

Central District Health Department is pleased to present its 2009-2010 Annual Report. We strive to be the leader in assuring a healthy community. Our mission is to educate, protect, assist and collaborate through comprehensive public health programs based on best practices.

1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community

A best practice in public health is to conduct periodic community assessment. These assessments, usually undertaken every three to five years, provide an updated snapshot of the community's health status. This past year, CDHD engaged the community in a comprehensive assessment process called MAPP (Mobilizing Action to Planned Partnership). The MAPP process provides many benefits. It not only leads to the identification of key health issues, but also sheds light on what specifically in our community makes these health issues better or worse. Additionally, bringing together representatives of some forty-five organizations and agencies creates an opportunity for new dialogue to begin. Community members have the opportunity to learn from one another and to share their successes and concerns. As a result, important partnerships are developed and/or enhanced. The more we understand about our community and what role each of us plays in addressing issues, the more we can complement and build upon each other's work. In this way, we can make better use of resources and be assured of optimal outcomes from our programs and services. The results of the MAPP process are now published. Obesity as a result of poor nutrition combined with a lack of physical activity is our number one health threat. As we formulate a plan, we will be asking for those who are interested in addressing the identified issues to commit to long term partnership in designing and implementing programs and services to address these critical issues.

2. Protect people from health problems and health hazards

This year the Nebraska State Fair found its new home in Grand Island. The role of CDHD at the state fair is to protect State Fair visitors from health problems and health hazards. There are chiefly three areas of focus. The first is assuring that food and beverages are safe for consumption. The second is to prevent state fair visitors from exposure to West Nile Virus. The third is to reduce sun exposure which may lead to skin cancer.

CDHD Environmental staff met early and often with state fair planners to assure a smooth transition for food and beverage vendors from their previous site in Lincoln to the new Grand Island location. In order to transact business at the fair, vendors needed to apply for the appropriate local and state permits. On the Friday morning before the

fair opened, CDHD provided a mandatory food handler safety class for food vendor staff. Prior to the kickoff of the fair, CDHD Registered Environmental Specialists inspected each vendor booth to determine all food safety requirements were met. They provided reinforcement education at that time and periodically during the ten days of the fair.

Throughout the summer and into fall, CDHD staff monitor mosquito populations for number and type. Weekly samples are submitted to the state for analysis. Environmental Health staff base the mosquito control program activity on the reports from the state as well as on community feedback. When CDHD is aware that large gatherings are taking place outdoors, such as during holiday weekends or during the state fair, staff increases mosquito fogging as well as provide upgraded education and reminders to the public for taking precautions against being bitten by mosquitoes. This year, CDHD coordinated a West Nile Virus booth at the state fair where educational information was made available and samples of insect repellent with DEET were provided. Sun safety information was also a part of the booth.

3. Give people information they need to make healthy choices.

Providing people with information needed to make healthy choices is a regular function of CDHD. Staff provide educational classes on prioritized issues. On a daily basis, WIC Clinic staff give parents useful information specific to the nutritional needs of their children. A special focus of WIC is the Breast Feeding Peer Counselor Program where counselors who are or have been WIC participants provide support and lay education to current WIC participants. As a result, the CDHD WIC program has one of the highest breast feeding initiation and duration rates in the state. Bilingual, bicultural staff at CDHD tailor written and verbal health education to be language and culturally appropriate, reaching minority segments of the district's populations.

4. Engage the community to identify and solve health problems.

This year, CDHD continues to work toward making a federal health center a reality for our area. The process began last year through a planning grant. CDHD partners with South Heartland Health Department in leading the process. The coalition includes a variety of organizations and agencies whose missions include protecting and providing for the health of the public. Following a period of assessment to determine need and capacity building, the process moved forward to the grant writing activity. The grant was submitted this spring. We will be notified by the end of the year of our funding. In the meantime, we continue to work towards readiness to begin operations

5. Develop public health policies and plans.

This year's pandemic provided ample opportunity for setting public policy in place. CDHD began planning for a pandemic several years ago thanks to preparedness and response federal dollars. As the H1N1 virus began to circulate, CDHD staff divided responsibilities and activities to assure a smooth transition into a pandemic operation. CDHD utilized existing staff in a variety of innovative functions to assure that vaccine would be distributed effectively and efficiently to the public. Vaccine was given at the health department, but was also re-distributed to area health providers. This provided a number of access points where residents could feel comfortable in receiving vaccinations. Providers signed agreements prior to vaccine distribution stipulating how doses would be tracked. They also received regular communication from CDHD regarding any changes in target groups or vaccine management. The planning that took place years prior to the pandemic paid off in a smooth transition through the pandemic phases. In the end, H1N1 vaccination rates were about 25% of the 73,000 residents resulting in less illness.

