



Executive Report to the Galveston County United Board of Health
January 30, 2008

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Taskforce

The first meeting for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Taskforce was held on January 8, 2008 in Galveston. The meeting resulted in the formation of 5 focus areas and the assignment of leads for four of the areas: (1) Public Awareness – Kurt Koopmann; (2) Screening, Reporting and Case Management – Dana Beckham; (3) Environmental Assessment – Ronnie Schultz; and (4) Eliminating Lead from the Environment – Kathy Tiernan. The fifth focus area Advocacy will be a collaborative effort by all after the four areas are worked out in more detail. Members of the taskforce signed up for subcommittees, a charge was submitted by the co-czars, Drs. Ben G. Raimer and Harlan “Mark” Guidry, to create a list of strategies, objectives, plan of action with timeline and resources for each focus area. The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2008. A list of members is located at www.gchd.org. Activities surrounding Galveston’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Task Force were outlined in an article printed January 27th in the *Houston Chronicle* found at www.gchd.org/press/2008/01LeadChronstory.htm.

Planning for 2007 Annual Report

In the January Board meetings, Dr. Guidry presented a proposed outline of the content of our annual report for 2007. The proposed content will include an evaluation of progress towards the 2004 strategic health plan, a public health report on the health of Galveston County, a report on the status of the EMS expansion to the Mainland and Non-Emergency Ambulance Transfer, and a list of 2008 priority initiatives. The goal for the 2007 report is to continue to make it more succinct and more useful to both staff and county and city stakeholders. Following board approval of the outline, the final report will be submitted for board approval at the end of February. The approved report will be posted on the internet as well as reproduced and distributed to cities and partners throughout the county. A PowerPoint summary of the report will be prepared to brief the board, city and county official, and community organizations. The 2006 annual report is located at <http://www.gchd.org/admin/strat06progress.htm>

Meningococcal Meningitis

January 22, 2008, UTMB reported a case of meningococcal meningitis in a Texas A&M University Galveston student. Epidemiology Services responded with a thorough investigation, identified all close contacts of the case for preventive antibiotics, and educated the school about appropriate preventive measures. Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial infection of the fluid of a person’s spinal cord and covering that surrounds the brain. A health advisory was sent out to medical professionals requesting them to consider meningococcal disease in the differential diagnosis of patients presenting with sudden onset of fever, intense headache, nausea, and stiff neck. There was one case of meningococcal disease reported for 2007. In the past recent years, the District has 0 to 4 cases reported annually, typically during winter months. Information about meningococcal disease and a vaccine can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5407.pdf>.

Gastrointestinal Outbreak in Texas City Facility

On January 24, 2008, the Health District received a complaint regarding vomiting and diarrhea in residents and staff of a Galveston County assisted living facility. Epidemiology and Environmental and Consumer Health Services are currently investigating the complaint. A total of 52 residents and staff were affected by the illness. Thirty-nine (49%) were residents and 13 (33%) were staff members. Thus far the Health District

has provided information to the facility on hygiene, hand washing, and disinfection of premises and will continue to monitor the residents and staff for illness. A total of 3 residents have been hospitalized, laboratory tests revealed no apparent cause of illness. The Health District sanitarian's inspection of kitchen and food areas was unremarkable. The Health District will continue to investigate and monitor the outbreak.

External Financial Audit

Both boards engaged the services of Null Lairson, Certified Public Accounts, PC to perform the annual audit. The auditors began work in December 2007. Board members and staff have been interviewed and/or provided the opportunity to provide direct information to the auditors. At present, the auditors have completed a draft report which is being reviewed by Kathy Barroso, CFO. Prior to presenting to the full Boards at the end of February, the auditors will present its report to Dr. Guidry and members of both board finance committees. It is expected that Null Lairson, Certified Public Accounts, PC will submit its final report to both board at February meetings. In the last bid process May 2005, the board selected Null Lairson, Certified Public Accounts, PC to perform the required audits for a three year period. This May 2008, the board will re-bid for these services.

