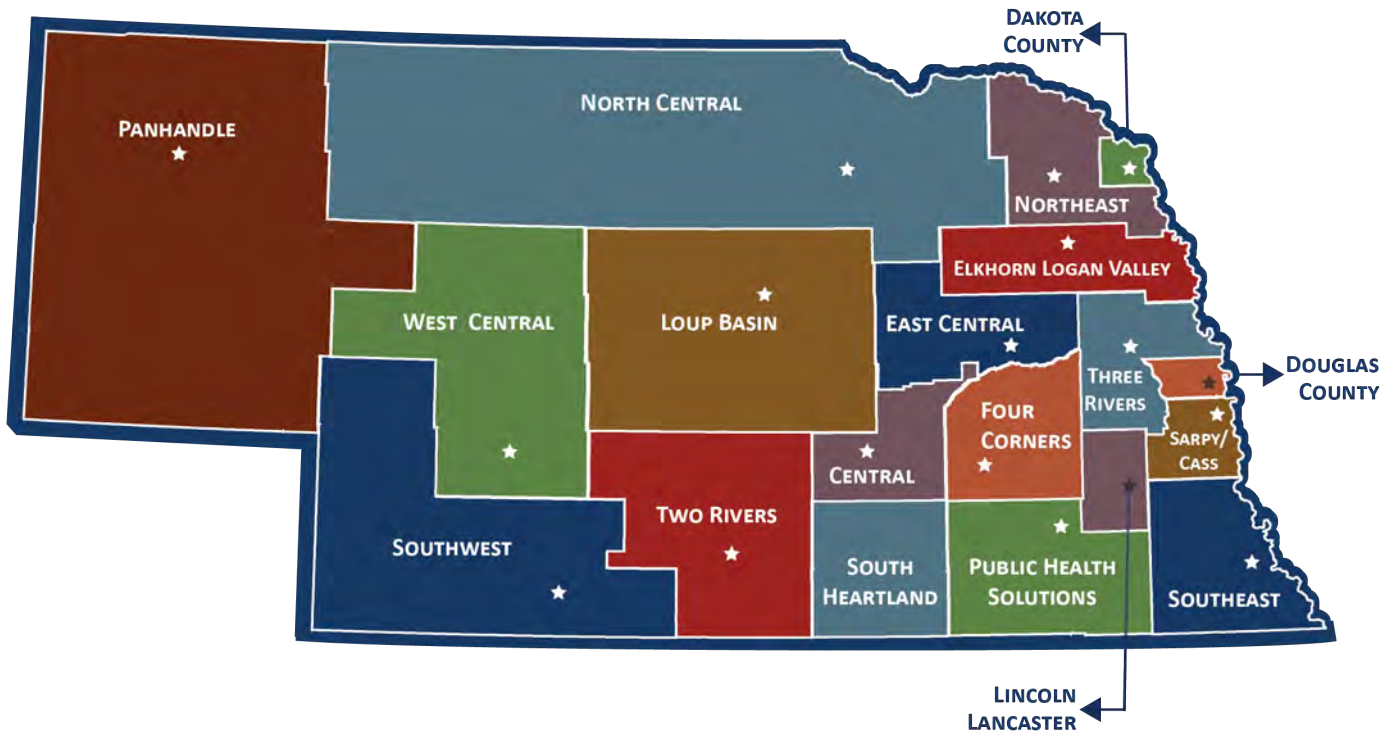


NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF
LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

Members Serving All 93 Counties Across Nebraska

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORTS

Local Public Health in Nebraska

Nebraska Health Care Funding Act

Nebraska’s local public health departments (LHDs) act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that local partners are working together to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of all Nebraskans. The Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (LB 692) was passed in 2001 by the Nebraska Legislature. This Act provides funding to LHDs through the County Public Health Aid Program (Neb.Rev.Stat. §71-1628.08). The Act also requires all eligible LHDs to prepare a report each fiscal year. These reports highlight examples of specific programs and activities toward meeting LHDs’ statutory obligations. These reports do not reflect the totality of the work performed by LHDs.

The Three Core Functions of Public Health—cited in the Health Care Funding Act



Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.

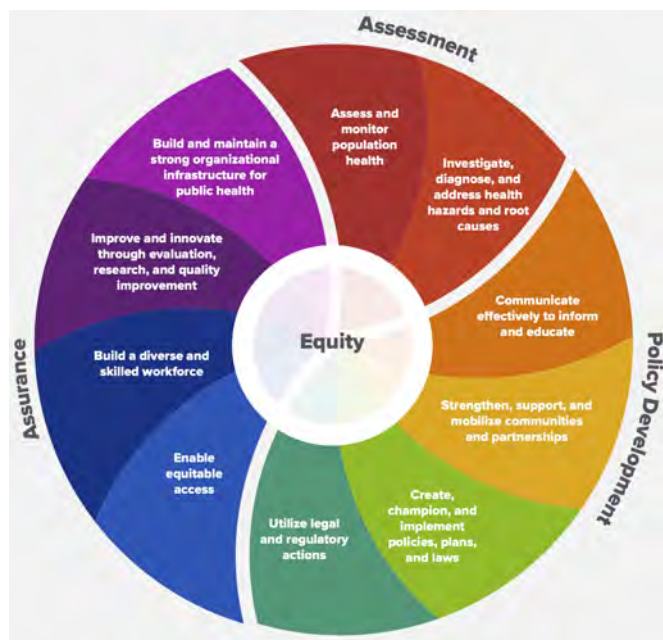


Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.

10 Essential Services of Public Health

The activities and programs of LHDs are summarized under the associated 10 Essential Services of Public Health. They provide a working definition of the public health system and a guiding framework for the responsibilities of local public health partners.

See: <https://phnci.org/national-frameworks/10-ephs>.



Leveraging Other Funds

For over 20 years, funds from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act have served as the financial foundation for all LHDs. It was from this foundation that LHDs ramped up their capacity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, starting in the spring of 2020.



The most recent data collected by the Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (NALHD) in FY 2019-2020 found that the proportions of individual LHDs' pre-COVID **revenue derived from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund and the Nebraska General Fund ranged from 5% to 70%**. Statewide, less than one-third (28%) of LHDs' revenues came from these State sources. Therefore, LHDs' sustainability and ability to meet their statutory obligations and perform the Three Core Functions and 10 Essential Services of Public Health generally require LHDs' ongoing effort and success in securing additional funds. Typically, LHDs rely on federal pass-through awards through DHHS, and other State agencies, for a range of work. A few LHDs also receive private or direct federal grants. Some LHDs also collect fees for limited services.

The work during the reporting period for this report was dominated by the COVID-19 response. While some of this effort was covered by other state and federal sources, none of it would have been possible without the foundational resources provided by the Legislature via the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act. Existing and new funding sources will be critical post-pandemic as we retool our public health system and ensure its readiness for future small and large-scale public health events.

Organizational Coverage

As of June 30, 2021, a total of 18 LHDs covering 92 counties were eligible to receive funds under a portion of the Health Care Funding Act, Neb.Rev.Stat. §71-1626 through 71-1636. The list of eligible public health departments and their affiliated counties is shown in Table 1. Dakota County has a single county health department that does not meet the population requirements of the Health Care Funding Act. DHHS-DPH and other local public health partners continue to support the work of all LHDs.

Report Time Frame and Scope

As required by statute, LHDs funded under the Health Care Funding Act submit a report to DHHS in October, for inclusion in the full Annual Report submitted by DHHS on December 1. This Annual Report covers July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 and includes brief descriptions of selected activities, services, and programs provided by the LHDs related to the Three Core Functions and 10 Essential Service of Public Health. LHDs supported through the public health portion of the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act, are working across their service areas to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of local communities. Only a few examples of the extensive of activities and programs provided by each LHD can be covered within this report. In their Spotlight stories, most LHDs have highlighted their ongoing efforts to respond to COVID-19 and improve their areas' vaccination rates. Visit LHDs' individual websites (included in each report) to learn more about the full scope of their work.

Table 1: Health Care Funding Act – Eligible Local Public Health Departments (LHDs)	
HEALTH DISTRICT	COUNTIES
Central District Health Department	Merrick, Hall, and Hamilton counties
Douglas County Health Department	Douglas County
East Central District Health Department	Boone, Nance, Platte, and Colfax counties
Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department	Madison, Stanton, Cuming, and Burt counties
Four Corners Health Department	Polk, Butler, York, and Seward counties
Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department	Lancaster County
Loup Basin Public Health Department	Blaine, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Howard, Loup, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler counties
North Central District Health Department	Cherry, Keya Paha, Boyd, Brown, Rock, Holt, Knox, Antelope, and Pierce counties
Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department	Cedar, Dixon, Wayne, and Thurston counties
Panhandle Public Health District	Deuel, Dawes, Box Butte, Sheridan, Banner, Morrill, Garden, Kimball, Cheyenne, Grant, Sioux, and Scotts Bluff counties
Public Health Solutions	Fillmore, Saline, Thayer, Jefferson, and Gage counties
Sarpy/ Cass Health Department	Sarpy and Cass counties
South Heartland District Health Department	Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster counties
Southeast District Health Department	Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties
Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department	Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, and Richardson counties
Three Rivers Public Health Department	Dodge, Washington, and Saunders counties
Two Rivers Public Health Department	Dawson, Buffalo, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Harlan, and Franklin counties
West Central District Health Department	McPherson, Logan, Lincoln, Hooker, Arthur, and Thomas counties

Report Time Frame and Scope

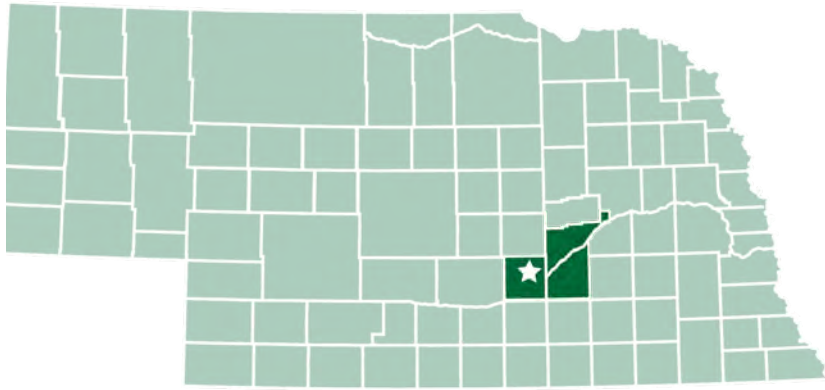
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LHDs supported through the public health portion of the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act, are working across their service areas to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of local communities. Only a few examples of the extensive range and number of activities and programs provided by each LHD can be covered within this report. In their Spotlight Stories, LHDs share more detailed examples of the type of work happening across the local public health system. Visit LHDs’ individual websites (included in each report) to learn more about the full scope of their work.

2021 Local Health Department Reports

CENTRAL DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Hall, Hamilton, and Merrick Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

With the COVID-19 vaccines becoming available in the first quarter of 2021, much of our planning for the vaccines came to fruition. We vaccinated hundreds of people weekly through clinics at the City of Grand Island's Community Fieldhouse, drive-through clinics, community clinics and vaccination clinics at our facility. Many Central District Health Department (CDHD) employees worked long hours with minimal time off to ensure as many as possible were vaccinated. When the rush for initial vaccinations slowed, we shifted to an advocacy role: promoting vaccines, working with community partners and continuing with clinics whenever and wherever possible. As of August 20, 2021, the vaccination rate in the Central District was at 39%, with the CDHD distributing 24,002 shots of the Pfizer vaccine, 8,274 of the Moderna vaccine and 701 shots of the J&J vaccine. To reduce community spread, vaccination rates were targeted for improvement. To that end we have partnered with schools in development of their "Safe Return to Schools" plans, emphasizing the effectiveness of layered approaches including universal masking along with vaccination for those eligible, social distancing, staying home when sick, and frequent handwashing. We partnered with local businesses to promote vaccination within their facilities and continued the work of contact tracing. With the Emergency Declaration for Nebraska ending in June also came the end of Test Nebraska, which CDHD staff coordinated. We continue to communicate with our residents using local media opportunities, creating messages for social media and within the community to increase the amount of vaccination in Hall, Hamilton and Merrick Counties.

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CENTRAL DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



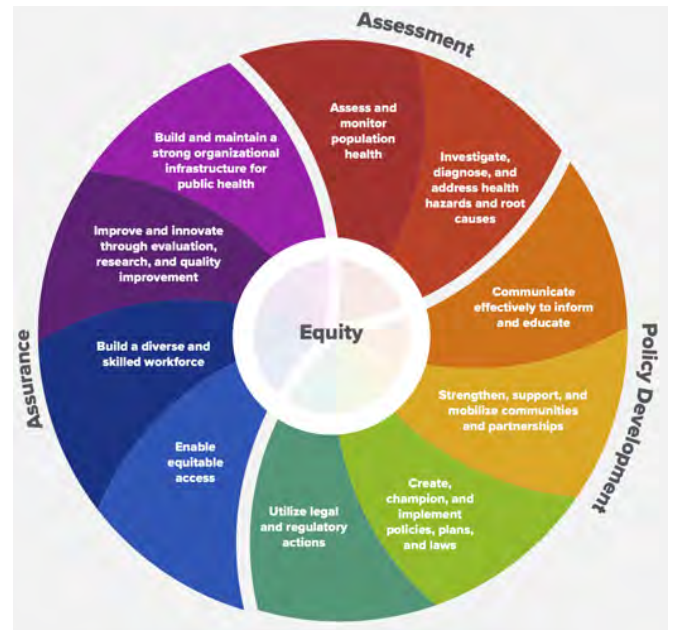
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

CDHD is in the process of updating the Community Health Assessment (CHA) in partnership with the four hospitals in the district. All four hospitals participated and contributed to the development and implementation of the CHA, which included gathering key stakeholder input at web meetings. In June, CDHD met with community partners, organizations, and community members to review data in our three-county district. In July, a survey was sent out to all communities using a variety of means and engaging diverse partners to gather primary data. At the beginning of September, another meeting will be held to review data and discuss key health priority areas which will then be the key points for the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) we will develop in 2022.

CHIP PRIORITIES: Updating the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) will begin in January 2022. The current CHIP focuses on childhood obesity prevention and reduction. Community partners continued to work on this issue, while CDHD has diverted its full energy this past year toward reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

Through the Minority Health Initiative (MHI) program, as well as the COVID-19 Recovery program, CDHD has found that there are many community members who do not have a primary care provider. Reasons for this include not having the money to see a doctor, not knowing who to go to, not knowing costs and what they can afford, not having insurance, not having time, etc. Our Community Health Workers (CHW) ask every person they work with if they have a medical and dental home, and if they do not, the CHW helps guide the participant to establish a medical/dental home. We have had the privilege of connecting hundreds of people to a medical/dental home and helped them to address their health/dental needs and improve their health.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

CDHD offers the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) as well as the Living Well with Diabetes Program. Both are evidence-based programs. The CDHD is recognized by the CDC for its work in the Diabetes Prevention Program which has been implemented to fidelity. This program has been negatively impacted by the pandemic because of the greatly limiting the ability to host face to face meetings, an important component to the success of clients.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

CDHD continues to monitor other disease trends in the district in addition to COVID-19. The Epidemiology team works with hospitals, physician offices, schools, and community members to identify illness and sources and take measures to reduce spread of communicable diseases.

CDHD provides adult and child vaccinations for all regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. In addition to COVID-19 vaccination clinics, we continue to provide regular/usual vaccination clinics. Between July 2020 and June 2021, we provided a total of 2,988 vaccines for children and 1,169 vaccines for adults as part of the Vaccine for Children (VFC) and Adult Immunization Program (AIP).

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

CDHD tests community and private water samples for nitrates, coliform, hardness, fluoride and pH levels. Between October 2020 and July 2021, we completed a total of 4,913 water tests. The majority of testing was to detect coliform. A total of 0.55% of community water samples and 17.9% of private water samples tested positive for coliform. For the same time frame, 23.1% of private samples had unsafe nitrate levels (over 10mg/L). COVID-19 also impacted the number of water tests typically conducted in a year. While the number of private water tests decreased, the number of community water tests remained unchanged during peak COVID-19 months.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

This year, CDHD began participation in the Drug Overdose Prevention Program through the State of Nebraska. We are currently in the research portion of this program and will have more information on its effects next year. Initially, we plan to gather information from community stakeholders, and then enlist their help in developing a community overdose prevention plan for the Central District.

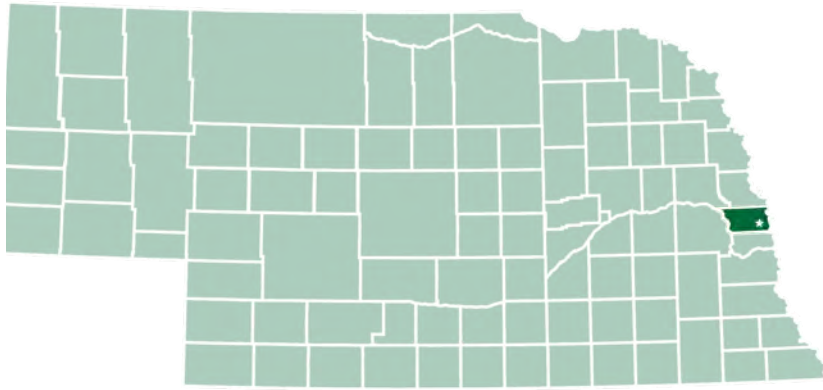
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

CDHD continues to offer the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, as well as the Breast Feeding Peer Counselor Program. CDHD's WIC has been strong throughout the pandemic, serving 2,092 clients in the calendar year 2020. A change in package requirements at the federal level allowed WIC to promote to clients the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables this year. This is in addition to the allowable purchases of healthy food choices for pregnant and breast-feeding women, and children aged 5 and under who qualify by income for WIC services.

DOUGLAS COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Douglas County



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Vaccinations: Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) has dedicated significant time and resources to COVID-19 response. Since December 2020, DCHD spearheaded and collaborated in efforts to administer 763,619 vaccine doses, resulting in 68% of the eligible population (over 12 years of age) and 56.2% of the total population (all ages) being fully vaccinated. DCHD provided vaccinations to the public through mass clinic sites, “Pop-up” clinics utilizing the health department’s vaccine vans, walk-ins at DCHD, school clinics, and other means as requested. DCHD continues to work closely with community partners and advisory groups to ensure equity of vaccine access in the Omaha metro.

Testing: Testing capacity is continually coordinated with community partners to ensure equitable access across the community.

Epidemiology: The epidemiology unit has contact traced 29,504 positive cases since January 2021, managing various clusters and outbreaks in a variety of settings in the community. Emergency Response Coordinators have distributed over 14.5 million articles of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the community, including nearly 88,000 BinaxNow testing kits. Epidemiology leadership continually provides up-to-date data for leadership decision-making across the community.

