Governor Sam Brownback Appoints KDHE Chief Medical Officer

On January 3, Governor Sam Brownback named Dr. Greg Lakin as Chief Medical Officer for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment effective January 8, 2018.

Gregory Lakin, D.O., has spent his career working in the field of medicine, caring for people of all age groups as a family practitioner, as well as in emergency medicine, skilled nursing and long-term care, and with patients suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. Lakin currently serves as the Medical Director for Valley Hope Rehabilitation Center. He received a Juris Doctorate from Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College in 1989, followed by a medical degree from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1998.

“Dr. Lakin has the perspective of serving as a front line medical provider for the last two decades,” said Lt. Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D., “He will be a great addition to our team at KDHE.”

“Healthcare has been my mission in life, and I look forward to bringing what I have learned from my years in the medical field to KDHE,” said Dr. Lakin, “I feel that this new position will provide an opportunity to make a more significant difference in the healthcare of all Kansans.”

Use FoodSafetyKansas.org to Report Food Complaints

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) partnered to launch a new food-related complaint website, FoodSafetyKansas.org. It can be used to submit food-related illness (food poisoning) complaints regarding restaurants, events like wedding receptions or potlucks, or food items purchased at a grocery or convenience store. It can also be used to submit complaints about food establishments that did not cause an illness, such as observed problems with pests or lack of employee handwashing.

KDA handles complaints that do not involve illness, and performs inspections of all restaurants for which a complaint was submitted. KDHE processes illness complaints and begins an outbreak investigation if the complaint involves multiple people from multiple households, and those people have nothing else in common that could have caused their illnesses.

The goal of FoodSafetyKansas.org is to improve accessibility and reduce the number of anonymous complaints. Anonymous complaints hurt KDHE’s ability to start an investigation and confirm an outbreak.

When local health department staff receive food-related complaints, they may access FoodSafetyKansas.org to file the complaint, or direct the complainant to self-report via the website. KDHE and KDA will receive a notification that the complaint has been filed, and investigate as needed.

NACCHO Announces Funding Opportunity for Rural LHDS Focused on SDOH

The National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) is pleased to offer a funding opportunity to six local health departments (LHDs). NACCHO is currently working to develop a training/technical assistance (TA) package to assist rural health departments in applying a SDOH (social determinants of health) lens to their community planning work.

NACCHO is seeking six LHDs to pilot the TA plan in their LHD. Each LHD will be awarded up to $15,000 to put towards their community planning efforts. Each site will receive the TA package of resources, planning calls with NACCHO staff, and will be invited to attend an in-person training in Washington, DC. Applications must be submitted to NACCHO by January 26 at 2 p.m. For more information and to access the application, view the website.
January 2018 is Kansas Radon Action Month!

On December 19, 2017, Governor Sam Brownback declared January 2018 Kansas Radon Action Month (KRAM). Winter is an excellent time to encourage your clients to test their homes for radon gas. The United States Environmental Protection Agency recommends actively reducing indoor radon levels when homes are confirmed with 4.0 pCi/L of radon gas or higher. Kansas State Research and Extension (KSRE) county offices and all county health departments can obtain radon test kits for distribution from the Kansas Radon Program (KRP); test kits are $5.50 each.

Chronic, long-term radon gas exposure in homes increases the long-term risk of developing lung cancer. Residential radon gas exposure is the number one leading cause of lung cancer death in the U.S. for non-smokers. The KRP is promoting KRAM through state-wide radio and television public education announcements in association with the Kansas Association of Broadcasters (KAB) between January 15 and March 15, 2018. KRP personnel are available to schedule public education programs on request throughout winter 2018. KRP personnel are also available for phone, newspaper or live broadcast interviews. The KRP encourages all KSRE offices and county health departments to include articles in monthly newsletters or newspaper columns promoting KRAM. Visit www.kansasradonprogram.org or call 1-800-693-5343 for more information.

