

TRPHD



Two Rivers Public Health Department Monthly Newsletter

February 2019

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.

TRPHD increased the distribution of test kits dramatically over the month of February. This was accomplished by new Community Health Nurse Susan Puckett and Assistant Director Laura Steele appearing on NTV to demonstrate how to use a test kit, a strategic Facebook Ad campaign, and word of mouth. TRPHD is able to provide test kits to community members at a better price than other locations and help guide those testing through the process.

Community Health Worker Collaborative

Community Health Workers play a key role in helping the public receive the proper health care. Often Community Health Workers (CHWs) help clients navigate the health system in order to connect those who need health care to resources. Two Rivers has created a CHW Collaborative so that that Community Health Workers are aware of the services available to clients. The other goal of the collaborative is to provide continuing education to community health workers to help better serve the community.

Two Rivers Public Health Department is actively planning 2 CHW Collaborative meetings to be held in Kearney with representatives from UNMC Lincoln. These meetings will provide continuing education credit, funding for travel for the CHWs, and food during the program. These programs will likely be held in early 2019 and the summer of 2019.

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

In February the Violence Intervention program worked on organizing a training, by the UNL Public Policy Center, for the Lexington Safety Resource Team so they will be able to take next steps in handling community cases. This will take place sometime in March. The Kearney Violence Intervention stakeholders will meet to establish an official team.

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 has the ability to assist with coordinating a collaborative response to emergencies.

During the month of February backup Emergency Response Coordinator Cody Samuelson attended the quarterly meeting of the South Central Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee (SCRLEPC). During the meeting it was discussed that Samuelson would work with the Phelps County Emergency Management Agency and Region 17 Emergency Management Agency to plan a table-top exercise to be held in Harlan County. TRPHD will make it an emphasis to invite community members in Alma, Harlan County, and Franklin County to participate in the training exercise.

Samuelson is also working with regional Emergency Response Coordinators to plan meetings for the revision of the Emergency Response Plan and other 2018-2019 grant work plan items. There will be several March meetings to address each of those needs. Going forward Katherine Mulligan will be expanding work in the Emergency Response Program and Samuelson will continue to assist.

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. The Data Surveillance program provides an essential service to both our communities and their individual members. By interviewing citizens who have been identified with active communicable diseases, we are able to gather important information about their signs and symptoms, educate about how best to prevent transmission to others, identify people who may have already been exposed, and ultimately to prevent an outbreak of the disease in the community. These activities are always handled with complete confidentiality of private information at the top of our priorities.

Noroviruses are one of the illnesses your community health nurse tracks. Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea. People of all ages can get infected and sick with norovirus. Norovirus spreads easily. People with norovirus illness can shed billions of norovirus particles. And only a few virus particles can make other people sick. You can get norovirus from having direct contact with an infected person, consuming contaminated food or water, or touching contaminated surfaces and then putting your unwashed hands in your mouth. You can get norovirus illness many times in your life because there are many different types of noroviruses. Infection with one type may not protect you against other types. It is possible to develop immunity to (protection against) specific types. But it is not known exactly how long immunity lasts. This may explain why so many people of all ages get infected during norovirus outbreaks. Your best strategy for prevention? Wash your hands before preparing or eating food, after toileting, and before touching your mouth, eyes, or nose!

During the past month, three cases of norovirus outbreaks were identified, contained, and resolved in our service area. When norovirus is identified in a community living facility it requires a rapid response for the affected buildings to protect their residents. We are grateful to the hard working staff who were able to implement the necessary isolation and disinfecting procedures quickly to aid in their facility's rapid recovery.

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 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.

Dawson County Rooted In Relationships

The Dawson County Rooted in Relationship Group met on February 19th, 2019. TRPHD presented a fiscal report, and secured a Zoom account for RiR use. Pyramid Coaches will be having their monthly meetings on the last Tuesday of the month starting at 4:00. Patti has scheduled the reoccurring meeting. Discussion included ideas for using Zoom for stakeholder meetings so that additional members from other communities could attend.

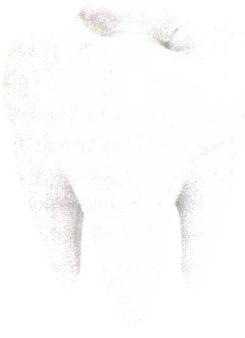
Two Pyramid Parenting Classes are being well attended with 5 attending each class. Child care is being provided by one provider for each class. The classes are being held at the Lexington United Methodist Church and in Gothenburg at the United Methodist Church. The classes are one hour classes that occur once a week for 6 weeks. One additional class will be held in Cozad in the future.

