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*Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.*

# KS Preparedness Times

## Kiowa County Memorial Hospital Opens New Facility in Greensburg

By Emily Nickel, Planning and Outreach Specialist

It is now almost three years after an EF-5 tornado struck Greensburg the evening of May 7, 2007. Since then, the community has moved swiftly to restore and rebuild itself.

On March 12, the new Kiowa County Memorial Hospital (KCMH) facility held its grand opening. Community members and those who were a part of the rebuilding process attended the celebration.



The newly constructed Kiowa County Memorial Hospital facility in Greensburg opened on March 12 and was built using green technology.

Governor Mark Parkinson addressed what it means to be a Kansan, especially in times of disaster.

“The spirit that I have seen in Greensburg, from the minute the tornado happened until...today, the city itself is bigger, better and stronger than ever before. And because of some extraordinary leadership of everyone pulling together, you have truly proven what can happen when people work together. I will tell you what you have done here, it is ... not [only] inspiring to Greensburg, but inspiring to the state [and] inspiring to the country,” Governor Parkinson stated.

Mary Sweet, KCMH Administrator, said that people have asked how she and her staff survived after the devastation of the twister. “I don’t think after the initial tornado we feared for our lives, what we feared for was our way of life. How were we going to continue on? And the people of Kansas made that possible,” Sweet explained.

The new hospital facility includes 15 acute-care beds, a family practice, dental and eye clinics and an ambulance service. In addition, there is also a pharmacy, exercise room and day care center for employees. The new hospital will employ approximately 90 people, and comprises 50,000 square feet.

When it comes to energy efficiency, the hospital is the first of its kind. It was built to meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

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## A Minute with Mindee

By Mindee Reece, BPHP Director



**A**pril 1, 2010 marks the beginning of my ninth year in this job. I can't help but feel in some ways I've gone full circle, and what a journey it has been. What started as the Kansas Bioterrorism Program has evolved through a few iterations into the Bureau of

Public Health Preparedness.

The early years were spent preparing for a bioterrorism attack, a deliberate release of viruses, bacteria or other germs used to cause illness or death in people, animals or plants. The war in Iraq put us on high alert, and we worked very hard to develop and test our plans to respond to a biological emergency.

In 2003, the threat of smallpox compelled the Smallpox Vaccination Program to begin first in the U.S. and then in Kansas. Vaccination clinics were conducted in selected areas statewide, and the Kansas Smallpox Response Plan was developed. Local planning efforts took place and smallpox response teams were built.

As years passed and experience grew, our collaborative efforts expanded to focus on "all

hazards." In addition to planning for bioterrorism, we began planning to respond to incidents of any nature. To date, KDHE Bureau of Public Health Preparedness staff members have been involved in the response to tornadoes, floods, hail storms, ice storms, blizzards, satellites plummeting to earth, chemical spills, mold, hurricane evacuees, bomb threats, white powder events, and the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. It's no wonder the past eight years have flown by.

In order for us to truly come full circle, I believe it's time for us to refocus our efforts on assuring we're well prepared for a biological emergency. While not the centerpiece of our efforts for quite some time, this threat remains. Biological agents, which may be spread through air, water or food, are difficult to detect. The resulting illness may not appear for hours or days. The lessons recently learned through the pandemic response effort pave the way for a renewed look at our plans for dealing with a release of a biological agent in Kansas. You will be hearing more from us on this topic as 2010 unfolds.

I want to thank all of you for your ongoing support, hard work and cooperation over the past years. I look forward to continuing this journey with each of you.

## ***Nickel Joins BPHP as Planning and Outreach Specialist***



**E**mily Nickel has been hired by the KDHE Bureau of Public Health Preparedness as Planning and Outreach Coordinator. She previously served at the Kansas Health Policy Authority, where she coordinated health insurance services for state employee retirees.

Previous to KHPA, Emily worked in the Office of the Secretary at KDHE, assisting with H1N1 influenza communication efforts during the fall of 2009. Prior to the fall, Emily held another position with KHPA as

Communication Assistant, supporting community and stakeholder outreach and relations.

