



Executive Report to the Galveston County United Board of Health

June 24, 2009

GCHD Prepares for Hurricane Season!

A guest column on hurricane preparedness was submitted to the *Galveston County Daily News* by CEO Dr. Mark Guidry and was published on June 1st. The column looked at preparedness from a health perspective and can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2009/prepared-for-storms.htm. Dr. Guidry's guest column as submitted with all information is posted at www.gchd.org/press/2009/Guest%20Column%20Hurricane.pdf; (2) GAAA staff participated in a tabletop exercise of the GAAA Hurricane Operations Plan on June 24th during their staff meeting. Staff members received an opportunity to learn the roles they will be expected to perform in a Hurricane situation. This opportunity is especially important to new staff members who have not functioned in these roles before; (3) Health District's PHP staff attended the City of Galveston Hurricane Town Meeting at the Galveston Island Convention Center on June 3, 2009. The meeting was designed to provide residents and visitors the opportunities to review hurricane preparedness practices. PHP staff distributed information on hurricane readiness and recruited members for Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps. Approximately 100 people visited the Public Health Preparedness table; (4) On June 6, 2009 PHP staff participated in the Annual Hurricane Preparedness/Response/Recovery meeting at the Jamaica Beach Public Service Building at 16628 FM 3005. Over 100 attendees listened to short talks addressing hurricane preparedness, island evacuation and recovery response activities from the National Weather Service, Galveston County and City Emergency Planning Office, City Planning and Public Utilities and Galveston Insurance Association; and 5) Public Health Preparedness (PHP) staff sent an email notice to Health District staff on personal hurricane preparedness and requested the hurricane relocation form to be completed and sent to public health planner. PHP staff presented at 4C's medical and dental in-service on hurricane preparedness and the role of staff in responding to a hurricane.

Animal Disaster Plan

After a year and a half, a final draft of the Animal Disaster Plan will be presented to the United Board of Health for review and action this month. The plan was drafted by members of the Animal Issue Committee consisting of staff from the Office of Emergency Management, Habitat for Horses, Rescue Rangers of Galveston County, the County Extension Service, Sheriff's Office, Friendswood and League City Animal Control, City of Galveston, Humane Society of the United States, Department of State Health Services, and the Houston Horse Council. The 2009 Animal Summit was held May 30th at Runge Park in Santa Fe. This year's theme was "Preparing Your Pets for Adverse Weather." Ronnie Schultz presented information concerning lessons learned following Ike and how we can be better prepared in the future. Cory Bowen with Brazoria County Extension Service spoke to the crowd about preparing large animals for the upcoming hurricane season and resources available to assist county residents in large animal evacuations. Other presenters included Jerry Finch with Habitat for Horses who discussed his lessons learned with the evacuation of large animals and his rescue of horses following Ike and Lark Tedesco who demonstrated the proper selection and use of small animal crates during pet evacuations. In addition to the animal summit, several organizations participated in an animal exposition where the general public was provided with information on responsible pet ownership. A story published in the *Galveston County Daily News* on May 24th promoted the event. <http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/expert-pet-info.htm>.

4C's Starts Journey to New Electronic Systems

The 4C's Governing Board, at their last meeting, authorized staff to negotiate a contract with NextGen for the purchase and installation of software/hardware for an electronic practice management, electronic health record and electronic dental record. On June 18, Dr. Guidry, Jay Holland, Kathy Barroso, Pam Jahnke, Patrick Butler and Pisa Lewis participated in a conference call with several members of the NextGen staff to begin negotiations. GCHD staff let NextGen know that the contract negotiations would not be fast paced, that we had lots of questions such as: finalizing and understanding what is in the equipment list; understanding/scheduling training; time line scheduling for implementation in "phases"; establishing final pricing and payment schedule; discussing some of the ancillary services available such as outsourcing the billing; maintenance/warranties; licenses; etc. NextGen assured us that they would work with us through the process, would provide us with any documentation we needed and looked forward to a long term relationship. Our next meeting will be face to face and should be the sometime in the third week of July. Clinic managers attended a NACHC webinar on "Detailed EHR Implementation Project Planning" on June 18. The presenter made several points about negotiating with a vendor in advance of signing a contract to plan thoroughly for an implementation schedule that will be successful. The presenter had excellent examples of planning tips that will apply to 4C's clinic's practice management and electronic health record roll outs.

