



**Executive Report to the Galveston County 4C's Governing Board**  
**June 26, 2008**

**GCHD Facility Needs in the News**

The need for **new health district facilities** was featured in a *Galveston Daily News* story on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Information was provided by staff for the story that discussed the age of current buildings and the need for additional clinic space. The story can be accessed at [www.gchd.org/press/2008/0608Newbuilding.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/0608Newbuilding.htm). The next day June 24<sup>th</sup> the *Daily News* also published an editorial supporting the plan for new facilities. In the editorial the efficiency of the health district was touted and the plan deemed sound. The editorial is posted at [www.gchd.org/press/2008/0608EfficientPlan.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/0608EfficientPlan.htm).

**Updates: Tackling the Problem of Childhood Lead Poisoning**

The Galveston Lead Taskforce met on June 12, 2008 at the Island Community Center where many updates were given. Information about the taskforce as well as resources for the public are located at [www.gchd.org](http://www.gchd.org).

- Since January 2008 to June 25, 2008, a total of 9 City of Galveston children with elevated blood leads have been reported to GCHD. Seven of 9 children reside in high risk zip code areas of 77550 & 77551. All children with lead levels of 10 ug/dl or greater receive a home assessment by a public health nurse who discussion prevention with parents. Homes of children with levels of 20 ug/dl or higher (or two levels between 15-19 over three months) also receive an environmental lead assessment where samples of paint and soil are tested with notification of parents/owners of results and laws regarding disclosure and lead safe work practices.
- GCHD Epidemiology Service has been working closely with UTMB and Mainland Medical Center to improve the accuracy of immediately reporting all blood lead level results in Galveston County to the Local Health Authority. After gaining access to the DSHS Lab blood lead reporting data based, GCHD EPI services determined that GCHD has not been receiving all blood lead reports from DSHS, UTMB, Mainland Medical Center, and reference laboratories. The May 2008 quality assurance review of data showed that a total of 111 blood lead results had not been reported to the Health District. None of the 111 were elevated blood lead level cases. The Health District has taken the follow measures to correct this reporting issue: letters and a health advisory were sent to healthcare providers and labs on reporting requirements and meetings were held with DSHS, UTMB, & MMC to streamline the reporting process. As of May 2008, the Health District started receiving all reports from UTMB. Currently the Health District has received 1214 lead results from all reporting entities. UTMB has reported 589, 4C's Clinics 63, and DSHS 562. Investigation revealed 9 confirmed cases and 23 pending.
- On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, GCHD submitted a draft MOU to City of Galveston and Galveston Housing Authority to share information, as allowed by law, to better identify any landlords on the housing voucher program (section 8) linked to reported cases of childhood lead poisoning. The draft MOU is currently under legal review by the City and the Housing Authority pending execution.
- On May 19<sup>th</sup>, GCHD submitted information to the HUD (Lead Programs Enforcement Division) for investigation and enforcement of the federal lead disclosure laws. Over the past three years, some 17 homes in Galveston were identified with lead hazards linked to a child reported with poisoning. Once notified, owners of property are required to disclosure the hazard to tenants or prospective home buyers of that property.

