

Medical Director's Report Board of Health October 2013

Lyme Disease:

I initiated communication with the CDC with regard to PCR testing of ticks. This is a special testing process using DNA amplification. It is very sensitive. This was prompted by an inquiry from the public regarding Cornell University's offering of tick testing.

The CDC does not recommend testing ticks for pathogens (bacteria and viri) due to a number of reasons:

- The results may come back too late in respect to desirable periods for treating that person.
- The results on the submitted tick may be misleading. (The individual may have been bitten by more than one tick unknowingly and the submitted tick may not be the one that carries the disease to which they have been exposed.)
- The tick tested may be a false normal and therefore be misleading as well.

For these various reasons the CDC does not recommend tick testing. Given the 3-5 day turnaround time that Cornell has talked about for PCR testing, I felt that I should directly inquire about whether there may be a role in some clinical cases for this type of testing. The CDC does not see a role.

General Activities:

- Reviewed influenza prevention policy for the department. This policy was prompted by New York State Department of Health Regulations which went into effect this summer at the end of July. The impact of these regulations are to require facilities and agencies licensed under Article's 28,36, & 40 to vaccinate their health care personnel for influenza according to certain regulations and provisions. If a person in their employ refuses vaccination that person will be required to wear a mask during a period of time to be designated by the Commissioner of Public Health.

The general impact of this is to increase healthcare worker vaccination, decrease transmission of disease and improve influenza statistics and outcomes.

The policy which the department is adopting is to cover delivery of care within its Article 28 & 36 facilities here at the department (to wit its diagnostic treatment clinic area and its licensed home care services agency).

- Reviewed and signed protective respirator evaluation forms for individuals.
- Reviewed rabies vouchers for submission to insurance companies for payment.

- Reviewed Children with Special Healthcare Needs forms to authorize services in cases where their personal physicians are not available to do so.
- Reviewed information regarding pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (also known as pneumovax).
- Physician recruitment for membership on the Board of Health. Drafted letter to selected colleagues inviting them to apply for our vacant position on the Board of Health. I detailed for them the benefits and advantages to them of doing so. I also contacted the Regional Office of the Medical Society of the State of NY to seek their help in recruiting for the Board of Health. Discussed the position at length with a number of interested colleagues.
- Met with the Community Health Quality Advisory Committee and reviewed the LHCSA policy and procedures and site survey results. We also reviewed some cases through the MOMS program. Particularly a pregnancy which resulted in a premature delivery and preeclampsia.

There were no complaints that we had to review.

Reviewed the various resources for dealing with clients who have language translation issues. We reviewed the availability of the dial in program that the county and the Health Department use to help translate in urgent situations. In addition Cornell University has a translator assist program which can be used and Total Care will pay to have an interpreter available at medical appointments. At times Google translator is used by staff to help bridge language barriers.

We reviewed the outstanding lead poisoning cases which are being handled as best they can. Often psychosocial family disruption issues make these cases challenging. Also challenging are sometimes the responsiveness of the landlords to correct the issues.

- September 17th, met with Ted Schiele and Samantha Hillson of the Tobacco Project to review materials with regard to pharmacies and the sale of tobacco products. The basic issue being: pharmacies are a place where people purchase products to promote health therefore the sale of a patently unhealthy product is strongly at variance. One does not want to psychologically connect an unhealthy product with a healthy image by any means. We had a constructive discussion looking at the data and activities in Massachusetts. We also reviewed activities taken by Dutchess and Cayuga County in this area and Cortland County Health Department and their Board of Health.

The contrast between businesses which host a pharmacy which is dedicated to promoting the preservation of health and the sale of a product which is adamantly injurious to health cannot be easily ignored.

A Day in Your Life – Thanks to Public Health



**A Day in Your Life –
Thanks to Public Health**

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Introduction

While most people know public health is important, they aren't always sure what it is or how it affects their lives. The purpose of "A Day in Your Life – Thanks to Public Health"* is to illustrate how the efforts of public health touch every North Dakotan every day.