4C's Saturday Clinic Update

On June 6, 2009 the 4C's Clinic in Texas City had it first Saturday Clinic through two-year funding with economic stimulus dollars. The first Saturday Clinic proved to be a success with 18 medical and 7 dental visits and the second Saturday even better with 19 medical and 10 dental visits. On Saturdays, the Texas City Clinic will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The clinic is open to all Galveston County residents, both insured and uninsured, as walk-ins only. Fees are based upon the patient's ability to pay, which is determined by the 4C's Governing Board's approved sliding fee scale and the patients financial status. The Saturday Clinic will be open for acute medical and dental services, as well as, Lab and X-ray services. All other services will be available Monday thru Friday during regular business hours. The Saturday Clinic is made available due to the 4C's award of the Increased Demand Service Economic Stimulus (IDS) grant submitted to HRSA's Bureau of Primary Healthcare (BPHC). The IDS Grant is designed to increase access to healthcare for the nation's un- and underinsured while also providing economic stimulus for the national economy and funded for a two year period. More information about the Saturday clinic may be viewed at: www.gchd.org/4cs/Saturdays.htm. The new 4C's Saturday walk-in clinic was the focus of a *Galveston County Daily News* story that was published on May 21st. The story can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2009/Saturday-clinic-daily-news.htm. Finally, a new flyer for public distribution can be found at <http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/saturday-clinicO.pdf>

Update on City of Galveston EMS Workgroup

On July 17, Health District staff (Jay Holland, COO, Kathy Barroso, CFO and Mike Carr, EMS Director) again met with City of Galveston fire department staff, City Manager, City Budget Officer, City CFO and Danny Webber, City Council Member to continue the discussion regarding the potential for moving EMS services into the City of Galveston Fire Department. A representative of the International Association of Fire Fighters made a presentation about Fire based EMS to the committee. At the City's request, Kathy Barroso is preparing an analysis comparing GCHD information with that of the Fire model proposed. The workgroup will meet again on July 1, 2009 at 3:00 pm.

Updates on H1N1 (Swine) Flu

As of June 24, 2009, there are 1,888 confirmed H1N1 cases in Texas and 17 cases in Galveston County. The cases reside in the following cities: **Dickinson (1), Galveston (1), La Marque (3); League City (3); Texas City (9)**. All cases have fully recovered from illness. Epidemiology Services will continue to conduct

surveillance for H1N1 throughout the summer months. However, the focus of surveillance will be on H1N1 hospitalized patients and deaths, in addition to identifying respiratory outbreaks within group settings (i.e. summer camps, long-term care facilities, and childcare facilities). While media interest in the novel H1N1 flu has subsided the district is still maintaining an informational website. When new cases of the flu are identified in the county the site is updated with a running total by location. The page can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2009/Swine-flu-information.htm. Three of the confirmed cases in Galveston County were from a Texas City middle school prompting this story from the *Galveston County Daily News* on May 28th, www.gchd.org/press/2009/confirmed-H1N1-Blocker.htm. Epidemiology Services attended the Regional Epidemiology/Bioterrorism Meeting on May 29, 2009. The meeting is a forum for epidemiologists and public health preparedness staff to exchange information regarding epidemiology and bioterrorism activities. The meeting acted as an after-action “hot wash,” where members discussed the strengths and weaknesses that occurred in response to the H1N1 outbreak.

GCHD Starts Planning for New Facilities

On June 8, Dudley Anderson, County Architect met with Dr. Guidry and staff to initiate planning for work space design of the new Wal-Mart facility. All GCHD service areas have completed a questionnaire about work space needs and requirements which are now under review by executive officers who are identifying common needs and spaces that could be shared as well as services that can now be consolidated. Once the executive review is completed, the information will be provided to the architect for next steps. Also in June, Mr. Anderson met several times with Kim Schoolcraft, Ronnie Schultz and Jay Holland to discuss issues/plans for the new Animal Shelter. This group also met with two architectural firms, which design animal shelters, in order to recommend one to Commissioners Court to be hired to design the facility. This recommendation should go to Commissioners Court in early July. These projects are long term and staff expect on-going review over the next several months or year.

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

- A June 1st MSNBC news story reported on the challenges still faced nearly nine months after Hurricane Ike. The story cited the GCHD annual report by mentioning the health care situation after the hurricane. The story is posted at <http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/still-hurting-from-ike.htm>.
- A press release was issued on June 16th encouraging people to take necessary steps to prevent West Nile virus. The release contained information on the proper use of repellants and things that can be done around a home to reduce mosquito breeding. Information contained in the release can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2009/WNV2009.htm.
- EMS Director Mike Carr was interviewed by Fox 26 News on June 23rd concerning the reopening of UTMB’s Emergency Room. The story focused on how it would change operations by not requiring as many transports off the island to mainland facilities. It was also discussed how it would mean less operational costs and quicker turnarounds for units that do not have to travel such great distances before returning to service.

