

## Lead

TRPHD works with the Nebraska Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to track children who have had their blood lead levels tested and provide education about possible lead hazards in their environment and safe options for remediating those hazards. Lead may harm a child's brain and central nervous system. Even low blood lead concentrations can cause irreversible damage, such as impaired and or delayed development, behavioral problems, and hearing loss. Knowing where the source of lead exposures in a child's environment are likely to be found and removed is the best way to prevent elevated lead levels in a child's blood.

Last month we talked about one of the primary culprits of elevated lead levels in children – deteriorating paint from 1978 or earlier. This month, I'd like to focus on some of the lesser known

sources of lead exposures; water, soil, foods, and cosmetics. As you may recall from the 2014 lead poisoning emergency in Flint, Michigan, lead contaminated drinking water can be a source of poisoning. This can be due to lead from the water source or from lead in the pipes that carry the water to homes. It is important to know where your drinking water is coming from and to access the annual water testing reports from your municipality. If your water comes from a private



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well, it is important to have your well water tested annually (including a sample from a faucet inside your home).

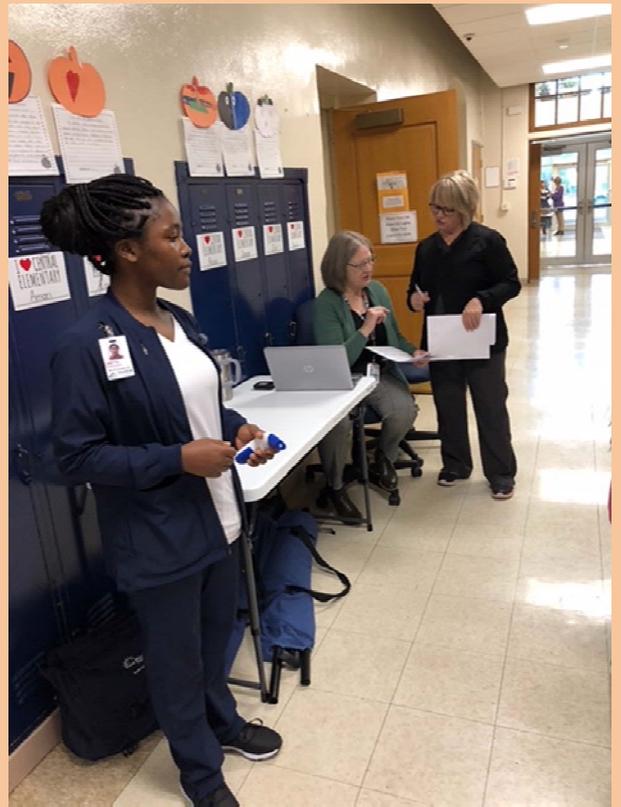
Lead in soil is often found in the perimeters of a home or out building with deteriorated lead paint from the building. Making sure there are soil coverings (grass, shrubbery, flowers) covering this soil is a relatively easy remedy for keeping children away from the contaminate soil. Be extremely cautious of ceramics both painted and unpainted that were manufactured outside the United States AND are used to cook or serve food or drinks. They may be beautiful (as lead in paints and glazes make the colors really brilliant), and they are perfectly safe to display, however, they are not safe to cook in or eat out of. The same is true of colorful spices and food additives (such as coloring for frostings) that are manufactured outside the United States. Simply put, other countries manufacturing regulations and inspections are not nearly as stringent as those in the US and 'buyer beware' is good advice as you will not find the lead content of these products anywhere in their labeling. Cosmetics also have the same issues, especially kohl eyeliners from India or the Arabian regions, lipsticks, rouges, and eye shadows.

During the month of October, six new cases of Elevated Blood Lead Levels (EBLL) were opened and four cases were closed.

# Immunizations

After months of preparation, in October we began our flu shot clinics for Kearney Public Schools. There are eight additional flu shot clinics yet to take place in November. We are extremely proud to be part of the community effort to better health for all by providing flu shots to schools, businesses and churches in our region. To date, we have administered over 500 doses of influenza vaccine.

