



South Heartland District Health Department

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Hastings NE 68901
402-462-6211 or Toll free 1-877-238-7595
www.southheartlandhealth.org

Annual Report 2007

The Mission

The South Heartland District Health Department is a combined health district dedicated to preserving and improving the health of the residents of various municipalities and townships within Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties. Our mission is to provide those services mandated by the statutes of the State of Nebraska in a courteous, efficient and effective manner within the limits of sound economic responsibility. Through interaction with other community agencies and leaders, the Board and staff will determine which public health services are needed and how that need may be met and financed. The Board will conduct continuing review of these activities to judge their effectiveness and continued need.



Message from the Executive Director

August, 2007

Last year was a busy and exciting one for the South Heartland District Health Department staff. We promoted programs to protect the health of the people in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties, such as Kids Fitness & Nutrition Day, Scrubby Bear, and Sonrisa. We worked with community groups and individual citizens to plan for emergencies and pandemic influenza. We were also responsible for investigations and contact follow-up of diseases such as Hepatitis, Rabies, West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, Q-Fever, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Shigellosis, and others.

However, public health is not a job for just one agency. There are many partners working for public health in our communities. These partners include county supervisors/commissioners, city/village government, law enforcement, emergency management, hospitals, physicians, veterinarians, dentists, mental health professionals, ministers/pastors, fire/EMS and many, many others. All of these partners perform public health functions on a daily basis.

Please continue through the pages of this annual report to learn more about some of the activities of the South Heartland District Health Department. We invite you to contact our office for additional information or for assistance. We welcome your input as we pursue our vision of "Healthy People in Healthy Communities" in the four-county District.

For me personally, it has been an honor and a pleasure to have worked for the citizens of Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties.

Sincerely,



Joyce Crawford, Executive Director
South Heartland District Health Department



Executive Director, Joyce Crawford, graduated from the first class of the Great Plains Public Health Leadership Institute and completed the Leadership Hastings class. She is a member of the Public Health Association of Nebraska (PHAN) and has served three years as a member of the PHAN Board of Directors. Joyce is a member of NACCHO and was selected to represent local public health departments on the NACCHO National Pandemic Flu Workgroup. She is also a member of the Nebraska Disaster Mental Health Steering Committee and serves on the Nebraska DHHS Public Health Law Team. Joyce is the Treasurer of the Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS) Steering Committee.

Staff



Public Health Education Coordinator, Dixie Zoucha, is responsible for the planning, promotion and implementation of public health education activities. She also coordinates the Department's assessment activities. Dixie is the co-chair elect of the Nebraska Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) State Team, co-chair of the Public Health Education section of PHAN, and Vice-President of the Health division of the Nebraska Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. She is currently working toward obtaining her Master of Public Health degree from UNMC/UNO.



Administrative Assistant/Financial Coordinator, Denise Ferguson, As office manager she is responsible for the smooth operation of the day-to-day business of the agency. As financial coordinator she processes and monitors payments and expenditures, and prepares and monitors the payroll system in order to ensure effective, efficient and accurate financial and administrative operations.



Public Health Risk Coordinator, Michele Bever PhD, is responsible for the Department's disease surveillance and epidemiology activities. She also manages and implements the local Pandemic Flu, Biopreparedness, and Public Water System Safety Grant contracts with Nebraska DHHS. This year, Michele completed her term as chair of the Emergency Response Section of the Public Health Association of Nebraska (PHAN) and section representation to the PHAN Board. She continues to serve as secretary for the Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS) Steering Committee and is serving on the state NEDSS (National Electronic Disease Surveillance System) workgroup.



Public Health Outreach Nurse, Janet Staehr RN BSN, because of her experience, is frequently requested to train new P.H.O.N.E. nurses across the state. She is a member of the nursing section of the Public Health Association of Nebraska (PHAN), State Public Health Nursing Emergency Response Team and the Nebraska Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team and can be called out to assist with debriefing of responders.



Minority Health Educator, Rosa Guia, had the honor of being selected to represent minorities in Health Professions on the State diversity poster and is the Coordinator of the Sonrisa Program. Rosa is a member of the Minority Steering Committee for the 3rd Congressional District. Rosa is a Trainer for the Psychological First Aid through Region III Behavioral Health Services.



Public Health Preparedness and Response Assistant, Anita Sullivan, manages the school surveillance program, assists with disease investigation and reporting, provides database development and management expertise, and helps coordinate the South Heartland Infection Control Group activities. In addition, she is developing skills in Global Information Systems (GIS) for mapping health events.



