



October 2010 Executive Report
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CEO & Health Authority
Galveston County & Cities

The Pulse of the District...

- **4C's New Electronic Business System Goes Live!**
- **Collection of Household Hazardous Waste Coming November 13th!**
- **Flu Prevention Campaign and Surveillance**
- **First West Nile Case in Dickinson**

Phase One of 4C's Electronic System Rollout Implemented

On October 19th, phase one (practice management) of new electronic system was implemented. This phase of the system includes new software to make appointments, check in process, financial screening and billing and collections. Overall the implementation in patient services was a success. Much work remains for programming, monitoring, and execution of the billing and collections component. As with any new system implementation, there were relatively minor mishaps but staff trainers were on site from the 19th – 22nd along with Harlan "Mark" Guidry, MD, MPH, CEO to provide assistance and moral support to staff and to communicate patience about the implementation. For the most part, medical and dental providers exercised patience and understanding of the expected delays in getting some patients in exam rooms by their appointment time. In addition, a DVD has been playing in the clinics to inform patients about the new system and a press release was issued on October 14th which contained information about the implementation of the system that started October 19th. The release which was published October 18 in the *Galveston County Daily News* is posted at www.gchd.org/press/2010/nextgen10-2010.html. In early November, executive staff will conference with NEXTGEN to outline steps needed to plan for Phase Two – implementing EMR and EDR. We expect the go-live for EMR and EDR to be in the first part of 2011.

Galveston County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day Event

On November 13th, Galveston County Residents will have an opportunity to properly dispose of household hazardous waste free of charge. The event will be held at the Gulf Greyhound Park from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Household hazardous waste such as paint, pesticides, herbicides, motor oil, antifreeze, etc. will be accepted along with electronic waste (computers, monitors, televisions, etc.), automobile tires, white goods, and document shredding will also be provided. A grant awarded from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will pay for the proper disposal. Mayor Julie Masters is currently chairing a planning committee composed of government agencies and private businesses. Volunteers to assist the day of the event are needed.

Flu Prevention Campaign and Surveillance

The Health started this year's flu campaign early due to availability of vaccine and the CDC recommendation to begin flu immunization as soon as vaccine becomes available. The week of Sept 15th, 206 GCHD employees were immunized and the following week vaccine was available to the public at all the GCHD clinic sites – Dickinson, Texas City, La Marque and Galveston. As of Oct. 22nd, Immunization Staff has administered 549 flu vaccinations at the GCHD La Marque Headquarters, League City Johnny Arolfo Civic Center, Bacliff Senior Center, La Marque's Bayou Pine Care Center, Crystal Beach AARP, Dickinson Senior Center, Cottages of Clear Lake Alzheimer's facility in League City, Galveston's Transitional Learning Center and Tideway facilities, Wayne Johnson Community Center, and the Senior Expo at Mall of the Mainland. The Health District is conducting influenza surveillance in Galveston County during October 2010 through May 2011. Influenza is not a reportable condition, however, flu surveillance remains the only way to collect data that enables health agencies to prepare for new vaccines, assess the severity of the annual epidemic, and detect new strains of the virus before a pandemic influenza strain can emerge. Mainland Medical Center, UTMB, Galveston County Coordinated Community Clinics (4C's), and Galveston County ISD schools are the public health partners participating in the flu surveillance. Thus far, the Health District has received 6 reports of influenza A in Galveston county residents.

West Nile infection (Dickinson)

On September 28, the Health District investigated a case of West Nile infection in a 68 year old Dickinson resident. The Epidemiology investigation revealed case worked and lived in Mexico as an outdoor security officer. Soon after moving to Texas, the case experienced symptoms of severe muscle aches and weakness, altered mental state and fever. Test revealed case was positive for West Nile virus and had neuro-invasive involvement. This is the first West Nile virus infection for 2010.