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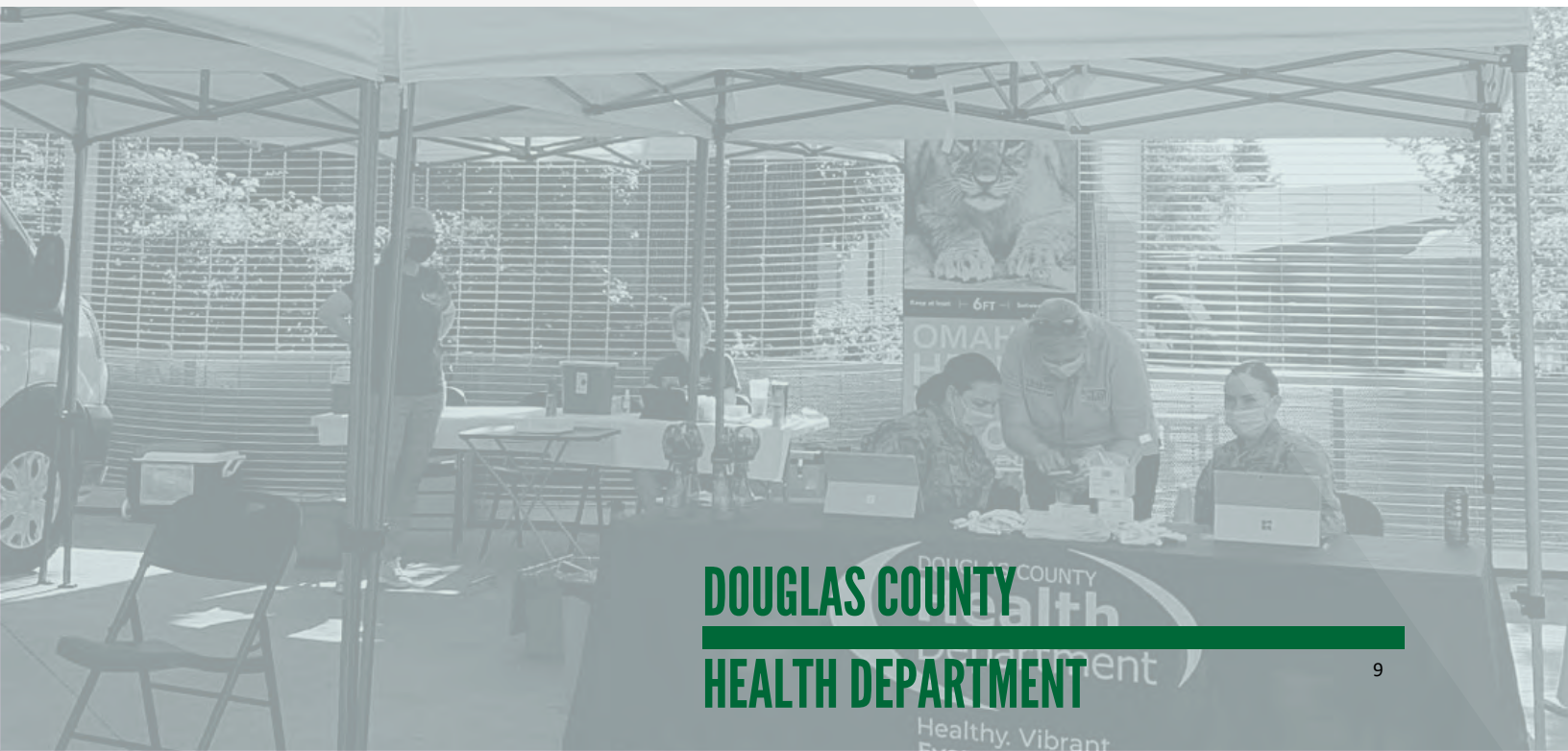
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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINES

Information: DCHD has operated a public information line, staffed during regular business hours, answering over 60,000 calls in English and Spanish. The health department also creates daily press releases on current COVID-19 topics and information regarding the burden of cases and hospitalizations in the community. DCHD subject matter experts frequently participate in media interviews and update social media postings regularly. DCHD also maintains a COVID-19 dashboard for Douglas County, which provides statistical information to the public including positive tests, case rates, breakthrough rates, hospitalizations, deaths, and geographical vaccine and case maps.



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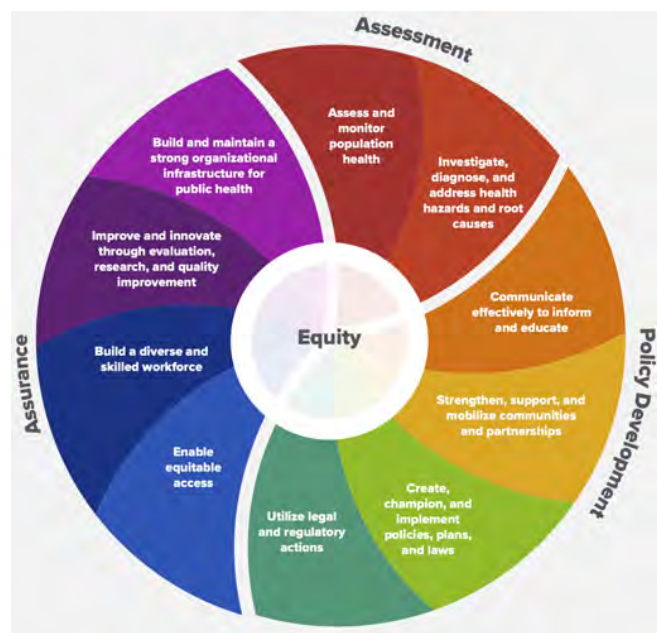
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Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

DCHD conducts Community Health Assessments (CHAs) within a regional framework with area health systems and two other health departments (Sarpy-Cass and Pottawattamie County, IA). Survey collection for the 2021 CHA was completed in late summer and results are currently under review. Upon first examination and meeting with partners, mental health has risen to the top again as a priority for the region.

CHIP PRIORITIES: DCHD and partners in the region continue to hear from the community, and agree, that mental health remains a top priority, especially after the difficulty the past 20 months of COVID-19 have presented. Further data and prioritization meetings will be occurring in early October 2021.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

DCHD has spent the past 20 months in COVID-19 response, prioritizing equitable access to COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. DCHD worked with health system partners and community advisory groups to bring COVID-19 testing to South Omaha for six weeks to meet unprecedented needs for testing (prior to Test Nebraska's implementation) and hosted COVID-19 vaccine clinics in a variety of settings (worksites, schools, libraries, community events, barber/beauty shops, home visits, etc.) to meet the needs of the community.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

DCHD developed a unique, COVID-19 navigation team in May of 2020. Trained navigators assist individuals who test positive or were exposed to COVID-19 with identified social determinants of health needs. Assistance such as food, utility payments, rent/mortgage payments, access to care for ongoing COVID-19 and/or chronic disease management, transportation, mental health supports, employment, etc. were provided. From May through December 3,050 individuals were assisted by the HDN team.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

In addition to COVID-19 work, communicable disease/epidemiology staff continue to follow up on other reportable illnesses such as enterics and zoonotics.

DCHD's STD outreach team has continued to stock condoms in condom box locations across the community; however, due to COVID-19 demands, STD testing and outreach had to be stopped for a time. In 2021, since resuming limited STD services (in June), a total of 420 clients were provided services.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

While assisting with some COVID-19 response activities, the Environmental Health (EH) section continued to complete food and sanitation calls and inspections. Between January and September 2021, DCHD inspected 2,527 retail food establishments and made 1,806 sanitation inspections. DCHD's EH team received a certificate of achievement from the FDA for "outstanding commitment to retail food safety and the continuous improvement of the retail food regulatory program as demonstrated by completion of an updated full self-assessment of all nine standards." Additionally, air quality monitoring continues across the metro area with near real-time updates to the public to inform when potentially hazardous air quality exists, and to allow DCHD to issue air quality alerts and warnings, as needed.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

DCHD is working with Coalition Rx to develop the infrastructure for an Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT). Members of the OFRT include physicians, schools, law enforcement, behavioral health, coroners, public health, health systems, social work, pharmacists and others. This group will review data, associated with overdose fatalities, to determine contributing factors which will guide the development and implementation of a county-wide Overdose Fatality Strategic Plan.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

Douglas/Sarpy County WIC program is now screening all pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women for depression using the PHQ-4 screening tool. Since the start of this program 1,609 participants were screened for depression. Pilot results below:

- 253 (15.8%) scored 3-5 (mild depression/anxiety)
- 97 scored (6.0%) 6-8 (moderate depression/anxiety)
- 38 scored (2.3%) 9-12 (severe depression/anxiety)
- 101 (6.2%) participants were given a mental health referral
- 492 (30.5%) participants were educated on maternal mental health topics

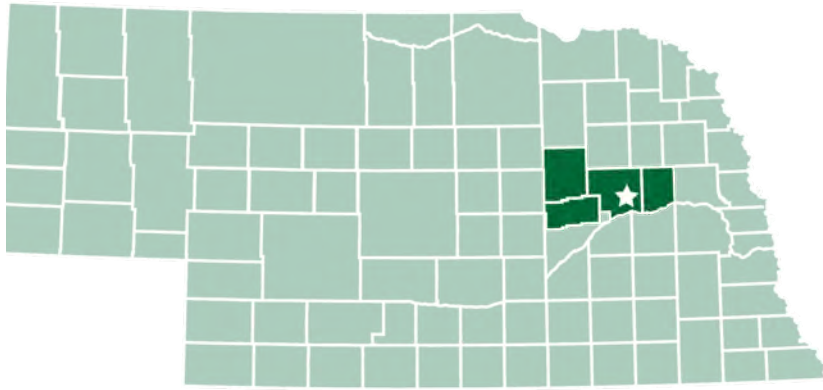
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Douglas County Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

In June of 2020, the Douglas County Board of Health adopted a resolution declaring racism a Public Health Crisis. Within this declaration are listed 22 actions the board has committed to supporting to address racism as a health issue in our community. Since then, the issues of equity and racial justice have been a strong focus of our work. We continue to build advisory groups and partnerships with communities of color and others and advocate for policies that support the health and wellbeing of people of color, minority communities (LGBTQ+, refugees) and others. The Board of Health Equity committee was established and has begun exploring how policies and systems in the area have impacted the health of these communities and groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently DCHD was funded for the CDC Health Equity COVID-19 grant which will support the development of the Office of Health Equity and Social Justice (#1 action step on the Resolution). Staffing for this Office will be the Health Equity Advisor, a Health Equity Epidemiologist and a Community Health Educator II. These positions will allow for greater breadth and depth of work to occur both in the department and the community and allow us to identify needed policy, systems and environmental changes across the spectrum of work being conducted by the health department.

EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Boone, Colfax, Nance, and Platte Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

The COVID-19 response required the rapid development, training, and deployment of a diverse team of topic experts, community partners, and other resources. The overall pattern of cases in East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) peaked in late April/early May. This allowed the health department about seven weeks of preparation time to build community relationships for training contact tracers and case investigators, create sector-specific technical assistance, and bolster community support for public health recommendations. ECDHD worked closely with and enhanced relationships with city and county government entities, first responders, education systems, NGOs, community organizations, among others.

ECDHD collaborated with the health district's medical community, including Good Neighbor Community Health Center (GNCHC) and the four local hospitals through the COVID-19 response. Early in the response ECDHD adopted a unique approach to managing cases. Leveraging our public health/medical community partnership, COVID-positive patients were referred directly to their own primary care provider or were established at a medical home of their choosing. Ceasing isolation guidance was given to cases by these medical professionals, with advice and guidance from the ECDHD team. The purpose of this was to 1) establish medical homes for every COVID-19 patient, 2) decrease patient risk for ceasing isolation, 3) maximize the public health workforce to address active monitoring on quarantined persons.

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Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

ECDHD began leading the 2021 Community Health Assessment (CHA) data collection in partnership with the Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (NALHD) at the end of 2020 and through February 2021. The first and second quarters of 2021 marked the end of the 2018 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) activities that focused on addressing obesity, access to healthcare, behavioral health, substance abuse, and family support. Behavioral health, an area of focus for all counties within the health district, will likely continue to be highlighted moving forward into the next CHIP. Quarter 3 will mark the kickoff of the 2021 CHIP process. Focus groups point to community engagement and mental health as key areas of interest for the 2021 CHIP process.

CHIP PRIORITIES: Between the four counties, ECDHD was focused on the following areas:

- Obesity
- Access to Healthcare
- Behavioral Health
- Substance Abuse
- Family Support

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

The Access to Care Committee in Platte County meets quarterly to discuss gaps and barriers to care. This working group examines the payer mix for specific healthcare services, barriers to transportation, weather and seasonal conditions, provider-related barriers, language and culture, and the impact of systemic factors. Additionally, the collaborative process for developing strategies to target the uninsured and underserved populations include partnering closely with Good Neighbor Community Health Center (GNCHC). ECDHD and GNCHC have created a mechanism for bi-directional support for getting patients services such as Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, medical, dental, Early Development Network, immunizations.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

ECDHD adopted the evidence-based nutrition program, Building Healthy Families (BHF). This program focuses on children with a BMI greater than the 95th percentile, along with their families. BHF uses fun and engaging methods that teach participants about nutrition and physical exercise. This interactive 12-week program provides individualized nutrition counseling and gives families the tools and support they need to make sustainable lifestyle modifications. This, in turn, can reduce their chronic disease risk and prevent future illness.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

In addition to monitoring and responding to the COVID-19 situation, ECDHD maintained a robust infectious disease surveillance program focused on CDC reportable diseases. Common investigations over the previous year in addition to SARS-CoV-2, included: rabies, campylobacter, and hepatitis B and C.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

ECDHD is working with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) to implement the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) testing program which focuses on lead testing within schools and daycares, where children are most likely to be exposed to lead. ECDHD also supports environmental health by offering radon testing and water testing programs free of charge for health district residents.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

Through the substance abuse grant, ECDHD has provided medication drop boxes at local hospitals to prevent accidental overdoses. This grant has also funded community outreach projects and home medication lock boxes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ECDHD staff and volunteers provided COVID-19 testing, vaccinations and quarantine guidance to mitigate the harm caused by COVID-19.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

Through outreach events, ECDHD staff have connected families to essential programs that improve the overall wellbeing of women and children, such as Early Development Network, WIC, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and primary care. ECDHD promoted breastfeeding within the community through trainings, community coalitions, certifications, and WIC client education. The WIC program improved the overall nutrition of participants by supplementing diets with nutrient-dense foods and offering regular and rigorous nutrition education during appointments.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that East Central District Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

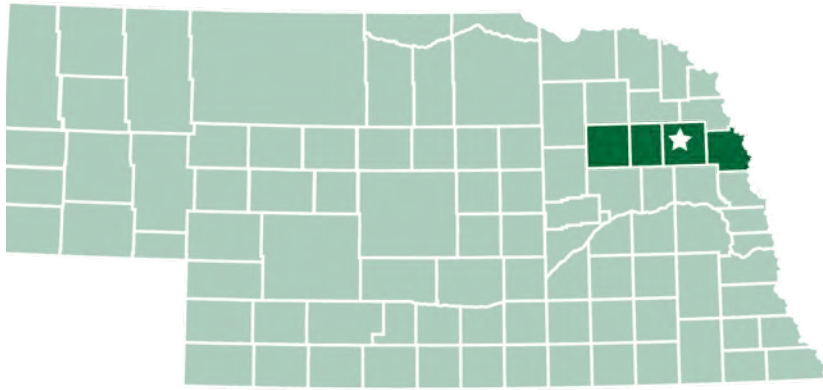
ECDHD staff designed an online monitoring and evaluation system to track the health department's efforts. Data were collected related to the implementation of interventions, short-term indicators for success (e.g., the number of patients reached by a policy or program), and outcomes (e.g., clinical measures, behavioral outcomes) across projects. Department staff: a) documented implementation and support activities, b) assigned nominal coding schemes that classified each event by a predetermined class of activities, and c) provided additional descriptions of contextual details about each activity (e.g., scope and reach, sectors engaged). Documenters from each of the implementation projects made entries related to implementation activities each month.

Documented activities are coded by seven distinct categories: a) Development Activities related to increasing capacity of the organization for delivering the intervention (e.g., hiring community health workers); b) Community Advocacy (e.g., creation of new partnerships to bring about a specific community or systems change); c) Community/Systems Change (i.e., new or modified policies, programs, and practices); d) Services Provided (e.g., instances of diabetes self-management education); e) Resources Generated or leveraged time or monies (e.g., the use of AmeriCorps workers as CHWs); f) Dissemination Efforts as a result of the project (e.g., scientific publications); and g) other.

Analysis of these data provide valuable insight into how the ECDHD team can improve the quality of our work and ensure excellence in delivery of public health services to our communities.

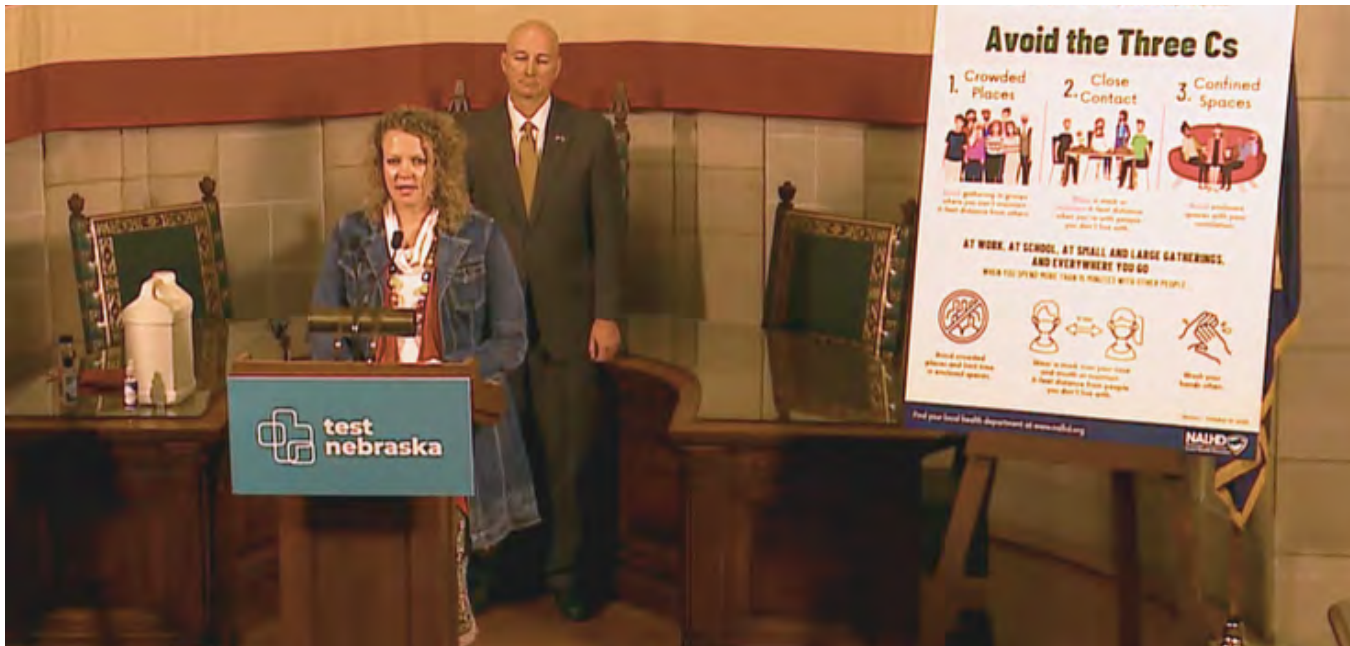
ELKHORN LOGAN VALLEY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Burt, Cuming, Madison, and Stanton Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department (ELVPHD) was inundated with phone calls, Facebook messages, and emails from different sectors asking what the guidance was for their organization or business. To help provide consistent messaging, ELVPHD determined what sectors were asking for information and then assigned a staff member to work with a specific sector. Sectors identified included: bars/restaurants, child care, religious organizations, elected officials, fairs/festivals/outdoor events, fire/EMS/dispatch, fitness centers/gyms, general business/employers, hospitals/clinics, dental and eye clinics, Latino community/translation, long-term care/assisted living, media, quarantine and isolation, personal protective equipment (PPE), Test Nebraska/National Guard, salons/massage/beauty industry, senior centers, schools/colleges, and sports teams. As staff were assigned to one or more specific sectors, it was the staff person's responsibility to learn how the State's Directed Health Measures applied to a sector, what the recommended guidance was for that sector, and then become the primary contact person for that sector. The staff would then take the phone calls for that sector, create social media posts, and respond to Facebook and email messaging. Prior to the pandemic, many of these sectors were not aware there was a local public health department that served the community, nor were they aware of the services offered.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINES

Collaboration with partners and communication of accurate information was extremely important as the pandemic unfolded. ELVPHD developed strong working relationships and had direct lines of communication with epidemiologists and infectious disease specialists with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS). ELVPHD staff also worked closely with the Emergency Managers from the four counties in the health district. These close working relationships allowed staff to provide accurate information to the public.

Social media was a critical tool sharing information with the community. The ELVPHD Facebook page went from 2,078 followers in January 2020 to 8,961 followers at the end of that year. The highest post reach occurred in May 2020. That post reached 50,881 individuals.



