



PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Bureau of Local and Rural Health



Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

Mark Parkinson, Governor

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FLU VACCINE: IT'S TIME TO LET GO OF YOUR EXCUSES

An Op-Ed by Jason Eberhart-Phillips, MD

Kansas State Health Officer, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)

People who turn down the flu vaccine year after year tend to rely on one or more of six common excuses to justify their decisions not to get immunized. This year, as Kansas gears up to immunize more people than ever before against influenza, these excuses are all looking increasingly feeble. Let's examine each one in detail:



Excuse #1: "I never get the flu, so I don't need the vaccine." If you've been living on this planet for more than a couple decades and you've never been infected with the influenza virus, you are a very rare individual. Congratulations!

Unfortunately, your past performance in avoiding this disease is no guarantee of future success. With no prior exposure to influenza and no artificial immunity from past immunizations, you are setting yourself up for a potentially serious encounter when the flu comes to your community in the months ahead.

Why take the risk of missing work or school, feeling miserable and possibly landing in the hospital, when you can avoid all that by simply rolling up your sleeve and getting the vaccine?

Excuse #2: "I got the vaccine once, and I came down with the flu anyway. The vaccine doesn't work." Do you know for sure that you became infected with the flu that year? Many common respiratory infections masquerade as influenza, but none of these can be prevented with the flu vaccine.

Chances are you never had the flu that season, but there is a small possibility that you did. The vaccine doesn't protect everybody, especially in the first two weeks after you get a dose, or if you are more than 65 years of age. But getting vaccinated definitely improves your odds against getting seriously ill or dying from the flu, regardless of your age.

This year, for the first time, there is a high-dose version of the flu vaccine for people over age 65 years of age. Clinical trials show that it induces a stronger immune response. So now you have a new option to consider if you're old enough for it and you really believe that the regular vaccine didn't protect you well in the past.

Excuse #3: "I hear that sometimes people get the flu from the vaccine." This is utter nonsense, like alligators in the sewers. Give it up. The vaccine stimulates your body's immune system to protect you against flu viruses, and sometimes causes a brief and very mild flu-like reaction. But it does not cause the disease itself.

Excuse #4: "I hear that the vaccine causes serious side effects. I'd rather take my chances with the disease than risk harm from the vaccine." After tens of billions of doses have been given to people throughout the world for many decades there is ample proof that flu vaccines are very safe.

Sure enough, bad things like serious neurological events, heart attacks and car accidents do happen occasionally to people recently immunized against the flu. But these same rare occurrences happen at roughly the same frequency to people who were not recently immunized. Such unfortunate events appear to be only coincidental with immunization.

Even if there is a link between flu vaccination and certain alleged side effects, the chances of serious harm from getting the vaccine are hundreds or thousands of times lower than the chances of harm that may come from getting infected if you are not immunized.

Excuse #5: "I don't like shots." Who does? But a little needle stick once a year sure beats several days of being sick in bed – or worse.

Still, if you're seriously phobic about needles and you're between two and 49 years of age, ask your health provider about the nasal spray vaccine. It's just as safe and just as effective as the injection, and it may be the right vaccine for you.

Excuse #6: "I don't think I'm in a high-risk group. I don't want to take vaccine away from people who really need it." A few years ago this altruistic excuse had a ring of truth.

But this year there will be plenty of vaccine for everyone. And for the first time almost everyone in America over the age of six months is recommended by public health authorities to get the vaccine, regardless of your underlying health.

Unless you are one of the rare people over six months of age who has a genuine medical reason not to be immunized, there is no good reason this year not to get the flu vaccine.

So go ahead. Get the flu vaccine now from your doctor, your local health department or your community pharmacy.

You know it's the right thing to do to protect yourself, your family and your community from a potentially serious infection. This year you haven't got any more excuses!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE KANSAS PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION 2010 AWARDEES



Roderick Bremby, Secretary of KDHE, received the President's Award, which is awarded at the discretion of the association's president to acknowledge special accomplishments of an individual or organization towards improving the public's health in Kansas.

