

# Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

## What Does Public Health Do for the Public

- Prevent epidemics, spread of disease
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Prevent injuries
- Promote, encourage healthy behaviors
- Respond to disasters, assist in recovery
- Assure quality and accessibility of health services

## Communicable Diseases Investigated

In an effort to keep diseases contained and prevent outbreaks, SWNPHD surveillance staff, Bev Powers, RN – primary contact ; Mark Graf or Myra Stoney work with schools, hospitals, doctors, laboratories, and other health professionals by interviewing, reporting, educating, and assisting in finding treatment for those possibly exposed to an infectious disease.

Over 50 different infectious diseases are considered reportable to the state health department. In 2007, ninety-seven potential cases were reported to SWNPHD with a total of 73 investigated.



## FROG-

### *Fitness Reaching Older Gen's*

Fitness Reaching Older Gen's (FROG) is an exercise and nutrition program developed by Julie Neighbors, Health Educator. The program is designed to improve strength and mobility in older adults which helps in the prevention of injuries caused by falls.

About 13 percent of America's population is age 65 or over. Many changes take place as we age, such as: diminishing sense of taste and smell, tooth loss, and change in energy levels. These are all normal processes of aging. Exercise and nutrition play a huge part in keeping aging bones and muscles more flexible to help protect your body from serious injuries should you fall.

FROG arrived in February 2007 in Imperial, Nebraska at the Community and Senior Center. A Senior Fitness

Test that includes six stations that measures lower/upper body flexibility, lower/upper body strength, height/weight or body mass index (BMI), and cardio-respiratory endurance was performed on five older adults at the Community and Senior Center. The information this test provides allowed everyone to compare their performance to other older adults their age. The exercise class is taught each Tuesday and Thursday for an hour at the Community and Senior Center. The exercise class involves low-impact work consisting of flexibility, muscle strength/endurance, balance/agility, and cardio-respiratory work.

In October of 2007, the health department received an injury prevention mini-grant from Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services which was applied to the

FROG program. During this time, the name FROG was established as well as the FROG logo.

In December of 2007, McCook Community Hospital's 55Plus Club welcomed FROG to their program. Approximately 30 participants completed the Senior Fitness Test and received a print out of their results to compare with other older adults their age. The exercise class is held twice a week for about an hour working on flexibility, muscle strength/endurance, balance/agility, and cardio-respiratory endurance work. All of these components are involving activities of daily living.

Future FROG programs will be established throughout Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department's health district in the near future. The goal of the FROG program is to reach out to the older adult population to provide skills/exercises to help prevent injuries brought on by falls avoiding the increasing healthcare costs and to provide the older adult population in Southwest Nebraska with a more active and enjoyable life.



*Fitness Reaching Older Gen's*

2007

Annual Report

Inside  
This  
Issue

2 Message From President

4 From the Director

7 Kicking Tobacco Use

8 Kids Health



**Board of Trustees**

The governing board for Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is composed of one county commissioner, one public-spirited person from each of the eight counties, one physician and one dentist.

**Current Board Members:****Chase County**

Joe Johnston - Commissioner  
Lola Jones - Board Vice-President - Hospital Administrator

**Dundy County**

Scott Olson - Commissioner  
Rita Jones - Hospital Administrator  
Douglas Peckham, DDS

**Frontier County**

Kevin Owens - Commissioner  
Barb Scarf - Extension Educator

**Furnas County**

Bill Lewis - Commissioner  
Roland Miller, MD, Retired

**Hayes County**

George Miller - Commissioner  
Marilyn Anderjaska - Board Secretary/Treasurer

**Hitchcock County**

Scott McDonald - Commissioner  
Kathleen Jankovitz - Banker

**Perkins County**

Michael Perlinger - Commissioner  
Ann Rieger RN, Retired

**Red Willow County**

Earl McNutt - Commissioner  
Karen Ackermann, RN - Board President  
Lennie Deaver, MD

**Past Members:****Chase:**

Richard Hamilton, Jodi Thompson

**Dundy:**

Gary Stamm, Marcia Ernest

**Frontier:**

Pat Dizmang

**Furnas:**

Clinton Olmsted

**Hitchcock:**

Leila "T" Herzog, Dale Keeney

**Perkins:**

Carol Kraus, Marvin Swan, DDS, Mary Buss

**Red Willow:**

Chris Nix, DDS, Toby Free, MD

**Our Mission**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department, in partnership with other entities, is to promote a healthy and secure quality of life for our communities.