Parotitis Associated with Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) continues to receive reports of acute parotitis with suspicion of mumps. During the previous two influenza seasons, several hundred cases of confirmed influenza infection with parotitis were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition, during Kansas’ mumps outbreaks in 2017, 25% of persons tested negative for mumps but positive for another respiratory virus, including influenza A, rhinovirus/enterovirus, coronavirus, and influenza B.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing is the preferred testing method for mumps. Mumps serologic tests are not as accurate in diagnosing mumps in a person with parotitis with no documented exposure as these tests can cross-react with other etiologic agents such as parainfluenza viruses 1, 2, and 3; Epstein-Barr virus; adenovirus; and human herpesvirus 6 resulting in false positive mumps results.

Currently influenza and other respiratory virus activity is high and no confirmed cases of mumps have been reported in Kansas since August 2017. KDHE and CDC urges providers to test patients with parotitis for influenza, other respiratory viruses, as well as mumps by PCR to ensure a correct diagnosis can be made.

Patients with parotitis not caused by mumps may not always have respiratory symptoms at the time of parotitis or in the days leading up to parotitis. CDC suggests that influenza be included in the differential diagnoses for acute viral parotitis during the influenza season even in the absence of respiratory symptoms.

If a healthcare provider highly suspects mumps (recent travel to an area with reported cases of mumps or ill visitors diag-

Save the Date - 2018 Kansas Infectious Disease Symposium - May 10 - 11, 2018

Plans are underway for the 2018 Kansas Infectious Disease Symposium to be held on May 10 - 11, 2018, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Kansas City/Olathe Hotel & Conference Center in Olathe.

Nearly 300 public health leaders, first responders, law enforcement and health care providers from around the region are expected to attend and learn how infectious diseases are contained and managed in the state of Kansas and the Midwest. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment will offer a pre-conference surveillance training on May 9.

If you are interested in exhibiting or being a sponsor at next year’s conference, contact Tiffany Wallin at 913-826-1252 or send an e-mail to Tiffany.Wallin@jocogov.org. Registration for this event will begin in early 2018 on KansasTRAIN.

Take this week’s public health news quiz from The Nation’s Health
The Local Public Health Program (LPH), Kansas Department of Health and Environment is sponsoring a Public Health Thank You Series of webinars in appreciation of the work that you do for Kansas. The first webinar was held on Monday, November 20. A webinar will be held each month leading up to National Public Health Week, April 2018. Continuing nursing education credit is being available.

The 2018 Governor’s Public Health Conference will be promoted during each webinar and as part of the promotion of the webinars, one free registration to the 2018 conference will be given to a randomly selected webinar participant. Registration for the webinars and login information will be through KansasTRAIN at http://www.train.org/ks/. The webinars will be presented and recorded via Go To Webinar.

- **Developmental Screening in a Public Health Setting, Course ID# 1073773**, Friday, January 12, 2018, 1 - 2:00 p.m.
  Katrina Lowry, MA, Building Blocks Grant Director, Russell Child Development Center, will lead this webinar on developmental screening. Do you wonder which tool to use for screening children at your organization? Do you know the benefits of screening in a public health setting? This webinar will share practical strategies for implementing developmental screening at your health department. At the conclusion of the webinar, learners will be able to: identify two benefits of conducting developmental screening; and name two strategies for implementing developmental screening.

- **Understanding the Mental Health System in Kansas, Course ID# 1073793**, Wednesday, February 7, 2018, 12 - 1:00 p.m.
  Kari Bruffett, Policy Director, Kansas Health Institute will present on how mental health is becoming an increasing focus in communities across the state. It is important for public health professionals to understand the mental health system to be able to address community needs. A report has been developed and will be shared as a resource to participants. At the conclusion of this presentation, learners will be able to: describe two ways mental health issues impact Kansas communities; identify key stakeholders in the mental health system; and recognize potential partnerships between public health and mental health.

- **Telehealth: A Resource for Public Health, Course ID# 1073796**, Thursday, March 8, 2018, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
  Janine Gracy, MA, Heartland Telehealth Resource Center, University of Kansas Medical Center will discuss explored untapped opportunities to utilize telehealth, including behavioral health, in public health settings along with best practices for using telehealth. At the conclusion of the webinar, learners will be able: describe benefits of using telehealth in a public health setting; and recognize strategies for addressing behavioral health through telehealth.