Richard Morrissey, Deputy Director of Health at KDHE, received the Samuel J. Crumbine Medal, which is given for meritorious service and state, regional or national recognition related to the improvement of the health of Kansans and/or the environment of the state.

Kimberly Engelman, Associate Professor at University of Kansas (KU), received a Special Service Award for individuals who have rendered outstanding service to Kansas in the interest of public health and/or environmental improvement.

Glendon G. Cox, Chairman of the Health Policy and Management at KU, received a Special Service Award for individuals who have rendered outstanding service to Kansas in the interest of public health and/or environmental improvement.

Debbie Whitmer, Public Health Nurse Specialist at KDHE, was bestowed the Dorothy Woodin Award for outstanding public health nursing service.

Linda Frazee, Public Health Workforce Development Specialist at KDHE, was given the Virginia Lockhart Award for outstanding service in public promotion of health and/or environmental issues.

Christy Schunn, SIDS Network of Kansas Executive Director, received the Jane Addams Award for a social worker who exemplifies the qualities of Jane Addams, including a pioneering spirit, being a trailblazer, and striving to improve the health of the poor and the sanitary conditions of communities.

The Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans and the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City received the Corporate Award for their public policy activities which makes a significant contribution to the mission of public health and/or environmental improvement of Kansas.

DICKINSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT, IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*by Linda Davies, Administrator
Dickinson County Health Department*

Dickinson County Health Department (DKCOHD) is centrally located in Kansas and serves approximately 19,000 county residents of all ages across 852 square miles. The health department recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, having been established in Feb. 1960.

DKCOHD operates under the direction of the County Administrator and presents monthly reports to the Board of County Commissioners as the Board of Health. The health department's staff is comprised of three full-time clerks, three full-time nurses, one part-time nurse and a senior health nurse who is tasked with administrative duties in addition to program-specific duties. All employees wear many hats while serving a predominantly rural environment. The health department works closely with the five public school districts and two private schools that are within its county border, as well as the six area hospitals, who serve Dickinson County residents.



With budget cuts to public health in recent years resulting in loss of staff and space, collaboration is the only way that the DKCOHD can begin to meet the needs of the community. The resilience and forward thinking rationale of the staff can be seen through the use of Facebook and a [health department website](#) as means to communicate the public health message. Partnerships have been established with the:

1. Kansas Children's Service League to provide the social/emotional component to the organization's Maternal Child Health (MCH) program;
2. Salina Family Healthcare Dental Clinic in provision of dental services in an outreach capacity to clients;
3. Early childhood educators to saturate the zero to five population for health and developmental screenings and education;
4. Regional Prevention Center to facilitate health messaging related to tobacco use presentations;
5. Memorial Hospital to provide a health fair.

The expansion of services to senior citizens for footcare and educational programming was an additional endeavor this past year.

Breastfeeding is strongly promoted through the health department's Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, MCH programs and a breast pump rental program that have reached across Kansas. The health department offers economical advantages to promote breastfeeding to new moms. Two nurses are certified breastfeeding educators and the Breastfeeding Café meets monthly in partnership with an area International Board of Certified Lactation Consultants.

During the past few years, with H1N1, accreditation preparation, and the economic stress upon families in the region and their subsequent need for services, the health department staff remained focused, professional and respectful. The staff is an amazing group of women to work with, to lead, and who diligently give without thought of appreciation. The opportunity to 'toot our horn' is a special honor and one we are most thankful for.

CHILD CARE CONFERENCES ACROSS KANSAS

by BLRH Staff, KDHE



Potentially thousands of Kansas children in child care are safer and healthier because of a statewide training program sponsored by the State Provider Cooperation Committee (SPCC). Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to bring additional safety training to providers, assist with equipment and facility upgrades and provide peer mentoring, the program has trained more than 1,100 providers to better protect the health and safety of the Kansas children in their care. The first nine training sessions have been such a well-received success that the SPCC is planning additional professional development opportunities for child

care providers.