Karen Ackermann  
Chairperson  
of the Board

**Message from the President**

I began serving on the Board of Health in November of 2005 and was elected President in February of 2007. The position has been rewarding to watch the health department grow and the board to mature and develop with changes in membership. I have worked in the medical field as a nurse for 22 years and currently own a business. My past experiences have helped to steer the Board in the direction of change.

The health district presents a number of challenges for the health department. The statistics from the *District Profile Highlights - 2005*, compiled by the State of Nebraska, is the compelling force in the health department's strategic plan. The following health district data steer the strategic planning process:

- Residents living in poverty - 12.2% was higher than 10.0% statewide
- 15.6% of district residents reported they have no health insurance
- 11% of adults in district reported that there had been a time in the last 12 months when they were unable to see a doctor for needed care due to the potential cost of services. Nebraska 2010 goal is to reduce this proportion to no more than 4% of adults.
- The cancer death rate for the district was 6% lower than the Nebraska rate but 16% higher than the state's Healthy People 2010 objective
- Deaths due to stroke was 10% above the statewide rate
- Unintentional injury death rate was 50% higher than the statewide rate
- Motor vehicle death rate was 69% higher than the Nebraska rate
- There were 342 tobacco-related deaths and 88 alcohol-related deaths recorded in the district in 2000-2004.
- An average of 19.0% of district women giving birth during the five-year period 2000-2004 reported smoking cigarettes during this pregnancy, compared to state average of 14.1%.
- 21% of adults reported heights and weights that placed them in the obese category.
- The proportion of adults who said they had not participated in any leisure-time physical activity in the previous month was 26.1% in the district and 25% statewide.
- 19.2% are current smokers

Data such as this drives the strategic plan. The strategic plan drives the changes for the health department. As long as data supports programs for the health department, the health department will continue to prioritize the health needs of the district and plan accordingly.

Karen Ackermann  
Chairperson of the Board

**Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department**

Serving the counties of Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Red Willow and Perkins

Myra Stoney - Director  
Mark R. Graf - Asst. Director/  
Emergency Response Coordinator  
Beverly Powers, RN - Public Health Nurse  
Heidi Wheeler - EMT-IV Preparedness Planner

Janet Brenning - Bookkeeper  
Jamie Hawkins - Health Educator  
Julie Neighbors - Health Educator  
Gaylene Stinman - Respite Coordinator

322 Norris Avenue, Suite 8, McCook, NE 69001 • 308-345-4223 • 888-345-4223

www.swhealthdept.com • info@swhealthdept.com



## Preparing for a Pandemic Influenza Outbreak

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department continues to educate and prepare the public for a Pandemic Influenza Outbreak. The focus of this education has been on individuals and businesses to become better prepared for a reduction in activities for a short period of time. Methods used for preparation include: voluntary social isolation, home preparedness, business preparedness, and personal hygiene.

Voluntary social isolation is an effective method of controlling the spread of influenza. This requires individuals to stay at home or to work in areas at least six feet from other individuals. This also means limiting large social gatherings such as sporting events, religious services, and civic meetings.

Individuals and organizations need to prepare in advance for a pandemic outbreak or other disaster events by stockpiling needed items. Items such as non-perishable food, water, medications, pet food, hygiene items, entertainment items and other miscellaneous items will be necessary during an event. With these preparations in place, people will be able to avoid contact with anyone contagious, nor will it be necessary to leave their homes or businesses in a dangerous situation. The health department has available disaster preparedness checklists, planning workbooks, and a "Launch and Learn" CD for preparedness in English and Spanish. Organizations

can prepare for such an event by creating a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). This plan looks at what items are critical to an operation and how best to continue operations should some items not be available for a short period of time; how to reestablish noncritical sections after an event. The COOP also identifies ways to contact key people and how they, in turn, will contact the rest of the workforce, keeping everyone informed of the changes in the workplace. Business planning checklists are available from the health department as are training and resource CDs.

Practicing prevention is a must to reduce the spread of influenza. Influenza is spread by droplets through coughing or sneezing into the air. The droplets enter the body through the mouth, nose, ears, or eyes. Coughing or sneezing into disposable tissues or into your sleeve will help control the spread of droplets. Influenza dies quickly on surfaces like cloth. Dispose of used tissues immediately by placing them in a covered trash can. Cough etiquette DVD's, cough procedure stickers, and proper hand washing posters are available through the health department.