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).*

- **Galveston County Indigent Program** – On June 2, 4C’s staff began screening potentially eligible candidates for the Galveston County Indigent Program utilizing the newly increased 50% of the federal poverty level. Previously, on May 13, Galveston County Commissioners Court approved to increase the eligibility requirement from 21% to 50% of the federal poverty level for the County Indigent program. Thru the Galveston County Indigent Program, Galveston County pays for hospital

and specialty care for patients at or below 50% of the federal poverty level. The 4C's screens potential patients for this program and acts as the patient's primary care provider.

- **4C's has a new Mental Health Provider** – Jeffery Whitley, PHD, a Clinical Psychologist started on June 10, 2009 and is a welcome addition to our Mental Health services. Dr. Whitley is working part-time and will be serving 4C's patients in both Clinics'. He will be alternating sites with Jimmie Powell, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and will see patients in Galveston on Mondays and in Texas City on Wednesdays. Appointments for both Mental Health Providers can be made with Melba Taylor at 409-938-2355.
- **Galveston Mental Health Summit** - June 5, 2009 the 4C's case management supervisor attended a Galveston Mental Health Summit hosted by the UTMB Health Policy and Legislative Affairs and the Mental Health Taskforce. The purpose of the meeting was to identify and prioritize solutions to help those with mental health issues resulting from Hurricane Ike. Identified issues include lack of public housing, which will not be available in Galveston City until the end of 2009, and increased need for Mental Health hospital beds, especially for the purpose of drug detoxification. The local MH-MR continues to receive some grant-related funds for free crisis counseling and social support for those with hurricane-related emotional fatigue.

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.*

- **Community Outreach** – During the month of June, Health District staff participated in the following three health fairs: 1) National Senior Health & Fitness Day, sponsored by Galveston County Parks & Senior Services, 2) 1st Annual Children's Festival sponsored by El Salvador Assembly of God in Texas City and 3) Dickinson Community Health Fair, sponsored by Dickinson NAACP. Over 150 persons were informed about various GCHD services through these combined events in addition information on how to become a member of the Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps was provided.
- **Family Health Camp** - This collaborative project between GCHD WIC and Agrilife Extension will start on June 18th and will be held each Thursday evening through August 13th at the Agrilife Extension office in Dickinson from 6pm to 8pm. This is a pilot program focused on educating parents and children about healthy eating habits. Cooking classes will be held as well as short education sessions.
- **HIV Cases** – From January to March of 2009 our STD/HIV prevention program has identified 17 new HIV cases and 3 new AIDS cases in Galveston County. This is a change from previous years at this point (11-HIV/15 AIDS cases in 2008 and 5 HIV/6 AIDS cases in 2007). This change could be due to citizens moving post Ike or changes in citizen behavior in the Post Ike period. STD/HIV will continue surveillance and keep the community informed.
- **Save Our Sisters Collaboration** - On June 8th Dr. Arceneaux trained the nurses of Barbour's Chapel Baptist church in Texas City on the Hallelujah to Health Curriculum for Breast and Cervical Health on behalf of Agrilife Extension for the Save Our Sisters Organization. This training was done in preparation for an event to be held June 20th to educate the community on breast health in celebration of Breast Cancer Survivor's Month. However, the June 20th event was postponed and will be rescheduled.
- **Meeting the Challenges of Chronic Disease at the Community Level** – On June 10-11, Dr. Arceneaux attended a state conference in Austin to discuss chronic disease prevention. The event defined the burden of chronic disease in the state of Texas; identified obstacles faced in attempting to address these issues, and highlighted successful projects throughout the state. This information will be useful to the Health District as we move forward with our Employee and Community Wellness projects focused on improving the health of the Galveston County community.

