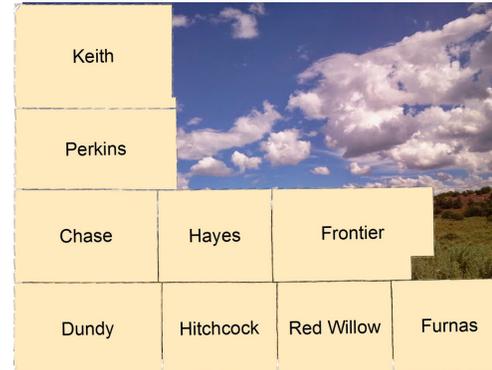


JULY 2019 TO JUNE 2020



BOARD OF HEALTH

Chase County:

*Charles Vette
Jordan Hammerlun*

Dundy County:

*Scott Olson
Rita Jones*

Frontier County:

*Kevin Owens
Shelley Veldhuizen*

Furnas County:

*Mike Sexton
John Kutnink*

Hayes County:

*Barry Richards
Leon Kolbet*

Hitchcock County:

*Scott McDonald
Stephanie Malcolm*

Keith County:

*Joan Ervin
Mark Baldwin*

Perkins County:

*Ron Hagan
Patsy Kroeker*

Red Willow County:

*Earl McNutt
Terri Skolout*

Physician:

Shiuvaun Jaeger, MD

Dentist:

Open

Public Health Moves From Preparation to Action

2019 progressed as usual with health department activities focused on preventing illness and preparing for future emergencies. The start of the pandemic meant shifting gears and putting all that preparation into action to protect the health of individuals and communities.

COVID-19 Timeline in Southwest Nebraska, January-June 2020

- Feb - First confirmed case in the US
- Mar - First confirmed case in Nebraska
 - School campuses closed
 - International travelers required to self-quarantine for 14 days
- Apr - First confirmed case in SWNPHD
 - Directed Health Measures enacted prohibiting gatherings
- May - Total of 18 cases in SWNPHD
 - National Guard conducted mass testing for COVID-19
 - Churches, some businesses, and elective surgeries allowed to resume in the Directed Health Measures
- June - Total of 22 cases in SWNPHD
 - First death due to COVID-19 in SWNPHD
 - Started work with schools on safe reopening plans
 - Moved to Phase II of statewide reopening, then Phase III

LEADERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE



Along with other members of the community, SWNPHD staff members Heidi Wheeler, Helena Janousek and Melissa Propp attended the Healthcare Coalition Response Leadership Course in February 2020.



LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS CLASS

How does one live well with a chronic condition? During January-February of 2020 SWNPHD held a Living Well with chronic conditions workshop. The workshop consisted of seven participants that attended the free 6-week program lead by Melissa Propp and Darcie Johnson. Targeted population were older adults aged 60+ that are low income; uninsured or underinsured; those living in rural areas; and adults with one or more chronic health condition, behavioral or mental condition or disability. In the workshop participants learned how to eat well and exercise safely, cope with pain and fatigue, explore new treatment options, and how to talk to their doctor.

ACCREDITATION:

SWNPHD continues to work towards becoming an accredited organization. Public Health accreditation is about reaching a standard of excellence in several key metrics, including quality improvement, partnerships, accountability, workforce development, resource utilization, and community health and equity. The Public Health Accreditation Board established twelve domains of performance in which all health departments seeking accreditation must adhere.

Each year SWNPHD focuses on one or two domains for improving policies and procedures. This year the team chose to work on Evidence-Based Practices, as well as Administration and Management. Although the COVID response hindered much of the work we intended on completing, the team did find time to carry out many accreditation activities.



OVERDOSE 2 ACTION:

SWNPHD joined the Overdose 2 Action grant as part of a CDC initiative to address the Opioid Crisis. SWNPHD will lead partners and medical providers in southwest Nebraska to form strategic plans and actions to reduce the risk of overdose and improve data collection and tracking of opioid related addiction and injury. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, OD2A strategic planning activities were not conducted. Health department staff Myra Stoney and Joy Trail participated in trainings to better understand the effects of opioids and treatment options.



