In public health, you can usually review the past year simply by tracking the seasonal maladies we deal with. For instance, in the winter, we’re talking flu. In late summer, mosquitoes and West Nile Virus are hot topics. And of course, there are the usual outbreaks that rear up each year as schools convene at the end of the summer.

However, much of what occurs in public health never makes it to the public forum. For instance, as we review 2014, perhaps you recall hearing of a mumps outbreak that originated in Columbus at The Ohio State University. In and of itself, mumps is not particularly newsworthy outside of being a somewhat rare disease in this day and age. However, from a public health perspective, immunization and the spread of disease were at the core of this outbreak. Hamilton County is home to hundreds of Ohio State students and those coming home for spring break may possibly be bringing this unwanted disease with them. Our teams tracked the outbreak closely in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Health. Did we have appropriate vaccine on hand? Were the physicians in our County informed that the disease may find its way into their offices? These questions, among many others, required considerable effort from our epidemiology and disease prevention teams.

Later in the spring, oil spilled from a transport pipe at the Oak Glen Nature Preserve in Colerain Township. While the majority of the news focused on damage to the Preserve and potential contamination of nearby water sources, our team of Emergency Preparedness and Environmental Health experts jumped into action to ensure that residents maintained access to a safe drinking water supply and that the air they were breathing was free of potentially dangerous fumes.

Hoarding and its effects on health and safety is an ongoing issue in public health – one that is not often visible to the public. Although we encounter hoarding frequently, our protocol has been to join forces with appropriate agencies to make sure that not only the immediate health and safety needs of the residents are addressed, but that they also receive attention from mental health professionals to deal with the root of the problem.

Last spring, when residents of a nursing home became ill with gastrointestinal distress, once again our Epidemiology and Environmental Health teams sprang into action to identify the source of the illness. They worked with nursing home staff to separate ill residents and provided the direction to effectively clean the facility to eliminate infectious agents.

Mosquitoes are a summer problem. Not only are they a nuisance, but they also carry and transmit disease, particularly West Nile Virus. Hamilton County Public Health sanitarians spend considerable time during summer months trapping mosquitoes and submitting them to a lab for testing. When we find a positive “pool” of the pests, we make sure the public knows of its location and is apprised of the best ways to avoid bites. In one neighborhood, sanitarians canvassed door-to-door to make certain every resident in proximity to the infected pool knew of its whereabouts and how to protect themselves and their children.
Back-to-school usually means children sharing various microbes with one another. While cyclical in nature, pertussis affected several schools throughout the County. Also known as whooping cough, this disease is preventable through vaccination. However, once it begins spreading, especially through a school, it can cause wholesale issues. The public health role is to quickly get preventive information into the right hands to direct schools to proper sanitizing techniques and to encourage schools and parents to monitor symptoms as well have children vaccinated.

When a sewer leaked into a creek in the County last summer, it briefly made the evening's news. However, for a public health department, these types of occurrences set off alarm bells. Our Water Quality team was on the scene immediately assessing the water in the creek and making sure residents kept children and pets out of the water. Teams continued to visit the site until water was returned to normal. While creeks are lots of fun for kids and pets, sewage contamination can result in serious illness.

Flu season is always a challenge. Americans treat the flu in a nonchalant manner, even though it can be responsible for upwards of 20,000 deaths in the United States each year. Our teams are working behind the scenes in the lead-up to flu season making sure we have adequate supply of the correct vaccine and of course, setting up clinics and encouraging people to get their flu shots. This flu season, in particular, has been very challenging as viral “drift” has rendered the current vaccine less than optimally effective. However, vaccination remains the most important line of defense against the flu. Seasons like this one can be even more challenging for our teams as widespread influenza activity taxes the healthcare system.

Perhaps the biggest public health challenge for the year was, and remains the Ebola virus. Our colleagues at the Ohio Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had Ebola on their radars long before it made its way to our shores. Extensive planning and then practice of these plans consumed a good deal of our time in public health. Once the first cases of the virus were identified within U.S. borders, the nation's public health system activated at the highest levels.

Here in Hamilton County, we assembled our agency planning and remediation teams and fine-tuned our plans for any scenario. We left no stone unturned as we worked on every eventuality including hospital preparedness, site clean-up, hazardous waste disposal, appropriate equipment requirements and public information. Ebola hit close to home when an infected traveler made her way to Ohio.

State-wide public health teams quickly integrated with national response personnel to identify potential exposure and make certain that any exposure was quickly contained. In fact, we continue to monitor healthcare workers returning to our area from West African nations stricken with Ebola.

As you can see, much of public health takes place out of public view. Perhaps it’s healthier when you don’t hear from us regularly!

Stay healthy!

Tim Ingram
Health Commissioner

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### Frequently Requested Information

**Customer Service and Important Phone Numbers**

- Main Number: (513) 946-7800
- Administration/Health Commissioner's Office: (513) 946-7822
- Main Fax: (513) 946-7890
- TB Clinic, Nursing, STD & HIV Fax: (513) 946-7603
- Odor Complaint Hotline: (513) 946-7879

**Web and Social Media**

- Hamilton County Public Health Online: www.HCPh.org
- Follow us on Twitter: @HamCoHealth
- Join us on Facebook: www.fb.com/HamCoHealth
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/HamCoHealth
- WeTHRIVE(sm): www.WatchUsThrive.org
FINANCIAL REPORT
Numbers rounded to the nearest dollar

REVENUES & RESOURCES
- Fees & Permits: $5,238,821
- Grants & Contracts\(^1\): 3,115,151
- TB Control-Indigent Care Levy: 933,250
- Cities, Townships, Villages: 704,586
- State Subsidies: 125,885
- Other Revenue: 84,009
Total Revenues and Resources: $10,201,702

EXPENDITURES
- Personnel Services: $5,513,972
- State & Other Agency Fees: 1,223,945
- Operating Expenses: 2,555,190
Total Expenditures: $9,293,107

\(^1\)Grant revenue includes amounts received in 2014 as reimbursement for expenses incurred in 2013
Hamilton County Public Health Mission
Hamilton County Public Health educates, serves and protects our community for a healthier future.

Hamilton County Public Health Vision

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.

Chairperson ................. Gwen McFarlin
Secretary .................... Lawanda Corman

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 .................... Neill Ramsey

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 on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

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

Health Commissioner and Staff
Health Commissioner ............ Timothy Ingram
Assistant Health Commissioner ... Kathy Lordo, Department of
                                Community Health Services
Assistant Health Commissioner ... Greg Kesterman, Department of
                                Environmental Health Services

Divisions
Disease Prevention .............. Pat Allingham, Director
Environmental Health ............ Jeremy Hessel, Director
Epidemiology and Assessment .... Craig Davidson, Director
Health Promotion and Education ... Rebecca Stowe, Director
Plumbing ........................ Lisa Humble, Director
Waste Management .............. Chuck DeJonckheere, Director
Water Quality .................. Chris Griffith, Director