Office of Public Information

- Rains the latter part of September resulted in a **mosquito bloom** that had county residents looking for relief. The *Galveston County Daily News* ran a story October 1st on the infestation and what mosquito control was doing to combat the pests. GCHD Public Information contributed to the story with tip on the proper use of insect repellent, and other tip for avoiding bites. The story can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2010/District-battling-mosquitoes.html.
- GCHD was recognized as a partner in the recently issued report from the **LEAST Lead Initiative** according to a press release issued by UTMB and published in the *Galveston County Daily News* October 15th. The report showed blood lead levels in 1 and 2 year old children in Galveston at or below state and national averages. The *Daily News* story can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2010/childhood-lead-levels-avg10-15-10.html.
- Problems that some local residents are having with **possums and raccoons** were explored in a *Galveston County Daily News* story on October 17th. GCHD Animal Services Manager Kim Schoolcraft contributed to the story with tips on how to avoid problems. Schoolcraft encouraged people to remember that wildlife can be dangerous and use precautions to avoid problems. The information as published, www.gchd.org/press/2010/possums.html.

4C's Clinic Updates

- **Head Start** - The 4C's has been contacted by Hitchcock Independent School District's Cooperative Head Start, the Texas City Head Start Program, and the Galveston County

Community Action Council Head Start Program (Galveston Head Start) to provide developmental examinations, physical examinations and possible dental examinations. The 4C's is scheduled to see Hitchcock Head Start children on November 4th and 5th, Texas City Head Start Program on November 2nd and 9th, and Galveston County Community Action Council Head Start Program (Galveston Head Start) on November 1st, 3rd, and the 8th.

- **4C's Vacancies** – Current open positions in the 4C's include: 4C's Nursing Director, one LVN, one part-time Lab/X-ray Technician, and one part-time Patient Service Specialist. More information about these positions and all open GCHD positions may be viewed on the Galveston County Health District's web site at www.gchd.org.
- **Pharmacy Cashiers** – As part of the NextGen roll-out Executive Staff has successfully placed cashiers in both pharmacies. One pharmacy cashier will be located at each clinic to assist patients with pharmacy only prescription needs. This will reduce the patient demand going thru the check-in cashiers and the amount of time needed to check-in patients with appointments or walk-ins.

Office of Community Health Services

- **Proclamation Recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness Month** - On September 29, 2010 Pam Jahnke, RN, Interim Administrative Director for Community Health Services and the staff of the GCHD Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening and D'Feet Programs attended the Galveston County Commissioners Court meeting. Judge Yarbrough issued a proclamation in recognizing October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The meeting was well attended by community "Partners in Pink" from various agencies including The Rose, UTMB, D'Feet and others. The Judge and commissioners wore pink ties in support of this community effort.
- **Immunization Program** - An annual audit was performed by the Department of State Health Services Regional staff on the three public health immunization clinics on July 26-27. Reviewers audited an extensive list of program requirements for vaccine management and practices. There were no findings in two clinics, Texas City and Galveston. One issue was discovered in Dickinson regarding the lack of a mercury thermometer in the vaccine refrigerator, in addition to other thermometers, in case of power failure. This has been corrected. The clinics were also reviewed for the percentage of two-year-olds seen in the clinics that had complete, on-time vaccinations. Complete vaccinations include 4 diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis, 3 polio, 1 measles/mumps/rubella, 3 hepatitis B, 1 varicella and 4 pneumococcal vaccines by 24 months. The public health clinics averaged 72%, higher than the state rate of 70%.

Office of Environmental Health Services

- **High Island Septic System Grant Closure** – Nine on-site sewage facilities (septic systems) were installed in the High Island Community under a grant program at no cost to the homeowners that qualified for the funding. Currently, 12 property owners will need to install approved septic systems at their own expense to comply with current wastewater disposal requirements. Certified letters will be mailed to these 12 property owners stating the need to install these approved septic systems.
- **Animal Services Sweeps** - Animal Services continues to direct animal sweeps in our contracted animal services cities and unincorporated areas. The proactive sweeps are designed to educate the public about the Health District's policy on animal control, the issuance of warnings and citations to violators of the policy and to remove unwanted strays off of the streets. The program recently began sweeps after hours following

public concerns that animals were allowed to roam after 5 pm. The after -hours sweeps have been successful.

