



Executive Report to the Galveston County 4C's Governing Board
September 27, 2007

Responses to Hurricane Humberto

On Wednesday, September 12, 2007, forecasts called for Humberto to make landfall on the west end of Galveston as a tropical storm. Over night however, the storm shifted to the east, gained strength as a category 1 hurricane and struck High Island. For the next 4 days, working in coordination with local, state and social service agencies, District staff handled a number of requests and tasks including: confirming safety of the water supply, conducting inspections of food service establishments, providing tetanus vaccinations at sites in High Island and Crystal Beach for 2 days (24 residents were vaccinated), providing assistance to residents with special medical needs, coordinating additional ambulances to support EMS services on Bolivar, providing guidance to the Red Cross regarding the type of mosquito repellent to provide for residents, and clarifying sanitary protocols to Red Cross operators of a mobile kitchen. District staff from the Executive Office, Community Health Nursing, Consumer Health, GAAA, 4C's Clinic, and Public Health Preparedness played important roles in responding to public health needs from this hurricane.

Public Hearing: Proposed Amendment to On-Site Sewage Facility Policy/Regulation

Notice of a public hearing for the purpose of the first reading of the adoption of an amendment to the *Galveston County Health District On-Site Sewage Facilities Policy/Regulation* was posted on August 31st. The hearing will take place at the September 26, 2007 meeting of the United Board of Health for the purpose of the first reading and consideration of the adoption of the amendment. The amendment would prohibit homeowner maintenance of individual aerobic treatment plants (normally associated with drip emitters or spray systems) on their own property with specific exceptions. Staff discussed the new proposal with Commissioner Lamb on September 6, 2007. To date, four written comments have been received and will be posted on the website following the board meeting. The notice with links to the proposed policy can be found at www.gchd.org/press/2007/09ossfpublichearing.htm.

Annual Board News Release

A press release summarizing activities on the **United Board of Health and 4C's Governing Board** was issued on September 5th 2007. The content of the news release included a report on new members received and officer elections for each board. Major actions taken by the boards during the past year were also mentioned which included the mainland EMS expansion, new food safety policies, and healthcare financing. The release was published on Guidry News Service on September 6th. It is posted at www.gchd.org/press/2007/BoardAct07.htm

UTMB's Physician MPH Students Learn About Health District

On September 11, 2007, Dr. Guidry gave a presentation to a group of physician MPH students in the UTMB Department of Preventive Medicine. Dr. Guidry provided an overview of public health responsibilities and a summary of the Board's 2006 Annual Progress Report on priority activities in the Health District. Interest in students varied after graduation from Pediatric care to Doctors Without Borders. Some of the student expressed interest in working with Health District on projects of mutual benefit.

Getting Ready for Flu Prevention

October will be a busy month for Community Health Nursing due to the beginning of flu season. 1880 doses of flu vaccine have been received out of an expected 4000. Health District employees will be able to receive their shots on October 10th and 11th. A press release will be issued that will provide details on the community wide campaign beginning October 15th. Flu shots will be \$20 per person and free to those patients with Medicare Part B. During this year's campaign, shots will be given at District immunization clinics, area senior citizens centers, local churches, and area businesses.

Employee Awards Ceremony

To recognize measurable exemplary performance, years of service, and other employee performances benefiting their area of service, the Health District will host its first Employee Awards Ceremony on November 1, 2007. Board member and elected officials are invited to attend and show support of over 95 employees that will be recognized. The ceremony will be held at the Wayne Johnson Community Center at 7:00 p.m. Invitations will be sent but others may attend at \$10 per person. The ceremony is part of efforts to improve public awareness and develop the workforce through awards and recognition of priorities and goals in the board-approved Strategic health Plan (2004-2010). For more information, contact the Mistress of Ceremonies, Kathrine Hall, Human Resources Director.