6. Enforce public health policies and plans.

CDHD provides Vaccine for Children (VFC) Immunizations. Through this program, children are immunized against childhood diseases that can cause unnecessary illness and even death. Through the public schools, CDHD staff and school nurses review immunization records. School officials cooperate with CDHD to establish "kick-out" days for children who have not yet received required vaccinations. Throughout the process, school nurses and CDHD staff work cooperatively to assure that parents have access to and seek appropriate vaccinations for their children, including a number of additional vaccination clinics offered at convenient hours. In the fall of 2009, H1N1 clinics were provided on site at area schools. Younger children received flu mist intranasal spray and older children received injections at no cost. School illness days were closely monitored and surprisingly low.

7. Help people receive health services

CDHD provides regular Vaccine for Children Immunization clinics in Grand Island and in Central City, with a total of five regularly scheduled child vaccination clinics each month. CDHD also provides weekly adult immunization clinics. This past year during H1N1, CDHD facilitated the process whereby nearly 20,000 adults and children were vaccinated against H1N1.

CDHD also provides daily WIC clinics with an average monthly enrollment of approximately 2,700 families. These families receive vouchers for healthy foods, as well

as useful education on childhood nutrition for proper growth and development. As appropriate, WIC staff educate clients regarding the benefits of breast feeding babies. Additionally, breast feeding peer counselors provide support and assistance to mothers who choose to breastfeed.

8. Maintain a competent workforce.

Based on ongoing internal assessment, CDHD administration looks at the organizational structure of the organization to assure optimal utilization of staff and resources. CDHD encourages staff to attend appropriate continuing education workshops, and offers tuition reimbursement. Additionally, CDHD staff are encouraged to be members of and serve on committees and work groups of state and national public health related organizations. These activities provide opportunities for staff to network with peers and to become familiar with new evidenced-based practices, as well as current and future trends in public health.

9. Evaluate and improve programs and interventions

CDHD staff are engaged in ongoing program evaluation. Each existing program is evaluated for the following:

1. Are program outcomes aligned with the organizational mission?
2. Does the program meet identified community needs?
3. Is the program working, i.e. is something changing for the better based on what we are doing?

Evaluation processes provide an opportunity to teach evaluation skills and methods to staff. Then program revisions based on these evaluation findings can work toward improving program efficiencies and effectiveness.

10. Contribute to and apply evidenced based practice of public health

New programs are grounded in public health theory and designed by CDHD staff using current and promising best practices appropriate to rural settings. Components related to program evaluation including measures of structure, process, and outcomes are shared at staff meetings as well as at statewide meetings such as PHAN, NEHA, and SACCHO. CDHD shares program materials and lessons learned with other public health organizations throughout the state and across state lines.

A GRAND AFFAIR (AND A GREAT OPPORTUNITY): THE NEBRASKA STATE FAIR!

One might not think public health has much to do with a fair, but that is not the case. Central District Health Department started planning for the Nebraska State Fair as soon as its new home in Grand Island was announced. As with many of our public health functions, much of what we do at the state fair is not highly visible but it is highly valuable.

Our Environmental Health Supervisor met early and regularly with state fair organizers with a focus on food vendors. Applications for food vendor permits were made available and easily accessible on our CDHD website and at our office. CDHD Environmental staff visited the fairgrounds during construction to review the food vendor layout and meet with fair organizers. As phone calls increased closer to fair time, Registered Environmental Health Specialists provided important information regarding the processes vendors needed to follow.

On the day before opening day of the fair, Environmental Staff began the process of inspections. With a total of 67 vendors, it took several days to complete inspections of each vendor's facility. Inspectors revisited locations where they believed a second inspection was necessary to assure food was properly prepared and served. A total of 97 inspections were completed over the eleven day event. A mandatory food handler safety class was provided prior to the opening ceremony. During this class, vendors reviewed safety precautions such as assuring food temperatures were maintained, that running hot water was working properly, and that all workers observed proper hand washing technique.