ELKHORN LOGAN VALLEY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



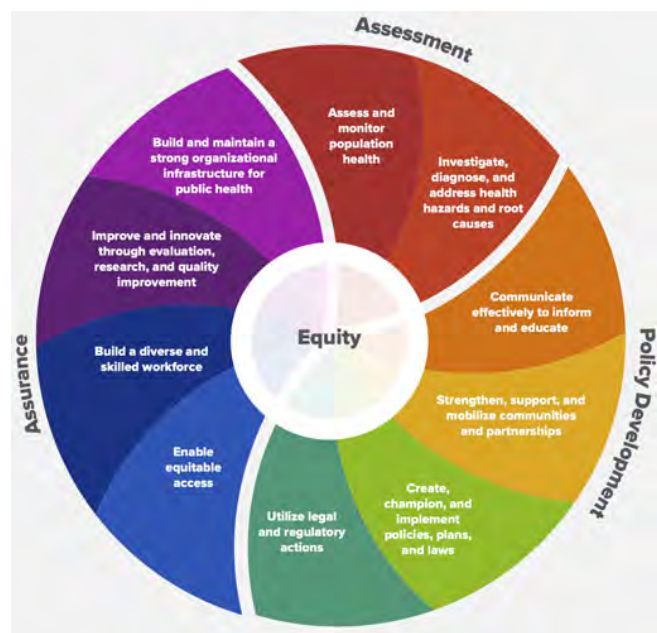
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Every three years, ELVPHD along with the hospital partners in the district—MercyOne Oakland Medical Center, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, and Faith Regional Health Services —conducts a community health needs assessment. The Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (NALHD) compiled the results of the assessment and combined them with pieces of data specific to the service area. This was last completed in 2019.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

- Priority 1: Chronic Disease Control and Sepsis
- Priority 2: Behavioral/Mental Health

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

ELVPHD's Smile in Style Program provides preventative dental services in local schools and child care centers. Services include an oral health screening, fluoride varnish, dental sealants and oral health education by a Public Health Registered Dental Hygienist. Although COVID-19 restrictions prevented operations at all area schools, ELVPHD was able to provide dental services at the majority of the school sites. The Smile in Style Program screened 610 children in local schools, 211 in child care facilities and 13 in the office. Education was provided to 1,244 children. A total of 1,488 dental services were provided in these settings.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

According to the 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data, 80.7% of adults in the ELVPHD service area are up-to-date on cervical cancer screening and 69.8% are up-to-date on breast cancer screening. For women age 40 to 64, ELVPHD provides health coaching to promote healthy eating and physical activity. ELVPHD also provides navigation to women to assist them in completing breast and cervical cancer screenings.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

The ELVPHD BRFSS data from 2019 indicates that only 50.3% of all adults in the ELVPHD health district and 71.4% of adults over age 65 had a flu shot. ELVPHD administered 2,432 vaccines (including both flu and other, non-COVID-19 vaccines) throughout the year. ELVPHD provided 539 vaccines for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. The VFC program provides usual vaccines for eligible children who are uninsured/underinsured. An additional 250 vaccines were provided via our AIP program (the Adult Immunizations Program) which provides select vaccines for adults who are uninsured.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

ELVPHD makes radon test kits available to the residents of our four counties. We use various media outlets to educate about the health risks of radon and mitigation considerations. During this reporting period, 197 radon kits were distributed with 133 of the kits returned for a 67.5% return rate. Thirteen social media posts were released with a total post reach of 23,495. Individuals with high radon levels were given a link to complete a survey to determine if they planned to install a mitigation system. A total of 24 individuals completed the survey. 29.2% plan to have a radon mitigation system installed, 33.3% are unsure if they will install a mitigation system, 8.3% do not intend to install a radon mitigation system and 29.1% stated they have already installed a mitigation system.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

ELVPHD's Tai Chi program is a fall prevention program with the goal to decrease falls for individuals age 65 and older. Two classes were started in September 2020 and April 2021. Both have been completed. Of the 17 individuals who completed the Tai Chi class, 13 showed improvement in their Time Up and Go results. Of the 13 that showed improvement, 9 showed improvement by .5 seconds or more.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

ELVPHD continues to monitor blood lead levels among children in the service area and investigates cases of elevated blood lead levels. ELVPHD has promoted education to prevent lead poisoning through social media and community outreach events. Social media reached about 25,815 individuals. During this period eight children tested with elevated lead levels (greater than 5 ug/dL). ELVPHD assists the NE-DHHS in coordinating inspections, referrals, and linkages to services for children with elevated blood lead levels.

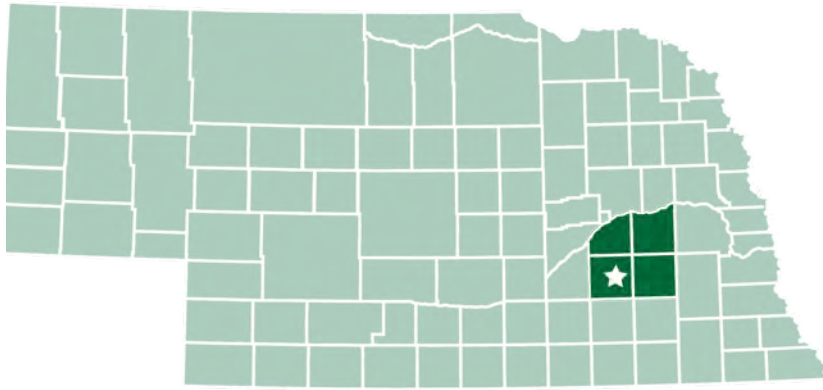
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

ELVPHD's contact tracing interview form used to conduct phone interviews with COVID-19 cases and close contacts was transformed into an online survey. The ELVPHD team emailed or texted a survey link to individuals that they were unable to interview by phone. This survey link was also used to send the online interview survey to individuals over weekends and holidays, as well as days when positive COVID-19 cases exceeded the capacity of ELVPHD's staff. Of all survey links sent out, approximately 41% were completed. It took the average person 11 minutes to complete the survey. ELVPHD saved many staff hours by implementing the electronic survey format. This will continue to save public health human resource time for as long as the pandemic persists.

FOUR CORNERS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Butler, Polk, Seward, and York Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

In the spring of 2020, Four Corners Health Department (FCHD) activated the Public Health Emergency Coordination Center in response to the US Public Health Emergency Declaration related to the emergence of COVID-19. Throughout the fiscal year, FCHD followed federal and state guidance in monitoring those at risk of illness, providing education, and implementing other public health activities depending on the situation. FCHD held regular briefings (using Zoom) with district medical providers, emergency management, elected officials, and community members. When statewide Directed Health Measures were in effect, the FCHD team actively reviewed Gathering Safety Plans to ensure that safety guidelines were in place. FCHD coordinated with the State to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies to EMS, healthcare, and others in the district. Health department staff continue to support our communities and partners in these ways as we all negotiate the ongoing pandemic.

Case investigation and contact tracing of COVID-19 cases are also ongoing. FCHD continues to implement our mass vaccination campaign. To do this, FCHD facilitates vaccine sharing and distribution across the district. Our efforts have focused on community vaccine clinics and the vaccination of critical infrastructure workers through mobile clinics. As the pandemic waned over the summer, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) provided fewer staff and other resources to support case investigations. FCHD developed a Qualtrics survey tool to help staff complete case investigations during the latest surge.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

FCHD continues to use our website and social media to share COVID-19 updates and guidance documents. Data related to the local status of the pandemic is shared weekly.



**FOUR CORNERS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

FCHD monitors rates of disease and other factors that may affect the health of our communities. Every five years, a community health survey is developed and promoted across the health district, in collaboration with area hospitals. Offered in both paper and online version, the survey provides the community an opportunity to voice their opinions on health care, education, health problems, and risky behaviors. In turn, this survey information helps develop the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

CHIP PRIORITIES:

- Local Public Health System Collaboration
- Healthy Lifestyles (Physical Activity and Nutrition, Cancer, Diabetes, and Heart Disease)
- Behavioral and Mental Health/Substance Abuse
- Motor Vehicle Crashes and Deaths

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

FCHD contributes a Public Health Nurse to the York Medical Clinic's care team and the York General Hospital. FCHD also hired a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner for this project. Together, the care coordination team works to improve outcomes for certain high-needs patients, addressing behavioral health issues and social determinants of health.

A similar model is being applied with Memorial Healthcare Systems in Seward, targeting patients who have scored high for depression using a depression screening tool implemented during an emergency room visit.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

FCHD offers the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), Tobacco Quitting Information Sessions, and Living Well with Chronic Disease workshops. Through these programs, people learn real-life skills to live a healthy life. Taking small steps to achieve overall health is the goal.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

In addition to the COVID-19 response, FCHD monitors other disease outbreaks. FCHD staff work with partners to perform weekly school surveillance, influenza-like-illness surveillance with the local hospitals, and routine reportable disease investigations. When communicable diseases are discovered, they are reported to FCHD by medical providers and laboratories. The public health staff then contact patients and medical providers to gain more information and take appropriate and tailored actions to stop disease from spreading.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

To protect groundwater and soil, FCHD worked with community partners to organize popular Household Hazardous Waste Disposal events in all four counties.

FCHD executes an annual radon education campaign, including making household radon kits available to the community.

FCHD addresses childhood lead poisoning through routine surveillance that picks up reports of children with high blood lead levels. These cases are investigated by our public health surveillance team. FCHD also works with schools and daycares to test their water fountains and taps for lead.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

FCHD's Car Seat Program provides car seats to families. Staff are also available to check seats for proper installation. Media campaigns are also utilized to promote "Drive Smart" messages (highlighting the dangers of impaired driving and drowsy driving, promoting seat belt use).

Better Balance and Fall Prevention Classes are offered on a regular basis, these include Tai Chi and "Stepping On" programs.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

FCHD continues to provide oral health services and screenings with the help of a Public Health Dental Hygienist. Education and screenings are provided to children up to age five and to school-aged children.

FCHD helps families find help they need to be healthy and well. This includes assistance with finding medical providers, behavioral health services, medication assistance, food assistance, housing assistance, etc.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Four Corners Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Four Corners Health Department spearheaded community engagement projects where action plans promoting health were developed by the residents. The goal was to enable the communities to improve opportunities for physical activity for kids. The participating communities established policies and plans for their children and families. Currently, FCHD has three active communities involved with this project.

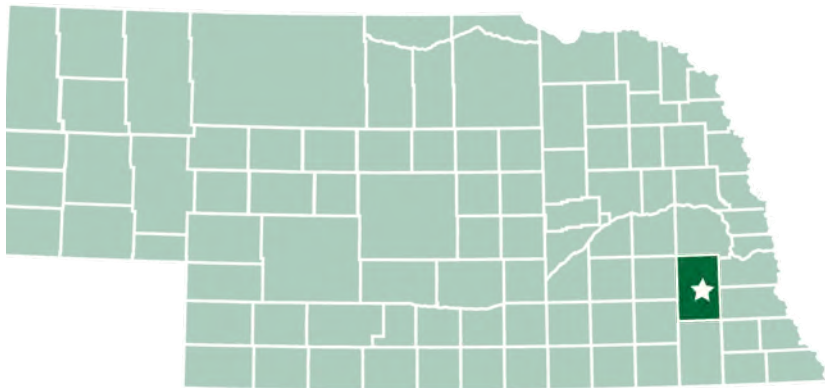
- Seward has three active groups focused on family friendly trail activities, outdoor equipment rental, and promotion of a future wellness center.
- Brainard has two active groups focused on outdoor trail enhancements and adding youth activities to the park.
- The community of Henderson completed a Community Garden.

Each of these communities had community, village, and school support and were surrounded by a host of volunteers to achieve their goals. Project sustainability is a focus in all cases.

FCHD continues to be a part of the LOSS Team (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors). The LOSS Team offers support to families that experience a death by suicide. The health department offers QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) which trains people to recognize a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Anyone can take this training and FCHD provides various offerings for different age groups.

LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Lincoln and Lancaster Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Lancaster County met the nationwide goal of 70% of adults 18 and older with at least one dose of COVID-19 by July 4, 2021. As of this writing, Lancaster County currently has 69% of its population 16 years and older fully vaccinated. Lancaster County continues to lead the state in the percentage of our entire population fully vaccinated at more than 54%. However, the burden of COVID-19 was disproportionate throughout the city, with higher risk in more diverse areas. Since Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) started offering the vaccines to the public in February of 2021, vaccination rates were continually monitored in individual census tracts and publicly reported by zip codes. By April, the vaccination rates were noticeably lagging in census tracts with higher rates of population in poverty and a younger population demographic compared to other census tracts. Based on the emerging data trend, LCCHD worked to encourage vaccination in specific areas of Lincoln by offering new community and neighborhood vaccination sites and focused, evening-hours clinics. LLCHD engaged additional local influencers in the faith community in addition to community leaders. New sites and times were prioritized based on mapping of vaccine distribution to provide the most accessible clinics possible and based on guidance and input from trusted leaders known by the ethnic, minority, and refugee communities. The change was noticeable within a month and by the end of June nearly all the census tracts throughout the city and county had reached 50% or above. Census tracts with the lowest vaccination rates were a primary focus and many increased by over 20% in the time period, with one increasing nearly 40% to rank among the highest in the city for fully vaccinated adults over 16 years old.

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LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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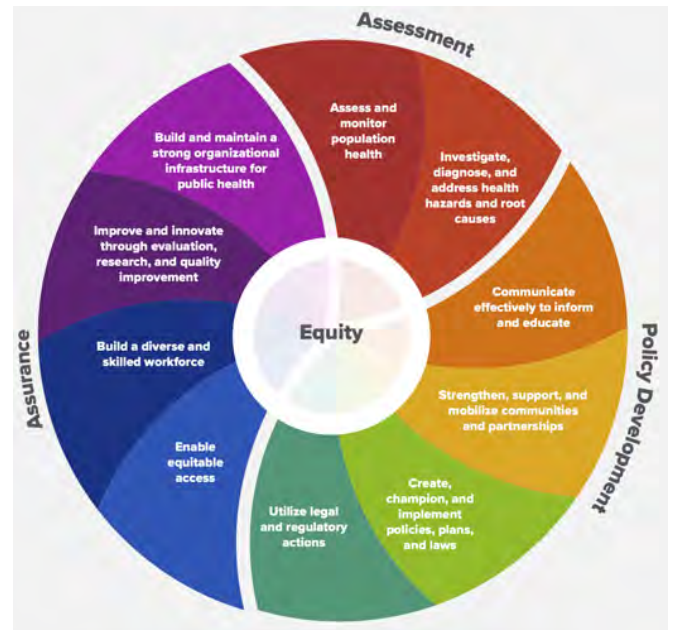
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Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

LLCHD developed an updated approach to Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning. Initial concepts were developed and tested for viability using an in-depth customer engagement process with more than 30 community partners. A five-question qualitative survey concept emerged, as well as broad buy-in to the approach from the partners that were engaged. LLCHD used a modified spatial-sequential sampling methodology (CASPER--Community Assessment for Public Emergency Response). LLCHD sent the survey to one in every seven parcels of land (households), allowing the Department to weight and map the results, and overlay the survey with established secondary data sources utilized in the Community Health Status Assessment (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System [BRFSS], Youth Risk Behavior Survey [YRBS], Vital Stats, etc.), and be more directed in where focus was placed in the Community Health Improvement Plan. In addition, LLCHD worked with the Cultural Centers of Lincoln, the Commission for the Blind, and the Homeless Coalition, LLCHD partnered to identify and oversample 11 Equity Groups.

CHIP PRIORITIES: The CHIP will be initiated later in 2021 following the completion of the assessment activities.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

LLCHD staff work with the schools and parents to assure that children with priority needs get an appointment with a dentist. Last year 21% of children screened had not seen a dentist, meeting the goal of 25% or less. During the early months of COVID-19, dental staff continued to provide services and outreach to vulnerable populations served by our clinic adding protocols to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and address general COVID questions and concerns of patients.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

LLCHD promotes active lifestyles which mitigate the risk factors of chronic disease. LLCHD supports safe use of transportation and mobility for all active users by providing health education regarding safe bicycling and walking as well as supporting infrastructure improvements to enhancing walkability. LLCHD representation at interdepartmental planning meetings and School Zone Guideline Planning meetings ensures city departments are moving toward an integrated infrastructure affording everyone options for both exercise and active transportation.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

LLCHD routinely assesses communicable diseases in the community. The epidemiologist is part of the Epi Team initiated within 24 hours of a disease outbreak report. The epidemiologist performs a number of functions related to assessment, follow-up, analysis, and reporting. During this past year of the pandemic, LLCHD epidemiologists have analyzed data, identified clusters, coordinating staff making and answering calls about vaccinations and create daily reports to support decision-making by the Health Director and the Mayor.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

Environmental Health continued to provide services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including consultation and training to childcare providers on health and safety and outbreak response to COVID-19 (over 60 clusters/outbreaks), RSV, Parainfluenza, and Norovirus and responding to hazardous materials spills. Staff provided technical assistance to hundreds of regulated businesses, such as restaurants and bars, body art establishments, barbers, cosmetologists and massage therapists on COVID-19 prevention strategies and compliance with Directed Health Measures. Staff also responded to hundreds of complaints about businesses or individuals not complying with the measures.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

LLCHD assesses the leading causes of unintentional injury to children and adults through review of hospital record data, YRBS/BRFSS injury data, and local police and fire accident and fire data. Staff utilizes this information, working with Safe Kids coalition partners, to create data-driven strategies using CDC/Safe Kids Worldwide recommended policies and public awareness efforts (i.e., car seat inspections; drowning prevention and pool retailer education, youth sports injury prevention videos for volunteer coaches and families, smoke alarm and safe disposal videos, childcare training certification, etc.).

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

Our epidemiology team and information management team continue to support our evidence-based home visitation program. During much of the past year, home visitors met with their clients remotely using Zoom. The epi and IT staff assured that the automated reporting and dashboards continued to provide quality data. The dashboards provide daily updates on caseloads and status of clients, tracks assessments and interventions by required time frames and monitors timeliness. This reporting function creates the monthly report to the State.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

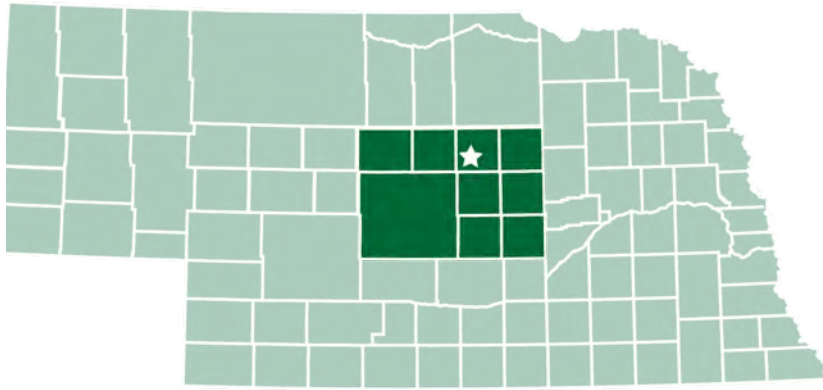
Additional public health activities that Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

The role technology and informatics played in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic was pivotal. Our existing informatics and technology capacity was an intentional investment for decades. Our use of informatics for the pandemic used an iterative improvement and innovative approach at high speed. All the processes we had for collecting, managing, and analyzing data had to be geared up to track, analyze and report every day, seven days a week. Assuring that disease reports from labs, data from contact tracers, testing data, hospitalization data, school absenteeism, and other data was collected every day. Scripts to organize and analyze the data to identify patterns, clusters and manage the data flow and maintenance had to be created and/or adapted. We added critical software to improve capacity which included: purchasing and implementing SAS and acquiring RedCap. We also used existing tools like Logi Analytics to create a COVID-19 Dashboard and Risk Dial. Two other aspects of the pandemic response required development of technology to manage: 1) PPE distribution and 2) vaccination program. An online PPE order, fulfillment and inventory management applications was created. The City's CIO, dedicated staff to develop an online vaccine registration application. This was implemented at the beginning of January 2021 and within a month, more than 130,000 individuals, registered their desire to be vaccinated. The application grew to include: 1) ability to schedule appointments for the vaccine clinics online; 2) vaccine administration could be entered into the application in batches reducing the time for entry from five minutes to 45 seconds and 3) real time application at the vaccine clinics for check-in, vaccine consent and vaccine administration. We continue to methodically identify and correct data quality issues.

Link to YouTube Video about LLCHD response to COVID19:
<https://youtu.be/HWbmSSWTtqc>

LOUP BASIN PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Blaine, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Howard, Loup, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

On April 4, 2020, Loup Basin Public Health Department (LBPHD) received its first COVID-19 case within the nine-county district. In the months since, the response to this public health emergency has challenged our staff with long hours, keeping up with evolving data and guidance, and ensuring equity for our rural communities all while continuing to balance other public health responsibilities. As the case counts continued to rise, so did the need for additional staff, office space, and storage.

