



Executive Report to the Galveston County 4C's Governing Board
November 20, 2008

Crisis in Uninsured Access to Specialty Healthcare

Since Hurricane Ike and the changes at UTMB, an estimated 75,000 Galveston County residents have no access to specialty care. The 4C's clinic sees about 17,000 uninsured residents annually among whom about 220 are currently deemed eligible for the county indigent healthcare program. For patients on county indigent, new referrals sources are being negotiated on a case-by- case basis as the need is identified. For all other uninsured patients, 4C's clinic staff have encountered many sad and challenging stories of uninsured patients who were previously under care by UTMB specialists now with little to no options for specialty care for serious health conditions. Staff is working with private providers who can provide some limited assistance; yet costs remain a barrier to many whose disease condition may worsen to the point of an emergency and ultimately preventable hospitalizations and mortality. Both GCHD boards of health are reviewing the current issues and plan to develop a position statement regarding the problem and a potential long-term solution. An article on community concerns about a much smaller UTMB was reported November 16th in the *Galveston County Daily News*. Many community leaders including GCHD CEO Dr. Mark Guidry expressed concerns about the difficulty many populations will have accessing health care. The article is located at www.gchd.org/press/2008/111608DownsizedUTMB.htm.

Hurricane Ike Environmental Updates

The Office of Environmental Health Programs continues to address issues related to the Hurricane Ike Recovery. Staff attended a meeting with County Judge James Yarbrough and Commissioner Pat Doyle along with representatives from several county offices and a private developer to discuss the possibility of installing a regional waste water collection and treatment system on Bolivar Peninsula. As we wait for the decision on regional wastewater treatment, the Consumer Health Services Division at the Health District continues to receive status reports from certified septic installers on the status of individual septic systems along the peninsula. Once received, staff forwards them to the County Engineer's Office who uses them to release power to these Peninsula residents. The Environmental Health Programs have also been working with FEMA representatives as a liaison between FEMA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) attempting to expedite a waste water discharge permit for a temporary waste water treatment plant associated with FEMA temporary housing. The Air and Water Pollution Services Division has been in communication with several departments at UTMB who have received a grant to sample the sludge on Galveston Island as a result of the storm surge from Hurricane Ike. The Division has offered to provide technical assistance on the project.

Time for Flu Shots

During November 3rd – 18th, the Community Health Nursing and Immunization staff provided over 372 flu shots to various entities throughout the county in addition to the almost 5,000 given immediately after Hurricane Ike. Staff have been to senior living facilities, churches, schools, rehab centers, and provided shots to employees at several community businesses. Cities served through this outreach include *Texas City, Galveston, Friendswood, League City, Hitchcock, and Santa Fe*. Thus far, there have been no confirmed flu cases reported to the Health District. Community groups desiring flu shots may contact June Gonzales, RN at (409) 938-2244.

Second Annual GCHD Employee Awards Ceremony

On Thursday, November 13th, the District recognized employees for exemplary performance and years of service. In addition, 165 employees were given certificates and recognition for their hard work and dedication before, during, and after Hurricane Ike. Seven employees were named GCHD's 2008 Employees-of-the-Year. Honorees were Abby Hernandez (Executive Services), Mary Jane Griggs (4C's), Barbara Gonzales (EMS), Jason Borillo, PA (4C's) Aida Martinez (Fiscal Services), Natalie Guillory (Community Health Programs), and Alex Strange (Animal Services). Several Board members were on hand to extend congratulations including Virginia Valentino, 4C's Governing Board; Steven Leach, United Board of Health; and Dr. Milton Howard, United Board of Health and 4C's Governing Board. See photo of employees of the year at <http://www.gchd.org/index.htm>

GCHD Has Jobs!!!!!! <http://www.gchd.org/hr/job.htm>

- **4C's Vacancies** - Staff continues to search for qualified primary care medical and dental providers, a staff RN, a Nursing Director, a Laboratory Supervisor, Medical Records Clerk and Dental Assistants.
- **Public Health Services Vacancies** – There is a vacant Disease Investigator (epidemiology), a Community Health Nurse (RN), WIC's Registered Dietitian/Site Supervisor, WIC Public Health Educator/Patient Referral Specialist, and a Clerk position.
- **Environmental Health Services** – Has Environmental Investigators, Assistant Program Manager, Animal Control Officer, Animal Care Technician and a Veterinary Technician.
- **EMS** – There are currently 16 vacant full-time field 911 positions and 5 vacant full-time field non-emergency transfer positions. We have three full-time EMT-Basics and one full-time Paramedic pending drug test results and physicals
- **Fiscal Services** – Currently has two Patient Services Specialist openings.