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

- **Beach Watch** advisories are being issued on a regular basis and continue to generate media interest. Advisories, distributed to the GCHD Electronic Mail recipients and community leaders, are posted at www.gchd.org/pollution/BeachAdvisory.htm.
- A new **Animal Services Policy** was the subject of a press release www.gchd.org/press/2007/09animalcitycomment.htm issued August 31st. Approved by the United Board of Health at their August meeting it has now been sent to member cities for comment and the board will review and act on any city comments received on September 26, 2007.
- Public Information received a call from Beaumont's CBS affiliate concerning a **fish kill** on Bolivar Peninsula on September 4th. After contacting Environmental Services Director Ronnie Schultz the call was returned referring the television station to Texas Parks and Wildlife.
- On September 11th Public Information received a call from the *Galveston Daily News* concerning the cafeteria at **Austin Middle School**. They had been informed that the school was serving meals out of the kitchen without an operating permit. They were informed that a GCHD Sanitarian visited the school on Friday September the 7th and did not issue a permit. He revisited the campus on Sunday the 9th and issued an operating permit having found everything in compliance.
- A call was received from the *Galveston Daily News* on September 14th concerning a piece of property in Bacliff with 100+ **roosters**. Neighbors have been complaining about the roosters, noise and smell. Assistance was requested from the Houston SPCA and the owners have been given notice that in order to keep the roosters, changes must be made at the property. A GCHD Sanitarian also served a notice of violation for excess weeds and rodent harborage at the property. The owner has 30 days to bring things into compliance. The story on the roosters can be found on the GCHD web site at www.gchd.org/press/2007/09Roosters.htm.

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

- **Title V Grant** – Selected staff have attended training in Austin preparing for the implementation of the recently awarded Title V grant from the Department of State Health Services in the amount of \$97,944. The purpose of this grant is to provide fee for service primary care and dental services to eligible clients.
- **County Indigent Health Care** - Effective September 1, 2007 the County Indigent Health Care Program has changed its third party vendor from Tri-Surant (formerly Health Administration System) to Boon-Chapman. The 4C's Clinic, Galveston County, and Boon-Chapman are committed to the success of the County Indigent Health Care program and are in constant communication to ensure a smooth transition.
- **Pediatrics Status** - In August 2007 a total of 436 kids were seen for a total of 457 visits with 67% Self Pay visits, 28% Medicaid visits, and 5% other visits. In July, there were a total of 398 visits, which is an increase of 59 visits or a 14.8% for the month of August.
- **Evaluation of Referrals to UTMB** - For the Quarter of April to June 2007, 4C's Providers made 817 referrals. After reconciliation with UTMB's DAMP office we had a success rate of 23%, 30% were Denied, 1% were Pending, 2% were Declined Appointments, 14% had No Record or were lost by UTMB DAMP, 4% of the patients failed to comply with Financial Office, 17% were unable to be contacted, 2% did not keep their appointment, and 6% were Third Party Qualified (such as Medicaid, Medicare, County Indigent Program).
- **Dental Review Recommendations** – The assessment of Dental Services has been completed. As a result some actions taken include: a contract with Texas School of Business was executed making it possible for students to do internships in our dental clinics; part-time provider salaries were increased; a new Dental Director schedule was developed; and the 4C's Business Director has taken over assisting with administrative duties such as disciplinary actions and customer service complaints.
- **New Standard Fee for STD/HIV Patients** – The 4C's has completed staff training and has implemented the Standard Fee for STD/HIV Patients previously approved by the 4C's Governing Board. The new changes will simplify the registration process, avoids the need for billing (unless the patient is unable to pay at the time of service), reduces cost by allowing utilization of antibiotics provided by the state, and clearly define the relationship and communications between the Public Health program (STD/HIV) and health care (4C's Clinic). Two 4C's patients have utilized the new process since implementation on September 12, 2007.
- **4C's Provider Vacancies** – Two provider vacancies are posted on the Health District's website, TACHC's website, Houston Chronicle, it was submitted to the Harris County Medical Society Newsletter for September, it will be advertised in the October issue of Texas Medicine, and also in the Chicago area. One interview was held with a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner on September 25th. Staff will keep the Boards informed when offers are made and accepted.