LBPHD was not only the primary resource for the latest data and best practices for our medical community, local businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, and individuals. We were also tasked with the logistical burden of ordering, tracking, and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to area nursing homes, hospitals, and EMS squads. LBPHD hosted weekly situational awareness/best practice calls, organized, and ran COVID-19 testing sites, coordinated COVID-19 vaccine distribution and scheduling throughout the district, and administered vaccine in underserved areas while performing local case investigations and contact tracing.

Because LBPHD was forced to expand quickly with the hiring of additional contract, part-time, and full-time staff as well as maxing out all storage options, there was no choice but to renovate to add more office space and a supplementary multipurpose building.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Managing all these endeavors at once proved to be a taxing feat for management while trying to maintain a grasp on our employees' mental and physical health, workload management, and burnout. In spite of these many COVID-related challenges, the LBPHD team provided expert public health guidance and services that were responsive to the needs and situations in our unique communities.



**LOUP BASIN PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

The Loup Basin Community Health Assessment (CHA) is completed every three years as a group effort among public health, health care, educational facilities, established coalitions, and other key leaders in the community. This process demonstrates a commitment to assessing the health needs of Blaine, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Howard, Loup, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler counties. The results of the CHA are used to make the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP contains priorities, goals, and strategies to impact the health of our community.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

Goal 1: Reduce the incidence and progression of heart disease.

Goal 2: Prevent oral diseases and conditions and improve access to preventative services and dental care for children.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

Loup Basin Smiles is an oral health program focused on prevention. The program provides fluoride varnish at Head Starts, preschools, and elementary schools throughout LBPHD's district. LBPHD uses public health certified dental hygienists to perform oral screenings and apply fluoride varnish treatments to children's teeth. Loup Basin Smiles reaches over 2,000 students during a regular school year. Due to COVID, LBPHD was not able to enter as many schools and numbers of students seen decreased dramatically. Loup Basin Smiles is a vital program to the health of students of the district and LBPHD will be working to achieve (and exceed) pre-pandemic participation once the demands of COVID-19 response decrease.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

The Well @ Work program offers onsite health screenings to businesses and schools in the LBPHD service area. LBPHD was able to modify its Well @ Work program in order to navigate through the pandemic. Important health screening data is obtained and personalized education is developed by LBPHD staff and is shared with participants to improve health outcomes through modifications in nutrition and physical activity. When appropriate, referrals are made to primary medical providers for further evaluation of health screening findings.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

LBPHD conducts surveillance, investigation, and follow-up of reportable communicable diseases as part of meeting our responsibilities as a local health department. Nebraska utilizes an electronic reporting system called the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) allowing health departments to receive communicable disease reports from a variety of healthcare entities. In addition to COVID-19, the diseases LBPHD followed-up on this year included animal exposures, childhood lead exposures, E. coli, Campylobacter, Hepatitis C, Pertussis, Salmonella, and West Nile Virus.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

Whether caused by natural, accidental, or intentional means, public health threats are always present and can lead to the onset of public health incidents. LBPHD collaborates with local, state, and national partners to prevent, respond to, and rapidly recover from these ever changing public health threats. More specifically, LBPHD continues to participate in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. When a lead exposure is identified, the LBPHD team gives guidance to local families regarding follow-up testing. We also help to arrange for an environmental inspection of the home.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

LBPHD has a public health nurse who is certified as a car seat technician. They know the ins and outs of car seats, installation options, vehicle differences, and harnessing procedures. The technician is available by appointment to instruct caregivers in a one-on-one learning experience on installation, provide education, and inspect car seats.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

LBPHD protects the families in our health district by providing a wide array of services such as immunizations, health screenings, communicable disease investigations, and car seat safety education and checks. Currently, LBPHD does not receive funding from Nebraska's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program. These needs are met by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) or other resources in our area. LBPHD refers all candidates for these programs to these resources.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

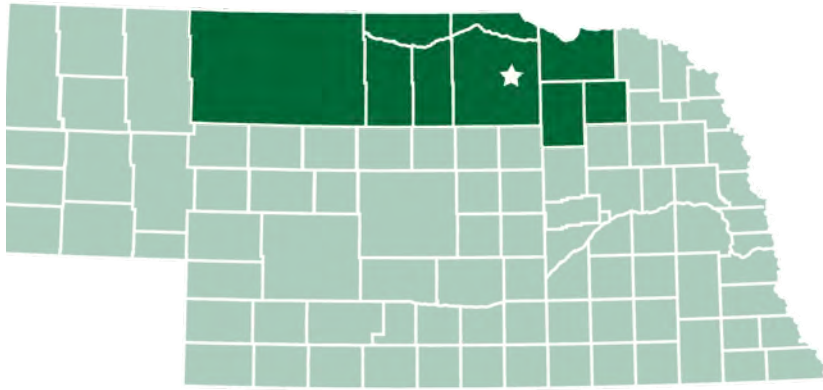
Additional public health activities that Loup Basin Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Loup Basin Public Health Department strives to reduce or eliminate cases of vaccine preventable diseases by providing vaccines in our area. LBPHD's immunization program promotes and provides adult and childhood immunizations. In addition to administering vaccines in the office, LBPHD offers immunization services every-other-month in Broken Bow (Custer County). Health department staff also work with local school nurses, district wide, to assure compliance with Nebraska Student Immunization Law and keep students and school staff healthy. LBPHD supports statewide data accuracy by ensuring our area's immunization data is correctly entered into the Nebraska State Immunization Information System (NESIIS).

LBPHD participates in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) and Adult Immunization Program (AIP). These programs are federally-funded and state operated vaccine supply programs. Through these programs, ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) recommended vaccines can be given to eligible persons for a requested donation.

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Antelope, Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Pierce, and Rock Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

COVID-19 testing was first launched in the North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) area with support from the Nebraska National Guard in the Spring of 2020, to test symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals and to get community-level data. As cases continued to grow, we launched our own testing program using drive-through testing. Clients stayed in their car while staff members registered them digitally on an iPad and collected the swab through the car window. We set up long-term testing sites in Bassett at the Rock County Fairgrounds, in O'Neill at the O'Neill Armory, and in Valentine at the Cherry County Hospital (run by Cherry County Hospital). Pop-up testing continued in other communities and targeted outbreaks. This included a large pop-up testing event at the Santee Sioux Nation's Health Center. Our testing program offered rapid testing in combination with PCR testing. This unique model allowed symptomatic individuals to get a lower efficacy, fast result rapid test. If the result was negative, a Gold-Standard PCR test was utilized and sent off for analysis. Depending on the number of cases in the state, the PCR results typically returned in 1 to 3 days.

NCDHD also supported long-term care testing by helping all facilities get routine testing established in-house. School-based testing was offered, but due to lack of interest, this was not rolled out.

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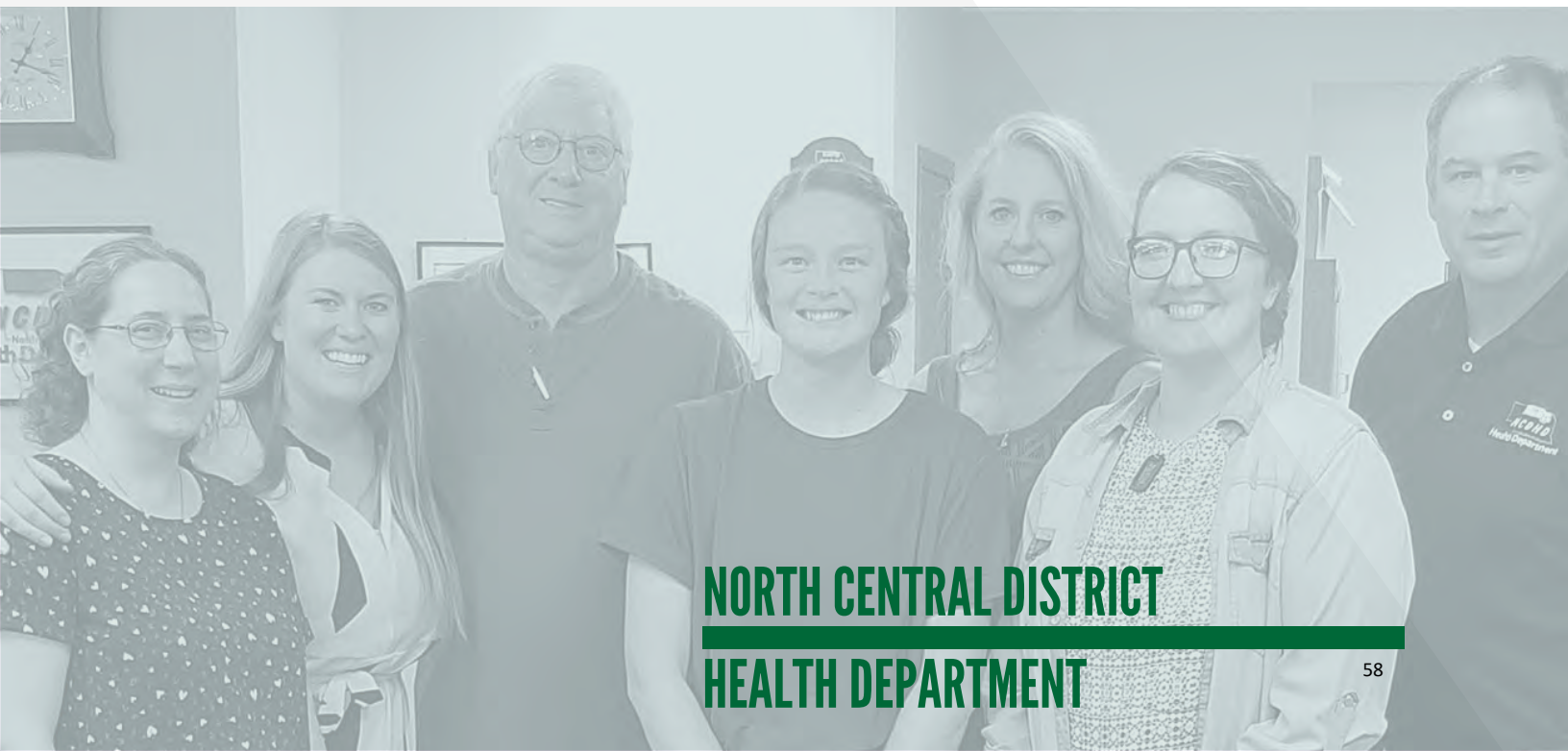
www.ncdhdne.wordpress.com



CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19

Addressing a major priority after schools closed in the Spring of 2020, we provided all area schools with education and materials to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the Fall of 2020.

We created a risk dial along with a base plan that helped schools start in-person classes successfully. Schools that utilized masking as a prevention strategy were generally the most successful.



NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

NCDHD and district partners conducted a Community Health Assessment (CHA) in 2019. Upon review of the data, partners identified community health needs regarding mental and heart health. NCDHD partnered with UNMC to create mental wellness and blood pressure media campaigns. Data on vulnerable populations were reviewed and campaigns targeting identified demographics were created. Campaign material was sent out to the community for review and feedback. Once finalized, NCDHD partners shared campaign content on website, social media platforms, clinics, food pantries, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic refocused NCDHD and area partners' areas of concern.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

Priority 1: Chronic Disease Detection and Management

Priority 2: Mental Wellness

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

Miles of Smiles (MOS) is a school-based program that utilizes Public Health Authorized Registered Dental Hygienists to do oral health examinations and to apply fluoride varnish to preschool, elementary, and middle school students within the nine-county health district. In 2020, 56% of students in NCDHD participated and our team applied fluoride varnish on 40% of school-aged children among 10 schools, which was all but 2 schools in our area. Of these children, 20% had Medicaid insurance; 44 children needed immediate referrals to a dentist; 236 sealants were placed. NCDHD averages \$22,000 over what is needed for match funding with the Nebraska Community Foundation.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

Given the resources needed from NCDHD and our partners to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in our area, our work in chronic disease prevention was limited. In our Chronic Care Management (CCM) program, NCDHD contracted with Osmond General Hospital and the Wausa Clinic to create a system to track data. We expanded efforts with this program to the Brown County Hospital and Niobrara Valley Hospital (Lynch). We continue to engage additional healthcare facilities to start the CCM intervention program.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

NCDHD strives to prevent the incidence of disease by promoting healthy communities, families, and individuals through communicable disease surveillance. The intention of surveillance is to identify, promptly investigate, and monitor each incident of reported communicable disease. Timely recognition of the disease within the community enables the proper implementation of prevention and control activities. This action helps us contain the spread of the disease before the illness becomes a major public health crisis. In 2020, we added contact tracers to help in the prevention and control of the COVID-19 surge and DHHS/contractors handled most other communicable diseases in our area.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

NCDHD provided education about the risk of radon gas and encouraged radon testing by distributing test kits at a reduced cost to the community. We followed up when test results indicated levels at or above 4.0 pCi/L, a level that is considered unhealthy by the EPA. NCDHD provided a Do-It-Yourself mitigation guide and a list of licensed radon mitigators. In 2020, NCDHD distributed 132 kits.

NCDHD also monitored mosquito-borne diseases in our district. In Nebraska, 14 West Nile Virus cases (and one death), 3 dengue virus and 2 malaria cases were reported; however, there were no cases reported in our district.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

NCDHD partnered with North Central Nebraska Child Safety to promote car seat safety and to provide car seat inspections.

To limit injury from drinking and driving, we assist our partners in activities to prevent substance abuse.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

NCDHD works to educate and to protect families in our district by providing immunizations, general vaccinations, flu vaccinations, health screenings and communicable disease investigations.

NCDHD also works with area partners to refer mothers and babies to need resources in our district.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

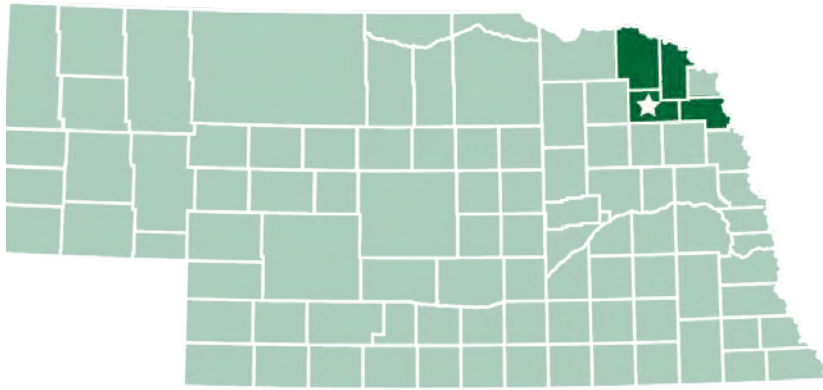
Additional public health activities that North Central District Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Substance Abuse Prevention

NCDHD promoted several prevention media campaigns: "Let's Be Blunt," SAMHSA's "Talk to Your Kids About Alcohol," SAMHSA's "Talk to Your Kids About Marijuana," CDC's "RX Awareness Campaigns," and "Talk to Your Kids About Marijuana on 420." to increase awareness around substance abuse. Alcohol and Tobacco Compliance Checks were partially completed with 94% compliance rate for alcohol and 92% for tobacco. We were able to host seven Drug Recognition and Awareness Trainings throughout our district for school staff and local emergency personnel.

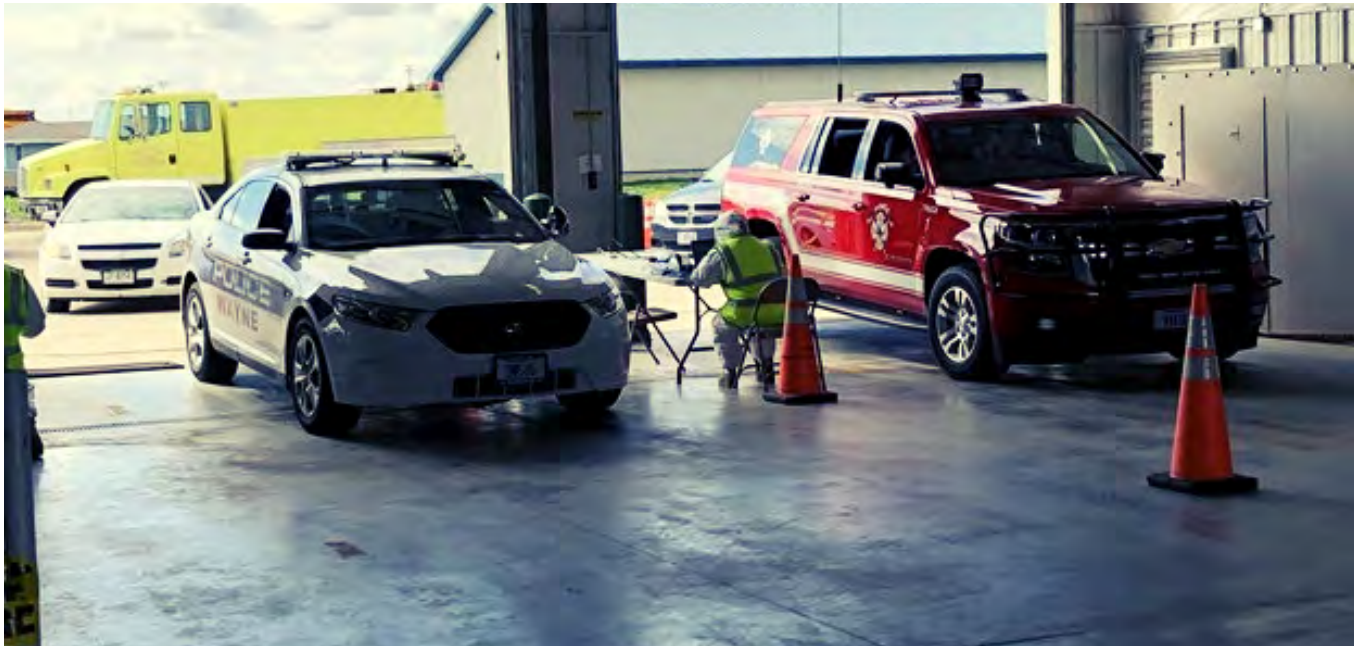
NORTHEAST NEBRASKA PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Cedar, Dixon, Thurston, and Wayne Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department (NNPHD) assumed the lead role in the COVID-19 public health emergency response for the counties of Cedar, Dixon, Thurston and Wayne. The NNPHD team worked hard to stay up-to-date on the fast-changing situation and ongoing scientific discoveries. We kept partners informed through regular Zoom meetings, telephone conferences, media, and Facebook. NNPHD held regular meetings with medical partners, schools, County Emergency Managers, businesses, faith leaders, and other community groups and individuals. During these meetings, people shared ideas and lessons learned about how to address different challenges of the pandemic response. NNPHD hosted meetings weekly during the peak times of the pandemic and decreased as the situation warranted. NNPHD supported area healthcare providers with response needs including obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE), testing supplies, vaccination supplies, and even finding additional staff.

NNPHD hired new staff in the midst of the pandemic thanks to federal funding received by the State of Nebraska that was then passed on to local public health departments. However, it was extremely difficult to recruit and onboard new staff during the height of response efforts. In spite of the challenges, in early 2021, NNPHD and healthcare partners were able to rally together to offer the vaccine to residents of the district. We developed vaccine sign-up processes and all partners worked together to quickly and safely get people in and vaccinated.

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At the end of June 2021, NNPHD district pandemic numbers included: 39,900 total tests, 4,010 positive tests, 10% cumulative positivity rate, 3,940 recovered residents, 52 deaths, 1.3% case fatality rate, 218 cumulative hospitalizations. In the district, 32.5% of the population was fully vaccinated (a likely under-count because, as of this writing, federal vaccination data was not yet included in local data).