The December webinar, **Addressing Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders in a Public Health Setting, Course ID# 1073771**, will be rescheduled due to an unexpected illness of the presenter. Those who registered for the original KS-TRAIN webinar will be notified via e-mail of the new date. In the rescheduled webinar, Melissa Hoffman, RN, MMH, Community Education Specialist, Lawrence Memorial Hospital will provide an overview of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders including strategies for identifying symptoms in a public health setting. Ms. Hoffman will also present current best practices for screening for these disorders in a public health setting as well as discussing the role of public health in addressing these disorders.

**Influenza activity increasing in Kansas**

Kansas is now experiencing regional influenza activity, with increased influenza cases in most regions of the state. Outbreaks in long-term care facilities have been reported to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Four outbreaks have been identified so far during the 2017-2018 season.

While there has been an expected uptick in reported cases, influenza activity likely has not yet peaked in Kansas. KDHE urges people to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their family members from the flu. While flu vaccine can vary in how well it works, it is the best way to prevent flu illness and serious flu complications, including those that can result in hospitalization.

Continued on page 4

**Population Health and Preparedness Statewide Webinar**
The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) hosts a Population Health and Preparedness Statewide Webinar on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. The next webinar will be January 23. To view minutes from the monthly calls, click the KDHE logo.
Influenza vaccine is recommended for nearly everyone six months of age and older. Receiving the influenza vaccine is especially important for anyone at high risk of complications including babies and young children, older persons, and people with certain chronic conditions. Even if a person is healthy, getting vaccinated protects the people around them. It is important for people caring for young children and those caring for persons with medical conditions, who are at a higher risk of severe complications, to get vaccinated.

Symptoms of influenza include fever, dry cough, extreme tiredness and muscle aches. Complications can include pneumonia, ear and sinus infections, and dehydration; influenza may also worsen other chronic conditions.

Depending on the severity of the influenza season, 5-20 percent of the population may get influenza each year. During the peak of the 2016-2017 influenza season in Kansas, approximately 10 percent of all health care visits were due to influenza-like illness in the clinics where KDHE conducts surveillance for flu. Influenza was the direct cause of 99 deaths and may have contributed to an additional 1,108 among Kansas residents during the 2016-2017 influenza season. Additional ways to avoid spreading influenza include covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands and staying home when sick.

For information on receiving the influenza vaccine and influenza activity, visit www.kdheks.gov/flu.

**Community Health Promotion Summit - January 31 - February 2**

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s Bureau of Health Promotion invites you and community partners to register for the Community Health Promotion Summit: Engaging Communities through Meaningful Communication. The Summit will be held at the Hotel at Old Town in Wichita on January 31 - February 2, 2018. The Summit will explore how communication strategies can be leveraged to increase the momentum towards healthy communities, specifically targeting tobacco use, increased physical activity and healthy food access. The agenda for the event is available online.

Steve Kinsella, President of Kinsale Communications, Inc., will be leading a workshop and providing the plenary presentation. Steve has worked in the fields of communication and public policy for more than 30 years. He has played a leading role in creating smoke-free policies in Minnesota, creating the Minnesota Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets Programs, the development of the Minnesota Goo Food Access Program, and developing Minnesota’s farm to school program. Other speakers will include representatives from the Truth Campaign and the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and local champions from Kansas. Additionally, Doug Seegers, Director of Parks and Recreation City of West Monroe, Louisiana, will speak on healthy communities from the perspective of parks and recreation.

A Chronic Disease Risk Reduction (CDRR) Request for Proposal applicant meeting with follow the Summit on February 2 for communities planning to apply and will focus on the CDRR proposal and application process. A limited number of scholarships are available for interested applicants who currently do not have a CDRR grant and are available on the registration page. Additional information about the Summit and the registration link are available online.

**Regional Public Health Meetings**

The Regional Public Health Meetings are designed to connect local health departments with programs and best practices that will benefit the work you do within your communities.

