

Central District Health Department



ANNUAL REPORT

Hall, Hamilton & Merrick Counties, Nebraska

FY 2012-2013



What is Public Health?

Public Health works to protect and improve the health of communities through assessment, assurance and policy development. Public health professionals educate, promote healthy lifestyles, track disease and prevent illness. Public health focuses on the effect that genetics, personal choice and the environment have on health in order to develop programs that protect the health of your family.

Public health focuses on protecting the health of entire populations. This may be a small group of people, a neighborhood or an entire community. Public health departments cooperate across the nation to provide safeguards against disease and illness in order to improve our quality of life.

Professionals in the field try to recognize and prevent problems from occurring before they become a larger issue. They focus on early interventions which ultimately are cost effective and limit suffering from disease or illness. This work is accomplished by creating educational programs, developing policies, administering services, regulating industry and working in partnership with others. Public health works on the foundation of 10 essential services that guide the practice.

“Our vision is 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. This is achieved by qualified staff empowered by personal and professional growth opportunities. We embrace a philosophy of integrity, commitment, and continuous quality improvement while providing progressive economically sound programs that target our community’s needs.”

The Ten Essential Public Health Services

- Monitor health status to identify community health problems
- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
- Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

What has Public Health accomplished?

Public health has a long and storied history throughout the world. As the world changes so do the priorities of public health agencies. Public health is responsible for many of the basic needs in life...safe water, food and air, basic sanitation and the control of disease.

Accomplishments over time have included:

- Vaccinations

- Motor-vehicle safety
- Safer workplaces
- Control of infectious diseases
- Decline in deaths from coronary heart disease and stroke
- Safer and healthier foods
- Healthier mothers and babies
- Family planning
- Fluoridation of drinking water
- Recognition of tobacco use as a health hazard

These advances have been largely responsible for increasing the lifespan of populations; over twenty-five of the 30 years can be accredited to public health initiatives. Furthermore, since 1900, the average life expectancy for Americans has increased by about 30 years.

What does Public Health look like in my community?

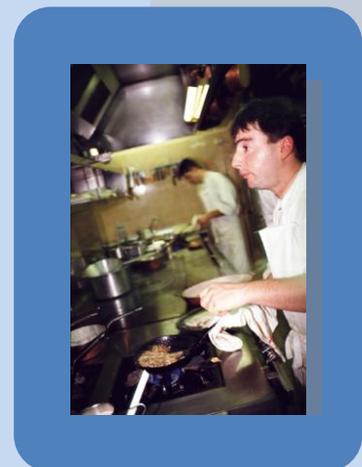
Your public health department is made up of dedicated professionals doing work in the service areas of Hall, Hamilton and Merrick Counties in Nebraska. ~75,000 residents live within the district's coverage area. The organization provides comprehensive public health services based on the needs of the community and the priorities of its residents.

The organization is governed by a Board of Health made up of residents represented in each county that is served. They provide oversight and strategic guidance to the important work conducted by Central District Health Department. Day-to-day functions are conducted by 26 staff that bring a wide variety of backgrounds and experience. The employees are led by a Health Director who oversees the organization and its programs. Central District Health Department structures the majority of its program and staff into two divisions; Environmental Health and Community Health. Each division is led by a supervisor who designs and implements programs and processes aimed to achieve healthy outcomes for the community.



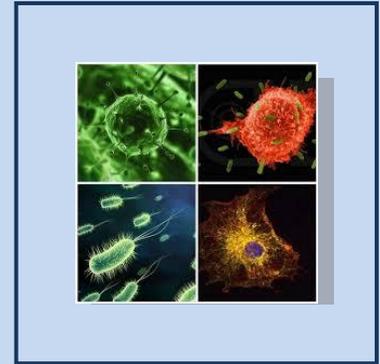
Environmental Health Division

Humans interact with the environment constantly. These interactions affect quality of life, years of healthy life lived, and health disparities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines environment, as it relates to health, as "all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all the related behaviors." Environmental health consists of preventing or controlling disease, injury, and disability related to the interactions between people and their environment. Maintaining a healthy environment is critical to our quality of life. Globally, nearly 25% of all deaths and disease burden can be attributed to environmental factors. These factors include exposure to hazardous substances in the air, water, soil and food; natural



and man-made disasters, physical hazards and the built environment.

Central District Health Department utilizes Registered Environmental Health Specialists to provide education, regulatory compliance and programming within the division. Inspections are conducted on a variety of operations including: food and drink establishments, tattoo and body piercing businesses, commercial animal establishments, swimming pools, child care facilities, garbage trucks, recreational camps, mobile home parks and worksites, well and septic systems. They also conduct smoking compliance checks at worksites and provide mosquito control. Throughout the year 1,126 inspections were conducted on food and drink establishments.



