

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

## Washington State Measles Outbreak Impacts All Health Jurisdictions

On January 18, Clark County declared a public health emergency as a result of a measles outbreak, which quickly escalated to a state-wide declared emergency on January 25.

As of March 22, Clark County had 73 confirmed measles cases and King County had 1. And although Kittitas County did not have a positive measles case associated with the outbreak, it still requires preventative efforts in the county.

When outbreaks occur, The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) increases communication with local medical providers and school districts. “We want health care and school district professionals to avoid quarantine situations,” states Community

Health Supervisor Liz Whitaker. “We send notices out with updated outbreak information and recommendations on vaccines.”

Kittitas County did receive reports about rashes, but no local cases were confirmed. Additional investigations involved students who were traveling for sports-related activities.

“A measles outbreak in Kittitas County would be incredibly expensive,” states Ms. Whitaker. “Measles is so contagious that one positive case identified in Kittitas County would mean that all of our staff would be working to communicate exposure sites, contact those potentially exposed, investigate exposures, answer questions about vaccines, et cetera.”

KCPHD continues to work with providers and schools to get information out to the community about vaccines and prevention. Almost all of the confirmed cases associated with the outbreak were in people who were unimmunized.

KCPHD recommends residents connect with medical providers with questions about vaccines and immunization information is available at MyIR online.



## Kittitas County Public Health Department Receives 5-Year Grant Award

KCPHD received notification of the Local Strategies for Physical Activity and Nutrition (LSPAN) grant award! The new grant funding stream provides \$60,000 annually for up to five years (total award of \$300,000).

KCPHD is one of four recipients of LSPAN funding (Kittitas, Kitsap, Clark, and Skagit counties). We are the only agency in Eastern Washington! “Partnerships in place like our strong Kittitas County



Breastfeeding Coalition (KCBC), the Kittitas County Health Network, and numerous letters of support from all of our partners, were integral in getting the grant,” states Public Health Administrator Tristen Lamb.

The grant requires work in four different areas during the five-year span of the grant, but only requires work in two separate areas during one contract year. Work that has already begun includes activities around increasing breastfeeding friendly employers and increasing bikeability and walkability in the upper county.

Our aim is to work with fast food locations in Kittitas County, to ensure those locations are providing breastfeeding friendly spaces to their employees. In regard to walkable and bikeable spaces, we are working with the City of Cle Elum to promote current efforts along with collecting future data, so the city can continue to pursue funding opportunities. In the future, we will also expand efforts and work in areas for Food Service Nutrition Guidelines and Nutrition and Active Play in Early Learning Environments.

**Department Wide**

New Grants /Fund Sources	1
Volunteer Hours	504.75
Health Data Requests	3
Quality Improvement Projects	2
Health Provider Releases	6
Media Contacts	8
Code/Policy Updates	2
Total Number of Clinic Appointments Provided	89

**Vital Records**

Hospital Births Registered	86
Birth Certificates Issued	346
Deaths Registered	74
Death Certificates Issued	356

**Access to Baby and Child Dentistry**

Outreach Contacts	355
Referrals to Dentists	2

**Communicable Disease (CD)**

CD Investigations	23
Confirmed CD Cases	6
STDs Reported	89
TB Tests	21
HIV Tests	1
Hepatitis C Tests	6
Syphilis Tests	1
Chlamydia/Gonorrhea Tests	2

**Harm Reduction Activities**

Syringe Exchange Participants	435
Syringes Distributed	16010
Naloxone Kits Distributed	41
HIV Education Participants	0

**Local Syringe Exchanges at Work in Kittitas County**

KCPHD has over eleven years of experience providing syringe exchange services. In addition to syringe exchange, KCPHD also provides other best practices like distributing Narcan and providing overdose prevention education.

“We have some excellent partnerships in place and more best practice services such as medication assisted treatment (MAT) via Community Health of Central Washington,” states Liz Whitaker, Community Health Supervisor. “Having local access to MAT means that anyone expressing interest at

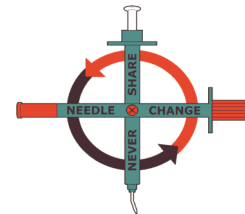
one of our local syringe exchanges can be connected quickly to medical services.”

According to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), about two people die every day in Washington State from an opioid-related overdose. DOH has identified four priorities: prevent opioid misuse/abuse, identify and treat opioid use disorder, prevent deaths from overdose, and use data to detect misuse,

monitor illness, and evaluate interventions.

“There is a commitment in Kittitas County to work to prevent and treat people with opioid use disorder,” states Ms. Whitaker “and interventions like syringe exchange can take a long time to build trust.”

Syringe exchanges work to prevent the spread of disease from intravenous drug use and also ensures thousands of syringes are properly disposed of in our county.



**Three Years Later, CWU Intern Returns to Kittitas County**

KCPHD has the pleasure of partnering with Central Washington University to host student interns. What’s even cooler? The coolest is when one of those interns goes off to a master’s program, and then comes back to work in the county.

Marie Betts (pictured right) worked as an intern three years ago, and has returned to work

with the Kittitas County Health Network as the Network Coordinator. “I don’t think there is a larger compliment to our community then having a student choose to come back to work in Kittitas County,” states Kasey Knutson, Health Promotion Supervisor.

KCPHD currently has four CWU Interns working at the department.



**Environmental Health (EH) Sees Staff Changes in 2019**

With Tristen Lamb accepting the position of Administrator, her promotion meant that KCPHD was in need of a new EH Supervisor. On January 22, Jesse Cox began his first day as Supervisor after also being promoted from within KCPHD.

