



PUBLIC HEALTH *Connections* Bureau of Community Health Systems

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To submit an item for *Public Health Connections* or to join the email list, please email **Lisa Horn** at lisa.horn@ks.gov



Pandemic propels launch of #WhyPublicHealthMatters campaign

Campaign brings awareness to the importance of public health

by **Lisa Horn**, *Public Health Nurse Specialist, KDHE, Local Public Health*

The COVID-19 pandemic has put public health in the spotlight unlike anything before. Health departments are

encouraged to use the current momentum to further amplify the value of public health.

Using the website whypublichealthmatters.org and #WhyPublicHealthMatters, a new

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Rebecca Adamson, with the Crawford County Health Department, posted a video to the campaign site.

State Formula update, COVID-19 response funding received

Before the legislative session was suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19, legislators approved an increase in State Formula funding.

The amount distributed to health departments had remained at \$2.2 million since 1992, with \$7,000 being the minimum payment a health department would receive (approximately two-thirds of counties were receiving the minimum amount).

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COVID-19 testing equipment, supplies and personal protective equipment were transported by helicopter April 19 to Finney, Ford and Seward counties by KDHE and the Kansas Army National Guard. Pictured from the left are: N. Myron Gunsalus, Jr., Colleen Drees, Sandy Carabajal, Deyna Ontiveros, Derek Montgomery, Ashley Goss, Staff Sgt. Scott Goodson and Warrant Officer Phi Tran. Not pictured: Chief Warrant Officer Derek Haskin.

Congratulations!

Riley County becomes accredited department

Years of planning and hard work led to the Riley County Health Department becoming accredited in March. The accreditation is for five years with annual reviews and suggestions for continued improvement from the Public Health Accreditation Board.

"We're very excited about it. It's been a long process," said Ed Kalas, Riley County Health Department health educator and accreditation coordinator. "So many people — from current and former staff to our community partners — helped make this goal a reality."

Funding increases to State Formula, federal programs

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The final budget added \$900,000 to the State Formula.

Also, for state fiscal year 2021, the minimum amount a department would receive was changed to \$12,000. State Formula funds are relatively discretionary in their public health use and disease control and investigation is an allowed purpose.

KDHE has calculated what the new payments will be, and every health department will see an increase, said Dennis Kriesel, executive director of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD). The downside is the change applies as of state fiscal year 2021 (which will not start until July). No additional steps are needed, Kriesel added, as the process to receive the funds is the same as in the past. KALHD released a comparison showing the change in support, by health department, from the original calculation to the new calculation, which is available [here](#).

Kansas received approximately \$5.9 million from the federal government for its Coronavirus response. It was the first financial package passed at the federal level, before the \$2 trillion package was later assembled. KDHE has allocated 30 percent, or approximately \$1.7 million, from this amount as direct aid to health departments and tribal governments. This money is specific to local health departments' COVID-19 response and some progress report information is required. To see the allocations, access the list [here](#).

This month, KALHD conducted a COVID-19 financial needs survey and is currently working with KDHE and other public health partners on a funding request to the state Legislative Coordinating Council. While the exact amount of the request is unknown at this time, it

will be several million dollars based off preliminary review of the needs survey, Kriesel said.

Some federally-funded public health programs, administered by KDHE, have already announced funding increases:

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is receiving additional funds to cover the anticipated increase in caseload due to loss of employment and other income caused by COVID-19. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also has temporarily removed the physical presence requirement needed for initial enrollment/certification. [Click here](#) for more info.

HOPWA and Ryan White Part B

Kansas has received an additional \$88,288 to help Kansans living with HIV remain in stable housing during the COVID-19 crisis. Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) is a federally-funded program that helps with housing costs, utility payments, basic phone service as well as transportation to HIV-related appointments, to food pantries and mental health/substance abuse services. These services help clients move from short-term assistance to long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency.

Along with this \$88,288 comes added flexibility in how the funds are used (direct rental assistance, access to cleaning/disinfection supplies, food and transportation to their employment for example).

"Many of our clients have lost their jobs or had hours cut in response to COVID-19," said Debbie Guilbault, STI/HIV Prevention and Care section chief at KDHE. "The additional funding will allow us to help these clients maintain stability."

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES)

also added \$50,000 to the Ryan White Part B program, which assists Kansans living with HIV in accessing medical care and medications needed to manage their HIV infection. This additional funding will be used to educate both clients and providers on proper prevention methods, personal protective equipment (PPE) use, increased social media presence and COVID-19 testing. It will also allow contracted case management and clinical services agencies to purchase triage equipment (thermometers, etc.). Ryan White Part B serves approximately 1,700 people living with HIV in Kansas.