Office of Public Information: *For more information, please contact Kurt Koopmann, Public Information Officer, at (409) 938-2211 or email (kkoopman@gchd.org).*

- Dates for upcoming **mammogram screenings** were submitted to the Community Bulletin Board in the *Galveston Daily News* with eligibility guidelines. These sites are submitted to the newspaper on a monthly basis. Additional information on the availability of mammograms can be found on the District's web site at www.gchd.org/chn/BCCC.htm.
- Partnering with the Department of State Health Services information on **handling cold weather** was posted on the GCHD web site January 3rd. Tips on staying safe in freezing weather are included in the information found at www.gchd.org/press/2008/cold-weather.htm.
- **Water quality in Dickinson Bayou** was the subject of a local news story published in the *Galveston Daily News* on December 21st. In particular the story questioned why signs similar to the Beach Watch signs are not posted along the bayou. The story is posted at www.gchd.org/press/2007/12Dickinsonbayouburden.htm.
- GAAA services were discussed in a story published January 5th in the *Galveston Daily News*. In the story some questioned if a delay in services provided may have been caused by an emergency unit being on a Non-Emergency Ambulance Transfer (NET) call. Mike Carr and Trey Frankovich both contributed to the story posted at www.gchd.org/press/2008/08delays-spur-changes.htm.
- Demand for the **HPV vaccine** was the focus of a story published January 6th in the *Galveston Daily News*. Many believe that demand for the vaccine is actually greater now than previous to the Governor's failed effort to make it mandatory for certain school age girls. The District's immunization department contributed to the story www.gchd.org/press/2008/08HPVflap.htm.
- Activities surrounding **Galveston's Childhood Lead Poisoning Task Force** were outlined in an article printed January 27th in the *Houston Chronicle*. Dr. Guidry and Dr. Beckham both contributed to the story. It can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2008/01LeadChronstory.htm. The Task Force has also been added to the GCHD home page. A photo of the group at the first full meeting and links to members are included at www.gchd.org.

4C's Clinic Updates: *For more information, please contact Patrick Butler, 4C's Business Director, at (409) 949-3406 or email pbutler@gchd.org or Pam Jahnke, RN, Strategic Plan Evaluator at (409) 938-2256 or email pjahnke@gchd.org.*

- **4C's Provider Vacancies** – Two Medical provider vacancies continued to be posted on the Health District's website, TACHC's website, and the Houston Chronicle. One full time Dental Provider

position became vacant in December. The position is posted on the Health District's website and also in the Greater Houston Dental Society newsletter.

- **TB X-Ray** – The Department of State Health Services has approved monies from GCHD's TB program for the purchase of two new X-ray machines to be placed in the 4C's Texas City and Galveston clinics. Additional funds were obtained from the 4C's Governing Board Capital Project Reserve fund (\$200,000) to purchase the machines as the funding from DSHS (\$55,620) did not cover the full cost. The two x-ray machines were delivered in late December and we are currently waiting on delivery of two 40kilowatt generators.
- **Donations to 4C's** - The 4C's received a donation from Direct Relief of 720 Albuterol inhalers, with approximately 3,000 inhalers donated to date. These items have been distributed to both clinics.
- **Dental Redesign** – As of January 2008, all new dental appointments are being scheduled by the main appointment desk in La Marque. All follow up appointments and general questions about dental services are still being handled by the Dental clinic staff. Dental staff are also using a new daily dental clinic report that is sent out to the Clinic Leadership team members, communicating the numbers of patients seen as walk ins and by schedule, numbers of patients asking for services, number of pediatric and new patients, as well as description of problems and/or issues encountered.
- **Title V Medical and Dental Services** – The 4C's began registering children, 0 -21 on January 2, for the newly awarded Title V grant with 55 patients being registered as of January 28, 2008. The purpose of this grant is to provide fee for service payment for primary care and dental services to eligible clients. Title V will cover children who are not eligible for Medicaid in households below 185% of the federal poverty level.
- **Collaboration with MHMR** - At the request of the Gulf Coast Center, the clinic counselor will begin seeing a few patients referred by MH-MR who have moderate to severe mental health conditions. These patients have been determined by psychiatrists to be good candidates for talk therapy along with their medications.

Office of Community Health Services: *For more information, please contact Cassandra Arceneaux, MD, MPH, Director of Community Health Services, at (409) 938-2457 or email carceneaux@gchd.org.*