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

- **Bolivar Burn** – The County of Galveston is currently reducing the amount of storm debris along Bolivar Peninsula by burning a large amount of vegetative matter. This process is expected to take until the end of July. Several complaints were filed with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality concerning the smoke impacting citizens on the Peninsula. The Air and Water Pollution Services Division consulted with the County and provided help on how to conduct these burns with minimal impact on the health of the Peninsula residents.
- **Texas Environmental Research Consortium (TERC) Board Meeting** – Ronnie Schultz attended the June 11th meeting of the TERC Board at the offices of the Harris County Judge. The TERC Board heard an update on active projects being funded under the New Technology Research and Development program that promotes the development of commercially available air emission reduction technologies mainly for heavy duty diesel engines. The TERC Board approves over 9 million dollars each year for these projects. In addition, the Board heard a preliminary report on two ongoing air quality studies in the Houston - Galveston area that utilized state-of-the-art air emission monitoring equipment. As the results of these studies become available, a report will be made to the Board of Health. The TERC is a non-profit organization that was commissioned in February 2002 by the state legislature to oversee a research management organization that recommends state-of -the-science air quality research projects.
- **Beach Watch Program Funding Reauthorized** – Galveston County’s Beach Watch program along with other beach water monitoring programs across the nation received word that the United State’s House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved legislation that reauthorized and increased grants to states to improve beach water quality and strengthen bacteria testing and public notification standards. The Clean Coastal Environmental and Public Health Protection Act of 2009 would reauthorize the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act through 2014 and increase grants for water quality monitoring and notification from \$30 million annually to \$40 million annually. Under this act, the public would have to be notified within two (2) hours after we receive results of beach water testing and this information would have to be made available on the internet. The Health District currently posts all beach watch notifications on our website and is currently renegotiating our contract with the Texas General Land Office for FY 2010.
- **Animal Services Restitution** – The Animal Services Division received a restitution check from an attorney on behalf of a client who was given probation on an animal seizure/cruelty case that Animal Control worked on and completed over a year ago. The case involved the neglect of three dogs that left one dead and two others in very poor condition. The court ordered the restitution be paid to the Health District for the care and disposition of the animals seized. We received a check for \$1000.00.
- **Environmental Notices of Violations** – The Office of Environmental Health Programs will begin this month reporting the number of notices of violation issued for all of the Divisions within this program. The notices will include violations of animal control rules, air and water pollution violations, food service, on-site septic systems and public health nuisances.

Environmental Health Programs – Notices May 2009	
Animal Control (dogs running at large, no registration, cruelty, etc)	50
Air Pollution (violation of state air regulations, permits, excessive emissions, etc)	6
Food Services (violations of food service policy)	3
Public Health Nuisances (trash and high weeds, violations of health and safety code)	20
On-Site Septic Systems (violation of on-site policy)	3
Water Pollution (improper disposal, sewage leaks, grease trap violations, etc)	11

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 7 vacant full-time field 911 positions and no vacant full-time field non-emergency transfer positions. We are awaiting a confirmed hire date from one Paramedic for the 911 side and one EMT – Intermediate for the transfer side. Reference checks for two EMT-Basics and two EMT-Intermediates are in the process for the transfer side.
- **UTMB Special Operations Cease** – GAAA has ceased providing a standby dedicated MICU ambulance at UTMB’s “urgent care center” at the request of UTMB. The unit ceased operating on June 4, 2009.
- **Second Ambulance Unit Ready for Service** –The second unit purchased with funds from the Texas Department of State Health Services, “Extraordinary Emergency Fund” has been delivered and equipped for operation. This ambulance will respond to 911 emergencies in the City of Galveston. The first unit was delivered in April of this year and replaced the Bayshore 911. Both units replaced were flooded during Hurricane Ike.
- **Weekend Crowds Increase Number of Responses** – Recent weekend crowds has caused increases in the number of EMS responses to Pre-Ike levels. For the last five weekends (Saturday and Sunday), EMS crews have responded to an average of 49 calls per day, while daily responses have averaged 33 calls per day. It appears that day trips and short weekend trips are causing the population of the island to increase on weekends and return to a lower baseline level during the week.
- **Protocol Testing Near Completion** - The training, testing and assessment of updated treatment protocols is drawing to a close. The updated protocols authored by Kevin Rittger, MD, GAAA Medical Director are intended to incorporate the latest practices in emergency medicine as well as increase the tools and resources available to GAAA Medics as they treat patients in pre-hospital conditions. Patient care will begin to be administered exclusively under the new protocols effective July 1, 2009.

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

Epidemiology Updates:

- **Elevated Blood Lead Cases (Texas City and Galveston)** - For 2009, GCHD has received a total of 4 confirmed elevated blood lead level (EBLL) reports on (2) Texas City and (2) Galveston residents. All cases have been referred to Community Health Nursing for assessment. Two cases required an environmental lead assessment due to significantly high levels. All levels above 10 µg/dL warrants public health intervention consisting of a community health nurse assessment and lead poisoning education; levels above 20 µg/dL triggers an environmental assessment conducted on dwelling in which the child spends majority of time.
- **Whooping Cough – League City** - On June 2nd, Galveston County Health District received its fourth pertussis case for the year. The case involves a 9-year old League City resident. Investigation revealed 3 household contacts received post exposure medications. In 2008, the Health District received a total of 11 pertussis reports for the year.
- **Vibrio in Galveston** - Epidemiology received a disease report of a 39-year old male Galveston resident with Vibrio. Investigation revealed that the resident fell into an oyster reef while fishing, cut his ankle and is fully recovered. Vibrio bacteria is naturally found in coastal waters in the US and Canada. Vibrio infection can occur when people eat raw or undercooked shellfish infected with the bacteria, or when a wound is exposed to seawater. The case was the first Vibrio infection of the year. In 2008, GCHD received a total of 3 Vibrio cases.
- **Legionellosis – Dickinson and League City** - Epidemiology Services received 2 legionellosis cases, a 79-year old Dickinson and an 80-year old League City resident. Legionellosis is a waterborne

disease caused by Legionella bacteria. The bacteria can be found in water tower coolers, respiratory devices and decorative fountains. It is transmitted through airborne or aspiration of water that contains the bacteria. Risk factors for illness include increasing age, respiratory disease, or compromised immune system. Epidemiology Services has received one case per year from 2004-2008.

- **Hepatitis B In Service Training** - On May 28, DSHS conducted an in-service for Health District employees on Perinatal Hepatitis B reporting. Staff from both Immunization and Epidemiology Services participated in an in-depth discussion about the proper treatment and proceedings regarding mother and child hepatitis patients in Galveston County.

Preparedness Update:

- **Regional SNS Exercise** - On June 3, Galveston County Health District's Public Preparedness (PHP) staff participated in a Regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) exercise with the Department of State Health Services. The exercise simulated an anthrax threat which required declaring a regional emergency that utilized mass dispensing. GCHD participated in the drill by sitting in on a state conference call and by conducting a call down of GCHD first responders.
- **Jesse Tree Food Fair** - Jack Ellison, Public Health Planner, participated in a Food Health Fair at the Cathedral of Faith church located in *La Marque* on June 5th. Mr. Ellison provided a presentation on being prepared for hurricane season. Other speakers present at the health fair were W. Clyde Lemon Director – Governmental Affairs with Galveston County District Clerk Office, Todd Zacherl, Fire Chief, City of La Marque and Joe Stanton, Administrative Sergeant, Texas City Police Department. All discussed the importance of being prepared for hurricane season. There were approximately 150 people in attendance.

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

- **Maintenance of Ambulance Stretchers** – Equipment Management, Service and Repair Maintenance Agreement was signed by COO on June 11th. This agreement is for preventive maintenance, equipment tune-up, equipment evaluation, usage evaluation/training and equipment reports for the EMS ambulance stretchers. The term of is June 2009 to April 2011. The rate is \$100.00 per cot, per visit + parts.
- **Educational Opportunities for Dental Assistant Students** - Dental Assistant Externship Agreement and a Clinical Medical Assisting Externship Agreement between Remington College Houston campus, Inc. d/b/a Remington College – Houston Southeast Campus (TX) and GCHD were signed by COO on June 8th. The 4C's clinics will provide an educational experience in a clinical setting for the students. The term is for 1 year.
- **Temporary Staffing of Nurses and Medical Assistants** - Supplemental Staffing Agreement between QSTAFF Incorporated and GCHD was signed by COO on June 10th. The effective date was June 9th until canceled. Contractor will provide nursing personnel and MAs to Clinic on a temporary basis.
- **Temporary Dentists** - Staffing Agreement between Staff Care, Inc. and Galveston Coordinated Community Clinic was signed by COO on June 5th. The contract shall continue until May 18, 2010 unless terminated earlier. The contractor shall provide temporary dental providers to the clinics.
- **Recruiting a Permanent Employed Dentist** - Recruiting Authorization and Right to Market Agreement with Nationwide Dental Opportunities was signed by COO on June 12th. The contract is good until cancelled. GCHD shall pay a one-time.
- **The Inkjet/Laser Printer/ Fax Cartridges** – a bid was awarded to Polir Inkjet & Toner and Southern Computer by COO on July 17, 2009. The term of the contract is July 22, 2009 to July 22, 2010.

- **The Spay/Neuter Services** – Cats & Dogs bid was awarded to Animal Alliance by COO on July 19, 2009. The term of the contract is July 22, 2009 to July 22, 2010.
- **Renewed Air Pollution Monitoring Contract - TCEQ Local Air Program grant** for September 1 to August 31, 2011 was signed by COO on June 10th. The amount of the award is not to exceed \$183,374 for personnel/salary, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, and other. This is the same amount awarded in the previous contract.