
Advancements in Emergency Preparedness

Since 2002, public health agencies have been preparing for threats such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks and pandemics. Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) has made great strides, along with help from our partners in the community, towards the goal of keeping our community safe.

Tremendous growth occurred in 2008 on the path to becoming better prepared.

Representatives from every community we serve have been working with our staff to identify and manage 36 Points of Dispensing across the county. A Point of Dispensing (POD) is a location where medications or vaccines will be distributed during a public health emergency such as a disease outbreak or bioterrorist attack. It will be opened if many people have been exposed to an infection that may make them sick and disease from that infection can be prevented by antibiotics or a vaccine. Coordinating a community POD is a significant effort that involves years of planning, recruiting volunteers and exercising plans.

Because an informed public is better able to cope with emergencies, in 2008 HCPH launched an awareness campaign, Be Prepared, Be Aware, Volunteer, that is aimed at educating residents about emergency preparedness plans. An informational flyer was mailed to all households within our jurisdiction. This flyer also asked residents to sign-up to volunteer during a public health emergency. To date, HCPH has more than 600 volunteers willing to assist in staffing PODs or other emergencies.

During the September blackout, HCPH and several partners opened a shelter for people with special medical needs. The shelter was staffed with both medically-trained and non-medically trained personnel 24 hours a day for five days.

HCPH was instrumental in the creation of Preparedness Information Network (PIN), a partnership among community organizations, emergency responders and public health agencies throughout Southwest Ohio. PIN is a growing network of organizations that have voluntarily agreed to serve as a channel of information in the event of a disaster or public health emergency to vulnerable, special needs and at-risk populations who may not otherwise be reached by mainstream media.

While remarkable improvement has been made in emergency preparedness efforts, HCPH will work in 2009 to further engage our community as we strive to prepare for potential public health emergencies.
Prevent

**TB Control**
The Hamilton County Commissioners contracted with HCPH for Tuberculosis (TB) Control activities on May 1, 2008. The TB Control Unit was incorporated with the communicable disease investigation program to form the new division of Disease Prevention. TB disease was once the leading cause of death in the United States. TB bacteria – particularly dangerous for children and persons infected with HIV – usually attack the lungs and if not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal. Tuberculosis is still a problem and demands attention from the public health community. This integration matches HCPH's mission and provides more effective and efficient services to treat and prevent TB in Hamilton County.

**Smoke Free Ohio**
The Environmental Health staff continue to be leaders in enforcing Ohio’s Smoke Free Workplace Law. Investigations into Smoke Free Ohio complaints, which must be completed within 10 days of receipt from the Ohio Department of Health, totaled 470 during 2008. Establishments including bars, restaurants and businesses receive an inspection at a time when there is regular activity in the facility. This means our health inspectors many times work late into the night to complete investigations. This law is effective at protecting workers from the known health hazards associated with exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke – a chemical in which there is no safe level of exposure. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, workers exposed to secondhand smoke are 34 percent more likely to get lung cancer.

The Environmental Health Division is committed to making this program a success. In fact, HCPH has issued the greatest number of $2,500 level fines in the entire state. Statewide statistics have shown HCPH to be the most efficient Smoke Free program in Ohio as evidenced by the low percentage of open investigations and the high percentage of violations issued.

**Bed Bug School Policy**
With the increasing presence of bed bugs on both a national and local level, Hamilton County Public Health created guidance to assist schools with this growing problem. Although they are unpleasant, bed bugs are not known to carry or transmit diseases according to public health scientific evidence. Bed bugs have made their presence known and they are an issue we need to deal with as a community. School guidance for handling bed bugs encourages two of the best tools we can use: prevention and controlling the spread of bed bugs.

**Promote**

**Odor Complaint Hotline**
Through HCPH’s work with the community of Colerain Township, Rumpke and the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, a 24-hour odor complaint hotline was established to respond to odor complaints from the operation of Rumpke Sanitary Landfill. The odor hotline has clarified response procedures to increase the flow of information to interested citizens and to ensure a more timely response to possible odor issues.

The hotline provides enhanced assessment of odors and enables us to better target solutions to prevent recurrent odors. HCPH’s focus however, is not just to respond and document reported odors, but to minimize their offsite occurrence as much as possible. Staff from the Waste Management Division monitors this compliance with unannounced routine inspections, as well as weekend, early morning and evening hour inspections. HCPH continues to work with Rumpke personnel to identify measures to minimize the occurrence of offsite odors as much as possible.
CDC Grant
For the first time, HCPH was awarded a grant directly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The *Strategic Alliances for Health* is a new program focused on training local communities to create policy and environmental changes that address lifestyle behaviors linked to some of the leading chronic diseases impacting the nation’s health. Evidence shows that being physically active regularly, eating a healthy diet, and avoiding tobacco use and exposure can help people prevent and manage chronic diseases.

