



COWLITZ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S

# 2006 ANNUAL REPORT

*Public Health...Always working for a safer and healthier Cowlitz County*

It is with great pride that we present the fourth annual Cowlitz County Health Department Report. This report, written each spring, provides us an excellent opportunity to evaluate our efforts and celebrate our successes of 2006. Many of our accomplishments reflect support and contributions from our local partners that help us sustain a system of Public Health services and functions county-wide.

We continue to **Move FORWARD** to perform our jobs better with improved technology to achieve better outcomes for the community. The Health Department staff recognizes the need for a responsive and cost effective public health system. We have established many standards to track and measure our progress. We feel it is important that we:

- Communicate public health messages clearly, simply, and promptly to county residents
- Provide the Board of Health/Commissioners and other decision makers with unbiased, science-based, best practice driven data and information
- Establish a network of health, community service providers, business, education, and citizens to help form community priorities and actions
- Develop systems and programs based on assessed needs and wants of the community
- Develop and strengthen our ability to respond to the unexpected

We have a plan, goals, and measurable outcomes that we continue to work towards. It is only with your help and support as community partners that we are able to promote health and protect against diseases and risks in Cowlitz County. We encourage you to visit our website at [www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health](http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health) for more information.

To your health!

Carlos Carreon, L.I.C.S.W., B.C.P.  
Director

Mimi L. Fields, MD, MPH,  
Health Officer

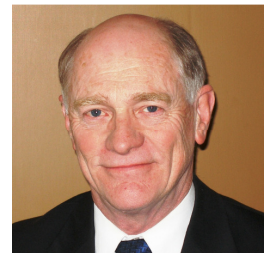
### **2006 BOARD OF HEALTH** **Per RCW 70.05.030 Cowlitz County Board of County Commissioners serve as the Board of Health**

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) shall constitute the local board of health. Each local board of health shall have supervision over all matters pertaining to the preservation of the life and health of the people within its jurisdiction and shall:

- (1) Enforce through the local health officer or the administrative officer appointed under RCW 70.05.040, if any, the public health statutes of the state and rules promulgated by the state board of health and the secretary of health;
- (2) Supervise the maintenance of all health and sanitary measures for the protection of the public health within its jurisdiction;
- (3) Enact such local rules and regulations as are necessary in order to preserve, promote and improve the public health and provide for the enforcement thereof;
- (4) Provide for the control and prevention of any dangerous, contagious or infectious disease within the jurisdiction of the local health department;
- (5) Provide for the prevention, control and abatement of nuisances detrimental to the public health;
- (6) Make such reports to the state board of health through the local health officer or the administrative officer as the state board of health may require; and
- (7) Establish fee schedules for issuing or renewing licenses or permits or for such other services as are authorized by the law and the rules of the state board of health: PROVIDED, That such fees for services shall not exceed the actual cost of providing any such services.



Commissioner Kathleen Johnson  
District No. 1



Commissioner George Raiter  
District No. 2



Commissioner Jeff Rasmussen  
District No. 3

### **Mission Statement**

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

# Priority #1: PROMOTE THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY

## *Eat Smart, Play Hard, Breathe Free*

### **WELLNESS – COMMUNITY**

- ✓ Produced and provided data, information, and reports to community groups on behavioral choices (physical inactivity, tobacco use, poor nutrition, unsafe sexual choices) that lead to chronic conditions.
- ✓ Sponsored a Revenue Replacement Workshop to address revenue loss in Cowlitz County schools due to the implementation of the new nutritional and physical activity guidelines.
- ✓ Co-sponsored a Feet First Workshop with the Healthy Lifestyles Coalition at the Exposition Center to create an active community environment and promote pedestrian and bicycling opportunities.
- ✓ Provided over Basic Food Nutrition Education Program counseling and classroom education sessions with focus on nutrition and physical activity.
- ✓ With Pathways 2020 lead the *Cowlitz on the Move* Healthy Lifestyle Coalition.
- ✓ Partnered with Pathways 2020 to complete 975 Quality of Life surveys in Cowlitz County.

### **TOBACCO FREE COWLITZ COUNTY**

- ✓ Partnered with Healthy Lifestyles Coalition to establish a Clean Air goal in their strategic plan.
- ✓ Partnered with ESD 112 and local school districts to change Tobacco, Prevention and Control policies through the Minor in Possession or Community Diversion Program.
- ✓ Distributed Quit Line cards, tobacco prevention brochures and literature to individuals and agencies throughout the county on tobacco prevention and control.
- ✓ Collaborated with local businesses to provide cessation resources and promote Tobacco Free establishments.
- ✓ Conducted follow-up on 39 complaints regarding Initiative 901 enforcements.