Office of Emergency Medical Services

- **Staff Vacancies** - Currently, there are two paramedic openings in the 911 service and one intermediate and one basic opening on the NET side. The Quality Assurance Coordinator position is also currently vacant.
- **Proposed UTMB Contract For Services** - GCHD Executive Officers are reviewing a UTMB Proposal to contract with GCHD for ambulance services for Victory and its mainland area network of clinics. In the proposal, GCHD would provide a “dedicated” ambulance housed at Victory Lakes (League City) and will provide space for the ambulance and staff. The service would be Monday-Friday during regular work hours and would be moving patients from the outlying clinics to UTMB hospital. The executive review includes due diligence considering new geo-political areas of service as well as fiscal and operational assurance.
- **Galveston EMS** – Due to the seasonal decrease in weekday EMS calls in Galveston, GAAA have reduced the number of MICU units from 4 down to 3 plus a supervisor Monday through Thursday. GAAA still operates 4 MICU units and a supervisor Friday thru Sunday for the weekend crowds.
- **Monument Dedication** – GAAA as well as the Galveston Police and Fire Departments were present at the dedication of a first responder monument at the 5700 Ball station. The monument was an Eagle Scout project by twin brothers Samuel and Taylor Krumholtz. The monument honors all of the first responders in the area.
- **Community Outreach** – GAAA participated in community outreach at the Children’s Health and Safety Fair during Bayou Fest held at the Highland Park in La Marque. Approximately 150 kids came by GAAA’s booth. GAAA also participated at Galveston Oktoberfest that drew approximately 10,000 visitors.

Disease and Disaster Preparedness:

Epidemiology

- **Finalizing MOU Between GCHD, Housing Authority and City of Galveston** - On Friday, October 15, Health District representative met with Galveston Housing Authority (GHA) representative to discuss an MOU between the Health District, GHA and City of Galveston. The purpose of the MOU is to form a collaboration which will facilitate information sharing among the parties in addressing lead poisoning, housing and remediation/renovation in Galveston. The MOU has been reviewed by City of Galveston and County legal offices and is now ready to be processed for execution.
- **Elevated Lead Levels** – In the month of October, Epidemiology Services received 3 confirmed Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL) reports in Galveston county residents (**Galveston – 2; Hitchcock – 1**). This brings the total of confirmed EBLL cases in Galveston County to 10 cases. All cases have been referred to Community Health Nursing for a home assessment. Four cases were referred to Environmental Services for an environmental lead investigation due to levels exceeding 20 µg/dL. The following is a demographic breakdown of the EBLL cases: 7 males and 3 female ranging from 10 months – 4 years; **(8) Galveston (77550), (1) League City and (1) Hitchcock.**
- **Suspect Pertussis (Bacliff)** – On June 15, Epidemiology Services received a report of a 50 year old **Bacliff resident** with suspected pertussis. Epidemiology investigation revealed the case had a cough for 3 weeks and tested positive for antibodies against pertussis. The case was treated with appropriate antibiotics and 3 household contacts were identified and completed treatment of post exposure prophylaxis. According to

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention a confirmed case of pertussis consist of acute cough illness of any duration and culture positive for pertussis or PCR positive with cough illness lasting 2 weeks. Based upon the findings of the investigation, the type of test that was performed could not confirm pertussis; therefore, it will be reported to DSHS as a probable pertussis case. Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease and is required to be reported to the State Health Department. The Health District has received 1 confirmed case and 2 probable cases of pertussis for 2010.