Do you have a plan in place? What supplies will you need? Where will your family meet in case of disaster? Who is your emergency contact person? This health department can help with your preparedness plan.

## M.R.S.A.

*Much has been said about M.R.S.A. in the news, but just what is it?*

MRSA, pronounced mersa, is the staphylococcus aureus bacteria which has become resistant to the antibiotics known as beta-lactams. In this instance, the staph bacteria has become resistant to methicillin; hence its name, Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus.

Frequent use of antibiotic therapy over time can result in a bacteria becoming resistant to some antibiotics. The best protection against MRSA is to use antibiotics only when the doctor has determined their effectiveness. Remember, antibiotics will not cure most colds, coughs, sore throats or runny noses, since they are usually caused by viruses.

MRSA may show up in the form of skin and soft tissue infections, with redness, warmth, swelling, boils or blisters with pus. It is often misdiagnosed because it resembles a spider bite. It is possible, although rare, for MRSA to evolve into an invasive infection of the lungs or blood, causing serious illness or even death.

Each year from 2001 through 2003 there were an estimated 12 million outpatient healthcare visits for suspected *S. aureus* infections in the United States. In 2004, approximately 76 percent of purulent (containing pus) skin and soft tissue infections in adults seen in 11 emergency departments were caused by *S. aureus*. Of these infections, 78 percent were caused by MRSA; overall MRSA caused 59 percent of all SSTI's.

Serious, invasive MRSA infections occur in approximately 94,000 persons each year and are associated with approximately 19,000

deaths. Of these infections, about 86 percent are health care-associated and 14 percent are community-associated.

MRSA is not a reportable disease, although, if a community has a problem with an outbreak, they can request the health department's assistance in controlling it. The Southwest Nebraska Health Department recently provided educational information to the area Educational Service Units on how to control MRSA in schools and are working with school nurses to help educate them on prevention.

MRSA can be spread by direct contact with drainage from skin lesions or through indirect contact with contaminated objects. Normally, staph is always present on the skin and can even live on inanimate surfaces, but it can cause an infection when it enters the body through breaks in the skin. That infection can be passed to others through person-to-person contact. A person with any rash or draining, open sores should be seen by a physician. If an antibiotic is prescribed, it should be taken according to instructions. If there is no improvement, or the wound changes significantly, return to the physician. This is especially important if no cultures were done at the initial visit.

**To prevent MRSA, frequent hand washing with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds is a must. Alcohol-based hand sanitizing gels can also be used effectively. Regularly clean and disinfect common surfaces. Do not share washcloths or towels. Cuts and scrapes must be kept clean and covered. Always practice good hygiene with bandage care and in disposing of used dressings.**

## Flu Shot Clinics

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department has offered the flu vaccine via "Flu Shot Clinics" at eight locations as well as by appointment in the office. According to the Centers for Disease Control, "the best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year."

A sliding fee scale based on insurance coverage is available, providing influenza immunizations at an affordable cost for everyone. Flu activity typically does not reach its peak in the U.S. until January or February. Flu activity, however, can occur as late as May, so getting the vaccine later in the season can still offer protection in most years.

Vaccination remains the best method for preventing flu and its potentially severe secondary complications. In addition to vaccination, good health habits may also help protect against the flu, such as:

- Avoid close contact
- Stay home when are sick
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- Practice other good health habits (get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food)

Visit the CDC web site for more information.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>



## From the Director



**Myra Stoney**  
Director

Change is a good thing. It has proved to be exceptionally good for the health department in the last three years. From moving the office, adding eight staff members, increasing programs; change has been a good thing.

The health department operates from a strategic plan. The plan is updated annually and submitted for board approval. The plan is based on the needs of the eight county health district. Data is analyzed to identify the needs and gaps to which a three year vision and the one year strategic plan are developed. This plan has been instrumental in the growth and development of the health department from a two person department in December 2004, into a ten person department in 2007.

With the addition of staff members, came the addition of programs. New programs for 2007 include: **Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day** – a fitness and nutrition day event for fourth graders; **FROG – Fitness Reaching Older Gen’s** – a fitness program developed for senior citizens to strengthen, build endurance and flexibility; **Respite** – to give caregivers a break, allowing them to care for themselves; **Environmental Program** – education of a staff member to follow-up on environmental concerns such as radon, lead, mold; **Stepping Away From Chew** – education for oral tobacco users, helping them to quit their tobacco addiction; **Telehealth services** – an alternative form of treatment which saves time and money in travel; **Clean Air Act Inspections** – education with businesses regarding the existing law passed in 2002; **Freedom From Smoking** – a tobacco cessation course taught with curriculum from American Lung Association; **Influenza Outreach Clinics** – providing a sliding fee scale for influenza shots based on insurance coverage or lack of coverage.

