



**January 2010 Executive Report**

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CEO & Health Authority  
Galveston County & Cities

**The Pulse of the District...**

- Strategic Health Planning
- Preventing the Spread of Communicable Diseases
- New NET Agreement
- Roll Out of New Electronic Systems

**GCHD Starts 2010-2015 Strategic Health Planning**

Harlan "Mark" Guidry, MD, MPH, Chief Executive Officer will hold a meeting with Board members and GCHD management on Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at Runge Park to begin the process of developing the draft 2010-2015 Strategic Health Plan. The draft plan will be shared extensively for community feedback during the months of February and March. It is expected to be presented to the Boards at their March meetings for consideration of adoption. Once approved by the Boards, the final plan will be distributed to the public and the Health will be tracking and evaluating its progress annually.

**Bacterial Meningitis Alert - (Galveston and Friendswood)**

On January 11 and January 18<sup>th</sup>, the Health District received reports of 2 bacterial meningitis cases in residents of **Friendswood** and **Galveston**. Epidemiology investigation revealed both cases of meningitis were caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. No post exposure medication is warranted for this type of bacterial meningitis. Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord. According to CDC, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* are the leading causes of bacterial meningitis. The bacteria can mainly be spread from person to person through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions. Common symptoms of meningitis include high fever, headache, and stiff neck. *S. pneumoniae* (also called pneumococcal meningitis), is a vaccine preventable disease. For 2009, the Health District received 1 case of pneumococcal meningitis.

**STOP THE FLU Campaign**

As of January 21, 2010, GCHD has vaccinated 10,357 individuals since receiving its first shipment of H1N1 vaccine in October. There are currently adequate supplies of vaccine to provide vaccinations for any person who wishes to receive it. H1N1 vaccinations which are free of charge continue to be given at the Headquarters building lobby from 9 am- 4 pm Monday through Friday as well as in GCHD immunization clinics in Galveston, Texas City and Dickinson during their regular hours. Epidemiology Services continues to conduct surveillance with local hospitals, medical providers and independent school districts throughout the county. From August 1<sup>st</sup> to January 20<sup>th</sup>, the Health District has received a total of 916 positive flu cases (106 H1N1, 448 Flu A, 5 Flu B, 357 Undifferentiated Flu). Of the reported H1N1 cases to date, there have been 8 hospitalizations and two deaths in a 31-year old and a 48-year old, both Galveston Island residents.

- From November 25, 2009 to January 19, 2010, Epidemiology Services received an average of 18 cases of daily ILIs and 5.28% of average daily absences from Galveston County schools. Both daily ILIs and absences have decreased compared to the last 6 week cycle (October 19<sup>th</sup> to November 24<sup>th</sup>) at 34 and 5.4%, respectively.
- **H1N1 vaccinations** remained in the news and the health district issued several press releases concerning availability. In a release issued December 4<sup>th</sup> the public was informed that vaccinations would be given at GCHD Headquarters in La Marque, [www.gchd.org/press/2009/H1N1120409.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/H1N1120409.htm). The information was published December 6<sup>th</sup> in the *Galveston County Daily News*, [www.gchd.org/press/2009/H1N1public.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/H1N1public.htm). In a release issued December 11<sup>th</sup> it was announced that all immunization activities would be relocated to GCHD headquarters during the holidays to better serve the public; [www.gchd.org/press/2009/H1N1holidays11-09.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/H1N1holidays11-09.htm), and was published in the *Galveston County Daily News* on December 14<sup>th</sup>, [www.gchd.org/press/2009/county-closes-small-clinics.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/county-closes-small-clinics.htm).
- After a nationwide recall of approximately 800,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine for children between the ages of 6 months and 35 months the District was contacted by the *Galveston Daily News*. The paper was informed that only 45 children received the vaccine in Galveston County the only important thing was that those children be sure to receive a second dose. The story can be found at [www.gchd.org/press/2009/county-vaccine-safe.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2009/county-vaccine-safe.htm).
- A community outreach clinic at Kemah City Hall for H1N1 vaccinations was published in the *Galveston County Daily News* on January 11<sup>th</sup>, [www.gchd.org/press/2010/free-swine-flu-shots-kemah.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2010/free-swine-flu-shots-kemah.htm).
- On January 22<sup>nd</sup> a press release was issued alerting the public that H1N1 vaccine is still available and encouraging them to get a shot if they have not already done so. The release can be found at [www.gchd.org/press/2010/H1N1012210.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2010/H1N1012210.htm).
- A statewide guest column issued by Texas Commissioner of Health Dr. David Lakey also let people know that it is not too late to get an H1N1 vaccination. The guest column was published in the *Galveston County Daily News* on January 2<sup>th</sup> and can be viewed at [www.gchd.org/press/2010/Lakey1-24-2010.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2010/Lakey1-24-2010.htm).

