



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Report 2009

Executive Summary

“Public Health improves quality of life by promoting healthy behaviors and preventing disease. Services and education are provided in areas such as communicable and chronic disease, reproductive health, food and water safety, and sewer compliance. The Health Department provides immunizations, health clinics and health education to promote healthy lives. Our priority – community health – does not change.”
-Christine Schuyler,
BSN, MHA
Public Health Director

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From The Desk of the Public Health Director

The year 2009 was my first full calendar year as Public Health Director for Chautauqua County and what a year it was! The Health Department experienced a lot of change in 2009. Change is constant, inevitable, and can bring with it opportunities for growth. What has not changed is the Health Department's presence in your everyday life.

With the emergence of the novel H1N1 ("swine") influenza virus in the spring of 2009, public health took center stage. I am very proud of the hard work of my Public Health Emergency Preparedness team, including not only the Health Department, but also County Emergency Services, Sheriff's Department, Information Technology, and Human Resources as well as outside agencies such as 2-1-1. We worked to implement pandemic influenza and continuation of operations plans. The cooperation of local media, schools, medical community and community agencies was crucial to successfully responding to this threat and coordinating

vaccination efforts. H1N1 clinic coordination and implementation, reporting requirements, and associated activities put a tremendous strain on staff. Their dedication to assure that the clinics operated as smoothly as possible while maintaining normal day to day workload to meet this pandemic need is commended.

From pandemic to flood! Public health responded to the devastating flood in the Silver Creek area in August. Our Environmental Health division worked to ensure a safe and dependable water supply to prevent disease and support recovery efforts.

While flu and flood were certainly our big news this year, we accomplished a great deal in other areas. In line with New York State's Prevention Agenda, we successfully completed our required Community Health Assessment (CHA). The CHA is especially important as we move forward to address the very real burdens of preventable poor health outcomes.

During these trying economic times,

the Health Department has strived to improve efficiencies and preserve public health infrastructure. To this end, we consolidated the Jamestown and Mayville Environmental Health offices, invested in technology to assist environmental and nursing staff whose work is mainly mobile, conducted analyses of billing and contracting practices, and internalized the Cancer Services Program and Medicaid Obstetric and Maternal Services (MOMS) Program. We were awarded federal funds to help provide nutrition education and vouchers for healthy foods through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. This department will continue to develop cost-effective programs to benefit the entire community and ensure that our residents have a clean, safe and healthy environment, along with access to health care services.

Just as the public health environment is ever changing, we too are constantly changing, adapting and improving the way in which we provide services to Chautauqua County. It is a pleasure to serve you—our community!

Swine of the Times

A great deal of Public Health Emergency Preparedness time and effort was contributed to H1N1 response in 2009 through early 2010. Chautauqua County had its first reportable swine flu/H1N1 influenza case shortly after the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the detection of swine flu in the United States in the spring of 2009. On April 27, the first two suspect H1N1 cases were reported in Chautauqua County and the first case was confirmed April 30. Following CDC and NYSDOH early guidance, the Bemus Point school officials and the Public Health Director deemed it necessary to close Bemus Point School District

based on the patient's association with the school, until clear and concise guidance was released. Public health nurses continue to track and report H1N1 illness.

Chautauqua County did not have the luxury of easing into the outbreak, or learning from other counties as they dealt with the illness. Local health departments were developing their response plans simultaneously with the CDC and NYSDOH. Working collaboratively with Emergency Services, the CCHD was charged with the responsibility to track and report illness, receive and relate messages from state and federal health agencies, communicate with and educate the public, obtain and

distribute H1N1 vaccine, and to plan and implement vaccination clinics to at-risk populations throughout the County.

Federal funding was distributed to all local health departments to augment the local resources to continue to respond to the H1N1 pandemic and implement a successful vaccination campaign. H1N1 vaccinations were administered to students and staff during 38 school-based clinics at 18 public school districts and one private school. Public were permitted to attend 15 of the 38 school-based clinics. This successful campaign vaccinated nearly 10,000 County residents through CCHD sponsored school-based and public H1N1 clinics.

Chautauqua County Community Health Assessment



“We are excited to offer this program which allows us to pave the road not only for a healthy pregnancy, but for a healthier life.”