Kids Fitness & Nutrition Day

The annual Nebraska Kids Fitness & Nutrition Day (NKFND) was held October 9th, 2019, at the McCook Community College Peter and Dolores Graff Event Center. 257 fourth grade students from the central time zone schools participated in this one-day fitness and nutrition event. Schools participating included Arapahoe, Cambridge, Eustis-Farnam, Hayes Center, Hitchcock County, Maywood, McCook Central Elementary, McCook St. Patrick's, Medicine Valley, Southern Valley, Southwest, Stratton, and Wauneta/Palisade. Perkins County Schools was the second location of Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day (NKFND) held for the mountain time zone schools on Wednesday, October 9th, 2019. Perkins County School hosted 189 fourth grade students from Chase County, Dundy County, Keith County Elementary, St. Paul's, and Paxton. Students at both locations spent time learning how to make healthy choices at 6 nutrition stations and getting active at 15 fitness stations. The fitness stations included activities such as agility drills, dance, frisbee, the parachute, trash can basketball and obstacle courses. Nutrition stations included handwashing, energy balance, healthy snacks, label logic, my plate and portion size.



Walk to Health is a free walking program run by SWNPHD to promote physical activity and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Walking is one of the easiest ways to increase daily activity levels and see health benefits like lower blood pressure, improved cholesterol numbers, better mood, and more. Through a partnership with Community Hospital of McCook's Wellness for Life program, walkers can use MoveSpring to track their steps. MoveSpring is a fitness challenge app that can be used on a smartphone or computer. The app gives users a fun way to

participate in Walk to Health, with motivational content, a leaderboard for those who like competition, and the ability to chat with other users about their walking. New this year was the mini-challenge feature that allows teams and individuals to create and run their own challenges in between Walk to Health events. In 2019-2020 four Walk to Health events were held, without the spring team challenge due to COVID-19. August had the Walk the Globe Challenge, a virtual journey; Walk Into the New Year in December got everyone moving through the holidays. The Stepping Through Coronavirus Challenge had 282 participants and lasted 4 weeks in April. The 20-20 Challenge ran from May 20th to June 20th and had 288 participants. Community Hospital Wellness for Life donated gifts for everyone who completed these challenges.

PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

TRACKING CONTAGIONS AND CONTAMINANTS

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Preventing the spread of contagious and infectious diseases is a vital function at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. Providing immunizations and following up on reportable diseases is key to protecting the health of residents. The need for preventing the spread of contagious disease in this recent era has never been more apparent than after the start of the COVID 19 pandemic. In late March SWNPHD began to monitor persons in the health district for possible exposure. Noting the first positive case of COVID 19 on March 14th of 2020. A total of 23 positive cases were investigated from March 14th through June 30, 2020. Interviews were conducted by phone and letters for isolation and quarantine were sent out with the recommended CDC guidelines. During the second week of March, Directed Health Measures were signed into place by the Governor. Schools and other places of business were closed and measures to avoid close contact were put into place. Masks became the fashion statement of the year as everyone was urged to wear a face covering when in close contact with others. SWNPHD continued to monitor other contagious and infectious diseases such as Salmonella, Hepatitis C, and doing follow up on animal bites with potential rabies exposure. 90 cases of lead levels in children were reviewed with only one case of lead poisoning or a lead level greater than 5 noted. SWNPHD does follow up with any child with a lead level greater than 5. Providers are contacted and discussions about follow up lab testing are done. Parents are mailed a home check list to help identify possible exposure risks and a lead fact sheet is also sent to help parents make decisions on further actions they can take to help keep their child safe.



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLAINTS

The health department is a resource center to assist our residents in resolving issues which may affect their health. Most issues can be resolved by linking the complainant with the appropriate agency. The health department assists in finding educational materials and additional information to resolve the issue.

