Geauga County Combined Health District

Geauga County Health District Advisory Council

One board member is appointed annually for a five year term. Board members serve as advocates for public health services and programs. This board is a quasi-judicial, policy development body tasked with determining, setting and monitoring public health policy. They are responsible for adopting the annual budget and ensuring adequate funding for the Health District.

Vacancy on Board

A Note from the Health Commissioner

The services provided by the public health system are like the pendulum on a clock; it swings to meet the health care needs of the community. Public health has seen some new and exotic diseases such as West Nile Virus, SARS, Monkey Pox, and Avian Flu. These diseases have never been seen in the general population to the magnitude as what is being seen today. We need to ask ourselves what is next and how will our public health system handle such a disease?

We are seeing a new insurgence of animal diseases cross over into the human population. Such a crossover requires scrutiny and fast action to develop and produce sufficient quantities of vaccines to ward off an epidemic. Global movement of such diseases can take place within a few hours and immediate action must take place to prevent the spread. If we are to practice public health in it's purest sense, it is imperative that we keep a vigilant eye on the ever-new emerging diseases.

However, we must be ever mindful of the true benefits we now get from implementing the current public health practices. The Geauga County Health District provides a wide array of public health services addressing the needs of children and seniors citizens. In the year 2003, there were 3,328 flu shots administered, 1,106 senior visits conducted and 3,176 immunizations given. In addition, there were 417 well child visits and 489 tuberculosis performed by the Health District staff.

The health district has great news to report! A large percentage of the For Sale of Property evaluations are passing. This tells us that the residents are taking sewage disposal seriously and playing an active role in the maintenance of these systems. Efficiently operating and well maintained sewage disposal systems equates to clean drinking water, something which all of us depend on every day of our life.

Public health is a very serious matter and WE can ill afford to take a passive approach.

Robert K. Weisdack
Health Commissioner
Residential Sewage

Most homes in Geauga County have individual household sewage disposal systems. The Health District regulates sewage disposal systems serving one, two and three family residences. In 2003 the Health District issued 513 permits for new sewage disposal systems, 300 new construction and 213 existing homes.

The staff conducted 688 lot evaluations for proposed sewage systems. Prior to obtaining a sewage permit, the Health District staff visits each lot and evaluates the site for a sewage disposal system. If the lot is approved, then a sewage permit can be issued.

The staff then inspects all sewage disposal systems at the time of installation.

The Geauga County Board of Health adopted new sewage regulations in July 2002 requiring all residential sewage systems be inspected by the Health District when the property is sold. The fee for this inspection is either $200 or $250. The Health District conducted over 600 For Sale of Property inspections in 2003. Individuals can obtain forms and information for this regulation at the Health District website http://www.geaugacountyhealth.org.

Maintaining the sewage system is the responsibility of each homeowner. This requires periodic pumping of the septic tanks, cleaning and maintaining filters, alternating use of leach trench fields where applicable, maintaining electrical components such as aerators and pumps, and adding chemicals for disinfection when required.

Every homeowner needs to monitor what enters the septic system and out into the soil and environment.

Homeowners looking for the type of sewage system installed on their property can call the office. Based on permit information on file we can educate the homeowner about components, location, operation and maintenance of their sewage system.

The department maintains an active nuisance complaint investigation program. We investigate written complaints filed with the department. Many complaints about failing sewage disposal systems result in installation of new systems.

The department also licenses and inspects semi-public sewage systems that treat less than 25,000 gallons per day. This includes 140 package plants / extended air treatment systems and 550 solid/liquid waste systems.