- On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Kempner Foundation awarded GCHD a grant award of \$30,000 to purchase state-of-the-art lead testing equipment known as an X-Ray Fluorescence Detector. This equipment will speed up identification of lead in paint and soil during an environmental lead investigation and allow us to report this information to parents and guardians in a timelier manner. The grant will also allow us to train and certify two Health District employees as certified lead risk assessors.
- The Health District has completed interviews of a vacant Air and Water Pollution position that also performed home lead testing in the past. Several certified lead assessors applied and a selection will be made soon. As home lead testing is expected to increase in Galveston and throughout the county, GCHD has requested increased funding for a dedicated position to address environmental lead issues.
- Media Inquiries and reports – ABC Channel 13 conducted an interview with Dr. Mark Guidry and City of Galveston Assistant City Manager Lloyd Rinderer on May 13<sup>th</sup>. In the interview each discussed the challenge posed by lead poisoning in Galveston and what efforts are taking place to address the issue. Reporter Cynthia Cisneros also interviewed two local residents living in pre-1978 homes that possess the greatest risk of containing lead. A June 2<sup>nd</sup> article the *Houston Chronicle* primarily summarized activities of the community task force to date [www.gchd.org/press/2008/06-06-08Alexis-Grant-lead-story.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/06-06-08Alexis-Grant-lead-story.htm). A June 6<sup>th</sup> story in the *Galveston Daily News* reported on activities with a focus on the data being collected and efforts being made to insure that all numbers are reported to the district's epidemiologist [www.gchd.org/press/2008/06-06-08leigh-jones-lead-story.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/06-06-08leigh-jones-lead-story.htm).

### **Pertussis Cluster in Galveston's Schools**

In the months of May and June the Health District received 3 confirmed pertussis (whooping cough) cases that were epidemiologically linked. All 3 cases attended school in Galveston (2 of the 3 attended the same school). All 3 cases were current on their immunizations for pertussis. Epidemiology investigation revealed all 3 cases were adequately treated for pertussis and a total of 21 close contacts were identified to receive post-exposure medication. The Health District notified school administrators at both schools and sent a pertussis advisory letter and fact sheet for distribution to the student's parents. Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease caused by a bacteria that infects the respiratory system. Galveston County reported 11, 9 and 1 pertussis cases to the Texas Department of State Health Department for the years 2005, 2006 and 2007, respectively.

### **TCDRS Retirement Plan starts on July 10<sup>th</sup>**

The United Board of Health and 4C's Governing Board have both approved the TCDRS retirement plan proposal for all GCHD employees after an intensive review of the proposal and town hall meeting with employees. The new TCDRS retirement benefit will start on July 10<sup>th</sup> and will be reflected in the July 30<sup>th</sup> pay checks. Human Resources has started working on enrollment of employees. Also Executive Officers have sent a letter to AUL requesting termination of the 401(a) plan. The options available to employees upon termination of the plan include rollover of funds to a qualified plan or request a lump sum payment.

**Office of Public Information:** *For more information, please contact Kurt Koopmann, Public Information Officer, at (409) 938-2211 or email ([kkoopman@gchd.org](mailto: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. The community mammogram schedule is posted on the district web site [www.gchd.org/chn/dfeet.htm](http://www.gchd.org/chn/dfeet.htm).
- Hurricane preparedness was the center attention in Galveston when the state's **Ready or Not** program visited the county. The program urges all families and individuals to develop an emergency plan in

advance to prepare for hurricanes and other disasters. GCHD public information was requested to handle all media inquiries at the event which included interviews with NBC Channel 2 and the Galveston County Daily News. The *Daily News* story can be found at [www.gchd.org/press/2008/052808Hurricaneprepare.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/052808Hurricaneprepare.htm).

- **Salmonella** from tainted tomatoes the subject of a press release issued on June 3<sup>rd</sup> after information was received from the Texas Department of State Health Services. Epidemiology worked to get the information out to medical providers in the community and also traced reported cases of the illness in the county. The press release is posed on the GCHD web page at [www.gchd.org/press/2008/0608Salmonellosisoutbreak.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/0608Salmonellosisoutbreak.htm).
- **Beach water advisories** garnered attention with the beginning of the summer season on Galveston County beaches. Public information fulfilled an interview request from *Univision* and several newspapers. The information is posted daily on [www.gchd.org/pollution/BeachAdvisory.htm](http://www.gchd.org/pollution/BeachAdvisory.htm).