SWNPHD assisted in the following environmental health issues:

- Standing water harboring mosquitoes with West Nile Virus
- Rodent infestations
- Mold in living spaces
- Bats in homes

SWNPHD is working with the State of Nebraska to offer schools free lead water testing. This testing can help identify sources of lead in water that children would be drinking at school. If a lead level of 15 or greater is noted. The school is notified, and corrective actions are initiated.



PREVENTION SERVICES

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE -- BEN FRANKLIN

WEST NILE VIRUS TRACKING AND PREVENTION

SWNPHD participates in the West Nile program by trapping mosquitoes and submitting them to the state laboratory for testing.

Awareness and education were done through special events held by local radio stations, press releases and social media posts. Mosquito trapping was done at twelve locations in Red Willow and Chase Counties on a biweekly basis by contracted employees. The public is notified when any mosquito pools test positive for West Nile Virus or other mosquito-borne diseases after it is reported to the health department.

Residents can reduce their risk of West Nile Virus by keeping their yards and communities free from standing water and keeping screens in good repair.

CLINIC SERVICES:

SWNPHD offers several clinic services such as immunizations and lab services. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program offers vaccines for children aged 6 weeks through 18 years. Children with Medicaid, uninsured, underinsured, native American or native Alaskan qualify for vaccines funded by the State of Nebraska and CDC. Nebraska also provides the Adult Immunization Program (AIP) with certain vaccines available at no cost for uninsured/underinsured adults. SWNPHD also offers insurance billing for immunizations to those who are insured. Travel vaccines such as Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B and Japanese Encephalitis are available as well. A total of 1,215 children and adults received vaccine through these programs this year. Health Fair lab draws are available at the McCook office; which are used to help identify health issues. Labs such as a Lipid Profile or A1C can help identify those persons who may be at risk for high cholesterol, or diabetes. A total of 70 people were seen from July 1 2019- June 30, 2020.

Lab services were put on hold starting in April to allow staff to focus on the COVID pandemic.

TOBACCO PREVENTION:

SWNPHD participated in Tobacco Free Nebraska outreach and cessation activities. The Quitline was promoted in news releases, social media and radio ads. SWNPHD encourages all medical providers in the health district to have Quitline information available and make referrals for their patients. The Red Willow County Rodeo Queens program shared the Steer Clear of Tobacco banner at their events. After an outbreak of lung injuries related to vaping/e-cigarettes, SWNPHD provided information and flyers to area schools and on social media.



Public Health Emergency Preparedness in Action

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was essential from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. SWNPHD received a list of essential supplies that were needed at healthcare facilities and nursing homes, which the state supplied from emergency stores. Many partners drove to McCook to obtain the PPE and then would return to their counties to deliver it to the entities that requested it. The Emergency Managers played a key role in getting these supplies to where they were needed most.

Events and gatherings were limited beginning in April of 2020. With the Directed Health Measures the health department worked with local businesses and individuals on following the guidelines to safely have events and gatherings. The goal of the Southwest Nebraska Health Department was to open safely without spreading the coronavirus to both those hosting the events and those attendees. Approximately 30 events were scheduled, reviewed and approved with appropriate precautions between April and June 2020. This included weddings, fairs, golf tournaments, receptions and graduation ceremonies.

Incident Command is a system to coordinate emergency response with multiple agencies. SWNPHD activated their incident command at the start of the pandemic and began meeting weekly with Emergency Managers to review Directed Health Measures, response activities, updates from DHHS, and positive cases and testing numbers.

COVID Case Investigations:

1. SWNPHD received positive COVID test reports from doctors offices, hospitals, pharmacies, and Test Nebraska.
2. Case investigators contacted the individual and completed an investigation, including anyone they had been in close contact with and any possible source of their infection.
3. The positive case received instructions on how to complete their 10 day isolation, to avoid spreading the virus to any household members or healthcare workers if they needed to seek medical care.
4. Contact tracers reached out to close contacts of the positive, to let them know they were exposed and give them instructions on how to quarantine and to seek testing if they develop symptoms.