Office of Community Health Services: For more information, please contact Cassandra Arceneaux, MD, MPH, Director of Community Health Services at (409) 938-2457 or email carceneaux@gchd.org.

- **Health Fair Participation** - Staff participated in the following events: 1) Kemah Wal-Mart Baby Day on September 7-9th, WIC encountered and educated 25 persons about appropriate nutrition and services provided by the program while Immunization staff encountered and educated 273 individuals on the importance of immunizations and preventive health care for children; 2) 1st

Annual Cathedral de Fe Health Fair in La Marque on September 22nd staff from Community Health and EMS were present. Community Health provided 33 blood pressure screenings and EMS provided over 40 vials of life to participants. In addition, staff informed the public of other services provided at the Health District; and 3) Jesse Tree Food Fair on September 21st, in La Marque fifty-three participants were educated on how to stay healthy during the flu season. Information was also provided about the DEET Breast Cancer Screening and other Galveston County Health District services.

- **Senior Center Outreach** - During the month of September, the Senior Centers in Galveston, Bacliff, and Dickinson were given presentations on Healthy Environmental Communities by Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Services for the Galveston County Health District. Eighty-nine seniors attended the three presentations. On September 27th Ronnie will be giving his presentation at the Johnson Center in La Marque. From June to August, over 400 seniors attended programs on emergency services, the Women Infants and Children Program, and good diet and exercise at the four centers above. We are currently in the process of forming a relationship with the senior centers in La Marque and Friendswood to educate their seniors as on services provided by the Health District.
- **Tuberculosis Coalition Meeting** - Dr. Haidry, Program Manager for Tuberculosis Surveillance and Treatment was in attendance for the TB Coalition Meeting held at the Department of State Health Services Region 6/5 South Headquarters in Houston, Texas on September 17th. Representatives from the central office in Austin, as well as the Regional and local offices in Region 6/5 South, were in attendance for this meeting. Some issues discussed were: the use of Quantiferon, a one time blood test for tuberculosis instead of tuberculin skin tests, the increase in resistant forms of tuberculosis, and the importance of genotyping isolates in tracking different strains of tuberculosis. There was also a demonstration of a portable isolation unit that could be purchased or borrowed from the regional office. Dr. Haidry gave a presentation on Galveston TB statistics that was very well received. The next meeting will be in three months.
- **Head Start Physicals** - On October 2nd and 4th Community Health Services will be offering Well-Child Physicals for students at the Texas City Head Start Program. Janice Jamison, RN; Sharon Woodfox-Ryan, RN; and Cassandra Arceneaux MD, MPH will be performing exams with the help of 4Cs registration and billing. This endeavor has been very successful in the past and staff are looking forward to it again this year.
- **Interesting TB/HIV Case** - A tuberculosis patient with a twice positive ELISA test for HIV did not have enough blood for the confirmatory western blot test on September 13th. The test was repeated on September 19th by HIV staff and both ELISA and Western Blot were non-reactive. Results were received by HIV staff on September 25th and the patient was notified immediately. The patient was relieved and grateful to hear that the test was negative. The patient was also informed that the test would be repeated in two months to confirm the results. Information and results were sent to the Tuberculosis Program Manager who will continue the follow up treatment.

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*

- **Envision Connect** 6 Staff members of the Environmental Health Program along with staff from the Executive Office began the first phase of the implementation of the environmental data management software. The United Board of Health approved the purchase of a new environmental data management software program designed to collect environmental data from complaints, inspections and sampling events and have the capabilities to publish this information on the Health District's

website. This software will, in addition, communicate billing information into the current accounting software. Full implementation and training should be complete by the end of the calendar year.

