



**Executive Report to the Galveston County 4C's Governing Board**  
**March 26, 2009**

**2008 Annual Progress Report Released**

During February meetings, both boards approved the 2008 Annual Progress Report. The report includes an evaluation of progress meeting strategic health priorities for the county, an extensive report on the public health response and consequences of Hurricane Ike, post-IKE loss of access to specialty care for indigent and uninsured, a new report of GCHD services provide by county/city jurisdictions, a comprehensive table of lessons learned in various areas of the Health District, etc. The report will be distributed to board members, elected officials, and community partners, as well as posted on the website at [www.gchd.org/admin/strattoc.htm](http://www.gchd.org/admin/strattoc.htm). In 2010, the District will initiate a new strategic planning process, involving community stakeholders, to develop a second plan for the next decade, 2010-2020.

**Educating State & National Officials about Impacts of Hurricane Ike**

On February 20, 2009, Harlan "Mark" Guidry, MD, MPH was a presenter at the National Public Health Preparedness Conference at a closing plenary address, "Hurricane Ike: Public Health Surge Amid a Rising Tide" in San Diego, California, moderated by the National Center for Emergency Medical Preparedness and Response at Texas A&M. Over 2000 health officials from across the US learned about GCHD's response to Ike and the long-term public health consequences. The presentation was well-received and resulted in a number of requests to speak at forums. In a February 27<sup>th</sup> *Galveston County Daily News* editorial the paper called for a clear explanation of the difference between the Galveston County Health District and a hospital district being discussed as part of a solution to the health care crisis in the community, and as it currently exists [www.gchd.org/press/2009/clarify-health-hospital-district.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/clarify-health-hospital-district.htm). In response to the editorial Dr. Guidry contributed a guest column explaining the differences which can be found on the web site at [www.gchd.org/press/2009/health-or-hospital-district.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/health-or-hospital-district.htm). In addition, on March 20<sup>th</sup> Dr. Guidry participated in the "Preparedness for Emerging Threats" a panel presentation for legislators at the state capitol in Austin. Over 60 legislators and/or staff members received an overview of the Health District's responses to Hurricane Ike as well as the long-term health consequences the county is facing. The presentation was well received and helped to inform and educate policy-makers about post-Ike public health challenges in Galveston County. Finally, GCHD has also provided information to legislators regarding HB 1876 relating to creating the health care access fund to recruit health care providers in health professional shortage areas and to support federally-qualified health centers. If created the fund would use money from a tax imposed on certain tobacco products.

**Reports of Suspected Meningitis in Galveston County**

The Health District's Epidemiology Services has received a total of 16 suspected meningitis cases from the time period of February 16 thru March 4, 2009. Investigation of the cases revealed 11 of the 16 cases were diagnosed as viral meningitis, 2 cases were ruled out and diagnosed as headaches, and the remaining 3 cases were diagnosed as bacterial meningitis. The bacterial cases warranted preventive antibiotics for close or intimate contacts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define meningitis as an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain. It is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and may result in brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disability. For bacterial meningitis, it is also important to know which type of bacteria is causing the meningitis

because antibiotics can prevent some types from spreading and infecting other people. The reported death of a middle school student due to bacterial meningitis created great media interest and resulted in numerous stories on the subject. As a result of the heightened interest GCHD posted an advisory on the district webpage February 17<sup>th</sup> [www.gchd.org/press/2009/Bacterial-Meningitis-2-17-09.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/Bacterial-Meningitis-2-17-09.htm). The student death resulted in the following news reports: *KPRC Channel 2* [www.gchd.org/press/2009/2-Meningitis.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/2-Meningitis.htm), February 17<sup>th</sup>; *Houston Chronicle* [www.gchd.org/press/2009/4-Meningitis.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/4-Meningitis.htm), February 17<sup>th</sup>; *KHOU Channel 11* [www.gchd.org/press/2009/5-Meningitis.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/5-Meningitis.htm), February 17<sup>th</sup>; *Galveston County Daily News* story [www.gchd.org/press/2009/6-Meningitis.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/6-Meningitis.htm), February 18<sup>th</sup>; *Galveston County Daily News* story reporting another suspected case of meningitis [www.gchd.org/press/2009/7-Meningitis.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/7-Meningitis.htm), February 20<sup>th</sup>; timeliness of reporting the meningitis case which resulted in a student death was questioned in this *Daily News* report [www.gchd.org/press/2009/8-Meningitis.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/8-Meningitis.htm), February 23<sup>rd</sup>. March 7<sup>th</sup> *Daily News* story reporting a suspected case in the north county did not have the illness [www.gchd.org/press/2009/clear-creek-girl-does-not-have-meningitis-3-7-09.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/clear-creek-girl-does-not-have-meningitis-3-7-09.htm). Additional information on meningitis is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/bacterial/faqs.htm>.