Every flu season, we face challenges when large portions of our population are affected by the virus. If you do become ill, it is important to restrict your contact with other people until you have not had a fever for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are subsiding. Influenza is a respiratory virus and the tiny viral particles move easily through the air and can infect others. Be vigilant with handwashing before eating, after using a tissue or coughing into your hand, and always after using the toilet. Stay warm and stay well!



## Dawson County Rooted In Relationships

In pyramid 10 providers are getting coached and had their first of 3 training's for the fiscal year on Saturday, October 19. One guest attended who payed \$25 to cover meals and materials. The future collaboration meeting is November 18 at the Community Health and Fitness Center in Lexington.

Rooted in Relationship does many community collaborations such as a 2 - 8 week- Circle of Security classes are being held in Lexington, one is being given in Spanish, and 1 - 6 week-Pyramid Parenting class was held in Cozad. They participated in a Lights Out event for the Lexington after school program.

Stakeholder Committee met on October 15. The focus of the meeting was to do an activity which recognized the strengths of the members and to identify future members to recruit. This activity will continue at the November 19 meeting.

# LIFESMILES

## DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

National Dental Hygiene Month is an annual designation observed in October. During this time, Dental hygienists spread awareness about the importance of oral health. Good breath, strong teeth, and clean gums are all important parts of oral health. It's important to listen to our dental healthcare providers and have regular dental check-ups.



You may not know this, but having a healthy mouth helps the rest of your body stay healthy, too. A look inside your mouth can tell a lot more than you realize about what's going on in your body. Our mouths are sometimes called "the window" looking into the rest of our bodies. Plus, a healthy mouth means you get to keep your teeth when you get older! Big bonus.

We, at Two Rivers Public Health Department, are working hard to utilize every minute to share program services as well as important health and safety information to all in our district. Please call or visit our website for more information. We are a small, but dedicated team of professionals working to serve those in our district and make our community healthy and safe for all! We are here for you!



During the month of October, the LifeSmiles Program has provided school dental disease prevention services at Gibbon Head Start, Holdrege Head Start, and Elwood Schools. Elwood is a new addition this year as the Gosper County board elected to fund school dental outreach services. 197 of Elwood's 212 students were screened per state requirements to assist their school nurse. 38 students were registered with the LifeSmiles program. 160 sealants were placed, 29 fluoride varnish treatments were given, and 52 dental need referrals were provided. Elwood families generously donated an additional \$210 towards services to assist in program support.



Multiple Lexington and Gibbon WIC clinics were held during October as well. Screenings continue to reveal the critical need for services. Children and their families have been screened who have been identified with severe untreated disease and desperate need for access to restorative and prevention care.

We persist in our efforts to attain support for services to those in need. Two Rivers Public Health Department receives requests weekly for help in receiving services. Access to dental and preventive care is a vast crisis to many in our district. Support is needed to make services available those vulnerable in our communities.

You can contribute to this program by contacting Two Rivers Public Health Department or visiting our website at [www.trphd.org](http://www.trphd.org) and click on the "donate now" tab at the top of the page, followed by clicking on the orange "Donate Here" option at the middle of the page. Please note that you would like funds to support the dental program in the "notes/ comments" portion of the page. Contributing to LifeSmiles Services is a way to help many in your community.

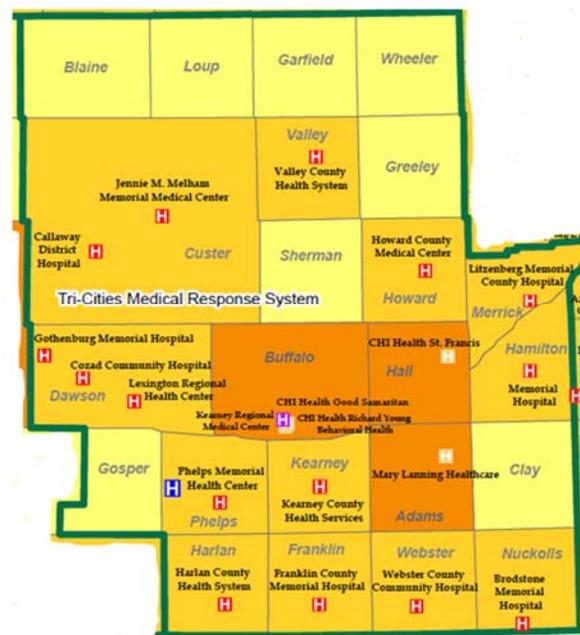


# TRI-CITIES MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

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. TRIMRS also serves as a liaison and information sharing conduit for members.