The health department was very productive in 2007 and is off to a great start in 2008. *The mission of the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department, in partnership with other entities, is to promote a healthy and secure quality of life for our communities.* The health department covers eight counties which includes 33 organized communities. Public health is a very large, diverse field and the challenges in this field are countless.

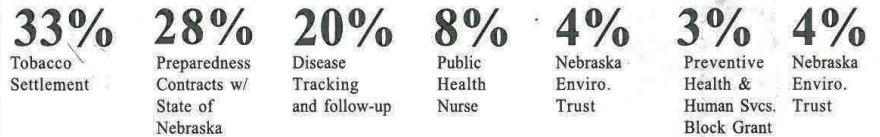
Yes, 2008 will be busy and we plan to see even more changes: Change to strive toward building a healthy and secure quality of life. A quality of life for everyone within this health district. This overwhelming task can be accomplished by breaking the big rock into manageable pebbles, one day at a time.

“Public health works, everyday, everywhere, and for everyone!”

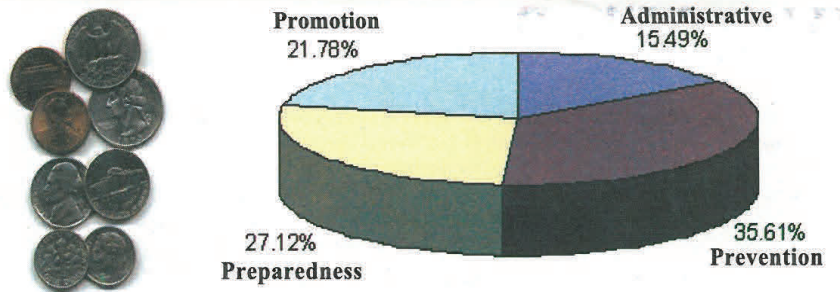
# SWNPHD Financial Report

As of June 30, 2007

### Where the Money comes from . . .

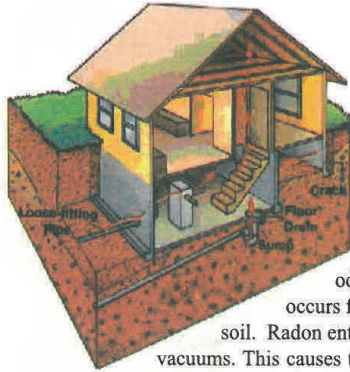


### Where the Money goes . . .



Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department Staff: (back row left to right) Janet Brenning, Bookkeeper; Mark R. Graf, Assistant Director and Emergency Response Coordinator; Jamie Hawkins, Health Educator; Gaylene Stinman, Respite Coordinator; (front row) Myra Stoney, Director; Beverly Powers, RN - Public Health Nurse; Helena T. Janousek, Volunteer Coordinator; Julie Neighbors, Health Educator; Heidi Wheeler, EMT-IV Preparedness Planner





## Testing for Radon

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the country. It is surpassed only by direct smoking, and is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers.

Radon is a colorless and odorless gas that naturally occurs from the breakdown of rock and soil. Radon enters a home due to indoor air vacuums. This causes the radon-laden soil gas to enter through the foundation.

Testing is the only way to determine the level of radon in your home. Levels vary from house to house. Every home should be tested regardless of age, condition or type of construction. High radon conditions may be reduced through mitigation. Radon mitigation is any process used to reduce radon concentration in the breathing zones of occupied buildings. This cost is similar to other home repair.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency through Nebraska

Department of Health and Human Services to promote awareness and testing of radon. The health department is distributing 200 short term radon test and 100 long term test to residents in the health district. The kits are given at no cost to residents. The health department provides one-on-one training with individuals and through news releases and the website. Training and education is also being conducted with the City of McCook to educate them on the benefits of radon resistant construction codes for new building construction.

The University of Nebraska Extension offices and the City of McCook partnered with the health department to accomplish these tasks. Should you have any questions or concerns about radon gas in your home, please contact this office.