### **Galveston EMS Financial Deficit**

The Health District has contracted with the City of Galveston for emergency medical services since 1975 and non-emergency transfer ambulance services since 1996. As a result of Hurricane Ike, emergency medical services on Galveston have changed resulting in growing financial losses from a decrease in transfers and operational revenue. As of February 28, 2009, the current Year to Date operating loss for Galveston EMS is \$267,920. The City, by contract, is obligated to reimburse the Health District for losses up to \$225,000. However, Hurricane Ike has created an extraordinary ongoing financial situation and an uncertain future of GEMS given a City proposal to assume services under the Fire department. The Galveston County United Board of Health will review the financial situation and consider action. Previously, GCHD requested the City of Galveston cover a FY 2008 funding shortfall for EMS services provided to the city under contract. *Galveston County Daily News* February 11<sup>th</sup> coverage of the request [www.gchd.org/press/2009/EMSbudget.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/EMSbudget.htm).

### **4C's Applies for Economic Stimulus Grant for Saturday Clinic**

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the 4C's Clinic submitted a grant application to HRSA's Bureau of Primary Healthcare (BPHC) for \$453,329. The Increased Demand Services Grant is designed to increase access to healthcare for the nation's un- and underinsured while also providing economic stimulus for the national economy. The clinic's proposal includes hiring an additional 8.2 full time employees over two years, including one physician, one dentist and an array of support staff as well as a part-time mental health counselor. The clinic in Texas City will increase its hours by an additional 7 hours weekly by adding a Saturday walk-in clinic. Medical and dental staff will provide urgent care within the usual scope of services. The grant will also provide funds for an accountant to manage this grant and provide other business support, supplies and minor equipment needs. The Bureau has indicated that funds from this RFP are expected to be disbursed quickly, perhaps as early as the end of March.

### **4C's had Unannounced Joint Commission Survey**

On March 2-3, The Joint Commission made an unannounced survey of the 4C's Clinic. For two days, two surveyors observed patient care at the two clinic sites and spoke with administrators, staff and Governing Board members, Dr. Milton Howard, Tony Juarez, & Dr. Guidry. The surveyors expressed surprise that the clinic has recovered so well from the aftereffects of Hurricane Ike and were complimentary regarding emergency planning and management. An initial list of opportunities for improvement was given to clinical management staff. The final report has not yet been received.

### **Annual Trash Bash!**

The Office of Environmental Health Programs once again is planning and participating in the sixteenth annual Rivers, Lakes, Bays and Bayous Trash Bash scheduled to begin at 8:00 am on March 28<sup>th</sup>. This annual event is part of a regional environmental project that brings attention to the serious problem of trash along our water ways. The local Texas City event sponsored in conjunction with the Texas City/ La Marque Chamber of Commerce will be staged on the grounds of Rainbow Park in Texas City. Due to the damage at the Texas City Dike, volunteers will be transported to Skyline Drive to remove trash. Following the clean up, volunteers will be treated to lunch, entertainment and an environmental exposition. T-shirts will be provided as long as supplies last.