The first quarter of 2018 regional public health meetings will offer a variety of useful information. The agenda includes an interactive session on facilitation skills led by Vanessa Lohf and Jessica Fiscus from Wichita State University’s Center for Public Health Initiatives. Vanessa and Jessica will provide attendees with skills and strategies to help sharpen the skills needed to contribute productively and facilitate a group to make progress. The session will provide skills for both facilitators and those who participate in facilitated discussions. Karen Kelley, KDHE Project Manager, Bureau of Community Health Systems, will also be presenting on the new Kansas Grant Management System (KGMS). She will focus on using KGMS for the State Fiscal Year 2019 applications and budgets. Registration is available on KS-TRAIN, Course ID#1074448.

The dates and locations for the meetings are:
- Southeast Region, Chanute, January 11
- Northeast Region, Topeka, January 25
- South Central Region, Hutchinson, February 7
- Southwest Region, Garden City, February 14
- Northwest Region, Oakley, February 15
- North Central Region, Beloit, March 7

If you have ideas for regional meeting topics or questions regarding the meetings, please contact Teri Caudle at teri.caudle@ks.gov.
Preparedness Corner

Don’t Forget to Check Out the Ready Reader

The Ready Reader is developed by a taskforce representing emergency preparedness professionals, regulators, and advocacy associations from Kansas concerned with promoting compliance with the new CMS Emergency Preparedness conditions. The newsletters are available at [http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/providers.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/providers.htm) and new issues become available on Tuesdays. To receive the newsletter directly when it is released, send an email with your email address to Michael McNulty at mike.mcnulty@ks.gov.

Training Course: Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA), revamped their Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (EHTER) course. EHTER helps prepare environmental health professionals and other emergency response personnel by providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to address the environmental health impacts of emergencies and disasters. Two different trainings are offered: EHTER Awareness Level and EHTER Operations Level.

EHTER Awareness Level is an online course that addresses the role of environmental health responders in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters, including issues and challenges in disaster management, responder safety and health, safe water, food safety, wastewater, building assessments, vectors and pests, and more.

EHTER Operations Level is an in person course that trains participants to identify problems, hazards and risks; plan for team response; select appropriate equipment; perform required tasks using environmental health response protocols; and report and participate in follow-up activities is needed. Most of the course involves hands-on operation practice and response to simulated events. This in-person course is available through a partnership with FEMA. FEMA covers all training costs. Learn more about the trainings and how to sign up to participate.

Accreditation Corner

NACCHO’s 2017 Forces of Change Survey Results Available

The National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) is excited to announce the release of the 2017 Forces of Change report, The Changing Public Health Landscape, containing new findings on the forces that are affecting the nation’s local health departments (LHDs).

Results show that although the economic situation is slowly improving for many LHDs, one in five still reported a lower budget in 2017 than in 2016. LHDs are also faced with diverse challenges related to workforce recruitment, including barriers to providing a competitive salary to qualified candidates. Some LHDs are adapting to the changing public health environment by exploring new opportunities for collaboration with community partners. For example, many LHDs reported partnering with the healthcare and education sectors to address issues including opioid and tobacco use. An additional factor influencing LHD operation is the emergence of infectious diseases in the United States, such as Zika virus, which compels a further focus on prevention and response activities to ensure prepared and resilient communities.

Preparedness Corner

Kansas Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic - February 9-10

by Kansas Mission of Mercy

The Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) Dental Clinic will be held on February 9 - 10 in Hutchinson at the Kansas State Fairgrounds. The dental clinics are an opportunity for free dental services such as cleanings, fillings, and extractions. Patients should continue taking any prescription medication as directed and bring them along so a dose is not missed. No eligibility, income, or residency requirements needed. Biscuits and gravy for breakfast and a hotdog and chips for lunch will be provided at no charge. Nearly 700 patients will be treated each day so be prepared to wait several hours; doors open at 4:30 a.m. No appointments are available and patients will be seen on a first come, first served basis. Please note that no denture service will be provided. Health departments and other agencies are encouraged to share the KMOM flyer with their clients. The flyer is available online in English and Spanish.
CASPER TRAINING

Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response

CASPER is an epidemiologic technique designed to provide quick and low-cost household based information about a community, allowing public health and emergency managers to make informed decisions. CASPER can be used in both a disaster and non-disaster setting.