**Free Radon Kit**

**Send Your name & address to:**  
**SWNPHD**  
**322 Norris Ave, Suite 8**  
**McCook, NE 69001**  
**Or Call: 308-345-4223**  
**Or E-mail**  
**Info@swhealthdept.com**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Limit 1 Radon Kit per household**

## West Nile Program

There were 146 documented clinical cases, plus 16 positive blood donors, for a total of 162 human cases, with three deaths being reported. In the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department's eight county district, there were five positive human cases and two positive blood donors.

Mosquitoes acquire the virus from infected birds and pass it on to other birds, animals and people. In addition to humans, horses and dogs are susceptible to the virus through the bite of a mosquito. SWNPHD assists with the WNV Surveillance program by trapping mosquitoes and collecting dead birds. The program begins during late May and ends in October.

*As of October 27, 2007, Nebraska had experienced its fourth most severe year for the West Nile Virus.*

Mosquitoes are trapped at Enders and Imperial in Chase county, and in McCook for Red Willow County. A total of twelve traps are set and every other week the dead bugs are sent to Lincoln. Once the bugs arrive at the lab in Lincoln, the mosquitoes are categorized by type and counted. The mosquitoes are then tested to see if they carry WNV.

For more information about WNV, see the State of Nebraska website at: <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/wnv/>

## School & Hospital Surveillance

*Programs track and monitor illnesses in the community and include surveillance of schools and hospitals.*

Each Wednesday during influenza season, schools report absences due to illness. These numbers are reported to the state through a secure website. This helps track spikes in absences, which could indicate an outbreak.

Thirty-six schools and five hospitals report data: in schools, the number of absent students due to illness, especially noting flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, headache, and general aches); in hospitals, the number of patients admitted with flu-like symptoms.

The hospital surveillance program tracks influenza-like illness among inpatients with special attention to ages of patients admitted. The information compiled includes the number of patients on a ventilator—a sign the respiratory illness is very serious.

Information is also collected as to the number of hospital personnel home with flu symptoms (absences in all departments of the hospital). This information is collected to position hospitals and the SWNPHD to respond in the event of an outbreak, to protect the public with healthy health care providers.

Flu surveillance begins at the end of October and continues through March.

## 2007

**January** – Stepping Away from Chew program developed; Began offering Telehealth services at Health Department

**February** – Quit Spit/Smoking Kits Developed; Senior Fitness Program/FROG developed

**April** – First Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day event held in McCook

**May** – Clean Air Act Inspections performed

**July/August** – Quit Spit kits distributed in health district through county fair sponsorships

**August** – Take over Respite Southwest Service Area Grant

**September** – Second Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day event held in McCook; first Freedom From Smoking Clinic taught in health district

**October** – Respite Coordinator hired; Preparedness Planner hired; Safe Routes to School collaboration in McCook

**November** – Flu Shot Clinics in Curtis, Eustis, Beaver City and McCook; hand out radon kits

**December** – Awarded Respite Southwest Service Area grant



## Heidi L. Wheeler;



### EMT-IV Preparedness Planner

Floods, earthquakes, damaging weather, and disease regularly cause destruction and death and have taken millions of lives and cost billions of dollars. Now the world is also

confronted with technological disasters and terrorist attacks. Much has been done to understand and defend against these threats, but new disasters, diseases, and variations of the old continue to challenge public health organizations.

Emergency managers and responders continue to struggle with reducing the human and material cost of these disasters by improving prevention, protection, response, and recovery capabilities. Though the Federal government can provide massive support during a disaster, local officials know their area best and must lead efforts to prevent disasters, mitigate damages, respond to the public's needs, and recover from the devastation.

My responsibility as the preparedness planner for Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department will be to work with these local entities to plan for these disasters, and to help protect and prepare our people should such an event arise.

I grew up on a farm in southwest Nebraska and graduated from Chase County High School. After graduation I attended McCook Community College and Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture to earn an Associate of Arts (1994) and an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technology degree (1996). In May I will be completing another Associates Degree in Health Information Management, which has proved to be very useful in my new career here at SWNPHD.

I have been a member of Imperial Emergency Medical Services for over ten years becoming certified in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and IV monitoring. I have led trainings session for the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department and the EMS. My agricultural and medical background has equipped me with knowledge and understanding of our rural area and its needs, especially in disaster preparedness.

SWNPHD has a great staff continually working on invaluable projects to promote the health and welfare of the people of our eight-county district, and I am truly excited to join them. I am eager to begin this new and challenging career and look forward to meeting and working with all the emergency managers and personnel in our area.



