



# Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department 2009 Annual Report

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*Serving Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins, & Red Willow Counties*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **SWNPHD Mission:**

In partnership with other entities, is to promote a healthy and secure quality of life for our communities.

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## **TOUCAN – Teaching Our youth Choices-Activities and Nutrition**

Teaching Our youth Choices- Activities and Nutrition or TOUCAN is a program developed through the Safe Routes to Schools grant with McCook Public Schools in 2007. With an Intervention Implementation Grant through the Office of Community Health Development from Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, TOUCAN is able to reach across the health district to teach Kindergarten through Third graders proper eating habits, the food guide pyramid (mypyramid), physical activity, physical activity in relationship to calories consumed, and exposes the children to calorie counting.

Providing education at a young age to choose healthier options and/or choices for nutrition and physical activity, will eventually reduce childhood obesity. The TOUCAN program is also mentoring with McCook Public Schools to encourage school policy and envi-

ronmental changes utilizing the Alliance for Healthier Generations program.

The Toucan program was presented to McCook Elementary schools in 2009. The Physical Education teachers received a 3-ring notebook with articles and resources about childhood obesity, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, promoting physical activity in the school setting, body mass index chart, stature chart, weight for age chart, and more nutrition articles/handouts.

TOUCAN is a beginning level education geared towards elementary children, school staff and parents. It encourages choosing healthier options for a more nutrient-rich diet and being more physically active.

TOUCAN encourages schools and school districts to make environmental and policy changes through the Alliance for Healthier Genera-

tions. These changes will help decrease the obesity rate in Southwest Nebraska. Per the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 40 percent of high school female students described themselves as slightly or very overweight.



## **Walk to Health Program Continues to Grow**

Walking is one of the least expensive and easiest ways for people to get active. Whether you want to shed some pounds or increase mobility, walking is great for people of all ages.

In 2003, the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department received a grant to encourage people to be more active and fight obesity. The "Walk to Health" walking program was developed. The grant also awarded funds to the public walking trails in McCook and Wauneta, which are consistently being used.

The McCook trail winds through Kelley Creek on the east side of McCook and has several stations and equipment along the trail which focuses on stretching and lifting. Wauneta's Walking trail is

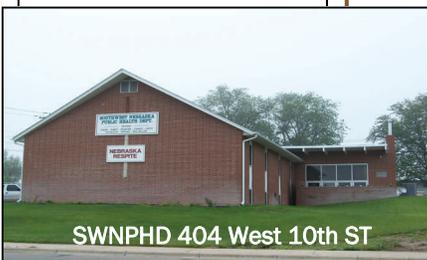
exercise stations and equipment along the trail which focuses on stretching and lifting.

Wauneta's Walking trail is located within the city park and is four tenths of a mile long. There are five exercise stations along the trail which include a high bar, body curl, push up, sit-up and a stretching station.

SWNPHD kicked off the 2009 Walk to Health walking program holding events in Wauneta, McCook and Cambridge. Participants were asked to take a "virtual tour" by "Walking Across Southwest Nebraska." Everyone was given a list of 19 destinations with 38 towns listing how many steps/miles it would take to reach that destination (such as Culbertson to Pali-sade). You simply set your

