

PRIORITY #1: PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through public awareness campaigns, promote the prevention of priority public health issues such as obesity, fitness, nutrition, tobacco cessation, childhood immunizations, oral health and public health preparedness for emergencies and disease outbreaks.

GOAL I Provide accurate and timely health information to the public in response to public health emergencies, disasters, and disease outbreaks. (See Priority 6, Goal VII)

Improvements have been made to the Galveston County public website www.gchd.org. A “search” feature was added, the “contact” feature has been updated, and the website has been reorganized for quicker load times and easier navigation. Additionally, members of the public can sign up for the GCHD Health News Alerts distribution list by going to the button on the home page that says, “Subscribe to Electronic Health News.” Currently about fifteen individuals have signed up for this new service that provides notification for news releases or health alerts.

Another means of communication has been set up for emergency use. The GCHD administrative headquarters fax machine is currently set up to send faxes to all member cities mayors’ offices and the county Judge for notification of public health emergencies or other important information. The “broadcast fax” is capable of sending messages out to over 150 stored numbers.

Objective One: Fulfill the objectives in the CDC Grant including addressing the specific needs of special populations that include, but are not limited to, people with disabilities, people with serious mental illness, minority groups, the non-English speaking, children, and the elderly.

Public Health Preparedness, Epidemiology and Environmental Services staffs provided a number of news releases, health advisories and other public interactions in response to public health emergencies and real or potential disease outbreaks:

- In January and February a cluster of shigellosis was investigated in Galveston schools by the Epidemiology Department. Information about the illness was sent home with the students that outlined the cause of the condition, symptoms and prevention methods.
- A guest column by Jim Hilton, Director of STD/HIV Control on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was published on February 7th.
- Information on an advisory issued by the Department of State Health Services was posted on the District website February 15. The advisory recommended limited consumption of speckled trout caught in the upper Galveston Bay system.

- On March 23, an Incident Command for Health District Operations was activated with key District personnel who coordinated efforts with the Texas City Office of Emergency Management in response to the explosion at the British Petroleum (BP) plant in Texas City. The Health District responded to health concerns, air quality inquiries and media questions.
- During Beach Party Weekend 2005, April 15-17, STD/HIV staff distributed condoms and health information to the partygoers.
- On April 21, the Health District responded to a reported case of meningococcal disease in a student from a Galveston school. The District sent a letter to the school district to distribute to classmates of the confirmed case about meningococcal disease. The letter provided information about the disease, how it is transmitted, symptoms to observe, and who is considered to be a high-risk contact.
- A press release was issued May 24 with instructions on how to beat the heat. Information was provided on how to stay hydrated when enjoying summer activities. This information was also showcased on the GCHD website. A link was also placed to a Department of State Health Services release on summertime pool safety to prevent drowning.
- Beach Watch advisories were posted on signs located at monitored beaches when water samples showed elevated bacteria levels. Swimmers were encouraged to seek another location to swim. This information was also posted on the GCHD web site. Several stories appeared in the press about the Beach Watch program including a Galveston County Daily News story in May and an interview with our Public Information Officer (PIO) on KHOU Channel 11. Talk radio station KTRH also interviewed the PIO about what the Beach Watch Program means for the public.
- The Health District continued to urge residents to take measures to reduce their risk for West Nile Virus by “remembering the 4 Ds – drain, dress, DEET and dusk/dawn” which is posted on the GCHD website. The first human case of West Nile Virus for Galveston County was reported to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in August.
- Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Services, contributed to a Houston Chronicle follow up story on August 7 about recent explosion incidents at the Texas City BP facility.
- In late August, Hurricane Katrina made landfall near Grand Isle, Louisiana. Galveston County Health District issued a press release outlining the District’s efforts to assist evacuees located in Galveston County including information on services being provided by staff in local shelters and WIC services. Links were also provided to access resource guides.
- Following Hurricane Rita, the District issued several “Boil Water” notices for various parts of Galveston Island and Bolivar peninsula in September. These were updated when water services were restored to these communities.
- The GCHD Chief Epidemiologist presented an overview of influenza virus and avian influenza information to the Galveston County Cooperative Emergency Management luncheon October 20.

- Epidemiology staff made a series of presentations for Galveston ISD nurses on disease reporting, changes on state immunization requirements, Health District services and frequently asked questions.
- In addition to these news stories and press releases, The Health Alert Network, an electronic-based notification system, made 17 health alerts available to the 213 county residents signed up for this service, the majority of whom are health care professionals, public health and emergency management personnel. Advisories were related to hurricane response, flu vaccine availability and outbreaks of concern.
- Throughout the year, Dr. Guidry attended meetings of the Galveston County Medical Society and presented to the members on SARS and an avian flu advisory.

GOAL II Increase public awareness about all of the services provided by the Health District.

Objective One: Develop a public awareness campaign about the services of the Health District.

- On January 4, a reporter with the Houston Chronicle interviewed Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Programs, and Michele Reynolds, Animal Services Manager about animal control in the Bacliff and San Leon areas.
- A press release on January 11 informed the public that additional flu vaccine had become available in Galveston County with information on how to access a flu shot. The Galveston County Daily News printed an editorial on January 13 encouraging those needing a flu shot to take advantage of the additional vaccine.
- In response to a letter submitted by a citizen concerned with animal services in the Bacliff area, Michele Reynolds submitted a guest column to the Galveston County Daily News about improvements made in the past year. The letter was published on January 13.
- On March 15, a staff member met with members of the Red Cross Disaster Services Group. Committee members were given an overview of the District programs in general, informed about the Public Health Preparedness program in particular, and discussed how additional volunteers could be recruited.
- A guest column by Jim Hilton, Director of STD/HIV Control on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was published on February 7th.
- Also on February 7, the District Public Information Officer (PIO) attended a meeting with other PIOs and a representative from the Galveston County Daily News about changes at the News and how that may impact local coverage.
- In March an ad was published promoting Health District services in the Galveston County Daily News's annual Horizons edition focusing on health and fitness. Dr. Guidry was quoted on the epidemic of childhood obesity. In the same edition there was an informational story published summarizing data concerning health indicators in Galveston County. In the article credit was given to the District's Epidemiology staff.

- The WIC program developed a message promoting March as National Nutrition Month. The article was distributed to program participants, employees and was posted on the District website. The article featured WIC leaders, each giving very useful information on developing proper eating habits.
- In April Dr. Guidry made a presentation to the Galveston County Commissioner's Court on the District's 2004 accomplishments and future plans. Judge Yarbrough thanked Dr. Guidry for the report and leadership of moving forward with the Health Plan and sent congratulations to the staff that implemented the Plan. This was also the subject of a press release issued on April 5. The press release was carried in the Gulf Coast E News.
- In March, the District distributed a press release recognizing "World TB Day". The release contained information on tuberculosis, symptoms that people may have prior to diagnosis and activities being conducted in Galveston County to curb the spread of TB.
- Texas EMS Week was the subject of a press release on May 18th. Galveston Ambulance Authority hosted a Children's Health Fair with 20 participating agencies. More than 200 attendees took advantage of the event held at the Island's Community Clinic. The event noted Galveston EMS's 30th anniversary.
- In May, a guest column in support of "National Cover the Uninsured Week" was submitted by Dr. Guidry to the Galveston County Daily News and was published May 3rd. The column was part of a cooperative community effort to raise awareness concerning the needs of uninsured citizens.
- The Galveston County Daily News in July published an editorial addressing the need for EMS services in the parts of the county where another service left the market. It discussed the possibility of contracting with GCHD's EMS service to fill the gaps.
- Dr. Guidry participated in a panel discussion of demographic trends, outlining how the Health District is preparing itself for projected increases in Hispanic populations, seniors and the uninsured, at UTMB as part of Diversity Week.
- The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program celebrated World Breastfeeding Day on August 3. The theme was "Mother's Milk: It's more than just food". Speakers included a pediatrician, a representative from the La Leche League and a breast-feeding mother.
- WIC held an Open House September 14 in its new Texas City suite in the Community Family Center. The new offices are larger and are in the same building where the old offices were located.
- A press release July 29 noted improvements made at the Animal Shelter in Texas City, along with changes in service hours and fees charged for adoption.
- The Kids Health Fest was featured in an article in the Galveston County Daily News on August 1. The Gulf-Coast E-News published a story on back-to-school immunizations on July 26. Fox News Houston visited the District August 2 for a back-to-school immunization story featuring an interview with the PIO, Kurt Koopman.
- Dr. Guidry was interviewed for a story in the Galveston County Daily News on August 8 promoting the concept of medical homes for county residents.

- A press release on changes in groundwater identification processes was the subject of a press release on August 26. A story in the Galveston County Daily News on August 29 included information about the new fee and requirements.
- 250,000 high quality brochures outlining all of the Health District services arrived in August. The brochures, made possible through an innovative grant from the Mainland Communities United Way, describe District services and the goals for senior health improvement. The brochures specifically target seniors in the community with use of a large, clear font. The brochures are being distributed to governmental entities, chambers of commerce, schools, community partners and the public at outreach events.
- In September Dr. Guidry met with newly elected officials from the Cities of LaMarque, Dickinson and Kemah. Officials were provided with brochures and an overview of Health District services.
- In September the Galveston County Daily News published an article encouraging Hurricane Katrina evacuees to seek out medical homes in the community instead of accessing health care in the Red Cross shelters; Red Cross leaders suggested the 4 C's Clinic as an option.
- A presentation to the Noon Optimist Club on the GCHD volunteer program was made in September.
- A Press Release in September highlighted the Galveston EMS's heroic response to evacuation needs of Galveston Island residents during Hurricane Rita.
- An advertisement promoting the 4 C's Clinic was developed and printed in a "Who's Who in Medicine", a supplement in the Galveston County Daily News on October 16th.
- An Open House to celebrate the "Re-Design of 4 C's Clinic" was held at the Galveston 4 C's Clinic site on November 16th. Several Board of Health members spoke, including Dr. Raimer from UTMB and Scott Bentley from Mainland Medical Center.

GOAL III Increase public awareness regarding wellness and the prevention of chronic conditions, including but not limited to, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, depression, heart disease and obesity.

Objective One: *Develop a public awareness campaign to include prevention of chronic conditions on an annual basis.*

- In January, Epidemiology staff presented information concerning the importance of getting children tested for lead poisoning to about 65 participants at the College of the Mainland Wellness Health Fair. The presentation included information on how lead enters the body, health risks, how to reduce the risk of lead poisoning and common sources of lead.
- The WIC program developed a message promoting National Nutrition Month in March. The article was distributed to program participants, employees and was posted on the District website. The article featured WIC leaders, each giving very useful information on developing proper eating habits.

- In May, information on the National Diabetes Day activities was submitted to the Galveston County Daily News and was published daily in the Community Bulletin Board section.
- The Galveston County Daily News ran a story about the importance of HIV testing, stressing the importance of education, awareness and prevention and encouraging individuals to be tested. This was done in conjunction with National AIDS awareness day and mentioned free HIV testing conducted by GCHD on June 27th.
- Public Information staff participated in a Liver Awareness Fair in Santa Fe on October 15th along with other community partners. The event was designed to raise awareness of the health conditions pertaining to the human liver.
- Staff from GCHD working on the Robert Wood Johnson Community Support For Diabetes grant began a series of diabetes self-management classes at UTMB's Department of Family Medicine and a series of cooking classes "Whisking Your Way to Health" at the Agricultural Extension office in Dickinson and the First Presbyterian Church in Galveston. The program's diabetes class curriculum and class schedules are posted on the GCHD website.

GOAL IV Increase public awareness about senior health concerns and available community resources. (See Priority 7, Goal III, page 15)

- October 14th a press release was issued promoting the Senior Summit held at the Doyle Convention Center in Texas City of October 26.
- The Senior Health Summit was held and 230 individuals attended. Attendees provided input on issues facing seniors in Galveston County, most notably problems incurred during the evacuation from Hurricane Rita. A Health Fair involving seventeen agencies and organizations that serve seniors was held immediately after the summit. 196 people were vaccinated with the flu vaccine and pneumonia vaccine was also given.
- Senior 4 C's Clinic patients were invited by letter to the 4 C's Open House on November 14. Flu shots were available.
- The GCHD Volunteer Coordinator taught three exercise classes (Sit and Be Fit) to 30 seniors at McKinney Memorial Methodist Church in September.
- During 2005 the Senior Program participated in fourteen health events with almost 2,000 participants and made 58 presentations to seniors. See Priority 7 for details.

GOAL V Increase public awareness about environmental health issues and Health District services. (See Priority 6, Goal IV)

Objective One: Develop public awareness information that addresses environmental concerns, explains how these concerns are being addressed and who citizens contact for additional information.