## Lead Poisoning

The public has been inundated with reports of toy recalls due to the risk of lead poisoning from paint used in the manufacturing of toys in foreign countries. The health department is concerned about this health risk and the safety of children. To increase awareness and education, news releases have been sent to local media sources, along with a list of affected toys. Risk Assessments and information on lead poisoning have been provided to all medical clinics in the health district.

### What can you do to protect a child?

- ✓ Keep your child's living and play areas clean and dust free.
- ✓ Do not let children put their hands, dirt, toys or other non-food items in their mouths. Give babies something else besides a key ring or bracelet to play with. Even though it looks safe, it could be made with

a metal containing lead. If a small charm is accidentally swallowed and does not pass through, it could slowly lead to serious and life threatening condition.

- ✓ When looking for toys, look for a recognized brand. Read the information on the box. You do not have to spend a lot; many times good quality toys can be found when other children outgrow their toys. Ask your friends & relatives who have older children; or check out garage sales and thrift stores. Remember, soap, water, and a sanitizer such as a diluted bleach solution can take care of the germs. Wash toys, bottles, and pacifiers regularly.
- ✓ Provide your children with plenty of calcium (milk, yogurt, and cheese) and iron (meats, peanut butter, and green leafy vegetables).

Contact the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at Nebraska Health & Human Services System 888-242-1100 or Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department for more information.

## Nebraska Respite Network

As the Respite Coordinator for the Nebraska Respite Network Southwest area, I am very excited to join Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). My position is new to the health department as it formally became the grant holder for the Respite Network Southwest Area in August. Prior to that time, SWNPHD was a supporting partner in the Respite Network to another agency.

I have a Bachelor Degree in Human Development/Family Rehabilitation with a minor in Gerontology. Prior to joining SWNPHD, I worked for twelve years as the Early Development Services Coordinator/Supervisor at Educational Service Unit #15 and served on the Southwest Area Respite Advisory Board. I currently serve on the Nebraska Respite Coalition, Nebraska Caregivers Coalition, Early Childhood Planning Region Teams (PRT) of PRT's 15, 16 and 27, High Plains Early Childhood Professional Coalition, and the Governors Early Childhood Inter-agency Coordinating Council.

The Nebraska Respite Network Southwest area includes the following eighteen counties: Arthur, Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, and Thomas. As the Respite Coordinator it is my job to coordinate information regarding respite resources, recruit providers, offer trainings for providers, caregivers and other interested parties, provide information and referrals regarding respite resources and services, assess need for respite and match families with appropriate respite providers.

I will be working to make the Southwest Area office the central point of contact for consumers in need of respite across our area. I will partner with other teams and

agencies to ensure that needs are being met for clients, caregivers and providers. I will provide marketing and education across the area to explain respite and its benefits to family and community.



Gaylene Stinman  
Respite Coordinator

I look forward to working with families across the SWNPHD district. The Nebraska Respite Network consists of six sites that collect information and coordinate respite resources statewide. We are the one place to call for your respite needs. *We care for those who care.* Statewide toll free 1-866-RESPITE (737-7483)

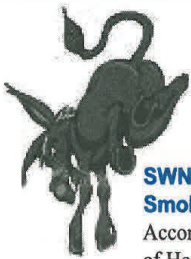
### Respite Care

Respite provides caregivers of those with long-term or life long disabilities or illness an opportunity to have some time away from their caregiver duties.

Respite care significantly benefits caregivers and recipients of care:

- ♦ Research indicates that respite care decreases family stress and improves family functioning, life satisfaction, attitudes toward family members with disabilities, and the physical and emotional health of the elderly.
- ♦ Respite care allows caregivers to devote energy and resources to their own health and wellbeing, as well as that of other family members.
- ♦ These services provide caregivers additional support when they themselves are experiencing crises.
- ♦ Respite care significantly decreases the need for costly out of home placements
- ♦ By providing much needed relief to caregivers, respite care significantly reduces cases of abuse and neglect.





# Kicking the Tobacco Habit

## SWNPHD is "Kicking Butt's" with Smoking

According to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, nearly 3 in every 10 Nebraska high school students (28.0percent), used tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, or smokeless tobacco) during the past month, while 28.9 percent of all persons 12 and older reported past month tobacco use. While cigarette smoking is the most common form of tobacco use, spit tobacco use is common in rural Nebraska. The good news- 7 out of 10 tobacco users want to quit!