Environmental Health Services Rendered 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing Permits</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing Inspections</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Water System Permits</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Water System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples/Inspections</td>
<td>1,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Public Sewage Certificates</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Public Sewage Inspections</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septic Tank Hauler Permits</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewage Permits</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewage Inspections &amp; Lot Evaluations</td>
<td>2,876</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solid/Infectious Waste Inspections</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Bite Investigations</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Rabies Cases in Animals</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Camp Inspections</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactured Home Park</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B &amp; Camp Inspections</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuisance Complaint Inspections</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Inspections</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool Inspections</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food Service Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Operation Inspections</td>
<td>1,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending Machine Inspections</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Food Establishment Inspections</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private Water Systems

One of our most valuable and necessary resources is our drinking water supply. In Geauga County we depend on ground water to provide this for us. Ground water makes up over 98% of the earth’s fresh water supply. It exists as a result of rain and melting snow seeping down through the soils and collects in the spaces between grains of sand, gravel and in the various rock formations.

Although we are uncertain of exactly how much ground water exists, we do know that approximately 730 million gallons of water are pumped everyday to supply our residential, industrial and agricultural needs in Ohio. We must make every attempt to conserve and protect this valuable resource.

The Health District enforces regulations that include the registration of well drillers and other private water system contractors, annual inspections of their work, and permitting, inspecting and sampling of every drinking water well that is drilled in Geauga County. In 2003 the Health District issued 392 private water system permits and performed 1320 water sample collections and inspections.
Personal Health Services
Summary Services Provided 2003

- Venous Thromboembolism Screening ............. 200
- Tuberculosis Tests Administered............... 489
- Maternal/Newborn Home Visits.................. 404
- School Service Visits .......................... 117
- Well Child Service Visits ........................ 417
- BC/MV Visits .................................... 553
- Geauga County Families in BC/MV ............... 455
- Orthopedic Clinic Visits .......................... 114
- Neurology Clinic Visits ........................... 94
- Immunization Visits (Adult & Child) .............. 3,176
- Adult Blood Pressure Screenings ................ 650
- Office Clinic Visits ................................ 107
- Senior Clinic Visits (Nurses Clinic) .............. 1,106
- Senior Clinic Presentation Attendance .......... 2,957
- Flu Shots Administered ............................ 3,328
- Pregnancy Testing ................................ 9

2004 Immunization Clinics

**Chardon**
Geauga County Health District
470 Center Street Building 8

- **2nd Wednesday—9:00 am to 11:30 am**

**Middlefield**
First United Methodist Church
1499 S. State St., South of Rt. 87

- **2nd & 4th Monday—9:00 am to 11:30 am**

**Middlefield Evening Clinic**
First United Methodist Church
1499 S. State St., South of Rt. 87

- **3rd Thursday—4:00 pm to 7:00 pm**

**Parkman**
Parkman Community Center
16205 Main Market, East of Rt 528

- **3rd Monday—9:00 am to 11:30 am**

**Russell**
Ledgewood Christian Church
2821 Kinsman Rd., West of Rt. 306

- **1st Thursday—9:00 am to 11:30 am**

**Troy**
Troy Community Center
13950 Main Market, East of Rt. 700

- **3rd Monday—1:00 pm to 3:30 pm**

Friday Morning Clinic
Adult Immunizations
TB Testing
Blood Pressure Screening
Geauga County Health District
470 Center Street Building 8

- **Friday—8:30 am to 11:00 am**

There are no clinics scheduled on public holidays.

To get a schedule of exact dates please call:

- (440) 285-2222
- (440) 564-7131
- (440) 834-1856

Extension 6577

**Evaluation**

The goal of the Food Program for the Geauga County Health District is to protect the public against food borne illness. This is accomplished through inspections, education and enforcement of the Uniform Food Safety Code. This code applies to such places as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, restaurants, grocery stores, fairs and festivals. Over 1800 food service operation and retail food establishment inspections were made in 2003. Inspections concentrate on how food is cooked, cooled and reheated as well as general sanitation. Complaints center on food quality, food contamination and food borne illness are also investigated.

We provided two Serv-Care Operators course to help educate operators on the code and safe food handling. The Sanitarians also provided mini education courses for restaurant and other local food service facilities. The Uniform Food Safety Code is under continual review. Changes are made every other year to meet the challenges faced by the ever-increasing awareness of the causes of food borne illness.