Public health protects and improves communities by preventing epidemics and the spread of disease; promoting healthy lifestyles for children and families; protecting against hazards in homes, work, communities and the environment; ensuring high-quality health-care services; safeguarding and improving the quality of the environment; and preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about public health.

**Adapted from a public health promotion originating in the Colorado Health Department*

A Day in Your Life – Thanks to Public Health

It's morning, and the first rays of sunlight peek through your bedroom curtains.

You breathe deeply and enjoy the clean North Dakota air.

You're thankful that public health monitoring and clean air programs protect the air you breathe.



You take a shower and brush your teeth, knowing that the water won't make you sick because safe drinking water is the responsibility of public health.

You check your smile in the mirror and realize you can't remember your last cavity, thanks in part to the fluoride public health helps add to the water.





At the breakfast table, your children drink their milk, which is safe to drink because public health checks and monitors it from the dairy to the grocery store.

Your sister – who just had her first child – calls. She says her doctor suggested she enroll in the Women's, Infants and Children program (WIC), a public health service that ensures children get the proper nutrition to help them grow strong and healthy.

You walk outside, put your children in the car and buckle them up in their car seats. You make sure you buckle your seat belt, too.

Public health and other safety organizations have worked hard to promote the importance of wearing seat belts and using car seats correctly, helping to reduce highway deaths and injuries in North Dakota.



Playmates greet your children at the day-care center. You know they'll stay safe while you're at work because the day-care staff have been trained about the importance of hand washing and other techniques to avoid the spread of diseases.

As you leave, you see a sign about the importance of immunizations. Thanks to the vaccinations your children have received, you know they're safe from many life-threatening diseases like polio and measles.



You arrive at work and find a flyer about a new exercise program tacked to the bulletin board. You sign up, remembering the public health studies that show you can reduce the risks of many diseases by staying physically active.





You feel good at work because your company is a smoke-free workplace. Public health has led efforts locally and nationally to protect workers from the harm of secondhand smoke.



A coworker takes you to lunch at your favorite nearby restaurant. As you wait to be seated, you notice the food service license signed by the state health officer, which means the restaurant was inspected by public health specialists. You know the food is sanitary and has been cooked and handled properly.



On the way home after work, you pick up your children and stop for a quick walk in the park. The small pond in the park is clean, and your children are pleasantly surprised to see the family of ducks that have made the pond home. You realize that, once again, public health has improved the quality of your life by monitoring the environment.

As you drive home, you meet a garbage truck. Thanks to the efforts of public health, garbage is picked up and disposed of in licensed landfills, keeping the neighborhood clean and safe.

You remember some public health messages you've heard about the importance of recycling, so you make a mental note to take your separated items to the recycling center in the morning.





When you get home, you call your father to see how your grandmother is doing. He says she is still in the hospital but is feeling much better. He mentions she will go back to the nursing home in a few days.

You know she's getting quality care at both facilities because public health conducts inspections to ensure a commitment to quality standards. Even the ambulance that took your grandmother to the hospital has met public health standards for emergency medical services.

When you get your mail, you are pleased to see a letter from your cousin, whose son recently was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. The letter describes how public health is helping to pay for some of his doctor visits and medical treatment. You are happy to know that your cousin's son is receiving the medical care he needs.



After supper, you relax with your family and watch the news. The announcer introduces a public health spokesperson who talks about a new type of influenza that is making people



sick. The spokesperson explains the symptoms of the disease, how many people have gotten sick, how they are doing now, and what you and your family can do to protect yourselves.

You are very relieved to see that public health officials are on top of the issue.

You put your children to bed. As you tuck them in, you think about the day and all the ways public health touches your life.

Public health really is for everybody, every day and everywhere.





More information about public health in North Dakota is available from the North Dakota Department of Health (701.328.2372 or www.ndhealth.gov) or from your local public health unit.