- On January 4, a reporter with the Houston Chronicle interviewed Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Programs, and Michele Reynolds, Animal Services Manager, about animal control in the Bacliff and San Leon areas.
- On January 5 Fox 26 News Houston conducted an interview with the Director of Environmental Health Programs about the recent completion of an environmental assessment conducted at Galveston County Road & Bridge facilities in Dickinson and Bolivar. The story aired on January 6.
- In response to a letter submitted by a citizen concerned with animal services in the Bacliff area, Michele Reynolds, Animal Services Manager, submitted a guest column to the Galveston County Daily News about improvements made in the past year. The letter was published on January 13.
- On January 24, Michele Reynolds made a presentation to the La Marque Kiwanis Club. She spoke about the services provided by the Animal Services Division and about the challenges facing animal control agencies.
- Garret Foskit, Nuisance Abatement Officer, addressed the Port Bolivar Chamber of Commerce. He discussed the role of nuisance abatement on the peninsula and the special projects he has participated in to assure clean beaches. He also spoke about the placement of a trailer to collect waste tires to reduce the amount of illegally dumped tires in the area.
- Staff from the Environmental Program spoke to and entertained 300 students at four Galveston school with the Wally Wiseguy program. Wally, a six-foot turtle mascot, teaches kids what to do in the event of a chemical emergency.
- A press release promoting a “Paint and Pizza Party” to be held at the animal shelter in Texas City was issued February 14. The event was sponsored by the Friends of the Galveston County Animal Shelter and was held February 20.
- On March 12, approximately 300 volunteers cleaned the Texas City Dike for Trash Bash. This annual event, in its twelfth year, is one of thirteen Trash Bash sites around the Houston-Galveston area. The event is designed to raise awareness about issues such as solid waste and the impact it has on our environment in Galveston County. The Trash Bash volunteers were treated to a wonderful lunch, given an appreciation gift and were entertained with music, environmental and safety presentations, and games for the kids. The Texas City/LaMarque Chamber of Commerce sponsored an environmental exposition where exhibitors provided information on environmental topics. The District served as Trash Bash Committee chair and extended thanks to the Trash Bash Committee, the many volunteers and the staff of the Health District.
- In April, Garret Foskit spoke at the High Island Community Association and Bolivar Chamber of Commerce on the issue of nuisances and the legal actions to abate them.
- Animal Shelter improvements were the subject of a press release issued on April 19. Information on revision of services offered while the shelter was having its floor sealed was included.
- A press release issued on April 7 recognized all food service establishments that received 2005 Gold Ribbon Awards for exemplary operations. The awards were presented on April 6th during a ceremony at the Wayne Johnson Community Center in LaMarque.
- The GCHD second annual Animal Summit held May 25th was the subject of a news story printed in the Galveston County Daily News noting several topics that were

discussed at the event. The Animal Summit was also the subject of a press release printed in the Galveston County Daily News. The summit provided a public forum to discuss animal services provided by the District and ideas to improve them.

- Staff received several calls from the public concerned with Beach Watch advisories. Callers are generally directed to the District's website, where current information on advisories is available.
- A volunteer in the District's Texas City animal shelter was the subject of a story published in the October 18th issue of the Galveston County Daily News.
- Environmental Health Services staff distributed educational materials about air and water pollution to over 200 people at the Santa Fe Safety Fair in October 8th.
- Wally Wiseguy made appearances at three county elementary schools promoting his "Shelter-In-Place" program against chemical emergencies. Over 1400 students were provided with important information on what to do during a chemical emergency.
- A story in the December 18th edition of the Galveston County Daily News concerned on-going sewage issues in the High Island Community. The Health District's Public Information Officer and Director of Environmental Programs were interviewed.

GOAL VI **Increase public awareness about the benefits of immunizations for children and adults. (See Priority 8, Goal IV)**

- A press release on January 11 informed the public that additional flu vaccine had become available in Galveston County with information on how to access a flu shot. The Galveston County Daily News printed an editorial on January 13 encouraging those needing a flu shot to take advantage of the additional vaccine.
- On April 20 the District issued a press release outlining activities for National Infant Immunization Week. The release included information on the importance of timely and adequate childhood immunizations. The Galveston County Daily News used the information to develop an editorial encouraging all parents to make sure their children are adequately immunized. In April all schools and most day cares received fliers announcing National Infant Immunization Week. The Health District gave 660 free vaccines during the week.
- A new immunization web site was developed by the Immunization Advisory Council members and the District's Webmaster and was presented to the Council on June 7th. The site contains valuable current information on immunizations useful to the public.
- A Kids' Health Fest news release in August 2005 announced the three weeks of back to school shot clinics located at the Galveston County Health District Headquarters in La Marque.
- The Health District hosted five CDC Immunization satellite courses on site for GCHD staff, and staff of private Vaccine For Children providers.
- Immunization staff went to the local food banks on three occasions to pass out immunization fliers and discuss the need for immunizations.

Objective One: *Provide educational materials in Spanish and other languages as needed.*

- Flyers for all immunization events were translated into Spanish and were printed on the back of all distributed materials.
- Reminder and recall cards mailed out by the Reminder Clerk are written in both English and Spanish.
- A Spanish-speaking volunteer was recruited who provided immunization education in Spanish in the Galveston and Dickinson walk-in clinics.

PRIORITY #2: ACCESS TO CARE AND HEALTH DISPARITIES

Identify and eliminate access to care barriers that contribute to health disparities.

In 2005, the Epidemiology Services analyzed several health disparities. Health disparities are defined as a specific demographic group or geographic area bearing a disproportionate share of negative health outcomes. Specifically, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) were noted. The Health District recorded 813 cases of *Chlamydia trachomatis* in 2005. Of these cases 48% were among African Americans, 22% among Hispanics and 29% among Whites. Females accounted for 85% of the cases. Galveston County had 436 case of Gonorrhea in 2005. Sixty-eight percent were among African Americans, 12% among Hispanics, and 20% among Whites. Females accounted for 59% of the cases. There were 28 cases of syphilis reported in 2005. Of these, 57% were among African Americans, 7% among Hispanics, and 36% among Whites. Another disparity noted was elevated blood lead levels in Galveston County children. Children under the age of 6 with blood lead level results equal or greater than 10 mcg/dL are considered to be elevated above the normal range. From 2000 - 2002, the state of Texas reported 3.2% of children with elevated levels; Galveston County reported 13.1%. Of the number of elevated cases recorded in Galveston County, Galveston Island had the highest percentage of cases. Cases are recorded by zip code: 77553 (41.4%), 77552 (27.3%), 77551 (23.6%), and 77550 (19.0%), followed by High Island, 77623 (36%).

GOAL I Improve access to 4C's Clinic's ambulatory healthcare services and operate at maximal capacity. (See Priority 7, Goal I, page 15)

Objective One: *Track and trend measurable objectives and key indicators of clinic access to care.*

- On February 15, 4 C's staff submitted the CY 2004 UDS (Uniform Data System) report of 4 C's clinical activities to the Bureau of Primary Health Care. This report showed increases in the number of total users served, the number of

uninsured users served and in the number of encounters provided to all users. This annual report is key to continuation and possibly increased funding from the Bureau.

- A report on “Access to Care Measures” was further developed in 2005. The report is shared with the Clinic Leadership Team monthly and with the 4 C’s Governing Board quarterly. New measures in 2005 are “cycle time” that measures the amount of time a patient spends from the time he/she enters the clinic until they leave the exam room, “start time” which shows a clinic average of how close to scheduled start time patients are ready to be seen, and productivity measures for the counselor.
- Access to Care Measures demonstrated that clinic productivity increased from an average of 2.2 to 2.5 patients/provider/hour in 2004 as compared to 2004. The increase in capacity approximates an additional 480 patient visits per month.
- Another evaluative report shows the daily number of patients seen, the number of walk-ins seen and the number of walk-ins who cannot be accommodated that day. This report goes out by e-mail to the Clinic Leadership Team members.

Objective Two: Research best practices and identify barriers in 4C’s clinic flow. Establish short-term and long-term improvements that will result in improved clinic flow and clinic productivity rates.

- Beginning in January, a 4 C’s Clinic “re-design team” comprised of a representative sample of clinic staff began testing new ideas in changing patient flow for improved access, patient satisfaction and productivity. A consultant, Patty Perches, brought ideas from Community Health Centers and other facilities that reengineered their practices. Beginning in April, all 4 C’s staff learned about the inroads made by the team.
- In March, clinic staff began an initiative to become more responsive to patient needs for appointments. Staff members work to make sure that patients who need return appointments receive them before they leave the clinic. In addition, staff members now have a goal of making appointments available at least 90 days in advance. In April, the Clinic focused on improving services to those patients who require medication re-writes of previous prescriptions. Each clinic site now has dedicated nursing staff to expedite these requests and a dedicated telephone line for patients to leave their requests. The goal is to turn requests over within 24 hours. The staff is also able to make appointments for the patients, per the provider’s instructions. This helps keep patients from walking in to see a provider, just to get medications re-writes, and thus makes walk-in appointments more available to those with acute illnesses. A weekly report tracking the turnover time for re-writes is sent to Clinic Leadership Team members.

- The 4 C's Clinic Re-Design project continued throughout the year with much staff training and many tests of improved processes. The project culminated in November with the official re-design handbook and an Open House to showcase the changes. A list of improvements includes:
 - Redesign has changed the point of view of staff in the clinic from “We can't do that “ to “What can we do to help?” Cross-training staff and improved communication has facilitated this improvement.
 - Patients are moved around less than in the past. Vital signs are now performed in the exam room. Lab specimen collection is done in the exam room whenever possible, including some tests that are performed by Medical Assistants instead of phlebotomists. Electrocardiograms are done in the exam rooms.
 - Patients are informed of what is happening when there are delays.
 - Patients are being reminded of their appointments in advance. A “pre-work call” is done a few days ahead of the appointment. Patients are reminded to bring medication bottles, summaries from other providers, immunization records, etc. to their visit. Patient expectations are clarified regarding the purpose of the visit.
 - Providers and support staff are working as teams. Each provider has an assigned Medical Assistant who usually works with the provider. The Medical Assistants are being trained to administer medications per Standing Delegation Orders. “Float staff” is available to jump in where needed.
 - We are using a “controller” to manage and facilitate better patient flow. This businessperson, one at each clinic site, also supervises the new unit receptionist staff.
 - Two new medical assistants and a part-time phlebotomist and medical records clerk were hired to fill needs identified through the redesign process.
 - A new clinic organization chart demonstrates several changes in supervision.
 - Paperwork was simplified wherever possible. New forms such as the lab request form have been designed for provider efficiency and to improve business processes.
 - The clinic sites were closed and physically cleaned and reorganized for greater efficiency.
 - New equipment was purchased for the clinics to replace outdated and missing items.
 - An official message to walk-in patients explaining the process of becoming a walk-in patient was developed and printed on large signs hung in the clinics front desk areas.
 - Future plans for structural improvements are being made. An architect has been hired to re-design the Texas City clinic site in order to make patient flow even more efficient. Some structural changes are also being planned for the Galveston site to be accomplished in 2006.

Objective Three: *Simplify providers' job responsibilities and tasks such that their time is focused on patient care duties that only a licensed provider can perform.*

Re-design has focused on forming teams of Medical Assistants and Providers in order to find efficiencies in workflow. Medical Assistants have been trained to perform new duties such as writing prescriptions, completing lab forms, documenting in the medical record, and performing some lab tests in the exam room. These new duties are designed to diminish the patient's wait time and distance walked, as well as to free the provider to concentrate on the things only a provider can legally accomplish. Providers and their assigned Medical Assistants are learning to work well together. In addition, MAs have a new career ladder based on documentation of their new competencies and new job descriptions. MAs began to administer some medications in the clinic in late 2005 and their training and competency determination will continue into 2006. Controllers also work to make business decisions to improve flow and relieve provider staff of these issues. Charge Nurses manage medical issues and perform triage duties, as needed.

Objective Four: *Establish a program to reward and recognize employees who exceed expectations to improve clinic capacity.*

- Career ladders have been developed to incorporate new re-design job duties, such as cross training, that award employees who reach various levels of proficiency. Career ladders have been developed for Medical Assistants and Charge Nurses.
- Merit bonuses were given in October to reward employees who participated in re-design efforts and those who exceeded expectations with regard to performing their job duties.
- "Star" awards were given at the GCHD Christmas party to non-management employees who demonstrated exceptional performance.
- Employees who demonstrate excellent customer service as determined by patient satisfaction surveys are highlighted on the employee intranet site each quarter.

GOAL II **Increase community awareness of the healthcare services provided by the 4C's Clinics. (See Priority 1, Goal II and IV, page 1, Priority 7, Goal II)**

- In March, an ad focusing on health and fitness was published promoting Health District services in the Galveston County Daily News's annual Horizons edition. Dr. Guidry was quoted on the epidemic of childhood obesity.
- In May, Dr. Guidry wrote a Guest Column for "National Cover the Uninsured Week" (Galveston County Daily News?) informing Galveston County residents about services provided by the 4 C's Clinics, improvements recently made and future plans. The column was part of a cooperative community effort to raise awareness concerning the needs of uninsured citizens.
- Dr. Guidry was interviewed for a story in the Galveston County Daily News on August 8 promoting the concept of medical homes for county residents.
- 250,000 high quality brochures outlining all of the Health District services arrived in August. The brochures were purchased through an innovative grant from the

Mainland Communities United Way that targets this strategic goal. The brochures are being distributed to governmental entities, chambers of commerce, schools, community partners and the public at outreach events.