ABOUT THIS REPORT

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Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



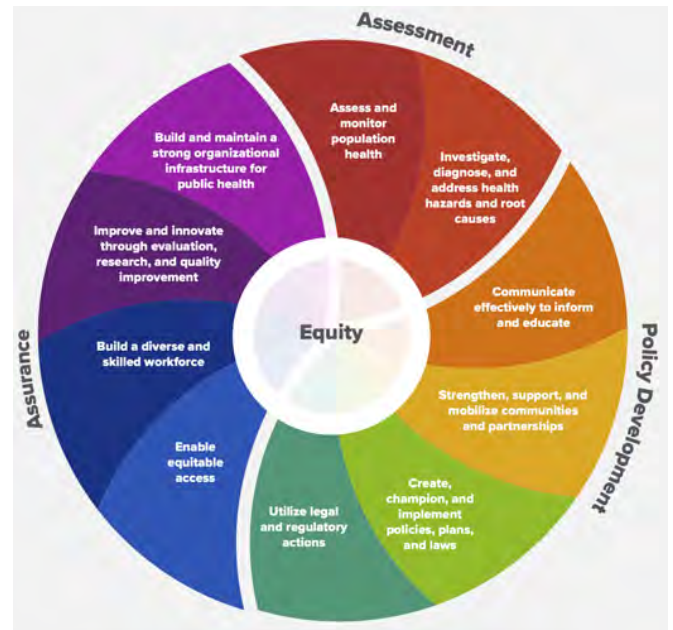
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Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

NNPHD’s most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) was developed in 2018-19 through which a local network of four healthcare agencies was formalized as the Northeast Nebraska Rural Health Network. This Network includes NNPHD, Pender Community Hospital, Providence Medical Center, and the Winnebago Public Health Department. In addition to these Network partners, individuals from over 40 organizations participated in the CHA process. A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was developed from the CHA that drives the Network’s action. Network partnerships were strengthened through our work together on the COVID-19 response. NNPHD received its second HRSA Network Development Grant in July 2020. This grant is being used over the next three years to continue to build the Network and support collaborative work on priority health issues. This grant is also supporting an update to the CHA in 2021-22.

CHIP PRIORITIES: Improve behavioral health through prevention and by ensuring access to appropriate, quality mental health services. ~Healthy People 2020

Promote health and reduce chronic disease risk through the consumption of healthful diets and achievement of maintenance of healthy body weights. ~Healthy People 2020

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

NNPHD is a member of the Wayne County Family Coalition and coordinates Community Response services funded by the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation through the Norfolk Family Coalition. Program staff provided linkages and support to 95 people in 33 households in and around Wayne County during this fiscal year. Assistance provided through this effort included: application assistance to Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) programs, health and parenting education, interpretation and translation, transportation to services, referrals for both clinical and mental health care, and coordination of linkages to other human service programs.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

While chronic disease control and prevention is a public health priority, most of our work in this area had to be paused due to the resources needed for our pandemic response. However, NNPHD staff did what they could to move forward with this important work. This included continued work with University of Nebraska at Kearney, on plans to offer the evidence-based family-focused obesity treatment program Building Health Families in the NNPHD jurisdiction, once the pandemic wanes.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

Controlling communicable diseases is part of the foundational work of NNPHD. During the 2020-2021 fiscal year, NNPHD received 402 lab reports of infectious and other reportable diseases in the health district. These included E. coli, Histoplasmosis, Legionella and a cluster of gastrointestinal illness reported to NNPHD by a local medical provider in January 2021. As an example of our approach to these types of outbreaks, NNPHD enlisted the help of NE-DHHS to investigate, identify the probable source, and prevent any additional illness.

NNPHD had 4,010 positive COVID-19 cases during this reporting period. The district's cumulative positivity rate was 10.04% and the case fatality rate was 1.3%.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

To help district residents avoid radon, a cancer-causing hazard present in many Nebraska residences, NNPHD offers radon test kits. NNPHD provides education about mitigation with each test kit along with contact information for area contractors certified in radon mitigation. NNPHD also offers information on how to address mold in homes and a copy of the Nebraska's Landlord and Tenant Handbook.

In normal years, NNPHD distributes and gets results from 188 radon test kits. This year, however, the public's focus was on COVID-19 and therefore the demand for kits was minimal. Only 23 test results were reported.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

NNPHD did not have funding specifically to address injury prevention during this fiscal year. This was, in part, because NNPHD diverted funding for Tai Chi classes for area seniors to other entities who used the funds toward meeting the wellbeing of senior citizens brought about by the pandemic. Because of the strong evidence of Tai Chi's impact on preventing falls among seniors, once this type of in-person activity is safe again, we will resume these classes with funding from the Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging and in partnership with Providence Medical Center and Pender Hospital.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

NNPHD supports the health of mothers and children in many of our programs, including our participation in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (monitoring and following up on childhood lead poisoning reports) and our oral health program, Creating New Smiles. The Creating New Smiles program was one of the services that had to be put on hold because of the pandemic. However, in June 2021 NNPHD's Dental Hygienist began visits again to childcare centers and provided education to four centers that month.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

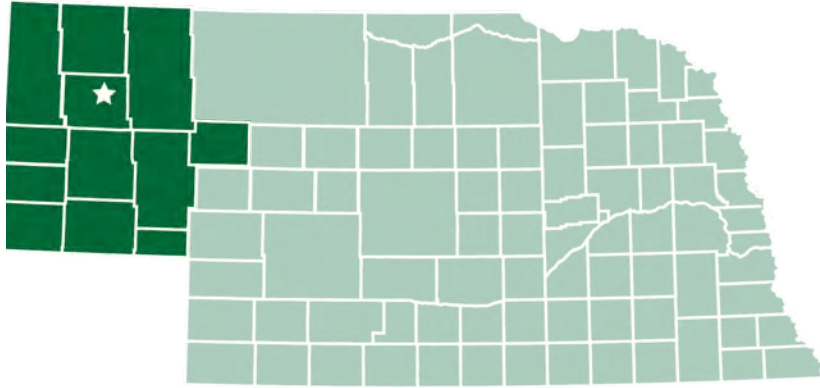
NNPHD has plans underway for building a district-wide substance abuse prevention coalition. These were somewhat delayed by the pandemic. A Region 4 Behavioral Health Prevention subaward, to promote substance use prevention and healthy living for teens had to be modified. Still, the funding supported two area teens' training in the Human Performance Project in Lincoln in May 2021. The Human Performance Project is an evidence-based approach to healthy lifestyle choices for teens. These teens are bringing lessons learned back to their school and will implement activities from that training.

The NNPHD oral health program, Creating New Smiles, was able to launch services in long term care facilities in June 2021. NNPHD's Public Health endorsed, Registered Dental Hygienists provided fluoride varnish and/or oral health screenings to 82 residents at five facilities that month.

2021 marked 20 years since Nebraska established its Local Public Health system. Since NNPHD's beginning, our health department has prioritized relationships and partnerships. That focus paid off enormously during our COVID-19 pandemic response. We are grateful to our many partners in the local response and vaccination efforts.

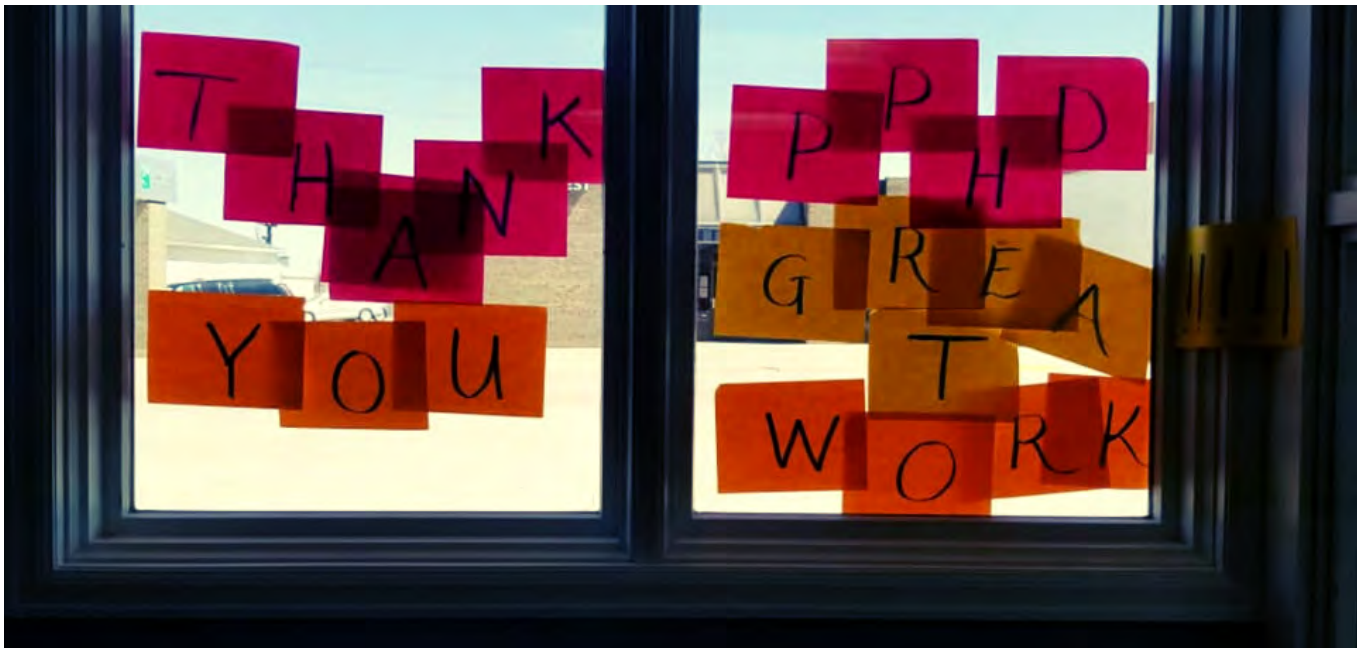
PANHANDLE PUBLIC
HEALTH DISTRICT

*Serving Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Grant,
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, and Sioux Counties*



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Collaboration is key in the Panhandle, and those relationships have remained vital in the coordination of a public health system COVID pandemic response. Panhandle Public Health District's (PPHD) partners rallied together to develop communications and processes to overcome the next obstacle every time they were called upon. This has been a time of patience, grace, and flexibility with each other, partners, and ourselves.

PPHD implemented several strategies to provide scientifically based, transparent, and timely education and communication. We adapted communication methods through a variety of platforms and language needs and worked swiftly to address any circulating misinformation impacting our efforts. Messaging was continually tailored to meet both broad and specific audiences.

We hosted frequent meetings with schools, law enforcement, first responders, healthcare systems, faith-based organizations, funeral homes, childcare providers, elected officials, and businesses. Central to these meetings included ways to mitigate risk, continuity of operations, ongoing technical assistance, weekly Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) needs and distribution processes, and quarantine and isolation procedures.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

We anxiously awaited the arrival of vaccines and have coordinated vaccination allotments for area health systems and pharmacies from around the Panhandle. Initially, this consisted of communicating and following the priority groups set forth by Nebraska DHHS. Additional functions included transporting vaccines to each location before direct ordering was available and with only one ultra-cold freezer available at Regional West Community Health in Scottsbluff, this involved shipments going directly there and delivered to the other locations weekly. No small feat considering we serve a 15,000 square mile jurisdiction.

We have maintained weekly briefings for the public and media to provide updates on preventive measures, case counts, and hospitalizations. Guest speakers have been representatives from the UNMC, local health care providers, and community leaders.



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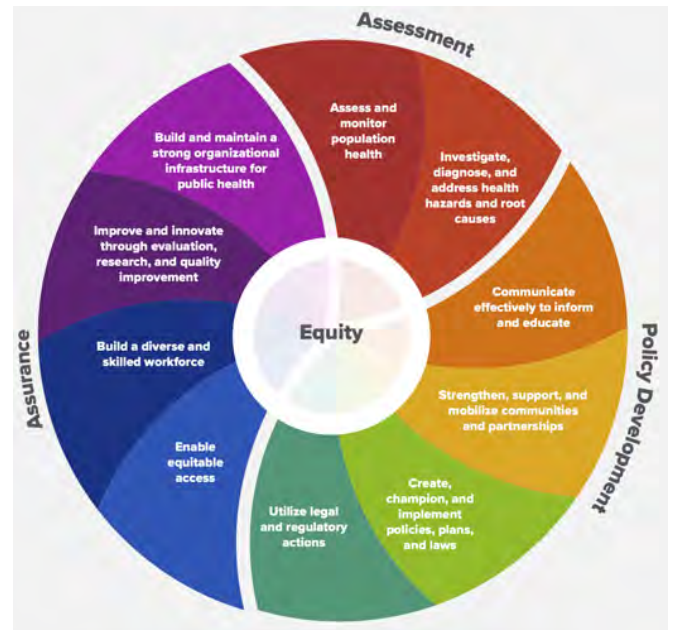
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Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

PPHD completes a CHA and CHIP every three years. The most recent process was completed in 2021. PPHD follows the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) process. To gather feedback that is representative of the entire Panhandle, PPHD collected community surveys and held community meetings that included individuals and organizations representing older adults, immigrants and populations that speak languages other than English, LGBTQ individuals, young people, and people living in poverty. Separate assessment and planning processes were coordinated by PPHD for each of the hospitals in the jurisdiction. The steering committee meets quarterly to review the goals and strategies under each CHIP priority area and to discuss successes and challenges. Workgroups also meet quarterly to implement strategies and share ideas.

CHIP PRIORITIES: Behavioral Health (focusing on substance use, misuse and mental health), Housing and Homelessness (focusing on emergency housing and reducing stigma), Early Childhood Care and education (focusing on healthy family relationships and quality schools), and Chronic Disease prevention (focusing on cancer, diabetes, and heart disease).

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

The Panhandle was identified as one of five areas of high burden for opioid overdose in Nebraska. Through our work with the Regional Opioid Collaboration, we have implemented a quality improvement (QI) process with behavioral health providers that receive Region 1 funding to expand access to treatment through increased referrals. We also are offering training to providers that will move them toward behavioral health integration in the primary care setting.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

We maintain strong relationships with area businesses and employers and facilitate employee health and well-being initiatives as part of our Worksite Wellness Program. Each month we disseminate communications campaigns—including short videos and easy-to-print-and-post flyers—to nearly 1,500 area businesses, schools, hospitals, and organizations. We continue to offer evidence-based programs like National Diabetes Prevention Program and Living Well. We have been working to increase services. An updated health risk assessment tool will provide direct referral to several public health and community health access points.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

The COVID-19 response put the planning to the test—stretching resources, staff, and partners. Disease investigation efforts remain a priority as we know quarantine and isolation are essential to reducing exposure. Disease investigators work with local hospitals, labs, and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) epidemiology to conduct surveillance of reportable diseases, detect outbreaks and help prevent and control the spread of disease. During the 2020 calendar year, we investigated 7,909 COVID-19 cases and completed 250 investigations of other reportable diseases.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites initiatives.

We have maintained our radon program and West Nile virus surveillance and continue to build capacity to offer lead identification and mitigation. PPHD's Environmental Health Coordinator is XRF (x-ray fluorescence) and Lead Safe certified. They have been working to educate schools and childcare providers about free access to water lead testing. PPHD coordinated a Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) training program for area contractors. PPHD works to enforce the Clean Indoor Air Act and provides technical assistance to help multi-family housing units to go smoke free.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving, and Complete Streets initiatives.

While nearly 60% of Panhandle drivers wear their seatbelts, this is almost 16% lower than the state average and nearly 28% lower than the US average. Considering the vast distances between rural Panhandle communities, travel on country roads, and heavy agricultural traffic with trucks and large machinery, these statistics are concerning. PPHD is working to address this through a public communications campaign and partnering with area agricultural groups, co-ops, and businesses. PPHD is helping Walkable Community initiatives expand among seven Panhandle communities. These initiatives include several community beautification, signage, and policy-level changes that support safer streets to walk, bike, and roll.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

Healthy Families Nebraska Panhandle promotes child well-being by helping families with the building blocks of attachment. This is done through consistent home visitation where parent coaches nurture the relationships between parents and children. Home visits focus on building healthy brains, reading cues of children, understanding child development, family goal planning, prenatal support, and learning about secure attachment. Healthy Families partners with families to enhance their knowledge of community resources that can support healthy, nurturing family environments.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Panhandle Public Health District performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

As part of PPHD’s Walkable Communities initiative, our team has developed a unique strategy—partnering with local community artists, school students, city councils and personnel, and public health for crosswalk beautification--Creative Crosswalks. This work aims to increase walking, biking, and rolling to support active communities. Creative Crosswalks use colors, textures, and patterns to enliven city streets as engaging and safe places for people. They can be designed to reflect the special character of a neighborhood, mark the gateway to a district, or otherwise create local identity and pride.

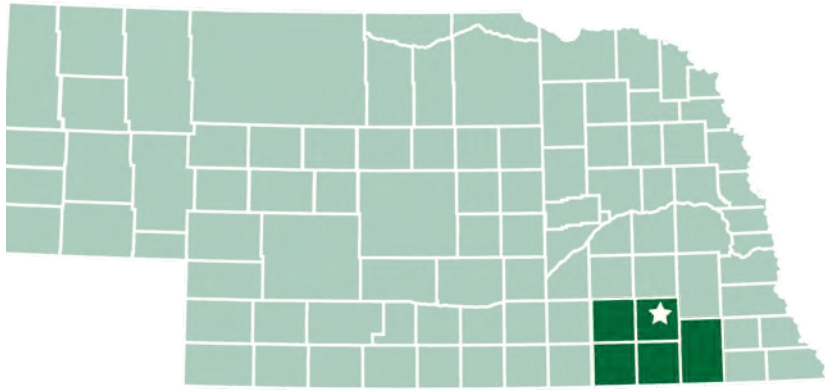
Creative Crosswalks highlight marked pedestrian crossings and are a low-cost, traffic-calming mechanism to reduce traffic speeds and volume. In addition to being fun, they can raise awareness of pedestrian safety. Research shows drivers tend to notice patterns and bright colors more than the standard white paint on asphalt. Cities report since upgrading crosswalks, vehicles slow down, and pedestrians feel that the street is not just for vehicles, it’s for pedestrians as well.

City councils in Alliance, Rushville, and Gordon were approached to affirm their support for Creative Crosswalks projects through a city resolution. One crosswalk in Rushville (near the elementary school), one crosswalk in Gordon (near the high school), and three crosswalks in Alliance (along their pathway) have each calmed traffic while fostering community collaboration. These projects bring an exciting vibrancy and opportunity for hope in a rather tumultuous time.

We look forward to partnering with additional interested Panhandle communities and building upon the momentum to support active living and placemaking.

