

## Environmental Health

### Radon

The Two Rivers Public Health Department Radon Program works through both grant funding and an internal testing program. Radon is a radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer when a person is exposed over a long period of time. If the person is an active tobacco user, the likelihood of developing lung cancer is increased. Nebraskans are frequently exposed to high levels of radon and approximately 50% of the homes in the Two Rivers district will test above the recommended level of radon.

#### What is Radon

- Radon is an invisible, odorless, and tasteless gas that is naturally occurring and can be found in homes posing a serious health risk.
- Breathing radon gas is the second-leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking, and is responsible for approximately 21,000 deaths each year in the United States.
- Radon Levels are measured in picocuries per liter (pCi/L) and homes with levels above 4.0 pCi/L can increase the risk of developing lung cancer.
- Nebraska, because of its soil, has a very high incidence of radon, over Half the homes that test in the state have levels that need to be mitigated.
- Percentages of houses that test high in your county:
  - Buffalo County 56%
  - Dawson County 37%
  - Franklin County 70%
  - Gosper County 51%
  - Harlan County 66%
  - Kearney County 62%
  - Phelps County 62%
- Testing for radon is the only way to know if it is present in your home.

# DISRUPTING THE PATHWAY TO VIOLENCE

Targeted violence can happen anywhere. Disrupting the Pathway to Violence aims to create safer communities by reducing barriers to reporting potential violence. There are a variety of reasons why behaviors of potential violence may go unreported, including fear, intimidation, language barriers, and trust. Utilizing a public health based approach, the program intends to address the potential barriers to reporting violence by training front-line organizations and community leaders on how to identify the signs of violence.

## Taking Action

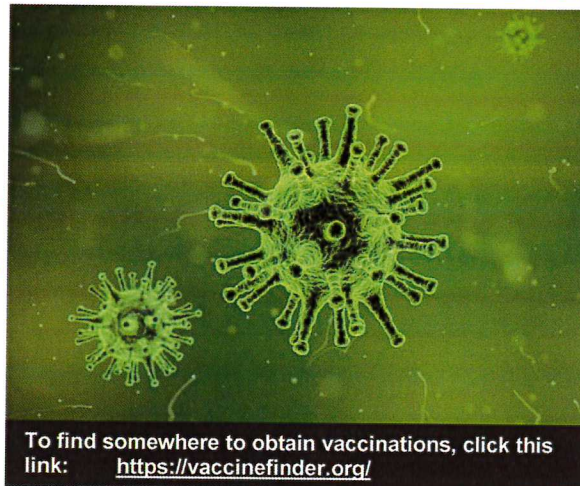
During the month of November TRPHD staff hosted a stakeholder meeting at the opportunity center in Lexington. During the meeting, stakeholders present expressed interest in forming a multi-disciplinary team to monitor potential violence in the Lexington community. During the coming months TRPHD will be assisting the community in forming a team and establishing a meeting schedule. Final preparations for a Kearney Violence Prevention Stakeholder meeting were made. The Kearney Violence Prevention Stakeholder Meeting will take place at the Kearney Public Library on December 10, 2018.

# Emergency Response

Emergency Response activities include developing and testing plans for responding to disasters in an effort to protect the Two Rivers Public Health Department district from health threats. Emergency Response also involves working closely with other agencies and organizations to best serve the citizens living in the Two Rivers Public Health Department district. Preparedness activities can inform the response time of the community to provide lifesaving help and resources to individuals who are in need. Through collaboration with community partners, clinics, hospitals, agencies, and organizations Two Rivers Public Health Department

During the month of November Two Rivers Public Health Department Emergency Response Coordinator Cody Samuelson appeared on NTV News at Noon to discuss emergency preparedness kits, just prior to the arrival of a winter storm. In early November Samuelson attended the regular meeting of the South Central Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee and his application into the group was accepted into the group during the meeting. During 2019 members of SCRLEPC are planning exercises that Samuelson will assist in designing.

Samuelson met with staff of Colonial Villa in Alma at their request to design and facilitate an exercisable to design a tabletop exercise and collaborate with community partners to put together a community tabletop exercise that will take place in December. The Harlan County Emergency Management are scheduled to participate in the exercise. Samuelson is also continuing his work as a member of the Kearney design team, a tabletop exercise will take place in December with the full-scale exercise to follow in January 2019. Samuelson



attended a tabletop exercise at Mary Lanning Hospital on Pandemic Influenza as well as a full-scale Pandemic Influenza the following week at the Adams County Fairgrounds. Samuelson has joined with regional Emergency Response Coordinators to design and exercise on Pandemic Influenza for the 2018-2019 fiscal year in addition to training put on by the State of Nebraska, a TRPHD full-scale Pandemic Influenza exercise will take place in January 2019.

Following a car versus bus in Kearney, Samuelson and Dustin Handley facilitated a post-incident hotwash at CHI Good Samaritan hospital for CHI Good Sam and Kearney Regional Medical Center to discuss how the response to the incident went and ways to improve future response.

