



# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Office of Local and Rural Health



Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

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### POST DEVASTATION: REVISITING A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

*Submitted by Gloria Vermie, State Office Rural Health Director  
KS Department of Health & Environment/Office of Local & Rural Health*



Kiowa County Memorial Hospital Administrator Mary Sweet was in Topeka on May 4 the night the EF-5 tornado came onto the central plains and devastated Greensburg as well as destroying land, property, and lives in several surrounding communities. Upon getting the news of the tornado's destruction, Mary jumped into her pick-up and headed south to Kiowa County. Several scenarios and visions played out in her mind. She hoped that the emergency evacuation drills her staff practiced would keep them and the 20 or so patients safe. On the way back home, Mary had the presence of mind to stop at a Wal-Mart and fill her vehicle with several emergency items (food, water, tarps, and

tools) to help supply the hospital staff during the first 72 hours.

In the weeks and months since the disaster, the staff and management from the Greensburg Critical Access Hospital have made their way through grueling hours of clean-up and managing the complexities of recovery and rebuilding needed to keep medical services in their community. Many from the hospital also had personal and family burdens to bear and resolve once they left work, 68 of the 95 employees lost their homes and belongings, and several spouses no longer had jobs.



After the disaster, there were many brave first responders, strong volunteers, and supportive local, state and federal agencies that came to the aid of Greensburg. Also to be remembered were the exemplary actions of other Kansas hospitals that implemented surge capacity and cared for displaced hospital and long-term care facility patients.

In conversations with Mary, she reminisced about a past Christmas holiday tradition, and discussed how much she wanted to carry on that tradition. It was "Santa's Store" at the hospital. The staff would collect gifts each year. On a special day, children from the community would come to the

hospital with \$2 to buy two \$1 gifts for their parents, siblings, or grandparents. This festive day was a great source of joy for the children as well as for those who worked and volunteered in the hospital.

This year with much determination, good intentions, and a little help from friends, there was a 2007 children's holiday shopping spree in Greensburg! An employee support group from a North Dakota Critical Access Hospital (CAH) sent a donation. The Kansas Board of Nursing donated gifts and sent volunteers to staff the store. An additional surprise that brought smiles, the North Dakota CAH is now planning to have a "kids shopping day" in their hospital.

This past year due to ice storms, floods, and tornados many counties in Kansas were declared disaster areas. Our health care industry and public health agencies have been challenged and stressed, but have been leaders in rallying their communities in the recovery effort and maintaining community traditions.

## ASSISTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DURING DISASTERS

*submitted by Cathy "Cat" Rooney, Project Director  
University of Kansas*



County health departments, hospitals, emergency managers, and disaster relief teams play crucial roles in community disaster and emergency response situations. People with disabilities are among those needing assistance. Yet, many health and safety personnel are not aware of the unique needs of people with disabilities before, during, and after catastrophes. As one remedy the course, '*Ready, Willing and Able,*' was developed by the Research and Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas through partnerships with the Center for Public Health Preparedness and the Office of Rural Health within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. This training is designed for public health and hospital staff, health professionals, disaster preparedness, emergency

response workers, and personnel working with people with disabilities.

'*Ready, Willing, & Able*' originated as a four-hour curriculum conducted in a classroom or workshop setting. In January 2008, the four hour presentation is being replaced by a two-hour Internet video version offered free to participants on the KS-TRAIN, <http://ks.train.org>, learning management system. Continuing education credits are being sought and once granted will be noted in the course introduction.

Specific training covers disability etiquette, terminology, communications, and assistance techniques during disasters for assisting people with disabilities. Course participants will become familiar with various disaster assistance needs of persons with sight, mobility, hearing, and cognitive disabilities. Instruction is given in the video by professional educators with one educator being a person with a disability to enhance the experience of acquainting the audience with disabilities.

The KS-TRAIN video experience is expected to be similar to the original four-hour course which received an A+ report card from class attendees.

Historically, 13 four-hour courses were taught to approximately 538 people at five health or emergency management associations conferences, four hospitals or medical centers, and at a public health department, home health agency, nursing school, and a center for independent living for persons with disabilities. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Hospital Association assisted with arranging for course locations.