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

- **Staffing Update** – The 4C's has two new Medical Providers, Bobbie Baggett, PA-C, who started on June 2, 2008, and a part-time medical provider, Kokila Parikh, MD, who started on June 12, 2008, as well as, a new part-time Dental Provider, Sophia Devoll, DDS, who started on June 10, 2008. Staff continues to search for qualified medical providers to fill open positions, with two possible medical candidates being considered at this time, along with one part-time vacant dental provider position. Current Provider vacancies have been widely advertized and distributed. Information on all Health District positions can be viewed at: <http://www.gchd.org/hr/job.htm>
- **4C's Plan for Clinic Management & Electronic Records Systems** – Executive staff set priorities for rollout to include: the clinic management system, a dental system, and the electronic medical record system in conjunction with the planned moved to the former Wal-Mart building on 9300 Emmett F. Lowery Expressway, Texas City. Executive and selected staff attended several webinars with BCA, Healthport, and EHS, Inc., who demonstrated their respective EMR systems. Areas of interest include the Clinic Management System, which includes patient registration, appointment scheduling, demographics, billing, reporting, auditing, just to name a few. As well as, the Electronic Medical Record itself, which includes, provider notes, patient vitals, immunizations data, medical alerts, educational materials, prescription writing and tracking, tracking of diabetes, hypertension and other clinical measures.

**Office of Community Health Services:** For more information, please contact Cassandra Arceneaux, MD, MPH, Director of Community Health Programs at (409) 938-2456 or email [carceneaux@gchd.org](mailto:carceneaux@gchd.org).

- **Senior Health** - Charles Kelly, Senior Health Coordinator continued to promote senior health this month through the topic "Grandparents Caring For Children-WIC" in the Cities of *La Marque*, *Dickinson* and *Bacliff*. A total of 155 seniors were educated on the importance of good nutrition for kids, and given an overview of eligibility requirements and services the Women Infants and Children Program provides. On June 12th, Charles Kelly presented an overview of GCHD services to 29 residents at Lake Haven Retirement Community in *League City*. Plans are being discussed to incorporate Lake Haven into the monthly Senior Center Presentations.
- **Texas STD/HIV Conference-** STD/HIV staff attended the Annual Texas Conference in Austin May 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>. At a "special meeting" during the conference, there was a discussion of concerns around the state of Texas. It was announced in this meeting that DSHS had conducted a workload survey and GCHD STD/HIV Program had the highest workload in Texas for 2007. DSHS is also working to adjust the pay scale for DIS workers statewide.

- **DSHS Regional Immunization Training** – On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, GCHD hosted the DSHS Immunization Training which included updates on the Vaccines for Children Program, ImmTrac, and Adolescent & Adult Immunizations. This training is in accordance with grant requirements. 9 attendees included providers, school nurses, and day care staff.
- **WIC Grocery Store Vendor EBT Training-** On May 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, & June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, DSHS held training sessions for local grocers for the upcoming transition of EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer). All grocers must be ready to roll-out EBT on August 11, 2008. A total of 115 local vendors were in attendance.

**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](mailto:rschultz@gchd.org)*

- **Healthy Homes Conference** – Ronnie Schultz attended a national conference on the transition from a lead intervention program to a Healthy Homes program. Under the healthy homes program, the home environment is viewed holistically. Every aspect of health and safety are reviewed during a healthy home inspection, such as fire hazards, tripping hazards, overall cleanliness of the home, food safety, integrated pest control and also the lead intervention. There is currently a national push to move lead intervention programs to the healthy homes concept. There are many programs currently funded in the country and more dollars being diverted to fund these programs. The trend in the lead intervention funding is toward the healthy homes.
- **Animal Shelter Cleanup** – The Joe Vickery Animal Shelter temporarily closed to adoption services in order for staff to make needed repairs and improvements. Staff organized shelter supplies and were able to store these supplies in the new storage container approved by the Board. The shelter was thoroughly cleaned and sanitized during this period of time to help reduce the likelihood of a future illness outbreak. Animal Control field services operated as usual during this time.
- **Animal Investigations** - Animal Field Services participated in a civil animal seizure that involved the abandonment of two dogs on the porch of a trailer in the San Leon area. Concerned neighbors reported the two dogs were left by their owners at the trailer with no food or water as reported by concerned neighbors. Officer Henderson investigated the case and sought a seizure warrant to remove the dogs following the owner notification. During this time, Officer Henderson provided feed and water to the dogs. They were eventually seized and awarded by the local Justice of the Peace to our shelter. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Animal Control Officers were notified and investigated a dog bite that involved a pit bull and a 19 month old baby in the Dickinson area. The baby sustained multiple puncture wounds to the legs and feet from this family owned pet. The dog was relinquished to the shelter for rabies testing and results are pending.
- **Consumer Health Permits Overdue** – 12 food service permits and three pool permits were overdue as of 6/1/08. Letters were sent out to the owners; as of 6/24/08, all of the facilities have paid and are in compliance with the policy approved by the Board for food service and pool establishments.