During the month of November the TRPHD Emergency Response Program presented information on NTV News at Noon that reached their coverage area, and served as a presenter at a University of Nebraska Extension program at the Phelps County Ag Center for area high school freshmen.

# Disease Surveillance and Investigation

TRPHD is committed to promoting healthy communities, families and individuals through communicable disease surveillance. The intention of surveillance is to identify, promptly investigate, and monitor each incident of a reported communicable disease. Timely recognition of the disease within the community enables the proper implementation of prevention and control activities. This action can contain the spread of the disease before the illness becomes a major public health crisis.

A good surveillance system also identifies emerging infectious diseases, acts of bioterrorism, and potential influenza pandemics, as well as providing a basis for evaluating the outcome of public health prevention programs.

Influenza is currently circulating in the TRPHD jurisdiction, and we strongly recommend taking precautions to avoid the flu. Laboratory testing has confirmed that influenza A, Influenza B, H1N1, and H3N2 are circulating in the TRPHD jurisdiction.

- Preventing the Flu
- Get the flu vaccination
- Avoid close contact
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose
- Clean your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Practice other good health habits



TRPHD also conducts school absenteeism surveillance, which means schools report the number of students absent due to influenza-like illness. This provides a snapshot of influenza circulating in schools. Across the state of Nebraska at the end of November, absenteeism due to influenza-like illness was at 2.28%. School age children may miss school due to influenza, and miss valuable classroom time. Therefore, TRPHD strongly urges parents to consider the influenza vaccination. It is not too late to receive the vaccine.

TRPHD is also encouraging safe food handling ahead of the holiday season. Proper food handling, such as ensuring food is cooked to the correct temperature, is necessary to avoid certain diseases such as Salmonella and Campylobacter. During the holiday season, TRPHD generally sees more cases of gastrointestinal diseases associated with gatherings and improper heating/cooling of food. Some tips to ensure safe food handling are below:

- Cook raw beef, pork, lamb, steaks, and roasts to an internal temperature of 145 degrees Fahrenheit
- Cook ground beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and veal to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit
- Hot food be held at 140 degrees or warmer
- Cold food should be held at 40 degrees or colder
- Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours
- Place leftovers into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer



Move Kearney is an advocacy group based in Kearney NE. This group advocates for active transportation and complete streets policies. A complete streets policy requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for the users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. Active transportation encourages community members to commute in a way other than using a car, for example; biking to work, walking to the grocery store, and skateboarding to meet friends.

- Move Kearney promoted safe and accessible transport in the month of November by attending the YMCA Turkey Trot. Members of Move Kearney distributed a survey at the Turkey Trot for feedback on active transport in Kearney. TRPHD staff also collaborated with Buffalo County Community Partners in November, to increase collaboration across community partners in the space of active transport.

- Move Kearney always welcomes new members to join. Monthly meetings for Move Kearney are held on the second Thursday of every month, at 6:30 PM at the Kearney Public Library. Please feel free to contact the health department at 308-995-4778 for more information.

200+ surveys were distributed at this event – enabling Move Kearney to collect good data to inform a proposal to the city of Kearney.

# LIFESMILES DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

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November was a month many focused on being thankful. The LifeSmiles Dental Program had many things to give thanks for. We have amazing agencies, groups, individuals, and organizations who we partner with. We were able to connect with more potential partners seeking oral health services. We have an exceptionally dedicated team who have a passion for health as well as devotion for those we serve. We have an incredibly supportive health department and board who believe in the outreach we are providing in our district and how it effects community health outcomes. We have program participants who show gratitude for our services and keep us inspired to continue our work. Finally, we are grateful for those in our community who believe in the value of good oral health and contribute to our program which helps support our outreach.

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November's outreach consisted of regular dental prevention services at schools, pre-schools, Head Starts, long-term care facilities and WIC clinics.

December's activities will include continuance of prevention services, and exploration of sustainability options for preservation and growth of program outreach.

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In November, the LifeSmiles team provided services at 28 clinics located with our partners in long-term care, 8 clinic visits were held at WIC sites, 2 schools and 1 preschool received dental preventive services, and 10 school education presentations were given.



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Dustin Handley and Samuelson continued their work as members of the Kearney Community exercise design team, a tabletop exercise will take place in December with the full-scale exercise to follow in January 2019. Handley and Samuelson attended a tabletop exercise at Mary Lanning Hospital on Pandemic Influenza as well as a full-scale Pandemic Influenza the following week at the Adams County Fairgrounds.