The course attendees represented 20 different occupations including hospital and emergency room nurses, public school nurses, respiratory therapists, social workers, and hospital administrators, planners, information specialists, managers, and trainers. Public safety personnel included emergency managers, safety officers, biological terrorism coordinators, risk communicators, and volunteers of the Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Red Cross. Several participants held dual roles in the health field and in public safety.

The pre- and post- test analysis of the original participants showed that both knowledge and confidence increased after taking the course. No differences appeared in mean knowledge or confidence levels among the three occupational groups (nursing and health, emergency field, and others) represented by course attendees. Persons in their respective fields the longest learned the most and those with the less experience increased their confidence much more than those with more experience.

'*Ready, Willing, & Able*' has proven to be a worthwhile investment of time and a valuable educational tool for health, safety, and other personnel to be better prepared to assist people with disabilities during



disasters. Moving this educational project into the TRAIN system should allow for greater access among the professionals that would most benefit from it.

For more information on 'Ready, Willing and Able' contact Cathy "Cat" Rooney at (785) 727-0808 or [catr@ku.edu](mailto:catr@ku.edu).

### ENHANCING LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL CAPABILITIES

*submitted by Gary W. Brown, Regional Coordinator*

*Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps*

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region VII*



Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units have been formed in 10 counties and/or regions across Kansas to enhance local public health and medical capabilities, these include: the Butler, Harvey, Jefferson, Douglas, Marshall, North Central Kansas Regional MRC (serving Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marion, McPherson, Mitchell, Osborne, Ottawa, Republic, Saline and Smith counties), Reno, Sedgwick and Shawnee Counties. In addition, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties are served by the MRC of Kansas City, sponsored by the Mid-America Regional Council in Kansas City, MO.

MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize medical, public health and other volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and promote healthy living throughout the year. MRC units are intended to supplement, support and assist the existing public health and medical response systems and resources. Each MRC unit is unique and is organized in response to its area's specific needs. A community's hazards, health concerns and host agency dictate the organization, composition and operation of an MRC unit.

For more information on the MRC program or to form an MRC unit, contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at (816) 426-2829, [gary.brown@hhs.gov](mailto:gary.brown@hhs.gov), or visit the national MRC Web site at [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov).

### KANSAS ESSENTIAL FUEL SUPPLY TRUST FUND

*submitted by Jessica Crossman, Environmental Scientist*

*KDHE, Bureau of Environmental Remediation*

Aboveground storage tank operators in Kansas are under new federal Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) regulations enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These new regulations require facilities with aboveground storage tanks with an aggregate capacity of 1,320 gallons to have secondary containment, integrity testing, corrosion protection, security, and loss prevention. These new requirements have proven to be quite cost prohibitive to some of the smaller, low volume, rural facilities such as many of the agricultural cooperatives in Kansas.

The 2006 Legislature amended the Kansas Storage Tank



Act to set up a fund that reimburses owners of aboveground storage tanks and bulk plants 90 percent (up to \$25,000 per facility) of costs associated with upgrading their facilities to meet the requirements of the SPCC regulations. This reimbursement fund is called the Kansas Essential Fuels Supply Trust Fund and is intended to assist the smaller retail facilities with the cost of compliance with SPCC requirements. The fund is administered by the Preventative Unit of the Storage Tank Section in the Bureau of Environmental Remediation at KDHE. The details of this new trust fund can be found in K.S.A. 65-34,131.

The Kansas Essential Fuel Supply Trust Fund is funded by the one-cent per gallon environmental assurance fee established in 1989, which also funds the Kansas Petroleum Storage

Tank Release Trust Fund. Only owners of aboveground tanks and bulk plants used for storage of petroleum products for resale are eligible under this program.

KDHE has received 172 applications to the fund and reimbursed \$425,670 to above ground storage tank owners for environmental improvements to their aboveground tank facilities.

More information on the Kansas Essential Fuel Supply Trust Fund can be found on our Web site:

[http://www.kdheks.gov/tanks/trust\\_fund/essential\\_fuels.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/tanks/trust_fund/essential_fuels.htm). Photos by: Michael Pomes, Environmental Scientist, Bureau of Environmental Remediation, KDHE.