LOGISTICS
- WHEN: Thursday, March 1, 2018
- TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- WHERE: Crisis City
  640 West M60 Rd
  Lindsborg, KS 67456

TARGET AUDIENCE:
Preparedness staff, Local Health Department Administrators, Disease Investigators, Epidemiologists, Sanitarians and Environmental Health Specialists

KEY FACTS
- Class size is limited, one person from each county will be enrolled
- This is not a required Preparedness training
- PHEP funding can be used to pay for travel expenses

Registration: KS-TRAIN #1074387

For more information on CASPER, visit https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/disaster/casper/

Sponsored by KDHE & CDC
Funding Opportunities

Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Assistance Program - Deadline January 31

The Office on Violence Against Women has announced a funding opportunity for collaborative projects designed to address and prevent sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in rural communities. Funds may be used to: identify, assess, and appropriately respond to child, youth, and adult victims; work with a network of partners within a rural community to provide legal services, health services, and basic provisions to victims; establish and expand victim services in rural areas or rural communities to child, youth, and adult victims; increase the safety and well-being of rural women and children by dealing directly and immediately with issues of violence; raise awareness of and prevent sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in rural communities. The grant project period is for 36 months and applicants will be awarded $350,000 - $750,000.

Applications that focus primarily on programs addressing sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking in African American, elderly, or immigrant communities in rural areas will be given special consideration. Applicants will be accepted from states, local governments, nonprofit entities, and tribal governments. Eligible applications must include a sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking victim service provider as the lead applicant and/or a formal project partner. Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to submit a letter of registration to ovw.rural@usdoj.gov by January 11, 2018. Additional information about the requirements for this funding opportunity is available online. The deadline for applications is January 31, 2018.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Deadline February 2

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is offering grants to fire departments and EMS organizations through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for equipment, training, personnel wellness programs, capital funding, and collaboration efforts. Funds may be used for: vehicle acquisition; joint/regional interoperability projects; and operations and safety activities such as training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness programs and modifications to facilities. A cost share up to 15 percent is required based on the population of the jurisdiction served. Program guidance and application assistance tools are available on the program website. Applications must be submitted by February 2 on the AFG eGrants portal.

Kansas Infectious Disease Symposium
May 10-11, 2018
Embassy Suites by Hilton Kansas City/ Olathe Hotel & Conference Center

- CEUs
- Expert speakers
- Plan, prepare for outbreaks
- Networking

SAVE THE DATE!
Register on Kansas TRAIN in early 2018

Presented by
Johnson County Health & Environment
Kansas Department of Health & Environment
Training and Conference Announcements

Webinar - Strategies to Combat Opioid Use in Rural Communities - January 18

The Rural Health Research Gateway is hosting a webinar to discuss “Strategies to Combat Opioid Use in Rural Communities.” John Gale of the University of Southern Maine will discuss the wide range of strategies that communities can use to battle the opioid problem. The webinar will be held January 18, 1 p.m. Along with presenting cost-effective, evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery programs that have been implemented in rural communities, Gale will share community organizing strategies that involve a wide array of local stakeholders to help alleviate the burden of opioid use. In order to connect in the webinar, participants will need to use the following link: https://hrsaseminar.adobeconnect.com/gateway_webinar/. The dial-in number for the webinar will be 888-603-9072 and the passcode is 2245841. More information on the webinar, as well as additional resources related to the subject, are available on the Rural Health Research Gateway website.

Webinar - Introduction to NACCHO’s Rural Health Section - January 18

The National Association for County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) is hosting a webinar on January 18, 1:00 p.m., to introduce the organization’s recently developed Rural Health Section. This segment comprises NACCHO members and partners working together across multidisciplinary and programmatic expertise with a goal of developing a high level strategy for advocacy, infrastructure, goal attainment, resources, and approaches to improve rural health. Join the webinar to learn more about the Section. Registration for the webinar is available online.

Got Bit? Rabies Testing and Animal Bite Procedures - February 21

The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment will be hosting a lecture with veterinarians from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory on animal bite exposures and rabies testing procedures on February 21, 5 - 7 p.m. at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center in Overland Park. The target audience for this lecture is veterinarians, animal control officers, public health and infectious disease professionals, and healthcare providers. Those interested in attending should RSVP to Tiffany Wallin at Tiffany.Wallin@jocogov.org or 913-826-1252.