"I love the children I care for," said Tiffany Mannes, an Overland Park provider. "I left the training sessions much better able to ensure their safety. This program appreciates the professionalism it takes to be a child care provider."

The SPCC is comprised of representatives from the Kansas Department of Health and the Environment, the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, and Child Care Providers Together/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The daylong events feature workshops on pediatric CPR and First Aid, Safe Sleep/SIDS prevention, and identifying and responding to signs of child abuse.

"So far, Kansas child care providers in communities from Colby to Dodge City to Concordia to El Dorado to the Kansas City metro area have completed over 8,100 hours of training," said Alexandra Townsend, coordinator of the SPCC. "The bottom line is Kansas children are in safer and healthier environments because of these trainings."

Nearly all of the initial nine sessions have been held at community colleges. Additional trainings will be held in Parsons and Emporia on Oct. 9 and 30 respectively. Providers can register at <http://ks.train.org>.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) TOOLS TO ADVANCE PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

by the Heartland Center for Public Health Preparedness

St. Louis University



The Heartland Center for Public Health Preparedness (HCPHP) Webinar Series was developed to highlight best practices of public health preparedness around the country. The Oct. 7 webinar will be on, "Using Quality Improvement Tools to Advance Public Health Preparedness – The Kansas H1N1 Experience."

During this webinar, participants will be provided with real work examples of how quality improvement tools have been used in H1N1 planning, response, and evaluation in Kansas. Presenters will describe utilization of QI tools in local vaccine

distribution and administration, as well as in a statewide H1N1 "hot wash" activity conducted during the summer of 2010. Click on the image above to register.

IT'S A WRAP

by Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN

PHAB President & CEO



The Beta Test site visits are finished and Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) could not be more pleased with how successful they were. We have heard from the health departments and site visitors that the site visits were positive learning experiences for all involved. PHAB shares this feeling of accomplishment with all those who worked with us on the Beta Test.

It has been a "PHABulous" summer and an historic one for public health. After thirty site visits from Maine to Arizona, from Washington to Florida, we have learned so much about our public health system. We have noted what makes each health department unique and most importantly we have found common characteristics and enthusiasm for providing the best public health services possible to the communities we serve.

PHAB appreciates the work of the staff at the sites (especially the Accreditation Coordinators), the site visit teams who reviewed documents and traveled to health departments, and the partners who served as observers. This was collaboration at its finest. Now, it's time for the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) to carefully

analyze all of the data we've gathered. As PHAB has planned, all of the information will be used to revise the standards, measures, documentation guidance, glossary, self-assessment, and other tools and documents of the process so that the best possible accreditation program can be launched in 2011. PHAB expects that it will take about six months to complete this important body of work.

For health departments who are anticipating applying for accreditation once it is launched in 2011, PHAB recommends working diligently on the prerequisites. These are required to apply for accreditation and will not change. They are a community/state health assessment, a community/state health improvement plan, and an agency strategic plan. PHAB will continue to share the latest wisdom in meeting these prerequisites. To read more about the prerequisites, click the Kaye Bender image above.



CERTIFICATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH

*by Molly M. Eggleston, Executive Director
National Board of Public Health Examiners*



It's an idea whose time has come. Public health professionals daily face the challenges of confronting complex health issues, such as controlling infectious diseases, reducing environmental hazards, public health preparedness and substance abuse. With all of these serious challenges, public health professionals need to be dedicated to staying at the forefront of their field by understanding the interaction between the different specialized areas of public health, learning new strategies to cope with disasters, and constantly working to stay two steps ahead of any threat in order to be effective with the proactive and preventative approach that characterizes the public health field.