## PANDEMIC FLU - TAKE THE LEAD

*submitted by Sandy Johnson*

*Center for Public Health Preparedness, KDHE*



Preparing for a pandemic influenza outbreak involves everybody. The threat of pandemic influenza is real, and America needs leadership from respected community members to prepare our towns and cities, reduce the impact of pandemic flu on individuals and families, and reduce or even prevent serious damage to the economy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health experts agree that it is not a question of **IF** a pandemic will occur, but **WHEN** it will occur. If America is not adequately prepared, pandemic flu could seriously affect everyone economically.

Government alone can't prepare the nation for pandemic flu; this challenge requires your help. As a leader in your community, you can play a powerful role in encouraging your employees, patients, and members and others whom you represent to prepare by providing information and guidance and by preparing yourself.

A kit was developed by Health and Human Resources (HHS) and CDC along with input from community leaders. It is designed to provide you with key information and tools to help your organization or practice understand the threat of a pandemic and prepare for it now.

This toolkit provides the following:

- Information for you about pandemic flu;
- Ready-to-use and ready-to-tailor resources prepared by HHS and CDC; and
- Ideas and materials to encourage your organization to prepare and to encourage other leaders to get involved

Pandemic preparedness efforts are an important part of community leadership. We thank you for joining community leaders across the Nation in taking steps to ensure America's health and prosperity in the 21st century. For more information on the tool-kit click on the logo above.

## WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH?

*submitted by the Office of Local and Rural Health  
Kansas Department of Health and Environment*

To promote awareness of the Core Functions and Essential Services of Public Health, Connections has been highlighting an Essential Service of the month by utilizing "What is Public Health?" An Orientation to the Public Health System for Participants and Spectators. **Click on the logo** to download the complete document for future reference, or refer back to previous 2007 editions of Public Health Connections, or go to the Office of Local Rural Health, Local Health section of [www.kdheks.gov](http://www.kdheks.gov).



### **Essential Service #10: Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems**

This service includes continuous linkage with appropriate institutions of higher learning and research and an internal capacity to mount timely epidemiologic and economic analyses and conduct needed health services research.

"Leaders need information for making decisions. Ongoing program evaluation creates an atmosphere in which effective leadership and organizational learning can flourish." Research should help to identify broad forces affecting the community health system, such as epidemiology, technology and legislation. "The actual process

of identifying health problems of importance to the community is one that must titrate information derived from data sets with information derived from the community's perceptions of problems which are most important." (Turncock, 2001)

The following provides a sample of the activities performed under this service that impact the public's health: Identify problems for which research may be needed; Evaluate the usefulness of research on identified health problems; Assess the priority of the health problem; Check current knowledge on targeted health problems; Identify tentative research questions; Identify potential research partners and collaborate in designing research; Carry out research; and Use and disseminate research findings.

Professionals providing these services include the agency administrator, research staff members, funding/grant-writing staff, program coordinators/supervisors, epidemiologist, public health nurses, quality improvement and safety committee members.

**Questions to ask yourself to help determine if you/your agency perform functions that contribute to Essential Service #10:**

- Do I/my agency identify problems to be researched?
- Do I/my agency describe technical assistance needed for research?
- Do I/my agency specify the resources needed for research?
- Do I/my agency prioritize the importance of research problems?
- Do I/my agency gather information using reliable methods of study?
- Do I/my agency confer with team members to analyze data?
- Do I/my agency disseminate research findings to appropriate individuals?

If you/your agency are **not** checking one of the boxes, how will you/we **assure** that this essential service is provided in your community, and how do we as public health professionals work to fulfill that mission in the daily performance of our duties and responsibilities?

**REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH MEETINGS – 2008**

Upcoming Regional Public Health Meetings and Billing Workshops.