PUBLIC HEALTH
SOLUTIONS

Serving Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, and Thayer Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Public Health Solutions (PHS) was excited to move into a new space this year. The Saline Medical Plaza houses partners from several healthcare areas and includes a clinic, physical therapy provider and will soon be home to additional healthcare providers, offering a wide range of services. The built-out space includes a full-service clinic suite, large conference room, and newly remodeled office areas. PHS now can expand clinical services and develop programs in lifelong wellness. The move came just in time as COVID-19 vaccine was rolling out and a much larger, more efficient space was needed.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

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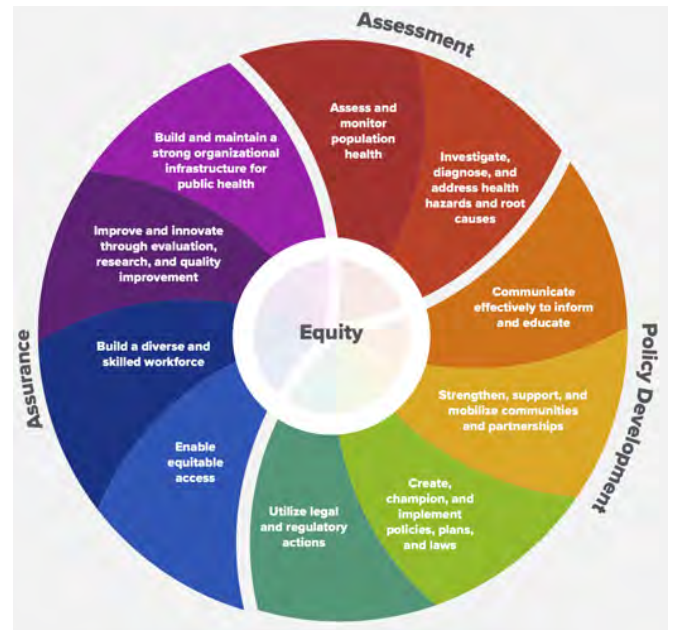
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Public Health Solutions (PHS) continues to prioritize the four areas identified by our local Partners for a Healthy Community (the regional steering committee) in the 2018 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The areas of prevention and chronic disease, access to mental/behavioral health services, health equity for all health district residents and environmental health and safety have been forefront in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These priority issues have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The focus on COVID-19 has left people seeking less care for chronic health conditions. Mental health issues related to shutdowns, quarantine, and fear of the virus have left more individuals with mental health issues. Environmental safety issues have largely gone unchecked as the pandemic response has taken precedence. Healthcare access has been of particular concern before and during the pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted disparities in access to care in our jurisdiction.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

- Prevention of Chronic Disease
- Access to Mental/Behavioral Health
- Health Equity
- Environmental Health & Safety

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

During the pandemic, PHS adopted an “all hands on deck” approach to make referrals and provide ‘warm hand-offs’ so that individuals had access to needed testing, healthcare services, and other supports. PHS is finalizing Behavioral Health Improvement Plan for the district (supported by a HRSA grant). Providers of direct mental/behavioral health services help lead this process—including an extensive data review, provider surveys, focus groups, and public plan review. The plan addresses substance use disorder (SUD) among other concerns and includes increasing access to Naloxone, workforce development among behavioral health providers, and coordinating support services with the five counties.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

PHS improves care linkages through our work with the Health Community Alliance Clinic. This clinic, staffed by a volunteer physician, provides chronic disease management to over 50 patients who have little or no health insurance coverage. Patients sign a contract agreeing to follow the recommendations of the Healthy Community Alliance provider and staff. This clinic continued to function during the pandemic. The PHS on-site dental clinic provided basic dental screening and preventative care (fluoride treatment and dental sealants) to approximately 50 individuals. The UNMC College of Dentistry and Central Community College help leverage resources in staffing and supplies for the PHS dental program. At the beginning of each school year, the PHS dental team serves 400-500 children in school systems, providing fluoride and sealant treatments as well as dental screenings for preschool and early elementary aged kids.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

The pandemic response was the focus of work at PHS this year. Early in the pandemic, PHS added eight contractors to help with contact tracing activities. Even with this help, staff time was dedicated almost exclusively to the COVID-19 response: data management, education, contact tracing, guidance, and answering phone calls. Partnerships with local healthcare providers, school leaders, and government officials supported ongoing communication regarding COVID-19 guidance, recommendations for best practices and infection prevention. Regular calls/meetings with partners across the district offered a channel for enhanced communication and planning.

PHS's SkipFlu program provided influenza vaccination to over 3000 school-aged children in schools across the district this year. Nurses from PHS travel provide flu shots in schools.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

PHS continues to provide radon test kits to district residents at no charge, with approximately fifty (50) kits being distributed during the reporting period. Any test coming back over the acceptable level of radon is sent to PHS for follow-up with the homeowner. PHS provided education and assistance to homeowners and in-home childcare providers during the year.

Eighteen children were identified within the district as having elevated blood lead levels and were referred to PHS for case management and follow-up. Lead exposure can lead to poor long-term outcomes both physically and developmentally if not diagnosed and treated early in a child's life. The PHS lead program provides support and case management to identify the source of lead exposure, provide mitigation assistance, and ensure access to medical treatment and care.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

PHS's Walkable Communities Initiative (described at the end of this report) is an example of our systems level approach to preventing injuries and promoting wellness.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

PHS's home visitation program (Healthy Families Gage and Jefferson Counties) provided pandemic-modified service in all five counties within the health district. Virtual home visits were integrated into the program to support wellness, healthy child development, effective parenting for enrolled families with young children. PHS's Rooted in Relationships (RiR) initiative expanded into a third (Gage) county in July 2020. Programs benefited 450 children directly and well over 700 children and families indirectly throughout the year. Childcare providers participated in trainings and coaching that support positive and nurturing environments for children and help promote social-emotional development. Parents' opportunities included Circle of Security-Parenting (COS-P) courses, a Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) course, and Parent Child Interaction Therapy.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Public Health Solutions performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Safe and Thriving Communities

Through the Walkable Communities initiative, PHS supports walking coalitions development, meeting facilitation, grant-writing, and any other functions needed by area walking coalitions.

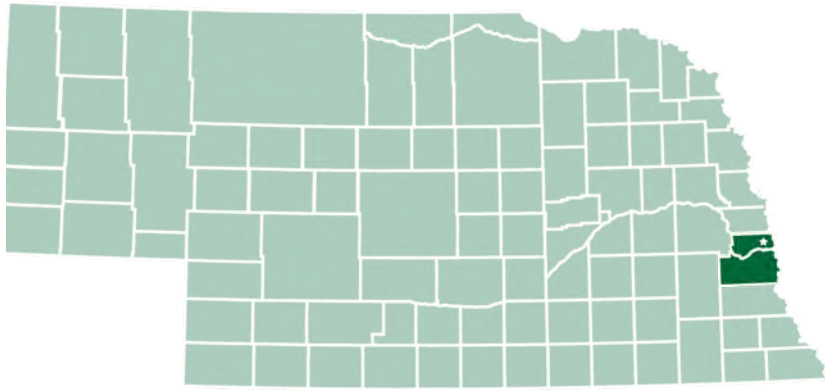
The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need, in our district, for safe outdoor spaces to connect physically and socially in environments that support active lifestyles.

In Jefferson County, a local community-wide survey identified a need to improve the city of Fairbury's parks' amenities for high school age youth and adults. PHS partnered with the walking coalition, JeffCo on the Move, the city of Fairbury, the local Rooted in Relationships chapter, and critical access hospital, Jefferson Community Health and Life, to implement a family-oriented game center in the city's main park area. This project utilized a walking trail to link the community's Story Walk to a large outdoor game area where families can meet to play basketball, ladder golf, horseshoes, life-size Jenga, board games on concrete game tables, bean bag toss, ping pong, and a variety of other interactive games. Families can find activities to support all ability levels and connect with one another to promote mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

In Fillmore County, the Geneva in Motion coalition prioritized increasing safe routes to and near the local elementary and high schools. PHS partnered with the coalition, Fillmore Central Public Schools, and the city of Geneva fund a traffic study on three intersections adjacent to Fillmore Public Elementary school. The group purchased and installed a push-button blinking crosswalk light that will alert traffic to stop on the road adjacent to Fillmore Central High School. In addition to the environmental changes implemented, the coalition worked with the city of Geneva to draft local policy changes to enforce changes in automobile driver behavior needed to support a culture of increased active transportation and pedestrian safety.

SARPY/CASS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Sarpy and Cass Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

This annual report covers the time span of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. Every day in the 365 days included in this period was dedicated to promoting and protecting the health and well being of the residents in Sarpy and Cass counties as communities endured the COVID-19 pandemic. The department had its fair share of ups and downs throughout the year in review with one constant – the resolve of department staff to do what needed to be done to support residents.

Sarpy/Cass Health Department (SCHD) staff conducted 24,000 communicable disease investigations this year, including 23,619 COVID-19 investigations. During the height of the pandemic SCHD was responsible for conducting nearly 1,500 disease investigations a week in late November. The COVID-19 investigations required extensive contact tracing for each positive case to help slow the spread of illness within our community. Timely communication of public health recommendations to positive residents and their close contacts was instrumental in the responses. Therefore, the disease investigation process occurred seven days a week.

Additionally, the health department hosted 125 COVID-19 vaccination clinics during this time. This year the health department and community partners vaccinated over 106,000 Sarpy and Cass County residents. To help ensure that residents had ample opportunities to access the COVID-19 vaccine, existing partnerships were expanded and new partnerships were established. Vaccine was provided via 125 separate public vaccination clinics, in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, schools, private worksites, and through in-home visitation.

SARAH SCHRAM

Health Director

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www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org



SARPY/CASS
Health Department

A wide-angle photograph of the Sarpy/Cass Health Department building. The name "SARPY//CASS Health Department" is mounted in large, raised, grey letters on the light-colored facade. The building has large windows and columns. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent grey filter.

SARPY//CASS Health Department

SARPY/CASS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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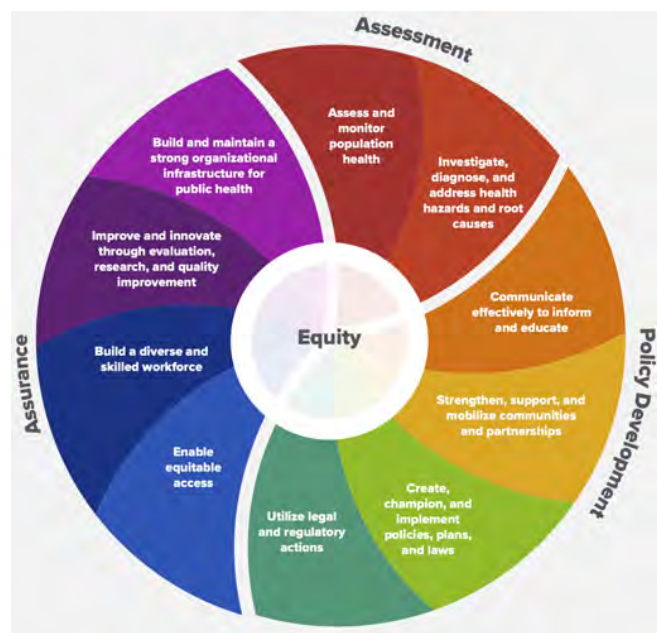
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Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

SCHD uses the community health assessment (CHA) process to ensure that health and behavioral needs of residents in the jurisdiction are met. Since 2008 the health department has participated in a collaborative planning process that results in a regional CHA that includes Douglas, Sarpy and Cass counties in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County in Iowa.

This regional assessment is a systemic and data-driven approach to determining the health status, behaviors, and needs of residents in the four county Omaha Metropolitan area. In the fall of 2020, planning began for the 2021 assessment. The CHA is sponsored by a coalition of local health departments, health systems, federally qualified health centers, and non-profit agencies. Information is gathered through resident and key informant surveys that were completed throughout the spring and summer of 2021.

CHIP PRIORITIES: The Sarpy/Cass Health Department is continuing to partner with the other health departments across the Omaha Metro Region and the Wellbeing Partners to address mental health, the health priority identified during the last community health needs assessment (see more in *Additional Activities*, below)

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

This year the health department and community partners vaccinated over 106,000 Sarpy and Cass County residents. Partnerships were created and expanded to provide vaccination opportunities to as many residents as possible. Vaccines were provided via 125 separate public vaccination clinics, in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, schools, private worksites, and through in-home visitation. COVID-19 testing was also provided during this time to employees of nursing homes and other healthcare facilities in an effort to help identify possible outbreaks.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

SCHD has engaged in several chronic disease control and prevention strategies and activities this year. As a founding partner of Share Our Table, a coalition focused on food security, SCHD continues to explore opportunities to increase residents' access to healthy foods. The health department's Active Aging program provides one-on-one support and education to seniors with a goal of keeping aging residents in their homes. This year nurses conducted 100 wellness clinics, which provided foot care, blood pressure screening, individualized health information and referrals to over 600 individuals. These same services were also provided to 130 seniors as part of the home visitation program.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

SCHD staff conducted 24,000 communicable disease investigations this year, including 23,619 COVID-19 investigations. These investigations also required extensive contact tracing for each positive case to help slow the spread of illness within our community. Additionally, SCHD hosted 125 COVID-19 vaccination clinics during this time. Weekly school surveillance, which is monitoring the rate of illness to identify possible disease outbreaks, was completed for all area schools.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

This year staff provided childhood lead poisoning prevention education and necessary follow-up to 20 families with a child whose blood lead level was greater than five micrograms/deciliter. Under the guidance of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) Swimming Pool Program, SCHD staff inspected 77 swimming pools for compliance with Nebraska Regulation Title 178 Chapter 2. As part of SCHD's arbovirus surveillance program, staff collected 30 mosquito traps throughout Sarpy and Cass counties and submitted those to NE-DHHS for identification and West Nile Virus testing.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass is a childhood injury prevention program within SCHD. While staff focused on the COVID-19 pandemic response this year, we relied on community partners to continue injury prevention efforts within our communities. The Sarpy County Sheriff's Department child passenger safety seat technicians provided seat installations for Sarpy and Cass County residents; SCHD was able to provide grant-funded seats for those residents in need.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

SCHD continued to partner with the Douglas/Sarpy County WIC Program to support women and children enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provided basic breastfeeding information, positive reinforcement to pregnant and postpartum women.

SCHD nurses created a Community Breastfeeding Advocate training aimed toward those who interact regularly with pregnant and breastfeeding women in the community, such as home visitors, medical office staff, early childhood professionals, and anyone with a desire to gain knowledge about breastfeeding to provide appropriate supportive messaging to breastfeeding moms.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that Sarpy/Cass Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

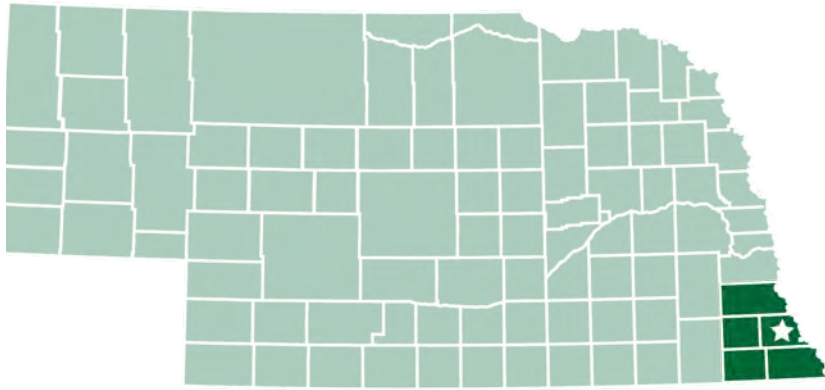
Through a partnership with Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, SCHED began creating a community-based prevention program aimed at addressing underage drinking and marijuana prevention among persons aged nine to 20 in Cass County. The Community Health Planner recruited Cass County influential community members from law enforcement, school, government, business, religious and youth organizations. These key leaders recruited additional residents from across the county to participate in the community board. This board will be directly involved with the assessment, prioritization, selection, implementation and evaluation of substance abuse prevention programs, policies and practices. This community action model utilizes a systematic, public health approach to community building which ultimately leads to positive health outcomes.

In other work and related to our CHIP priority, a mental wellbeing stigma reduction campaign was launched in May of 2020. As of December 2020, 53 testimonial stories have been shared on WhatMakesUs.com with more than 350,000 impressions of the media on Instagram and Facebook. A baseline survey was taken in April of 2020 and the post survey in May 2021 will indicate progress to date on cultural acceptance of mental health at work, among social groups, and among family members. A Spanish-based site was also launched, with testimonials and articles linked on an ongoing basis.

More than 269 partners elected to receive monthly campaign communications. Evaluation results include a statistically significant reduction in mental health stigma behaviors repeated within workplace, familial and friend groups. Also, the campaign achieved 3.9 million impressions across the metro and had 350 thousand engagements via social media.

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties




ANNUAL REPORT 2021







SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE



Take a picture with your phone



WALK-IN CLINICS

JANSSEN Tuesday 9 am - 3 pm	PFIZER Wednesday 9 am - 3 pm	MODERNA THURSDAY 9 am - 3 pm
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For updates and scheduled walk-in clinics, please visit:
www.sedhd.org/about-us/news-events

Individuals presenting during this time MUST:

- Be at least 90 days past receiving a monoclonal antibody infusion as a treatment for COVID-19
- Wear a mask
- If under 18 years of age, a parent/legal guardian must be present at the clinic for consent.

Southeast District Health Department
2511 Schneider Ave
(east of Hwy 75 & 26th Street)
Please enter through the South Door.
Questions? Call 402-274-3993 (dial extensions 109 or 110)

GRANT BRUEGGEMANN

Health Director
grant@sedhd.org
(402) 274-3993
www.sedhd.org



**SOUTHEAST DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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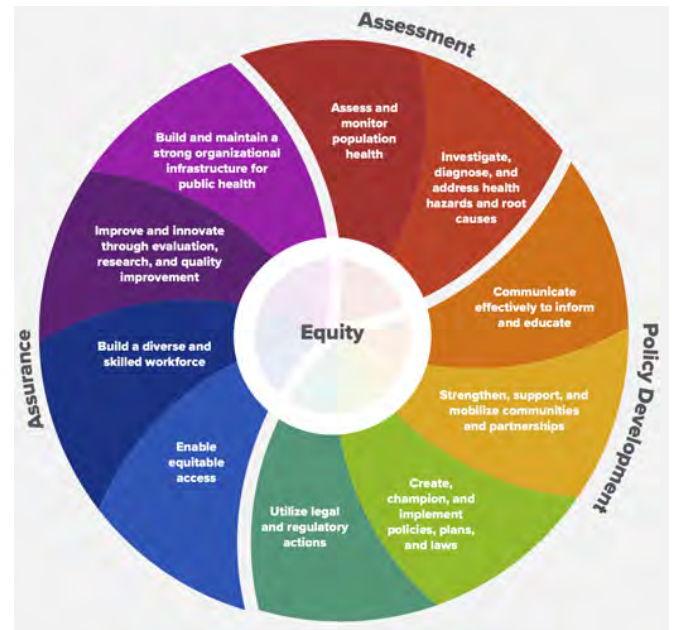
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Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Every three years, Southeast District Health Department (SEDHD) collaborates with area Critical Access Hospitals and other local partners (including clinics, schools, law enforcement, military and Veteran organizations, economic development agencies, businesses, foundations, other community organizations, and individual community members) to complete a Community Health Assessment (CHA) that aims to identify the key health issues within the community. The process consists of a community-based survey and focus groups. The resulting formal assessment is used to create a community-wide plan aimed at strategically improving health - the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHA/CHIP process ensures that local communities are able to work together toward a *Good, Healthy Life* for all Nebraskans.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

SEDHD participates in several access-to-care activities within the district. The Brighter Smiles program provides dental screenings for adolescents who might otherwise lack preventive care and face barriers in accessing oral health care when needed. Additionally, SEDHD community health workers (CHWs) navigate and link community members to health care—scheduling routine preventive screenings with their primary care physician.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

SEDHD collects and monitors chronic disease-related data from primary and secondary sources.

SEDHD conducts health screenings for community members at health fairs and engages businesses and worksites in sustainable wellness activities (including health screenings, evidence-based wellness programs, and policy changes). SEDHD staff provides education related to diabetes and blood pressure monitoring, and healthy eating and weight status. SEDHD also assists with accessing breast, cervical, and colon cancer screenings.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

SEDHD's Disease Surveillance and Public Health Emergency preparedness programs collect and analyze data to monitor disease incidence across the district's five-county region. Data are shared with various community partners (schools, health care, etc.) to inform on disease incidence trends and to educate on best practices related to infectious disease prevention. SEDHD provides regular immunizations for children and adults to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases and links community members to other health care services when applicable.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

SEDHD's radon program provides families with kits to test their homes, provides public education, and assists families in identifying risks and mitigation strategies. The department's lead program also provides education and assists families in reducing childhood lead exposure.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

SEDHD conducts child passenger safety seat checks and other injury prevention education as a part of the department's Safe Kids Coalition.

SEDHD's Growing Great Kids program performs home safety visits and provides childproofing supplies to enrolled families.

The Southeast District Prevention Partnerships Coalition, spearheaded by SEDHD, provides evidence-based substance use prevention and intervention curriculum to schools within the district.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

SEDHD's Growing Great Kids program administers screenings for developmental milestones and perinatal depression, along with other screenings for families with young children. Growing Great Kids disseminates this information to inform the community on maternal, child, and family health-related issues across the district. For children and families who present with a developmental delay, SEDHD refers to the Early Development Network, through ESU 4. Growing Great Kids also supports family planning efforts through implementation of curriculum and provides referrals to primary care and other relevant community resources.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

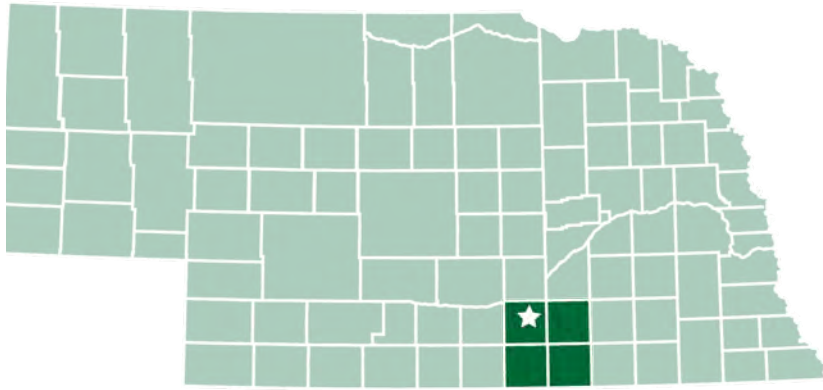
Additional public health activities that Southeast District Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

SEDHD's emergency preparedness programs assess to identify gaps in planning for emergencies; plan and implement exercises to coordinate and practice emergency efforts; align policies and procedures to promote cooperative response across the region; and provide a platform for collaboration between response agencies, emergency management, public health, and health care organizations to advance emergency preparedness across the district.