On March 4, EH Supervisor Jesse Cox hired a new EH Specialist Zac Bales (pictured right).

Mr. Bales grew up in Selah and graduated from Central Washington University in 2018. He has a degree in geology.

Mr. Bales enjoys working outdoors and plans to put down roots in Kittitas County.



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## SMARTGov Increases Efficiency

SMARTGov is a permit tracking software that is being used by multiple Kittitas County departments, including KCPHD.

Customers may not realize, but the internal permitting system increases efficiency and customer service.

“Previous to SMARTGov, EH staff were inputting information into multiple data tracking sources,” states EH Supervisor Jesse Cox. “This new system means less time in toggling between systems to find information and cuts down on inputting information into multiple locations.”

In addition to the one step process, using the system to

the fullest potential means that other departments can access information as part of customers pursuing permits.

For example, customers at Community Development Services (CDS) who are in the process of a final building permit, can have CDS staff look at KCPHD’s records as part of that process.

“Customers in the final building permit stage have to have septic in place and CDS can see that status without sending customers to us or taking the time to

call and reach staff.”

KCPHD will continue to use SMARTGov to provide efficient customer service.

“We have continue to input more information to use the software to its highest level,” states EH Supervisor Jesse Cox.



## Environmental Health Cross Trains with MOLO Certification

KCPHD’s EH Division currently has five staff who work in various areas like drinking water, food safety, on-site septic, et cetera.

Historically, each EH Specialist oversaw one to two specialty areas within environmental health.

And although staff will continue to be subject matter experts in certain fields, there is a new focus on cross training each staff in various subject areas.

“Cross training can be difficult,” states EH Supervisor Jesse Cox. “We have limited staff and training requires us to be unavailable and out of the office for periods of time.”

Recently, two Environmental Health staff participated in the

Manager of Landfill Operations or MOLO training. The training is three days and concluded with an examination.

Examination results will be available by May of 2019 and certification will mean that staff can inspect landfills within Kittitas County without the use of partner agencies, like Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology).

EH staff is also working with a CWU Intern to create desk manuals for each subject area.

“We have staff, like Holly Erdman, who have been working at KCPHD since 1990 and we want to make sure that we capture her expertise the best we can,” asserts Supervisor Cox.

Environmental Health staff will continue to cross train, access certification for inspections in various areas, and provide services in all areas of EH.

“Case in point - EH will shortly go from one certified pools and spa inspector to three inspectors,” asserts Supervisor Cox.

<b>Environmental Health (EH)</b>	
EH Complaints	17
<b>Living Environment</b>	
School Inspections	0
Pool Facility Permits Issued	0
Pool Facility Inspections	6
Camp & Park Inspections	0
<b>Solid Waste</b>	
Permits Issued	0
Inspections	8
<b>On-Site Septic</b>	
Installation Permits Issued	47
Finalized Permits	20
Site Evaluations	16
Inspections	6
<b>Food Safety</b>	
Permanent Food Establishment Applications	6
Temporary Food Establishment Applications	9
Food Handler’s Permits	867
Establishment Inspections	134
Temporary Event Inspections	5
<b>Drinking Water</b>	
Group A Water System Sanitary Surveys	0
Group B Water System Inspections	0
Individual Well Site Application Reviews	16
Adequate Water Supply Determination Applications	54
Well Delegation Inspections	8
Well Site Inspections	2

? Did you know ?

- KCPHD had 20.15 FTE in 2018.
- 2018 Annual budget was \$1,667,265
- Proposed budget for 2019 is \$2,002,112
- Most of our funding comes from department fees.
- KCPHD has multiple divisions within the department.
- Staff salaries and benefits made up 80% of our 2018 total budget.
- Our mission is to protect and promote the health and the environment of the people of Kittitas County - population 45,600!
- Some of our services are required by law! Responding to tuberculosis in our county is one example.



## BOH Recognizes National Public Health Week

On March 19, the Kittitas County Board of Health (BOH) approved a resolution to recognize National Public Health Week, which is the first week in April, annually.

The intent of National Public Health Week is to call attention to certain public health issues. The American

Public Health Association determines an annual theme, and this year's theme is "Creating the Healthiest Nation: For science. For action. For health."

Noteworthy public health issues specific to Kittitas County center around the opioid crisis response, air

quality issues from wildfire, along with water mitigation in order to be what is considered "water budget neutral" in the county.

More information is online at [www.co.kittitas.wa.us](http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us) including annual reports and the 5-year community health assessment from 2018.

## BOHAC Works to Obtain Secure Funding for Public Health

On March 11, the Kittitas County Board of Health Advisory Committee (BOHAC) received a presentation on the 2019 finalized budget, which sparked discussion about Kittitas County Admissions Tax.

In 2016, ordinance 2016-001 provided the first \$100,000 to be dedicated to KCPHD. Additional taxes, per ordinance, are placed in the County General Fund.

With KCPHD facing budget challenges every year, BOHAC members discussed

additional admission tax revenue as providing sustainable funds for the future.



## Kittitas County Health Network Update

The community health collaborative effort known as "The Network" is currently making great strides in addressing community health issues relating to care coordination and social determinants of health in Kittitas County. They are currently applying for several new grants that address issues such as adolescent and adult

mental health and food access in the community. They are also continuing to work on projects such as an electronic referral system to coordinate patient information sharing amongst providers. The Kittitas County Public Health Department continues to partner with the network on several of these projects. Currently, KCPHD is assisting

the Network in creating performance metrics to identify how much progress has been made on the Community Health Improvement Plan's goals and objectives. These measures should tell the Network which areas may need to be bolstered or put on hold until more resources are available.