### **WELLNESS - CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH**

- ✓ Provided 908 home and office visits with families expecting or with newborns to offer education, parenting tips, linkages with medical care and support.
- ✓ Provided 59 health and safety consultations to area childcare providers.
- ✓ Conducted 46 home visits with high-risk families referred from DSHS – Child Protective Services.
- ✓ Provided 10 Work First evaluations for temporary aid to needy families (TANF), children with special health care needs, Head Start, and special needs populations.
- ✓ Participated in local health fairs to promote healthy lifestyles.
- ✓ Participated in the Castle Rock Care Coalition to improve the health of the City of Castle Rock.

### **ORAL HEALTH**

- ✓ Facilitated the local Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Healthy Smiles Oral Health Coalition.
- ✓ Distributed 2,498 Oral Health Packets containing toothbrushes, dental floss, and oral health information to various community agencies.
- ✓ Coordinated appointments for the local UW dental clinic. Collaboration with Community Health Partners offering dental care to mothers and children. In 2006, 149 clients were served.
- ✓ Participated in an adult dental planning group, which works to secure funding and services for the uninsured.

### **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

- ✓ Provided assistance to over 800 individuals since September 2005, through a Community Health Advocate to obtain Medicaid coupons, Basic Health Plan, and transportation assistance for clients.
- ✓ Continued operation of the Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic in partnership with Community Health Partners (CHP).
- ✓ Provide linkages for improved access to care through the Free Clinic where 1,300 patients have been seen to date since November 2005.

## **Priority #2: PROTECT THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY**

### *Promoting Health, Preventing Disease*

#### **PREVENTING COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

- ✓ Responded promptly to 1,016 reports of communicable diseases and 4 outbreaks. 32% increase in the number of cases from 2005.
- ✓ Conducted over 1,100 screening tests for TB, HIV, and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's). This is a 67% increase in the number of tests from 2005.
- ✓ Distributed over \$769,000 of state-supplied vaccines for children to local physicians.
- ✓ Ensured the vaccination of approximately 20,000 high-risk people against influenza.
- ✓ Conducted a successful influenza immunization program for elementary school using special grant funds - 150 children were immunized.
- ✓ Observed a 36% increase in Sexually Transmitted Infections. Initiated an intensive testing and treatment program at Cowlitz County Jail.
- ✓ Exchanged over 245,700 syringes and administered approximately 200 vaccinations in the needle exchange program. There were 25% fewer syringes distributed in 2006 compared to 2005.
- ✓ Seventy-one HIV/AIDS clients received case management services

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

- ✓ Coordinated the development of the Cowlitz County Health Care Coalition. Developed a Major Medical Response Guide in collaboration with local Cowlitz Emergency Responders and Health Care Partners.
- ✓ Participated in Region IV Governing Council, Hospital and Health Care Partners and Steering committees.
- ✓ Provided staff training in National Incident Management System and Incident Command System curriculum to bring County into compliance with State and Federal requirements.
- ✓ Provided risk communication training to all staff.
- ✓ Collaborated with local partners in responding to communicable disease outbreaks.
- ✓ Secured and trained staff on equipment that supports public health emergency preparedness and response program.
- ✓ Conducted semiannual tests of the local Health Alert Network (HAN) system to ensure rapid and efficient communications between the Health Department, health care providers, and other community agencies.

## **Priority #2: PROTECT THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

#### **Food Safety – assure safe food where you shop & eat.**

- ✓ We assured food handlers received education - 5563 Food Handlers Cards issued; 6 PIC trainings for 118 persons.
- ✓ We partnered with industry – Food Advisory Committee.
- ✓ We conducted more than 1,700 food facility inspections and responded to more than 200 complaints to reduce risk of foodborne illness.
- ✓ We reviewed 32 food facility plans.
- ✓ We conducted 100 food service tobacco surveys.

#### **Drinking Water Safety - Assure Safe Drinking Water.**

- ✓ We conducted survey of 18 public water systems to help identify high risk problems with water systems.
- ✓ We processed 801 water samples.
- ✓ We mapped 52 small public water systems.
- ✓ We processed 52 water adequacy requests for building permits.

#### **Pool / Spa Safety – Assure Safe & Healthy Recreation**

- ✓ Conducted 47 inspections.
- ✓ Prepared facilities for new safety intervention: pool main drains and safety shutoffs.

#### **Zoonotic Diseases – Reduce Risk of Disease**

- ✓ West Nile Virus – responded to 61 dead bird reports; of which 23 were suitable and submitted for testing; documented first positive WNV bird.
- ✓ Rabies Control - responded to more than 180 animal bites.