Public Health Assistant, Janis Johnson RN BSN, assists with emergency response and pandemic planning activities. Janis was instrumental in implementing the emergency preparedness kit project with the grocery and hardware stores throughout our district. She has also played a key role in ensuring completion of South Heartland's Emergency Response Plan.

Public Health Education



“Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.” This Essential Public Health Service provides the guiding framework for South Heartland District Health Department’s Public Health Education programs. SHDHD is dedicated to providing health information, health education and health promotion activities designed to reduce risk and promote improved health among the residents of its four-county District.

Mobilizing for Action through Planning & Partnerships (MAPP) – Through MAPP, the SHDHD and other community organizations are striving to improve the health and quality of life in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties through community-wide and community-driven strategic planning. Below, the MAPP Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from all four counties, hold a planning session regarding the Local Public Health System Performance Assessment, which was conducted in June 2007.

Nebraska Kids Fitness & Nutrition Day – On September 27th, 564 students and 62 school staff/parents from Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties participated in the second Nebraska Kids Fitness & Nutrition Day held at Hastings College. Approximately 90 volunteers, including staff from SHDHD, the Hastings Family YMCA and Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital, as well as students and staff from Hastings College and area registered dietitians assisted with the event. Students enjoyed participating in fifteen physical activities, such as Ultimate Frisbee, Dead Bug Freeze Tag and Big Ball Chase. In addition, My Pyramid, Portion Distortion and Healthy Snacks were topics discussed at the six nutrition education stations. All participants were served a healthy lunch and received a backpack. The event was sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Kearney, the Nebraska Beef Council and the All Recreate on Fridays (ARF) Move-



Public Health Education

Project A.C.T.I.O.N. (*Advocating for Change to Improve Nutrition in Schools and Worksites in the South Heartland Health District*) – The SHDHD was one of three applicants to receive a Physical Activity & Nutrition grant from the Cardiovascular Health Program-NHHSS for a Community Intervention Project. The South Heartland Health District stands out among the eighteen local public health departments as having the lowest percentage (15.9%) of adults that consume five or more daily servings for fruits and vegetables daily. Project A.C.T.I.O.N. has provided funding, support, education and other resources to two secondary schools and three worksites to assist them in advocating, developing and implementing policies that promote healthy eating behaviors and increased fruit and vegetable consumption. In addition, an Action for Healthy Kids Regional Team (the first of its kind in Nebraska) has been formed to provide a forum for networking, sharing strategies and resources for individuals interested in creating healthy school environments. A Worksite Wellness Seminar is planned for August 2007.



Additional PH Education Activities – The SHDHD continues to promote activities which encourage healthy lifestyles, such as All Recreate on Fridays (ARF), N-Lighten Nebraska, N-Lighten Kids, Walk to School Day/Week, Walk Out on Your Job Day, the Summer Play Every Day! Scorecard program and Camp Hot Shots (for diabetic youth). SHDHD staff also provide educational presentations and materials about various public health issues at area businesses, organizations, schools and health fairs. In addition, the SHDHD recently collaborated with the City of Hastings and Hastings Public Schools in the development of a successful application for funding of a Safe Routes to School public awareness campaign to begin in Fall 2007.



Public Health Education

Salud Para Su Corázon – *Health for your Heart* transitions into a new name **Bienestar De Por Vida – *Wellness for a Lifetime***. Mary Lanning HealthCare Foundation – Diabetes Department and South Heartland District Health Department is a joint effort for ongoing medical and program support to meet the long-term Diabetes Disease management needs of the Hispanic population via quality medical services, health education, and a healthy learning environment. Clients include men, women, young adults and the elderly. Initially, the first program began with 44 people nearly five years ago and has now evolved to approximately 150. The vision of this program is to provide a continued solid program focusing on total individual and family wellness measured by lower BMI results, lower A1C blood sugar lab results, consistent exercise, healthy eating, stress management, self disease management, client program documentation and access to ongoing health information. Overall, this health project has improved the health care of the minority community dealing with Diabetes and other health risk factors through education, support groups, exercise tracking via YMCA memberships, direct access to doctors and healthcare system, assistance with medication and testing supplies, meeting with the nutritionist and in-home visits.

Scrubby Bear – Continues to make an impact in the importance of hand washing. Scrubby Bear keeps busy in our four county area at pre-schools, elementary schools, daycares and Head Start Facilities throughout the district. During the 2006-07 school years, Scrubby Bear educated about 1,800 children and adults to prevent the spread of germs by practicing proper hand-washing techniques. The Scrubby Bear program is made possible through our volunteers in cooperation with the Mid-Rivers Chapter of the American Red Cross and SHDHD.