In her spare time, Emily volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and serves on the Lawrence Habitat for Humanity communications committee. She also volunteers with the Kansas Symphony in the Flint Hills and is actively involved with her sorority alumnae chapter, Zeta Tau Alpha.

Emily graduated from Baker University with a bachelor's of sciences degree in mass communication. She lives in Lawrence and enjoys being outdoors, hiking, and going to the park with her Beagle puppy, Bailey.

## Kansas Well-Represented at

### Public Health Preparedness Summit

By Cait Purinton-Day, BPHP Contingency Planner

**K**ansas was represented well at the 2010 Public Health Preparedness Summit, which took place in Atlanta on February 16-19.

Attendees at the summit included staff from two KDHE bureaus (Public Health Preparedness and Local and Rural Health), Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) partners, and numerous local health departments, including those located in Shawnee, Johnson, Linn, Doniphan, Geary, Douglas, Leavenworth, Sedgwick and Wyandotte counties.

“The Summit was one of those opportunities I am so grateful for. I attended programs on MRC, mass casualty, and planning that will help me do a better job,” said Melody Saxton, of the Junction City-Geary County Health Department. “We decided to create a program for our local commissioners that will help them understand not only why we plan [and] what the plans include, but also how we need their involvement. In Geary County, the Summit has impacted our entire response program.”

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius presented the opening remarks and commended the public health response to the H1N1 pandemic. Topics included pandemic flu and lessons learned from H1N1, mass fatality incidents, point-of-dispensing (POD) planning and management, continuity of operations, special needs/at-risk planning, laboratory response, and many more.

An interactive session on “Using Your Experience with H1N1 and Quality Improvement Tools to Review, Refresh, and Revitalize Your Pan Flu Plan” was hosted by Shirley Orr and John Moran and featured best practices from the Shawnee County Health Agency, the Sedgwick County Health Department and KDHE. Shirley Orr is the Director of Local Health in the KDHE Bureau of Local and Rural Health (BLRH), and John Moran is Senior Quality Advisor at the Public Health Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The complete program, as well as the handouts and PowerPoint presentations from the summit, are available online at [www.phprep.org](http://www.phprep.org).

## In Memoriam



**M**ichael A. Cameron, 58, Topeka, passed away Sunday, March 21, 2010. Mike was born Feb. 2, 1952, in Topeka, the son of Alan and Alice Lueb Cameron. He was a 1970 graduate of Topeka's Hayden High School and earned his Bachelor of Arts

degree in mass media and print journalism from Washburn University in 1997. Mike worked as the Preparedness Risk Communications Specialist for KDHE from January 2003 – December 2008, when he resigned due to health reasons. Mike loved his work in preparedness and especially enjoyed his part in the overall FluBugU public education campaign, for which he deserves significant credit. He was a very enthusiastic and creative person who made many long-lasting contributions to the statewide public health preparedness effort. Mike will be missed by his former colleagues and friends. Online condolences may be sent to [www.kevinbrennanfamily.com](http://www.kevinbrennanfamily.com).

## Thompson Hired as Director of Administration and Evaluation



**M**aggie Thompson has joined the KDHE Bureau of Public Health Preparedness as Director of Administration and Evaluation. She most recently served as the Director of Communications for KDHE before transferring to the bureau.

Prior to working at KDHE, Maggie served as the Special Projects Manager for the Division of Public Affairs at the Kansas Department of Transportation. Maggie holds a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in business communications, both from the University of Kansas.

## BPHP Operations and Planning Update

By Michael McNulty, BPHP Operations Director

The Bureau of Public Health Preparedness is pleased to announce the release of the Dialysis Center Emergency Management Plan Template on the BPHP website. The template, which may be accessed at <http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/providers.htm#dialysis>, has been prepared and organized using the principles of emergency management to assist dialysis centers in their emergency planning efforts.