- **League City Immunization Outreach** - On Thursday, January 24th, Immunization staff provided a vaccine clinic at The Landing Subdivision in League City at the request of the home owners association. Eight shots were provided to community members who took advantage of this clinic.
- **Follow up to DSHS Immunization Grant** - As a requirement of the DSHS Immunization grant, staff are required to insure that deficiencies found during the yearly audits of Galveston County Texas Vaccine for Children Providers have been resolved.
- **Daycare Center Immunization Rates** - Staff audited 3 daycare centers to determine the immunization rates of 19-36 month old children. The rates of the daycare centers were: Star Kids Education and Day Center (La Marque) at 67%, Ziegler Head Start Center (Galveston) at 65% and Tiny Tot Day Nursery (Texas City) at 57%. There is no state wide average specific to Daycare Centers available. The CDC telephone survey of Texas in 2006 resulted in a state wide average of 74.7%. Staff provided letters to the parents of what each of their children needed to be up to date. Staff will re-visit these daycares in a month and expect the rates to be higher.
- **Senior Health Presentations 2008** - The Senior Health schedule for 2008 presentations will include the following topics: 4Cs services, sexually transmitted diseases, wills and food stamps, grandparents caring for children, dental health, emergency services (when to call 911), healthy communities, and personal hygiene and safety. The Health District will also offer TB skin tests and flu shots when available. These presentations will be held at the senior centers in Galveston, Texas City, La

Marque, Bacliff, and Dickinson. Staff is also researching the possibility of collaboration with the Cities of League City and Friendswood. Other topics and locations may be added as needed.

- **HIV Quarterly Report** - The report of HIV cases from October to December of 2007 showed an increase in AIDS cases from the last quarter (Jul-Sept) which was four (4) to ten (10) this quarter with a Cumulative total for 2007 of 29 cases. There has also been 1 pediatric case of AIDS which was found in a 12 year old boy born to an HIV positive mother.
- **STD Biannual Report** - The STD report for July to December of 2007 showed we are surpassing our goals to interview at least 95% of the number of syphilis cases reported and to test at least 95% of STD clients seeking services for HIV infection. A deficiency in follow up of contacts to insure treatment was identified. This deficiency is due to the decrease in staffing as a result of the loss of the HIV prevention grant. This staff had provided some cross cover for the STD Investigation team. There is currently one STD investigation position vacant that will be posted soon.
- **Community Health Nursing Cervical Health Presentation** - In observance of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, the Community Health Nurses in partnership with AgriLife Extension (formerly Texas Cooperative Extension) provided a cervical health presentation on Saturday, January 19, 2008 from 10-12pm at the First Lutheran Church of Galveston. The presentation was given to the Glorianas, the women's group of this Church, with 25 people in attendance including nursing students from the University of Texas Medical Branch. The presentation not only provided important information on cervical screening and the new preventive HPV vaccine, but involved skits, poems, and was enjoyed by all who attended.
- **D'FEET Annual Meeting** - On January 23rd D'FEET held its annual meeting for 2008. Dr. Arceneaux presented a comprehensive look at what the program has accomplished since its inception 6 years ago and the 5 years since working with Galveston County Health District. It was humbling to reveal that we have provided more screening mammograms this year than in any previous year with 821 screening mammograms given through the program from January - December 2007. Dr. Arceneaux will provide this presentation to the Komen Foundation, the funding organization behind D'FEET, on January 30th.

Office of Environmental Health Services: *For more information, please contact Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Services, at (409) 938-2314 or email rschultz@gchd.org*

- **Storm Water Management Plan** – The federally mandated Storm Water Management Plan is due on February 11, 2008 to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The Galveston County Storm Water Collaborative chaired by the Health District has successfully completed phase one of its mission to make certain that each participating member has a storm water plan that meets the state guidelines and ready for submittal. The collaboration will continue its efforts by routinely meeting to discuss the implementation of our plans, discuss jurisdictional overlap, and communicate about areas that we can collaborate successfully.
- **Upcoming Outreach Events** – The Office of Environmental Health Programs is currently planning two big outreach events, Gold Ribbon Awards and Trash Bash. This year modifications to the nomination process for food service establishments have been made allowing restaurant owners or managers to nominate themselves. This self nomination form and an informational brochure are available on the Health District's website at <http://www.gchd.org/ech/goldribbon.htm>. The awards ceremony will be held in April 2008. The Texas City Trash Bash Committee chaired by the Health District will be held on March 29, 2008. This is the fifteenth anniversary of this environmental outreach event that focuses the public's attention on our environment. We will be cleaning the Texas City Dike as our environmental activity and will then be treated to a wonderful lunch, entertainment, the first ever Trash Bash Olympics, and a giveaway to thank all of our participants.