Mini-Grants

Sonrisa – *Smile* - South Heartland District Health Department and Central Community College-Hastings oral hygienists students, Dr. Jessica Meeske (Hastings Pediatric Dentist), and the Mary Lanning HealthCare Foundation, and the University Medical Center College of Dentistry serve as partners in the Sonrisa Program. The Sonrisa program offers dental care to children in the South Heartland District Health Department District. The children are selected using the following criteria: less than 18 years of age, no dental home, not covered by Medicare/Medicaid/Kids Connection, and live in our coverage area. In 2006, a total of 83 individuals were seen at Sonrisa. So far in 2007, Sonrisa has provided dental care to 120 patients. The Sonrisa Program is making a difference in the smiles of those who otherwise would not have had access to dental care.

South Heartland District Health Department has received requests to fund health-related projects and programs. Mini-grants were awarded to eight organizations for physical and nutritional activities, vision screening programs, the purchase of educational materials, nutritional materials, and emergency training software to promote healthy and safe lifestyles. SHDHD has awarded \$21,400 in mini-grants across the four-county District.

Public Health Outreach Nursing Education

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services contracts with South Heartland District Health Department to provide the **Public Health Outreach Nursing and Education (P.H.O.N.E.) program**. This program is to assist persons with Medicaid or Kids Connection to establish and maintain Medical, Dental and Vision homes. Emergency Rooms as well as medical, dental and eye care offices send contact information to the PHONE nurse. Families are provided with information and education to help them maintain consistent health care as well as other resources, support groups and supplemental food programs. Each week newly enrolled Medicaid clients receive educational information and referrals to help them meet their individual needs. In 2006, the PHONE nurse made 2144 contacts through mailings and follow-up calls for missed appointments and emergency room visits. Case management was given to 121 clients.

During the past fiscal year booths were at **health fairs** in each of the four counties: Adams, Clay, Nuckolls & Webster

Clients are encouraged to have Medical, Dental, and Vision homes as well as to seek medical care for their children.



Oral Health Coalition Marketing Grant

Over the past three years, the Oral Health Coalition has been creating a marketing campaign focused on bringing to the attention of children and pregnant women their risk of dental problems. These target groups were identified by the Coalition after the completion of an assessment by a local marketing firm. The funding for the campaign was received through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Dental Health Division.



Good dental health starts early in life.
Your child's first dental visit should be at age one.

For information: South Heartland District Health Department serving Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties. 402-462-8211 • Toll Free 1-877-26-2788

Quarantine and Isolation Rules and Regulations

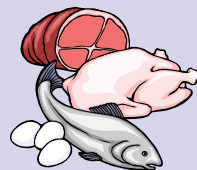
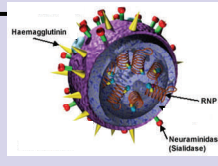
The SHDHD Board of Health passed Quarantine and Isolation Rules and Regulations for the four-county District. These Rules and Regulations were presented at each of the four County Boards of Supervisors/Commissioners. The County Boards as well as the City Council for the City of Hastings approved the Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations have been sent to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for the final approval. If the public would like to review or have a copy of them, contact this office.

Disease Investigation and Infection Control

Essential Public Health Service: Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.

During the fiscal year of July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, South Heartland staff investigated 135 reports of illness or exposure events. South Heartland uses the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) to report diseases to the State. Some of these reportable diseases are carried by vectors such as mosquitoes or ticks, some are spread by respiratory droplets in sneezes and coughs, some are spread by exposure to blood, some are carried by animals such as bats or raccoons, and some are food borne or waterborne illnesses. South Heartland's investigations included the following illnesses or exposures:

- Brucellosis
- Campylobacter
- Coccidiomycosis
- Cryptosporidiosis
- E. coli
- Giardiasis
- Group A Streptococcus
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Influenza
- Legionella
- Lyme Disease
- Methicillin-resistant Staph aureus (MRSA)
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Psittacosis
- Q-Fever
- Rabies exposures
- Rickettsia (Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever)
- Salmonellosis
- Scabies
- Tuberculosis
- Toxic Shock Syndrome



School Surveillance

Essential Public Health Service: Monitor health status to identify community problems.

