

Public Health Matters



January - June, 2007

Points of interest:

- There have been no positive West Nile Virus mosquitoes yet this year in Mohave County.
- Remember to get your flu shot! Approximately 36,000 Americans die each year from influenza.
- What can you bury and dig up in 700 years - unchanged? PLASTIC! Americans throw away an average of 40 million plastic bottles every day. Please Recycle!
- Congratulations to Shelly Watson for winning the newsletter naming contest!

Inside this issue:

Smoke Free Arizona	2
Senior Center Improvements	2
Employee Service Awards	3
Medical Reserve Corps	3
Death Certificate Processing	3
Epidemiology Update	4
Pandemic Influenza Seminars	4

Havasu Stick'em

For the second year our Nursing Division participated in Havasu 'Stick'em at the Lake Havasu Aquatic Center. The event was sponsored by Lake Havasu City Rotary Clubs and the Kiwanis Club with a planning committee represented by Rotary, the Kiwanis, MCDPH, Lake Havasu City School District, the offices of Dr. Oyas and Dr. Diehl. This event is all about children's immunizations and includes participants from organizations around the community to make it fun as well. Participants this year included: Pet Partners, WACOG Headstart, MCDPH Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, and Havasu Family Eye Center. Blue Cross Blue Shield brought their Health Safari van which was used by Dr. Kelli Ward to conduct free sports physicals. The Arizona Sunwise Program was also there to distribute information about sun safety. Healthy Families and MCDPH distributed car seats. Pet Partners brought therapy dogs for the kids to hold or pet to help relieve some of the worry they had with getting their shots.



Children had to bring their shot records to gain access to the event. If they didn't have them, computer records were printed and checked to determine if vaccinations were needed. Entertainment was provided by Future Shock; younger members of the hip-hop dance group, Culture Shock. Participants also had free all day swim in the wave pool at the aquatic center. Approximately 800 children attended the event with 491 shots given to 189 children.

Drug Education and Prevention Program

The MCTUPP program recently expanded to include a new drug awareness and education program. This new program is possible by a grant from the BHS Legacy Foundation and collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Carol-Smith Carter moved into this program from the MCTUPP program and stated that, "My first focus is to develop community awareness on the impacts of drug use." In addition to recruiting doctors for the Healthcare Partnership program, Carol will offer professional training to school

nurses and other interested medical professionals. Carol states that methamphetamine is a big problem, but so are prescription drugs. According to Carol, "The trend right now for teens is abuse of over-the-counter and prescription drugs as well as inhaling products. Today's parents are overwhelmed. They aren't sure what they should be looking for." Carol hopes to reach parents at the workplace with the "Lunch 'n' Learn program". For more information on this program, contact Carol at 758-0722 ext. 2036.



“When we get a complaint, we do an inspection and if a violation is found, we issue a notice of violation to the person who owns, manages, operates or otherwise controls the public place or place of employment.”

**Rachel Patterson,
Environmental Health
Division Manager**

Smoke Free Arizona Act

The Smoke Free Arizona Act became effective on May 1, 2007. This initiative was passed by voters in the 2006 General Election. The law bans smoking in public places and places of employment. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) administers the grant and revised the delegation agreement with our Environmental Health Division to include this function in their duties. According to Rachel Patterson, Environmental Health Manager, “When we get a complaint, we will work with businesses to educate them on how they can comply with the law; however, civil penalties can be imposed.” Arizona statute states that fines can be \$100 - \$500. The amount fined is based on previous citations and efforts that are taken to prevent a violation.

According to Susan Williams, MCTUPP program coordinator, “Mohave County has the highest percentage of smokers in Arizona. We also have the highest rate of heart disease and lung cancer.” Frederick Malter, a University of Arizona Tobacco Education Prevention Program data analyst, calls Mohave County a

“smoker stronghold.” In 2005 Mohave County recorded 35% of residents as smokers compared to the state and Maricopa County at 19%. The state with the highest percentage of smokers in the country during 2005 was Kentucky at 29%. The MCTUPP program provides smoking cessation classes. Individuals who stay enrolled in the classes are eligible to receive reduced-price or free nicotine replacement materials. A toll-free statewide smokers’ hotline is available through the University of Arizona at 1-800-556-6222. Susan Williams can be reached at 753-0794 or toll-free at 1-888-454-4924

Individuals with questions regarding the Smoke-Free Arizona Act can go to the www.smokefreearizona.org website. This is also the best place to file a complaint or you can e-mail ADHS at nosmokingarizona@azdhs.gov or call 1-877-4AZNOSMOKE. Complaints are logged in the ADHS site and given to the appropriate county health department for investigation.