- In September the Galveston County Daily News published an article encouraging Hurricane Katrina evacuees to seek out medical homes in the community instead of accessing health care in the Red Cross shelters; Red Cross leaders suggested the 4 C's Clinic as an option.
- An advertisement promoting the 4 C's Clinic was developed and printed in a "Who's Who in Medicine", a supplement in the Galveston County Daily News on October 16th.
- An Open House to celebrate the "Re-Design of 4 C's Clinic" was held at the Galveston 4 C's Clinic site on November 16th. Several Board of Health members spoke, including Dr. Raimer from UTMB and Scott Bentley from Mainland Medical Center.
- A number of presentation to senior groups throughout the year spotlighted services available at the clinic.

GOAL III Identify and eliminate barriers in the system of referring 4C's patients for specialty evaluations, hospitalizations, and other types of referrals.

Objective One: *Develop a comprehensive system to monitor, standardize, and track referrals.*

- In April, the 4 C's Clinic received a grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. This one-time grant in the amount of \$100,000 was awarded to help provide mental health services to those patients with mild to moderate illness. The grant was used to develop a case management program to assist the 4 C's counselor to serve as many patients as possible. The resource coordinators funded by the grant refer patients to local resources for social services, refer patients with more severe illness to other mental health agencies in the community, and give patients support through intensive case management follow up.
- During 2005 baseline data from the electronic referral system was collected. The system has been used to reissue referrals that have not been acknowledged by the referral source and to refer mental health patients to other sources when referrals were denied. The system has been successful in determining causes of denials or pending referrals, as well as referral patterns.
- **In 2006**, we will explore applying for a grant that would fund a mental health care manager to track mental health patients' progress through a database and use of standardized tools.

Objective Two: *Explore and implement use of new technologies to meet the intent of this goal.*

- During 2005 4 C's Clinic staff developed a "wish list" of functional requirements for an Electronic Medical Record. Vendors of two systems made presentations to

the Clinic Leadership Team. We plan to develop a Request For Proposals by early 2006 and implement a system by the end of 2007. Funds have been set aside for this major IT undertaking.

- Clinic staff participated during 2005 in the Texas Telehealth Disparities Network Coalition that is funded by a grant from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to investigate ways to make health care more effective and efficient in Galveston County through various Telehealth strategies.
- 4 C's staff participated in a collaborative effort between Gulf Coast MHMR, UTMB Emergency Department, the Jesse Tree and other community partners to coordinate mental health services. The result was the receipt of a \$1.6 million grant that will provide for the development of a shared database to be used by case managers to track patients as they access services from multiple agencies. In addition, these monies have helped the MHMR to accept more referrals of patients for their services.

GOAL IV **Improve fiscal management and healthcare financing of the 4C's Clinic. (See Goals in Priority 4.)**

- In January, an application was submitted for a Service Expansion Grant to the Health Resource Services Administration to expand services in the areas of Mental Health and Substance Abuse treatment. Although the application was not funded, the research will be used to apply for further funding for 4 C's Clinic mental health services.
- As in Goal III above, the 4 C's Clinic received a \$100,000 grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. In 2006, we plan to apply for another Hogg Foundation grant in collaboration with the Gulf Coast MHMR and other community partners.
- **In 2006** we will continue to work with our community partners to improve healthcare financing in Galveston County.

GOAL V **Strengthen the partnership between the 4C's Clinic and local resource organizations in order to link 4C's patients to a variety of existing community and social service resources that may more comprehensively meet their needs.**

- Clinic staff participated during 2005 in the Texas Telehealth Disparities Network Coalition that is funded by a grant from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to investigate ways to make health care more effective and efficient in through various telehealth strategies. The Galveston group is pursuing a method to share patient care data among providers who see the same patients via electronic means
- Clinic staff participated in the community coalition the Mental Health Task Force that is focused on improving access to mental health services in the county. This culminated in a \$1.6 million HRSA regional grant to the lead agency, the Gulf Coast Center. The project's stated goals are to increase the capacity of the 4 C's Clinic to assess and maintain mental health clients, to develop a database of

mental health/substance abuse patients shared between agencies to enhance continuity of care, and to develop a “Continuity of Care Center” to manage mental health referrals. Beginning in early 2006, a case manager with mental health experience will be assigned to the 4 C’s Clinic to expedite continuity of care.

- A monthly report for Case Management services has been developed. Resource Coordinators for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Patients have been hired as funded by a grant from the Hogg Foundation. The resource coordinators assist the 4 C’s Counselor to concentrate on professional counseling by handling other duties such as making appointments and routing referrals to the counselor, following up on patients who do not keep appointments, making referrals to other agencies for social service assistance and assisting patients to access medications through the Patient Assistance Program. The whole Case Management Department moved to new offices in LaMarque in July.

PRIORITY #3: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

Improve the Health District’s business practices in order to recruit and retain competent public health employees, to increase access to technologies that will improve efficiency, to improve training programs, to improve internal and external communications, to be prepared for public health disasters/emergencies, and to comply with legal responsibilities.

In April, a volunteer appreciation reception was given in honor of our volunteers for their services and time given to the District during 2004. Attendees included elected officials, 4 C’s Governing Board members, Senior Health Advisory Council members and a host of District employees. The volunteer program initially started with funding from the Mainland Communities United Way and has logged many valuable volunteer hours of service since the beginning of the program in April 2004.

GOAL I Improve the Health District’s system of recruiting and retaining competent public health employees.

- In 2005 the volunteer Program placed a total of 219 volunteers at the Health District in 2005, including 12 seniors. This represents 9965 hours of service. An estimate of value for these hours, based on the Texas dollar value of volunteer time, equals \$167,810. 151 students volunteered including 94 Emergency Medical Services students.

- In August, executive staff worked to implement cost of living increases, merit bonuses and market analysis on positions that are difficult to fill. Merit bonuses were issued in October. 72 employees with exceptional performance toward the objectives of the Strategic Health Plan and who participated in Board and Executive initiatives were given 3% bonuses.
- Re-design career ladders were developed for several job positions in the clinic and in the Pollution Control program to reward employees who expand their abilities to serve.
- A compensation program was also initiated for key bilingual staff in the 4 C's Clinic to assist Spanish-speaking patients.

GOAL II Improve job-related training programs for Health District employees.

- In January, the Health District hosted the Texas Public Health Association's Regional Conference. Holding this conference locally allowed staff to participate in many informative public health sessions.
- A4 C's provider orientation program was developed and presented in May. The program was standardized so that all new providers can be oriented similarly and is available on the employee website.
- A training program was developed for paramedics regarding billing and coding procedures.
- In May, twenty-four GCHD, local law enforcement and cities' staff attended a workshop on "Effectively working with the Media" that was presented in conjunction with the UT School of Public Health Houston: Center for Biosecurity and Public Health Preparedness. Dr. Bob Howard, who served eleven years as Director of Strategic Communications for the National Center for Infectious Diseases, presented this very informative workshop.
- Web-based training programs have been developed for employee orientation (Sexual Harassment, Work Environment and Employee Assistance Program Training), Computer Security training, Customer Service and Cultural Competency and for Rider 33 Training (reporting suspected child abuse).
- The general employee orientation program was improved to include sessions on emergency preparedness, HIPAA procedures and computer usage guidelines, as well as expanded safety training.

GOAL III Increase employee access to technologies that will improve job-related responsibilities as well as internal & external communications. (See Priority 6, Goal V)

- 15 new personal computers were purchased for the 4 C's Clinic registration and cashiering staff to replace the old terminals. These will allow use of windows-based programs along with email and intranet access. Registration staff was trained.
- 4 C's Clinic staff has continued researching the use of an Electronic Medical Record, a Perpetual Pharmacy Inventory system and Telemedicine. The EMR will be implemented in accordance with specifications developed by the Clinic

Leadership Team, with money set aside for the purpose, probably in 2007. A “wish list” of important elements has been developed and two vendors have made presentations on their systems. The Perpetual Pharmacy Inventory software also is funded but is delayed by the vendor until April 2006. The 4 C’s Clinic Business Manager has met with UTMB staff regarding implementing Telemedicine to assist our patients with specialty care and he will continue to explore the best use of this technology. The Referral tracking system is currently implemented and staff can use standardized reports to evaluate the referral system.

- Reengineering efforts in the 4 C’s clinic prompted improvements in IT infrastructure including the overhaul of the clinic technology. Phones were replaced, PCs replaced old dumb terminals and network printers were implemented.
- Vital Statistics’ new database has been custom-built and will be up and running in January 2006.
- The Animal Shelter received new hardware including a new server with a shelter management software package and seven new PCs. Staff now has access to the Internet and District e-mail.
- At the Dickinson Immunization and WIC site, Internet connectivity was improved to supply access to the TWICES immunization registry.
- EMS billing department received improvements in software and hardware upgrades and will soon be able to integrate EMS run sheets with the billing department.
- Additionally, infrastructure improvements have been in progress, including the anticipated completion of the Optiman fiber network. This technology will increase connectivity between the LaMarque Headquarters, the two clinic sites and two EMS stations on Galveston Island.
- HIPAA security guidelines, including risk analysis and contingency planning, were developed in 2005 to comply with federal regulations.
- Based on the IT employee assessment completed 2004, several items of self-help have been placed on the employee intranet website.

GOAL IV Clarify, strengthen, and standardize district management practices.

- On April 21 and 22, managers gathered for an off-site management development and training program to meet several objectives including efforts to strengthen and standardize management practices. The group reviewed characteristics and roles of managers and leadership, identified individual and group communication preferences and needs, reviewed how decisions are made, identified current and future challenges, and identified ways to improve customer service, cultural competency and the management of change. In addition, the group reviewed each priority and goal in the SHP and identified challenges, strategies, resource/budget limitations, and processes necessary to accomplish these goals. A “Next Steps” tracking document was later developed to track the strategies, responsibilities and timelines from the retreat.

- Program Business Meetings began in March for Fiscal Programs, Environmental Programs, Community Health Programs, and the Galveston Area Ambulance Authority. These monthly meetings are held to proactively communicate and inform the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Operating Officer of programmatic projects, far in advance of deadlines, and for staff to receive direction regarding issues and who to coordinate with internally and externally.
- An Executive Memo defining expectations for supervisors and managers was finalized and distributed in January.
- The Chief Financial Officer has worked with departments and programs in 2005 to communicate budget information to supervisors on a real-time, need-to-know basis.
- Executive staff annually maintains updated and board-approved policies.
- Executive Managers are working on a decision tree for authorizations for business activities. This is the first step in automating such processes as electronic purchasing and time-sheet usage.
- The Health District made many improvements to its organization-wide safety program. The GCHD Safety Manual was developed; overhead codes for use in emergency situations (medical emergency, shelter in place, bomb threat, etc.) were developed for each District location and laminated instructions were distributed. New safety training modules were completed and taught to groups as well as placed on the intranet for employees. Several safety incidents triggered intense investigations with findings and recommendations for future prevention that were given to managers. The Risk and Safety Coordinator has drafted a new procedure for reporting incidents such as injuries and exposures after hours. The draft will go to the Executive Team in early 2006 for comments and approval.
- The District's Executive Team approved a comprehensive Records Retention Plan in May.

GOAL V Improve the Health District's preparedness and capacity to respond to public health disasters and emergencies.

The Galveston Area Ambulance Authority has been expanding its services to the Mainland since Goldstar EMS, a private contractor, shut down operations in June. GAAA has covered the Dickinson, LaMarque and the Bayshore areas under short-term contracts while negotiations are ongoing. An Interim County EMS Committee has been meeting and discussing recommendations for a permanent solution. GAAA is currently negotiating contracts that will create a new cooperative agreement for expansion to the Mainland, serving the Tiki Island/Bayou Vista/Hitchcock and the Bayshore area. Contracts should be signed in January 2006 with operations commencing February 1, 2006.

Objective: Fulfill CDC objectives in the bioterrorism grant, including a fully efficient and operational Health Alert Network (HAN) to communicate with county partners.

