Geauga County General Health District

Health District Advisory Council
Composed of chairpersons of Township Trustees and Mayors of Villages and Cities, oversees the appointment of Board of Health members and reviews reports and finances of the Health District. Frank Gihla, President; Michael Brown, Secretary.

Board of Health
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.

J. David Benenati, President
Chester Township, Term Expires 2011

Dr. Donald Bowers
Burton Township, Term Exp. 2010

Melanie Eppich
Chester Township, Term Expires 2012

Christine Livers
Russell Township, Term Exp 2014

Timothy Goergen
Hambden Township, Term Expires 2013

Robert K. Weisdack, RS, MA, MPH
Health Commissioner / Environmental Health Director

Vital Statistics
(440) 279-1902

Birth Certificates
Death Certificates
Burial Permits
Registrar
Fiscal Coordinator
Computer Systems Support
Bio-terrorism & Emergency Planning

Personal Health Services
(440) 279-1950

Adult Immunization Clinics
BCHM Visits
Child Immunization Clinics
Communicable Disease Surveillance & Investigations
Health Assessment
Influenza (Flu) Clinics
Health Promotion & Education
HIV & AIDS Education
Maternal & Newborn Home Visits
Senior Clinics
TB Testing & Surveillance
Walk-in Pregnancy Testing
Well Child Clinics
Women, Infant’s & Children (WIC)

Environmental Health Division
(440) 279-1900

Animal Bite Investigation
County Camp & RV Park Inspections
Manufactured Home Park Inspections
Nuisance Complaint Investigations
Plumbing Permits & Inspections
Private Water Well Permits & Inspections
Radics Prevention & Surveillance
Retail Food Establishment Inspections
Restaurant / Food Service Inspections
Temporary & Mobile Food Service Inspections
School Environmental Inspections
Semi-Public Sewage Certificates & Inspections
Septage Land Application Site Inspections
Septic Tank Cleaner Permits & Inspections
Sewage Treatment Permits & Inspections
For Sale of Property Permits & Inspections
Solid & Infectious Waste Inspections
Solid Waste & Water Hauler Truck Permits & Inspections
Swimming Pool Inspections
Tattoo & Body Piercing Permits & Inspections
Vending Machine Inspections

Administration

Robert K. Moritz, M.D.
Medical Director

J. Bradley Moritz, M.D.
Medical Director

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A Note from the Health Commissioner

In light of recent recession, we are fortunate to be able to function effectively and provide quality public health services to the residents of Geauga County. Through attrition and two layoffs, we have reduced the workforce from 34 to 27 staff members, while at the same time experiencing an increase demand for public health services because of the economic turmoil many of our residents have experienced. The downturn in the economy has decreased environmental services as indicated by the reduced number of sewage and water well permits issued. We have had to do more with less and will continue to do so. However, we are very aware of the fact that we cannot, and will not, compromise the health of community as cost cutting measures are being considered and implemented.

Our biggest challenge in 2009 was the H1N1 influenza vaccination campaign. This incident has caused many health departments to rethink their ability to handle large mass immunization programs. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) placed stringent limitations on vaccine handling and residents were forced to wait patiently until adequate supplies of vaccine became available. We faced additional barriers to vaccine availability as local health departments were allocated vaccine based on supply and supply-sharing local hospitals. A great deal of work had to be done on short notice; this resulted in scheduling clinics at the last minute to ensure adequate vaccine was available. The staff put in long hours, but persisted to vaccinate over 12,000 of our high-risk residents in just two months. This endeavor has provided us with great insight and knowledge in the event we need it in the future.

A national survey conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute released in January 2010 ranked Ohio counties health on several factors, including the environment, socioeconomic status, clinical care, and individual health behaviors. Geauga County ranked second in health outcomes, which indicates how healthy a county is, and third in health factors, which indicates factors influencing the health of the county. These rankings are a very good indicator of the real public health effort put forward by the public health agencies throughout the whole state of Ohio. Public health is something that has an effect on the entire population and needs to be an ongoing endeavor so everyone can benefit from a lifestyle, which produces good health.