### **Public Health Week Activities**

As part of the Galveston County Health District's observance of *National Public Health Week*, two events will take place on April 8<sup>th</sup>. At Mall of the Mainland, 2 p.m. Hurricane Ike Public Health Heroes will be recognized. Cities and schools have been asked to nominate one person from their staff they consider a public health hero. This may be an employee who greatly assisted in keeping the municipal water system functioning during the event; or a school nurse who provided care to more than students but members of the community as well. There will also be a small community health fair in the mall commons. This is being coordinated with preventive medicine resident physicians from UTMB Galveston. Immunizations will be offered free of charge at the health fair and at Health District Immunization clinics in Galveston and Texas City as a recognition of *National Infant Immunization Week*. At 6:30 p.m. the Gold Ribbon awards will be presented at Carbide Park, La Marque, in the Wayne Johnson Community Center. These are given to food service establishments each year that show exemplary compliance with the Texas Food Establishment Rules. Award criteria includes: establishment must actually prepare food, maintain a record of satisfactory food temperatures, must have not confirmed food borne illness complaints, must have at least one certified food service manager employed, must have no significant number of demerits, must have a good cleaning and maintenance program, have evidence of staff discussions or training, and show special effort to comply with the rules by the use of food safety aids.

**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)).*

- Post Hurricane Ike the DFees and BCCC mammogram screening schedule had many changes made due loss of the mobile screening unit. The programs website page listing the schedule has been redesigned to make friendlier for women seeking services. The schedule can be found at [www.gchd.org/chn/BCCC.htm](http://www.gchd.org/chn/BCCC.htm).
- With UTMB's Level 1 Trauma Center closed there has been an increase in the number of accident victims being air transported out of the county for treatment in Houston. The media has shown an interest and contacted the District's Public Information Office for information. Visiting [www.gchd.org/press/2009/men-fall-off-roof.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/men-fall-off-roof.htm) will illustrate the type of accidents needing such service in this news item from the *Galveston County Daily News* published February 2<sup>nd</sup>. There was media interest in this same issue when it was announced that there would be an air ambulance on standby for incidents during Mardi Gras on Galveston Island in this report broadcast February 13<sup>th</sup> on *Fox 26 News Houston* [www.gchd.org/press/2009/helicopter-mardi-gras.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/helicopter-mardi-gras.htm)
- A press release was issued on February 24<sup>th</sup> to inform the public the Joe Vickery Animal Shelter would be closed for several days for spring deep cleaning. The release can be found at [www.gchd.org/press/2009/Animal-shelter-clean309.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/Animal-shelter-clean309.htm).
- At the request of the *Galveston County Daily News* Dr. Guidry contributed a guest column providing cold and flu prevention tips that was published March 10<sup>th</sup> [www.gchd.org/press/2009/Guest-Column-Cold-and-flu.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/Guest-Column-Cold-and-flu.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).

- **Medical & Dental Provider Update** – Susan Berkley, PA started on January 5, 2009 as a 4C's medical provider. Currently, there are 2 Medical and 1.5 Dental provider vacancies. Staff continues to search for qualified candidates with all vacancies widely advertised and distributed. Information on all Health District positions can be viewed at: <http://www.gchd.org/hr/job.htm>
- **4C's Nursing Staffing** - Currently there are four open positions in the clinic nursing area. Three positions - the LVN, RN and a Medical Assistant are being processed by Human Resources. The fourth position, bilingual Medical Assistant is still vacant.

**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).

- **New Community Health Nurses** – Community Health Services is pleased to announce the addition of Kimberly Chapple, RN as a Community Health Nurse effective March 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Chapple hails from Indiana where she was a public health nurse specifically in Infectious Disease Control. She will be providing clinical care as well as serving as a liaison between the community and the Galveston County Health District. In the Immunization program on February 13<sup>th</sup>, Brenda Caldwell, LVN was hired as site supervisor for the Dickinson and Galveston Immunization Clinics. She is working under the supervision of June Gonzalez, Immunization Program Manager.
- **Health Fairs** – During the month of February, GCHD staff participated in two health fairs (Teen Parents Healthcare Choices Workshop and The Heights Pre-K/Headstart Education & Health Fair). A total of 345 persons were reached through these two events, and a total of 60 children were researched in the state's ImmTrac Database. GCHD Brochures, incentives, and all services materials/pamphlets were provided.