The program is part of a larger $25 million CDC investment in local community efforts to reduce the burden of chronic diseases across the nation. HCPH health educators will collaborate with leaders and community members in Lockland, Woodlawn and Lincoln Heights to develop specific strategies that promote physical activity and healthy eating and reduce tobacco use and exposure – all lifestyle behaviors associated with obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Protect

Federal Clean Water Act
The Water Quality Division continues to work with the Hamilton County Storm Water District to help carry out the requirements mandated by the Federal Clean Water Act including locating, mapping and sampling all the storm water discharge points within Hamilton County. In 2008, a total of 1,892 outfalls were visited and 250 samples were collected and analyzed. This project protects the health of the streams and rivers by targeting storm water discharges that contain pollution exceeding water quality standards set by the State of Ohio. Staff then investigates any possible pollution sources and coordinates enforcement and clean-up.

Blackout
With widespread power outages from remnants of Hurricane Ike during September, HCPH worked swiftly and diligently to protect people from the dangers of food-borne illnesses by stressing proper handling of food during power outages. Public health sanitarians ensured the safety of food at restaurants and other food service facilities. Staff from across all divisions answered calls to the Food Safety Hotline and advised residents and food service facilities how to properly handle food. We also asked residents to use caution when patronizing restaurants that appeared to be operating without power and to contact us if they saw a restaurant that was without power and open for business.

Lead Poisoning Prevention
Through the Nursing Division’s participation with the Hamilton County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Collaborative, we provided 150 childhood blood lead level screening tests. Lead poisoning is invisible and 100 percent preventable. A Public Health Nurse accompanies a certified lead risk assessor from the Waste Management division to homes where a child has been identified as having a high blood lead level to provide education about the health risks associated with lead exposure and tips on how to limit the effects of lead exposure, including hand hygiene, cleaning and nutritional information.

Itch Mite Identification
The divisions of Environmental Health, Waste Management, Epidemiology and Assessment and Disease Prevention worked together in August to identify *Pyemotes herfsi*, otherwise called “itch mites,” as the source of an outbreak of skin rashes in the eastern Hamilton County suburbs. HCPH was quick to warn about occurrences of these bites from microscopic mites and inform the community that they are not known to transmit disease in humans.

Community Health Reviews
The Division of Epidemiology and Assessment worked with the Public Affairs Specialist to complete Community Health Reviews for each of the 43 jurisdictions served by HCPH. These reports provide a better idea of the public health issues that impact each community including births and deaths, injury occurrences and communicable diseases.
Hamilton County Public Health Mission
The purpose of Hamilton County Public Health is to work with the community to protect the public health and environment. By providing education, inspections, health care coordination and data analysis we strive to assure that the citizens of Hamilton County are safe from disease, injury and contamination.

Hamilton County Public Health Vision
Hamilton County Public Health will revolutionize the way it provides services to a changing community. We will provide a network of information to be used as a tool to improve public health. Communities will develop new and innovative ways to solve problems. Together we will be uniquely equipped to face the challenges of tomorrow and provide an environment in which we will be proud to live and work.

Our Core Values
Our service will be prompt, reliable and professional. Our staff will be caring and responsible.

District Advisory Council
Members include presidents of township boards of trustees, village mayors and the President of the Board of County Commissioners. Members are required by law to meet annually in March. They select four of the five members of the Board of Health, make recommendations to the Board of Health and authorize city contractual agreements.

Chairman Joe Sykes
Secretary John Waksmundski

Licensing Council
The Licensing Council provides input on rules and fees regarding business entities licensed by the Hamilton County Board of Health. It meets at least annually and appoints one member to the Board of Health.

Chairperson of Licensing Council Larry Riddle
Vice Chairperson Jim Brett
Secretary Bill Mowery

Board of Health
The Board of Health is the governing body of Hamilton County Public Health. It has the authority to adopt rules and regulations which have the same status as law, enact policies within the jurisdiction of HCPH and hire a health commissioner. Meetings are held at the HCPH office the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

President Mark Rippe
Vice President Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.
Board Members Kenneth Amend, M.D.
Jim Brett
Thomas Chatham

Health Commissioner and Staff
Health Commissioner Timothy Ingram
Assistant Health Commissioner Kathy Lordo, Department of Community Health Services

Divisions
Disease Prevention Pat Allingham, Director
Environmental Health Greg Kesterman, Director
Health Promotion and Education Stacy Wegley, Director
Nursing Mary Sacco, Director
Plumbing Lisa Humble, Director
Waste Management Chuck DeJonckheere, Director
Water Quality Chris Griffith, Director