Updates on Boards' Memberships

When a United Board of Health member resigns their position on the Board or their term expires, Commissioners Court nominates a new member, subject to approval by a majority (7) of member cities. On April 30, 2008, six member terms expired. To date, a majority of city members (*Jamaica Beach, Friendswood, Dickinson, Hitchcock, Santa Fe, Clear Lake Shores, and Kemah*) have now ratified the following members: Scott Bentley; J.A. Konikowski, MD; Steven Leach, CRNA; Bernard Milstein, MD; Walter Treybig, III; Bob Baylor, DVM (new); and Charles T. Scruggs, DDS (new). Also, as of October 29th, Mary Anne Holcomb resigned from the United Board of Health. A member to replace her term has been submitted to Commissioner's Court for consideration, pending approval. For the 4C's Governing Board, Rosie Morales resigned after the impact of Hurricane Ike. Per bylaws, The United Board of Health will nominate a replacement at its next meeting on December 10th, for subsequent approval by the Governing Board at its next meeting on January 29, 2009. For more information on boards of health, see <http://www.gchd.org/boards/boardindex.htm>

4C's Issues RFP for New 4C's Management & Medical Records Systems

The 4C's Clinic Management and Electronic Records Systems RFP was sent out to several vendors on November 3, 2008 with a closing date of December 15, 2008. Areas of interest include the Clinic Management System, which contains 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. Priorities for the rollout include: the clinic management system, a dental system, and the electronic medical record system in conjunction with the anticipated move to the former Wal-Mart building on 9300 Emmett F. Lowery Expressway, Texas City.

Workers' Compensation Coordinator

To address workers' compensation issues, a new position was approved. On November 17, 2008, Mary Anne Holcomb started as the District's Workers' Compensation Coordinator. Mary Anne's responsibilities include acting as a liaison with the workers' compensation carrier, providing case management and care coordinator for injured workers, performing root cause analysis/investigations, assisting supervisors, and developing training and policy guidelines to potentially decrease the frequency of on-the-job injuries, the length of time employees are out of work, total overall costs to the District. Mary Anne will be providing reports and updates to the board on a quarterly basis.

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

- Current dates for upcoming **mammogram screenings** are posted on the district web site www.gchd.org/chn/dfeet.htm.
- New **lead detection equipment** purchased with grant funds received from the Kempner Foundation was the subject of a press release issued September 5th. The press release included a photograph of the equipment being used and can be found at <http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/090508XRFequip.htm>.
- The GCHD annual **flu shot** campaign was noted in a press release issued on October 16th. The release stressed that while it is always important to get a flu shot it may be even more important following Hurricane Ike. The information with a schedule of locations where flu shots would be given is posted at www.gchd.org/press/2008/Preventing-flu-10-08.htm.
- An effort by Galveston County Commissioners to provide full-time fire and EMS services to the **Bolivar Peninsula** was covered in a October 28th *Galveston County Daily News* article www.gchd.org/press/2008/102008ems-news.htm.
- **The Healthy Weigh** a new childhood obesity **project** being implemented by Community Health Programs with funding received from the Department of State Health Services was announced in a November 6th press release. The information with a link to additional program information and forms can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2008/childhood-obesity-10-08.htm.
- After Ike the community was left with no Level 1 **Trauma Center**. A November 8th story in the *Galveston County Daily News* examined what that means to the county and how air ambulances are being used to fill the void. EMS Director Mike Carr contributed to the story www.gchd.org/press/2008/110808TraumaCare.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 or Pam Jahnke, RN, Strategic Plan Evaluator at (409) 938-2256 or email pjahnke@gchd.org.

- **Medical & Dental Provider Update** – 4C's has two new Medical Providers, Tawana Smith, MD, who started on October 20, 2008, and part-time medical provider, Stephanie Hamilton, NP who started on November 3, 2008.
- **Care for HIV/AIDS Patients** - Clinic staff are working with the Aids Coalition of Coastal Texas to deliver primary care to persons with HIV/AIDS. A contract for services is being developed but meanwhile, patients are being referred from ACCT and are being seen in the clinics. Clinic provider staff anticipates training from the Resource Group in Houston.
- **4C's Dental Review** – 4C's has a new Dental Controller, Judith Primm, who started on October 28th. Ms. Primm will assist the 4C's Dental Director and Business Director to train the Dental Assistant/Receptionists, as well as, assisting in the planning and implementation of guidelines and procedures of the Dental Review.