The Nebraska Respite Network-Southwest Area serves as a resource and referral service for families needing a break from caregiving, across the lifespan. The Nebraska Respite Network Southwest Service Area is one of 6 service areas in Nebraska. The Nebraska Respite Network offers information and referral services for families and potential or current respite providers. Eighteen counties make up the Southwest Service Area. Nebraska Respite Network assist families in locating providers, accessing information for respite funding, maintaining listings of independent care providers, and providing trainings and support for family caregivers, providers, agencies, and community members.

Families often feel high levels of emotional, physical, and financial stress when they care for someone with special needs in the home. Because of the demands, many families do not have the occasional short-term periods of rest and relief that are so important to everyone's health and family stability. By providing breaks to the family, respite services are a vital support to the ability of families to provide continued care in the home. Respite services provide temporary, short-term care for families in crisis, caregivers of adults and children with disabilities or special needs person with Alzheimer's, frail elderly, or families simply needing a break.

Radon Poster Contest

Every home in Nebraska has radon gas, at different levels. One in two homes tested in Nebraska have radon levels over 4.0, which is the level that requires mitigation—installing a system to remove the radon gas from the home. Radon gas is a leading cause of lung cancer in the US, second only to smoking. Testing for radon and installing a mitigation system if the level is high is one way to prevent lung cancer, which is why the health department encourages testing of all homes in the health district for radon. DIY home radon test kits are sold for \$10 at SWNPHD offices and are also available at many hardware stores. New state legislation passed in 2019 requiring all new construction to be radon resistant, meaning including features designed to reduce radon entry into homes and workplaces. SWNPHD is helping local contractors and building inspectors with education about these preventive measures that will help reduce radon-related lung cancers in southwest Nebraska.



Program Manager Joy Trail and Contest Winner from Stratton Elementary: Aiden Kane



Teacher Lori Smith & the Contest Winners from Hitchcock County: Riley Hagan, Hailey Lynn, Dylan Kollmorgen and Lailah Swanson

GREATER ACCESS TO CARE

IN RURAL NEBRASKA

Every Woman Matters



POLISH YOUR PEARLS DENTAL PROGRAM:

Polish Your Pearls is our Dental program that provides oral health care education, instructions, and preventive dental treatment. Treatments include fluoride varnish and dental sealants, referrals for additional care, and establishment of a dental home for children ages 0-5. This program supplements regular dental visits to provide optimal protection against cavities.

Early dental visits, prevention and early intervention in childhood and adolescence is important because it can impact their overall health and well-being throughout their lifetime. Early intervention may reduce or eliminate tooth decay and reduce the cost of dental work. Fluoride is most effective when applied 3-4 times a year and can decrease further cavity development by about 38%. Having your child participate in the Dental program can save money and help prevent problems.

The Polish Your Pearls Program offers optional preventative dental services at local child daycares. A grant given by the State of Nebraska allowed us to visit daycares for free the first 6 months. SWNPHD partnered with Katie Vaughn a Dental Hygienist with public health authorization to provide services that include visual oral health screening, education, and application of fluoride varnish.

Children that participated in the program received a free dental screening, toothbrush, and toothpaste kit. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic response, the dental program was put on hold for the remainder of 2020.