- **Bacliff Animal Services** – The first animal services additional patrols were conducted in the San Leon/Bacliff area the weekend of January 26th. These additional patrols are being funded by Commissioner Doyle and the County. Galveston County Animal Control Officer Edwards was assigned the inaugural weekend duty on Saturday. Officer Edwards captured three dogs, attempted capture of another eight dogs, issued 11 notices for dogs at large and improper food and shelter and investigated one alleged cruelty case. While in the area, Officer Edwards also assisted a constable who was attempting to serve a warrant and was unable due to an aggressive dog.
- **Air and Water Pollution Services Staffing** – The Air and Water Pollution Services Division is currently in the process of hiring four full time equivalent Environmental Investigators to replace staff that terminated their employment with the District. The Division has been interviewing potential candidates and hoping to make offers in the near future. Recruiting competent staff has been difficult recently. Reasons to explain this down turn in candidate response may be due to the fact that jobs in the environmental field are in great demand and the competition for staff is great and has increased available starting salaries.
- **Overdue Consumer Health Permits** – During the past month staff have been dealing with two permitted establishments whose permits expired at the end of the year, the Cajun Greek Restaurant and Crystal Beach Zoological Park. The board approved policy for food service establishments requires a published notice and filing of charges for a class “c” misdemeanor when an establishment is operating without a permit. This became unnecessary when the restaurant owner paid for his permit after being contacted by District personnel. No such notice is required of the animal establishment and Consumer Health is in the process of filing charges.

Office of Emergency Medical Services: *For more information, please contact Mike Carr, JD, EMS Director, (409) 765-2524 or mcarr@ghcd.org*

- **Staffing Update** - There are currently 15 vacant full-time field 911 positions and 5 vacant full-time field non-emergency transfer positions. For full-time, we have one basic and one intermediate scheduled for testing. We are checking references on one Basic and Intermediate and are waiting on physical and drug test results for one full-time Basic and Paramedic. For part-time, we have one Paramedic scheduled for testing. We are checking references on one basic and are waiting on physical and drug test results for two basics. In addition, the vacant EMS Supervisor position has been posted internally. Employees who have been with the District for at least one year and have been in a Team Captain role for one year are welcomed to apply.
- **First Week of Mardi Gras Operations**– GAAA staff completed response operations for the first week of Mardi Gras in Galveston. Crowds were moderate even though the festival area does not require admission fees this year. One GAAA Medic was injured when he was thrown from his bicycle while responding to an emergency request for service. The second week is historically the busiest weekend of the festival.
- **Non Emergency Transfer Operations** – Deputy Director for Non Emergency Transfer operations, Trey Frankovich, continues to work with partners to streamline operations and improve customer service. Work continues on development of a Standing Operations Guideline for Non Emergency Transfers and Memorandum of Understanding for backup to GAAA crews when demand for service exceeds capacity to respond.
- **New EMS unit delivered** – GAAA took delivery on a new Frazer Type III ambulance unit. After being equipped, the unit will become the primary 911 response unit in the Hitchcock station, with the current vehicle providing a reserve for mainland 911 operations.
- **Non-Emergency Transfer Operations** – GAAA has hired a dispatcher for Non Emergency Transfer operations as contemplated by the budget amendment approved by the UBOH at its November meeting. The dispatcher will work during peak hours, up to 48 hours weekly.

Disease & Disaster Preparedness for additional information, contact Dana Beckham, DVM, Director of Disease and Disasters, at (409) 938-2322 or email dbeckham@gchd.org.

- **Dengue Fever in Friendswood Resident** - On January 14, 2008, the Health District investigated a case of dengue fever in a 39 year old female residing in Friendswood. Investigation revealed that the case had traveled to an area in Mexico where dengue is endemic. Dengue Fever is a mosquito-transmitted viral illness characterized by sudden onset of fever, severe headaches, muscle and joint pains. There were 2 cases of dengue fever in 2007; both were imported into the United States. Dengue Fever is not transmitted person-to-person. For more information on dengue fever, see <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/dengue/index.htm>
- **Influenza** - The flu activity level for Texas for the week ending January 12, 2008 (MMWR week 2) is “widespread”. Widespread indicates that at least half of the regions in the state are experiencing an increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) and have recent culture–confirmed cases. Texas’ second pediatric influenza-associated fatality occurred during week 2. Galveston County is experiencing an increase in flu and ILI. The Health District has reported to DSHS the following lab confirmed cases: 149 cases of Flu A; 9 cases of Flu B; 2 cases of non-differentiated Flu; and 30 ILI from November 2007 to January 26, 2008. The full report for MMWR week 2 is now available at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/influenza/surveillance/2008>.