- **Head Start** – The 4C's has contracted with the *Texas City Independent School District's Cooperative Head Start* and the *Galveston County Community Action Council – Head Start program* to provide Developmental Examinations and Physical Examinations to participants. 4C's staff completed 53 well child physicals for Texas City Head Start and will begin seeing Galveston Head Start participants on December 9th.
- **Hurricane Ike Registry** – The Health District is collaborating with The USA Center for Rural Public Health Preparedness at the School of Rural Public Health at Texas A&M Health Science Center to develop a Hurricane Ike Registry. The research project was approved by the Governing Board at the October 30th meeting and recruitment efforts began on November 19th. The purpose of this registry is to gather the names and contact information for individuals affected by Hurricane Ike and who are interested in participating in activities. Members of the registry may be contacted about activities and research studies focused on better understanding evacuation, sheltering, and recovery in the wake of this hurricane. Activities and research studies will allow state and local entities to better respond and meet the needs of Texans before, during and after a hurricane and other natural disasters. It is anticipated that these activities and studies will occur over the course of the next 5 years.

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.*

- **Health Fairs** – During the months of October/November, GCHD staff participated in 2 health fairs, a total of 350 persons were reached. GCHD Brochures, IMMTrac, STD/HIV, & WIC information was provided. The health fairs were held at Highlands Elementary and La Marque Middle Schools.
- **BCCS/DFEET-** Due to the loss of the use of the Oleander Van and UTMB Radiology Department, the Health District's Breast Screening Programs are collaborating with several community partners to continue breast screening services. Currently, GCHD is developing contracts with The Rose to continue breast screening, diagnosis and treatment. Currently services are being provided through Victory Breast Imaging and Dr. Beverly Lewis who provide screening and diagnostic studies.

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*

- **Animal Shelter Donations** – The Animal Shelter continues to be the recipient of donations and grants closely associated with the recovery from Hurricane Ike. The Animal Shelter was recently awarded \$8700.00 grant from Petfinder. These funds will be utilized to replace approximately \$3000.00 worth of vaccines that were lost as a result of Ike. In addition, Petfinder provided \$5700.00 to assist with the replacement of outdated desktop computers and an outdated network. Also, the shelter was the recipient of \$250.00 from Mr. Michael Massie as part of a program at BP Petroleum known as BP "Fabric of America" program.
- **Dangerous Dogs** – The Animal Services Division has been investigating several dangerous dogs and dog bite cases. In La Marque, officers investigated the attack by three pitt bulls on a horse. The attack, fortunately, was stopped by concerned citizens and the animals were picked up by our officers. A dangerous dog declaration was issued by the Health District for these animals. In addition, Animal Control Officers were called to the scene of an animal bite on a human in the City of Dickinson. Apparently, a citizen was walking his dog when a dog at large attacked his dog. As the pet owner was attempting to break up the fight, he was bitten. Due to the uncertainties of which dog actually bit the citizen, both animals were quarantined.
- **Texas Environmental Research Consortium** – Ronnie Schultz attended the October 30th meeting of the Texas Environmental Research Consortium (TERC) in Dallas as the proxy for County Judge James Yarbrough. The TERC was assembled in 2002 to significantly improve ozone science and air

quality modeling in the Houston-Galveston area and the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This consortium approves funding for these ozone science projects and air quality modeling projects that assist the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in choosing emission reduction measures for these areas. TERC awards \$2million each year for pre-qualified research teams that investigate problems associated with emissions inventories, monitoring and atmospheric chemistry. In addition, TERC awards over \$9 million each year to organizations that develop promising technologies to reduce Nitrogen Dioxide emissions from diesel engines. At the October 30th meeting, TERC members heard reports on active projects currently funded with TERC monies and heard proposals to be considered for future funding for innovative diesel technologies.

- **Animal Issues Committee** - The Animal Issues Committee held its second meeting since the landfall of Hurricane Ike on November 13th. The committee is currently reviewing the county's Animals in Disasters Plan. It is designed to assist with the planning for pre-landfall and post-disaster recovery efforts associated with animals. With the lessons learned from the recovery efforts after Hurricane Ike, the committee has focused efforts on getting the plan revised and eventually approved by the State Office of Emergency Management. Once the plan is completed it will be reviewed by the Health District's Animal Services Advisory Committee.