### **Implementing a New NET Interlocal Agreement**

After county legal review, the proposed new interlocal agreement for non-emergency transfers (NET) is now ready for review and execution. In 2008, post-like there was a \$127,654 financial deficit. Texas City's Mayor Doyle in early 2009 proposed changing the agreement such that cities no longer would be liable or recipients of NET year end losses/surpluses. The modified agreement removes member cities from responsibility for yearend losses (and gains) and replaces that obligation with the County of Galveston. Unchanged is the cities' responsibility for establishing ordinances that make GCHD the exclusive NET transfer provider in local jurisdictions. If GCHD is unable to provide a timely transfer other designated ambulances, permitted in the jurisdiction to serve as backup may be used. As of January 26<sup>th</sup>, the following entities have approved and signed the agreement: Galveston County, City of Dickinson, City of La Marque and The Village of Tiki Island. Pending approval are: City of Bayou Vista, City of Hitchcock and the City of Texas City.

### **Electronic Practice Management & Accounting Softwares**

Dr. Guidry met with clinical staff on January 13<sup>th</sup> to inform them that the team selected to study and make recommendations regarding the practice management system continues to make headway towards meeting the tentative timeline for EPM implementation date in August 2010. Following EPM implementation, we will then begin implementing the electronic medical record (EMR) and electronic dental record (EDR).

Staff are also working on the upgrade to the current accounting software with the first phase focusing on installing an integrated, streamlined, electronic personnel system for payroll, human resources and employee timesheets. The first phase go live date tentatively is April 1<sup>st</sup>. Once completed, staff will focus

on General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Allocation Management, Accounts Receivable and Fixed Assets with a tentative completion date by the end of May 2010.

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

- Public information was contacted by the *Galveston County Daily News* with questions concerning a stretch of State Highway 3 between Texas City, and Dickinson where **stagnant water** is a problem. The paper asked questions concerning any possible public health concern. GCHD's response can be found in a story from the January 7<sup>th</sup> *Daily News*, [www.gchd.org/press/2010/concern-if-discharge.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2010/concern-if-discharge.htm).
- A **Santa Fe ISD proposed agriculture barn** has been the subject of community concern by some that live near the barn site. At a recent school board meeting GCHD Director of Environmental Programs, Ronnie Schultz addressed some of their concerns. New coverage of the meeting from a January 14<sup>th</sup> story, [www.gchd.org/press/2010/dis-ag-barn.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2010/dis-ag-barn.htm).

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

- **County Indigent Covers 100% of FPL in 2010** - As of Monday, January 19, 2010, there were approximately 162 patients approved on the County Indigent Program. County Officials have agreed to increase the eligibility requirement to 100% of the federal poverty level for the Program effective January 1, 2010. Thru the Galveston County Indigent Program, Galveston County pays for hospital and specialty care for patients at or below the 100% of federal poverty level. Currently, Executive staff is working with County Officials to clarify the County's Policy regarding eligibility, streamlining and defining asset testing, clarifying services covered and/or excluded, defining the roles of GCHD and the roles of the County, and determining staffing needs. Executive staff is also working to update GCHD's staff procedures for its role in the County Indigent Healthcare Program.
- **SSBG Case Managers** - A federal social service block grant through the Texas Department of Health and Human services and H-GAC (Houston-Galveston Area Council) will begin to provide case management services for 4C's patients affected by Hurricane Ike. Case Managers will start in early February to assist patients with health problems, especially those who have had barriers accessing secondary care. Hurricane Ike wiped out much of the network of specialty providers in the area that provided care to the uninsured. The case managers will work to help patients apply for funding programs, refer them to local agencies for social services, and help them reach improved wellness through education and self-management of their conditions.