- **Animal Shelter Freezer** ó Installation and testing of the walk-in freezer at the Animal Shelter is complete. Shortly after installation, a water leak from the roof area was discovered. The contractor was notified and has since fixed the leak.
- **Animal Bites & Seizures** ó Animal Services responded in a two day period to four separate reports of dog bites: two on Bolivar Peninsula, one in Hitchcock and one in Dickinson. The injuries suffered due to these dog bites ranged from a minor puncture wound to a severe bite inflicted on a two year old by the family dog. In the month of September, staff investigated a total of 10 bite cases (Texas City - 2, Bolivar Peninsula - 2, San Leon - 2, La Marque - 1, Santa Fe - 1, Hitchcock - 1, and Dickinson - 1). SPCA investigators assisted in the seizure of 23 Pit Bulls and 3 Chihuahuas living in unsanitary conditions and possible animal neglect in the unincorporated area of Galveston County. 10 Pit Bulls and the three Chihuahuas were housed in our shelter while the remaining 13 were relocated to the Houston SPCA's facilities. Evidence of dog fighting was documented and turned over to the proper authorities for a criminal investigation. The television show "Animal Planet" filmed the civil seizure which should air in about six months.
- **Rooster Complaints in Bacliff** - Galveston County Animal Services responded to an inquiry concerning the housing of approximately 100 roosters. Houston SPCA assistance was requested when neighbors complained about noise, odors, animal neglect and the general nuisances associated with roosters running at large. SPCA investigated the allegations of cruelty and the unsanitary conditions of the roosters and gave the owner seven days to improve the living conditions. The Health District also issued a notice to remediate the problem of high weeds and the harboring of rodents.

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

- **Community Health Fair** – GAAA participated in a Community Health Fair on September 22nd held in conjunction with a fundraiser for a local youth who is suffering from Leukemia. Along with many other community partners, information was distributed to several hundred members of the community.
- **City of Galveston EMS Operating Budget Approved** – The City of Galveston approved the EMS operating budget for fiscal year 2008, at their September 13, 2007 meeting. The budget features a slight increase in overall costs and some market adjustments to some staff members salaries. In addition, the City council approved a budget amendment on August 23rd which allows for the purchase of three new cardiac monitors, sixteen hand held radios and an infusion pump for use on the island.
- **Expected delivery of new Vehicles** – GAAA is anticipating delivery of two new Type III MICU Ambulances by the end of September. These vehicles are part of the concerted effort to modernize the GAAA fleet of ambulance vehicles. Two vehicles with more than 150,000 miles each are being retired from service as a result of this acquisition.
- **Staffing Update** – There are currently 24 vacant full-time field positions in the EMS area. For full-time positions, we are waiting for one EMT-Basic to receive her Texas licensure; we are scheduling four EMT-Basics, two Paramedics, and one Intermediate for the physical agility and/or written test; and have one EMT-Basic scheduled for an interview. For part-time positions, we are waiting for physical and/or drug test results for two EMT-Basics, for one EMT-Basic to be cleared through Immunizations, and have five EMT-Basics being scheduled for the written test.

- **Update on EMS buildings** - GAAA staff and GCHD facilities personnel are working to complete assessment of two buildings used by GAAA, but owned by the City of Galveston. Pending the completion of one survey, staff are preparing to begin a series of repairs and remodeling to make the buildings a better environment for the Medics who respond to emergencies in the Galveston area. The repairs are expected to begin in October and to be completed by September 2008.