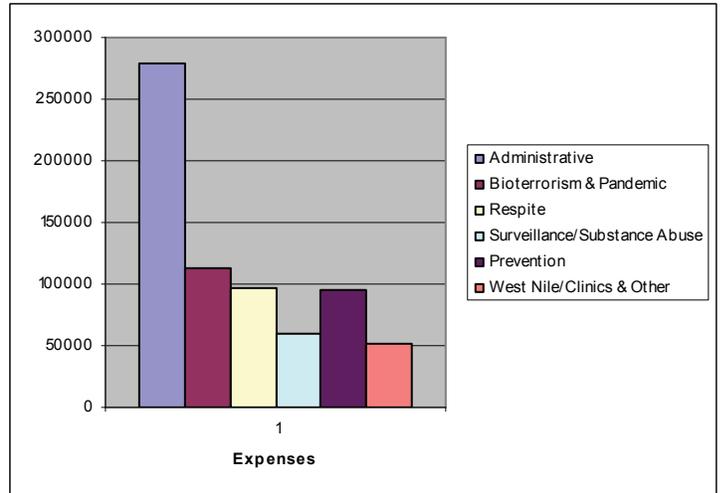
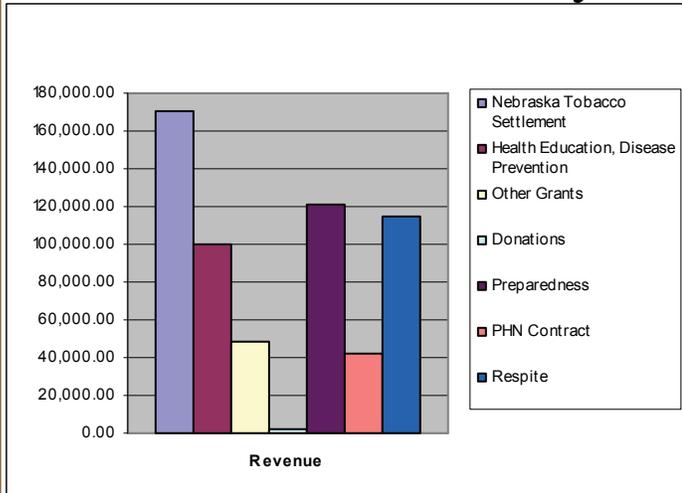
goal and start walking. Once you achieve that goal you could take another "tour". There were more than 300 participants covering all eight counties who received a T-shirt, pedometer, walking journal and fitness and nutrition information.

The Walk to Health program has continued to grow each year helping people to be consciously



SWNPHD 404 West 10th ST

# Financials - July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009



## H1N1 Preparedness Planning

The start of the H1N1 Influenza response started off like the blast of a shotgun in mid-April. The countless hours of planning and preparation for another pandemic were well utilized as we forged into an expected but somewhat unfamiliar process. Community Preparedness teams from each county gathered to prepare for this influenza, not knowing the potential scope or severity of the pandemic. As expected, these teams came together to implement their pandemic response plans and effectively mitigated the effects of the disease that could have been much worse. We witnessed people from each county answering the call to help, to do whatever they could to protect their community. It is what makes rural Nebraska great.

The vaccine was delivered in small weekly quantities at first, and trying to distribute 200 doses among 21 providers was a challenge. Because of the unusual

target of this disease (i.e. children instead of elderly as with seasonal influenza), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) mandated very strict recipients, or target groups, of those to be immunized. However, the citizens of Southwest Nebraska were very patient and understanding through this process. Again, we are very fortunate! We are now seeing the lowest swing of H1N1 since it began, but school and hospital surveillance is ongoing. Continuous surveillance allows us to be proactive instead of reactive to the threat of this or any other disease outbreak that we should face. Community Preparedness teams continue to meet to update and revise infectious disease outbreak plans. But for all the planning and preparing we do on a daily basis, we have once again been reminded of how many dedicated individuals we have in Southwest Nebraska.

## Annual Report - PHONE Nurse

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department has a contract with Medicaid to link Medicaid-eligible individuals and families to health care and assure that health care is accessed in a responsible manner.

Some goals of this contract are:

- Encouraging children enrolled in Medicaid to receive Early Preventions, Screening and Diagnostic Testing as recommended.
- Assisting families with Medicaid in choosing a medical, dental and vision homes.
- Promoting self care and responsibility for health.
- Educating people on the proper use of the Emergency Room.
- Creating partnerships with health care providers.

Statistics for the 2009 PHONE Nurse Program are as follows:

- Sent out 787 EPSDT (newly eligible) brochures
- Followed up with 210 Failed Appointments
- Followed up on 197 Emergency Room Visits
- Completed 58 Standard Health Assessments
- These and other activities totaled 842 contacts with Medicaid Clients



Reaching for a healthy future.

### Quick Tip:

To start a disaster supply kit for your family, visit:

[www.swhealthdept.com](http://www.swhealthdept.com)

## Three SWNPHD staffers licensed in Radon Measurement

How would you feel about having a NUCLEAR POWER PLANT as your neighbor? Would you allow doctors to perform 250 chest x-rays in a year on you? Scary isn't it?