Public Health Preparedness staff completed all objectives of their grant in 2005 and is now working on the 2006 grant. Some of their achievements include:

- From January 19-21, the Health District hosted the Texas Public Health Association's Regional Conference. Approximately 170 public health and healthcare workers from around the state attended the conference at the Tremont House in Galveston to learn about topics in Community Health, Public Health Administration, Preparedness and Environmental Health. Participants also had the option of attending a Basic Disaster Life Support Class where doctors, nurses and first responders could learn about disaster response strategies.
- On January 24 and 25, staff conducted presentations on Public Health Preparedness to community volunteers. Attendees were informed about the roles of volunteers in the event of mass vaccination or dispensing clinics. District staff will use these contacts to build a volunteer base to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies.
- The training division of the GAAA co-hosted three days of radiological awareness training. The class instructors were from the Department of State Health Services Community Preparedness Program. In attendance were Health District Staff, City of Galveston Haz-Mat Team members, Galveston Firefighters, Galveston County Sheriff Officials and EMS personnel.
- On February 4, in collaboration with the Jesse Tree, GCHD staff conducted a presentation on Public Health Preparedness to attendees at a Texas City Food Fair. Approximately 100 people were present. They were given information about current preparedness activities, things they can do to prepare for emergencies, ways to protect themselves and others from the spread of infectious disease, and the need for volunteers in emergency response.
- On February 10, the Health District's on-call system was notified of a possible bio-terrorism incident in the Dickinson area. The District's field representative was dispatched to the scene to provide field technical assistance. In addition to the District's representative, the FBI, Dickinson Volunteer Fire Department and the Texas City Hazardous Material Unit were on scene. The FBI received a call that nerve agent literature and a hand held "pump up" sprayer were found inside a storage building. The Haz Mat Unit secured the area and the sprayer to prevent any release. The Houston Fire Department Haz Mat unit was called to identify and safely dispose of the material. The material was identified as a pesticide and was properly disposed of by the FBI.
- On February 25, District staff, in collaboration with the Gulf Coast Center, hosted a meeting to develop an effective capacity to respond to county mental health needs during disasters. The meeting came about as a result of a session in the "Diseases and Disasters: Are We Ready?" Conference held in September 2004 where participants identified a need for a coordinated approach to meet the mental health needs of victims and responders in a large-scale public health emergency. Many community partners and volunteers attended the meeting and identified a variety of needs and next steps toward the goal. This group will continue to meet in 2006. It plans to host a conference to train mental health providers in disaster response, and to discuss strategies to pool local resources to provide mental health services in a disaster.

- On March 11, the Health District Epidemiology Services hosted a regional Epidemiology and bioterrorism meeting. The Epidemiology and Bioterrorism Workgroup promotes the exchange of information and assessment of issues between jurisdictions.
- On March 14, Health District staff and volunteers conducted a presentation for union delegates at the AFL/CIO union hall in Texas City. The 13 delegates who attended represented various professions. The representatives were provided a general overview of the Health District, told what they could do to be better prepared for a public health emergency and were informed about the need for volunteers to assist should mass vaccination or an antibiotic dispensing clinic be needed to protect the public from the spread of disease.
- On March 15, staff members met with members of the Red Cross Disaster Services Group. Committee members were given an overview of the District programs in general, informed about the Public Health Preparedness program in particular, and discussed how additional volunteers could be recruited.
- On March 16, City Commissioners with Texas City approved a resolution allowing a memorandum of understanding between the Health District and the Texas City Department of Recreation and Tourism. The MOU would allow the District to use the Doyle Center and/or Nessler Center as a clinic site for dispensing antibiotics or providing vaccinations in the event of a disease outbreak or other public health emergency. The District also entered into agreements with the Friendswood Independent School District and the College of the Mainland to use their facilities and resources in the event of a Public Health Emergency.
- On March 23, an Incident Command for Health District operations was activated with key District personnel who coordinated efforts with the Texas City Office of Emergency Management in response to the explosion at the British Petroleum (BP) plant in Texas City. The Health District responded to health concerns, air quality inquiries and media questions, gathered patient statistics from UTMB, Mainland Medical and Clear Lake Regional Hospital, coordinated an environmental assessment and gathered informational reports. .
- The District received approval from the Texas Department of State Health Services for \$132,777 in funds to purchase an emergency generator and two handheld radios. The generator will provide electricity to the Kemmerer Building (headquarters) in LaMarque in the event of a power outage. The radios provide additional personnel the capacity to communicate with response partners throughout the county in the event of an emergency.
- On April 21, the Health District responded to a reported case of meningococcal disease in a student from Galveston ISD. The District sent a letter to the school district to distribute to classmates of the confirmed case about meningococcal disease. The letter provided information about the disease, how it is transmitted, symptoms to observe, and who is considered to be a high-risk contact. The Epidemiology staff investigated the case and coordinated prophylaxis for 14 contacts including referral for out of jurisdiction contacts.
- On April 26 the Galveston Area Ambulance Authority went on full alert for President George Bush's visit to Galveston Island. Using all special duty teams and additional ambulances, Galveston EMS, under the direction of the Secret

Service, strategically stationed units in the secured areas. EMS was prepared for medical emergencies and terror attacks. One ambulance and crew accompanied the presidential motorcade at all times.

- On April 19, the Health District, with the Galveston County Sheriff's Department and the Galveston County Office of Emergency Management, hosted a meeting to discuss planning for the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). County Judge Jim Yarbrough, HD staff and many other partners attended. The purpose of the meeting was to inform attendees about the SNS and CHEMPACK, and to enlist their support in planning should the SNS be dispatched to Galveston County.
- In May twenty-four Health District, local law enforcement and staff from local cities attended a workshop called "Effectively working with the Media". The workshop was presented in conjunction with the UT School of Public Health Houston: Center for Biosecurity and Public Health Preparedness. This very informative workshop was presented by Dr. Bob Howard who served eleven years as Director of Strategic Communications for the National Center for Infectious Diseases.
- On May 11 staff participated in an exercise held at the new county Emergency Services Facility. The scenario involved a major hurricane striking the Gulf Coast. Representatives from county departments, local cities and the National Weather Service attended the exercise.
- On May 31 and June 1 the Public Health Planner attended training at Rice University on maritime security efforts. The training, provided by the US Dept. of Homeland Security, focused on terrorism prevention, response and post incident issues, and an overview of new regulations. On June 9 and 10 the Planner and a Community Health Nurse attended the Strategic National Stockpile training in Austin. The purpose was to train leaders in the functional areas of SNS deployment.
- On June 28 the Public Health Planner participated in the Houston'/Galveston Traffic Management Exercise along with county and city emergency managers, law enforcement officials, Red Cross and many others. The exercise was to become familiar with and test the new evacuation plan for the area. Participants identified additional planning and training opportunities to enhance hurricane evacuation for Galveston County residents.
- In August an exercise was held to evaluate the District's Strategic National Stockpile and small pox preparedness plans. Thirteen volunteers from the Jesse Tree participated in training leading up to the exercise and acted as patients being lead through the mock mass vaccination clinic.
- On August 1 the Health District's application to start a Medical Reserve Corps in the county was officially approved and registered by the Office of the Surgeon General. The Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps is now recognized as part of the White House's USA Freedom Corps initiative and the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps. The mission of the GCMRC is to organize, train and maintain a local team of volunteer medical and public health professionals to strengthen the public health infrastructure and improve emergency preparedness. Individuals wishing to volunteer should contact the GCHD Public Health Planner.

- August 8-10 The Director of Community Health Services and the Strategic National Stockpile Coordinator participated in a statewide Strategic National Stockpile exercise with staff from other health department around the state, the Centers for Disease Control and law enforcement agencies. The purpose of the exercise was to practice receiving and dispensing national stockpile medicines and supplies from mass dispensing sites.
- Epidemiology staff attended the 2005 National BioWatch Workshop in August in Washington D.C. Bio Watch is a federal program that monitors the air for pathogens that terrorists might use.
- Epidemiology staff also participated in a Public Health Data Sharing Conference in Houston in August.
- On August 24 the Public Health Preparedness Program hosted a tabletop exercise with an anthrax scenario. Participants included GCHD staff, UTMB, Mainland Medical Center, the Red Cross, the Gulf Coast Center, the Galveston County Office of Emergency Management, Shriners Hospital, Texas City Fire/HAZMAT, the Galveston County Sheriff's Office, Galveston County Attorney's office, Devereaux Treatment Center and the Texas Department of State Health Services. Dr. Mary desVignes-Kendrick from the UT School of Public Health moderated the exercise.
- Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Training took place on September 15. Thirty participants from UTMB, Mainland Medical Center and the Health District learned about the role of the LRN and how environmental and clinical samples should be submitted for testing.
- The Epidemiology Program is participating in statewide influenza surveillance. Data from local health care providers and institutions on local flu activity is collected weekly and reported to the Department of State Health Services.
- The Volunteer Program assisted the Red Cross in recruiting and assigning volunteers to two shelters in Galveston County during the Hurricane Katrina response.
- GAAA coordinated the first ambulance evacuation of Galveston Island in September in response to Hurricane Rita. The bed-bound evacuation took twelve hours and evacuated 142 patients. They used thirteen GAAA ambulances. Another 80-100 ambulances were sent by the State to assist.
- The Public Health Preparedness staff researched and developed a Plan to prepare for and respond to Pandemic Influenza. They also drafted a handbook containing the Plan, a brief history of avian flu, frequently asked questions and information on the Medical Reserve Corp. This information was presented to the Galveston County Commissioner's Court, the United Board of Health and the Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative in November.
- The GCHD Health Planner drafted the Disaster Re-entry Plan for staff returning to work after a local disaster. The plan calls for a tiered system for identification badges based on job responsibilities. The Planner will be working with the County Office of Emergency Management to issue tiered badges to all employees in 2006.

- The Public Health Preparedness staff updated the GCHD 24/7 Contact Protocols that ensure the ability to communicate with all stakeholders in the event of a disaster.
- Throughout the year, the Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative met to discuss common emergency preparedness themes. GCERC members include the Sheriff's Office, the County Office of Emergency Management, representatives from local hospitals, Red Cross and the local MHMR. Activities in 2005 include:
 - The group scheduled Risk Communication training for response agency Public Information Officers.
 - Mainland Medical Center hosted a meeting to plan for CHEMPACK, a cache of chemical antidotes to be stockpiled in the county for use when needed
 - The creation of a Medical Reserve Corps of volunteers to assist in public health emergencies for Galveston County
 - A discussion of the response to the BP explosion that occurred on March 23 including lessons learned from the incident.
 - An information session by the Texas City Fire Department about the role of the Hazardous Materials Response Team in responding to industrial and biological incidents.
 - A CDC satellite broadcast "Mass Antibiotic Dispensing: Streamlining the Process"
 - A walk through of a scenario involving Avian Flu to learn more about each entity's response plans and to identify issues that need to be addressed in planning. As a result, members decided to work to identify available resources in the county, share and update contact information, explore systems to track patients in a disaster, and continue to collaborate in planning to improve preparedness and response in the event of a public health emergency.
 - A discussion of hurricane evacuation plans.
 - Work on a patient tracking system to keep track of patients during an emergency.
 - Plans for educating medical providers on emerging pathogens.
 - An epidemiologist with the Texas Department of State Health Services in Austin informed members of how public health assessments can be used to assess the needs of residents after a tropical storm or hurricane.
 - Members discussed evacuation plans and took a tour of the new county Emergency Management Building.
 - A discussion of Hurricane Katrina response and how agencies can be better prepared to respond to emergencies in the future.
 - A discussion of the use of WebEOC, a web based system to track emergency response efforts and improve communications.
 - A talk by Eliot Jennings, Galv. Co. EOC Coordinator, on the use of incident command structure to manage emergencies and lessons learned from Hurricane Rita.

In August and September 2005 the Health District staff was greatly affected by the two hurricanes that devastated the Gulf Coast Region. Response to each storm was all encompassing for many employees and each District employee was affected in some way. Although emergency preparations made before the storms ensured a competent workforce with resources for success, we also learned many lessons about how to improve our preparations and strategies in the future.

Hurricane Katrina: On Monday, August 29th, Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a category 4 hurricane near Grand Isle, Louisiana. About 3,000 individuals who fled from the devastation ended up in Galveston County hotels, shelters, churches, and private homes. Galveston County Health District staff worked in coordination with hospitals, Red Cross, Emergency Management, and other agencies to provide relief to those whose lives were turned upside down by this storm. The 4C's clinics provided medical care and prescriptions to those displaced. Community Health Nurses conducted health assessments and provided care and immunizations to evacuees housed in shelters. WIC staff provided food vouchers and infant formula to those who qualified. EMS staff transported patients who had been evacuated by air from hurricane-affected areas to area hospitals. Public Health Preparedness staff worked with agencies and community groups to identify resources and to coordinate response activities. The HIV program linked individuals to needed treatment and medications. The Consumer Health program visited shelter operations to insure they were preparing food properly and operating in a safe, sanitary manner. And Animal Services provided shelter to animals that were evacuated from storm and flood ravaged areas.

Hurricane Rita: Early in the development of Hurricane Rita, Health District staff closely monitored its progress and landfall forecasts. When forecasts began predicting the storm would make landfall in Southeast Texas, Health District staff began taking actions to protect district facilities, safeguard data, and provide ample opportunity for employees to secure their homes and evacuate the area. Galveston EMS worked with local hospitals to evacuate patients to safety.

On the morning of Saturday, September 24th, not long after Hurricane Rita made landfall in the Sabine Pass area, Health District staff initiated recovery operations bringing up computer systems, preparing the Public Health Lab for water sampling operations, and calling in staff to assist in food safety inspections and animal control activities. Staff also worked with county emergency management to identify available healthcare resources in the area.

In the days following Rita's arrival, Health District staff worked to address public health concerns by issuing boil water notices to the media, conducting tests of municipal drinking water, conducting inspections of grocery stores, restaurants and schools, providing tetanus shots those in affected areas, and addressing debris burning and disposal issues. 4 C's Clinic provided services to persons displaced by Hurricane Rita.

