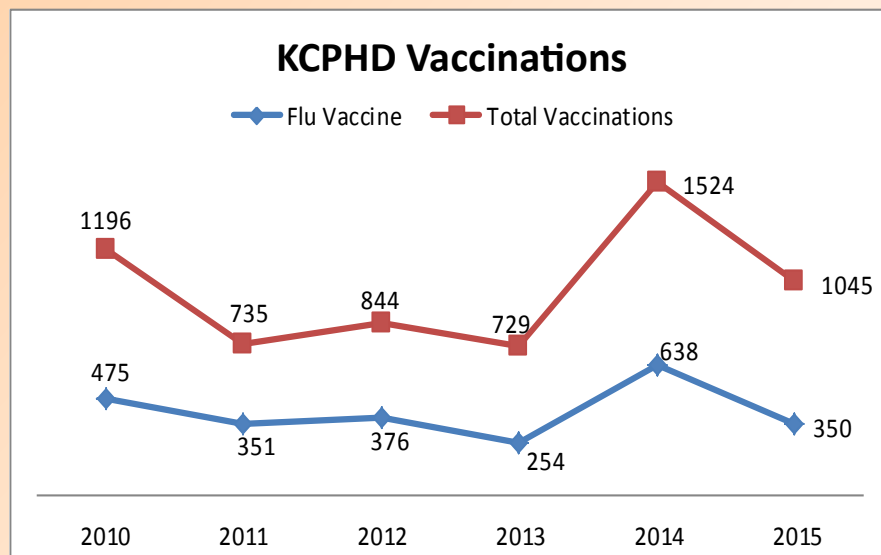
Syringes Exchanged 2009-2015



Annual Program Data

Immunization	2013	2014	2015
Total Vaccinations Given	729	1524	1045
Flu Vaccinations Given	254	638	350
Specialty Travel Vaccinations	74	30	29
Adults Receiving Vaccinations	283	760	517
Children Receiving Vaccinations	207	406	285
Travel Consultations	56	47	39

KCPHD plays a large role in keeping the community safe from communicable disease through the provision of vaccinations. KCPHD provides many types of vaccines including influenza, polio, hepatitis A and B, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap), as well as specialty vaccinations for overseas travel such as yellow fever and typhoid. The total number of flu vaccines administered this year was lower partially due to the decrease in free vaccine available (as compared to 2014). We continued to have access to the same free vaccines for uninsured and under-insured adults such as shingles and hepatitis A and B.

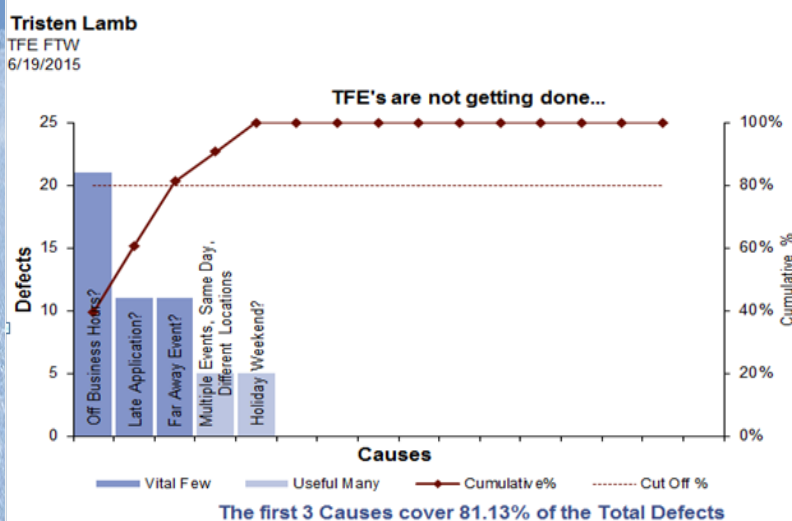


Annual Program Data

Food Safety	2013	2014	2015
<i>Permits</i>			
Permanent Food Establishment Applications	309	288	338
Temporary Food Establishment Applications	87	61	88
Food Handler's Permits	2490	2555	3056
<i>Inspections</i>			
Food Establishment Inspections	390	373	585
Temporary Event Inspections	158	96	171