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

- **Senior Health Coordinator Resigns** - After several years with the Health District serving in multiple capacities, Mr. Charles Kelly, senior health coordinator, resigned. Mr. Kelly was a very active Governing Board member with a passion for helping seniors and making GCHD more senior friendly. His leadership led to the Board allocating funds for a senior health pilot to educate seniors about our services, to bring our services to seniors, and to bring more seniors into the 4C's clinic. He was then hired as a part-time employee to champion that cause and over the years his passion has lead to the senior health advisory council, a public health friendly 501c3 non-profit, a partnership with senior citizen centers to bring educational programs and vaccinations to seniors, and many other productive projects. Though the loss of Mr. Kelly is a great one, we will refill his position as senior health outreach worker and continue our work with the senior community.

- **Senior Health Presentations 2010** - The Senior Health schedule for 2010 presentations will include the following topics: heart health, chronic diseases, adult vaccines, senior safety, disaster services, Medicare, cancer, Flu, diabetes mental health, and stress reduction. The Health District will also continue to offer flu shots when available. These presentations will be held at the senior centers in Texas City, La Marque, Bacliff, Dickinson and Kemah. Other topics and locations may be added as they are identified.
- **HIV Quarterly Report** - For the quarter ending December 2009 there were two additional cases of HIV reported in Galveston County and four additional cases of AIDS reported. For the 2009 calendar year that brings the total number of AIDS cases in Galveston County to 23, and the total number of HIV cases to 66.

**Office of Environmental Health Services:** For more information, please contact Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Services, at (409) 938-2314 or email [rschultz@gchd.org](mailto:rschultz@gchd.org)

- **Septic Systems in Harris County portion of League City** – On May 28, 2009, the Board of Health approved a temporary variance for a resident who lives in the Harris County portion of League City. The resident requested a variance from the Health District's On Site Sewage Facility (OSSF) policy that requires a homeowner maintain a valid maintenance contract with a certified maintenance company. Dr. Guidry, Marty Entringer and Ronnie Schultz met with the City of League City officials on January 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss a possible resolution to this variance that expires in May 2010. After reviewing options to resolve the dilemma, League City officials elected to pursue an agreement with Harris County to regulate OSSFs within Harris County.
- **New Shelter Hours Starting February 8, 2010** – Executive management met and discussed making changes to the current hours of operation at the Animal Shelter in Texas City. Currently, the shelter opens to the public at 11:00 am and closes at 6:00 pm, except on Tuesdays when the shelter stays open until 7:00 pm and typically does not see many customers. Also, opening at 11:00 am places a great demand on staff to have the shelter cleaned and ready for public viewing. The new shelter hours will be Tuesday – Saturday 12:00 – 6:00 pm, remaining closed on Sunday and Monday. This proposal met with approval from members of the Animal Services Advisory Committee.
- **Agricultural Facility** – Health District staff, upon request, reviewed plans to construct a 35,000 square foot animal agricultural facility capable of housing 150 animals in the City of Santa Fe. The Santa Fe School District plans to build this facility on school property which places the facility within 130 yards of a resident. Nearby residents are fighting these plans and raising concerns over public health and citing environmental pollution as a reason not to construct. Their concerns include: disease transmission, nuisance odors, spraying of pesticides, water pollution issues, etc. Ronnie Schultz addressed a group of concerned citizens at a public meeting sponsored by the school district. The Health District assured the audience while risk to public health and the environment are low, nuisance odors are a concern.

