

Cowlitz County Health Department's Annual Report

2004



*The Cowlitz County Health
Department works to ensure the
health of its communities and environment
through health
promotion and disease prevention.*

Public Health...
always
working
for a
safer
and
healthier
Cowlitz County

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It is a pleasure to present the Cowlitz County Health Department 2004 Annual Report. This work is the product of many partnerships among people who are working to create a healthier and safer place to live in Cowlitz County. Our thanks go to them, as well as the dedicated and hard working health department staff.

Over the last several years, we have created and refined our work based on our strategic plan, public health performance standards, and the Community Report Card in concert with the state Public Health Improvement Plan. This work is not without challenges: maintaining a competent and well-trained workforce; keeping abreast with technology, managing resources efficiently, and responding rapidly to emerging issues. Despite these challenges, the staff is committed and passionate about creating a healthier community.

We look forward to continued success in making this an attractive, safe, and healthy place to live, work and play!

Sincerely,



Sue Grinnell, Director



Mimi L. Fields, MD, MPH, Health Officer

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH

Communicable Disease Prevention and Response

- Exchanged over 255,000 syringes and administered approximately 250 vaccinations in the needle exchange program. Rates of acute hepatitis B/C are declining.
- Formed Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Workgroup. Identified strategies to reduce rates of STIs.
- Worked with community physicians to assure about 78.5% of children age 19-35 months were up-to-date for recommended vaccinations as of summer 2004.
- ✓ Produced and distributed a county immunization coverage report to local and state partners (on web page).
- ✓ Distributed over \$593,000 of state-supplied vaccines for children to local physicians.
- ✓ Responded promptly to 565 reports of communicable diseases, preventing outbreaks and spread of disease.
- ✓ Conducted over 500 screening tests for TB, HIV, and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's).
- ✓ Coordinated the vaccination of more than 21,000 high-risk people against influenza.

Future work:

- Continue STI work plan, including physician education and involvement.
- Form Provider Immunization Advisory Group.

Environmental Health

- Began work with Food Advisory Committee and CSAC to voluntarily ban smoking in restaurants.
- Worked with Board of Health to voluntarily ban smoking in outdoor public parks.
- Educated and issued food worker cards to over 4,300 food handlers in partnership with Lower Columbia College and Washington State University; and administered 110 hepatitis A vaccinations to food service workers.
- ✓ Conducted inspections of 742 permanent and 281 temporary food service establishments; and issued 305 temporary food permits.
- ✓ Investigated 2 food borne illness outbreaks.
- ✓ Continued West Nile Virus surveillance and educational efforts. Received 40 dead bird reports, tested 25 birds with none positive for WNV.
- ✓ Conducted 1,026 water samples and system surveys
- ✓ Participated in arsenic study with Clark County and DOH.
- ✓ Conducted 68 inspections of permitted pools and spas at hotels/motels and apartment complexes to prevent injuries and unattended drownings related to recreation.
- ✓ Conducted Swimming Pool education and safety classes.
- ✓ Attended EPA's *Tools for Schools – Indoor Air Quality* class. Began working with area schools to implement program.

Future Work:

- Work with establishments to voluntarily ban smoking in indoor/outdoor public places.
- Utilize data and information from current programs to develop an Environmental Health Education Program.
- Continue to work with area schools using the *Tools for Schools* Program.
- Enhance work with partners to integrate healthy lifestyle choices into environmental health issues.

Legend: Completed future work from 2003 ✓ Completed in 2004 To be completed in 2005

PROMOTING HEALTH

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Conducted test of local Health Alert Network (HAN) and maintained rapid and efficient communications between the CCHD, health care providers, and other community members.
- Developed community partnerships and participated in the local emergency response planning.
- Actively participated in writing a regional Emergency Response/Bioterrorism plan; a SARS response plan; a Smallpox Response plan; and a county Public Health Bioterrorism and Emergency Response Plan.
- Completed emergency practice exercises with police, fire, American Red Cross, hospitals, Emergency Management, and many other community partners.
- Promoted staff training in emergency preparedness at work and at home.

Future Work:

- Continue developing community partnerships and continue participation in the local emergency response planning.
- Conduct a full-scale bioterrorism response exercise.
- Continue to test Health Alert Network biannually.

Child and Family Health

- Provided 2,214 home and office visits to families expecting or with newborns to offer education, parenting tips, linkages with medical care, and support.
- Distributed 2,388 Oral Health Packets containing toothbrushes and dental floss; provided training for agencies distributing packets; coordinated dental visits for eligible clients; and developed a low cost health and dental care brochure to distribute to the public.
- Provided 51 health and safety consultations to childcare providers. Emphasis and training has been on providing the University of Washington's curriculum for "Promoting First Relationships" for childcare providers.
- Provided 28 Work First evaluations for temporary aid to needy families (TANF). Provided linkage to Children with Special Health Care Needs Program, and Head Start Program.
- Conducted 192 home and office visits with families referred through the Early Intervention Program and enrolled 14 children in the Passport Program.
- Issued infant and booster car seats for community lending and use. Unintentional injuries or death to children in motor vehicle accidents remains very low.
- Completed four Public Health Nurses ear needling training. This is a technique used for stress reduction, substance abuse and obesity.