Inspectors made themselves highly visible and readily available for questions and consultation throughout the fair's duration. During the process, staff maintained a focus on assuring public safety. Preventing a foodborne illness outbreak does not get much media attention, but it is highly preferable to dealing with the fallout when contaminated food products cause a food borne illness outbreak.

CDHD also took advantage of several other opportunities to address potential health issues at the fair. In partnership with DHHS and four other district health departments, we hosted a West Nile Virus educational exhibit. Educational materials were made available to the public with the idea of better preparing those attending the state fair to "Fite the Bite!" Coincidentally, a press release related to the first human case of West

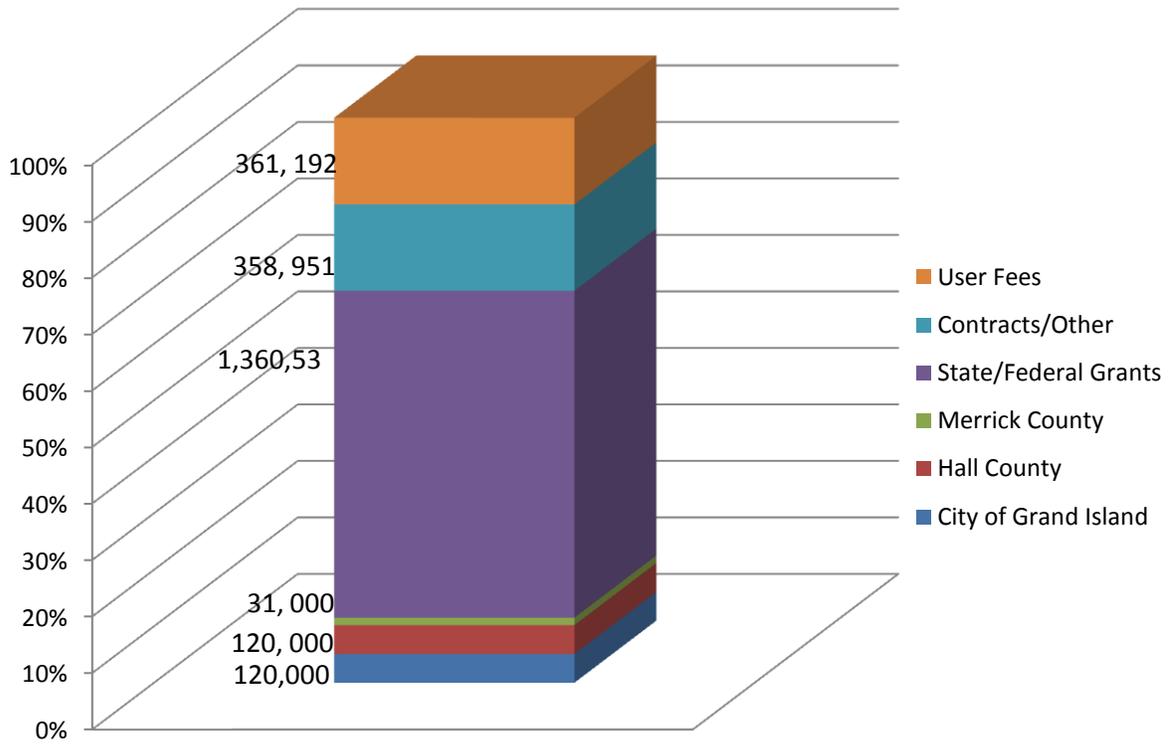
Nile Virus in Hall County was released, making the “Fite the Bite!” message both timely and important.

The CDHD WIC office took the lead in developing and staffing a breastfeeding center at the state fair. New mothers welcomed a break from the hustle and bustle of the fair in this conveniently located room complete with rocking recliners and bottled water. Here in these quiet surroundings they could breast feed and tend to their infants’ needs in privacy. Amazingly, nearly 1200 mothers and their family members visited the breastfeeding center.

CDHD also partnered in a nutritional activity for the children’s area. Healthy trail mix was offered as a treat for children participating in a learning activity related to nutrition.

With a total of 309,000 visitors to the State Fair, it is clear to see that there were ample opportunities for CDHD to promote and protect the health of the public. We have already begun to review our processes and outcomes so that we can be even more effective for next year’s Nebraska State Fair!

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CDHD REVENUE BY SOURCE (FY 2009-10)