Public Health Preparedness

- **Public Health Emergency Response (PHER) Grant Extended** – Phase 1 and Phase 3 of the H1N1 PHER grant have been extended through July 2011. This “No Cost” extension will allow GCHD PHEP staff to use unexpended fund to continue planning and preparedness efforts for response to Pandemic Influenza Outbreaks. Using the After Action Report submitted to DSHS in February of 2010, PHEP staff are working to target identified areas for improvement. The funding plan proposal will be based on our lessons learned in responding to H1N1 and will result in better response capabilities in the future.
- **Meetings with Emergency Preparedness Partners** - PHEP staff attended the following Preparedness meetings during October 2010. PHEP staff participated in a conference call with UTMB and other parties about a proposed Evacuation Drill at UTMB on October 1, 2010. PHEP Staff attended the Regional SNS Coordinators, Public Health Planners, and Hospital/Treatment Center Coordinators (Catastrophic Medical Operations Center CMOC Coordinators) meeting in Houston on October 5, 2010. Staff participated in a Webinar on the Automated Critical Asset Management system that has been developed by the Department of Homeland Security to be used to track critical assets in all communities to help manage disaster response. The webinar was held on October 7, 2010. Staff participated in a statewide Public Health Preparedness conference call on October 12, 2010. Staff participated in a CDC Webinar on Emergency Treatment Orders in time of disaster on October 13, 2010. Staff attended the Urban Area Security Initiative Health and Medical committee meeting on October 13, 2010. Staff members participated in Galveston County Emergency Management Coordinators meeting on October 21, 2010.
- **Galveston County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training** – Two members of the PHEP staff are attending the Galveston County Community Emergency Response Team training sessions held on Tuesday evenings. This program is intended to train community members to be self sufficient and to be able to respond in times of emergency. It is a part of the FEMA’s Citizen Corps project. This is a sister program to our own Health Emergency, Action and Response Team (HEART) that GCHD operates under the Medical Reserve Corp division of the Citizen Corps. Classes will continue through November.
- **HEART-MRC Recruitment Drive** – Staff are completing the final touches on a presentation for recruiting members to the Health Emergency, Action and Response Team (HEART). This program is an affiliate of the Citizen Corps Medical Reserve Corps. The program is intended to develop a base of volunteers in the community to respond in Public Health Emergencies to assist GCHD staff in response. The presentation consists of a Power Point slideshow and 10-15 minute talk on the need for HEART in our community. The first presentation is scheduled for October 28, 2010 at the Texas City Lion’s Club. PHEP staff members are available to make this presentation to any group who desires to see it.
- **Regional Pandemic Influenza Exercise** – PHEP staff members are participating in planning for a Regional Exercise of Pandemic Influenza plans. This exercise is a

requirement of the Cities' Readiness Initiative program of the CDC. As such, the local Health agencies in the Houston Metropolitan area will coordinate the exercise and will be participating in a coordinated manner. The preliminary date for the exercise is mid-February 2011.

Signed RFP's, Grants, Contracts & Agreements:

- **Agreement between Hitchcock Independent School District** – Cooperative Project Head Start and Galveston County Health District was signed by COO on September 30, 2010. Agreement will be for one year from September 1, 2010 to September 1, 2011.
- **Agreement between Texas City Independent School District** – Cooperative Project Head Start and Galveston County Health District was signed by COO on October 7, 2010. Agreement will be for one year from September 1, 2010 to September 1, 2011.
- **Storm Water Pollution Prevention and Management Contract between Galveston County Health District and the City of Santa Fe** was signed by COO on October 21, 2010. Agreement will immediately begin following full execution of the agreement and will expire on September 20, 2011. The contract states that each governmental agency (GCHD, Santa Fe, and Galveston County Drainage District 1) will pay 1/3 of the total cost of the program, FY2011 operating budget being \$36,000.

Environmental Health Programs – Notices September 2010		
	Month	Average
Animal Control (dogs running at large, no registration, cruelty, etc)	68	87
Air Pollution (violation of state air regulations, permits, excessive emissions, etc)	4	5
Food Services (violations of food service policy requiring voluntary closure, court actions, etc.)	0	0.2
Food Services (letters sent for operating with an expired food service permit)	33	24
Public Health Nuisances (trash and high weeds, violations of health and safety code)	65	27
On-Site Septic Systems (violation of on-site policy)	5	7
Water Pollution (improper disposal, sewage leaks, grease trap violations, etc)	5	7

*A Monthly Report of
 The Galveston County Health District.
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