- **Central Region:** Feb. 27 at the Reno County Health Department, 209 W. Second, Hutchinson, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Please contact Jon Anderson at (785) 296-8435 if you have any questions.
- **North Central Region:** Mar. 25, please contact Debbie Whitmer at (785) 827-9639 for meeting location and time.
- **Northeast Region:** Mar. 13 at the Curtis State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Flint Hills Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Topeka, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Please contact Linda Frazier at (785) 296-3641 if you have any questions.
- **Northwest Region:** Mar. 13, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the NW Educational Service Center, Oakley. Contact Georgette Schoenfeld, RN, Logan County Health Department, for a lunch reservation at (785) 672-4502. Please contact Debbie Whitmer at (785) 827-9639 if you have any questions.
- **Southeast Region:** Feb. 14, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Southeast District Office, 1500 W. Seventh, Meadowlark Room, Chanute. Please contact Jon Anderson at (785) 296-8435 if you have any questions.
- **Southwest Region:** Feb. 15, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Finney County Administration Building, 311 N. Ninth, Garden City. Please contact Debbie Whitmer at (785) 827-9639 if you have any questions.

**BILLING WORKSHOPS - 2008**

- **NE Billing Group** will meet on Feb. 7 at the Curtis State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Flint Hills Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Topeka, 9 a.m. - noon. For more information, contact Linda Frazier at (785) 296-3641.
- **Billing Biddies** will meet on Mar. 5 from 9 a.m. – noon. For more information, contact Debbie Whitmer at (785) 827-9639.
- **Billers Anonymous** will meet on Feb. 13 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. For more information, contact Debbie Whitmer at (785) 827-9639.
- **Mission Impossible Group** will meet on Feb. 28 from 9 a.m. – noon, Reno County Health Department, Hutchinson. For more information, contact Jon Anderson at (785) 296-8435.
- **KUG's** meets from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Satanta District Hospital's education room (in basement). For more information, contact Michelle Miller at (620) 675-8191 or e-mail: [mmiller@satantahospital.org](mailto:mmiller@satantahospital.org).
- **Billers-R-U's** will meet Feb. 14 at the district office in Chanute, Meadowlark Room, 9 a.m. - noon. For more information, contact Jon Anderson at (785) 296-8435.

### SAVE THE DATE!

This year's Public Health Conference "Public Health in Kansas: There's No Place Like Home!" will be held in Wichita on April 29-30. A pre-conference for new MCH and Healthy Start Home Visitors or those wanting a refresher will be presented on April 28. This year's conference is sponsored by Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA), KDHE Office of Local and Rural Health, KDHE Maternal and Child Health Program (MCH), and the Heartland Centers for Public Health Preparedness.



### HEALTHY CULTURES, HEALTHY KANSAS: MOVING FORWARD

*submitted by Sharon L. Goolsby  
KDHE Center for Health Disparities*



This year's Health Disparities Conference will be held March 31-April 1 in Topeka. Join professionals and community champions from across Kansas as we continue 'moving forward' to create effective strategies that improve health disparities among the diverse populations in our state.

The conference planning committee invites submission of abstracts for poster presentations, panel presentations or workshops. We encourage abstracts in all areas of public health with emphasis on cutting edge topics associate-ed with the elimination of racial and ethnic disparities, disparities research and policy development.

We will select abstracts based on how well they contribute to and support the conference theme: *"Healthy Cultures, Healthy Kansas: Moving Forward."* Deadline for submissions is Feb. 1, 2008. Authors whose abstracts are accepted for presentation must register for the conference. Presenters are responsible for all of their expenses, including conference registration, travel and hotel costs. For more information click KDHE Center for Health Disparities logo above.

For more information, contact Sharon Goolsby, (785) 296-5577, or [minorityhealth@kdhe.state.ks.us](mailto:minorityhealth@kdhe.state.ks.us).

### ORIENTATION TO KAN BE HEALTHY



Registered Nurses, not previously Child Health Assessment Nurse Provider (CHANP) certified are invited to attend the KAN Be Healthy Health Screening on Tuesday, Mar. 18 from 1 – 5 p.m. (not required for ARNPs). The classroom style four-hour training session will be a review of the orientation training manual. There will be no equipment demonstrations provided. Other training options:

- ✚ Independent (home) self-study
- ✚ Classroom Style
- ✚ Web-based

Following the training sessions and successful completion of the quiz, the registered nurse will be "approved" to provide KAN Be Healthy screenings. All training options are identical.