Future Work:

- Continue to provide linkages for improved access to medical, dental and social services.
- Coordinate and improve efficiency of all entities providing infant case management and maternal and infant home visits.
- Continue to provide age appropriate oral health kits and oral health videos for families.
- Expand outreach efforts to include behavioral education, environmental assessments, and physical activity/nutrition during home visits.

Health Education to Prevent or Reduce Chronic Diseases

- Continued the Basic Food Nutrition Education Program with focus on increasing healthy food choices and active lifestyles, with emphasis on reducing obesity.
- Worked with Parks and Recreation, Building and Planning, and cities to increase and make known walking trails.
- Produced and provided data, information, reports to numerous community groups on the problems resultant from poor behavioral choices (such as inactivity, tobacco use, unhealthy nutrition, unsafe sexual choices), which lead to chronic conditions.
- Began a Health Department employee wellness program with emphasis on healthy lifestyle choices and stress reduction.
- Applied for and received 50k Community Prevention Planning Grant.
- Provided 383 Basic Food Nutrition Program direct contacts through one on one counseling and classroom education with focus on nutrition and physical activity.

Future Work:

- Develop a countywide nutrition and physical activity plan.
- Work with Board of Health to develop a Wellness Program for County employees.
- Increase safe areas for physical activity by continuing work with partners.

BUILDING STABILITY

Agency Development:

- Implemented health education phone line.
- Consolidated 333 databases into 18.
- Secured grants to augment decreasing local, state and federal funds.
- Developed web site with up-to-date disease information, disease reporting requirements, community survey results, specific guidance on what to do with dead birds or bats (e.g.), and other current health information.
- ✓ Continue implementing strategic plan to address the Washington State Department of Health Public Health Standards.
- ✓ Purchased a new billing and data tracking system to allow for greater accountability of activities and funds
- ✓ Developed protocols for various Health Department programs.

Future Work:

- Continue work on development of strong data structure systems.
- Continue to identify creative funding sources.
- Increase abilities to utilize internal billing systems to identify funding efficiencies.
- Use data driven decisions to formulate policies, priorities and budget.

PARTNERSHIPS

Cowlitz County Government and City Governments

Especially: Cities of Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview, Toutle and Woodland; Cowlitz County Departments of Administrative Services, Auditor, Building and Planning, Corrections, Emergency Management, GIS, Human Services, Juvenile, Maintenance, Motor Pool, and Public Works; Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments; Kelso-Longview Parks and Recreation.

Cowlitz County Health Providers

Especially: Child and Adolescent Clinic; Family Health Center; Kaiser Permanente; Kirkpatrick Family Care; Longview Radiology; Peace Health; Pediatric Clinic; Planned Parenthood of Western Washington; St. John Medical Center; including all providers of medical, dental, laboratory, mental health, pharmacy, substance abuse, and veterinary services.

Cowlitz County Agencies and Coalitions

Especially: Breastfeeding Coalition; Catholic Community Services; Child Care Resource and Referral; Community Action Council; Community Health Partnership; Community House on Broadway; Cowlitz HIV/AIDS Services; Emergency Support Shelter; Ethnic Support Council; FISH; Humane Society; Kelso and Longview Housing Authorities; KLTV, Ministerial Association; Parents Place; Pathways 2020; Progress Center; Radio Stations of KBAM; KEDO, KLYK; KJVH; KLOG; KUKN and KZOE; Safe Kids Coalition; Substance Abuse Coalition; The Daily News; United Way; Woodland Community Center; Youth and Family Link; churches and faith-based groups.

Educational Institutions

Especially: Lower Columbia College; Lower Columbia Head Start/ECEAP; School Districts of Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview, Toutle, and Woodland; Washington State University - Vancouver; and the University of Washington, Educational Service District 112.

Other Governments

Especially Counties of Clark, Lewis, Pacific, Thurston and Wahkiakum; Cowlitz Tribe; Washington State Departments of Health, Social and Health Services, and Ecology. St. James Child Care Center.

2004 Cowlitz County Board of Health

Bill Lehning
District No. 1

George Raiter
District No. 2

Jeff Rasmussen
District No. 3

2005 Cowlitz County Board of Health

Kathleen A. Johnson
District No. 1

George Raiter
District No. 2

Jeff Rasmussen
District No. 3