During the month of October, Coordinator Cody Samuelson participated in several exercise planning meetings for pending training exercises throughout the coalition region. Mary Lanning Healthcare is planning a full-scale exercise in November, the South Central Region Local Emergency Planning Committee is planning a full-scale tornado exercise in November, and the Phelps County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) is planning a tabletop exercise for December.

Samuelson served as an evaluator for a full-scale tornado exercise in Central City involving Merrick Medical Center and for a functional active shooter exercise in Gothenburg involving Gothenburg Health. Samuelson's feedback for the Central City exercise will be used to create an After Action Report (AAR). Samuelson assisted Gothenburg Health in generating an AAR for their exercise that was completed just over a week after the exercise was conducted. This was a very positive accomplishment as AARs can be put off after exercises are completed and there is an unspoken rule they should be completed within 90 days of the exercise completion.



Early in October TRIMRS helped coordinate infectious disease personal protective equipment training that was hosted at CHI Health Good Samaritan and was attended by multiple TRIMRS hospital members. The training was put on by staff members of the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Biocontainment Unit. The trainers instructed attendees on how to put on and take off protective equipment in the event of an infectious patient at one of their hospitals. TRIMRS recently purchased kits that include the equipment and distributed those kits to member hospitals represented at the training.

Finally, October presented an opportunity for Samuelson to make a presentation about the work being done by TRIMRS and other Healthcare Coalitions. Samuelson presented to the Region 3 Trauma Board at their quarterly meeting. The focus of the presentation was how coalitions can assist trauma programs with meeting emergency preparedness goals.

# Radon

Radon is a radioactive gas that is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. In Nebraska, the concentration of radon radiation in homes is frequently higher than the EPA recommends. Because radon is invisible, odorless, and tasteless, the only way to determine the presence or amount of radon in a home is through testing. TRPHD sells simple Radon Test Kits for \$10 so our community members can easily determine whether or not the radon level in their homes are safe. If the radon level is found to be unsafe, retesting and remediation, if needed, is recommended. During the month of July, TRPHD provided education materials and sold test kits at county fairs in our jurisdiction.

## Kearney Area Project Connect

Project Homeless Connect was pioneered in San Francisco in 2004. The goal of Project Connect is to guide homeless or poverty level people toward agencies and services available to establish housing and stability. Project Connect consists of a short term gathering of these agencies in one location (sometimes yearly) to create a one-stop-shop for help. Agencies like barbershops, behavioral health professionals, and real estate agents provide additional services to link clients with jobs, houses, and mental health services.

Katie submitted a grant application to the Kearney Area Community Foundation to help fund a location for the event, this funding was denied. Katie will attend a meeting in November with the larger group to determine if this is a viable project.

## VetSET

Rural veterans, service members, and their families can be disproportionately affected by negative health outcomes. Two Rivers Public Health Department through VetSET Nebraska is working to connect veterans and service members to community resources to better serve this population. We are increasing community awareness, building collaboration with partners, and connecting our community to support.

Katie continued this program by raising awareness for veterans through Facebook. Katie was able to attend the meeting framing efforts to be addressed in the coming, final year of the grant. Part of the discussion was the sustainability of the program.

# Disease Surveillance and Investigation

We work diligently in the early detection, intervention, prevention and education of communicable diseases. Our public health department is notified of communicable disease laboratory results through the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS). The community health nurse investigates each report, which may include patient interviews and physician consultations. Recommendations are made to patients to prevent, promote, and protect the health of community members.