That's why in 2009 three staff members became licensed in Radon Measurement, and 2 of those 3 are also licensed in Radon Mitigation. It is our goal to educate the residents of Southwest Nebraska to understand exposure to radiation via radon gas in your home is more of a problem than either of the questions posed to you.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and the leading cause of lung cancer amongst non smokers. Radon is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that occurs from the natural breakdown of uranium found in the soil.

In 2009 we received a mini grant to provide both short term and long term test kits to area residents as an economical way to check homes for radon gas. Test kits are available to residents of the health district at no charge while supplies last. We continue to educate on the dangers of radon, and how to lessen our exposure to it.

If the growth of the radon program in 2009 was an indicator of how things would be in 2010, it should be a GREAT year.

# HOPPING UPDATES ON THE FROG PROGRAM

Fitness Reaching Older Gen's (FROG) is an exercise and nutrition program which helps older adults to improve their mobility and strength.



**FROG**  
Fitness Reaching Older Gen's



The goal of FROG is to reach out to the older adult population and provide skills or exercises which help prevent injuries caused by falls.

Reducing falls may reduce health-care costs and provide the older adult population with a more active and enjoyable life.

About 13 percent of America's population is age 65 or over. Many changes take place as we age, such as: diminishing sense of taste and smell, tooth loss and change in energy levels. These are all normal processes of aging. Exercise and Nutrition play a huge part in keeping aging bones and muscles more flexible to help protect your body from serious injuries should you fall.

FROG is going and growing strong at all 10 sites. Their schedules are as follows:

McCook Community Hospital's FROG program is through their

55Plus program and all of the Hospital's outreach sites now offer FROG.

**McCook** - 9 a.m. Monday, Thursday, and Friday at the Evangelical Free Church.

**Curtis** - 9 a.m. Wednesday and Friday at the Community Building  
**Indianola** - 8:30 a.m. Wednesday at Community Hospital's Outreach building.

**Stratton** - 10 a.m. Tuesday at Stratton Senior Center.

**Trenton** - 10:30 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday at Eldorado Manor.  
Tri-Valley Health Systems of Cambridge also has the FROG program through their 55Plus program as well. Tri-Valley Health recently celebrated their first year anniversary with the FROG program. The anniversary celebration will be an annual event.

**Cambridge** - 9:30a.m. & 5 p.m.,

Tuesday & Friday at the Congregational Church

**Arapahoe** - 9:30 a.m. Monday & Thursday at the Senior Center

### Other Sites

**Benkelman** - 10 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday at the Senior Center.

**Grant** - 9 a.m. Thursday at the Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

**Imperial** - 10 a.m. Tuesday & Thursday at the Imperial Community Center/Senior Center

All participants are tested annually on their agility, balance, body mass index, cardiovascular, flexibility and muscle endurance/strength.

The Senior Fitness Test identifies strengths and weaknesses of the participants. This information is used by the instructors to make exercise adjustments to benefit the group.

FROG is heading to Omaha to the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual National Association of Local Boards of Health Conference Aug. 5-7th of 2010. Julie Neighbors, Health Educator of Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department will present a poster session about the program to board of health members, senior agency officials and national public health leaders.



## 30 posters submitted for first Radon Poster Contest



SWNPHD sponsored it's first Radon Poster Contest. The contest was in part with the state and

national contest. The first, second and third place winning posters from the health district were sent to Lincoln for State competition. The State winner was forwarded on to Washington DC for national competition.

The contest was open to all students age 9 - 14 years within the health district. The students were to create original art work in crayon, markers, water colors, collages, computer graphics or pictures depicting either; what radon is, where does it come from, how does it get into your home, radon can cause lung cancer or testing for radon.

The purpose of the contest was to bring awareness of the harmful effects radon has. There were 30

posters submitted from schools in McCook, Culbertson, Hayes Center, Imperial, Palisade and Maywood.

First place winner: Paige Ribordy from Central Elementary. Her poster was Titled "Do You Have Radon?" Paige received a Nintendo DS game system with a Mario Kart game.

Second place winner: Ana Miller, also a Central Elementary stu-

dent. Her poster was titled "Radon Is Here." Ana received a new mountain bike and helmet.

Third place winner: Megan Tidyman from Tidyman Academy in Maywood. Her poster was titled "Radon is Dangerous and Deadly." Megan received a \$50 gift card from GameOn in McCook.