**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)

- **Texas Environmental Research Consortium** – Ronnie Schultz attended and was approved for membership on the Texas Environmental Research Consortium (TERC) at the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in Dallas, Texas. He was selected by Dr. Mark Guidry and County Judge James Yarbrough to represent the Health District and Galveston County. TERC's mission involves the commissioning and management of multiple research activities to advance scientific understanding of the complex air quality issues facing the Houston-Galveston and Dallas-Fort Worth areas. This research has and will continue to help state and federal policy makers in choosing the most cost effective strategies for cleaning the air. In addition, TERC's second mission is aimed at the rapid commercialization of better technologies to reduce ozone forming nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and other emissions from diesel engines.
- **Animal Shelter Spring Clean-Up** – The Joe Vickery Galveston County Animal Shelter was closed on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for "spring cleanup." Even though the shelter was closed to animal adoptions, residents could still relinquish or redeem animals and Animal Field Services continued to respond to calls in the field during this time. The annual cleanup allows staff the necessary time to do a top to bottom cleaning of the shelter, remove all unwanted items and to sanitize the entire shelter to help reduce the spread of disease.

**Office of Emergency Medical Services:** For more information, please contact Mike Carr, JD, EMS

Director, (409) 765-2524 or [mcarr@ghcd.org](mailto:mcarr@ghcd.org)

- **Mardi Gras Operations** – GAAA staff completed response operations for Mardi Gras 2009, in Galveston. Crowds on Saturday February 22nd were heavy, but similar to last year. The other days of the celebrations were lightly attended due to weather, even though the festival area did not require admission fees this year.
- **Hurricane Plan Review** – GAAA staff plan to complete work on applying lessons learned from Hurricane Ike to the Hurricane Operations Plan. Interested GAAA staff and administrators are meeting to complete the process by the end of April 2009. Training for staff on the improved plan will be done in May.
- **GAAA Assisting UTMB Urgent Care Center** – GAAA has begun to provide EMS transportation for the UTMB Urgent Care Facility which occupies the facility previously used by the Emergency Department. A Mobile Intensive Care Unit ambulance has been stationed on site 24 hours per day since 7:30 am March 16, 2009. The unit is used to transport unstable patients who walk into the facility to other hospitals for treatment.
- **ePCR System Training in progress** – GAAA is completing training on the electronic Patient Care Record system provided by ESO Solutions. User and “Train the Trainer” classes were conducted on March 23, 24, 25, 2009. After a short practice period, the system is expected to “go live” on April 1, 2009 to record all patient responses

**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).

- **2009 Childhood Lead Poisoning (Texas City)** - For 2009, GCHD has received 1 confirmed elevated blood lead level (EBLL) report on a 2 year old Texas City resident. The EBLL was initially 29 µg/dL followed by a 15.4 µg/dL. 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. This case was referred for a Community Health and Environmental Assessments.
- **Public Health Information Network (PHIN) Advisory** - On March 19, the Health District sent out a PHIN advisory to medical professionals from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Invasive *Haemophilus influenzae* Type B Disease in Young Children and Importance for All Young Children to Receive 3 Dose Primary Series with Available Hib-containing Vaccine. More detailed information regarding Hib disease and vaccination is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hib/default.htm>.
- **Flu Update** – Texas flu activity for the week ending March 7, 2009 was "widespread." Widespread activity 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 influenza. Galveston County has received a total of 87 lab confirmed influenza test reports for the 2008-2009 flu season (65 influenza A; 15 influenza B and 7 not differentiated flu). Flu cases are confirmed by rapid test, culture, antigen detection or PCR.
- **UTMB Synergy Seminar: GCHD Response and Recovery to Hurricane Ike** - On March 12, the Health District's Director of Diseases and Disasters made a presentation to approximately 100 UTMB students and staff on GCHD's response to Hurricane Ike at a UTMB Synergy Seminar. The Synergy Seminar is a Disaster Management forum that educates the audience on the components of responding to an incident

**Preparedness Update:**

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Fit Testing** - On February 4, 2009 Public Health Emergency Planning Team conducted a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) fit testing for

approximately 50 Health District Employees. The training consisted of how and when to use PPE in cases where there is an increased risk of exposure to infectious droplets and nuclei or other harmful dust, fumes, gases or vapors.