The organization also houses a water testing laboratory to ensure safe drinking water to residents. Each American household uses an average of 94,000 gallons of water per year. We often take this convenience for granted. It is in everyone's best interest to be aware of this precious resource in order to conserve and protect it from many risks.



Community water supplies along with private well owners across the state send drinking water samples to the lab to check for water quality. The laboratory can test water samples for coliform bacteria, nitrates, pH,

hardness and fluoride. Safe drinking water is essential to good health and the laboratory helps ensure our communities and residents water sources are safe to drink. 10,870 water tests were conducted throughout the year. 9% of the private water samples tested showed bacteria levels while 21% of private water samples showed unsafe levels of nitrates.

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The Preparedness and Response program falls within the Environmental Health Division. This program prepares the community to respond to natural and man-made disasters. This may include a public health response to floods, tornados or other natural disasters but also involves preparing and responding to biological and chemical concerns on a community level. This work is done in cooperation with local response agencies such as the fire and police department as well as emergency managers. We all join forces to protect the community in times of great need.



Community Health

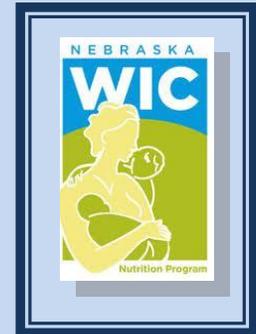
Our Community Health Division houses our clinical services. This includes child and adult immunizations as well as the Women Infant and Children program. Disease surveillance and investigations occur within the community health division as well. All reportable diseases that come through local clinics are reported to the Central District Health Department. We monitor trends to identify the spread of disease and illness and put measures in place to stop the spread. Not only are we partnering with clinics, staff are working with area schools to monitor school age illnesses. Illnesses are

constant in a community but unusual or high amounts of illness are red flags that prompt prevention measures to be implemented.

Immunizations play a significant role in keeping the community healthy as whole. The Central District Health Department offers immunizations to both children and adults. Clinics are available onsite as well as in local business settings. Throughout the year 4,801 vaccinations were provided and 1,828 flu shot were given.



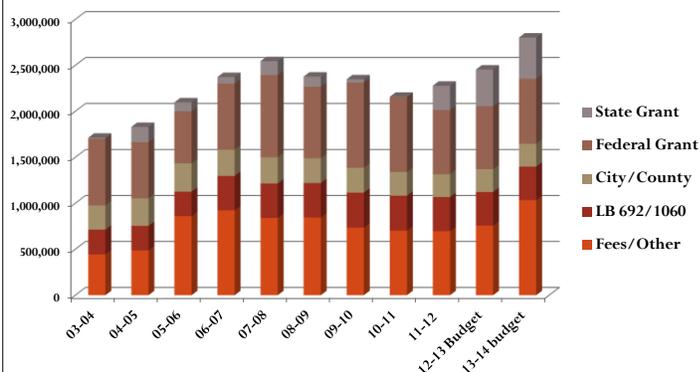
The Women Infant and Children program (WIC) is administered through our organization. It is a federal assistance program of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for healthcare and nutrition of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants and children under the age of five. The program provides a combination of nutrition education, supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals for health care. WIC has proven effective in preventing and improving nutrition related health problems within its population. Our WIC clinic provides service to over 2,000 individuals per month. In May of this year, \$91,531 in WIC checks were cashed in the area that helped support good nutrition for your children.



Public Health Finance Overview

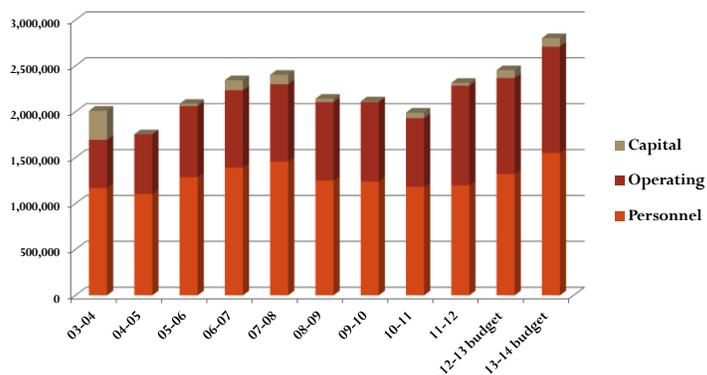
Funding to support public health programs in our service area comes from many sources. Those sources include Federal and State grants, local city and county dollars, legislative allocations as well as fees for service. The graphs below detail funding streams as well as a breakdown of costs over recent years.

Central District Health Department



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Additional Programs

Central District Health Department has several programs and initiatives that fall outside our community and environmental health divisions. These may be short term programs or initiatives in the early stages of development. A few of these programs are detailed below.