Rural health departments with just a few food inspectors often struggle to inspect all the temporary food establishments (TFEs) in their county. In 2014, only 43% of permitted TFEs were inspected by KCPHD. Tristen Lamb, EH Specialist, and member of the KCPHD Quality Improvement Leadership Team created a QI project to determine why this number was so low and what could be done to improve it. Data collection and prioritization tools revealed that most of the uninspected TFEs were held outside of business hours, were inconveniently located, and had late application submissions. Benchmarking similar

Pareto Analysis

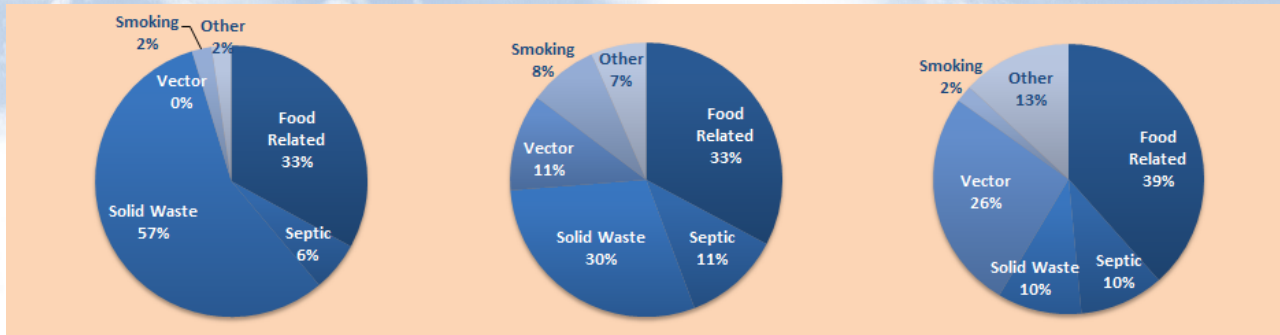


jurisdictions showed possible solutions: 1.) flexible inspector scheduling and division wide cross-training, and 2.) reduce the number of TFEs that need inspections with the introduction of a low risk TFE category. Using QI methods, Ms. Lamb analyzed this data and created realistic solutions for TFE inspections including changing criteria for low risk TFEs and creating a self inspection form for customers. She also amended KCPHD policy to reflect new definitions of TFEs. After solutions were implemented, documented TFE inspections increased from 43% to 86% for 2015.

Drinking Water	2013	2014	2015
Group A Water System Sanitary Surveys	9	15	9
Group B Water System Inspections	7	0	1
Individual Well Site Application Reviews	79	58	104
Adequate Water Supply Determination Applications	443	317	374
Well Delegation Inspections	28	21	34
Water Mitigation Certificates	N/A	31	108

Annual Program Data

Environmental Health	2013	2014	2015
Environmental Health Complaints	85	61	99



2013 EH Complaints

2014 EH Complaints

2015 EH Complaints

Solid Waste	2013	2014	2015
Permits Issued	9	9	8
Inspections	30	30	31

On-Site Sewage	2013	2014	2015
Permits Issued	180	187	238
Finalized Permits	78	126	163
Site Evaluations	157	177	232
Inspections	128	134	164

Land Use	2013	2014	2015
Plat Applications	11	6	10
Soil Logs	6	2	6

Living Environment	2013	2014	2015
<i>Schools & Playgrounds</i>			
Inspections	30	29	27
<i>Public Pools & Spas</i>			
Permits Issued	33	34	16
Inspections	30	30	50
<i>Camps & Parks</i>			
Permits Issued	17	16	13
Inspections	13	17	13

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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