HEALTH HUB EVERY WOMAN MATTERS

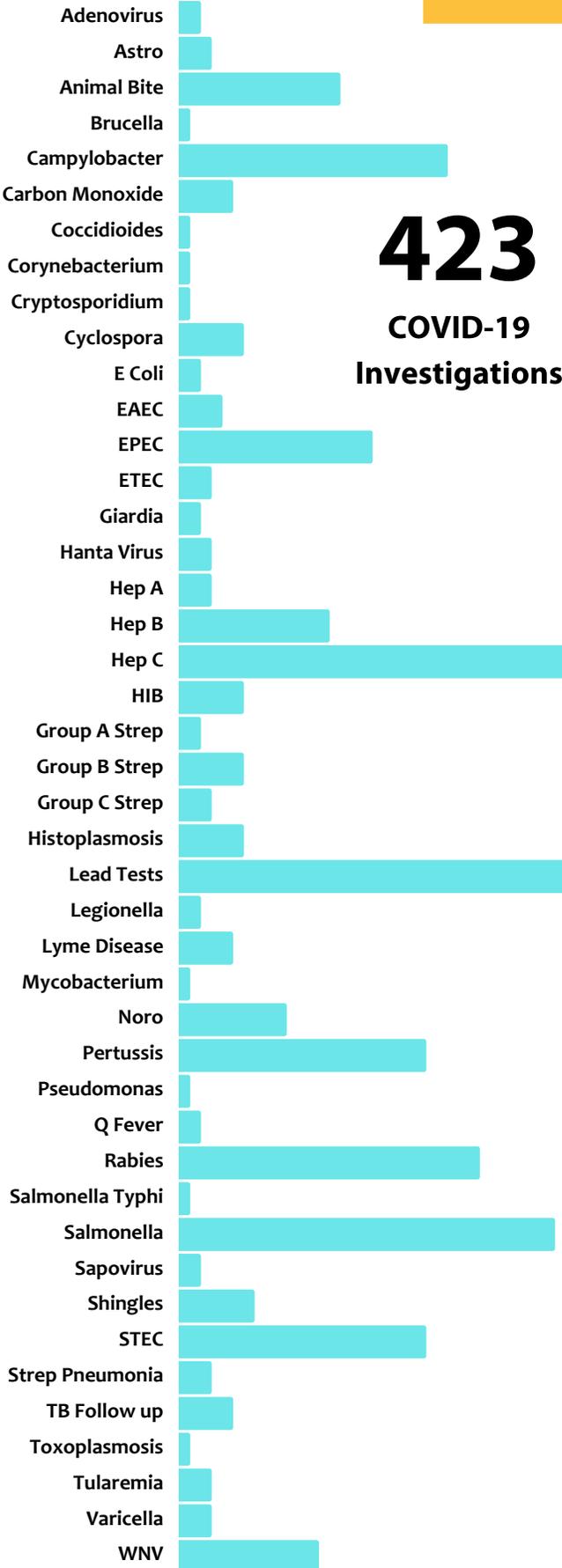
Preventative screenings are an essential tool for early detection of health issues to keep adults healthy.

The Health Hub works with community partners to offer screenings that emphasize cervical, colon, and breast cancer, uncontrolled hypertension, and obesity. Health coaching is provided to clients who meet certain criteria. Healthy behavior support services include 3 health coaching sessions for high blood pressure, physical activity-walk and talk for those wanting to increase physical activity, or health coaching with individual goals. In addition to health screening and coaching, FOBT kits are available to men and women aged 45-75 to screen for colon cancer from the comforts of your own home.

“Outcomes are meant to improve access to high-quality preventative screening services, enhance community linkages, and strengthen data collection and utilization that impact quality of life and health outcomes for Nebraska residents”
(Nebraska DHHS, 2020).

