

KDHE Public Health Call March 27, 2012

Miranda Steele, KDHE Communications Director, welcomed everyone to the call and provided a rundown of the morning's agenda.

Charlie Hunt, State Epidemiologist, let everyone know that rabies cases in Kansas are on the rise and that we expect to see more cases this year compared to 2011. We'll be sending a note through KS-HAN before a press release goes out to remind Kansans that even their horses need rabies vaccinations by a veterinarian. Charlie said that the launch of EpiTrax went off without a hitch and thanks local health departments for their support and patience. Finally, he reminded all that good hand washing and food safety practices are important in preventing spread of the norovirus that has been seen in several locations across the state.

Dr. Robert Moser said he wanted to make sure that all county health officers and medical consultants were getting the message about the special track coming with the Governor's Public Health Conference, so anyone who would like to have him contact their doctor can send that contact info to Miranda. Dr. Moser also reminded everyone that timely medical investigations and other alerts are sent over the Kansas Health Alert Network, so we'd like to see all health care professionals signed up for KS-HAN. Contact Gilbert Tabares if needing assistance with registration for the HAN Alert network. Dr. Moser provided an update on the activities of the Legislature as it relates to KanCare, Tobacco Use Prevention (CIF) and Newborn Screening.

Mindee Reece, Director of the Bureau of Community Health Systems, said this was the first year that HHS and CDC have aligned the Hospital Preparedness Program and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program. This brings a new grant process to Kansas and KDHE, which is based on similar sets of public health and hospital preparedness capabilities. KDHE is collaborating with the Kansas Hospital Research and Education Foundation, Hospital Preparedness Grants Advisory Committee, and Kansas Association of Local Health Departments to develop the aligned grant application, which must be submitted to the federal funders by April 27.

Tom Langer, Director for the Bureau of Environmental Health, announced that CDC has planned to eliminate funding for Lead Prevention, and this will certainly be impacting Kansas' lead program. This means KDHE will lose the capacity to assist families with remediation support. The program hopes to be able to continue to assist with lead screening but at this time the future is unclear. Contact Tom Langer with questions.

Jane Shirley, Director of Local Public Health, shared a couple of highlights of the upcoming Governor's Public Health Conference. Lt. Governor Colyer will be in attendance, delivering a welcome on Tuesday, April 24. The keynote that day will be a panel comprised of Secretaries from Aging, SRS and KDHE.

Miranda Steele reminded everyone of the upcoming Public Health Week, April 2 – 8.

No call in April due to the Public Health Conference; next Public Health Call is in May.