Week of the Young Child: The movie "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" will be provided in Lexington on April 13th, 2019. The movie has a capacity of 160 and will cost \$225. Admission will be one can of food (to be donated to the Lexington Food Pantry). All children will be given a free small box of popcorn (for the cost of \$2.00 each) and a SE book to be handed out as the children leave the theatre. Patti will make a flyer and send it out for distribution. Volunteers will arrive at 2:00 and the movie will begin at 3:00. Tracy N. and Nancy P. volunteered to work with Patti. Additional volunteers will be sought (Pyramid providers and coaches, etc.).

ELA Week of the Young Child even will be April 11th at the Lexington Middles School Cafeteria from 4:30-6:00. The RiR stakeholder group has a table reserved to once again have children make solution kits with their families. Volunteers are welcome!

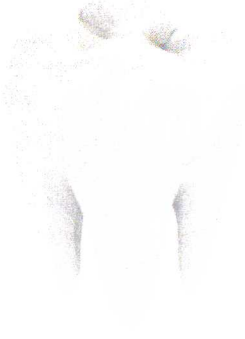
Other classes being offered include; "Migrant Education" Conference in Grand Island April 6, 2019, and "Big Emotions with Little Changes" March 1, 9-12 at the Lexington Early Learning Academy. Lexington Learning Academy is providing a Family Engagement Center for 25 families who have children in preschool to first grade. The times are 9:00-11:00 (8 hours/week). Included are ELL classes, GED education classes, and Child Abuse Prevention classes. 2 hours of time is in the classrooms with the parent's child. They will be recruiting participants for the COS-P classes.

LIFESMILES DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM



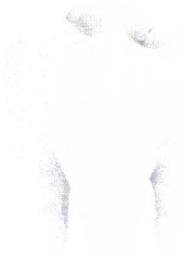
February was Children's Dental Health Month. This month-long national health observance brings together thousands of dedicated professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers and many others. LifeSmiles advocates for children's health and well-being by providing access to care in school and WIC settings. Education for children and their caregivers is a priority to succeed in addressing the crisis of oral disease, the number 1 unmet healthcare need in children.

Many good things are happening with the development progress of Violence Intervention Community groups in Kearney and Lexington. This program is unique in its efforts to intervene and prevent potential violence in our communities. Its potential for developing good community relations with those in need is vast. Helping those who may be on a destructive path is what this program's focus is on and the teams created will be unique to each community so to serve each community to its best ability.



February's LifeSmiles program outreach consisted of sharing the benefits of oral and dental health on TV and social media as well as providing education presentations. With budget restrictions, clinic services ceased at the month's end of February and current efforts to resume are a strong focus.

Organization efforts took place in February for the Disrupting the Pathway to Violence Program by TRPHD program leads. Meetings to assist in development of community teams and how those team members will work together in addressing cases has been an emphasis to move forward.



March's activities will focus on continuing community outreach to solicit funding for long-term sustainability for the LifeSmiles Dental Health Program. This outreach will consist of meeting with County officials, City officials, Schools, Hospitals, and Foundations.

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During the month of February TRIMRS Coordinator Cody Samuelson attended the quarterly meeting of the South Central Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee (SCRLEPC). During the meeting it was discussed that Samuelson would work with the Phelps County Emergency Management Agency and Region 17 Emergency Management Agency to plan a table-top exercise to be held in Harlan County.

The Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS) helps to strengthen emergency response through collaboration. TRIMRS assists in designing, facilitating, and evaluating community-wide disaster drills and table-top exercises.

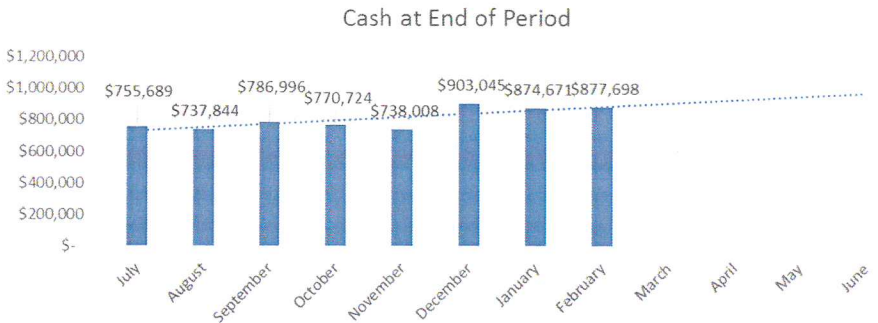
Samuelson also led and participated in the February TRIMRS Executive Committee meeting and bi-monthly regular TRIMRS Steering Committee meeting. At this time the coalition is focusing on sorting out outstanding requests for reimbursement and financial details. The group is also working toward finding the best way to spend Ebola funding before the end of the fiscal year in June 30.

Samuelson is eagerly awaiting the arrival of spring weather to begin travelling to meet with TRIMRS members and he will attend the SUMMIT Preparedness conference in St. Louis, MO in March.