Robert K. Weisdack
Health Commissioner

Visit Us Online at http://www.geaugacountyhealth.org
Residential Sewage Treatment

The Geauga County Health District regulates household sewage treatment systems for one, two, and three family residences in Geauga County. Approximately 70% of the homes in the county utilize individual household sewage systems. In 2009, the Health District issued 350 permits for sewage systems, including new homes and replacement systems for existing homes. The types of systems permitted included:

- 167 Septic tanks followed by leach trenches
- 2 Pre-treatment followed by leach trenches
- 12 Septic tank to drip distribution
- 2 Pre-treatment to drip distribution
- 99 NPDES/EPA permit to discharge
- 29 Septic tank/pretreatment to a mound
- 10 Miscellaneous
- 5 Total Permits

A sewage permit must be obtained from the Health District prior to the installation or alteration of the sewage system. Prior to issuance of a permit, the Health District staff conducts a site evaluation of the property. All lots in new subdivisions must be evaluated and approved before any sewage permits are issued. Sewage systems are inspected at the time of installation to assure compliance with the sewage rules.

All homes sold in Geauga County are required to have a point of sale inspection of the sewage system by the Health District. This assures that the system is functioning properly prior to prospective buyers occupying the home.

The department maintains an active nuisance complaint program for sewage and other complaints. Written and signed complaints submitted to this office are investigated. If the complaint is justified, orders will be issued to abate the nuisance.

This office licenses and inspects semi-public sewage systems that treat less than 25,000 gallons of sewage effluent per day. This includes about 140 aerated commercial systems and 550 commercial septic tank systems.

Private Water Systems

The fresh water supply found in the rock formations beneath us provide the majority of the water we need for everyday use. The Private Water System Program is designed to protect this vital resource as well as helping to assure that our drinking water is safe. Water well drillers and contractors must be licensed by the State of Ohio and their work inspected by the Health Department to assure compliance with the regulations for water systems installation. The State Health Department is currently in the process of revising these regulations.

Permits are required to drill new wells and to alter existing wells. Upon completion, the work is inspected and a water sample is taken to test for the presence of bacteria. If bacteria is found, which occurs about 20% of the time, the well is disinfected with common household bleach and then re-sampled. If this process fails to remove the bacteria, further investigation may be required to solve the bacteria problem. Depending on the circumstances, a treatment system may need to be installed.

Old or abandoned wells that are no longer in use must be properly sealed in order to prevent potential ground water contamination. Permits are required for this procedure as well.

In addition to the bacteria sampling we can also perform scans for numerous chemicals and other potential contaminants through the use of a portable Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer. Although it is not required, residents may want to consider having this scan performed in order to provide background data on the well.

In 2009, The Geauga County Health District issued 110 well permits and conducted 282 water well inspections. For more information on the Private Water Systems Program please visit the Health District Web site.
Public Health Emergency Preparedness

The Geauga County General Health District continues to be actively involved in emergency preparedness planning for our entire county. We coordinate our plans with the other Northeast Ohio health departments, hospitals, emergency services, law enforcement, fire departments, schools, the American Red Cross and other related agencies. This planning prepares staff for responding to a wide range of emergencies that can occur: hurricanes, other severe weather conditions, environmental emergencies caused due to natural disasters, such as the H1N1 Flu Pandemic, and mass casualties. In 2009, the Health District staff was involved in the following projects:

- Preparedness preparedness information sessions to community groups
- Distributed over nearly 12,000 H1N1 vaccinations to the residents of Geauga and surrounding counties
- Distributed Potassium Iodide to residents and businesses of Thompson Ohio
- Tested our emergency plans by participating in emergency seminars, workshops, tabletops and drills with community partners across Northeast Ohio
- Provided the health district staff with incident management training
- Continued recruiting Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers for Geauga County
- Purchased supplies to establish an emergency vaccination or medication distribution clinic
- Increased the level of security in Building #6 for health department staff, vaccines and other crucial supplies.
- Continued meeting with regional and local partners to establish regional and local plans to include:
  - First Responder Distribution Plan
  - Specials Needs Population Plan
  - Mass Vaccination Plan
  - Antiviral / Countermeasure Distribution Plan
  - Continuity of Operations Plan
  - Kenton LSD Pandemic Flu Plan

Geauga County Health District Communicable Disease Policy

Being prepared for any emergency, whether it is a house fire, power outage, snowstorm, disease pandemic or terrorist attack requires planning. We urge our members of the Geauga County community to take the time to work out a disaster plan and to gather supplies to keep in your home and workplace. It is important to include your household members in this plan so that everyone will know what to do, where to go, and how to communicate in an emergency.

Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, is a fundamental part of Ohio's public health system and is intended to reach income eligible pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to the age of five with a health or nutrition risk. The Geauga WIC Program provides nutritious foods, nutrition education and referral services to prenatal and pediatric health care and human service programs. From June to October, the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program supports local farmers by offering Ohio grown fresh fruits and vegetables to our participants. Breastfeeding education and support is provided by an experienced lactation consultat. An emphasis is placed on the benefits of breastfeeding to all participating pregnant women. In addition, breastfeeding aids such as breast pumps may be provided to eligible mothers returning to work or school. Infant formulas are also available as needed.

Nutrition education and counseling is provided by the licensed dietitians on staff. Special attention is being given to address the increase in childhood obesity by providing nutritional and behavioral interventions. An emphasis is placed on the benefits of breastfeeding to all participating pregnant women. In addition, breastfeeding aids such as breast pumps may be provided to eligible mothers returning to work or school. Infant formulas are also available as needed.

Recycling drop-off sites scattered through Geauga County townships included 1,589.11 tons of recyclables.

Food Safety Division

The goal of the Food Safety Division of the Geauga County Health District is to ensure that wholesome food is provided to the public. Locations that sell food to the public such as restaurants, grocery stores, mobile food stands, temporary food stands, and vending machines must fulfill the requirements set forth in the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code. A license is purchased from the Geauga County Health District and inspections are routinely conducted to ensure compliance with the rules of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code. Inspection frequency is based upon state law and determined by risk classification and areas served of the facility. Areas addressed during an inspection include staff hygiene, food handling, physical facilities, and general sanitation practices.

In addition to educating the operators of the food facilities during inspections and completing several personalized consultations, the department offered a ServSafe seminar on food safety. We held the ServSafe seminar on May 20th and 21st and over thirty people attended this class. This class is designed to give restaurant staff and managers the knowledge to make their food establishments a safer place for their customers. The staff also provided food safety education to the public and answered questions about food safety. When a food borne outbreak is suspected, it is investigated, food and stool specimens are collected, and laboratory tests are conducted.

Each inspector in this division takes a minimum of eighteen hours of accredited continuing education each year and routinely works with the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Agriculture for updates on rule changes and state and nationwide recalls of food products. The Food Safety Division staff also attends The Northeast Ohio Food Roundtable meetings where area health departments along with state inspectors and food safety experts work to ensure that food is safe and free from contamination.

Rabies in Geauga County

The Geauga County Health District continues to take an active role in monitoring the presence of rabies in the county as well as participating in efforts to keep it from spreading. Throughout the year we have collected specimens of various wildlife species including: raccoons, skunks, fox, and coyotes and sent them to The Ohio Department of Health for testing. In addition to testing wildlife we also monitor bite incidents involving household pets. Due to the fact that rabies is almost always fatal if left untreated, anyone who is bitten or scratched by a domestic or wild animal should seek immediate medical attention as well as reporting the incident to the Health Department.

The most problematic situations are those involving bats. Bat bites can sometimes occur undetected. If a bat is found in the home, every effort should be made to safely capture it and bring it to the Health Department for testing. The only wild animal testing positive for rabies in 2009 was a bat.

For the past several years we have assisted the Ohio Department of Health and USDA Wildlife Services in distributing oral bat rabies vaccine baits throughout the county, targeting the raccoon population. The baits are dropped from low flying aircraft over the more rural areas and are distributed through the more densely populated areas. This process has proven quite effective thus far in preventing the spread of rabies throughout the raccoon population in Geauga County.

There were 184 bite incidents reported in 2009. None of the animals tested in these incidents showed signs of rabies. There were however 5 persons who received the post exposure treatments because the animal did not exist or were not available for testing.

