

Public Health Matters

Points of interest:

- Since May 2007 we have responded to 128 complaints regarding smoking in public places or places of employment. Compliance has been very good and very few notices of violations have been issued.
- 1,855 children were vaccinated in our back to school clinics in July and August. Additional clinic days and “after hours” clinics were held in our Nursing Division to accommodate the additional children seen during this time.
- For the second year, we won a Health Educators Media Makers Yearly (HEMMY) award. This year, the award was for our public education radio ads.

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July - September, 2007

Naegleria Fowleri Investigation

In mid-September, the Nursing Division and Epidemiologist investigated a case of human infection with a microscopic, water-borne amoeba known as *Naegleria fowleri*. The case proved fatal and dealt a devastating blow to the family of the afflicted teenager and the Lake Havasu Community in general.

Communications with experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, have helped shed some light on the life cycle of the amoeba, risk factors associated with this rare infection, and precautionary measures designed to lessen the risk of infection.

The Mohave County Department of Public Health has pledged its cooperation and continues to support a multi-jurisdictional approach to determine the best course of action in educating our citizens and visitors about the existence of this microorganism and its potential for disease.

Pet Code Ordinance

A new pet code ordinance (#2007-08) was recently passed by the Board of Supervisors. The newly passed ordinance allows the Environmental Health Division to permit and inspect pet shops, pet grooming parlors, kennels and shelters. It also strengthens sanitation regulations and provides improved enforcement authority. Regulations added to the pet code were requirements regarding co-mingling of animals, sanitization of grooming tools and construction requirements. The ordinance provides authority for Environmental Health to permit facilities that were not previously permitted and to follow-up on gross and insanitary violations in court and to assess civil penalties if needed.

“Flu” Man Group practices for our safety

The Nursing Division received hands-on training and practice in July for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Members of the nursing response team had the opportunity to practice donning and “doffing” protective equipment that would be worn to respond to outbreaks of highly infectious biological agents. Another training will be held in November for additional response team members who have been added since July.



“We realize people forget to stock up on emergency supplies. Nurse Dixie at the stores is a reminder to buy extra items when they’re on sale and put them in your emergency kits.”

**Patty Mead
Health Director**

Meet Nurse Dixie

For several years we have been providing information and encouraging our residents to prepare for emergencies through our public education radio ads. Many of our ads explain the need to have a 2 - 3 week supply of food, water, and supplies and to have an emergency supply kit. As we’ve seen with the devastating fires in California, you may need to evacuate your home and an emergency supply kit can be easily grabbed to get you out of the house quickly.

Unfortunately, we’ve found many people don’t have food supplies or an emergency kit. Reasons include “I don’t think about it when I’m at the store” and, “I don’t have the money to buy 3 weeks worth of food and supplies”. To help remind people, we’re introducing “Nurse Dixie”. We’re partnering with grocery stores in Mohave County to place Nurse Dixie cut outs at sale displays of non-perishable food to remind everyone to stock up. Look for Nurse Dixie in the near future! And remember, you don’t have to buy 3 weeks worth of food at a time, you can slowly build your supply kit.



New Medical Doctors for MCDPH

We’d like to welcome two new contract physicians to MCDPH; Dr. Cynthia Brennan and Dr. Anayochukwu Uche. Dr. Brennan is our new Medical Director. She has worked with our communicable disease investigation team for many years as a community provider. She now provides professional directorship for the CD and Immunization team as well as for the Reproductive Health Title X program. She will also participate as the physician member on our Board of Health. Dr. Uche is our new Tuberculosis Control Officer. Dr. Uche is an infectious disease specialist who provides consultation for Tuberculosis cases. He is a valued member of our public health team who work closely with him to provide extensive case management services for all active cases of TB.

“With level funding from our grant and increased operating costs, we had to come up with a solution to our WIC no-shows. The same day appointment system has exceeded our expectations.”

**Carol Matthews
Nutrition & Health
Promotion Manager**

WIC Goes to Same Day Appointments

With the encouragement of the Arizona State WIC Program, Mohave County WIC implemented a new system of scheduling that has proven to be a more efficient use of staff time and more convenient for clients. The previous scheduling system resulted in a 35 - 40% no-show rate, less staff productivity and a longer wait for services by new clients. Instead of setting an appointment three months in advance, WIC clients now call in the morning to set an appointment to be seen that day. Grant funding has not kept pace with increased operational costs which has resulted in less staff to serve more clients. Open access is one way that our program continues to meet the client needs with fewer staff. The new system of scheduling has proven very effective and resulted in an almost zero no-show rate.