The Kansas Hospital Preparedness Grant Advisory Committee, Sub-Committee for Planning has revised the Hospital Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) tool. The newest HVA iteration is version 1.4 and is available on the BPHP website at [http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/grant\\_tool\\_kit.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/grant_tool_kit.htm). This tool has been revised based on comments received from community hospitals and others interested in healthcare preparedness. The tool is now only one page in length to help facilities more generally address hazards that may arise at their location.

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Local Technical Assistance Review Tool and the Automated Technical Assistance Review Score Sheets are now available on the website to assist local health

departments and communities in reviewing their level of readiness to receive the SNS. These tools also provide departments the opportunity to review their own plans, policies, and procedures prior to official reviews done by KDHE or the Public Health Preparedness Regional Coordinators.

The Kansas Response Plan (KRP) is undergoing revision. As part of this effort, all of the Emergency Support Function (ESF) Coordinators are reviewing and revising their respective ESF-based plan sections. This year, KDHE will propose addition of the Kansas Mass Casualty Plan and the Kansas Mass Fatality Plan to the ESF #8 – Health and Medical section. Both plans were developed by their respective state-level task force; namely the Kansas Mass Casualty Task Force and the Kansas Mass Fatality Task Force. These multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional teams have been working for over a year to develop state-level plans to address supporting these possible incidents. Once the KRP has been promulgated by the Governor, it will be released publicly and communicated to response organizations and partners.



## Kiowa County Memorial Hospital Opens New Facility

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(LEED) Platinum specifications. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the facility's on-site 50kW wind turbine (shown in the photo to the left) will produce a 34 percent energy savings, compared to a similar-sized hospital built to standard codes.

Sen. Sam Brownback, Rep. Jerry Moran, FEMA Deputy Administrator Richard Serino, and several local and state leaders also spoke at the ceremony. Serino said that Greensburg residents should be proud of their accomplishments since the tornado.

“You have set the mark on how to recover from a disaster. Disaster recovery is never easy and the struggles will continue but the hardest times are behind you,” Serino stated.

About 100 residents observed the dedication, and members of the public were allowed to tour the hospital before and after the ceremony.

## **Medical Reserve Corps Units Assist with H1N1 Flu Efforts Kansas Adds Three New Units**

By Sonia Jordan, BPHP Preparedness Systems Program Director

**S**tate of Kansas Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units have been busy throughout the influenza season assisting local health departments with H1N1 vaccination clinics and general flu efforts. The MRC is a volunteer organization that is dedicated to serving communities in a public health and medical capacity. This makes the group valuable in responding to pandemic influenza.



MRC volunteers have become an important aspect of vaccination efforts. In Shawnee County, for example, 105 MRC members contributed 607 volunteer hours, which led to over 45,000 H1N1 vaccinations given. Without the time and effort of the MRC volunteers, the H1N1 vaccination campaign could have been even more taxing on local health departments.

Kim Ens, Preparedness Coordinator for the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department (LDCHD), reached a similar conclusion. "Our MRC volunteers were a big help throughout the entire campaign, providing over 250 volunteer hours. We could not have done what we did without our MRC volunteers," she stated. "We had 30 different MRC volunteers assist at 28 of our 50 H1N1 clinics," she added.

LDCHD clinics in which MRC volunteers assisted varied from large mass clinics where over 1,600 vaccinations were given, to small clinics at the Lawrence Public Library and the Healthy Hearts Fair at Lawrence Memorial Hospital. On November 11-12, LDCHD provided H1N1 vaccinations at 14 Lawrence public elementary schools during parent teacher conferences in the evening, giving 2,800 doses.

According to Geary County Unit Coordinator Melody Saxton, "H1N1 proved what a small staff we had when it came to response and that the only way we could meet a pandemic was to increase our response capabilities by using volunteers. By locating

nurses and lay volunteers who wanted to be a part of protecting Geary County, we not only met our goals of vaccinating our community but were able to complete both vaccinations of the children in the schools before Christmas vacation."