Public Health Communication Courses Available on KansasTRAIN

The following public health communication courses were recently posted to KansasTRAIN at https://www.train.org/ks/:

- **Design Matters! Integrating Design into Public Health Communications: Two Case Studies**, Course ID# 1073432, discusses the crucial role of design in health communication and how good design can make or break a health communication campaign. In the recent Health Communications Matters Webinar Series, the presenters illustrated the role of good design in health communication and described how public health practitioners and researchers can work with designers and artists to enhance the appeal and effectiveness of their materials.
- **Raising Community Voices: The Power of Storytelling in Public Health**, Course ID# 1073425, provides participants information on how to use storytelling to advance public health goals for the communities you serve.
- **What's Your Peer Crowd? Identifying Your Audience and Health Messages That Resonate**, Course ID # 1073428, will help you use the FDA’s Fresh Empire tobacco education campaign and instruct you on how this piece of information can assist you in designing and disseminating your messages.
- **Building a Public Health Literate Organization**, Course ID# 1073433, provides information from Dr. Cynthia Baur on health literacy tools and guidelines developed at the federal level by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This will be followed by a presentation by Susan Bockrath, who shares a best-practice example on how one local health department in Nebraska has taken on the challenge of implementing health literacy organizational capacity. They have been working with a variety of stakeholders in their community to achieve public health accreditation standards for health literacy.
- **Storytelling as Health Communication: Fighting Obesity and Diabetes**, Course ID# 1073431, this recorded webinar highlights the power of storytelling as a public health tool in preventing our most pervasive chronic conditions, diabetes and obesity. The panel featured community works and researchers doing work in vulnerable communities from two cutting-edge projects.
The Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Diseases (CEVBD) is an interdisciplinary research center at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State University. The primary focus of CEVBD is to conduct research on vector-borne diseases of importance to animal and human health. Its goals also include disseminating the current knowledge through continuing education conferences. The conference will offer DVM Continuing Education credits. The CEVBD will hold its first annual national conference to provide the most up-to-date information to participants on tick-borne diseases. Renowned scientists with a high level of expertise on tick-borne diseases will be among the speakers (listed below). The conference is open to scientists, doctors, veterinarians and others having interest in learning about tick-borne diseases.

The following speakers are currently confirmed for the event:

- Dr. J. Stephen Dumler, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Pathology, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland
- Dr. Christopher Paddock, MD, MPHTM, Medical Officer, Rickettsial Zoonoses Branch, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia
- Dr. Ed Breitschwerdt, DVM, DACVIM, Professor of Internal Medicine, Vector Borne Disease Diagnostics, Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
- Dr. Hans Coetzee, BVSc, PhD, Professor, Department Head and Interim Director of Nanotechnology Innovation Center of Kansas State (NICKS) and Institute of Computational Comparative Medicine (ICCM), Department of Anatomy and Physiology, College of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State University
- Dr. Roman Ganta, MS, PhD, Professor and Director, Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Diseases, Department of Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology, College of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State University.

Register before March 9 for the a discounted rate of $150. Register online here or visit the website to register. For more information, contact Dana Parker by e-mail at dlaparker@vet.k-state.edu or by phone at 785-532-4528.
Why HIPAA shouldn’t be an impediment to public health data sharing

A new report from de Beaumont Foundation and John Hopkins aims to clear the air with regard to what the privacy law does and doesn’t do. The study, "Using Electronic Health Data for Community Health," is meant as a roadmap of sorts for overcoming those perceived legal impediments. The report offers a series of recommendations for public health departments for more HIPAA-compliant access to electronic health data:

- Define key public health issues and goals with broad community support.
- Develop a data request with a clear explanation, plan for privacy protection, and plan for data use.
- Obtain legal review to assure key participants of compliance with HIPAA and other applicable state and local laws.
- Provide for public engagement for the purposes, use, and protection of data.