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

- **GAAA Staffing Update** – There are currently 19 vacant full-time field 911 positions and 6 vacant full-time field non-emergency transfer positions. This includes the recently added three intermediate positions to cover the Bolivar Peninsula. We have six full time EMT–Basics finishing up the hiring process and nine full-time Basics, Intermediates, and Paramedics scheduled for testing or interviews. We have one part-time Paramedic scheduled to start in July and 3 part-time Basics and Paramedics scheduled for testing or interviews.
- **Bolivar Peninsula First Responder Program** – The Galveston County Commissioner's Court has funded three EMT-I positions to serve as first responders assisting the four EMS providers on the

peninsula. To date, the County has provided a vehicle for the responders, and necessary equipment has been ordered. One potential employee is in the screening process and if all goes well should be on board by early July.

- **Hurricane Operations** – GAAA staff are working with City of Galveston and County of Galveston Emergency Management officials. The Hurricane operations plan has been reviewed with all staff members. City of Galveston Emergency Management has consulted on Hurricane evacuation staging operations and is supportive of the plan for staging outside resources for dispatch as needed by local evacuation operations. GAAA staff members, along with City of Galveston officials are compiling a list of persons who may need ambulance transportation in the event of an evacuation; each of these persons will be contacted prior to an evacuation event to determine continued need for ambulance transportation.
- **Non Emergency Transfer (NET) Status** - As of May, GAAA's NET had responded to a total of 3,883 calls for fiscal year 2008. 1,792 of those calls were in Galveston which is an increase of 341 from fiscal year 2007. The other 2091 calls were on the Mainland which is a decrease of 317 calls from last year. NET has handed off 590 calls for service to private ambulance providers during the first 8 months of this fiscal year due to staff shortage or no NET units available to meet the callers requested time line. This represents approximately 21% of the NET call volume. Another NET unit was added to the schedule for part-time staff to fill in order to attempt to capture more of the calls that are handed off to outside providers.
- **Software Upgrade Project** – The project to implement the ePCR (electronic patient care record) is moving forward. Quotes for hardware and accessories have been received and data is being collected to begin configuration of the software for GAAA use. The anticipated "Go Live" date is October 1, 2008.
- **UTMB Contributes to EKG Upgrades** - UTMB Emergency Preparedness Program has donated \$20K to the GAAA to be used as part of the local match for a DSHS Local Project Grant. The project is to upgrade six EKG monitors to read 12-lead EKG's and to transmit them to the local hospitals. The project is expected to be completed by the end of August 2008.

**Disease & Disaster Preparedness** for additional information, contact Dana Beckham, DVM, Chief Epidemiologist, at (409) 938-2322 or email [dbeckham@gchd.org](mailto:dbeckham@gchd.org).