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is helping fill the need for tobacco cessation classes and resources in the eight county health district. One valuable resource offered by SWNPHD is American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking Clinics. Eight group sessions are led by a certified Freedom From Smoking Clinic Facilitator, who understands how hard it is for smokers and spit tobacco users to quit. Classes are offered for a minimal cost to those who would like to kick their tobacco habit and have proved to be very successful.

The Nebraska Quitline is another valuable resource that has been in existence since July of 2006. The Quitline is operated by the American Cancer Society and funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. By calling the Quitline number, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, Nebraska residents are given free, top-of-the-line tobacco cessation coaching and many first-rate resources to help them along their journey to becoming tobacco-free.

## Stepping Away from Chew

Stepping Away from Chew (SAFC) is a program that was developed in January of 2007 by Health Educator, Jamie Hawkins. The purpose of the program is to address the need for an education program for people who currently use spit tobacco and to deter others from starting the deadly addiction. Spit tobacco is a widely used product across Southwest Nebraska- with eight percent of the population currently using some form of spit tobacco.

The major component of the Stepping Away from Chew program is the Quit Spit Kit. Each kit contains a variety of quitting strategies and tips, nutrition and exercise

information, healthy lifestyle tips, healthy snack ideas, games, gum and mints. These kits are available to anyone living in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department health district free of charge.

Along with raising awareness through the distributing of Quit Spit Kits, the Stepping Away from Chew program has been presented to local businesses, dentists, doctors, medical clinics as well as being a topic presented to many citizens of Southwest Nebraska at health fairs and other various presentations.

## Stepping Away from Chew FREE Quit Spit Kit

Your FREE Quit Spit Kit includes: quitting strategies and tips, nutrition info., 1-800-Quit-Now wallet card, gum, mints, games, healthy snacks, etc...

Provide us with the following information and we will be happy to mail you a Quit Spit Kit.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department  
 322 Harris Avenue, Suite 8, McCook, NE 68801  
 (308) 345-4223 • Toll Free (888) 345-4223  
[www.swhealthdept.com](http://www.swhealthdept.com)

# Health Department Conducts Indoor Air Inspections

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department conducted 200 Clean Indoor Air Act Inspections in the health district which consists of Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Furnas, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The Clean Air Act was passed by the Legislature in 2002. The health department focused on courthouses, bars, restaurants, retail stores, some convenience stores and other types of businesses were targeted.

The inspections were used as a way to educate and bring awareness to businesses concerning current laws, and to promote and encourage smoke free work areas. Businesses that choose to provide smoking areas were informed of the requirements to also provide a smoke free access to their business.

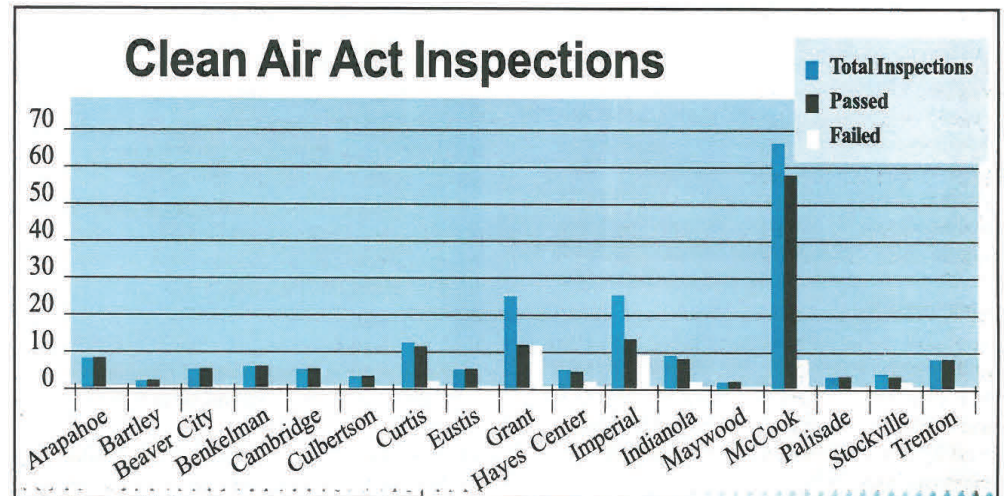
## To be in compliance with the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act, the following conditions must be met:

- ◆ No person shall smoke in a public place, except in designated smoking areas.
- ◆ No person shall smoke in an indoor area serving as a place of work where smoke pollution causes discomfort to nonsmokers. Restaurants and bars may have other conditions that may apply.
- ◆ If the proprietor or other person in charge of a public place designates a smoking area, s/he must designate an area that is reasonable proportionate to the preference of the users. Since 75% of Nebraskans don't smoke, a designated smoking area not exceeding 25% of the seating area is allowed.