Here are some **upcoming COVID-19 grant funding opportunities** (details on how to apply will be on [KALHD's website](#)):

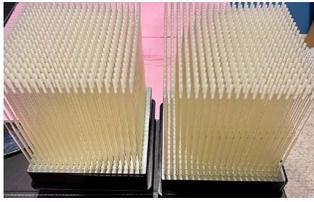
Sunflower Foundation

Applications for a second round of COVID-19 response funding from the Sunflower Foundation will be accepted in the coming weeks. KALHD will administer the grants, which will total \$100,000 across all funding rounds. Sunflower grant funding prioritizes counties with COVID-19 cases and rural areas. Non-KALHD members are eligible. Beyond the application, there are no reporting requirements.

Blue Cross Blue Shield

A contract has been signed between the Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Initiatives program and KALHD to administer COVID-19 response grants. A portion of the funding will support statewide efforts around volunteer work, with the bulk of the funding to go directly to local health departments. The direct-to-local portion is not set, as surplus statewide funding will be reallocated into the direct-to-local piece, but the direct payments will total at least \$135,000. Requirements and applications will be available soon.

3D swab printing helps fill shortage of COVID-19 test supplies



ABOVE: Completed 3D swabs await packaging and sterilization. BELOW: KDHE's 3D printers.



by Lisa Horn, Public Health Nurse Specialist, KDHE, Local Public Health

In Kansas, fulfilling the need for more COVID-19 test swabs is being met head on — thanks to a partnership between the KDHE Bureau of Oral Health, a western Kansas pediatrician and two northeast Kansas dentists.

3D printing involves converting digital blueprints into three-dimensional objects by layering additive materials on top of one another. To meet the supply needs for the COVID-19 response, organizations around the world have begun manufacturing masks, swabs and face shields using 3D printing technology.

Dr. Dayna Brinckman, director of the Bureau of Oral Health at KDHE, worked with pediatrician Dr. Kristie Clark (who

researched available software) and two Johnson County-based dentists, Dr. John Fales and Dr. Kory Kirkegaard, who have produced thousands of swabs for Kansans. Three 3D printers were purchased by Dr. Brinckman and are at full production enabling them to produce a steady production of nasopharyngeal swabs now that the dentists are returning to their practices.

“It was really a no brainer,” Dr. Brinckman said. “Within 10 days (of use), the machines completely paid for themselves.”

Each run takes 32 hours from start to finish. Once printing is completed, the swabs are washed in 99 percent alcohol, air dried, cured using ultraviolet light and heat, packaged, sterilized and couriered to the KDHE lab for distribution.

Campaign shares impact of public health with frontline stories

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campaign is seeking stories and experiences from the COVID-19 response.

Crawford and Butler County health departments and Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health have uploaded videos to the site.

Since the pandemic response began, Rebecca Adamson, Crawford County Health Department director and health officer, said she's seen residents in her community realize the importance of public health.

“Even many of my friends who work in different areas of health care were unaware of everything that has to take place during a disease investigation and outbreak of this magnitude,” Adamson said.

Jamie Downs, Butler County Health Department director and

health officer, agreed. Since the pandemic response began, her department went from 200 to more than 2,000 followers on Facebook.

“Most (people) had no idea what we did or why we do what we do,” Downs said.

She and several staff members created the video they posted on whypublichealthmatters.org.

“We are always saying public health is the best kept secret and we need to be more visible,” she said.

She hopes the video helps in that mission.

“I feel it is extremely important for the public to be aware of all that public health does to protect their health and safety, especially during this pandemic,” she said. “And I feel as though public health does not get enough recognition for all the hard work that we do.”

Morton County recognized by Farmworker Health program



Kansas Statewide Farmworker Health program employees presented the Champion of Farmworker Health Award to the Morton County Health Department March 13. Pictured from left to right are: Tina Guenther, Heather Driver, Amy Swanson, all with KDHE; and Marla Houtz, Pam Baldwin and Rhianna Shaw with Morton County.

Safe Kids receives donation



State Farm presented a check to Safe Kids Kansas March 3. The check will support key injury prevention initiatives. Pictured from left to right are: Cherie Sage, Judy Hafner, Lynette Hudson, Jamie Hornbaker and Brandon Aldridge.