Senior Programs no longer in transit business

In an effort to avoid duplication of transit services and due to limited funding for transit, Mohave County Senior Programs ended transportation in the three major cities September 1st, 2007 and rural transit was ended November 1st. To allow a smooth transition of services to the cities, county and city officials met and developed Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA's) by which the county provided State LTAF II (Local Transportation Assistance Funds) to the cities. The IGA's include assurances that seniors receive timely transit service to the senior centers and that the county will no longer provide transit. The county also donated vans to the communities of Golden Valley, Golden Shores and Dolan Springs in an effort to help them run their own transit systems. The Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG) will shift monies formerly given to Senior Programs to the rural non-profits to help them defray the costs of operations. Senior Programs has worked extensively with both the non-profits and WACOG to ensure the rural non-profits get all the tools necessary to begin independent operations by November 2007.

Mohave County will continue to apply for LTAF II funds and distribute funding to the cities and non-profits on an annual basis. Avoiding duplication of services was one of the main components of new transit legislation. The federal government developed a "United We Ride" program and by integrating systems into one resource, tax payers should see less waste and duplication.

Senior Programs has experienced rapid growth in the number of seniors who are homebound and requesting meals. For example, in Lake Havasu City home delivered meals increased from 125 meals per day to 165 meals per day (32%) in the last three months. We will now be able to focus our services on home delivered meals and congregate meals.

Practicing Our Response Capabilities

Our department was notified of a large water main break in Lake Havasu City that serves commercial and residential areas. Due to concerns with contamination issues and permitted establishments being without water, our Emergency Response Team (ERT) was alerted. The ERT determined that Environmental Health should send sanitarians to monitor the water situation at restaurants and other establishments open to the public. It's critical for these establishments to have running water in order to allow them to properly clean and for employee hand washing. Forty two establishments in the affected area were checked by our sanitarians with instructions given that if they ran out of water, they were to close. This incident provided good practice for the ERT in response to critical/emergency situations.

McTUPP Conference

In September, Mohave County Tobacco Use Prevention Program staff attended the 5th Annual Coalition For Smoke Free Arizona Conference. The keynote speaker at the conference was Dr. Richard Carmona, 17th Surgeon General of the United States. Dr. Carmona addressed the health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke. Other sessions during the conference included: Using Technology to Quit, Tips and Tools for Physicians, Media Literacy, Reaching Latino and Native American Communities, and Driving Consumer Demand.



Terri Holloway, Health Educator, Richard Carmona, U.S. Surgeon General, Lauren Weber, Health Educator

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**We're on the web:
www.HealthELinks.com**

Edited by Jennifer McNally



Epidemiology Update

Several disease outbreaks have occurred that have required Public Health Nursing response.

- An investigation was launched in the Bullhead City area after a group of visitors reported gastrointestinal symptoms between August 1st and August 18th following a family gathering. The investigation team worked with Arizona Department of Health Services and other public health departments to identify the cause of illness. Unfortunately, the requested laboratory specimens were unable to be obtained leading to an inconclusive investigation.
- Other gastrointestinal illness outbreaks were reported from a local health care facility. Norovirus was the suspected cause of illness based on epidemiological data collected during the investigation. Although the GI illnesses were reported around the same time period, the outbreaks were separate, unrelated events.
- In late September, MRSA cases were reported among students at a local school. The Nursing Division worked with school officials to ensure appropriate cleaning practices of school equipment and provided educational material to the school for distribution to students and parents. No additional cases have been reported from this facility. For additional information on MRSA, log on to www.HealthELinks.com

Joint Information Center Training for Mohave County Public Information Officers

The Mohave County Department of Public Health hosted a Joint Information Center (JIC) training conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard, National Strike Force, Public Information Assist Team. The training provided information on the National Response Team Joint Information Center Model that has been successfully used by the Coast Guard for more than ten years. This model is for Public Information Officer's (PIO's) to use for responses to incidents of any size. PIO's from law enforcement, fire departments, public health, schools, hospitals, tribes, and city government attended the training. The training provided information on what a JIC is and why it's formed; procedures for setting up a JIC; and definitions of JIC positions, roles and responsibilities. During a large-scale emergency, it will be crucial for agencies to work together to provide public information and a JIC is used to ensure consistent, accurate messages get out to the public.

Walk Away From Drugs

The Kingman, Bullhead City, and Lake Havasu City Meth Coalitions hosted a Walk Away From Drugs event in September. Community members rallied together to walk the streets of their cities and in doing so took a stand against drugs in their communities. Local businesses and clubs sponsored and actively supported the event. Participation was larger than expected with 1,500 participants in Kingman, 800 in Bullhead City, and 200 in Lake Havasu. For more information log on to www.arizonamethproject.org.