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

- **Bolivar Peninsula Emergency Recovery Program** – EMS Director Mike Carr attended a meeting with representatives of the Peninsula EMS providers and the County Judge, along with County Commissioner Pat Doyle on Wednesday, October 22, 2008. In that meeting, GCHD was asked to coordinate efforts to bring in Medics to staff two ambulance units on the peninsula to allow volunteers time to repair their homes and lives. The operation will be reviewed on a monthly basis and terminated when the need has been met. The current intent is to begin providing 24 hour Medic teams by November 24, 2008 and continue through the month of December.
- **Hurricane Plan review** – GAAA staff held an after action debriefing to identify lessons learned from Hurricane Ike. As a follow up to that meeting, volunteer members of GAAA staff have been meeting bi-weekly to review and update the GAAA Hurricane Action Plan. This effort is expected to continue through the winter with completion before Hurricane Season 2009.
- **New Ambulance Fleet Additions** - GAAA has taken delivery on two new Type II ambulance units manufactured by Medix, Inc. These units are built on Chevrolet Van chassis and are currently being equipped and licensed. When ready, they will be placed in service in the Non-Emergency Transfer operation.
- **2007 EMS Turnover Rate** - The turnover rate for fulltime EMS employees for 2007 was calculated as 27%, using the annual turnover rate calculation. This formula considers the total number of EMS terminations for the calendar year divided by the average annual headcount times 100. This figure does not include staff who have transferred from full time to part time but only those full time employees who have terminated.

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

Epidemiology Updates:

- **2008 Elevated Blood Lead Cases** - The Health District has received a total 15 confirmed elevated blood lead cases from January to November 20. All 15 cases were referred to Community Health Nursing and 4 were referred for an Environmental Lead Investigation. Demographics on the confirmed cases are as follows: Gender: Male (10), Female (5); Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic (7), Black

(5), and White (3); Age ranges were from 1 – 41 years old; Zip Code: 77550 (8), 77551 (2), 77590 (2), 77568 (2); 77573 (1); Levels ranged from 10 – 32 mcg/dL, 3 cases were \geq 20 mcg/dL.

- **Flu Surveillance** - Epidemiology Services sent an email inviting partners to voluntarily report flu data during the months of October thru May. Local influenza surveillance efforts remain the only way to collect data that enable 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. Thus far, there have been no confirmed flu cases reported to Galveston County Health District.
- **Community Assessments for Public Health Emergency and Response (CASPER)** - GCHD teamed up with State and Federal agencies to perform a community assessment of Galveston Island after Hurricane Ike September 22, 2008. The results of the assessment had many findings. Examples of findings included: Almost half of the population at the time of the survey did not have electricity or regular garbage collection; 68% of the households using a charcoal grill or stove were using them inappropriately (e.g., indoors or near an open window or door); TV alone is not enough to deliver public health information to all the community; etc. Follow-up action was taken to address the finding.

Preparedness Update:

- **Medical Special Needs Cache** - On October 15, 2008, Galveston County Health District received a cache for medical special needs from Department of State Health Services (DSHS) funding project. The supplies are to be used for shelter operations in Galveston County. This initiative is a result of a regional Department of State Health Services funding project that assist local health departments to prepare for sheltering residents with special needs.
- **Lester Pill Counter** - The Health District is expected to receive a pill counter from Department of State Health Services (DSHS) funding project. The pill counter is to enable the quick break down of bulk medication for first responders into units of use bags during an outbreak.

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

- **DSHS Lactation Services Grant** was approved. We received a letter dated November 4, 2008 from DSHS. The grant provides for reimbursement in the amount of \$9,000.00 for lactation services rendered during October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009.
- **TB Federal Prevention and Control Grant from DSHS** was signed by COO on November 11, 2008 in the amount of \$44,399.00. A \$1,850 dollar decrease from last year's amount. It provides for basic TB services of prevention and control, expanded outreach to identified persons who have or are at high risk for TB.
- An Agreement with **A-1 White Top Taxi** was signed by COO on November 18, 2008. A-1 Taxi will provide transportation services to D'Feet patients referred by the District. Compensation varies depending on the specific geographic territory.
- **Program Reviews** – BCCS was reviewed on August 19-20th and the final outcome of the review was issued on November 10th. The program is in good standing and has been taken off of accelerated monitoring for prior documentation finds. In addition, the STD program was reviewed on August 13th and the final outcome of the review was issued on October 28th. The program is now in good standing and has been taken off accelerated monitoring for prior deficiencies.