Dr. Terry L. Dwelle, State Health Officer for the North Dakota Department of Health and Chair of the National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE), says, "Over 1,500 public health professionals have been certified in Public Health (CPH) candidates through the examination process. Become recognized for your mastery of public health concepts." Registration for all candidates can be completed online at www.publichealthexam.org. Register now for the early bird rate.

The NBPHE reminds you of the eligibility criteria for the CPH exam: You must have a graduate level degree from a CEPH-accredited school or program of public health or be enrolled at a CEPH-accredited school or program participating in the NBPHE early administration. Graduates must complete all degree requirements, including, but not limited to, coursework, internships, and thesis, by Dec. 31, 2010. Students enrolled at a CEPH-accredited school or program participating in the NBPHE early administration must complete 21 credit hours towards their public health degree by Dec. 31, 2010. The 21 hours must include completion or concurrent enrollment in *applicable* core course in Biostatistics, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology, Health Services/Policy Management, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

CORE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM UPDATE

by Kelly Kabler, Coordinator

KS Core Public Health Program, University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita

The fifth session of the Kansas Core Public Health (CPH) program took place on Sept. 9-10. Students could attend in either Wichita or Topeka and were connected through ITV. Presentations focused on Healthy People 2010 objectives. Dr. Paula Cupertino, KUMC, presented information about reducing and eliminating disparities in health and disease.

The CPH audience also heard from Brandon Skidmore, KDHE. Brandon discussed the Healthy People 2010 objectives that focused on addressing the leading causes of death in Kansas. The leading cause of death in Kansas — heart disease — is generally caused by tobacco use, poor diet and lack of exercise. Brandon shared what Kansas has been doing to address these issues and

showed that though progress has been made, we have not yet reached our goals. For example, the percentage of adult Kansans using tobacco decreased from 26 percent to 18 percent from 2004 to 2008; however, the goal is 12 percent.

A discussion on health equity was led by Roderick Harris and Pamaline King-Burns from the Center for Health Equity in the Sedgwick County Health Department. The pair showed the first episode of the "Unnatural Causes"



Roderick Harris and Pamaline King-Burns lead a class discussion following the "Unnatural Causes" video.

series, they then facilitated a discussion about its content. The video questions the correlation between low socioeconomic status and poor health, asking "is inequality making us sick?"

There were presentations focusing on quality improvement efforts. As local health departments are preparing to meet upcoming accreditation standards. Dan Partridge and Charlotte Marthaler, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, shared what they have been doing to prepare for these changes. They gave the students tips and evaluation methods that can be used in their own agencies. Sonja Armbruster and Ty Kane from the Sedgwick County Health Department shared an example of a Plan-Do-Study-Act project they performed.

Barbara Berry, Junction City-Geary County Health Department, explained the necessity of including research in grant proposals. She gave examples of good research methods and how to design a scientific research project.

The graduation session for the 2010 CPH class will be held on Nov. 4-5 in Topeka. Students will share their final projects with the class in PowerPoint or poster format, and receive their graduation certificates.



Sonja Armbruster explains the quality improvement project she worked on to reduce the number of children with dental caries in Sedgwick County.

PREPARED LIFESTYLE: BEST DEFENSE FOR BEATING FLU

by Catherine Howland and Val Renault

Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL)

University of Kansas



With winter and flu season bearing down, it is time to think "prepared lifestyle" as the best defense for staying healthy. Being prepared makes sense for everyone - and it is possible to do. This is especially true for people who are most vulnerable to disasters, which include public health threats such as seasonal and pandemic flu. Vulnerable populations include people with disabilities, the elderly, young children and people with chronic health conditions.

To assist with all-hazards preparedness, especially for vulnerable populations, the Research and Training Center on Independent Living developed a free, online continuing education course and produced a corresponding booklet called "The Prepared Lifestyle."

The free online course is offered through KS-TRAIN, "All Hazards Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities in Seasonal and Pandemic Flu" (Course #1022607). It is a two-hour course that covers disaster-related risks to people with disabilities, public health threats and their prevalence, historical pandemics, seasonal flu prevention and preparedness, and pandemic planning.