Staff changes will be made in 2004. Food Program Supervisor, Sandee Uecke will be retiring and Mark Janesic will be promoted to her position. Anthony Zoccal, Registered Sanitarian, will take over Mark’s former duties.

Vital Statistics

All births and deaths that occur in the County are registered with the Vital Statistics office of the Geauga County Health District. In the year 2003 there were 1,100 births, 558 females and 542 males. The majority of the births were at UHHS Geauga Regional, 139 were at Middlefield Care Center and there were 11 home births.

There were 694 deaths recorded in Geauga County for 2003, a decrease of 18 from 2002. The Health District’s Medical Director reviews all death certificates and compiles statistics listing the most common causes of death.

**2003 Most Common Causes of Death**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer (Lung Cancer Higest)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung Disease</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumonia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certificates copies of birth and death records are available in our office or by mail for $15.00 each. Uncertified copies are no longer available.

Solid Waste Program

Although there are no active landfills in Geauga County, the Health District has an aggressive and proactive solid waste program. The solid waste program in 2003 conducted 301 inspections on scrap tire generators, small infectious waste generators, large infectious waste generators, infectious waste treatment facilities, closed landfills, compost sites and solid waste transporters.

Again, as in the previous year, emphasis was put on the enforcement of solid waste laws pertaining to mosquito control and scrap tire generators in 2003. This is particularly important due to the fact that West Nile Fever which is a mosquito borne virus first detected in Ohio in 2001 had erupted in dozens of reported cases in neighboring counties in 2002 and 3 cases in Geauga County that year. The Health District responded to an increased number of citizen reports of scrap tires and mosquito breeding sites. This indicates that people are becoming more aware of the fact that unless properly attended, scrap tires can become exceptionally efficient mosquito breeding sites. There are a total of 50 registered scrap tire generators in Geauga County, and they are inspected annually to ensure that the scrap tires are stored and disposed of in accordance with Ohio laws.

There were two solid waste collection events held in Geauga County for scrap tires, appliances and hazardous waste material. These collection events helped to reduce the amount of solid and hazardous waste material that may have been discarded illegally. Some of the waste materials collected included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Weight/Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scrap Tires</td>
<td>6400 tires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances</td>
<td>217 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint &amp; bi-products</td>
<td>102 cu. yd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propane tanks &amp; cylinders</td>
<td>320 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>64 gallons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2002, the Geauga-Trimble Solid Waste Management District purchased land inside Trimble County to build a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center. After construction of this facility it will operate several days a week from Spring through Fall. This should make disposal of household hazardous wastes safer and much more convenient for residents of both Geauga and Trimble counties.

Food Program Division
The Personal Health Services Division provides a wide variety of programs and services with one goal in mind – promoting and maintaining the health of the Geauga County community. This division consists of professional dietitians, nurses, and secretaries working together to serve the residents of Geauga County. We are also proud to work with other groups and agencies in the county to improve and enhance our service delivery system.

In addition to the clinical services outlined here, the staff provides information on relevant health issues to community agencies and Geauga county citizens who request such information. We maintain health statistics for state reports and monitor local needs and service gaps through on-going community involvement.

Children’s Services
The Personal Health Services division offers many programs that are specifically for children in the community. We hold well child clinics in Chardon and Middlefield where the nurses perform health screenings, test for hemoglobin and lead tests, and provide health information regarding normal growth and development and age-related issues. The child is examined by a physician or a pediatric nurse practitioner, and immunizations are given, if needed. Charges for the well-child exam are on a sliding fee scale, based on family size and income. A monthly schedule of Children’s immunizations clinics provides free immunization to county residents.

Public health nurses provide Newborn home visits to newly delivered mothers in Geauga County to ensure a healthy transition to the family. These visits are voluntary and consist of a health screening for the mother and the infant, routine infant blood testing when needed, and information about infant care and local resources for the family. The nurses also perform free pregnancy testing for walk-ins at the Chardon office.