COVID-19 social media toolkit now available

A new resource for local health departments to provide COVID-19 information on social media is now available. A multitude of social media graphics and infographics are available for any health department to use during the pandemic.

You must have a Google account to access it. Once you are logged into Gmail or another Google account, [click here](#) to get to the folder.

This toolkit is a coordinated effort between not only KDHE and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM), but also includes work from other state agencies. The toolkit will be continuously updated. Please follow KDHE, KDEM and other state agencies on various platforms and share messaging that way. Also, if you see a need for content that isn't available, please contact Lacey Kennett, Preparedness Public Information Officer, at lacey.kennett@ks.gov.

HERO invites healthcare workers to participate in COVID-19 research

The Healthcare Worker Exposure Response & Outcomes (HERO) Registry is a national research community for healthcare workers to share perspectives and problems they face in the COVID-19 pandemic front lines. HERO Registry participants will have the opportunity to participate in research studies to improve understanding of COVID-19 and to help keep healthcare workers safe and healthy.

The first study, the HERO-HCQ Trial, is inviting 15,000 healthcare workers from the registry to evaluate whether hydroxychloroquine can prevent COVID-19 infections. The University of Kansas Medical Center will participate in this nationwide clinical trial in preventing COVID-19 infection in exposed health care workers — anyone who works in a setting where people receive health care and are exposed to COVID-19.

Health care workers interested in participating in the hydroxychloroquine clinical trial at KU Medical Center may contact Shelby Almo at salmo@kumc.edu or (913) 574-3006. They also must register at heroesresearch.org.

Kansas Health Matters survey reveals how data is being used

Thanks to the 91 respondents who completed the recent Kansas Health Matters survey. Two-thirds of survey respondents reported that Kansas Health Matters website was their primary source of health data for Kansas.

The top three reasons for using KHM were: Grant-related efforts, community health needs/health assessments and community health improvement planning. Community health data, demographic data and health disparities data were the top ranked reasons for visiting Kansas Health Matters. More than 90 percent of respondents felt they found the resources they needed. Based on the survey feedback, KHM is making these updates:

- 1) Working to improve the “Contact Us” area of the website to better highlight the organizations and people involved in developing and maintaining Kansas Health Matters
- 2) Making the website more user-friendly and sharing examples of how peers use this site for their efforts. [Click here](#) to submit a promising practice.

Get the latest information from KHM by following its new [Facebook page](#).





Health disparity fact sheet available from Kansas Disability and Health program

The Kansas Disability and Health Program (DHP) has updated its fact sheet on health disparities between Kansans with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. The fact sheet compares data for 2015-2018 from the KDHE Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Kansans with disabilities continue to experience disparities in health and physical activity; coexisting health conditions such as diabetes and depression; and other health risk factors such as health insurance and rates of tobacco use.

Kansas DHP will mail the fact sheet with its annual communication packets in May or June. To receive a copy, contact **Kim Bruns** at kbruns@ku.edu. The fact sheet will also be available on the [DHP website](#).

Stoplight Healthy Living program offered to organizations serving people with IDD

Stoplight Healthy Living is an evidence-based, easy-to-follow health promotion program designed for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The program helps participants learn how to make healthier food and drink choices by assigning foods a stoplight color:

- **GREEN** foods are “anytime choices” or **GO** foods
- **YELLOW** foods are “sometime choices” or **SLOW** foods
- **RED** foods are “rarely choices” or **WHOA** foods.

The program also promotes regular exercise and increased water (vs. soft drink) consumption. Activities are fun and interactive and designed to reinforce the message of healthy food and drink choices. Stoplight Healthy Living is delivered through partnerships between the Kansas Disability and Health Program (DHP) and local organizations that serve people with IDD.

Kansas DHP trains staff to facilitate sessions, conducts the first session on site as part of the training, provides the curriculum and all program supplies at no charge and ensures ongoing technical assistance.

Organizations are asked to identify two facilitators, provide a meeting space, recruit up to six to eight participants, commit to delivering six sessions and participate in weekly technical assistance sessions. The estimated time commitment after training is approximately three hours per week for six weeks for each of the two facilitators.

Organizations interested in facilitating improved health for their clients through Stoplight to Healthy Living should contact **Kim Bruns**, program coordinator, at kbruns@ku.edu or (785) 864-0704.



Job Postings

Shawnee County

- [Epidemiologist](#)
- [RN – Nurse-Family Partnership](#)
 - [Social Worker – MSW](#)