An instructor presented the course in person at seven Kansas sites last fall and winter. The course was very well-received and found to hold the interest of a diverse group of participants. Participants all increased their knowledge, and a majority said they wanted to commit to make changes towards being better prepared.

Participants included staff from health departments, hospitals, long-term care facilities, mental health agencies, community-based organizations serving vulnerable populations, volunteer agencies, emergency management offices, centers for independent living, and public works and transportation offices.

A majority (78 percent) of the course participants did not have a pandemic plan. But, after being exposed to the information in the course, 68 percent wanted to make a commitment to having a plan. For those who already had a personal pandemic plan at home (22 percent), six percent wanted to be better prepared in this area after taking the course.

"The Prepared Lifestyle" checklist booklet is used in teaching the online course and can also be downloaded from a new website that describes all of the RTC/IL courses, www.disabilityprepared.ku.edu (click on the picture titled "Seasonal and Pandemic Flu Planning").

In addition to providing information for preventing the flu, the booklet contains checklists for stockpiling nonperishable food, emergency supplies, important documents, supplies unique to people with disabilities, and materials for service animals and pets.

To access the course, login to either TRAIN www.train.org or your state TRAIN system to create a free account. In Kansas, the address is <http://ks.train.org>. Then search by course number (#1022607). Next, register for the course. Once you have registered, you can take the course at any time.

All RTC/IL courses are free. Once participants have completed the course and successfully passed the post-test, they can print a certificate of completion for their records from the TRAIN home page. The certificate may be used as evidence of CEUs completed.

This project is supported by Bureau of Public Health Preparedness, Kansas Department of Health & Environment, by a grant from the Hospital Preparedness Program, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

WINTERIZE YOUR HOME THIS FALL AND SAVE MONEY THIS WINTER

by the Kansas Green Team



Winterizing your home is an inexpensive way to save money on your heating bill. It is also important because reduced consumption of natural gas, propane and electricity translates into environmental benefits and natural resource conservation. Every cubic foot of gas or kilowatt hour of electricity saved reduces the generation of air and water pollutants, and conserves finite energy resources for future generations. It makes good financial sense to

winterize your home by easing your heater's workload, you will help the environment. Here are some tips for winterizing your home:

1. **Change Furnace Filters** – It is easy to forget, but it is important to replace or clean your furnace filters once a month during the heating season. Dirty filters restrict airflow and increase energy demand. Set monthly reminders on your calendar to help you remember. If you want to go above and beyond, consider purchasing a permanent filter which will reduce waste and hassle. Disposable fiberglass filters only trap up to 40 percent of debris, while permanent electrostatic filters trap around 88 percent. 
2. **Winterize Your A/C and Water Lines** – This one is fairly simple. Drain air conditioner pipes and make sure you don't have excess water pooled in equipment. If you're A/C has a water shut-off valve, turn that off too. Make sure you drain your hoses and store them away for the winter, and turn off exterior water spigots. Lastly, remove window A/C units and store them to prevent drafts.
3. **Install Storm Doors and Windows** – Installing a storm door can increase energy efficiency by 45 percent by sealing drafts and reducing air flow. Storm doors also offer greater flexibility for letting light and ventilation enter your home. Storm windows can also make a huge difference in the winter. Storm windows add an insulation barrier and reduce storm noise.
4. **Avoid Drafts** – According to the U.S. Department of Energy, drafts can waste 5 to 30 percent of your energy use. Start simple with a draft snake, which you can easily make yourself. Just place a rolled up bath towel under a drafty door or make a draft snake with fabric filled with sand. 
5. **Pay Attention to Your Thermostat** – It is easy to forget to turn down the heat when you leave, but doing so is one of the surest ways to save money. Most households shell out 50 to 70 percent of their energy budgets on heating and cooling, so why pay for what no one is using? Every degree you lower the thermostat, you'll save between 1 and 3 percent on your heating bill. Make it easier with a programmable thermostat – the average family will save \$180 a year with one.
6. **Put on a Sweater** – Sounds simple right? Remember what you just read about each degree on the thermostat costing you money? It may be winter outside, but it shouldn't feel like summer inside. Dressing in a light long-sleeved sweater is roughly worth about 2 degrees in added warmth and a heavy sweater is adds about 4 degrees.
7. **Run Fans in Reverse** – Most people think of fans only when they want to be cool, but many ceiling units come with a switch that reverses the direction of the blade. Counterclockwise rotation produces cooling breezes while switching to clockwise makes it warmer. Hot air rises, and the hot air pooled at the ceiling is circulated back into the living area. This could cut your heating costs by as much as 10 percent! 
8. **Turn Down Your Water Heater** – While many conventional water heaters are set to 140 degrees by installers, most households don't need water that hot and end up paying for it. Lowering the temperature to 120 degrees would reduce your water heating costs by 6 to 10 percent.
9. **Give Your Heating System a Tune-Up** – Just like cars, heating equipment need periodic tune-ups in order to run their best. Keeping your furnace clean, lubricated and properly adjusted will reduce energy use and save up to 5 percent of your heating costs. Many utilities offer free annual checkups by qualified technicians, but you have to call early as they get backed up once heating season starts. Some furnace dealers may also offer free or discounted inspections – just be prepared for a sales pitch. 
10. **Put Up Some Plastic** – For just a few dollars you can pick up a window insulation kit at your local hardware or discount store. Properly installed plastic is essentially invisible, so don't worry about aesthetics.

