

Our Vision: Healthy People in Healthy Communities
Proudly serving, Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties

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South Heartland Recognizes Public Health Leaders at Annual Luncheon

Hastings – The Board of Health for South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) recognized and honored 11 individuals at the SHDHD Annual Luncheon and Public Health Awards on Wednesday, March 4, in Hastings. Over 70 people attended the event, which was held at The Lark.

“We are fortunate to have such committed and expert leaders helping to improve the health of our communities,” said Michele Bever, SHDHD Executive Director. “We are able to accomplish a lot more when we work together.”

The health department launched a new community health improvement plan (CHIP) last year after completing a community needs assessment in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties. Next, professionals and community members came together to determine health priorities and develop strategies to address them. The five priorities are 1) Access to Healthcare, 2) Mental Health, 3) Substance Misuse, 4) Obesity & Related Health Conditions, and 5) Cancer.

“We have ambitious goals for our district,” Bever said. “The key to improving health in our communities based on that plan is to actually USE the plan,” she said.

Bever explained that the health department set up a new structure to implement the CHIP. The structure involves oversight committees composed of community leaders and members, and supported by SHDHD staff. These committees met last October and will be meeting every 6 months through the life of the plan to assure that the strategies for each priority are on track.

“The committees will recommend making corrections to our path, if necessary,” Bever said. “They are making sure we are all accountable to this plan we developed together.”

Wednesday’s awards luncheon recognized the leaders of the Steering Committees. The Access to Care Steering Committee chair is Jodi Graves, Executive Director of the United Way of South Central Nebraska. The vice chair is Dave Long, Vice President of Ambulatory Services for Mary Lanning Healthcare.

The Mental Health Steering Committee chair is Kim Kern, Director of Behavioral Services at Mary Lanning Healthcare. The vice chair is Treg Vzyourek, CEO, Brodstone Memorial Hospital.



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The Substance Misuse Steering Committee chair is Shannon Short, Pharmacist at Brodstone Memorial Hospital and the vice chair is Stefanie Creech, Executive Director for Area Substance and Alcohol Abuse Prevention (ASAAP).

Troy Stickels, Executive Director for the Hastings Family YMCA, is the chair of the Obesity Steering Committee and Marisa L'Heureux, APRN at Blue Hill Clinic, is the vice chair.

Sally Molnar, director of the Morrison Cancer Center is the chair of the Cancer Steering Committee and the vice chair is Danielle Malchow, APRN, of Hastings Family Care.

South Heartland's Public Health Leadership Award is given to individuals in recognition of extraordinary commitment and leadership in public health. "This year we are recognizing the chairs and vice chairs of these steering committees for their commitment and leadership in implementing the community health improvement plan," Bever said.

The Board of Health also honored Judy Reimer. Board president Nanette Shackelford read a citation noting Judy's contributions to the creation, development, and growth of the South Heartland District Health Department. Shackelford stated, "Today we are also recognizing a lifetime of service to public health and we honor Judy Reimer on her retirement from the Board of Health."

For the luncheon keynote presentation, Dr. Brandon Grimm talked about "Starting a Movement: Strategies for Community Health Outcomes." Dr. Grimm is the Associate Dean of Public Health Practice and an Associate Professor with the Department of Health Promotion, University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health.

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