After Actions: GCHD Executive Staff met on November 8 to discuss lessons learned from Hurricane Rita operations. An After Action Report has been drafted based on this meeting and the meeting with the Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative. Some targeted areas of improvement include a need to review and revise plans for

vaccine storage, to clarify roles of community health and clinic nurses working in Red Cross shelters, and to continue to train staff on new communications technologies. Staff responsibilities in making these improvements have been made and the work will continue into 2006.

GOAL VI Improve Health District's compliance with legal responsibilities

- During April and May, STD/HIV staff participated in a weeklong mandatory training in Austin. They exceeded the state performance objectives goal of 80%.
- In February the Risk and Safety Coordinator completed a comprehensive assessment of compliance with the American Disabilities Act for District facilities. A few minor improvements were made based on the findings.
- The Health District developed and distributed a list of employees required (or preferred) by job description to perform translation duties in Spanish. The list was sent to all employees and is available on the intranet site. The list includes options for employees who need translation into other languages and information on how to access the Language Line.
- In February, the Department of State Health Services conducted a site visit to assess the Family Planning, Texas Health Steps (for children), Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Services and Women, Infants and Children programs that are funded through the state.
 - The visit report showed that the WIC program had improved enough to be taken off probation, although several recommendations were made.
 - There were also recommendations for Family Planning, including a new mandate to require parental consent for young people seeking those services.
 - Staff worked on a Plan of Corrections, including a plan for a Rider 11 100% compliance QA program. The Strategic Plan Evaluator and the new Compliance Auditor have monitored Rider 11 (now Rider 33) reporting monthly, for both the 4 C's Clinic and the WIC programs. This Rider requires that minors be reported to the Department of Family and Protective Services if abuse (sexual or other) or neglect is suspected. Staff has been trained on this program. Monthly monitoring will continue.
- The District approved a new, comprehensive Record Retention Plan in May. The new Plan assures compliance with Title VI Subtitle C of the Local Government Code.
- Both Boards approved a new position for a compliance officer in July and the position was filled August. His first duty has been to centralize and develop a tracking methodology for all contracts and agreements in the Health District. He has also begun auditing critical and required contractual requirements in designated programs. He conducted an internal audit of the WIC program in October before the State funding agency came down for an official site visit. He has also been present for State audits of the HIV Prevention Program (EBI/HIV) and the HOPWA Program. (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS).

- The District formed a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) committee to bring us into compliance with the security rule by April 2005. The rule requires that the electronic form of protected health information be secured under specific guidelines. New processes were implemented. Staff training on some of the new processes will be ongoing in 2006.
- In the 4 C's Clinic, HIPAA security was identified as an area for improvement in August as a result of a proactive risk assessment. New guidelines were developed and implemented. Quality Assurance assessments show continued improvement throughout the end of 2005 and assessments will continue in 2006.
- In October the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) was audited by the state agency on an accelerated schedule. WIC had been taken off probation earlier in the year. The audit result report shows just five findings. A Plan of Correction is due in early 2006.

PRIORITY #4: HEALTHCARE FINANCING

Improve health care financing in order to avoid loss of revenue from Medicaid, to finance medications and indigent health care, and to increase reimbursements to the Clinic.

GOAL I Become an authorized provider of health care plans that serve Galveston County residents.

- 4 C's Clinic became an authorized provider for the Amerigroup Medicaid HMO plan.
- Executive staff is researching the possibility of becoming a Medicare Part D pharmacy in the 4 C's Clinic. The decision will be made by February 2006 and will be based on whether this move will be financially beneficial to the organization as well as the 4 C's patients.

GOAL II Assure that all patients who are potentially eligible for health insurance are provided the opportunity to apply for coverage. (See Priority 7, Goal V, page 16)

- 4 C's Clinic eligibility procedures have been improved and clarified and staff has been trained and cross-trained. Eligibility Specialists routinely refer patients to the Medicaid office if they appear to be eligible and assist patients with accurate information if they wish to make the 4 C's clinic their Medicaid provider. Case Managers are available to assist patients with completing applications.
- Through a relationship with Mainland Children's Partnership, pregnant women receive case management services including assistance with the Medicaid application process.

- In 2005 the clinic's procedures for determining eligibility for the County Indigent Health Care Program changed. Asset testing began January 1, 2005. The program uses software developed by a vendor to assist Texas counties with determination of eligibility. Since this program was instituted, the county has realized an initial steep reduction in the number of eligible participants with a gradual increase during the year. The number of eligibles appears to be stable at about 60% of what it was at the end of 2004.

GOAL III **Assure 4C's Clinic fees are appropriate and reflect the actual cost of service.**

- The Medical fee schedule was reviewed, revised and approved by the 4 C's Governing Board on November 10th at the October meeting. This included a new fee set for completing applications for the Patient Assistance Program that assists patients to access medications not available on the clinic formulary, directly through the manufacturer. Dental fees are currently under review and will be updated by Governing Board approval in 2006.

GOAL IV **Increase collection of fees charged to self pay patients (for example, uninsured) so they meet national standards set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).**

Financial reports continue to show that 4 C's self-pay collections are low (less than 10% of what is billed) and we are out of compliance with this measure in comparison with other Community Health Centers. This year the following measures have been taken in an attempt to try to increase the rate of collections:

- In 2005 we updated credit card machines in the 4 C's Clinics to accept debit cards and allow for automatic authorization of credit cards.
- We are using a third party service to guarantee and verify payment on personal checks.
- We ask each patient for payment at the time services are provided. Eligibility Specialists continue to inform patients of the 4 C's payment procedures when they are registered.
- Patients are reminded of co pays during Pre-work calls several days ahead of their appointments.

GOAL V **Assure coding accurately reflects the services provided and diagnosis made.**

A new position has been developed and the new hire will begin January 2, 2006. The Patient Billing Manager will coordinate billing and collection functions for the 4 C's Clinic and for the Galveston Area Ambulance Authority. This manager will have good knowledge of medical coding and will look for ways to improve the coding, billing and collection functions.

GOAL VI **Increase the proportion of clinic patients who have third party reimbursement.**

Although the 4 C's Clinic did not appreciate an increase in the amount of third part reimbursement in 2005, we continue to strive to increase these monies.

- 4 C's Clinic is currently using a web-based site to verify current Medicaid eligibility for 4 C's patients. This is a rapid and accurate program through the Texas Medicaid Healthcare Partnership. In 2005, new computers were purchased for all of the 4 C's Clinic front office staff so that all users could utilize the Medicaid eligibility website to verify eligibility.
- In 2005 we applied for continued Title XX, Family Planning grant funds through the state but did not receive funding. We are currently reviewing our application weakness and plan to reapply for funding in 2006.
- Our project to market the 4 C's Clinic to seniors with Medicare has continued through 2005 with the development of the senior-friendly brochure on Health District services and outreach presentations by the Senior Health Coordinator.

GOAL VII **Work with community partners and the Legislature to develop a funding method that would support indigent health care.**

- In January Kurt Koopman, Public Information Officer, attended the first meeting of the Galveston United Way Children's Community Investment Initiative. The meeting was held at UTMB and attendees represented many local agencies providing a variety of services to families and children. The group is examining issues and developing principles that will guide future funding decisions.
- In May, a guest column in support of "National Cover the Uninsured Week" was submitted by Dr. Guidry to the Galveston County Daily News and was published May 3rd. The column was part of a cooperative community effort to raise awareness concerning the needs of uninsured citizens.
- Dr. Abdul-Aziz Alhassan, 4 C's Medical Director, attended a breakfast meeting with local members of the clergy and community at the Nessler Center in Texas City of May. The subject was access to medical care and helping the uninsured obtain needed medical care.
- On May 5 the 4 C's Business Manager participated in a panel discussion on health disparities in Galveston County, held at Levin Hall on the UTMB campus. Also participating were representatives from the Jesse Tree, St. Vincent's House and the UTMB President's Office. Panel members presented talks on what their organizations were doing to help the uninsured in Galveston County.
- GCHD executives were approached by members of the Brazosport Medical Center (BMC) to discuss the possibility of the 4 C's taking over the operations of the BMC. The reasons for the request concerned advantages in funding that federally qualified health centers receive from Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement. 4 C's staff spent months reviewing due diligence material provided by BMC staff and a consultant's report on potential revenue sources and contracts, private contributions, etc. to determine if it would be feasible. After reviewing all materials, constructing a proposed expense and revenue budget based on our understanding of what services

are required of an FQHC, the GCHD team came to the conclusion that for the project to work, there would have to be a guaranteed income source, other than patient revenue, lease revenue, and donations of \$500,000. In June, this message was communicated to the 4 C's Governing Board with the determination that we not affiliate with BMC.

- GCHD staff participates in a number on ongoing collaborations and partnerships to improve access to healthcare. These include the Texas Telehealth Disparities Network Coalition, the Mental Health Taskforce and collaborative grant to coordinate mental health services and continuity of care, the Robert Wood Johnson collaborative grant to develop community support for diabetes and continued work with the Galveston County Health Access Program.

GOAL VIII **Review and assure that the pharmacy formulary and laboratory authorized tests are consistent with the clinic practice guidelines. (See Priority 5, Goal I, page 11)**

- The 4 C's Clinic formulary was reviewed and updated with the final version finalized in November. The formulary included all new medications approved, most of which are available through the Pfizer "Share the Care Program". The formulary includes the medications called for in clinical guidelines. It also includes patient safety measures such as the Guideline on Prohibited Abbreviations and a list of "Look Alike Sound Alike" medications.
- The Patient Assistance Program (PAP) was revamped to include a fee charged to assist patients to complete applications to drug manufacturers for medications not on the formulary. This puts the charges for formulary medicines and PAP medications in line.

GOAL IX **Implement a Perpetual Pharmacy Inventory System as a fiscal monitoring tool. (See Priority 3, Goal III, page 6)**

The Perpetual Pharmacy Inventory System has been ordered from the vendor and we anticipate that it will be implemented in April 2006. In 2006 we plan to continue to analyze prescribing practices and drug cost data.

In 2005 we have vastly improved information infrastructure as a foundation for future electronic business and medical records systems..

PRIORITY #5: MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Improve the identification and management of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, depression, etc.

GOAL I Establish official 4C's Standards of Care

Objective One - *Develop and implement clinic practice guidelines for chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and depression.*

- In 2005 Clinical Guidelines were written and approved by the Clinic Leadership Team for Chronic Asthma and Hypertension as well as prescribing guidelines for certain medications on the 4 C's Clinic Formulary. All guidelines were researched using professional association groups. Guidelines, additionally, have been written in conjunction with guidelines from other local resources such as UTMB in order to coordinate community resources and patient care. Staff has been trained on the Clinical Guidelines. All approved guidelines are available on the GCHD intranet site.
- During 2005, almost 1,000 patients with chronic conditions were referred to the 4 C's Case Manager from local hospital emergency departments. The Case Manager is funded by a collaborative effort from UTMB, Mainland Center Hospital and the Health District to assist patients who use the local hospital emergency rooms as a medical home to access 4 C's Clinic appointments. Of the patients referred, the case manager contacted approximately 800 individuals, who made and kept almost 500 appointments at 4 C's.
- In May 4 C's received a \$100,000 grant from the Hogg Foundation for mental health services. The grant maximizes the services of the 4 C's counselor by providing intensive case management support to 4 C's patients with mental health and substance abuse conditions. Additionally, the clinic is in the process of contracting with a psychiatrist to provide consultation services through the Hogg Grant.
- 4 C's Clinic staff has participated in a collaborative effort, with the Gulf Coast MHMR, UTMB Emergency Room, Jesse Tree, St. Vincent's House and others. The group received a \$1.6 million grant from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to coordinate mental health services in Galveston and Brazoria counties. They will develop a shared database to track patients as they receive services from various agencies and facilities in the two counties. This grant will be implemented in 2006 and evaluative measures will be developed. This collaborative effort resulted from continuing participation in the Galveston County Mental Health Taskforce.
- In 2006, 4 C's staff will work to develop mental health screening and evaluative tools. Additional grant funding will be sought from the HRSA and the Hogg Foundation. 4 C's staff will develop guidelines for treatment of mental health and substance abuse conditions for outpatient counseling, case management and psychiatric consultation services, and inpatient treatment referrals.
- Through reengineering efforts, the clinic staff has implemented new appointment scheduling procedures. Patients who need follow up appointments, especially

those with chronic conditions, are now able to schedule their appointments before leaving the clinic.

- **Objective Two - *Develop and Implement a Quality Assurance Monitoring Program.***
- A quarterly report to the Clinic leadership Team and to the Governing Board measures the average A1c of diabetic patients (a measure of whether the patient's condition is controlled or not) as well as the percentage of diabetic patients who have made a self-management goal. These measures are tracked electronically through a computerized database. This year, infrastructure has been completed to allow the clinic to upgrade its registry and to allow it to track measures on other chronic conditions. In 2006, staff will convert the registry to the improved version. This will also allow improved tracking of the patient self-management program.
- Case Management has continued to track patients with diabetes who do not keep appointments and to phone them to offer assistance with compliance issues. The case manager followed up over 300 patients.
- Medical Peer Review has been conducted throughout the year on physicians' treatment of patients with diabetes mellitus and childhood asthma using clinic guidelines in place to review care. In 2006 it is anticipated that other chronic conditions will be the focus of Medical Peer Review.
- In 2006, mental health services evaluative tools and measures will be developed.