**Office of Emergency Medical Services:** For more information, please contact Trey Frankovich, LP, EMS Director, (409) 765-2524 or [tfrankovich@gchd.org](mailto:tfrankovich@gchd.org) or Mary McClure, GAAA Business Director, (409) 938-2336 or [mmcclure@gchd.org](mailto:mmcclure@gchd.org).

- **Staffing** – Transfer service has one EMT Basic position available and 911 service has 7 paramedic positions available
- **Narcotics Safes** – To ensure an extra degree of security of our medications, small narcotic safes have been purchased and installed in all of the ambulances.
- **Equipment Management** - A memo was reviewed in the GAAA PBM and approved on how broken equipment will be tracked. All broken equipment will require a malfunction report and the equipment will be tagged. The tag will have a brief description of the malfunction. The asset custodian will look at all malfunction reports and equipment. Any items the asset custodian deems

non-repairable will have the proper disposable form completed and sent to the appropriate areas. The memo will be reviewed at the January 27<sup>th</sup> staff meeting and posted on the intranet.

- **NET After Hours Dispatching** - The afterhours NET dispatching duties have been conducted by Medic 10 one of two 24 hour NET units. After discussing the afterhours dispatching process it was approved at the GAAA PBM 1/15/2010 that the afterhours dispatching responsibilities will be rotated between the two 24 hour NET units. Therefore, effective February 1, 2010 Medic 10 will have the NET dispatching responsibilities on odd months and Medic 12 on the even months. A memo has been issue to the staff and posted on the intranet.
- **EM-Track System for Mardis Gras** – GAAA staff has been trained to use the EM-Track system for Mardis Gras this year. This system consists of small handheld computers that were purchased by the County EOC which will capture the patient’s demographics by scanning their driver’s license. The patient’s condition can be quickly added and the information is sent to the hospital so they are aware of incoming patients. A scanned wrist band is applied to each patient so they may be tracked as they are transported. The status of the units and number of patients will also be monitored from the EOC. This technology will be used in mass casualties as well as evacuations.

**Disease & Disaster Preparedness:** For additional information, contact Dana Beckham, DVM, Chief Epidemiologist, at (409) 938-2322 or email [dbeckham@gchd.org](mailto:dbeckham@gchd.org) or Mike Carr, Public Health Preparedness Manager, at (409) 938-2333 or email [mcarr@gchd.org](mailto:mcarr@gchd.org).

- **Elevated Blood Lead Cases (Galveston and Hitchcock)** – Since November 25<sup>th</sup>, Epidemiology Services has received 5 new elevated blood lead cases (EBLL) in **Galveston** and **Hitchcock**. All 5 cases were referred to Community Health Nursing for a home assessment. For 2009, the Health District has received a total of 17 confirmed EBLL cases.
- **Probable Pertussis (League City)** – On December 30, Epidemiology Services received a report of a 5 month old male **League City** resident with possible whooping cough. Investigation revealed the child was diagnosed with respiratory syncytial virus and tested PCR positive for pertussis. However, based on epidemiology definition the case did not meet the criteria for a confirmed case of pertussis. Two household contacts were identified and received post exposure medication. In 2009, the Health District received a total of 7 Pertussis reports for the year.
- **Public Health Advisories** - Since November 2009, Epidemiology Services has disseminated 4 public health advisories to hospitals, healthcare providers, superintendents of ISD schools, emergency departments, and emergency managers on November 16<sup>th</sup>, November 20<sup>th</sup>, December 15<sup>th</sup>, and December 23<sup>rd</sup>. The advisories consisted of H1N1 antiviral treatments, vaccinations and non-safety related voluntary recalls of H1N1 vaccine (The vaccine recalls did not have any impact on the vaccine given by the Health District).