- **Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative** - The Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative (GCERC) met on February 12 and March 12, 2009. The guest speakers were Mark Gavin, British Petroleum (BP) and Jason Hayley, Director of Waterfront Operations for Texas City Terminal Railway Company/Port of Texas City, respectively. Each speaker presented their agency's role and response to Hurricane Ike. The presentations initiated communications, and understanding other entities responsibilities in response to an incident and relationship building with the other members of GCERC.

**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).

- Maintenance Contracts were signed by COO on March 4<sup>th</sup> with **Presstek, Inc. for equipment used in the District's print shop**. Specifically, the monthly charge is \$84.09 for the Cutter, \$191.26 for the Optical Plate Maker, and \$186.29 for the Offset Press.
- **GAAA Ambulance Services Contracts with Mainland Medical Center for Non-Emergency Transports** were signed by COO on March 9th. The contract term is for one (1) year, commencing on January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2011. After such initial Term, the agreement will automatically renew year to year unless terminated. The rates for patients being transported into or out of the facility one-way are at Level One the base rate is \$213.00 and at Level Two the base rate is \$100.00. There is a \$50.00 per hour fee for wait time. And, a mileage fee of \$7.00 per mile for traveling outside of Galveston County. A HIPAA Compliance Business Associate Addendum was executed on March 16, 2009.
- **Memorandums of Understanding with Galveston County Community Action Council and The Children's Center, Inc.** were signed by COO on March 9, 2009. The District will furnish certified copies of birth certificates from the Vital Statistics office to the agencies clients upon presentation of vouchers. At the end of each month, the agencies will be invoiced for the cost. The cost per certificate will be \$23.00 which is set by the State.
- **The Clinic Lab Supplies bid was awarded to Moore Medical and Infolab** by COO on March 12, 2009. The term of the contract is March 20, 2009 to March 20, 2010.
- **GAAA Ambulance Services Contract with the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston for Non-Emergency Transports** was signed by COO on March 16th. The contract term is for one (1) year, commencing on March 16, 2009 through March 16, 2010. After such initial Term, the agreement will automatically renew year to year unless terminated. The rates for patients being transported into or out of the facility one-way are at Level One the base rate is \$213.00 and at Level Two the base rate is \$100.00. There is a \$50.00 per hour fee for wait time. And, a mileage fee of \$7.00 per mile for traveling outside of Galveston County. A HIPAA Compliance Business Associate Addendum was executed on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- **GAAA Ambulance Services Contract with the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston for 24/7 on-site ambulance operations at their Urgent Care site** was signed by COO on March 16th. The contract term is for one (1) year, commencing on March 16, 2009 through March 16, 2010. After such initial Term, the agreement will automatically renew year to year unless terminated. The District will be reimbursed \$1,500 per day for staffing the site 24/7. Reimbursement rates for one-way transports are Basic Life Support \$213.00, Advanced Life Support (Level 1) \$405.00, and Advanced Life Support (Level 2) \$586.00. In addition, there is a \$50.00 per hour fee for wait time. And, a mileage fee of \$7.00 per mile for traveling outside of Galveston County.

- **Clinical Externship Agreement with Galveston College** was signed by COO on March 18<sup>th</sup> for two-years. After the initial Term, the agreement will automatically renew year to year unless terminated. The District agrees to give students the opportunity to participate in a meaningful educational experience in the area of medical billing and coding through this externship program. A HIPAA Compliance Business Associate Addendum was executed on March 18<sup>th</sup> with the Externship Agreement.
- **Amendment to DSHS WIC agreement** was signed by COO on March 23, 2009. The reimbursement rate was increased from \$10.73 to \$10.96. Effective date will be April 1, 2009.