Training/Meetings:

- **Point of Dispensing Exercise Preparations** - Public Health Preparedness personnel are making preparations to conduct a point of dispensing exercise on March 29th. The exercise will be conducted in coordination with Clear Creek Independent School District, the League City Police Dept, League City Emergency Management, Brazoria County Health Department, and the Texas Department of State Health Services. An anthrax scenario will be used in structuring events. Public Health Preparedness staff has been meeting with the partner agencies to coordinate planning leading up to the exercise.
- **Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative** - The Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative (GCERC) met on January 10th. The group walked through a pandemic flu scenario to identify what actions needed to be taken to be better prepared for such an event. The group identified several steps that could be taken including adding additional providers into the Health Information Network, getting clarification on the state flu vaccine plan, and coordinating messages to the public between GCHD and healthcare providers. In the next meeting on February 14th, the group will further discuss the pandemic flu scenario and discuss medical surge and healthcare staffing issues.
- **Meeting with Emergency Coordinators** - On January 3rd, the Public Health Planner and the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Coordinator attended a meeting with city and county Emergency Management Coordinators at the County Emergency Management Building in League City. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify how the response to a SNS plan activation should be structured. An incident command structure consistent with local, state and federal guidelines was developed from the meeting. The Public Health Planner will be meeting with emergency coordinators from each of these jurisdictions to further develop public health emergency response plans for their jurisdictions.
- **Regional Epidemiology/Bioterrorism Meeting** - Epidemiology Services attended the regional epidemiology and bioterrorism meeting at the City of Houston Health and Human Services. Dr. Beckham, chief epidemiologist, presented “Childhood Lead Poisoning in Galveston County” to approximately 40 participants representing 16 counties. The meeting is a forum for epidemiologist

and public health preparedness staff to exchange information regarding epidemiology and bioterrorism activities.

Signed RFP's, Grants, Contracts & Agreements For more information, please contact Kristina Garcia, Compliance Auditor, at (409) 938-2213 or email kgarcia@gchd.org.

- **Contract with Leta F. Melancon** was renewed on December 26, 2008. The term of this Agreement is January 31, 2008 through January 31, 2009. The independent contractor will monitor health services delivered by Correctional Medical Services to the Galveston County Jail inmates. Compensation will remain the same as previous contract at an annual amount of \$10,000 to be paid in twelve equal payments of \$833.33.
- **STD/HIV Programs Grant from DSHS** was signed by COO on January 16, 2008 in the amount of \$161,448. There was an increase of \$20,865 from the previous year. The grant provides for programs to control and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and Viral Hepatitis.
- **Immunization Grant from DSHS** was signed by COO on January 18, 2008. It is a potential new revenue stream of \$31,000. The District will provide immunization for 4C's uninsured patients 18 years or younger, with special emphasis on children less than 36-months of age.
- Technical Support Agreement with **Ortivus, Inc.** and GAAA was signed by COO in January. This Agreement is for maintenance of the SWEEPS billing software program.
- Interlocal Agreement with **The Texas Department of Transportation** was signed January 18, 2008. The District agrees to provide Hepatitis B injections to their employees at a cost not to exceed \$150 per series of three vaccines. The maximum amount payable under this agreement without amendment is \$15,000.

Program Audits: For more information, please contact Kristina Garcia, Compliance Auditor, at (409) 938-2213 or email kgarcia@gchd.org.

- **Internal Audit of Animal Shelter** – Dr. Dana Beckham, Veterinary Consultant, conducted an internal audit of the animal shelter on December 28, 2007. The results of the audit were sent to Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to meet the Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 823, Animal Shelter Act requirement. The shelter received an overall satisfactory rating that indicates that the shelter is clean, modern looking and structurally sound. Deficiencies noted included dog food improperly stored; stainless steel sink pulling away from wall with broken rusted leg; non-waterproof electrical socket installed above sink and drug log book not current on entries. The shelter received excellent feedback from DSHS' last audit (August 2007) regarding improvements at the shelter and processes implemented for rabies follow up, social enrichment for animals, standard operating procedure book, and new positions.
- **HRSA Performance Review** –Staff continue to prepare for the Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Operational Performance Review that will take place on February 4-5, 2008. Performance Measures to be discussed include (1) the number of unduplicated users (2) 4C's Current Ratio and (3) the percentage of Dental patients with a comprehensive oral evaluation and a treatment plan completed in a 12 month period and (4) Immunization percentages for pediatrics up to the age of 3. HRSA staff has also requested to review the Health Center Emergency Management Program Expectations for Policy Information Notice (PIB): 2007-15.
- **STD Contract Site Review** - The STD program is scheduled for a program review by DSHS on February 26-28, 2008. The reviewers will be reviewing administrative activities for the year 2007 and will be making field observations of staff interaction with clients. A full report of the review is anticipated to be completed within 45 days of the visit.