PROTECT THE HEALTH OF ALL

2019-2020 Disease Investigations



423

COVID-19 Investigations

COVID-19: 423

Total Investigations: 865

20
FOBT Home
Colon Cancer
Test Kits

1215
Immunizations given

42
Environmental
Complaints
Investigated

23
Public Shot Clinics for
Children & Adults

14
Women Navigated to
Cancer Screenings

16
Walk-in Flu
Shot Clinics

70
Health Fair Lab
Draws

70
Radon Test Kits
Distributed

42
Families Connected to
Respite Care

120
Mosquito Traps
Set for WNV

288
Walk to Health
Participants

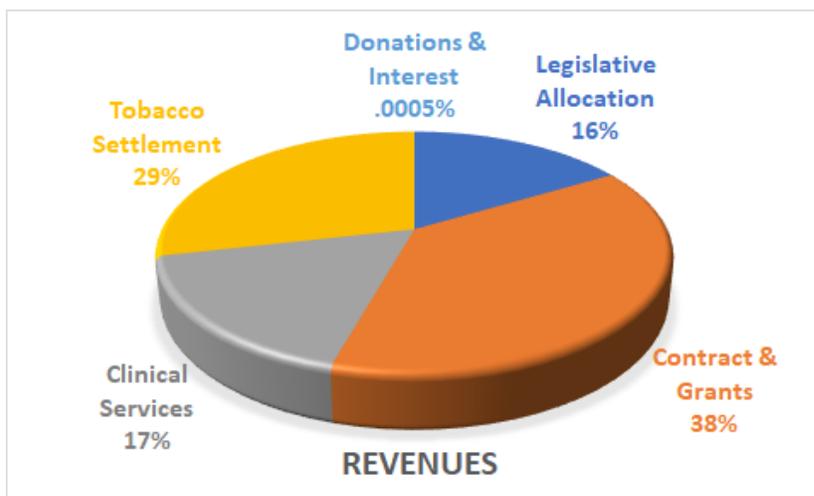
**THE MISSION OF
SOUTHWEST
NEBRASKA PUBLIC HEALTH
DEPARTMENT, IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH
OTHER ENTITIES, IS TO
PROMOTE A HEALTHY AND
SECURE QUALITY OF LIFE
FOR OUR
COMMUNITIES.**



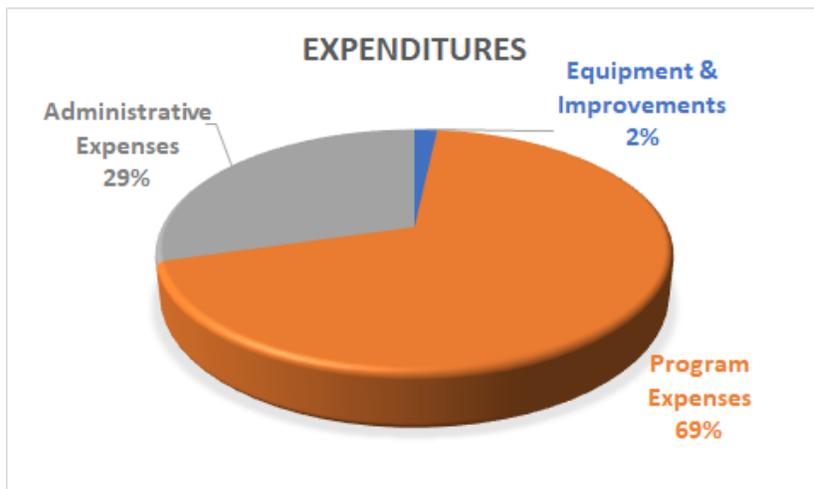
Financial Report Fiscal Year 2020

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Audited 12/29/2020



Total Revenues \$641,631.00



Total Expenditures \$630,162.00

- Provided regular updates on each Directed Health Measure to City/Village Clerks and Attorneys, County Clerks and Attorneys, Emergency Managers and the Board of Health.
- Sent guidance documents to churches, restaurants, beauty salons and barbers, livestock barns, dentists and medical providers.
- Worked with all our schools to assist them with developing a plan for reopening.
- Involved on the committee to develop guidance for Game and Parks, Sports, Arts, Music and Theater, and the DHMs.
- Communicated to the public with weekly updates via web-conferencing, news releases, and radio public service announcements.
- From March to August 2020, answered over 1500 phone calls from people requesting guidance or expressing concerns.
- Investigated and contact traced positive cases, including isolation and quarantine of individuals and subsequent follow-up.
- Coordinated Test Nebraska events in 3 different communities.
- Continued to work with long term care facilities on testing, cases, education, personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Coordinated PPE weekly for different partners by organizing orders, deliveries and storing of these needed resources.

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