Activities of the Southeast District Prevention Partnerships coalition have continued to grow over the past year. Examples include providing five middle/high schools and one state college with the 3rd Millennium Classrooms curriculum, providing Second Step (a social-emotional learning program) materials to seven school districts (pre-K to grade eight), engaging six middle/high schools in implementing Hope Squads (a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program), and disseminating a monthly, themed, community-wide prevention campaign toolkit within the community. The prevention campaign toolkit is set up to be used by schools and anyone in the community, and contains posters, flyers, social media/website graphics, and newsletter/text content.

SOUTH HEARTLAND DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued into the summer of 2020, South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) looked toward the 2020-2021 school year with the goal of supporting all schools in staying open for in-person education by developing principles for safe reopening. These included promoting the use of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

SHDHD partnered with nearly 120 local healthcare organizations and providers to emphasize that NPIs—including social distancing, masking, cohorting, and handwashing—would be key to keeping local schools open. We shared this message with superintendents, school boards and parents at Zoom meetings and in letters to school staff and families.

SHDHD met weekly with ESU-9 and parochial superintendents as they developed their reopening plans. At the same time, we increased our own capacity to support schools. We developed recommendations for screening, exclusion, and re-admittance of ill students and staff. We shared instructions for determining exposures/close contacts. We assigned SHDHD staff to each school and developed processes for contact tracing in school settings. We developed a system for securely sharing information between schools and SHDHD. We shared applicable State and Federal guidance. We shared the evolving status of community risk.

MICHELE BEVER PhD

Health Director

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINES

SHDHD emphasized that social distancing, masking, cohorting, handwashing, community spread and other factors would all be considered in determining close contacts and, hence, who would need to quarantine. Schools adopted plans for opening that phased in public health recommendations according to local risk levels. Some schools included options for remote learning. Most found ways to increase distance between students. Some started with masks required. Many schools applied public health recommendations to activities outside of the classroom.

As the school year launched, SHDHD and schools worked together closely while navigating outbreaks involving school staff, classrooms, and teams. We also addressed ongoing changes in CDC school guidance. By May 2021, we were able to look back, exhausted, and celebrate the schools' achievement of making it through an entire school year of in-person classes without needing to shut down due to COVID-19!



**SOUTH HEARTLAND DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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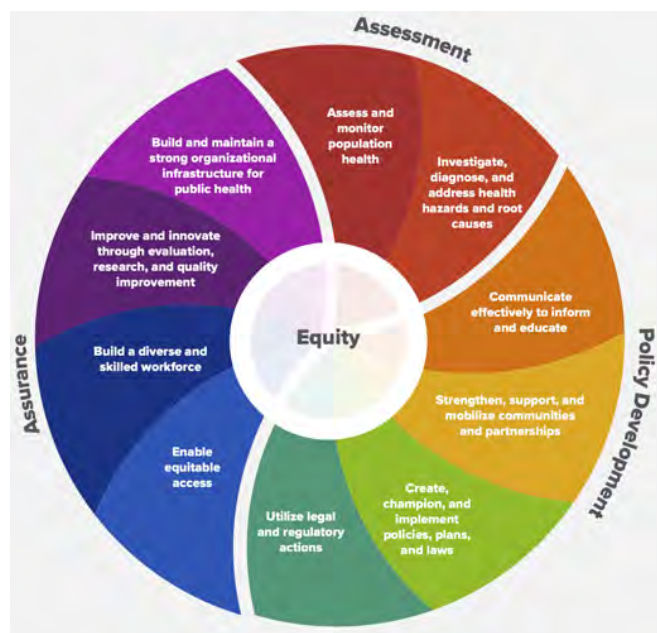
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Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

SHDHD activated five Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) priority steering committees in 2020. Community partners are leading action plan implementation, evaluating progress, and adjusting the plans, as needed. In January 2020, COVID-19 interrupted CHIP activities and in-person meetings. We surveyed committee members for their CHIP progress in April 2020, cancelled fall 2020 meetings due to increased COVID-19 cases, and reconvened committees (via Zoom) in June 2021 to assess progress, revise strategies, and determine next steps for the planned October meetings. SHDHD and our partners continued addressing CHIP priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic through our grants and programs. Our interim Community Health Assessment (CHA) is in progress and is sure to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the district’s overall health and wellbeing.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

Mental Health, Cancer, Substance Misuse, Access to Care, and Obesity and related health conditions.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

Medical providers played a key role in COVID-19 vaccination, administering 73% of SHDHD's allocated doses. SHDHD worked to identify providers in all four counties, assisting with state approval for each and providing vaccine storage equipment, if needed. We established protocols for managing vaccine distribution, developed a reporting process to track doses given, transported vaccines, provided education, advised on best practices, supported adoption of the State's vaccine registration system, staffed vaccination clinics, and helped schedule and connect residents to vaccination sites in their counties.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

Participation in an evidence-based Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) can cut the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by more than half and improve overall health. Over two years, participants in SHDHD's CDC-recognized program (Smart Moves) hosted in Hastings and Superior exceeded the 5% weight loss target. Participants lost an average of 7.5% and 5.5% of their overall weight. Due to COVID-19, classes during this reporting period were offered via Zoom for the first time.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

Between July 2020 - June 2021, SHDHD's epidemiology team received 4,595 positive COVID-19 lab reports, conducted investigations, and took action on potential outbreaks. Outbreak responses included working with schools to create policies that would be consistent for exposures across our district and helping businesses apply public health best practices for safe work environments.

Collaboration with schools and childcare, businesses, healthcare facilities and government agencies resulted in lower community spread of COVID-19 and protection for the most vulnerable populations.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

In partnership with Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE), SHDHD offered elementary schools and Head Starts opportunities to voluntarily test for lead contamination in drinking water through the Water Infrastructure Improvement (WIIN) Act project (U.S. EPA). The project provided sample kits and laboratory analysis for interested facilities. Five facilities participated, sampling from 20 faucets or drinking fountains. Ten of those sources, impacting over 1,000 children, showed lead levels above average. One tested 10 times above normal. Faucets that are leaching lead must be replaced or shut off to avoid exposing children to lead.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

Holding community-based fall prevention classes was difficult with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, SHDHD was able to safely coordinate six Tai Chi classes and one Stepping On class. Pre/post assessment of all participants demonstrated balance improvement over seven weeks (Stepping On) or 12 weeks (Tai Chi).

The Stepping On class series included guest presentations on physical therapy, ophthalmology, pharmacy, Life Line, and footwear. Participating older adults increased their self confidence and learned to prevent falls.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

SHDHD worked with nine childcare or school partners to incorporate evidence-based physical activity and nutrition practices, impacting 750 kids with our Healthy Kids initiative. All partners reported the project helped them increase the number of children who met current Federal physical activity guidelines for aerobic/muscle strengthening. Four sites adopted policies supporting an objective to meet the Federal guidelines and all sites believed they would be able to sustain their progress towards this objective over the next five years.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that South Heartland District Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Using Trusted Voices to Promote Vaccine Acceptance

Widespread vaccination is the key to ending the large-scale disruptions of COVID-19. To promote vaccination, SHDHD convened a taskforce of community members and SHDHD staff to discuss strategies for promoting COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in the district.

The task force used trusted voices from our four counties to help promote the importance and safety of the vaccine, focusing on local health care providers and nurses, as well as business leaders, farmers, and local “celebrities”.

All voices promoted the same message, using a 45 second script. Launched in May 2021, our first trusted voices campaign included a registered nurse, family care provider, farmer/business owner, local TV news anchor and her husband who is the Hastings College Dean of Admissions, a Director of Tourism and Commerce, an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, and an internist with his high school daughter. Working with a local media company, we were able to get seven recordings on four radio stations for six weeks.

A new script was developed to focus on the importance of vaccination as a result of the delta variant. This time we are using voices of health providers practicing throughout the district. Roll out began in July.

Local Recognition

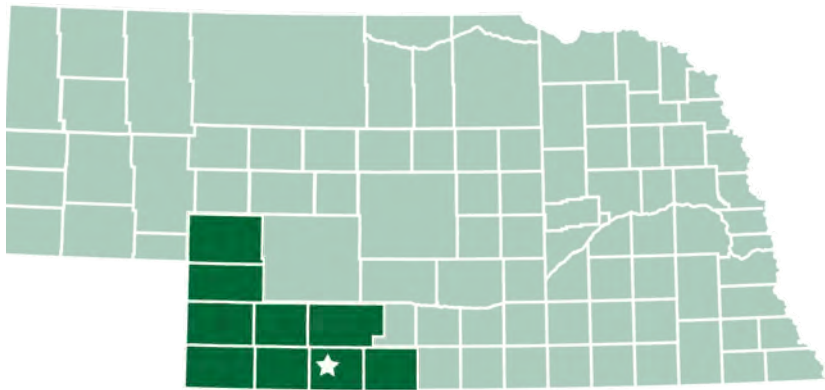
South Heartland District Health Department was honored at the Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Meeting, receiving the “Max Award” for making a significant and extraordinary contribution to the Hastings Area.

Gaining Knowledge of Public Health Through Internships

SHDHD maintains a strong intern training program allowing students an opportunity to gain a foundation and basic knowledge of public health while assisting with activities and projects throughout the health department, even during a pandemic. This year’s interns take that knowledge back to Johns Hopkins University, George Washington University, Methodist College of Nursing and Hastings College.

SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) provided regular updates on each COVID-19 related Direct Health Measures to City/Village Clerks and Attorneys, County Clerks and Attorneys, Emergency Managers and the our Board of Health. In addition, guidance documents were sent to churches, restaurants, beauty salons and barbers, livestock barns, dentists and medical providers.

SWNPHD staff worked tirelessly to assist our schools with developing plans for reopening and continued education. Ongoing communication and reporting between the health department and school were important hurdles we worked through once school began. The SWNPHD team was also heavily involved on the committee that developed guidance for county fairs, Nebraska Games and Parks, sports, music and theater, and Nebraska's directed health measures.

Communication to the public was vital as we progressed through the pandemic. This was accomplished through weekly updates via web-conferencing, news releases, and radio public service announcements. From March to August SWNPHD answered over 1,500 phone calls from people requesting guidance or expressing concerns about COVID-19.

Investigations and contact tracing of positive cases took a significant amount of time and resources. Advising and following up on ill and exposed community members regarding isolation and quarantine was also time consuming.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

SWNPHD launched its COVID-19 Community Risk Dial on July 17, 2020. The color-coded dial depicted the phase of the pandemic in the health district and provided guidance for residents to protect themselves and prevent the spread of the virus.

We coordinated COVID-19 testing via Test Nebraska in three different communities across our large geographical area. We worked with four hospitals and a pharmacy to continue the free testing for the State.

We continue to work with long term care facilities on testing, cases, education, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other ongoing issues. We coordinate PPE weekly for different partners—organizing orders and deliveries, and storing these needed resources.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

The demands of the pandemic put progress on our CHA and CHIP on hold.

CHIP PRIORITIES: Heart Disease and Cancer Prevention

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

Dental disease is one of the most preventable diseases and early prevention and intervention is key. The SWNPHD dental program, Polish your Pearls, targets children ages up to age five and provides oral health screenings, fluoride varnish treatments, and education on the importance of cleaning teeth and regular dental visits. SWNPHD makes referrals to local dental clinics and assists families in establishing a dental home.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

SWNPHD's Health Hub and Target Your Health programs are geared towards getting people free health screenings that include blood pressure checks, cholesterol and glucose checks, as well as weight and BMI measurements. Health Hub helps women and men to get preventive cancer screenings completed. Women who qualify also receive free health coaching to assist in reaching their weight, fitness, and nutrition goals. Making lifestyle changes can help control conditions such as high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol and improves overall fitness.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

The primary focus of communicable disease control in 2020-2021 was on the COVID-19 pandemic response. SWNPHD was notified of all persons in the health district who tested positive for COVID-19 and contacted each positive case to determine where the exposure happened, who may have been exposed, and to give guidance on isolation and quarantine. This vital work of identifying and controlling infectious and contagious diseases continues at this time, with COVID-19 and other reportable diseases (such as Campylobacter, E. coli, West Nile virus, and measles).

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

SWNPHD participated in a recycling grant. SWNPHD investigated what services were available in each county and began working with Keep Keith County Beautiful to assess how their hub and spoke program may be applicable in other city or village recycling programs in the health district.

The few nuisance complaints that came in during the 2020-2021 year were residential nuisances and standing water in area towns. Follow up and resources were provided by SWNPHD to assist residents to resolve these issues.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

SWNPHD participates in the OD2A grant, addressing the opioid crisis in southwest Nebraska. Opioids are the number one contributor to drug overdose nationally, whether it is alone or in conjunction with other medications and/or drugs. SWNPHD participated in strategic planning meetings in Grant, Nebraska and in McCook to determine what the community needs are regarding overdose injuries. The RX Awareness campaign was used to share public education on social media and on six radio stations across the area.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

SWNPHD continues to follow up on any child with a lead level of 5ug/dl which is considered lead poisoning. The department sends information to families to help identify sources of lead, such as lead paint, that may be present in the home.

Red Willow County Health Department partnered with SWNPHD to continue providing vaccinations for children and adults when SWNPHD staff were diverted to the pandemic response. When schools reopened, Vaccines for Children (VFC) shot clinics were resumed in the towns of Hayes Center, Curtis, Trenton, and Ogallala to ensure children had access to recommended vaccinations.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

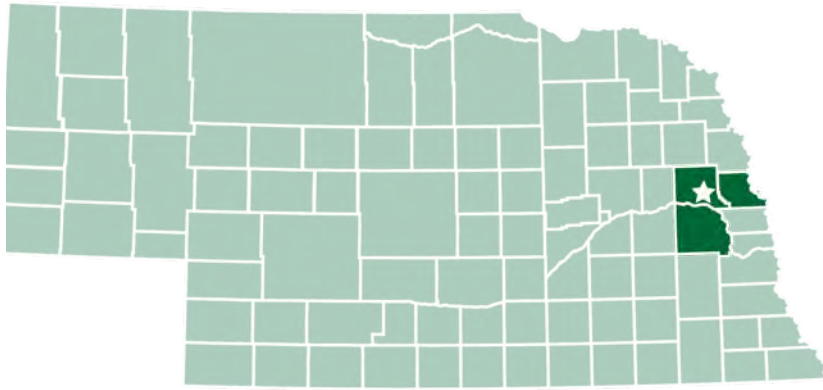
Additional public health activities that Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

Accreditation for public health departments is a significant and important task. Each year, SWNPHD conducts activities outlined by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to reach this high standard. This year's focus was on one domain—Public Health Law. Even during the COVID-19 response, SWNPHD staff were able to attend training from the Center for Preparedness Education regarding all laws pertaining to the scope and authority of public health. Other activities included providing education to stakeholders and partners, developing a staff training calendar to ensure competency, and posting important laws to the SWNPHD website for easy access by the public.

In December 2020, SWNPHD began to give their first COVID-19 vaccinations to healthcare workers and vulnerable populations. Efforts were coordinated with all six of the area hospitals to assist in administration of these vaccines. As more vaccine became available, SWNPHD brought on local pharmacies in the nine-county health district to help administer shots to more of the population. Off-site shot clinics were offered in several communities to increase access in rural communities. SWNPHD shared frequent press releases with information about the COVID-19 vaccines and their safety and effectiveness. These helped to build confidence and raise vaccination rates.

THREE RIVERS PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Dodge, Saunders, and Washington Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

The COVID-19 pandemic was an eye-opening experience for Three Rivers Public Health Department (3RPHD) and a testament to the importance of public health practice and prevention. Test Nebraska became a great mechanism of prevention within each of our three counties. Test Nebraska sites were set up in coordination with Methodist Fremont Health in Dodge County, Saunders Medical Center in Saunders County, and Memorial Community Hospital in Washington County allowing those who were symptomatic or exposed to COVID-19 to seek testing. Over the past fiscal year, 3RPHD utilized approximately 10 contractors and 10 full-time staff to conduct contact tracing. From July 1st, 2020 to June 30th, 2021, 3RPHD reported a total of 8,927 new confirmed-positive and probable-positive COVID-19 cases. At the beginning of August 2020, 3RPHD began using Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE-DHHS) contact tracing contractors to assist with the workload. Like the rest of the state, our health district surged with COVID-19 cases between October and December of 2020. During this time period alone, 3RPHD reported 5,190 new cases. Our average positive test rate from October-December was 32.3%. With the new year came new hope as COVID-19 vaccination rollout began, starting with our healthcare workers and first responders. From the end of December 2020 to the end of April 2021, we hosted approximately 140 COVID-19 vaccination clinics, including mass vaccination clinics, school clinics, and outreach clinics at local businesses and organizations.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

In May, we switched gears to best suit the needs of the population by offering weekly walk-in clinics at locations in each of our three counties while also continuing to do Closed Point of Dispensing clinics across the health district. By the end of June 2021, 3RPHD administered over 50,000 doses of vaccine with the help of our healthcare partners, Methodist Fremont Health, Saunders Medical Center, Memorial Community Hospital & Health Center, Ashland Pharmacy, and Scribner Drugstore. Looking forward, we are excited to make use of our vaccination trailer, purchased in April 2021 to take to our communities and provide vaccinations of all types where they are needed.



**THREE RIVERS PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



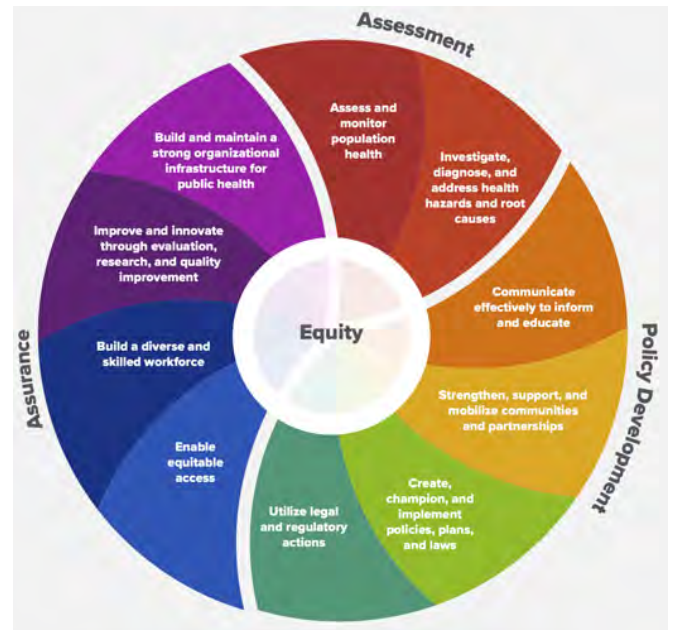
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

3RPHD conducted a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and developed a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in 2019. Both Dodge and Washington County partners discussed the need to address risky behaviors, specifically to reduce the sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates and teen pregnancies for youth and young adults. 3RPHD continues to address this need by hosting a Youth Action Committee to increase knowledge of healthy relationships, STIs, and contraceptives. The condom box program is also still in effect. All three counties expressed the need for increased prevention and screening. One strategy to address this need was to work with providers to ensure that patients are up-to-date on basic screenings and to offer the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. We consistently work with local hospitals to conduct regular mammograms on our reproductive health clinic patients.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

- Addressing risky behaviors
- Enhance screenings and prevention
- Access to care

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

The clinic at 3RPHD offers multiple programs to connect community members with essential services including 1) Title X: Family planning services for low-income families; 2) Contraceptive Access Program: Contraception for the uninsured focusing on 15 to 24 year olds; 3) Collaborative Impact Project: Breast and cervical cancer screenings for uninsured, non-U.S. citizens; 4) Every Woman Matters: Preventative health screenings and diagnostic testing for under/uninsured.; 5) VFC Program: Immunizations for children who might not be vaccinated due to inability to pay.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

At the beginning of 2021, 3RPHD conducted annual blood draws on employees for the staff wellness program. These were done at no cost to the employee. In addition, a former employee came to the health department and presented on the mental health of public health employees due to the pandemic.