The best line of defense against rabies is education and good old fashioned common sense. Stay away from wild animals, strays and domestic pets that you are unsure of. The Geauga County Health District has educational materials available and can answer any questions you may have concerning rabies.

Solid Waste Program

The Geauga County Health District works in cooperation with the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste District to inspect scrap tire generators, large and small infectious waste generators, closed landfills, compost sites, solid waste landfills and hazardous waste generators. Emphasis has been placed on the enforcement of solid waste laws concerning scrap tire storage. The Geauga County Health District and Geauga County Solid Waste District are required to be in accordance with all the rules and regulations of the State of Ohio. The Geauga County Health District is required to ensure that the scrap tires are stored and disposed of in accordance with the rules.

In 2009, the Geauga- Trumbull Solid Waste District held an appliance collection and a hazardous waste collection event. Townships also held tire collection events. In all, he district collected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twp. Scrap Tire Collections</td>
<td>7619 tires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veh. Collections</td>
<td>1,10,490 tires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles recycled</td>
<td>2,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>121,494 lbs (87% recycled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>1,864 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antifreeze</td>
<td>83,282 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batteries</td>
<td>660 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>151 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2010 an appliance collection event is scheduled for April 17th from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Geauga County Engineers yard at 1250 Middlefield Road. The Geauga County Solid Waste District operates the Hazardous Waste Recycling Facility at 5138 Enterprise Blvd. in Warren, Ohio. This facility is open to Geauga County residents on Wednesdays from 10:00am to 6:00pm from May 5, 2010 to September 29, 2010. It is also open to Geauga County residents three Saturday mornings in 2010, including May 1, June 5, and August 7, from 9:00am to 12:00 noon.

The Geauga County Health District has educational materials available and can answer any questions you may have concerning rabies.
The Personal Health Services Division of the Geauga County Health District is responsible for maintaining a healthy and prepared community through various programs. Our focus is on prevention, and many of our services are offered at different locations throughout the county, as well as limited home visits. The following is a summary of our programs and those who are served through them.

**2010 Children’s Immunization Clinics**

Free to Geauga County residents regardless of income. Out of county residents are charged $5.00 per child.

**Chardon**
Geauga County Health District
470 Center St., Building B
1st Wednesday — 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM

**Chardon Evening**
Geauga County Health District
470 Center St., Building B
2nd Thursday (except November) — 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

**Middlefield**
First United Methodist Church
14999 S. State St. (State Route 608)
2nd Wednesday — 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM

**Middlefield Evening**
First United Methodist Church
14999 S. State St. (State Route 608)
3rd Thursday — 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

**Newbury**
Grace Evangelical Bible Church
14951 Auburn Rd.
4th Wednesday — 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM

**Troy**
Troy Community Center
1350 Main Market (US Route 422)
3rd Wednesday — 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM
Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct., Dec. only

**Friday Morning Clinic**
Adult Immunizations
TB Testing
Blood Pressure Screening
Geauga County Health District
70 Center St., Building B
Fridays — 8:30 am to 11:00 am
There are no clinics on public holidays

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**Children’s Services**

**Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMH):** is an Ohio Department of Health (ODH) program with the goal of assuring that children with special health care needs receive comprehensive, coordinated care. Public health nurses act as the local contact for families and provide early identification, evaluation, and referral for qualifying children from birth to 21 years of age. The family receives culturally competent services from public health nurses, which includes child assessments, developing care plans, health promotion, and advocacy. In 2009, the public health nurses made 84 home visits to children who qualified for this program.

**Immunization Clinics for Children:** The Personal Health Services (PHS) division holds children’s immunizations clinics at Geauga County health centers. These are walk-in clinics that require no appointment. Immunizations are free of charge to Geauga County children. Ohio Department of Health (ODH) supplies vaccines for these clinics. In 2009, we held 69 clinics where we administered 5,023 immunizations to 2,058 children.

**Lead Program:** The Personal Health Services (PHS) division and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) collaborate to provide prevention and remediation services to children with Elevated Blood Lead (EBL). Public health nurses conduct case management activities, including contacting families of children with elevated lead levels, providing educational recommendations. This information is shared with ODH. Lead level screenings are provided to children at well child clinics and individuals in high-risk situations. In 2009, the nurses completed 101 lead screenings.