## Clean Indoor Air Report

The Clean Indoor Air Act (LB395) was passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2008. The purpose of the Act is to protect the public's health and welfare by prohibiting smoking in public places and places of employment. Effective June 1, 2009, LB395 requires every indoor public place and workplace to be smoke-free. Businesses may create outdoor areas for their smoking patrons.



The role of SWNPHD is to educate businesses and communities on the Act, follow-up on complaints of violations and assist businesses in measuring for outdoor smoking areas.

Generally, business owners in the health district have complied with the Act. SWNPHD has followed up with 6 complaints and assisted several business owners in complying with the outdoor smoke areas.

# Nebraska Respite Network News

Respite provides caregivers of those with long-term or life long disabilities or illness an opportunity to have some time away from their caregiver duties. The Nebraska Respite Network-Southwest Service Area serves as a resource and referral service for families and providers needing respite or in-home services across the lifespan.

Respite assists families in locating providers, accessing information for respite funding, maintaining listings of independent care providers and provide trainings and support for family caregivers, providers, agencies and community members.

The Nebraska Respite Network Southwest Service Area serves 18 counties: Arnold, Arthur, Chase, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Hooker, Red Willow and Thomas.

Billie Cole assumed the role as the Respite Coordinator for the Nebraska Respite Network Southwest Service area and

Southwest Public Health Department Project Coordinator in October 2009.

As respite coordinator, Billie maintains the statewide database of respite providers, recruits and markets respite services within the 18 county service area, collaborates with area state and county agencies and matches families with providers.

What is respite?

Respite provides caregivers of those



with long-term or life long disabilities or illness an opportunity to have some time away from their caregiver duties.

Billie has given all respite marketing items including the brochures, newsletters and training information a new look. She has been recruiting in areas that are needing more providers.

An application must be filled out and returned to the coordinator. After a background check with is completed, the provider will receive a packet and letter stating their enrollment into the statewide database.

For more information on respite or to become a provider visit us on the web at [www.swhealthdept.com](http://www.swhealthdept.com) and click on the respite provider tab or call 308-345-4990.

## Lets hit West Nile Virus Outta the Park

In 2009 with the West Nile Virus Educational Project Grant, SWNPHD chose to use Little League Baseball teams as the target audience. Five communities in the eight county area served by SWNPHD participated and exceeded the educational goal of 350 kids and 150 adults.

The slogan "Lets Hit West Nile Virus Outta the Park" was developed. Nine hundred and fifteen sacks were filled with materials and distributed to each ball player. Each sack contained an activity book titled "Don't Be Mosquito Meat USE DEET", an insect repellent wipe containing DEET, a pencil imprinted with the program theme and a baseball shaped magnet listing safety tips regarding how to protect yourself against West Nile Virus.

**West Nile Virus prevention message:**



- Use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET.
- Take extra precautions at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Get rid of standing water.
- Keep window screens in good repair.

Additional WNV activities for the health district included trapping mosquitoes for testing every other week in Imperial and Enders, submitting suspicious dead birds to the state for testing, general WNV education, and handing out educational materials at health fairs and other functions.



# Steer Clear of Tobacco

Steer Clear of Tobacco is a nationally recognized program that was created by Health Educator, Jamie Hawkins. The purpose of the campaign is to educate rodeo contestants, organizers and spectators on the dangers of smokeless tobacco and smoking and to give them resources on how to quit. Rodeos and other agricultural based events are the perfect venue to educate against spit tobacco use. Quit Spit Kits are offered at all of the events as well as information on the toll-free Nebraska Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

To date, the Steer Clear of Tobacco campaign has been a major sponsor at more than 20 rodeos in Southwest Nebraska. The Steer Clear logo has been spotted at rodeos as far away as Texas and the presence at rodeo and agricultural events is continuing to see a rapid growth. Cowboys, cowgirls, rodeo committees and spectators have all been extremely receptive to the anti-tobacco message and many have benefitted from the resources offered.

## Stepping Away from Chew **FREE Quit Spit Kit**

Your **FREE** Quit Spit Kit includes: quitting strategies and tips, nutrition info., 1-800-Quit-Now wallet card, gum, mints, games, etc...

Provide us with the following information and we will be happy to mail you a Quit Spit Kit:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Steer Clear of Tobacco



[www.swhealthdept.com](http://www.swhealthdept.com)