



## **Executive Report to the Galveston County 4C's Governing Board**

**May 29, 2008**

### **GCHD Promoting Hurricane Readiness**

GCHD is gearing up for the 2008 Hurricane season. On April 29th, the Health District's Community Outreach Coordinator participated in a Hurricane Exercise sponsored by the Citizens Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.) of Galveston County. The purpose of the multi-jurisdictional exercise was to test the procedures in place for mandatory evacuation of Galveston County residents. Besides participating in a number of local events and exercises, the Office of Environmental Health Programs held its annual hurricane planning meeting with staff to emphasize the importance of being prepared. Staff was provided with tips on how to prepare their families and property. In addition, staff was provided with the Health District's plans for the preparation of District assets, the importance of communication, and our responsibilities during a post-disaster recovery phase. In addition, Galveston Area Ambulance Authority staff are preparing for the opening of Hurricane Season. GAAA staff actively participates in the City of Galveston Mayor's Hurricane Preparedness program which includes monthly status meetings. Additionally, GAAA staff participated in *Hurrex '08* a regional Hurricane exercise that extended over a three day period from April 29 through May 1, 2008. Line staff will be given refresher training during their May 28<sup>th</sup> staff meeting.

### **National Cover the Uninsured Week**

A guest column by Dr. Milton Howard, Chair of the 4C's Governing Board submitted to local media on April 25<sup>th</sup> was published in the *Galveston Daily News* on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The column was submitted as part of a national effort to **Cover the Uninsured**. Dr. Howard discussed the importance of the 4C's clinics in meeting the needs of the uninsured in Galveston County and the on-going financial barriers to access to specialty care for the uninsured in Galveston County. Encouraging readers to listen to the voices of the uninsured, the column can be found at <http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/050108HowardGuestColumn.htm>.

### **Galveston County Animal Seizure**

Kim Schoolcraft and staff members from the Animal Shelter were alerted and responded to a citizen inquiry concerning the possible "hoarding" of dogs and cats at a location in an unincorporated area of Galveston County. Staff noted the deplorable conditions both outside and inside the residence once allowed to enter. Ms. Schoolcraft eventually negotiated the voluntary relinquishment of 7 dogs and 7 cats. The owner was allowed to keep 2 of the dogs which will be spayed/neutered for free at the Galveston County Animal Alliance's Spay/Neuter Clinic. Staff also requested health services assistance through the County Sheriff's Office to assist with the current living conditions and the health of the owner of the pets.

### **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Taskforce**

From January to May 27, 2008, Epidemiology Services has received 9 reports of elevated blood lead cases – 7 of the 9 confirmed cases are in the City of Galveston zip code areas 77550 & 77551. All 9 were referred to Community Health Nursing and 2 have been referred for an Environmental Lead Investigation due to the level being over 20 mcg/dL or 2 venous blood lead levels in range between 15-19 mcg/dL at least 3 months apart. A Public Health Advisory was sent on May 9<sup>th</sup> to improve the reporting of lead tests to GCHD. State laws requires all Health Care Providers, Hospitals, Laboratories, and Schools to report all lead testing reports to the Health District, regardless of the level. The Galveston Island Lead Task Force will meet again

on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. at the Island Community Center conference room located at 4700 Broadway. There will be an update of activities and developments since the last meeting as well as a planned presentation by the Galveston Housing Authority. Updates will include status of grant applications, a summary of recent statistics, an update on the vacant environmental lead testing position, and a summary of community agencies/individuals roles to assist with reducing the risk of childhood lead poisoning on Galveston Island. The Health District's lead investigator position (currently an additional duty assigned to a routine air & water pollution duties) is located at <http://www.gchd.org/hr/environmental-investigator-lead-risk-assessor-147.pdf>.

### **Grant Collaboration Meeting**

On May 21, the Health District convened a meeting of local stakeholders interested in a two-year demonstration grant to initiate a cadre of "Patient Navigators," community health workers who will work to improve chronic health conditions. Ted Hanley and Carol June Gonzales from the Jesse Tree, Mary Wainwright and Leslie Hargrove from Coastal and East Texas AHEC and Steven Shelton from UTMB were present with district staff. AHEC reported that it has a curriculum for training community health workers and has already begun to prepare a grant application. The group shared concepts for a successful grant application and agreed to look at expanding their application to build on a network of relationships with county organizations brought about by the HRSA-funded Community Access Project from several years ago.