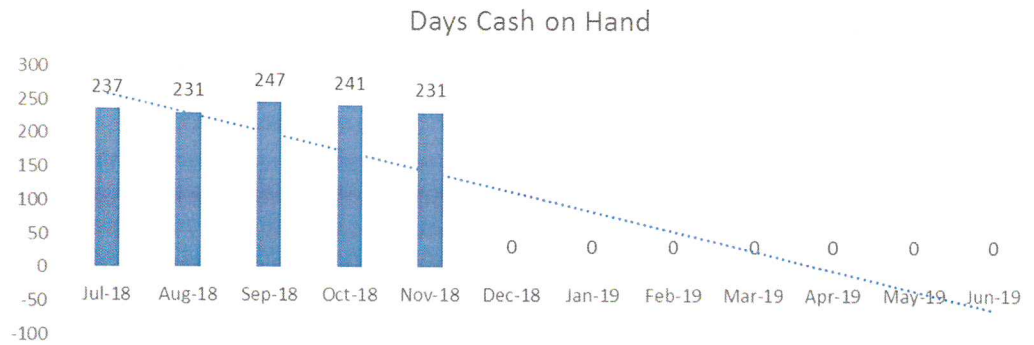
**Following a car versus bus in Kearney, Handley and Samuelson facilitated a post-incident hotwash at CHI Good Samaritan hospital for CHI Good Sam and Kearney Regional Medical Center to discuss how the response to the incident went and ways to improve future response.**

Handley, Samuelson, and Assistant Director Laura Steele attended the annual meeting of the Central Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps. During the meeting Handley acknowledged the group for their efforts and informed the group that he will be departing the TRIMRS Coordinator position with Samuelson acting as interim TRIMRS Coordinator. Handley invested time preparing and editing a contract between the CNMRC and TRPHD prior to his departure. The contract allows for CNMRC to be compensated for their work according to work plan agenda items stipulated in the contract.

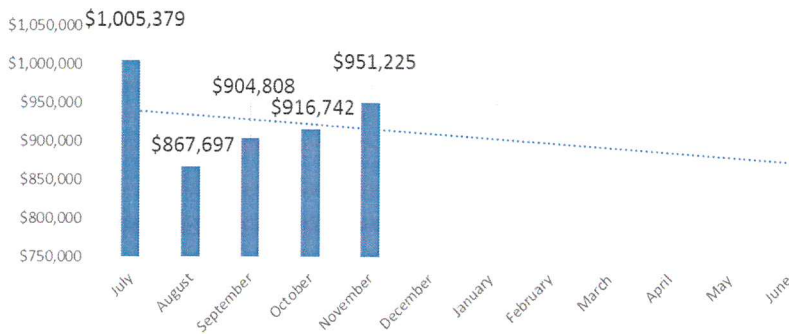
**TRI-CITIES MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM**

# NOVEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

Two Rivers fund balance on November 30<sup>th</sup> was \$738,008. We have 231 days cash on hand.



## Current Assets



Current assets are at an estimate of \$951,225; an increase of \$34,483 from October. This is due to an increase in receivables for the month of November.

Current Liabilities have decreased in the month of November by about \$8,142. This is due to a less amount of payables entered in the last week of November for payment.



A/R and A/P this month are both operating efficiently. We are still awaiting payment from DHHS for the Radon 2018 program of \$3000 that is over 90+ days past due. We have sent in our documentation for the period of this grant towards the end of September, so we will see when the payment will be processed for the past due amount. Same thing applies for West Nile Virus for \$2,453.00 that was issued in May 2018, and for 1422 Chronic Disease for \$72,001.23 that was issued in June 2018.

**UPDATE:** Invoice for Radon (\$3000) and West Nile (\$2,453) are being investigated through DHHS. They should have an answer for us by December when these invoices will be processed for payment. As for 1422 Chronic Disease (\$72,001.23) we are still waiting for an answer on when this invoice will be processed for payment. We just issued another invoice for this program in the amount of \$83,799.09 on 11/14/18.

### New grants and increased revenue:

Radon 2019 goes from Nov 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019 for \$3,000 with \$3,000 In-Kind Matching.



## REAL IMPACT

Maria Barocio is the Community Health Worker at the health department. In this role, she is out in the communities we serve every day, providing health education and resources—and serving as a resource 'hub' herself.

During the month of November, she worked at the Life Smiles Dental Program at Lexington WIC site, Holdrege WIC site, as well as partnered with Dr. Carranza, and Dr. Hohman to get services for individuals in need. Maria assisted in connecting people to services such as Intelliride, which provides transportation for some families who have medical appointments, and other services like diabetes classes, nutrition classes, immunization, WIC, Dentist, food bank. She will also call and remind patients of their appointments.

### Administrative Notes

Dustin Handley has submitted his resignation from the Healthcare Coalition Coordinator as of 11/1/18. His last day of employment is on 11/30/18

Effective immediately – applications have been received for the HCC Coordinator position. Interviews have been scheduled for this position.

First round interviews have been completed, and second round interviews are almost complete. Will have a possible candidate by the New Year for the Community Health Nurse Position.

### Contact Us

Give us a call for more information

#### **Two Rivers Public Health Department**

##### **Holdrege Office:**

701 4th Ave., Suite 1 Holdrege, NE 68949

**Phone Number:** (888) 669-7154

##### **Kearney Office:**

3715 29th Ave., Suite A2 Kearney, NE 68845

Visit us on the web at [www.trphd.org](http://www.trphd.org)

Two Rivers Public Health Department

November 2018

Monthly Newsletter

  
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Jeremy Eschliman, Director