Adding a buffer against drafts and extra still air space can give a nice boost to your home's ability to hold heat.

News and Updates

Submitted by BLRH

Awareness Campaign on Vaccines for Children



The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) has launched a campaign, with support from Sanofi Pasteur, to increase awareness of the Vaccines for Children program. The campaign will include radio public service announcements, radio interviews, and printed outreach materials to educate parents about how they can access no- or low-cost vaccines for their children and teens. Click the NACCHO logo above for more information.

Presentation: "Why H1N1 Still Matters"



Sixteen months after reports of a potentially fatal new influenza virus took the world and media by storm, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an end to the 2009 H1N1 pandemic on Aug. 10, 2010. Although the Phase 6 alert has been lifted and H1N1 is no longer the dominant influenza virus it once was, evidence from prior pandemics suggests that the virus will come to model the behavior of seasonal influenza and continue to circulate for years to come. Fortunately, global preparedness efforts and a swift public health response resulted in rapid detection and reporting of cases, extensive vaccination coverage for some high risk populations, and a legacy of stronger influenza control efforts even in communities with weaker health systems.

This special 1st anniversary session of Public Health Grand Rounds reviewed the roles that preparedness, surveillance, vaccine development, and risk communication played in the H1N1 response, discussed lessons learned, and tackled the myths and truths of this controversial and still relevant public health issue. Click the WHO logo above to view the Public Health Grand Rounds Webinar.

JOB OPENINGS

Sedgwick County Health Department

The Sedgwick County Health Department is taking applications for the following positions:

- Health Protection & Promotion Division Director [20002303082410](#)
- Healthy Babies Community Health Nurse [20002336092310](#)
- Part-time Breastfeeding Peer Counselor [20006475092310](#)
- WIC Registered Dietician [20003751070710](#)



Click on a job number to view details. For more information, click the Sedgwick County Seal or contact Jeff Goetzinger, Human Resource Assistant, Sedgwick County Health Department, at (316) 660-7333.

Finney County Health Department

The Finney County Health Department is taking applications for the following position:

- Licensed Practical Nurse (Temp Position)

Click on the Finney County logo to view position details.



Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department is taking applications for the following positions:

- [Project LIVELY Coordinator/Care Manager](#)
- [ARNP](#) in the Family Planning/Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic

Click the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department logo to view position details.



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

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