### **GCHD Selected for Public Health Apprentice Program**

Galveston County Health District has been chosen to serve as one of eight host sites in the Public Health Apprentice Program in Texas. This CDC funded program was created to train new public health professionals through hands on experience in local health departments. In a three year assignment starting in early August 2008 through July 2011, an apprentice assigned to GCHD will receive experience with outreach and case management of lead exposure and chronic diseases including breast cancer under the supervision of Cassandra Arceneaux MD, MPH; Water and Air Safety under the supervision of Ronnie Schultz, and Surveillance/Public Health Preparedness under the supervision of Dana Beckham, DVM. The apprentice will also participate in the establishment of the new Strategic Health Plan for the District under the direct supervision of CEO/Health Authority Harlan "Mark" Guidry MD, MPH.

**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)).*

- Dates for upcoming **mammogram screenings** were submitted to the Community Bulletin Board in the *Galveston Daily News* with eligibility guidelines. These sites are submitted to the newspaper on a monthly basis. The community mammogram schedule is posted on the district web site [www.gchd.org/chn/dfeet.htm](http://www.gchd.org/chn/dfeet.htm).
- **Rescued Puppies** – The Joe Vickery Animal Shelter received national attention from animal rescue groups around the United States in response to a newspaper article highlighting the plight of two (2) puppies that arrived at our shelter with birth deformities. Gwen Norman, Administrative Assistant for the Animal Shelter sent out a plea requesting special assistance for these puppies. Eventually, the call was answered by St. Francis' Animal Sanctuary in Vermillion, Ohio who specializes in care for such animals. The *Galveston Daily News* featured a front page story and photograph of the animals in their May 17<sup>th</sup> edition [www.gchd.org/press/2008/0517Buddiessavepuppies.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/0517Buddiessavepuppies.htm).
- A **candy recall** was the subject of information posted on the GCHD web site on May 7<sup>th</sup> after receiving notice from the Department of State Health Services. The candy manufactured in Mexico and commonly sold in Texas was shown to have elevated levels of lead which can be harmful to children. The recall information is posted at [www.gchd.org/press/2008/0508Candyrecalled.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/0508Candyrecalled.htm).

- Continued concern about water quality in **Dickinson Bayou** was reported in a *Galveston Daily News* story published May 25<sup>th</sup>. The story included information on new signs posted at two boat ramps that will alert citizens of elevated bacteria levels in the waterway when detected by samples taken by Environmental Services staff: [www.gchd.org/press/2008/052508DickinsonBayousigns.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/052508DickinsonBayousigns.htm).
- Precautions people can take to **avoid dog bites** were posted on the district web site May 28<sup>th</sup>. The release also included information on Lillian's Law that took effect September 1, 2007 increasing the penalties for dog owners who fail to reasonably secure their dogs, resulting in an attack on a person. The information can be found at printed for distribution at [www.gchd.org/press/2008/0528avoiddogbites.htm](http://www.gchd.org/press/2008/0528avoiddogbites.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).*

- **Staffing Update** – There is a new 4C's Medical Provider, Bobbie Baggett, PA-C, who will start on June 2, 2008. Staff continues to search for qualified medical providers to fill the 1.5 physician and 1 midlevel positions. There is currently 1 part-time vacant dental provider position; however, one part-time dental provider is finalizing the credentialing process with the start date pending. Current Provider vacancies have been widely advertised and distributed. Information on all Health District positions can be viewed at: <http://www.gchd.org/hr/job.htm>
- **4C's X-ray Competency-** A DRAFT 4C's Clinic X-Ray Technician Competency Checklist is being reviewed to help ensure, efficient and effective training and staff competencies. The lab supervisor will test the draft tool before it is finalized and required for use on all new and existing staff performing x-rays to document and assure their competency.
- **New Dental Walk-in Procedures** - As of May 14, 2008, the procedure for the intake of dental walk-ins has changed. The new changes are designed to reduce the steps it takes for a dental patient to be seen and to assist dental providers in meeting productivity goals.
- **Texas Association of Community Health Centers (TACHC) MUP/HPSA Webinar** – Staff attended a webinar on the Proposed Rules for the Designation of Medically Underserved Populations (MUP) and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). The proposed changes combine the designation “process” while the “designations” themselves will remain separate. The three proposed designations are Tier 1, Tier 2, and Safety Net Facility. Similarly, all entities under the three designations will be eligible to compete for federal funds and National Health Service Corps (NHSC) placements. More information on the Proposed Rules for the Designation of MUP/HPSA areas can be found at: <http://newsroom.hrsa.gov/releases/2008/commentextended.htm>. Other webinars being viewed include a review of FQHC board requirements and Joint Commission initiatives which will be presented to board upon completion.

**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** - Charles Kelly and Senior Services continue to promote senior health this month through the topic “Wills and Food Stamps”. 175 seniors were educated on the importance of wills and given the opportunity to apply for food stamps with the help of Gloretta Thornton of Lone Star Legal Aid.
- **United Way-** Galveston Regional Outreach, Public Health and Education Services (Galveston-ROPES) had a hearing with the United Way on Monday May 12, 2008 at 2:40pm to discuss possible funding and becoming a United Way agency. Preliminary responses are favorable. The Potential funds to the Health District could be as high as \$62,000 for the Senior Health Program. Galveston County Health District has also submitted a letter requesting an additional \$27,250 to complete

program activities for June through December 2008. The response from Elizabeth White is still pending.