GOAL II Identify and develop clinic guidelines for other identified priority health conditions.

Objective One - *Develop criteria for identification of priority health conditions.*

This objective was accomplished through the comprehensive needs assessment completed in late 2004 in preparation for the 5-year 4 C's Clinic federal grant application. This data is used to prioritize the development of clinical guidelines and improvement efforts based on local morbidity and mortality data, common diagnoses of 4 C's patients and identified health disparities. Mental health conditions and substance abuse issues are targeted for guideline development in 2006.

GOAL III Integrate chronic health conditions activities with other Health District programs.

During 2005 the 4 C's Clinic and the Community Health Program continued their collaborative efforts to provide diabetes education and to engage patients in self-management activities. Staff funded by the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) grant "Community Support for Diabetes" continued to teach classes at both clinic sites, track patient's self-management goals and to facilitate a support group. Some of the activities funded by this grant that were accomplished in 2005 include:

- In March RWJ and GCHD staff hosted an agency “Show and Tell” to share programs and resources among agencies and elicit support for a community Diabetes Day in May. Staff from seventeen various agencies attended to provide information to others about their programs and all expressed interest in the community activity.
- Diabetes Day was held on May 26th. Seventeen Galveston community organizations had booths with organizational and educational materials including the College of the Mainland Fitness Programs and the Health District’s Diabetes Support Group. Two guest speakers were a physician from the University of Texas Medical Branch discussing “14 Superfoods” and a talk on “Making Calories Tasty” by a representative from the County Agricultural Extension. 70 people attended.
- RWJ staff worked with County Extension Office staff on curriculum for “Whisking Your Way to Health” cooking classes. These classes are held in the community and are targeted to seniors.
- A newsletter was developed for the community diabetes coaches trained through RWJ staff. These lay coaches are currently teaching diabetes classes in eleven locations. The newsletter includes a list of free or reduced cost resources for diabetic supplies.
- The District is setting up an extranet site which will provide diabetes information for the public. Currently, all class schedules, curriculum and coach forms are available at <http://www.gchd.org/pages/chn/diabetesaction.htm>
- The Goal Patrol Program for helping patients set self-management goals continues as an integrated activity. Goals are set through diabetes classes or patient clinic visits. RWJ staff helps train clinic nurses on patient education and the goal-setting program. The Clinic nurse on NurseLine contacts the patients by phone to track progress. RWJ staff track patients with goals in a database.
- Other integrated programs continued, including the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program and the D’Feet Breast Cancer screening programs that provide mammograms and follow up services to women both within and outside the 4 C’s Clinic patient population.

PRIORITY #6: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

Address environmental issues involving air, water and food, to include aspects of wastewater management, enforcement, bacterial contamination, animal control violations, toxic substances monitoring, and conservation of natural resources.

GOAL I Comply with all contract requirements in the State and Federal contracts which fund program activities. (See Priority 3, Goal IV, page7)

- On January 28 and April 9, the Health District sponsored two 8-hour euthanasia training courses for a total of 62 participants representing Galveston, Brazoria, Harris, Matagorda and Hay Counties. The course consisted of approved methods of euthanasia, animal restraint, and stress management. As a result of this course, participants will meet the state mandate for euthanasia certification.
- In April, the animal shelter floor-sealing project was instituted per state regulations. The shelter remained open and carried out business in the parking lot. Rescue group partners fostered many animals away from the shelter over the weekend.
- The Water Pollution Division sponsored and participated in the annual Water Pollution Oversight Committee meeting in May.
- The Office of Environmental Health Programs reviewed and updated their hurricane plans. The Division plays a critical role in preparing Health District facilities prior to hurricane landfall and plays an even larger role during the recovery phase. Their roles include assuring the safety of both the water and food supply, condemning unsafe food products and septic systems, monitoring the ability of water suppliers to deliver safe water to residents of the county and monitoring the air and water for potential chemicals from the nearby petrochemical facilities. They also assist the county to assure that storm debris including hazardous waste is properly disposed.
- In July two staff members met with officials from the Galveston County Office of Emergency Management and the State Division of Emergency Management to discuss finalization of the County's Debris Management Plan. This plan describes the county's responsibilities to remove and safely dispose of storm event debris from the unincorporated areas. The District will play a key role in providing expertise in the proper disposal of debris, including the disposal of hazardous waste. All storm debris will be transported to regional debris sites that are currently being identified.
- Dr. Dana Beckham, Health District Veterinary Consultant, conducted an internal assessment of the operations at the animal shelter in July. The shelter received a satisfactory assessment and is in compliance and meets the minimum standards set forth by the Texas Administrative Code. Recommendations for future improvement were listed in the assessment. The review included general structural strength and sanitation of the shelter, proper storage of food products, controlled substance security and drug log documents, signage, compliance with quarantine rule and regulations.
- The GCHD Public Health Laboratory was audited by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Laboratory Accreditation and Certification Division that certifies our lab for analysis of drinking water. The result found no significant findings.
- The Phase II Storm Water Cooperative Committee was created this year to help the county and cities make a coordinated effort to comply with the new Phase II Storm Water Permit Program. This program was issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and is currently open for public comment. This federally mandated program is comprised of seven objectives to limit and reduce the amount of pollutants that reach our waterways through storm drain

systems. Cities and counties will be required to control pollutants from entering the storm drains under their control. The committee was formed when County Judge Yarbrough approached GCHD Air and Water Pollution Services Division staff to meet with the cities and provide a collaborative program that is consistent and cost effective.

- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved a request to amend the On-Site Sewage Facility rules that allows the District to enforce the state regulations. Following approval by TCEQ, the United Board of Health passed a procedural change along with an associated fee for groundwater evaluations on Galveston Island and Bolivar Peninsula. The change was implemented in August 2005. At the request of TCEQ, this procedural change is being upgraded to an amendment to the Health District's On-Site Sewage Facility.
- **In 2006**, Air and Water Pollution Services Division will draft and finalize the 2006 air work plan and file that with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- The Air Section will participate in the annual air audit conducted by TCEQ to review the program objectives completed in FY 2005.
- Animal Services continues to meet with the Galveston County Animal Services Advisory Committee as required under the Interlocal Agreement. Staff completes action items as directed by the committee. Recommendations coming from the committee are directed to the United Board of Health through the Executive Director.

GOAL II **Identify resources needed for future environmental needs and services.**

- County Judge Yarbrough, Texas City Mayor Doyle, GCHD and City of Texas City staff met with representatives from Cinco Mas, a non-profit organization dedicated to operating a no-kill animal shelter. Cinco Mas has purchased land in the City of Texas City and has a conceptual design for a shelter. The officials from Cinco Mas are interested in collaborating with the county and are proposing to provide the land if the county will construct a new county animal shelter on the property. The current shelter would be sold. We will continue to meet with Cinco Mas to discuss this proposed collaboration.
- In July GCHD staff and an attorney working with the Houston-Galveston Area Council met with the Bolivar Special Utility District Board to discuss the possibility of the Board sponsoring a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP). The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality allows monies generated from fines for violations of environmental laws to go toward funding approved SEPs. These monies generated under the SEP would be used to assist low-income households with correcting their on-site sewage problems. GCHD will work with the Bolivar Special Utility District to help identify persons eligible for this funding and assisting them in identifying resources for these environmental needs.
- Animal Services Task Force met on April 20 to discuss revision five of the Galveston County Animal Services Interlocal Agreement. Several changes to the agreement were discussed and approved. The Interlocal Agreement was

- forwarded to the United Board of Health for approval and then forwarded to all member cities for signatures. The Interlocal Agreement went into effect on October 1, 2005. Recommendations for membership to the Galveston County Animal Services Advisory Committee were discussed and potential members were nominated.
- In 2005 the Health District drafted a list of priority items needing attention at the animal shelter. These items included: building repairs, capital equipment purchases, development of division standard operating procedures, a draft of an employee professional development program to address training and certifications, the purchase of new shelter management software and the continuation of adherence to all state laws, rules, regulations and guidelines. All of these items are complete except for the standard operating procedures that are still being revised.
 - The City of Texas City and the Health District have drafted a Memorandum of Understanding that allows trustees from the Texas City Jail to work off community service hours by working at the animal shelter. They will not actually handle animals, but will clean and provide labor at the shelter. Shelter staff will accomplish their training. We are anticipating the completion of the agreement in 2006.
 - In 2005 Animal Services has processed an additional 2,000 more animals than in past years, bringing the annual total to about 8,000 animals. Increased patrols in contracted cities and planned “sweeps” are a few reasons for this increase. The shelter has invested in new software to assist in tracking the animals from impound to final disposition. This helps generate reports to the contracting cities. There was also an increased adoption rate in 2005 of 36% compared to 24% in 2004 and a decreased euthanasia rate of 68% compared to 76% in 2004.
 - Animal Services requested two new Animal Care Technician positions from the County Commissioner’s Court and member cities and received approval. These additional staff members were necessary to maintain levels established by the National Animal Control Association for the proper care of the animals. This improvement is critical in maintaining compliance with the state rules and regulations established for government shelters. In addition, Animal Services received approval from the United Board Of Health to purchase and replace animal services trucks.
 - On November 1, 2005, the inaugural meeting of the Galveston County Animal Services Advisory Committee was held at the Health District Headquarters. Participation by committee members was excellent. The meetings are open to the public. The committee discussed the formation of a subcommittee to review the current sterilization policy. The next meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2006.
 - In 2005, the Air and Water Pollution Services Division continued to install mobile air sampling equipment in two (2) enclosed trailers to monitor the air for a host of toxic compounds. Many project delays forced by unforeseen equipment problems and calibration issues pushed back the actual start date. To date, the trailer installation is complete and test runs are being conducted behind the District’s environmental building. This mobile system allows the District to monitor the air anywhere in the County. Monitoring locations are based on identified pollution

sources, proximity of sensitive receptors to the source, citizen complaints and special requests for monitoring.

- **In 2006**, we will continue our efforts with the non-profit organization, Cinco Mas, seeking funds to construct a new county animal shelter on lands owned by Cinco Mas.
- The Air and Water Pollution Services Division will draft and submit for approval a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) plan. Once approved, the project will be eligible to receive funding through environmental fines.
- The Office of Environmental Health Programs will review with the Chief Financial Officer the current fee schedules to assure that revenue is covering expenses.

GOAL III **Implement a public awareness campaign that addresses environmental concerns. (See Priority 1, page 1)**

- On January 24, Michele Reynolds, Animal Services Manager, made a presentation to the La Marque Kiwanis Club. She spoke about the services provided by the Animal Services Division and about the challenges facing animal control agencies.
- Garret Foskit, Nuisance Abatement Officer, addressed the Port Bolivar Chamber of Commerce and discussed the role of nuisance abatement on the Peninsula and the special projects they have participated in to assure clean beaches.
- Staff from the Environmental Program spoke to and entertained 300 students at four Galveston school with the Wally Wiseguy program. Wally, a six-foot turtle mascot, teaches kids what to do in the event of a chemical emergency.
- On March 12, approximately 300 volunteers participated in the annual Trash Bash event at the Texas City Dike. This annual event, in its twelfth year, is one of thirteen Trash Bash sites around the Houston-Galveston area. The event is designed to raise awareness about issues such as solid waste and the impact it has on our environment in Galveston County. The Trash Bash volunteers were treated to a wonderful lunch, given an appreciation gift and were entertained with music, environmental and safety presentations, and games for the kids. The Texas City/LaMarque Chamber of Commerce sponsored an environmental exposition where exhibitors provided information on many environmental topics. The District served as Trash Bash Committee chair and extended thanks to the Trash Bash Committee, the many volunteers and the staff of the Health District.
- The GCHD Animal Services Division, along with the Friends of the Galveston County Animal Shelter, participated in the 2005 Candlelight Vigil in observance of National Homeless Animals Day. The vigil calls attention to the millions of homeless dogs and cats born to die each year in America. About 30 participants took part in the Saturday night vigil at the Animal Shelter in Texas City. A photographer from the Houston Chronicle was on hand taking photographs of the many homeless animals at the shelter. The Friends of the Shelter bathed and groomed many of these animals and presented them for adoption during the event.
- The Beaumont Enterprise published a story in June noting litter control efforts being made on the Bolivar Peninsula beaches. The GCHD Nuisance Abatement staff was interviewed.