During the 2006-2007 school year, 100% of the schools in our district who were eligible participated with us in the "school illness surveillance" program. The Health Department contacts schools on a weekly basis to gather reports of absenteeism due to illness. We monitor local trends and respond as needed to assist schools with concerns, for example, unusual numbers of influenza-like illness or gastroenteritis. Using a secure website, these reports are also submitted to Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for analysis of statewide illness trends.

Seasonal influenza hit children particularly hard this year—with some schools reporting as high as 20-30% absenteeism due to illness. Several schools opted to close for a few days to break the chain of transmission and to clean their facilities. When they reconvened the next week, the absentee rates had dropped dramatically to 4-8%.

South Heartland Infection Control Group

Essential Public Health Service: Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.

The South Heartland Infection Control Group meets quarterly for educational sessions and training:

- July 2006 – *Pandemic Planning Workshop* (Michele Bever, SHDHD)
- October 2006 – *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)* (Jude Eberhardt, Kathryn White, HHSS; Connie Hyde, MLMH, and Lynda Zieg, York Gen. Hosp.)
- January 2007 – *Outbreak Management of Gastrointestinal Illness* (Connie Hyde, MLMH; Cheryl Bliefertich, GSV; Michele Bever, SHDHD)
- April 2007 – *Immunization Update* (Molly Uden, HHSS Immunization Program)

Participants include infection control practitioners from hospitals, clinics, educational facilities, long term care facilities, correctional facilities and public health. Nurses were offered continuing Education Units for two of the sessions.

Emergency Preparedness: Planning and Exercises

Essential Public Health Service: Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

Promoting Personal Preparedness for Emergencies

To encourage residents to start or complete a personal or family emergency kit, the Department placed emergency preparedness kit guides and shelf tags in 56 partnering grocery, hardware, and convenience stores across the South Heartland District during the months of October through January. The brochures were set up at the cash registers and laminated shelf tags, stating "Consider These Items For Your Emergency Kit", were placed on shelves near types of items suggested by the brochure. The shelf tags also directed patrons to pick up a brochure at the register. Four stores serving non-English patrons were also set up with brochures and shelf tags in Spanish or Vietnamese and were also provided with language-specific pandemic education materials. There was no cost to the businesses and participating partners received free advertising in their area newspapers.



Raising Awareness about Preparedness. Most of the partnering stores related that there was an increased demand for the emergency preparedness kit brochures after the December 31, 2006 ice storm and many decided voluntarily to extend the project beyond their original commitment. One grocer stated he felt this was a project that should be in his store all year and that he felt his customers had indicated they would now know exactly which items to pick up if needed, even if shelf tags were removed.

Regional and Local Exercises

SNS Exercise. In January, South Heartland held a full-scale exercise to test the district's readiness to receive and process the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies. The goal of this exercise was to identify areas where our response could be strengthened if we ever face a health event that requires mobilization of federal resources to protect the local population. Twenty-one participants received a review of the SNS process as well as just-in-time training before the exercise began. The team delivered, unloaded, inventoried supplies, then prepared shipping and tracking documents and re-organized pallets of supplies to be distributed to each county. An After Action Review of the exercises was used to improve the Department's Emergency Response Plan.



Pandemic Flu Exercises. South Heartland coordinated the first of our second series of local pandemic flu table top exercises. In Webster County, participants developed action steps and communication needed during various stages of a pandemic and worked together to complete a decision tree that will be included in their county pandemic plans. Similar exercises are scheduled for the 2007 fiscal year in Clay, Adams and Nuckolls counties. Members of pandemic committees from all four counties participated in a regional pandemic flu table top exercise coordinated by Nebraska Health and Human Services and compared their work to planning that was happening in other areas of the State.



More Emergency Preparedness & Planning...

Essential Public Health Service: Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

Pandemic Planning Activities

“Why Don’t We Do It In Our Sleeves?”

In an effort to teach people better ways to reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses like influenza or mumps the Department distributed more than 70 copies of a 5-minute video on proper sneeze and cough etiquette (by OtoRhinoLounsburgology Productions). Most of us learned when we were young to cover our coughs or sneezes with our hands - but this is a very good way to spread germs to every surface or item or human hand we touch! All of the K-12 schools in the district and many other entities (long-term care facilities, UNL Extension offices, Head Start, etc.) received copies of the video. The video has also been shown on Hastings Community Access TV and at the Hastings Museum.



Update: COOP Plan is COMPLETE!

South Heartland’s All- Hazards Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan is completed and ready for Board of Health approval. The process helped us identify functions and positions that should have back-up. Development of just-in-time training materials and additional cross-training is already occurring for some functions, such as disease investigation and reporting.