CDC Offers Digital Media Toolkit for 2017-18 Flu Season

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has produced a seasonal flu vaccination campaign. The materials are available to assist partners in communicating about the importance of vaccination. This digital toolkit includes details on events/activities, sample social media and newsletter content, graphics, web assets, and media prep material. Posters, educational; material for children, flyers, and factsheets are available through the toolkit. This material is downloadable, shareable, and some of the material is customizable.
Opioids Now Kill More People Than Breast Cancer

More than 63,600 lives were lost to drug overdose in 2016, the most lethal year yet of the drug overdose epidemic, according to a new report from the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most of those deaths involved opioids, a family of painkillers including illicit heroin and fentanyl as well as legally prescribed medications such as oxycodone and hydrocodone. In 2016 alone, 42,249 US drug fatalities - 66 percent of the total - involved opioids, the report says. That’s over a thousand more than the 41,070 Americans who die from breast cancer every year.

The Opioid Crisis Is Getting Worse, Particularly for Black Americans

The epidemic of drug overdoses, often perceived as a largely white rural problem, made striking inroads among black Americans last year - particularly in urban counties where fentanyl has become widespread. Although the steep rise in 2016 drug deaths has been noted previously, these are the first numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to break down 2016 mortality along geographic and racial lines. They reveal that the drug death rate is rising most steeply among blacks, with those between the ages of 45 and 64 among the hardest hit.

Opioid Crisis Trims U.S. Life Expectancy, Boosts Hepatitis C

The opioid crisis is rippling through the U.S. healthcare system, causing a spike in rates of hepatitis C related to increased opioid injections and reducing overall life expectancy among Americans, which has fallen for the second year in a row. U.S. health officials said on Thursday. The surge in overdose deaths has depressed recent gains in U.S. life expectancy, which fell to an average age of 78.6, down 0.1 year from 2015 and marking the first two-year drop since 1962-1963. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published new research suggesting the recent steep increase in hepatitis C virus infection is associated with increases in opioid injection. Until the last decade, hepatitis C primarily affected older generations - mostly baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1965 - but as the opioid crisis has worsened, the virus has gained a foothold among younger people who inject drugs. The new report underscores the importance of an integrated response to these dual epidemics. Among 18- to 29-year-olds, hepatitis C rates increased by 400 percent and admission for opioid injection by 622 percent. Among 30- to 39-year-olds, hepatitis C rates increased by 325 percent and admission for opioid injection by 83 percent. For more information, please see the press release. Additional media resources including graphics can be found on the NCHHSTP online newsroom.
2017 Rural Health Report Card

A recently released report rates each state’s rural health care against one another in mortality, quality of life, and access to care.

More people may die from the flu each year than we thought

A large, international survey conducted by the CDC and several of its global health partners suggests that significantly more people than previously estimated die from influenza-related respiratory illnesses each year. The study, published recently in the Lancet, says between 291,000 and 646,000 people likely succumb to these respiratory diseases each year - potentially far more than prior estimates hovering between 250,000 and 500,000 casualties.

Job Postings

- Registered Nurse
- Registered Dietitian
- Registered Nurse
- WIC Coordinator
- Full Time Attendant Care Provider
- Receptionist/Clerk I
- Registered Nurse - Public Health
- Public Health Administrator
- Administrative Associate II/Community Health Associate
- Public Health Nurse - Mother & Infant Program
- Home Health Registered Nurse
- PT WIC Clerk
- Public Health Performance Manager
- Nurse Coordinator | Division of Health
- PT Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
- Nurse Immunization Service Coordinator
- Customer Service Representative | Division of Health
- Registered Nurse RN

Career opportunities at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment can be found here.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment Program Newsletters

- 2017 KDHE News Releases
- Epi Updates Newsletter
- Kansas Environmental News
- Kansas Health Statistics Report
- Kansas Statewide Farmworker Health Program
- Newborn Screening Newsletter
- Nutrition and WIC Update
- Ready Reader
- What’s Happening Wednesday (Immunization)

Public Health Connections Information

To receive the monthly E-Newsletter, email phc@kdheks.gov.


Send your public health news to Katie Mahuron at katie.mahuron@ks.gov.