***Epidemiology Updates:***

- **Multistate *Salmonella saintpaul* Outbreak** - On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, a Health Advisory was sent to the medical community on a multi-state outbreak of the *saintpaul* strain of *Salmonella* bacteria found in raw tomatoes. According to CDC, 707 persons in 34 states and District of Columbia have been infected with the organism since April 2008. As of June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 293 cases were reported in Texas and 3 of them were in Galveston County.
- **Lead in Artificial Turf PHIN Health Advisory** - On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, a Public Health Information Network (PHIN) Health Advisory was sent to the medical community on the Potential Exposure to Lead in Artificial Turf. The advisory discussed the public health issues, actions, and recommendations.
- **UTMB 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Pediatric Review** - On June 8<sup>th</sup>, the Chief Epidemiologist presented on *Partners in Prevention* at the UTMB 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Pediatric Review and Update. The presentation consisted of Health District Services, opportunities for medical and public health services to collaborate on public health concerns, and the importance of disease reporting. There were over 180 participants registered at the statewide conference.

***Preparedness Update:***

- On June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2008 Galveston County Public Health Preparedness/Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps attended the Dickinson (40 attendees) and League City (14 attendees) Rotary Club

weekly meeting. A presentation was given regarding Public Health Preparedness, Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps and GCHD Volunteer Program. Participants were instructed regarding how to prepare for a public health emergency, given information on the Health District's Volunteer Program and encouraged to become active participants in both the Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps and the Galveston County Health District Volunteer Program.

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

- **Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund** grant Agreement was signed by CEO on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The grant award amount was \$30,000 to support the purchase of the lead detection equipment and to certify one additional district staff member.
- **First Amendment to GAAA Ambulance Services Contract with CHCA Mainland, L.P., d/b/a Mainland Medical Center** was signed by COO on June 11th. This Amendment included revisions to Section 3 pertaining to Time for Commencement and Completion. And, Attachment A – Price List for Ambulance Transportation section “Rates for PCI MICU standby” were removed from original agreement.
- **The Paper and Janitorial supply bid** was awarded to **Corporate Express and Kleen** for one-year. COO approved the bid award on June 11th.
- **ESO Solutions, Inc. Subscription Agreement** was signed by COO on June 16<sup>th</sup>. ESO shall provide electronic patient care reporting services to GAAA. The term is for one-year with automatic renewals until cancelled. The annual estimated subscription fee is \$31,995 annually and a one-time licenses fee of \$9,730.
- **Memorandum of Agreement** between the 4C's Clinic and **Our Fathers Kingdom Ministry** was signed by COO on June 18, 2008. The Clinic has agreed to provide medical and dental service to patients referred by this local agency. In exchange, the local agency will be billed at a flat contract rate per visit for the professional services rendered to their clients
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Training and Consulting Agreement** was signed by COO on June 20, 2008. **Contractor Barry Hanke** will provide seven professional training sessions totaling 24 hours, technical expertise during a health and/or disaster related emergency, and consulting services by phone and in person. The cost of these professional services is \$9,345.00 and will cover from July 15, 2008 through July 31, 2010.
- **Memorandum of Understanding with Ms. Erin Anderson, Certified Lead Risk Assessor** was signed by CEO on June 20, 2008. Ms. Anderson will provide lead risk assessments and conduct environmental lead investigations. GCHD will compensate her at the rate of \$30.00 per hour and will pay mileage at the rate of 50 cents per mile. This agreement will remain in effect until terminated.
- **Agreement to Detail Federal Civil Service Personnel to the Galveston County Health District** was signed by CEO on June 25, 2008. This collaboration with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Texas Association of Local Health Officials (TALHO), and the district is to establish a Public Health Apprentice Program. This agreement outlines the objectives to the assignment and the District's responsibilities as the host agency.
- Addendum to the Agreement to Detail Federal Civil Service Personnel between CDC and entities within the Texas Public Health System titled **Administrative Agreement for the Public Health Apprentice Program in Galveston County Health District** was signed by CEO on June 25, 2008. The Apprentices are civil service personnel hired by CDC to serve under an excepted service appointment not-to-exceed two years, with an option of an additional one year extension.