Location is at Washburn University, Benton Hall, Room 407, 1700 SW College Blvd., Topeka. Registration fee is \$50 and deadline is March 15. This course is posted on KS-TRAIN, <http://ks.train.org>, #1002706.

For more information call (785) 670-1399 or visit our Web-site for other training options at [www.washburn.edu/ce/kbh/training/](http://www.washburn.edu/ce/kbh/training/). The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services developed this orientation. Course contact is Joanne Ramberg, RN, at (785) 670-2615. Coordinated by the Washburn University, Division of Continuing Education, Topeka.

## KANSAS PUBLIC HEALTH GRAND ROUNDS SERIES



*submitted by John S. Neuberger, Ph.D.*

*Professor, University of Kansas Medical Center*

On a daily basis, we see new developments in public health, including new national and local initiatives, new research, new threats, new policies and new opportunities to improve the public health. Staying abreast of these new developments is a monumental task.

The Kansas Association for Local Health Departments, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, KU Medical Center's Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health, and Area Health Education Centers are collaborating on a new series of educational programs focusing on current issues in public health. This series is an outgrowth of the KU Public Health Seminar course in KU's MPH program and builds on other models of continuing education in public health. The series occurs live on Wednesdays from noon - 1:00 p.m. between January and May, via the Internet. We will be able to offer the series to 30 locations across Kansas.

Continuing Education credit is offered for physicians and nurses and a certificate of attendance for other individuals employed by your organization and attending at your site. A transcript will be issued at the conclusion of the series; certificates will not be issued for each individual session.

Topics covered in the fall 2007 series included: Influenza Update; Health Care Worker Mandated Influenza Vaccination; BRFSS Update; Comprehensive Cancer Plan Progress; MCH Initiative Proposal; School Health Services/Bright Futures Modules; Disaster Preparedness and Agency Response; Ozone in Kansas/Clean Air Act; Public Health Infrastructure at the Local Level, and Indoor Air Quality legislation.

Topics planned to date for the spring series include: Hurricane Disasters, The New Madrid Earthquake, and Smoking and Fetal-Infant Mortality.

The fee for the entire spring series (16 sessions) will be \$100 per site (or internet connection) and will include continuing education credit for physicians and nurses employed by your organization and attending at your location. A total of 30 Internet connections are available on a "first come, first served" basis. In order to make the series available to as many organizations as possible, we will limit connections to one per organization.

If you have any questions or desire more information, please contact either Mary Beth Warren, Director, University of Kansas Medical Center's Area Health Education Centers at [ksphgr@kumc.edu](mailto:ksphgr@kumc.edu) or (620) 235-4040. Alternatively, you can contact Dr. John Neuberger, Professor, Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health, KUMC, at [jneuberg@kumc.edu](mailto:jneuberg@kumc.edu) or (913) 588-2745.

## CHILD CARE LICENSING AND REGISTRATION SURVEYOR JOB OPENING

*submitted by Anne Gray*

*Osage County Health Department*

The Osage County Health Department has an opening for a part-time Child Care Licensing and Registration Surveyor. This position evaluates child care centers, preschools and day care homes in Osage County, making recommendations for licensure and compliance, investigates allegations of non-compliance, and educates providers and the public on licensing and registration. Training will be provided by KDHE. Applicant must have a bachelor degree in education, nursing, social work or family development. Qualified applicants may apply by mailing a resume to: Osage County Health Department; PO Box 197; Lyndon, KS; 66451.

## JOHNSON COUNTY JOB OPENINGS



The Johnson County Public Health Department, located in the Kansas City Metro area is seeking applicants for the following position:

- Senior Environmental Health Specialist #102220

To review the job specifications click on the Johnson County logo on the left and scroll down the page. Interested applicants may send resume and cover letter to Stacy Barr, Recruiter; [stacy.barr@jocogov.org](mailto:stacy.barr@jocogov.org) or for complete details and to apply online, visit <http://hr.jocogov.org>; or fax resume to (913) 715-1419; or mail to: Johnson County Human Resources; 111 S. Cherry, Suite 2600; Olathe, KS 66061. EOE

**LOCAL HEALTH SECTION  
OFFICE OF LOCAL & RURAL HEALTH**

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