- ◆ No common areas may be designated as smoking areas, including, but not limited to hallways, lobbies, checkout counters, restrooms, entrances, etc.
- ◆ The proprietor must ensure that no individual will be required to use or pass through a smoking area in order to conduct all activities permitted in the public place.
- ◆ The proprietor must ensure that there are no ashtrays in nonsmoking areas and that ashtrays are provided at all entrances to nonsmoking areas.
- ◆ Proper signs indicating smoking policy must be posted on all public entrances and at boundaries between smoking and nonsmoking areas.

The majority of the 200 businesses **did not** have appropriate signage at the **beginning of the inspection**. A total of 43 businesses were not in compliance after the initial inspection. Of the 43 business, 10 businesses upon re-inspection were in compliance. The remaining 33 businesses had not been re-inspected at the end of the period.

**"No Smoking"** or **"Smoking in Designated Areas Only"** signage is available from the health department. Please contact our office if you would like more information on the Clean Air Act.





# Kids Health

## Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day (NKFND) 2007

This year was fun and exciting for Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day (NKFND). As the first year to host the annual event, everyone was pleased with the great turnout of students and the many generous donations from across the eight county health district. A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the co-sponsors (planning committee) and volunteers for their help putting together two great events: McCook Public Schools, Ed Thomas YMCA of McCook, and American Dairy Association and Dairy Council of Nebraska.

Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day is an educational event allowing fourth grade students to participate in physical activity and nutrition education information presented in an exciting and motivating environment. The event also fosters a consistent, clear, and concise message to all participants regarding the importance of incorporating energy balance (physical activity and good nutrition habits) into their everyday lifestyles. Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day is coordinated through the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the Nebraska Beef Council.

The first NKFND took place in McCook on April 26. The rainy, gloomy day did not impose on the fun of hopping, skipping, jumping, and learning to eat healthier. The day was brighter and more cheerful inside with 500 smiling fourth grade students as they stepped through 16 fitness stations and exercised through six nutrition stations. The monetary donations from area merchants provided each student with a t-shirt, a back-pack, and a sports bottle. Pedometers were given to the students to use during the activities, and were then given to the teachers for the students to use at school.

The second NKFND was on September 26 and was a great day to have the event outdoors. With the experience of hosting the first NKFND, the planning committee and volunteers ran a smooth and exciting event. The American Dairy Association and Dairy Council of Nebraska and Meadow Gold Dairy helped sponsor this event. They provided milk for the students' lunches and nutritional information to all 450 fourth grade students and gave each child a frisbee. The students also received a t-shirt, lunch bag, water bottle, and a pedometer to use; again, the pedometers were donated to their classes. Over 50 businesses within this health district generously donated to help make the event possible.

Both students and teachers look forward to this great event which provides an extraordinary experience for the health department to use while teaching kids and adults (parents) the importance of eating healthier and being more physically active, as well as motivating Southwest Nebraskans to lead healthier lifestyles.

On behalf of Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day, the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department will again apply for grants from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the Nebraska Beef Council. Area businesses will also be contacted again for sponsorship of their areas students participation in this event.




### Go On-line Click on Personal Health Assessment You're on your way to a new beginning

To get the best results from the assessment, you will need:

- ◆ Your Height \_\_\_\_\_ Your Weight \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Blood Pressure \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Total Cholesterol Level \_\_\_\_\_ HDL Cholesterol \_\_\_\_\_

#### Instructions:

- ◆ Go to: [www.swhealthdept.com](http://www.swhealthdept.com)
- ◆ Click on 
- ◆ Login in with initial preset stated on website
- ◆ Set up your personal Username & Password
- ◆ Select your county
- ◆ Enter your Site Code
- ◆ Submit your information
- ◆ Accept the Privacy Statement
- ◆ You have now setup your personal login
- ◆ Click the "Take Survey" button to begin
- ◆ You may exit & return to your personal survey anytime by logging back in.

#### Site Codes:

Chase — S72 Dundy — S76 Frontier — S6 Furnas — S38 Hayes — S79  
Hitchcock — S67 Perkins — S74 Red Willow — S48 All others — SW2

After completing the survey, a report will be generated giving you insight to your personal health status. You can print or save this information to your computer for future reference.