#### **Methamphetamine Labs – Protect From Chemicals**

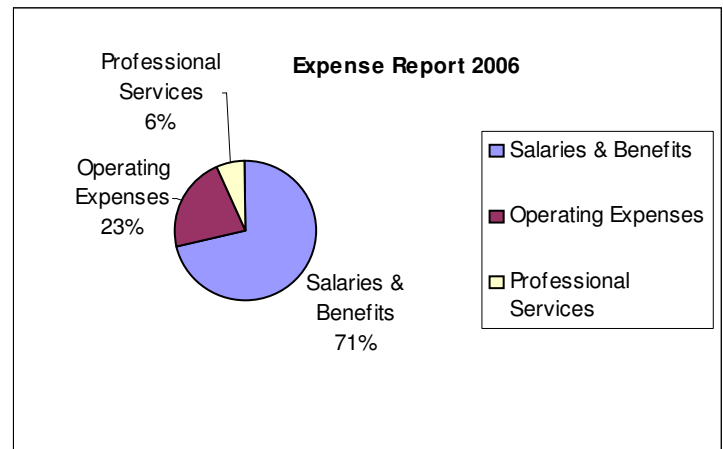
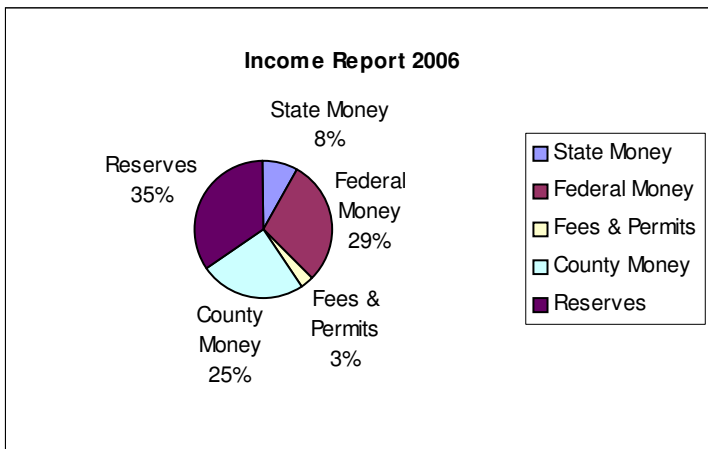
- ✓ Responded to 7 reports, determined 2 sites unfit for occupancy, released 2 sites for reuse.

## Priority #3: QUALITY AND EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

In 2006, we:

- ✓ Implemented automated phone line with over 60 recorded health messages.
- ✓ Expanded health department web page.
- ✓ Developed over 60 medical and operational policies and protocols for the Health Department.
- ✓ Continued strategic planning, reviewed assessment data, county needs and developed new goals for 2006-2008.
- ✓ Developed and instituted performance measures for health department programs.
- ✓ Participated in the Washington State Standards review; Evaluators identified many pieces of exemplary practices.
- ✓ Issued 4,844 birth certificates and 4,567 death certificates.
- ✓ Became a pilot site for the new Washington State Learning Management System, an online educational training system.
- ✓ Participated in *Office Lean* trainings – a process to review processes for inefficiencies to make improvements in providing quality customer service.

The Cowlitz County Health Department serves a population of over 98,000 residents with 28 employees providing essential programs to help protect and improve the health of our community. Revenues that support these primary functions come from Federal, State, and local funding. Revenues from the County and local fees are flexible money that cover the balance of operating expenses for the Health Department. The steady decline of County revenue for core public health functions, which began in 1999, continued in 2006, has prompted the reduction as well as elimination of necessary public health programs and support services.



# **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; Lower Columbia Mental Health; 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 Health Partners; Community House on Broadway; Cowlitz HIV/AIDS Services; Cowlitz Substance Abuse Coalition; Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Healthy Smiles Oral Health Coalition; Emergency Support Shelter; Ethnic Support Council; FISH; Food Advisory Committee; Healthy Lifestyles Coalition; Humane Society Cowlitz County; Kelso and Longview Housing Authorities; KLTV, Lower Columbia Community Action Council; Ministerial Association; Parents Place; Pathways 2020; Progress Center; Public Health Advisory Committee; Radio Stations of KBAM; KEDO, KLYK; KJVH; KLOG; KUKN and KZOE; Safe Kids Coalition; Tobacco Free 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; Oregon Health Sciences University; School Districts of Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview, Toutle, and Woodland; Washington State University - Vancouver; and the University of Washington, Educational Service District 112 Youth Workforce Program.*

## **Other Governments**

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