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This morning (11/4/19) we received a Health Alert from our State Epidemiologist, Dr. Tom Safranek, reporting an unusual number of positive results on influenza testing over the past two weeks. It may signal that our influenza season in Nebraska is starting early this year. This news makes obtaining your influenza vaccine (AKA 'flu shot') extremely important, if you have not already done so. Following are CDC recommendations for influenza prevention:

- Influenza vaccine for everyone over the age of 6 months, every year. Many area clinics, pharmacies, and Two Rivers Public Health Department will be offering influenza immunization clinics beginning in October.
- Frequent handwashing throughout the day – but especially before you eat, after using a tissue or coughing into your hands, and always after toileting.
- Avoid touching your face with your hands unless you have completed handwashing. The eyes, nose, and mouth are easy portals of entry into the body for the germs lurking on hands.
- Stay home if you are sick! Influenza is a respiratory illness that spreads by tiny viral particles expelled into the air when sick people cough and sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve to reduce the number of airborne viral particles in your home. Avoid contact with other people who are sick, especially if they are coughing and sneezing.

# 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 October Katie Mulligan attended a donning and doffing training for the use of personal protective equipment for the TRIMRS Highly Infectious Disease Go-Kits. Katie also attended a PHocused conversation facilitated by Jeremy Eschliman about the response to the flooding disasters across Nebraska. Katie and Cody attended continued planning meetings for the Harlan County Tornado Full Scale Exercise, and completed a phone interview for the Harlan County Journal to alert the public of the exercise. Katie, in coordination with the Phelps County Area COAD began planning an animal health disaster exercise. The animal health tabletop exercise will be held in the Phelps County Community Foundation during December, all community members are welcome. Katie and Cody participated as evaluators for the Gothenburg Memorial Health Full Scale Active Shooter Exercise. Katie and Cody attended G-489, Management of Spontaneous Volunteers, to learn more about volunteer management during a disaster.

During October, the Kearney Area Disaster Recovery Group was formed. This group specifically focuses on the case management efforts of recovery from the flooding disasters in Buffalo County during 2019. This group formally organized, created a group structure, acquired grant funding, and began the process to hire case managers. The driving forces behind this group are the Kearney Area United Way, Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska, the Salvation Army, and Re-Store of Kearney. Two Rivers has been able to partner with these entities and others to address the flooding in our jurisdiction.

## UNMC Dia-Beat-it

Initial meetings for this study were held in four locations in Nebraska. The study team consisting of Dr. Fabiana Silva of UNMC, Dr. Fabio Almeida of UNMC, and Maria Cantu Hines of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services visited Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska in Scotts Bluff, Two Rivers Public Health, Central District Health Department, and East Central Health District. The study group is working toward creating a program to address current diabetics' diet and health choices. This program would be conducted in a culturally competent manner by explanations and help in languages other than English, and providing meal choices that are culturally familiar. During the initial session, the study group asked for opinions from program managers, community health workers, and community members in three different meetings. Once all of the data is compiled from all four locations, a second session will be completed.

## 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 to and from appointments, interpreting for those who can't speak English, and connecting individuals with resources.

In the month of October Maria the Community Health Worker received a call from a lady who has Medicaid and needed to see a dentist. This woman had a hard time finding a dentist who accepts Medicaid. She had been having dental pain for 3 months. She tried relieving her pain with Tylenol and ibuprofen, but it didn't help. She told Maria that she was in constant pain unable to eat and sleep. Maria connected her with Heartland Health Center in Grand Island via conference call, and within a week the woman was seen by a dentist at Heartland Health Center. The doctor prescribed an antibiotic, and the woman told Maria that her pain was easing. She is scheduled to have some teeth extracted, and was very grateful to Two Rivers Public Health Department for connecting her to the resources she needed.

## Administrative Notes

### Accreditation Update:

Two Rivers Public Health Department received our response for our Accreditation status.

Katie, Jeremy, and Glenda began planning a partner meeting for the kick off of the next iteration of the community health assessment process. This process will include data collection and reports compiled by Dr. Juan Paulo Ramirez. Community discussions will be facilitated by Two Rivers Public Health Department and with the blessing of community partners, we will be using the Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnerships Process (MAPP). Two Rivers will hold four to five meetings over the next year to complete the planning process. These meetings will rotate location to accommodate travel for partners. The current iteration of the Community Health Improvement Plan will be presented to be blessed at the first meeting during November in Kearney

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