- **Health Fairs** – In the month of May, Community Health Services participated in The Galveston Housing Authority Community Fairs in the City of Galveston. Approximately 158 people were informed about various GCHD services through these combined events.
- **STD/HIV Budget Changes-** STD- To compensate for the loss of funds due to budget cuts from DSHS, the STD/HIV program has submitted a budget amendment to use moneys from salary savings due to open positions for the Community Service AIDE III position. HIV- A request for \$3,220 in travel and equipment has been submitted for approval by DSHS. Tammy Sajak, Surveillance Coordinator for the state, reports the amount has been preliminarily approved and we will have final confirmation in 3 to 4 weeks.
- **Non-infectious TB Case Lost of Follow-up** - A male tuberculosis patient in his 50s was responding well after four months of treatment. The patient had been non-infectious for 2 months when he moved out of his family home to an unknown location in Crystal Beach 3 weeks ago. The TB program has been trying to find him by visiting his job and other places he is known to frequent. Also, a certified letter has been mailed to his P.O Box in Crystal Beach instructing him to contact the TB clinic for continuation of his TB treatment for an additional 3 months. At present the patient's smears and cultures are negative and he is not a threat to public health. This situation is concerning, however, because if he does not complete his TB treatment, his TB may get reactivated or may become resistant to common anti-tuberculosis medications. TB staff will continue to try to locate him according to State protocols and procedures.

**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)*

- **Animal Services Advisory Committee Meeting** – The Advisory Committee met on May 8, 2008 and reviewed a presentation on options available for the expansion of our current animal shelter. These options range from adding on to the shelter at the existing location to the purchase of land and the construction of a new shelter. Brian Maxwell of the County Judge's staff participated on the animal shelter subcommittee and has kept the Judge and the Commissioner's Court updated on the results of the subcommittee. Commissioner's Court is very interested in looking at these options and has placed the shelter expansion on its facility upgrade list. The next step in this project is to bring the revised power point presentation to the UBOH for review and approval. Once approved, the power point presentation will be given at the next Animal Summit targeted for the late summer 2008. Other items discussed at the quarterly meeting were the upcoming FY 2009 Animal Services budget. Staff anticipates the release of the draft budget in late May 2008.
- **Beach Watch Program** – The Beach Watch program is in full swing in anticipation of crowds visiting the beaches along Galveston Island, Bolivar Peninsula and the Texas City Dike. We have in recent weeks posted many advisories along the island and peninsula. These postings are published on the District's website, emailed to public officials, and posted with signage on the beaches. The program recently was the recipient of a new Beach Watch truck donated by the Texas General Land Office. Our current vehicle is showing severe signs of wear and tear from its use on the beaches.
- **Consumer Health Permits Overdue** – Three food service permits were overdue as of 5/1/08 and one pool permit. Letters were sent out to the owners; as of 5/23/08, all of the facilities have paid and are in compliance with the policy approved by the Board for food service establishments.

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

- **GAAA Staffing Update**– There are currently 17 vacant full-time field 911 positions and 4 vacant full-time field non-emergency transfer positions. We have two full-time EMT-Basics pending drug tests and/or physical results, one full-time EMT-Basic scheduled for an interview, and one full-time EMT-Intermediate scheduled for testing. In addition, we have two paramedics interested in part-time work scheduled for testing.
- **EMS System Coordination Agreement** – During a meeting of Mayors and City Administrators involved in the EMS System Coordination agreement, it was decided that effective June 1, 2008 it would be ended. The ending of this agreement does not effect the mutual aid agreements, Non Emergency Transfer Agreements that are in effect. The Mayors felt that the system were operating in an acceptable fashion on their own and should have a less formal affiliation. The Mayors pledged to continue working together and to cooperate in emergency drills on a regular basis.
- **Non-Emergency Transfer (NET) Operations Update** – A meeting of stakeholders in non-emergency transfer operation was held on May 23, 2008 in the La Marque Headquarters. During the meeting a “snapshot report was delivered to the stakeholders about the current status of transfer operations. All present agreed that transfer operations were going well and that improvements in the last six months were significant. There was discussion of ideas to make operations better. There was also a discussion with stakeholders about emergency evacuation procedures and agreement to assist in status planning throughout Hurricane Season.
- **Software Upgrade project** - GAAA began a project to upgrade the Patient Care Record software for all of its operations. The kickoff meeting was held on May 22, 2008. This project is possible during this fiscal year because of the budget amendments approved by the UBoH and the City of Galveston. The anticipated “Go Live” date is October 1, 2008. Staff will be working diligently in the coming months to realize this project.