- Beach Watch advisories garnered attention from the public and from elected officials. Dr. Guidry and the Public Information Officer participated in a conference call on July 21 with the City of Galveston's mayor, city manager, Public Information Officer, city attorney and management from the local beach patrol. There were concerns about the large number of advisories posted and how the city should handle questions. Dr. Guidry provided them an explanation on what the advisories mean for most people. As a result of this call, the District's web page for this program has been modified to make language consistent with the signs that are posted on local beaches.
- The annual Gold Ribbon Award Ceremony was held on April 6, 2005 at the Wayne Johnson Community Center. Thirty-four food establishments received awards. Winners are selected for their excellent compliance with local food service regulations. More than 100 people were in attendance at the affair.
- The Consumer Health Services Division continues to collaborate with the Galveston County Daily News to inform the general public of current restaurant inspection scores on a weekly basis by publishing these scores in the newspaper. The report includes a short explanation of the inspection scoring system. Enhancements to this reporting system are being investigated including the purchase of software for posting these results on the GCHD website.
- **Next year**, the Animal Services Division will draft and implement an outreach program to teach school aged children about responsible pet ownership.
- The Air and Water Pollution Services Division will continue its environmental outreach efforts with the county school districts. In addition to focusing on air and water pollution issues, the division will draft and implement a recycling outreach effort.

GOAL IV Increase awareness among elected officials regarding environmental services and concerns. (See Priority 1, Goal V, page 2)

- Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Programs reviewed two new air initiatives with the Galveston County Commissioner's Court on April 18. The first initiative concerns the District's new mobile air toxic monitor trailers. This program, funded with state contract monies, was discussed with the Board of Health and will provide the District with the capability to monitor for air toxics throughout the county. The second initiative is for the Air and Water Pollution Services Division to team up with other air investigators from several jurisdictions targeting large pollution emitters in the Houston-Galveston area. The City of Houston, Harris County, TCEQ and the District proposed to form a Multi-Jurisdictional Air Enforcement Task Force to identify and inspect petrochemical facilities with excessive air emissions.
- The Director of Environmental Health Programs and the Nuisance Abatement Officer participated in a workshop discussion in Commissioner's Court in May. The discussion concerned the environmental assessment of all county owned facilities that was conducted by a third part consultant. The consultant's report included a report drafted by GCHD on environmental compliance deficiencies of three County Road and Bridge facilities. The Health District has been asked to provide information on prioritizing the next steps of implementation.

- The Water Pollution Services Division sponsored the annual water pollution services oversight meeting with seven cities and one water utility district to discuss merits of the program, review the content of annual water pollution reports and the upcoming fiscal year.
- At the request of a member of the United Board a Health, an intensive investigation was completed regarding water quality issues in the Lake Madeline area of West Galveston Island. Data collection and analysis is ongoing. County and city officials are being kept informed. A final report will be released in January 2006.
- In December, Dr. Guidry, Ronnie Schultz and other Managers met with the County Commissioner's Court to brief the members on sewage disposal problems in the High Island area.
- **In 2006**, Office of Environmental Programs will draft a quarterly newsletter specific to each of the cities within Galveston County. The newsletter will report on current activities, provide a summary of work performed, highlight environmental issues located in their city, and an update on upcoming legislative and rulemaking changes.
- The Water Pollution Services Division will sponsor and participate in the annual Water Pollution Services Oversight Committee meeting to be scheduled in May of 2006.

GOAL V Assure systems are in place to collect accurate and available data.

- The Animal Services Division has purchased and installed animal shelter data management system software to better collect and manage information while meeting the Animal Services' business needs. The software effectively and efficiently produces reports to be shared with our public health partners.
- Monitoring of air toxics has been implemented with the new mobile trailers discussed in Goal IV.
- **Next year**, The Office of Environmental Health Programs will continue to investigate with the internal compliance auditor a comprehensive data management system for the entire Office excluding animal services. The data management system should be web based and parts of the database should be accessible to the public.

GOAL VI Improve public relations among public health partners and relevant stakeholders.

Objective One: Annual forum for Health District environmental related issues, and animal services, to include: veterinary associations, other animal shelters, city officials who also provide animal related services, local restaurant associations, plant managers, Environmental Managers Round Table, Chambers of Commerce, and the Community Advisory Panel to address current problems and receive feedback.

- On February 3 the Environmental Health Program hosted a meeting of agencies interested in finding a solution to the High Island sewage discharge problems.

Attending were representatives from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Bolivar Special Utility District and Carroll-Blackman Engineers. Corrective action plans were discussed to resolve the issue of the sewage discharge. The District has identified many houses that are connected to an illegal collection and disposal system. In order to verify our filed assumptions, a dye test must be conducted on each of the suspected lines. In order to complete the test, it will be necessary to install several inspection ports along the collection system. Once all the houses are identified, corrective action planning may proceed.

- The Animal Services Division has been busy conducting nighttime sweeps of the San Leon/Bacliff area. These sweeps are in response to citizens voicing their concerns at public town hall meetings about animals running at large in the nighttime hours. Animal Services pamphlets explaining regulations were distributed and six citations were issued for various ordinance violations.
- The second meeting of the Animal Services Task Force was held on March 29. The members reviewed the draft of the Animal Services Interlocal Agreement, a legal document between the Health District and participating cities that outlines the scope of work under animal services. The Task Force was assembled to provide input from the many stakeholders. The major change to the agreement is the fact that it addresses both animal field services and shelter operations. It also defines a new makeup of the Animal Services Advisory Board to include members of animal rescue groups, the general public and representatives from each participating governmental entity. Task Force members were also asked to provide their nominations to the Animal Services Advisory Board.
- In May, the Office of Environmental Health Services held their second annual Environmental Summit. Commissioner Stephen Holmes welcomed everyone and Dr. Guidry explained the expectations. A brief presentation was given on the current programs and services provided by the Office of Environmental Health. The attendees joined small focus groups and identified areas of concern including: regulatory standardization (consistent enforcement of rules), funding and resource allocation (competitive salaries and better utilization of current resources) communication (better explanations of current services), staffing including employee retention, and education/outreach to increase outreach activities. The participants brainstormed possible strategies to address the areas of concern. The group evaluated the summit.
- In July the Office of Environmental Health Programs implemented a communication plan aimed at notifying customers of the changes approved by the Board of Health for Animal Services and the Public Health Lab. The changes include Animal Services fee increase and a change to the hours of operations, and a fee increase for water testing in the lab.
- The second annual Animal Services Summit was held on May 25 at the Wayne Johnson Community Center in LaMarque. Over 35 participants attended the public forum to provide recommendations on short-term and long-term goals to continue to improve Animal Services. County Judge Yarbrough and Commissioners Holmes, Doyle and Janek were in attendance as were mayors and members of city councils. A presentation was provided outlining the major accomplishments realized over the past

year. Following the presentation, the floor was opened to the participants. The major issues identified at the summit include: spay/neuter programs, disease testing, vaccinations, public outreach, hours of operation, review of the fee schedule, adoption screening processes.

- The Houston Galveston Area Council hosted the first meeting of the Environmental Awareness Roundtable on November 7, 2005. Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Programs, was asked to participate on the committee. The committee's main objective is to sustain a program of idea sharing between city staff, county staff and community organizations to create effective environmental awareness campaigns. Elyse Collins of EC Productions presented on most effective communication and media techniques.
- **In 2006**, The Office of Environmental Health Program will host and participate in the third annual Environmental Health Summit with our public health partners and relevant stakeholders. The forum provides for the exchange of information and ideas on environmental related issues.
- The Animal Services Division will host and participate in the third annual Animal Services Summit to receive input from our public health partners on short-term and long-term goals to continue to improve our animal services

GOAL VII **Increase collaboration between Health District staff and their counterparts in local political jurisdictions for routine and emergency communications.**

- The Air and Water Pollution Services Division teamed up with other air investigators from several jurisdictions targeting large pollution emitters in the Houston-Galveston area. The City of Houston, Harris County, TCEQ and the District proposed to form a Multi-Jurisdictional Air Enforcement Task Force to identify and inspect petrochemical facilities with excessive air emissions.
- On April 11, Garret Foskit, Galveston County Nuisance Abatement Officer, presented to 75 members of the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Texas Environmental Health Association on the legalities of the Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement Rules and Regulations. This "in-depth" discussion reviewed Chapter 343 of the Texas Health and Safety Code that governs the abatement of nuisances. Fort Bend County requested assistance in establishing a nuisance abatement program following this discussion.
- **Next year**, the Office of Environmental Health Program Manager's will be meeting with our counterparts in local political jurisdictions to discuss improvements to our current communications both verbal and written during routine business days and during emergency situations. A final report with recommendations will be drafted for review by the Executive Team.

GOAL VIII Ensure consistency in inspection and enforcement procedures. (See Priority 3, Goal IV)

- To ensure inspection and enforcement consistency, food service inspectors are being standardized through an internal quality assurance process. At this time, the standardization has been completed on a majority of the inspectors. The Department of State Health Services Standardization Officer certified the GCHD staff member conducting the internal audit.
- In May, the Office of Environmental Health Services held their second annual Environmental Summit. Regulatory standardization (consistent enforcement of rules) was identified as an area of concern. The Summit participants brainstormed possible strategies to address the issue.
- **In 2006**, The Consumer Health Services Division will continue to complete the standardization of food service inspection. Inspection and Enforcement Standard Operating Procedures will be reviewed and recommendations for updates or changes will be drafted for review by the Director of Environmental Health Programs

PRIORITY #7: SENIOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Address senior health issues such as isolation, social needs, healthcare, legal, transportation and housing.

GOAL I Increase access to the 4C's clinic services for underserved seniors. (See Priority 2, Goal I)

- In July the 4 C's Clinic hired a Board-eligible Geriatrician who is also Board Certified in Family Medicine.
- In August a listing of the GCHD services was prepared and placed in the 6th annual Gulf Coast Senior Care Providers network Resource Guide that is widely distributed to over 700 providers.
- Senior 4 C's patients received special invitations to the Reengineering Open House that was held in November to highlight changes made to increase access and patient satisfaction at the clinics. The seniors were invited to get their flu shots at the Open House.
- 250,000 high quality brochures outlining all of the Health District services arrived in August. The brochures were purchased through an innovative grant from the Mainland United Way that targets this strategic goal and the goal for senior health improvement. The brochures specifically target seniors in the community with use of a large, clear font. The brochures are being distributed to governmental entities, chambers of commerce, schools, community partners and the public at outreach events.
- 4 C's Case Manager assist senior patients with applying for Medicare assistance and with making clinic appointments for those without a medical home who are referred by the hospital emergency departments.

- The Senior Health Coordinator assists seniors in the community to understand and access clinic services as needed.

GOAL II Increase the number of outreach activities for underserved seniors.
(See Priority 2, Goal II)

During 2005, fourteen community health events, with a total of 1,975 participants, were held for seniors. These included:

- Ten Senior Health Fests held at the county’s senior citizen centers, which included demonstrations such as tai chi, health screenings and information about Health District services.
- Co-hosted a senior Walk-A-Thon with the Galveston County Parks and Senior Citizens Programs.
- Participated in the Senior Expo at College of the Mainland, an annual event that provides access to vendors of services and products for seniors and included a fashion show and free movie.
- Co-hosted the “Summer Camp for Seniors”. Approximately 650 people attended the event. Thirty-one new seniors enrolled in the GCHD Senior Health Corps, 500 “Senior Critical Phone Numbers” cards were distributed and 12 new volunteers were recruited.
- The Senior Health Summit, held on October 26th at the Texas City Doyle Convention Center, drew 231 attendees. At the summit, participants were encouraged to provide input into programs and services offered and were given information about disaster planning and evacuation. Before and after the Summit, participants were encouraged to visit the booths of seventeen local vendors of products and services for seniors.

In addition, health information was given to 667 Food Fair participants and 352 seniors enrolled in the Senior Health Corps whose members received a special newsletter with health-related information.

Fifty-eight (58) community presentations were offered in 2005:

- Several presentations on Medicare Part D and GCHD services were made to various groups.
- Charles Kelly, Senior Health Coordinator, presented “Physical Activity and the Built Community in Four Galveston Communities” with Dr Edilma Guevara from UTMB. He has also been working with the Healthy City Assessment Project (collaboratively with UTMB).
- Shirley Carr, Volunteer Coordinator, attended a training at the County Extension Agency to review the curriculum “The Healthy Harvest”, a community outreach program, designed to teach seniors safe handling of fresh fruits and vegetables. Volunteers were trained and they presented the curriculum to over 225 seniors at senior citizen centers, churches, and other community groups.

GOAL III Link seniors to existing community resources.

- The Senior Health Coordinator trained fifteen people to enroll clients in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program and enrolled thirty-two seniors in the program. He also provided information and referral services to fifty-one individuals. The coordinator also presented information about the new Medicare Part D program at six community groups.
- Members of the Senior Health Advisory Council (SHAC) developed a comprehensive senior resource manual. The manual is targeted to agencies that serve seniors. Information includes local community resources, support groups, prevention of identity theft, advance directives, elder abuse, elder rights and more. 170 manuals were printed by the Area Health Education Center and were distributed to the Galveston County Senior Centers and other agencies. In addition, staff at four senior centers attended presentations about GCHD services given by the Senior Health Coordinator.
- A listing of GCHD services was prepared and placed in the 6th annual Gulf Coast Senior Care Providers network Resource Guide that is widely distributed to over 700 health and social service providers.
- A “Senior Critical Numbers” card, in English and Spanish, was developed and distributed to 1,300 seniors with funding through a grant from the Health Education Training Centers Alliance of Texas. This handy list includes local emergency phone numbers and can be placed on a refrigerator door.
- The Galveston County Senior Summit was held on October 26 at the Doyle Convention Center in Texas City. Seventeen vendors attended the summit to provide seniors and their families with information about community services. The flu vaccine campaign began at the summit, as did the first mass distribution of senior- friendly brochures describing GCHD services.