Epidemiology and Assessment
- Birth Records Recorded: 6,053
- Birth Records Issued: 14,036
- Death Records Recorded: 4,785
- Death Records Issued: 28,250
- Communicable Diseases Reported: 803
- Confirmed Cases of Tuberculosis: 13
- Directly Observed Therapy Visits: 2,446

Environmental Health
- Food Inspections: 6,678
- FSAP – Individuals Trained: 257
- FSAP – Facilities Participating: 45
- Jail Inspections: 19
- Manufactured Home Park & Camp Inspections: 135
- Marina Inspections: 3
- Motel Inspections: 130
- Housing Inspections: 1,184
- Nuisance Complaint Inspections: 947
- Rabies Control Cat & Dog Bites: 403
- School Inspections: 347
- Swimming Pool/Spa Inspections: 1,200
- Smoke Free Ohio Inspections: 470

Nursing
- BCMH Contacts: 1,555
- IAP Home Visits: 26
- Immunizations Given at Clinics: 3,726
- Flu Shots Given: 178
- Patients Visiting Regular Clinics: 1,738
- Public Health Nursing Referrals: 30
- Tuberculosis Screenings: 114

Plumbing
- Backflow Surveys: 291
- Backflow Inspections: 431
- Testable Backflow Devices: 8,782
- Plumbing Inspections: 8,909
- Plumbing Investigations: 345
- Plumbing Permits Issued: 3,652

Health Promotion and Education
- Active for Life Participants: 89
- Chair Volleyball Participants: 369
- Fall Prevention Presentation Attendees: 1,232
- You Hold the Key Participants: 10,581
- Mocktail Event Participants: 825
- Walk Club Participants: 234
- School Wellness Teams: 5

Water Quality
- Mechanical STS Inspections: 10,782
- Mechanical STS Re-inspections: 2,408
- STS New Construction/Repair Reviews: 130
- Household Sewage Code Variances: 20
- Installer/Repairer Registrations: 120
- Non-mechanical STS Inspections: 1,223
- Non-mechanical STS Re-inspections: 107
- STS Installation Inspections: 443
- Private Water Inspections: 87
- Semi-public STS Inspections: 473
- Semi-public STS Re-inspections: 105
- Septic Hauler Registrations: 30
- STS Permit to Install: 117
- Subdivision Reviews: 26

Waste Management
- Construction and Demolition Debris Landfills: 182
- Compost Site Inspections: 99
- Infectious Waste Facility Inspections: 199
- Lead Risk Assessments: 9
- Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Inspections: 136
- Open Dumping Investigations: 133
- Environmental Sampling at Waste Facilities: 41
- Solid Waste Nuisance Inspections: 645
- Tire Site Inspections: 24
- Tattoo/Piercing Facility Inspections: 46

Total Revenues & Resources: $9,392,737

Total Expenditures: $8,458,314
Frequently Requested Information

Hamilton County Public Health Online
On the HCPH Web site, you can review your favorite restaurant’s latest inspection report; find an immunization clinic; search for a plumbing contractor or septic system installer/repairer; file a nuisance complaint; request a birth or death certificate; and much more. Visit us online at www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org.

Main Number……………………………………..(513) 946-7800
Fax Number……………………………………….……………….(513) 946-7890

Departments

Administration………………………………………..(513) 946-7822

Department of Community Health Services
Division of Disease Prevention……………………………..(513) 946-7809
Division of Epidemiology and Assessment……..(513) 946-7924
Office of Vital Statistics………………..(513) 946-7932
Division of Health Promotion and Education…..(513) 946-7811
Division of Nursing………………………………………..(513) 946-7881

Department of Environmental Health Services
Division of Environmental Health……………………………..(513) 946-7831
Division of Plumbing………………………………………..(513) 946-7851
Division of Waste Management……………………………..(513) 946-7875
Division of Water Quality………………………………………..(513) 946-7866

Other Important Phone Numbers and Web sites

Environmental Health Information Line………………….(513) 946-7832
  Report High Mosquito Activity
  Report an Animal Bite

File a Nuisance Complaint……………………………..(513) 946-7800
  www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org

Get a Plumbing Permit……………………………..(513) 946-7852
Get a Plumbing Permit……………………………..(513) 946-7000
Report Storm Water Pollution……………………………..(513) 946-7000
Find a Flu Shot (seasonal)……………………………..(513) 931-SHOT (7468)
  www.931SHOT.org

Hamilton County Tobacco-Free Partnership……….www.tobaccofreehamiltoncounty.org
Hamilton County Fall Prevention Task Force……….www.fallpreventiontaskforce.org