Every Woman Matters Program: This programs works to formulate a public health systems plan of improving screening rates and cancer diagnostic outcomes. Throughout the year an environmental scan was conducted to paint a picture for planning purposes. The scan includes collecting and



analyzing subjective data through focus groups of providers and users, as well as informal surveying through a variety of sites where potential users can be found. We have attended a number of events where we provide information on access to screenings for both breast and colorectal cancer. We are working closely with providers across the district to improve access to screenings.

Choosing Health and Maximizing Prevention Program (CHAMP): This is a grant that covers the six counties of Hall, Merrick, Kearney, Buffalo, Dawson and Phelps. Partners for this program include Two Rivers Public Health Department, Central Nebraska Council on Alcoholism, Central Health Center and Lexington Regional Hospital. The adult arm of this program targets minority women of child bearing years who are interested in making positive lifestyle changes designed to improve their overall health. The CHAMP grant enrolled over 1,000 women in the education and coaching program. At the end of their 8wk program, 73% of these women scored higher than on their pretest and at 3-months post program 82% scored higher on behavioral tests as compared to baseline scores. This translates to better knowledge of what constitutes healthy choices and then applying that enhanced knowledge when choosing what to eat and what to serve families, as well as how to increase physical activity.



Healthy Works Program: The Central District coverage area, the state of Nebraska and the nation face a significant public health problem related to lifestyles. Over 67% of our adult population is either overweight or obese. 1 in 3 children in our area fall into this category. Our most recent community health assessment prioritized this issue as the district's most important public health issue needing addressed. Once this was identified the department created the Healthy Works program. Its purpose is to make environmental and cultural changes within area worksites that support wellness. A focus has been placed on better nutrition and increased physical activity. 20 new policies have been established in the district's worksites that provide supports for better nutrition and physical activity. These businesses are "stepping up to the plate" and leading the community towards wellness. Community advisory groups have been established in each county to help lead the health department priorities. These groups are made of health professionals and concerned citizens to help plan strategies to combat obesity. Central District Health Department practices what we preach. This year we were awarded Governor's Excellence in Wellness Award for our work on employee health.



Sugar Sweetened Beverage Initiative: Taking the Healthy Works program a step further, the department created a "Rethink Your Drink" campaign to educate about over consumption of sugary drinks. We know that a large portion of excess calories come from these drinks. We have worked with many facets of the community including; worksites, day cares, medical facilities and government properties to educate and provide support in reducing consumption of these drinks.



Making a difference in lives: Staff Perspectives

This section of the annual report shares with you some examples where staff felt they made a true difference in the lives of our residents. These stories happen on a daily basis and are what make us proud of the work we do.



Jazmin Yacaman RD, LMNT, WIC Program CPA

I recently had a young woman come in to the clinic with just the clothes she had on and nothing else as her mother kicked her out of the house because she became pregnant. She was sleeping in the park and was wondering where she could get help and ended up visiting the Health Department. I signed her up for the WIC Program, provided her with checks for the healthy food and gave her contact information for Hope Harbor, OB clinics with sliding scales and the Nebraska Children's Home Society. It was pretty emotional for her for the whole process because she wanted to keep the baby and did not receive support from her mother. Being there to let her know she can make it through made me feel as if I made an impact on her. She was very interested in her nutrition needs because she knew she needed to eat healthy for the baby. It made me feel good to be able to provide her with information that allowed her to make better choices for her and the baby's health.

I feel like many days I make a difference in somebody's life and I really enjoy it!



Cindy Valdez, Administrative Secretary

A nine year old girl came into the Health Department needing an immunization. Apparently the girl was scared of shots. When the girl was approached to get her shot she began screaming and ran out of the health department. I caught up to her and we sat down and talked for a while. The girl said she was afraid of shots and didn't want it to hurt. I told her there was nothing to be afraid of. I offered to go with her to get the shot. She agreed and was given the immunization. After the shot, she told me that it did not hurt at all and then hugged and thanked me for helping her not being afraid anymore.



Jane Miller, WIC Program CPA

I was working in the WIC Program with a mother that was breast feeding her baby and wanted to be able to continue to pump her breast milk as she went to work. Her employer was not providing her with anywhere to do so. They were sending her across the street to another building so she could pump her breast milk. She came to WIC for help because she did not know what to do. WIC got her in touch with people and provided her with information on what she could do. In the end, her employer provided her with a private place to pump her breast milk and also provided her with back pay from when she had to go elsewhere. The woman was extremely grateful for all of the help WIC was able to provide her.

These types of stories happen on a daily basis at the Central District Health Department. If you would like to learn more about the services we provide please visit our website at www.cdhd.ne.gov or give us a call at (308) 385- 5175.