**Public Health Preparedness:**

- **Galveston County Emergency Response Cooperative** – The Galveston County Emergency Response Cooperative met on December 11, 2009. David Popoff of the Texas Department of Emergency Management presented a program on planning for the 2010 Hurricane season operations. During the meeting, it was decided that the schedule would be changed to quarterly meetings. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2010.
- **Public Health Emergency Response Focus Area 3 Grant progress** – The Texas Department of State Health Services PHER Focus area 3 Grant for the Galveston County Health District has been approved and work is ongoing to respond to the H1N1 threat. This grant encompasses response to the H1N1 threat and is to be used to provide H1N1 vaccinations to the public based on CDC guidelines. The grant period runs to July 31, 2010.

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

- **Mobile Van Mammography Professional Service Agreement with UTMB-Galveston** was signed by COO on January 4, 2010. UTMB will perform mammography screenings and interpretation services for women who live in Galveston County and are eligible for participation as patients within the GCHD's health care services programs. The term is January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2012. Compensation shall be based on the approved Texas DSHS BCCS reimbursement rate current at the time the services are performed.
- **Budget Amendment to D'Feet Breast Cancer, Inc.** contract was signed by COO on January 7, 2010. The amount of the amendment was \$93,451.16 which increased screenings mammograms and diagnostics.
- **Coordinating addiction recovery services for mutual clients-** Memorandum of Understanding with The Gulf Coast Center was signed by CEO on January 11, 2010. The term of this agreement is January 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011.
- **Non-emergency ambulance transports to patient to and from Gulf Health Care Center in Texas City**– agreement was signed by COO on January 14, 2010. The term is from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011 and renewable for one year terms my mutual written consent. The rates are set at the current Medicare reimbursement rates. Level One base rate \$213.00 one way, Level Two base rate \$100.00 one way, wait time \$50.00 per half hour, \$7.00 per mile outside Galveston County.
- **Vocational training to AARP referrals**--American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Foundation Affiliation Agreement was signed by COO on January 20, 2010. GCHD has agreed to provide vocational training to AARP referrals in order to assist them with the development of additional skills and to gain practical knowledge for reaching their individual employment goals. The term is January 20, 2010 to January 20, 2011 with an automatic renewal clause subject to the termination clause.
- **Non-emergency ambulance transports to patient to and from Shriners Hospital for Children in Galveston Hospital**– agreement was signed by COO on January 20, 2010. The term is from October 1, 2010 to October 31, 2011 and renewable for one year terms my mutual written consent. The rates are set at the current Medicare reimbursement rates. Level One base rate \$213.00 one way, Level Two base rate \$100.00 one way, wait time \$50.00 per half hour, \$7.00 per mile outside Galveston County.
- **Accounting Software Upgrade service agreement with AccuFund Inc.** was signed by COO on January 22, 2010. The upgrade project fee is estimated at \$47,475.00.
- **Blackboard Connect service agreement** was signed by COO on January 25, 2010. The term commenced on July 1, 2010 and will end in one (1) year. The service fee is \$7,750.00 which includes a \$1,500.00 support fee. This service allows District to send internal notifications to employees/staff.

<b>Environmental Health Programs – Notices December 2009</b>	
Animal Control (dogs running at large, no registration, cruelty, etc)	93
Air Pollution (violation of state air regulations, permits, excessive emissions, etc)	3
Food Services (violations of food service policy requiring voluntary closure, court actions, etc.)	1
Food Services (letters sent for operating with an expired food service permit)	7
Public Health Nuisances (trash and high weeds, violations of health and safety code)	17
On-Site Septic Systems (violation of on-site policy)	5
Water Pollution (improper disposal, sewage leaks, grease trap violations, etc)	5



*A Monthly Report of  
 The Galveston County Health District.  
 For more information regarding this document,  
 Contact Pisa Lewis, Executive Assistant, [plewis@gchd.org](mailto:plewis@gchd.org) or  
 409-938-2401 or Kurt Koopmann, PIO, at  
[kkoopman@gchd.org](mailto:kkoopman@gchd.org) or 409-938-2211*