In the community, colon cancer screening kits were provided to the individuals aged 50-74 at no cost.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

3RPHD participated in several activities related to this core function during the past year. Although the major area of focus was the investigation and follow-up of COVID-19, Three Rivers and their state partners continued follow-up of non-COVID cases. One example was a case of Cyclosporiasis. In partnership with NE-DHHS, this case was investigated and determined to be part of an Cyclospora outbreak at a restaurant in the Omaha metropolitan area. Another example is follow-up on two cases of norovirus among residents at a local long-term care facility. In this instance, 3RPHD and NE-DHHS partnered to provide guidance and resources to the facility to prevent further spread of the illness.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

3RPHD provided radon kits for just \$1 for the residents of Dodge, Saunders, and Washington counties. These were provided at several pick-up locations across the three counties for easy access for the public. Information and mitigation information was provided to those in need who yielded high results.

3RPHD continued trapping mosquitoes around Dodge County as part of West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance. Only 1 pool tested positive for WNV throughout the trapping year.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

Due to the health department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many injury prevention activities were put on hold. However, 39 car seat checks were performed during this time period. These appointments stopped in March of 2020 and did not resume until March of 2021. No car seat events or bike rodeos were hosted in Summer of 2020. We were able to complete two bike rodeos in May and June of 2021 as well as two car seat events in June of 2021.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

Our maternal and child health (MCH) programming was limited this year due to Three Rivers' response and continued involvement related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 3RPHD team looks forward to getting back to work in the following MCH grant areas once the pandemic subsides: 1) adolescent reproductive health education and youth engagement, 2) motor vehicle crashes and unintentional injuries among youth, and 3) sexually transmitted infections among youth.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

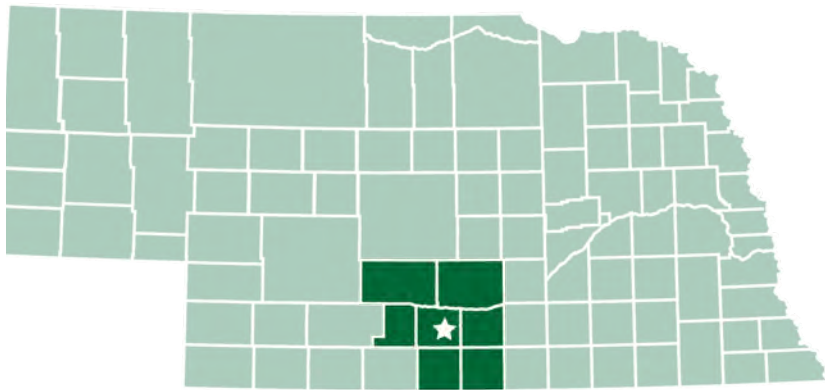
Additional public health activities that Three Rivers Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

While a substantial amount of time was dedicated to activities related to COVID-19, work in other areas did continue, but in a limited capacity, including:

- Worked with a web-design company to redesign and update the Three Rivers website to include teen portal, events calendar, and a risk dial for sexually transmitted infections in our jurisdiction.
- Maintained a social media presence through our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.
- Presented at area middle schools on growth and development/puberty; reached close to 600 students.
- Delivered reproductive health talks with Dodge County Drug Court program on topics such as Three Rivers services, contraception, healthy communication, and sexually transmitted infections.
- Began work on reviving the Three Rivers Youth Action Committee after a year-long hiatus due to the pandemic. This committee is made up of local high school students who provide community education and outreach activities related to sexual health.
- Distributed condoms and condom boxes at various locations throughout our jurisdiction including bars, nail salons, and service organizations.
- Began work on the Communities that Care (CTC) program in Washington County through a Region 6 grant. CTC is a five-phase, community-owned process aimed at implementing programs and procedures to target better outcomes related to risk and protective factors. Key leaders in this community have been identified and the Key Leader Orientation was completed in two sessions in June 2021.
- Participated in community coalitions including Active Community Team (ACT), Fremont Family Coalition, and Title X Rural Access and Healthcare Professionals committees.
- Participated in the Structured Onboarding process with Nebraska Family Planning.

TWO RIVERS PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney, and Phelps Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

By July 2020, Two Rivers Public Health Department (TRPHD) recognized the need to provide an innovative and collaborative response to COVID-19. Our community requested and received increased data and data analysis to better respond to local disease spread. Using weekly risk dial reports, vaccination reports, press releases, and data visualizations, TRPHD was able to inform the community of the risks. Information such as hospitalizations, numbers of individuals who had contracted COVID-19, and vaccination rates were posted to the TRPHD website on a regular basis.

Beginning in June 2020, TRPHD engaged with partners to provide testing in multiple local communities (the goal: testing within a 30-minute commute or less). Free tests were accessible to many individuals using the Test Nebraska system. These free testing sites increased access to testing, addressing a significant deficiency in the district health system. TRPHD facilitated this system-level work with health system partners to ensure these sites were staffed in six of the district's seven counties.

With the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for COVID-19 vaccinations, TRPHD initially worked collaboratively with local hospitals, the Tri-Cities Medical Response System, and Emergency Management to distribute and administer vaccine equitably, following Federal and State guidance for release. Due to the lack of vaccine availability, TRPHD enacted a nimble response to planning, distributing, and administering vaccine.

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CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

When the vaccine was more widely available, TRPHD added local clinics and pharmacies to the list of partners in our vaccine efforts. TRPHD recognizes the essential need to collaborate with partners to decrease the spread of COVID-19 in our district.



**TWO RIVERS PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

TRPHD began a Community Health Assessment (CHA) project in January 2020. The finalized CHA was presented to the Board of Health and partners in August 2020. TRPHD utilized the, national best practice, Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) process in order to create an inclusive Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The vision of this process was, “Empowering all individuals, families, and communities to pursue healthy behaviors, and enhance physical environments, for improved mental, physical, spiritual, and social health and wellness. Assuring an environment where communities flourish and people are connected.” The CHIP was accepted by the Board of Health in December 2020.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

- Access to care
 - Addressing the needs of minority populations
 - Improved education surrounding healthy lifestyles using CLAS standards and health literacy
 - Increasing vaccination rates
- Safe Environment
- Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

TRPHD continues to recognize the immense value of community health workers as part of the continuum of care. Community health workers help link individuals to vital services like clinical care, dental care, and local non-profit organizations to assist with fundamental necessities for daily living. TRPHD was able to leverage the skills and connections of our community health workers toward completing contact tracing for COVID-19 and linking COVID-19-impacted individuals to much needed services.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

Chronic disease control and prevention is a public health priority in our district, though much of TRPHD's work in this area had to be paused due to the resources needed for our pandemic response. TRPHD provides education on prevention and management of chronic diseases including heart health, advocating for active living while following COVID-19 safety practices, eating appropriately during the holiday season, and preventative health screening through our regularly scheduled media appearances, website, and social media.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

Investigation and prevention of communicable diseases was brought to the forefront of public health activity for the entire nation during 2020. TRPHD increased its capacity to complete investigations for COVID-19 through the addition of public health nurses and staff/contractors to complete contact tracing. Nonetheless, the TRPHD disease investigation capacity was overwhelmed by a surge of COVID-19 cases in late October 2020. TRPHD briefly partnered with State contact tracing teams prior to resuming responsibility for all investigations on January 1, 2021.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

TRPHD provides education to individuals regarding the dangers of radon gas in homes. The health department distributed 100 free radon kits to members of the community starting in January 2021.

In other environmental work, TRPHD provides education and referrals for individuals who are experiencing mold problems.

TRPHD also works with partners to trap and test mosquitoes for West Nile Virus during the summer months, to monitor disease activity.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

TRPHD distributes educational material about injury prevention at fairs and other community events. Staff regularly participate in local radio and television programs to promote injury prevention including farm safety, dental safety, firework safety, and water safety.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

TRPHD acts as the fiscal agent for the Dawson County Rooted in Relationships program. This program supports social and emotional development of children, up to age eight, by providing educational materials to children, parents, and daycare providers. Rooted in Relationships offers innovative support for parents such as a free parent training series designed to give families strategies to reduce their child's challenging behavior, and promote approaches to help children learn positive behavior.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

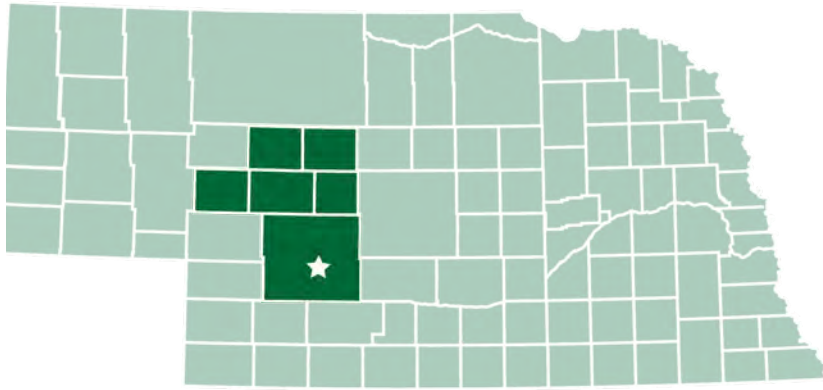
Additional public health activities that Two Rivers Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

TRPHD partnered with Nebraska Strong through Region 3 to provide mental health information and support at our COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics.

To address TRPHD's CHIP Priority of increasing Access to Care by increasing vaccination rates locally, the team modified an enclosed trailer to create a mobile vaccine clinic. This mobile clinic travelled to various sites across the district. Increasing access to vaccinations by using non-traditional clinic hours and central locations. To date, TRPHD has over 10 regularly scheduled clinic sites across the health district in addition to special clinics provided at events, schools, and businesses. TRPHD was also able to partner with schools, meat processing plants, and local businesses to provide vaccinations onsite—increasing accessibility.

WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Arthur, Hooker, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, and Thomas Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 VACCINE

The West Central District Health Department (WCDHD) team has been innovative in our approach to promoting and providing COVID-19 vaccinations to area residents and addressing the lagging vaccination rate in our district. In addition to offering many vaccination opportunities across the district, WCDHD makes it easy for residents to know where and when they can get the COVID-19 vaccine. We create calendar infographics highlighting WCDHD's weekly COVID-19 vaccination clinics. These are available on WCDHD's Facebook page, sent to local primary care providers' offices via email, as well as placed on the event calendar at www.wcdhd.org.

WCDHD also looks for new strategies to encourage unvaccinated residents to prioritize getting the shot. Just one of many unique approaches that WCDHD staff brainstormed was brought to fruition through the generosity of three anonymous donors within our community. From June 10, 2021, to June 21, 2021, anyone who received a COVID-19 vaccination with WCDHD was eligible to be entered into a drawing to win a pair of tickets for Luke Combs or Toby Keith concerts in North Platte. The tickets were gifted to WCDHD to be used in the drawing. WCDHD advertised the opportunity on our Facebook page, at businesses throughout North Platte, and through local media partners. Spanish ads were placed at Mexican restaurants and at the Platte River Mall. In total, 166 individuals received a COVID-19 vaccination as part of this promotion.

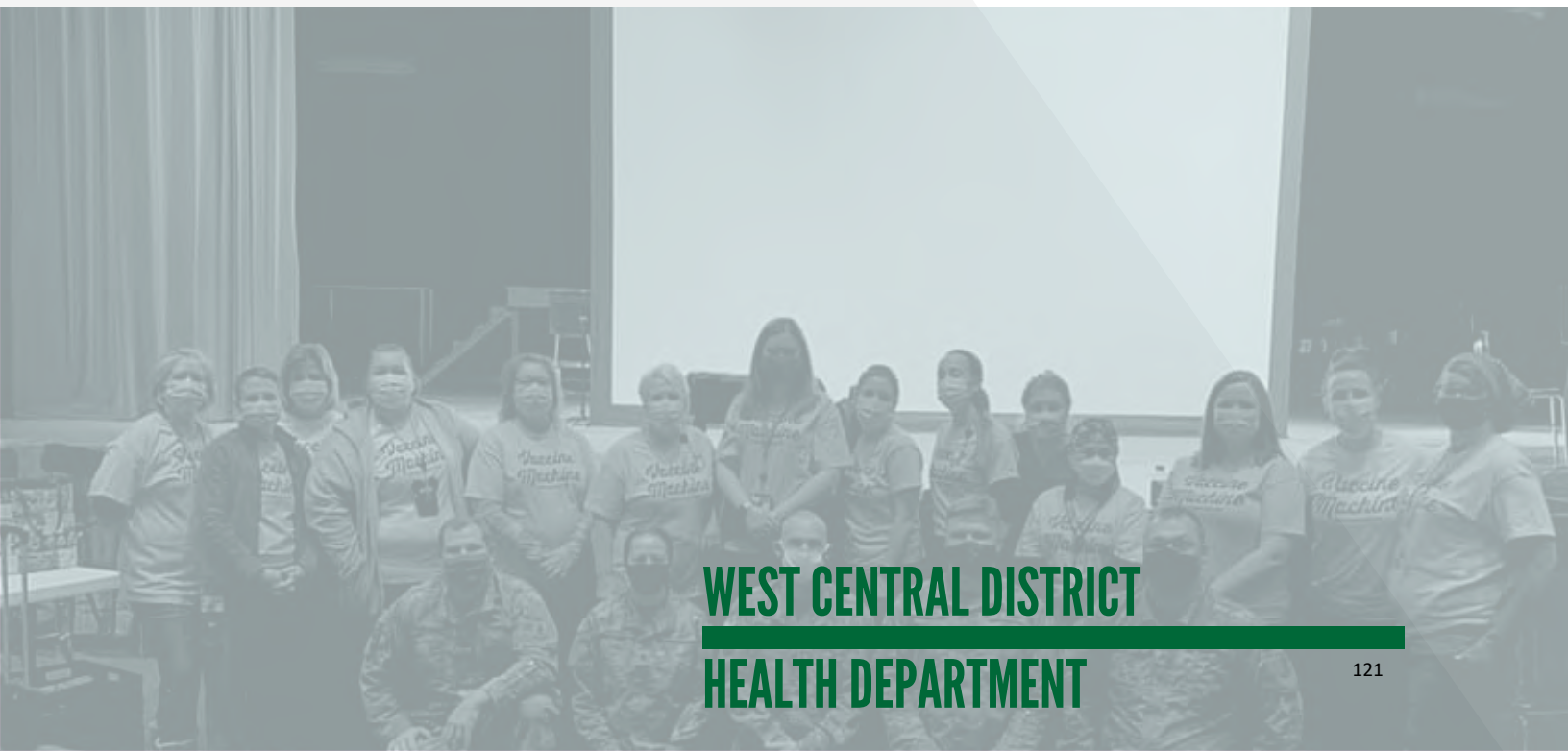
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**WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes examples of efforts by this local health department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the Three Core Function Areas of Public Health:



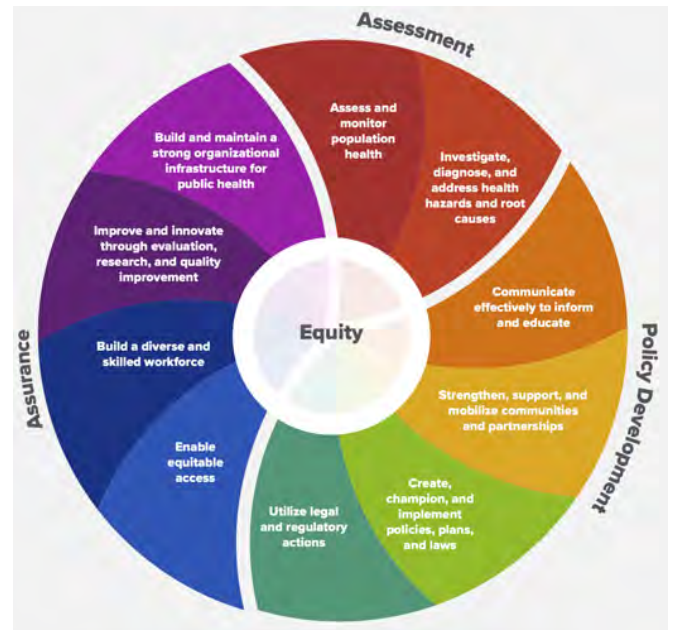
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) / Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

WCDHD and Great Plains Health (GPH) partnered in 2019 to develop a unified Community Health Improvement Plan. Five shared priorities were identified and teams gathered to start to develop goals and implementation plans specific to each priority. When the pandemic struck, efforts were suspended because both organizations had to shift staff and resources to pandemic response. WCDHD and GPH re-started the process in the spring of 2021, and teams are currently developing goals and strategies for implementation in 2022.

CHIP PRIORITIES:

- Increase access to mental and behavioral healthcare.
- Increase prevention education to reduce the prevalence of chronic diseases, preventable conditions, readmissions, and high mortality rates.
- Increased access to safe and affordable housing.
- Improved access to medical and dental care.
- Recruit and retain quality professionals.

AREAS OF WORK

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Includes coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.

WCDHD's Community Health Work/Certified Medical Translator facilitates healthcare access for individuals with limited English speaking abilities. Services provided by WCDHD for Spanish speaking individuals in the past fiscal year included assisting with scheduling medical appointments, in-person translation and interpretation during medical appointments, translating and interpreting at pharmacies, and translation and interpretation at routine and COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.

WCDHD's Minority Health Initiative (MHI) provided care management for individuals with diabetes this year. Some clients were identified through health screenings conducted by the program and were then referred to health care providers. Others were referred from their provider to WCDHD's bilingual services. All received monthly health coaching and education where WCDHD staff encouraged work toward client-selected goals such as improved nutrition, increased physical activity, following medication and care guidelines from their provider, and improved glucose self-monitoring. WCDHD's MHI staff had monthly communication with clients' primary care providers. Clients improved healthy lifestyle choices, overall health, and A1C scores.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Includes communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).

During the 2020-2021 fiscal year, WCDHD accomplished disease investigations, education, COVID-19 vaccination and testing, and provided immunizations for other vaccine preventable communicable diseases. WCDHD made COVID-19 vaccinations easily accessible to all eligible individuals by removing barriers wherever feasible. This included offering in-home vaccinations to homebound individuals. WCDHD provided COVID-19 testing through Test Nebraska and the Nebraska Public Health Laboratory (NPHL), as well as outbreak testing at area long term care facilities.

AREAS OF WORK

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Includes radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.

WCDHD works to raise radon awareness in our area and to help residents avoid radon, a cancer-causing hazard present in many Nebraska residences. Free radon test kits are available at our offices. Residents use these to test radon levels in their homes. WCDHD connects residents to mitigation resources if tests show high levels of radon. WCDHD also provides education about the hazards and effects of radon, in schools and in the community.

INJURY PREVENTION

Includes motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.

Due to the health department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many injury prevention activities were put on hold. Examples of work in this area include a sun safety campaign and mental health awareness activities in conjunction with the Platte River Fitness Center: Tyler Vanderheiden Memorial Run and the Twilight Run.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Includes Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).

WCDHD protects the families in our health district by providing a wide array of services such as immunizations, health screenings, communicable disease investigations, and Building Healthy Families and the North Platte Fitness Series. Currently, WCDHD does not receive funding from Nebraska's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional public health activities that West Central District Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

WCDHD increased access to routine vaccinations and for all interested residents this reporting period. WCDHD increased routine vaccination appointment availability from four hours per week to 19 hours per week. WCDHD provided local school districts with a flyer promoting back-to-school and routine immunization appointments. The North Platte Public School District distributed the flyer to students and parents using their own communication channels. WCDHD also relied on the outreach and education skills of our Minority Health Initiative (MHI) team to help make the most of vaccination opportunities. Members of WCDHD's MHI team had contact with 308 individuals. These interactions resulted in 9% (n=19) of educated individuals receiving the HPV vaccination. The WCDHD Public Health Registered Nurse on the MHI team provided one-on-one education to 202 clients in conjunction with routine healthcare appointments. In addition to vaccine appointments, the MHI team hosted preventative health screenings for minority populations within our community.