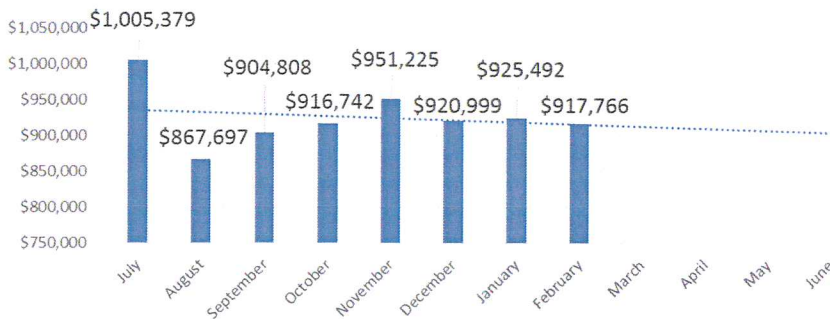
**TRI-CITIES MEDICAL RESPONSE
SYSTEM**

FEBRUARY FINANCIAL REPORT

Two Rivers fund balance on February 28th was \$877,698. We have 275 days cash on hand.



Current Assets



Current assets are at an estimate of \$917,766; a decrease of \$7,726 from January. This is due to collecting a couple of payments in receivables for this month.

Current Liabilities have decreased in the month of February by about \$11,562. This is due to less payables entered in the last week of February.



A/R and A/P:

This month are both operating efficiently. Will follow up with DHHS on the outstanding invoices of \$340.00 for TB Surveillance.

Followed up with Barbara Koester (TB Program Manager) to ask about the progress of payment on the \$340 showing past due in our receivables. Found out Barbara is no longer working for DHHS. Managed to talk to Ashleigh McCormick who previously worked in the TB division and she forwarded my information about the invoices to Jessie Lamprecht who is the supervisor of Hepatitis, TB & HIV Programs. Waiting to hear back about the invoices.

New grants and increased revenue:

NA

Closeout and decreased revenue:

N/A

REAL IMPACT

Maria Barocio is our Community Health Worker. In this role, she is out in the communities we serve every day, providing health education and resources, serving as a resource 'hub' herself. Maria is great at assisting individuals in finding transportation from Lexington to Kearney or Grand Island who have no transportation back and forth to medical or dental appointments. Maria is been calling Heartland Health Center at Grand Island and doing Dental appointments for people who have low income or no income, this Clinic is based on a fee scale. In the month of February, Maria received many calls for assistance.

She received a call from a women not feeling well. Maria asking if she can help her make an appointment to see a Doctor. She said she wanted her appointment to be at Central Health Center. Maria immediately called and assisted in setting up the appointment. Maria went to the appointment to interpret for this woman. She has had problems for the last three months, and after doing blood work they noticed she has low iron levels. She asked to the nurse "Is that why I feel so tired all the time? I feel that I have no energy at all, sometimes I feel dizzy, have nausea, and all my body hurt." The nurse said "yes those are some of the symptoms to be low in iron." They prescribed some iron, told her to eat more food rich in iron, and a gave her follow up appointment in a month. This woman didn't know what was happening with her body. She wasn't feeling well, and needed to see a doctor. Maria told her that is important to do an annual check, but if she feel bad she should not wait till her yearly check up to see the doctor.

Maria received another call from a mother who has a child with Dawn syndrome, the child has had watery eyes for a long time. The child's teacher called the mother saying that it is not normal, and that the child needed an appointment with an eye Doctor. The mother called Maria and told her the situation. Maria offered help to do the appointment, and the mother agreed. She wanted to have the appointment in Kearney. Maria gave her options, and she decided for the Kearney Eye Institute. Maria asked for the child's information and made the appointment. Maria also helped the mother find transportation and an interpreter because Maria was unavailable. Doctor found that child has dry eyes and lashes in the corner of his eyes. Doctor gave some drops to be administered 4 times a day, and if he is not better in a month Kearney Eye Institute will refer him to a specialist. The mother is reporting that her son is getting better.

Maria called and made a dental appointment for a child and then the mother of this child said "what worries me now is that my child is 3 years old and he has been complaining of a pain in his genitalia for 6 months, but I didn't pay a lot of attention because I thought the pain would go away by itself. I have no money to take him to the Doctor, but lately he is complaining more often." Maria asked the mother if she could get \$35.00 to take him to Grand Island? The mother said "yes, but I have no transportation and I don't know anybody who could provide transportation for us." Maria said "I will find transportation, but you need to make sure to take the child to the Doctor. She confirmed that she will take her child to the Doctor if Maria does the appointment, and finds transportation. Maria set the appointment up at Heartland Health Center at Grand Island, and found someone who would provide transportation. The mother and child attended the appointment, and the doctor found that this child have skin infection at his genitalia. The doctor did some urine analysis, and gave some ointment cream to the mother to apply every day after a bath. The child is getting better.

Administrative Notes

As of February 18, 2019, Katherine Mulligan will take the role of Emergency Response Coordinator.

Susan Puckett started her position as Community Health Nurse on February 4th, 2019.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information

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