The highlighted need for volunteers during a public health emergency spurred the addition of three new Kansas MRC units since the beginning of the 2009 H1N1 influenza season. The Geary County and NEK Multi-County Unit were added in the fall of 2009. The Cowley County Unit is currently in the final approval stage. Therefore, as of this writing, Kansas now has 15 approved MRC units, with approval pending for an additional unit.

Communities are already beginning to see the benefits of an MRC unit to their community. Says Saxton, "The unit has become a viable organization in the community. At an education booth last week, community members actually came up and asked about how they could join the MRC. We are expanding into a team that will learn together, exercise together and, if needed, respond together, all working to protect our community."

If you would like more information about joining an MRC unit or starting one in your community, contact Emily Nickel, Planning and Outreach Specialist, via e-mail at [enickel@kdheks.gov](mailto:enickel@kdheks.gov) or by phone at 785-296-5201.

***Do you have news about your agency's preparedness efforts?***

*If you would like to include it in the next issue of the KS Preparedness Times, please e-mail your news to Mike Heideman at [mheideman@kdheks.gov](mailto:mheideman@kdheks.gov) or Cait Purinton-Day at [cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov](mailto:cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov).*

## Tales From the “Dark Site”

By Brett Starbuck, Regional Coordinator, Northeast Corner Regional Initiative

In April 2009, the Santa Clara County Health Department (San Jose, Cal.) was one of the first communities in the U.S. to begin closing schools to mitigate H1N1 spread. This one decision impacted the health department’s ability to communicate to the public by bringing down their most important communication tool – their website.

When officials announced the school closings, community residents rushed to the health department’s website looking for information and answers to their questions. Coincidentally, recently posted election results on the county website had also garnered the attention of the community. The overwhelming response crippled their network server, eventually rendering access to the county website useless.

What was the solution? A “Dark Site!”

Recently, I attended the 2010 NACCHO Public Health Preparedness Conference and had the opportunity to learn about the Santa Clara County Public Health Department’s dark site.

What is a dark site? Working with Google for two years, the health department had developed an emergency website, ready but unseen until activation. Such a “dark site” is a way to seamlessly redirect the community to critical information. During the network outage, the Santa Clara County Health Department was still able to provide the community with important H1N1 information, such as hotline numbers, operational hours, brochures, guidance and recommendations through their emergency dark site.

There are many benefits into developing a dark site for your organization’s continuity of operations. Such sites are low- or no-cost, reliable and instantly

updatable, enhancing your agency’s overall preparedness. Santa Clara County has made their “Dark Site” Public Health Template available through Google. With the Google Sites template gallery, you can select the Public Health Emergency Dark Site Template and in one step, use it to create your department’s own emergency dark site by adding your own logo and content.

You can begin creating your own emergency dark site at [www.google.com/sites](http://www.google.com/sites).

For more information on how to develop your own dark site, you can visit the “Emergency Dark Site Toolkit” at: <http://www.sccgov.org/SCC/docs/Public%20Health%20Department%20%28DEP%29/apc/emergency-dark-site/index.html> or Google search “Santa Clara Dark Site.”

### Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Enlists Physicians for H1N1 Vaccination Campaign



Dr. Phillip Godwin vaccinates Robert Freeman during an evening H1N1 clinic on December 15. Dr. Godwin, who is retired, was able to catch up with many of his old patients at two clinics. Some of the people he vaccinated he had seen as patients for years as their family physician. With the need for vaccinators great and the holiday season in full swing, several Douglas County physicians independently volunteered their time at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department’s H1N1 immunization clinics. Drs. Phillip Godwin, Ed Manda, Susan Hall and Lori Hougham, the department’s medical consultant and Douglas County Health Officer, took time out of their busy schedules to assist in the H1N1 vaccination campaign.

### **Looking for a speaker to present at your event or meeting?**

*Simply click on the Request A Speaker link on the KDHE Bureau of Public Health Preparedness website at [www.ksprepared.org](http://www.ksprepared.org). Our staff will follow up as soon as possible to fulfill to your request!*

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