The purpose is to encourage early prenatal care and provide information on pregnancy related issues to mothers-to-be.

The Geauga County Health District serves as the local contact point for families receiving services through the Bureau of Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMH) program. This program is administered by the Ohio Department of Health and provides early diagnoses and treatment of covered pediatric conditions for children whose families qualify financially. The public health nurse assists the family with application and renewal procedures, assesses the child and family regularly to assure comprehensive service delivery, and provides referral to other community services and specialists, when indicated. These nursing services are provided in the comfort and privacy of the child’s home at the parent’s convenience.

Adult Services
The public health nurses work closely with staff from the Geauga Department on Aging at the various senior centers throughout the county to offer blood pressure checks and hearing screenings free of charge. In the fall, we offer flu shot clinics at these sites, as well as in assisted living and nursing homes, and at our office in Chardon. In 2003, the Geauga Department on Aging and the Geauga County Health District began a collaboration to bring dietitian services to Geauga county seniors at various sites in the area. The dietitian gives regular group presentations at the senior centers and individual nutrition counseling as needed.

The nursing staff works closely with the infection control personnel at UHHS Geauga Regional Hospital and with local physicians for communicable disease control and surveillance. We monitor disease patterns and trends in an effort to provide early identification of outbreaks or unusual incidents. This process includes regular contact with school nurses in Geauga County for information sharing and service updates. In small schools without nurses, the public health nurses provide health screenings, health record reviews, and referrals.

One of the mandated functions of the local health department is tuberculosis control. A public health nurse acts as TB registrar for the county and is responsible for tracking any person in the county with active TB and also does follow up with TB exposures and positive reactions.

The adult clinic is held every Friday morning at our office providing immunizations, blood pressure checks, and TB testing for persons over the age of 18 years old. Persons can be tested for HIV, the danger of fire, or the pain of death. The partnership formed in a community demonstrating a need is public health in its purest form. Thank you to all in the community who turned this concept into a lifesaving reality.

Injury Prevention: Fire Safety in the Amish Community

2003 was an exceptional year for seeing the results of the infrastructure that has been built over the last three years of the grant process from the modest grant amount of $26,666.00. Over 500 Amish children received fire safety education per the approved classroom curriculum taught by the local fire department. There were 1,500 Middlefield Amish were in attendance at the first annual Amish Safety Fair. A total of eight coalition meetings and 22 presentations to 687 Amish families benefited this community.

In 2003 in the Amish communities served by the Middlefield, Burton, Troy and Parkman Fire Departments responded to 235 fire related calls. 53 of the calls or 22% were related to smoke and chimney fires. 71 of the 235 calls or 30% were related to one or two family dwellings. No fatalities were reported from any of the homes that had received a smoke detector from the local grant monies.

It has become apparent that there exists a lack of awareness about carbon monoxide poisoning. Many homes and Amish trade shops had no CO detection devices. As a result we have begun distributing CO detectors to those families without protection.

The carbon monoxide education coloring book designed for the Amish community was reviewed for accuracy in content and pictures by the community. An improved book is being considered for a federal fire safety program in the Amish communities across the United States.

The safer quality of life has been much appreciated by the Amish community. Paramedics making rescue calls distribute smoke detectors. CO educational awareness has increased in families that were not even aware of the lethal gas and its effects. Signs at local fire departments serve as reminders to check batteries and batteries are available at the local fire departments in the Amish community. The WIC program has been distributing smoke detectors to the Amish women at the WIC clinic visits and the public health nurses have reported back to the grant about homes and schools without detectors.

When the grant was initially written and presented to the Amish community the goals from the grant and the far-reaching impact of the program could have never been envisioned. However, with the collaboration of so few so many will prevent the tragedies of fire, or the pain of death. The partnership formed in a community demonstrating a need is public health in its purest form. Thank you to all in the community who turned this concept into a lifesaving reality.