“The Golden Shores Community Center’s parking lot work was paid for through a \$30,000 grant from the state capacity building funds”

**Brad Bixler, Senior
Programs Manager**

Improvements at Senior Nutrition Centers

Thanks to grant funding, the senior centers received some much needed improvements. The Golden Shores Site received paved parking areas. Brad Bixler, Senior Programs Manager, stated, “When we got our funding, we knew we had to pave the dirt parking lot. The seniors on walkers had a hard time in the dirt lot and it turned into a small pond when it rained.” Dist. 3 Supervisor Buster Johnson allocated his full Community Development Block Grant funds to the Golden Shores facility. These funds will be used for replacing swamp coolers with air conditioning and heating, repairing the roof, replacing the

drop ceiling, and making the doors, food service window and restrooms ADA compliant.

The Kingman Senior Center received a new air conditioning unit. The Bullhead Senior Center received a double-decker over, steam table, and three compartment sink.



Golden Shores Senior Nutrition Site

Employee Service Awards

The following employees received their service awards from the Board of Supervisors for 15 or more years of service to the county.

15 years:

Nadja Bohnstedt, Registered Sanitarian, Environmental Health
Gaylynn Caban, Public Health Specialist, Nursing Division
Carol Matthews, Nutrition & Health Promotion Manager

20 years:

Diane Schreiber, Account Specialist, Administration



H.E.A.R.T. Becomes Medical Reserve Corps



In February 2007, the Mohave County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) unit was established through the Mohave County Dept of Public Health and the Health Emergency Assistance Response Team was merged into the MRC.

MRC teams have been established in Kingman, Bullhead and Lake Havasu and monthly meetings are held for each team. The meetings include a wide variety of training which is guided by the MRC core competency matrix from the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General.

Training this year has included:

- radio and emergency communication skills
- incident command system
- strategic national stockpile
- emergency response preparedness - IS22 Are You Ready?
- dealing with critical incident stress as emergency responders

Our MRC has volunteered over 800 hours so far this year!

***“Volunteers
Building Strong,
Healthy and
Prepared
Communities”
MRC slogan***

***“Count on Us...
Volunteers, Making
a Difference”
MCDPH slogan***

Changes for Death Certificate Processing

The Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Vital Records (OVR), is currently developing an on-line Electronic Death Registry System (EDRS). This new software will allow not only county health departments, but funeral homes, hospitals, medical examiners, nursing homes, and certifying physicians to interface with the statewide system. Currently, original death certificates are submitted to MCDPH and we issue certified copies to eligible applicants. The original death certificates are forwarded to OVR after two weeks and individuals have to contact them for certified copies - a process that can take weeks.

MCDPH has elected to participate in the new on-line system in order to continue to provide certified copies in a more timely manner. In addition, we will have access to all death certificates that are processed in Arizona and will be able to issue certified copies locally.

The on-line registration system is projected to be implemented with local health departments in late September, 2007. Full implementation with others using the system is projected for November or December.



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**We're on the web:
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Edited by Jennifer McNally



Epidemiology Update

News coverage this year from Maricopa County and nationally of quarantined individuals with tuberculosis has spurred numerous inquiries at the health department. Since the year 2000, 37 cases of active tuberculosis were reported in Mohave County residents. 65% of the cases were male and 35% were female. One case was an infant; the average age of all other cases was 51 years. Mohave County has seen just one case of multidrug resistant tuberculosis in Mohave County; the case was diagnosed and treated in 1997.



Multi-state outbreaks that have made national headlines have also impacted Mohave County:

- *E.coli* in bagged spinach - 2 cases investigated - not related
- *Salmonella* in peanut butter - 1 case
- *E. coli* in ground beef - 2 cases
- *Salmonella Heidelberg* in Arizona - 1 case
- *Salmonella Pomona* in turtles - 1 case

Other outbreak investigations in Mohave County have included:

- *Norovirus* in a long term care facility with 25 residents and 5 staff confirmed ill
- *Norovirus* in a high school with 18 (and possibly 26 more) confirmed ill
- *Norovirus* in an elementary school with 114 confirmed ill
- *E. coli* in a long term care facility with 5 residents and 5 staff confirmed ill

Pandemic Influenza Senior Leader Seminar

A pandemic flu seminar was held in Kingman, Bullhead, and Lake Havasu. The seminars included city and county elected officials as well as senior leaders from chambers, law enforcement, fire departments, schools, and governing agency staff. The seminar was conducted by CRA, Inc and focused on the processes Mohave County will be faced with in response to a pandemic influenza outbreak. Consideration was given to protective actions that may be recommended to safeguard public health including: issue and enforce isolation or quarantine, identification and tracking of exposed individuals, and closure of schools, public gatherings, and social events.

The seminar was designed to focus on the overall response and decision-making process for a public health emergency. The seminar was not a test of detailed response procedures; instead it emphasized initial communication and collaboration, emergency response coordination, and problem identification and resolution. Each seminar was designed to be an open, thought-provoking exchange of ideas to help the county and partner agencies evaluate procedural capabilities in response to a communicable infection outbreak.