Pandemic Education



From July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 South Heartland staff and health department liaisons provided more than 70 educational programs on avian flu, pandemic flu, emergency preparedness for businesses and families, and continuity of operations. Current global situation updates and preparedness materials were provided to diverse audiences, including civic groups, faith-based organizations, human services agencies, schools, clubs, businesses, responders and the public.

South Heartland Emergency Response Plan (ERP)

The Emergency Response Plan has been updated – and we will continue to revise it annually. The plan contains guidance for the Department on activities such as:

- Surveillance and Disease Investigation
- Risk Communications
- Environmental Safety
- Quarantine and Isolation
- Mass Distribution of Vaccine and Antibiotics
- Working with Vulnerable Populations

Regional Collaboration:

Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS)

South Heartland is collaborating with 3 other local health departments, hospitals, emergency management, EMS and others to ensure that communications and procedures are in place to respond to events that overwhelm local resources. During 2006-2007, TRIMRS provided redundant communications equipment, training & exercises for the 23-county region.



Technology: Saving Time and Money

The Health Department stays connected to hospitals, other local health departments, regional Medical Response Systems and other organizations through **Tele-Health video conferencing equipment** and a T-1 line located at the Department. The equipment is used frequently for point-to-point contacts, administrative meetings, conferences, seminars, and workshops. Over the past fiscal year, South Heartland has saved thousands of dollars in staff time and mileage by connecting electronically.

Message from the President of the Board of Health

It has been my privilege to serve as a charter member on the South Heartland District Health Department formed in 2001 and as President of the Board since 2003. During that time the Board has worked diligently to fulfill their responsibility of protecting and promoting the public's health through assessment, policy development and assurance.

A community assessment was conducted with a subsequent approval of a Public Health Improvement Plan in 2003. Many of the programs and activities described in this annual report are the results of that assessment and plan.

We are currently in the process of another assessment and evaluation of our effectiveness as a public health entity and expect that the outcome of this process will strengthen and expand our efforts to ensure healthy people in healthy communities in all our four counties.

The role of the Board is regulatory and we are responsible for the oversight of the Agency. In 2006, the Board passed Rules and Regulations for the Prevention of Spread of Communicable Disease, Illness or Poisoning. These Rules and Regulations have been approved by the four county Boards of Supervisors/Commissioners in the South Heartland District and the Hastings City Council.

All Board members are NIMS (National Incident Management System) compliant, which reaffirms a dedication to serve in times of crisis through continued professional development. NIMS is the accepted standard in the state of Nebraska to guide emergency and disaster response.

As my term on the Board expires at the end of this year I would like to compliment the Board members, the Executive Director and the staff for responding in such an exemplary manner to the challenge of establishing a four county public health department. Our success is built on collaboration with many agencies and individuals who support our mission. I have confidence that through these combined and ongoing efforts all citizens in our area will benefit from a strong public health presence.



Judy Reimer

Board of Health

ment of the Nebraska Cardiovascular

Health Program.

County Officials

Charles Neumann
(Adams County Supervisor)

Gene Arnold
(Clay County Supervisor)

Michael Combs
(Nuckolls County Commissioner)

Mary Delka
(Webster County Commissioner)

Public Minded Citizens

Judy Reimer
(Adams County)

W. Michael Kearney
(Adams County)

Jan Baird
(Clay County)

Sam Townsend
(Clay County)

Peggy Meyer
(Nuckolls County)

Perry Freeman
(Nuckolls County)

Barbara Sprague
(Webster County)

Robert Sheckler
(Webster County)

Community Representatives

Kathy Anderson, MD
(Medical Representative)

David Landgren, DDS
(Dental Representative)

John Waddell, DVM
(Veterinary Representative)

Financial Report

South Heartland District Revenues	
State Revenue– LB692/LB1060	\$298,674
Emergency Response/ Pandemic	141,099
Public Health Outreach Nurse Educator	35,894
State Oral Health	12,500
State & Local Grants	79,083
Minority Health	14,798
TRI-cities Medical Response System Administrative Fee	7,200
Other Income & Interest	29,573
Total Revenues	\$618,821

South Heartland District Expenses	
Salary & Benefits	\$309,900
Mini-grants	21,400
Other Expenses	207,514
Excess Revenue	80,007
Total	\$618,821



TRICities Medical Response System	
Revenue	\$ 159,000
Expenses	\$ 174,826
Deficiency of Revenue	(\$15,826)