**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).

#### **Epidemiology Updates**

- **Brown Bag Seminar Video Series – Unnatural Causes** - As of May 20<sup>th</sup>, the Health District has viewed six of the seven part series titled Unnatural Causes. Unnatural Causes is a 4 hour documentary exploring racial and socioeconomic health inequalities. The segments will be viewed every Tuesday from 12:00 – 1:00 pm at the Health District’s Head Quarters executive conference room.
- **Whooping Cough in Galveston** - The Health District received a confirmed Pertussis (whooping cough) case on May 20, 2008 from UTMB. The index case is a 5 year old female that resides in the city of Galveston. Epidemiological investigation revealed that the case was current on immunizations and 7 close contacts were identified and received chemoprophylaxis. The Health District provided a letter and fact sheet to the case’s school administration for distribution to parents on transmission, prevention, treatment of disease, and Health District contacts for additional information inquires. Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease that is an acute bacterial infection of the respiratory tract. The Health District reported 1 case of pertussis in 2007 and 9 cases in 2006 to the Department of State Health Services.

#### **Preparedness Update:**

- **Outreach Activities with Santa Fe/Hitchcock Rotary Club** - On May 1st, the Health District’s Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinators attended the Santa Fe/Hitchcock Rotary Club weekly meeting. Ten rotary club attendees received information on Public Health Preparedness, Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps and GCHD Volunteer Program. The information

consisted of the recruitment for volunteers, the Medical Reserve Corps role in a disaster, the Health District's preparation and response in a public health emergency or a large scale disease outbreak, and actions the community can take to prepare for an incident.

- **Health Fair & Safety Fair at Roosevelt Wilson Elementary (Texas City)** - On May 2, the Public Health Preparedness and the Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps attended the Roosevelt Wilson Health and Safety Fair. Information on hurricane preparedness, pandemic flu, hand washing and respiratory etiquette was distributed to over 650 students and staff.
- **Regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Workgroup Meeting** - The Health District staff attended the regional SNS workgroup meeting on May 13 at the state regional office in Houston. Topics discussed included funding for FY 09, disposition of expired medications, events, trainings and exercises. The workgroup is a forum for information sharing and discussion of deliverables for the City Readiness Initiative grant
- **DSHS statewide "Ready or Not" Campaign** - May 18 and 19, the Health District participated in the State Health Department "Ready or Not" Campaign for Public Health Preparedness at the League City and Galveston HEB Pantry. Ready or Not stresses three critical areas, Family, Essentials and Information. Over 850 participants received information and/or equipment related to preparing for public health emergency events. Items distributed consisted of waterproof document bags that also had a checklist in English and Spanish of items people should have in their emergency kits; hurricane and pandemic flu wheels; 211 cards, emergency kits and hand washing brochures.

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

- **The Decade Conversion Plan** was signed by CEO and COO on May 1, 2008. The purpose of the agreement was to give systematic instructions for the data conversion process.
- **Amendment to the DSHS CHS Title V- Fee for Service Grant** was signed by COO on May 6, 2008. The budget amendment stated the total payments will not exceed \$30,000. This was necessary because of a decrease in the contract amount due to a realignment of FY08 funds.
- **Amendment to the DSHS CPS Bio-Terrorism Preparedness Grant** was signed by COO on May 12, 2008. This grant funds the dispensing of prophylactic medications during a bioterrorism attack. The change resulted in \$22,315.00 additional funds for FY08 grant period to purchase several items including server, digital camera, video camcorder and supplies.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the District and **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Galveston County** was signed by COO on May 13, 2008. The agreement establishes guidelines for the RSVP volunteers. The term of this contract is three years.
- The Spay/Neuter Service contract was renewed for one additional year to **Animal Alliance of Galveston County**. COO approved the renewal on May 13<sup>th</sup> for one year.
- **Amendment to the DSHS NSS – WIC Card Participation Grant** was signed by COO on May 13, 2008. The administrative fund rate was increased from \$9.94 to \$10.47 for each participant served.
- Memorandum of Agreement between the District and **D'Feet Breast Cancer, Inc.** was signed by COO on May 23, 2008. The effective date was April 1, 2008 and will continue unless cancelled. The Agreement sets forth the respective obligations of the parties with respect to the breast cancer screening program for underserved and uninsured women between the ages 40 and 64 and women at high risk for breast cancer. D'Feet will fund \$197,083.000, GCHD will provide \$31,120 as an in-kind contribution, and the total program budget is \$228,203.00.
- The **Medical Equipment/Supplies bid** was awarded for one-year to PSS, McKesson and Moore Medical, the lowest bid. The COO approved the award on May 19, 2008. The term is June 1, 2008 to June 1, 2009.