GOAL IV Establish a Senior Advisory Panel comprised of Senior Health Corps members and community partners.

- The Senior Health Advisory Council (SHAC) met on a regular basis during 2005. The priorities developed for 2004- 2005 were:
 - To promote wellness/ fitness for the prevention of health problems and conditions, the popular cooking classes “Whisking Your Way to Health” were continued in 2005. 336 participants attended the classes held at senior citizen centers and two churches. Other activities included the Walk-a-thon, Flu-vaccine campaign, and “Healthy Harvest” programs (noted above)
 - To improve the way we communicate with seniors and their caregivers about affordable health care services, the Senior Resource Manuals, senior-friendly GCHD brochure, “Senior Critical Numbers” cards, presentations about Medicare Part D and GCHD services contributed to the achievement of this objective.

- In 2005, the SHAC conducted a community assessment that included a review of existing reports as well as the compilation of data from questionnaires the members developed. The assessment consisted of:
 - A review of “What Seniors Day They Want”, a survey conducted by the Galveston County Senior Citizens Centers
 - A review of “Physical Activity and the Built Environment”, a study led by UTMB Department of Geriatrics to determine the factors influencing senior’s physical activity level
 - Data from focus groups conducted by County Commissioner Patrick Doyle in Galveston, Texas City, Bolivar and the San Leon-Bacliff areas
 - The SHAC questionnaires, completed by 333 seniors in the Senior Citizen Centers, BINGO halls, the Mall of the Mainland, the 4 C’s Clinic, churches, grocery stores and in their homes;
 - The Senior Summit
- A summary of the findings includes:
 - 87% said that having a healthy lifestyle was extremely or very important.
 - Transportation was an almost universal concern. Requests were made for transportation services to routine appointments as well as to special events/ enrichment activities.
 - Other suggestions for community services included: low cost legal counseling, classes on crafts, dancing, cooking, foreign language, exercise equipment, computers, support for grandparents and phone support.
 - Evacuation during emergencies was the “hot topic” of the Senior Summit.
 - Health concerns included common conditions of adulthood (diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, cancer, obesity/overweight), social issues (depression, boredom, loneliness, lack of social support), financial concerns (access to health services, high cost of medications and health care), and loss of function as one ages (vision/ hearing loss, memory loss, loss of balance and falls).

All portions of the community assessment were reviewed at the November meeting and 2006 goals and objectives were set at the December meeting.

GOAL V Evaluate the Senior Health Care program and make recommendations to the Governing Board.

The Senior Health Advisory Council met in December to develop a plan for 2006. It was decided that all goals, objectives, and activities targeted for 2005 had been met. The goal for 2006 is to improve or enhance the projects that were started during 2004-2005.

Specific activities include:

- Development and distribution of a quarterly newsletter to Senior Health Corps members that will include health information and a calendar of health and social activities.
- Collaborate with Mainland Medical Center, Mall of the Mainland, Galveston County Parks and Seniors to put on a Senior Summit/ Expo (target early May)
- Develop a senior physical activity program (Walk Across Texas was suggested), to kick-off in May 2006

- Continue “Cooking Schools” in the Senior Centers beginning in January with continuance based on available funding.
- Document the Train-the-Trainer model of providing education regarding Medicare Part D.
- Assist with distribution plans for GCHD brochures
- Participate in activities related to disaster planning for the homebound and elderly (identifying people, education)
- Utilize volunteers to compile resource directories
- Ensure that Senior Critical Numbers cards have updated resource phone numbers (consider placing municipality numbers on the cards so that citizens will call the city early in the hurricane season if they are homebound or have no transportation)

PRIORITY #8: PREVENTION BY IMMUNIZATION

Immunize Children and Adults to Prevent Infectious Diseases
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GOAL I Designate leadership and establish local plans and goals.

Objective One: *Establish the Galveston County Health District as the lead organization for local planning to improve immunization rates using the medical home model in Galveston County.*

- The Galveston County Immunization Advisory Council was formed in 2004 with the purpose of coordinating immunization efforts throughout the county and providing advice and assistance for the Health District’s three immunization events each year. The Council met on four occasions in 2005. During their meetings the Council planned activities for the National Infant Immunization Week in April, the Kids’ Health Fest for back to school shots as well as preparations for flu shot season events.
- They discussed ways to improve county immunizations rates, including planning a website that contains useful information for the public and healthcare providers. The website has been up and running since April and includes frequently asked questions, the current immunization schedule, locations and hours for clinics, resources and links.
- Other suggestions made by the Council included having adequate facilities and better planning for special immunization clinics, setting up a pilot program with Dickinson schools, and making a traveling display to show pictures of vaccine preventable diseases, which was done this year.
- A presentation on Flu Mist, the nasal flu vaccine was made to the Council members at the August 30th meeting.
- The Council also received information on the new Immunization Reminder Clerk who was hired in September 2004 to increase compliance rates. Parents of children 2 years and younger, who are delinquent in immunizations and who have

immunizations coming due, are contacted individually by postcard, phone or home visit to educate them on the need for immunizations and where they can receive them. An average of 436 children per month is tracked for recall and 226 for reminder. The reminder clerk has sent out over 1300 reminder cards so far, with over 1200 responses received. The clerk also helped identify the specific populations that are delinquent with their immunizations: the 6 month and under age group and those who use the Dickinson Clinic. This knowledge will help us plan activities to increase compliance rates in these targeted groups.

GOAL II **Improve availability and accuracy of local data to enhance tracking, assessment and feedback.**

Objective One: *Increase the number of Vaccine for Children (VFC) providers in Galveston County.*

This year the Immunization Department researched a list of “recruitable” local physicians provided by the Department of State Health Services and contacted all eligible physicians at least twice. Five new providers were enrolled in the Vaccine for Children Program and two short-term enrollments were completed during the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Objective Two: *Compile and disseminate a report of aggregate immunization compliance rates for the public and private sector.*

- In 2005, Texas Medical Foundation conducted visits at 13 VFC (non-GCHD) provider sites in Galveston County. Of these, 11 serve children 0-35 months of age. Four (4) to fifty (50) records were reviewed at each site for a total of 365 records. The compliance rate for 4-3-1 (4 diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus, 3 polio, 1 measles/mumps/rubella vaccines) for this group was 71% compared with 73% in 2004 (This includes private providers, UTMB, etc. who are likely to be the child’s PCP, but may not be.)
- 21 (100% of the 24-35 months of age) shot records were reviewed at the 4C’s Clinics and the compliance rate was 87% for the Texas City site and 89% for the Galveston site. (Done 10/18/05). 2004 total for both sites was 88%.
- 375 (100% of the 24-35 months of age) shot records from the GCHD Immunization Walk-in Clinics were reviewed. The compliance rate at Dickinson was 78%, Galveston 85%, and Texas City 73%. (Done 10/18/05) All site total for the previous year was 76%
- The national goal for these rates is 90%

Objective Three: *Prepare and disseminate information to the community regarding immunization rates.*

With the development of the Immunization Advisory Council website this year, public information and links to immunization data has been provided. Resources include links

to the GCHD Epidemiology report on local vaccine preventable diseases, as well as links to state and national data.

Objective Four: *Develop a white paper that summarizes quality of available data on immunization compliance, identifies data limitations and ability for cross-jurisdictional comparisons.*

Information on the difficulty of comparing immunization data (locally, state-wide, nationally) was given to relevant stakeholders in the presentation of the Strategic Health Plan Report for 2004 as well as in news releases. Board members, staff, city council, commissioner's court members and many others were educated regarding the limitations and inconsistencies among various types of immunization compliance assessments done.

GOAL III Identify and reduce barriers to immunizations.

Objective One: *Assess the most common barriers to immunization compliance and identify disparities.*

- Feedback from the new reminder clerk, who speaks directly to clients, suggests that lack of money (and lack of knowledge that immunization fees can be waived due to inability to pay), and transportation issues are the two top barriers to immunization compliance.
- She further determined that children under six months of age and those who use the Dickinson walk-in immunization clinic are the most immunization delinquent groups.

Objective Two: *Work with the Immunization Advisory Committee to explore feasible ways of reducing barriers and increasing immunizations in identified groups.*

- The Advisory Council recommended strategies to publicize National Infant Immunization Week, Kids Health Fest and the flu shots. For example, during the flu shot season, immunization clinics were re-located to the LaMarque building for smoother and more efficient flow.
- The Advisory Council had many suggestions for their public website on immunizations including, developing a "truth about vaccine" page to answer frequently asked questions, a link to the Epidemiology page for ease in accessing statistics on Vaccine Preventable Diseases Reported, and a section on how to request an Imm Trac record. The website was started in April, in time for National Infant Immunization Week and has been improved throughout the year.

GOAL IV Increase education and awareness among all responsible groups.

Objective One: *Work with the advisory committee to establish a public education campaign about the benefits of immunizations.*

- On January 4 an in-services was held for Friendswood ISD nurses on disease reporting, childhood immunizations and the role that community health nursing plays in academia.
- During 2005 National infant Immunization Week, all three walk-in immunization clinics gave free immunizations to children 18 years and on April 30. A total of 660 shots were given.
- The third annual back-to-school Immunization event, Kid's Health Fest, was held between August 1 - 19 at the La Marque site. 3,061 were administered to 1136 people. 55 more people were immunized this year, in a shorter period of time (3 weeks as compared with 4 weeks).
- Flu shot activity included outreach to 10 locations that were identified as having high-risk populations (nursing homes, senior sites). 4209 flu shots were given through Dec. 31, 2005. Of those, 1880 were given to seniors. An additional 830 doses were given in the 4C's Medical Clinics. Educational efforts were directed toward letting people know if they were high risk and when they could get a flu shot if they were not. A tiered approach was used to ensure vaccine for the high risk.

Objective Two: *In conjunction with Board members and the immunization advisory committee, engage the support of local businesses and business organizations for immunization incentives.*

- During National Infant Immunization Week, Dairy Queen provided coupons for children receiving immunizations.
- 29 local businesses helped distribute fliers to their patrons for National Infant Immunization Week and Kids Health Fest immunization locations.
- Contributors to the Kids Health Fest included three local businesses, the Coastal Area Health Education Center, the Galveston Housing Authority, and two separate departments from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

We will continue to engage the support of businesses in the community to promote immunization health.

Objective Three: *Explore opportunities for resources to fund a volunteer coordinator position.*

A Volunteer Coordinator position was funded by Mainland Counties United Way and the Volunteer Department has been active in supplying volunteers to support immunization activities. In 2005, 33 students and 12 other volunteers worked with the Kids Health Fest, the flu vaccine campaign and other routine immunization clinics.

Objective Four: *Co-sponsor with local groups to make continuing education programs available for local physicians and other health professionals on technical aspects of immunizations.*

- Surveys were sent to 255 childcare facilities, 95 schools and 41 private providers outlining the benefits of Imm Trac, the statewide vaccine database. Those who responded were provided instruction and education about the registry and enrollment process.
- Six mail outs on important immunization topics were sent to an average of 100 recipients per mail out (school nurses and public and private providers).
- 3 Core Curriculum classes on Immunizations were conducted with 18 participants (providers, school nurses, day care staff, volunteers and new employees). One Smallpox Class was conducted with 4 participants (hospital employees).
- In April, Community Health Nursing presented two TWICES trainings and four VFC Inventory training sessions to 4 C's Medical staff, educated 39 UTMB student nurses in the Immunization clinics. Hosted the annual 4-part "Epidemiology of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases" teleconference. (Were these the only TWICES, VFC Inventory etc. classes done?)

GOAL V Define, align, coordinate, and seek resources.

Objective One: *Prioritize Health District resources to meet TDH contract objectives which include selected HP2010 objectives.*

- Community Health Nurses are cross-trained to work in Immunization Clinics. Clerks are also cross-trained to do data entry as well as support patient care at Immunization Clinic sites.
- Immunization fees are reviewed annually as part of the regular fee review. In 2005, fees for flu shots were revised to reflect cost increases.
- The new "Reminder Clerk" position, funded by the 000 Essential Public Health Services grant., has triggered new patient tracking processes to be developed.
- The Volunteer Program has placed 12 volunteers to assist with immunization activities.
- Immunization staff has been involved in planning for bioterrorism and setting up mass vaccination clinics and played an active role in the Strategic National Stockpile/Kid Fest collaborative exercise. The exercise used a real immunization event (Kid's Health Fest) to also test the ability of clinic staff to set up and efficiently operate a mass vaccination clinic. The exercise included triage and administration of prophylaxis to fictional smallpox contacts.