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

Epidemiology Updates:

- **Public Health Information Network (PHIN) Advisory** - On September 17, 2007, the Health District sent a PHIN advisory to the medical community regarding 2 probable measles cases in Harris County. The probable cases were exposed to a laboratory confirmed case while at a Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania in August 2007. The advisory outlined the symptoms of measles (generalized rash lasting 3 or more days, temperature greater than or equal to 101°F, and cough, coryza, or conjunctivitis) and how to test for measles (serology on a single specimen for IgM testing or significant rise in acute and convalescent specimens or isolation of measles virus from a clinical specimen). The Health District investigated an out of jurisdiction lab confirmed measles case at a local hospital in May 2007. Galveston County has not had a documented case of measles in a resident in over 10 years.
- **Epidemiology Disease Reporting In-Service** - During the month of September, Epidemiology Services provided 2 disease reporting in-services to the Core Immunization Class and Dickinson ISD nurses. The 30 medical community participants received training on the *ō*who, what, when, and how*ö* of disease reporting for notifiable conditions/diseases to the Health District. The participants also received information on the procedure to report animal bites and obtain rabies post-exposure prophylaxis.
- **Collaboration with Baylor College of Medicine** - Galveston County Health District and Baylor College of Medicine signed a MOU for collaboration work with elevated blood lead levels in Galveston County in August of 2004. The final product is now in draft form: *ö*Childhood Lead Poisoning in Galveston, TX: Background*ö* Health Effects*ö* Hot Spots*ö* Intervention*ö*. The document provides lead background, intervention measures, identifies hotspots utilizing geospatial mapping, and outlines recommendations for decreasing the elevated blood lead level in Galveston.

Preparedness Update:

- **Pandemic Flu Planning** - On September 6th, representatives from Health Departments in Southeast Texas and the DSHS Regional office met to discuss next steps from the pandemic flu exercise that took place in August. The group decided that over the next fiscal year, participating Health Departments will each host a workshop or training to address issues that were raised during the exercise. Some of the issues to be addressed include: antiviral caches available to health departments, continuity of operations planning, web-based emergency planning programs, collaboration in the dissemination of public information, mass casualty planning, medical surge planning, and incident command training.
- **Animal Issues Committee** - The Galveston County Animal Issues Committee met on September 12th. The group discussed possible locations for the staging of animals during after a disaster, options to provide badges so animal rescue teams can enter the county before the general population, and the status on MOUs between the district, the county, and animal rescue organizations to assist in the rescue and shelter of companion animals and horses. Currently the county is reviewing these documents.

- **Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative** - The Galveston County Emergency Response Collaborative met on September 13th. The group discussed the regional pandemic flu exercise and expressed an interest in continued exercises and drills to improve response capability and coordination between agencies. The group also discussed activities surrounding Hurricane Dean and the role of the Catastrophic Medical Operations Command in Houston in aiding the transport of patients during an evacuation.

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

- Memorandum of Agreement with **Texas City Independent School District - Cooperative Project Head Start and Galveston County Community Action Council, Inc.** were signed by COO on August 28th. GCHD will perform developmental assessments and physical examinations of their students, and organized treatment programs will be provided to patients desiring follow-up diagnostic and treatment services through the 4Cø clinic.
- Clinical Agreement with **Angelo State University - Department of Nursing** was signed by COO on September 5th. GCHD will provide a learning and clinical experience to their nursing students.
- MOU with **Planned Parenthood of Houston & Southeast Texas (PPHSET)** was signed by CEO on September 5th. GCHD will work cooperatively to conduct Partner Elicitation and elicit, locate, and test partners of persons identified with HIV.
- Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the COO on September 6, 2007 with **Evan Surplus** to purchase all the scrap X-ray films from the clinics at a rate of 15 cents per pound and the file films at a rate of 20 cents per pound.
- **Department of State Health Service Grant for Child Health and Dental Services** was signed by COO on September 6th. This grant totaling \$97,944 provides funding for preventative and primary child health and dental service for Title V eligible clients.
- Affiliation Agreement with **Educational Ventures, LLP** for the Dental Assistant Externship program with the 4Cø clinics was signed by COO on September 11, 2007. And the agreement for the Medical Assistant Externship program was signed by COO on September 20th.