**Maternal/Newborn Home Visiting:** Public health nurses visit new mothers and their infants. The home visits are voluntary and free of charge; they include an evaluation of the mother’s recovery, assessment of the infant’s early growth and development, information on a variety of preventive health issues for the family, and referrals to other community agency and resources. Funding for this service is made available through the Geauga County Family First Council, who administers a grant from the Ohio Department of Health called “Help Me Grow.” In 2009, the nurses completed 230 home visits.

**SIDS Home Visits:** The health district provides public health nurses that visit families who have lost an infant unexpectedly. During these visits, nurses provide support, information, and referral services to bereaved families, providing the opportunity to express their feelings in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

**Vision Program:** The health district partners with the Prevent Blindness Ohio to provide their Vision Service Plan (VSP) to qualifying families in Geauga County, including those without insurance who do not qualify for federal aid. Public health nurses can identify a family in need and arrange for this service. This plan provides an eye examination by an licensed optometrist who can prescribe glasses, contact lenses, vision therapy, or vision treatment. In 2009, 239 children seen and 182 VSP referrals made.

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**Well Child Services:** The health district provides well child clinics twice each month in Middlefield for children whose families are uninsured and meet certain financial guidelines. Public health nurses provide health screening to children for development, dental, lead, anemia, vision, hearing, and nutrition. Health education is provided to family members. A physical examination is performed by a licensed physician and public health nurses give immunizations. This service is supported by funding from the Child and Family Health Services grant administered by the Ohio Department of Health that served 349 children in 2009.

**Adult Services**

**Communicable Disease Investigation:** The Personal Health Services (PHS) division provides surveillance of communicable diseases reported in Geauga County in compliance with the Ohio Department of Health Infectious Disease reporting requirements and CDC recommendations. The disease surveillance specialist and public health nurses perform investigations in the community who qualified for a public health threat due to their communicability or virulence. PHS collaborates with the Environmental Health (EH) division when a food borne illness outbreak is suspect. In addition, PHS division provides information and data collection for any possible or confirmed vector-borne disease in collaboration with EH. Included in this category of diseases is West Nile virus, Lyme Disease, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, to name just a few. In 2009, the health district investigated 143 reports of communicable disease.

**Immunization/Blood Pressure Clinics for Adults:** The Personal Health Services (PHS) division holds clinics every Friday at the health district office for adult immunizations and blood pressure screenings by public health nurses. Seasonal flu vaccine clinics are held at different sites throughout the county. Blood pressure screenings are provided at no charge, while the cost of adult immunizations is determined by the Board of Health based on the cost plus a modest administration charge. In 2009, the nursing division administered 323 adult immunizations, 2,344 flu shots, and 175 blood pressure readings. The health district directed tremendous resources towards the mass influenza A vaccination effort in 2009. The health district conducted 50 mass vaccination clinics at fire departments, public schools, the PHS office, and other locations administering 11,397 shots.

**Maternity Survey:** The Personal Health Services sends a representative to the annual maternity licensure survey of the local hospital and birthing center that is conducted by the Ohio Department of Health. The Board of Health is presented with the survey results to review for approval or denial of re-licensure for each of these facilities. The PHS division is also responsible for investigating any complaints received regarding the maternity facilities.

**Senior Services:** The health district sent public health nurses to provide services for 400 adult day care clients at the Geauga Multi-purpose Senior Center. This is funded by the Title III/Community Block Grant managed by the Department on Aging. Nurses give presentations on various topics to the general senior population at the senior center on a weekly basis. There were 959 seniors in attendance at 43 presentations at the senior center during 2009.

**Tuberculosis Control:** In accordance with Ohio law, the health district promotes Tuberculosis (TB) control and containment in Geauga County by screening high-risk populations, contact investigation, maintaining a register of positive reactors, and following through with suitable treatment for appropriate individuals. Nurses perform routine TB tests at the health district office during walk-in visits at residential facilities. In 2009, the PHS nurses administered 288 TB tests, and had 4 TB positive reactors.