–Cathy Burgess,

Director of

Community Health

Nursing on the

MOMS program



**Nearly 10,000 H1N1
Vaccinations were given at
CCHD clinics**

In keeping with the Commissioner of Health's statewide mission to improve the health of all New Yorkers, the Department of Health requires local health departments to conduct Community Health Assessments (CHA) every four years, and local hospitals to submit a Community Service Plan (CSP) every three years. The latest round of assessments and plans provided a unique opportunity to enable local hospitals and local health departments to join forces to prioritize community health needs and to develop remedial strategies. This process created a shared vision and built true collaborations within the health care community. The Chautauqua County Health Assessment is now available on the new County Health Department website; <http://www.co.chautauqua.ny.us/departments/health/>.

Designees from Women's Christian

Association Hospital (WCA), Brooks Memorial Hospital, Westfield Memorial Hospital, Lakeshore Hospital, Chautauqua County Health Network and CCHD met monthly to compile and analyze local, regional and state data to gain a better understanding of the County and its existing health needs in various communities.

The CHA seeks to identify target populations that may be at increased risk of poor health outcomes, as well as to assess the larger community environment and how it can play a role in addressing the health needs of individuals. The CHA process also identifies those areas where better information is needed, especially information on health disparities among subpopulations, quality of health care, and the occurrence and severity of health care barriers in the community. The CHA is the basis for all local public health

planning.

This latest CHA process sought the direct input of the community. Thirty-eight community focus groups were conducted from January to May 2009, throughout multiple regions in the County. A total of 525 individual responses to the question "What are the health needs of our community" were collected and tabulated. During the community engagement process it became obvious that the community identified that the three health priority areas should be chronic disease prevention, access to care, and increased physical activity and improved nutrition. The community-selected priorities mirrored the health care community's selected priorities, with the exception of infectious disease. The CHA is the most specific and accurate health assessment conducted for the community, by the community.

County Strives for Healthy Pregnancies

In 2009, the Health Department internalized the previously subcontracted Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services (MOMS) Program. The MOMS program offers valuable information to low-income pregnant women in Chautauqua County about achieving a healthy pregnancy outcome. Program participants are offered nutrition

and psychosocial services, health education, HIV counseling and assistance with the Medicaid application. Referrals to participating physicians allow patients to receive the medical component of prenatal care and delivery at no cost through Medicaid. Women whose families earn up to 200% of the federal poverty level are eligible for the

program. Women can self-refer or can be referred by any agency or medical provider. All visits and services are free to women enrolled in the program. "We are excited to offer this program which allows us to pave the road not only for a healthy pregnancy, but for a healthier life." states Catherine Burgess, Director of Community Health Nursing.

Working with Local Hospitals to Prevent Disease Spread

The protection of our Community from the threat of communicable disease is an essential responsibility of the Health Department. Detection, identification, and intervention are the steps needed for the

Communicable Disease staff to prevent the spread of disease within the County. The staff works closely with local hospitals and providers to confirm the disease. Education is provided on how to prevent further spread of the infection. Active

surveillance is ongoing within the department, whether for H1N1, whooping cough, or a food-borne illness. These are only a few of the over 60 reportable diseases which are tracked by the Department.

Water Supply Emergencies

Several significant drinking water emergencies occurred during 2009 prompting response from the Health Department. One of the emergencies differed significantly from those in the past because it was caused by a natural event (flooding) and prompted the Department to assist with both public and private water supplies.

The other emergencies were caused by weaknesses in the aging infrastructure of the municipal water systems in Chautauqua County. Our Department continues to work with

Municipalities to identify infrastructure problems, assist in obtaining funding to address those problems, and to encourage municipal partnerships, interconnections, and shared services to minimize the cost of necessary improvements.

Progress is being made. With the assistance of the State and local Health Departments, two communities in our County (Cherry Creek and Forestville) have obtained a significant amount of capitol in the form of low interest loans and grant

funding through the State Revolving Loan Fund to address weaknesses that were identified in their water systems. These communities are working to improve their sources of drinking water, treatment processes, and distribution systems, so that they can provide an adequate amount of safe drinking water to their communities for the future.

Other communities have plans in place for upgrades and improvements, but currently lack the funding to go forward with projects.

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-William Boria, Water Resource Specialist

Bed Bugs Make an Appearance in the County

In early 2009, the first documented case of infestation by the common bed bug, *Cimex lectularius*, was investigated by State and County officials in a motel in Chautauqua County. Since then, two other infestations have been investigated, including one in a private residence. In the age of the mobility of people and commodities all over the world, the bed bug is becoming

increasingly common in many areas. They feed on the blood of many different animals, including humans. Although no evidence of human disease transmission exists to date, secondary infections due to bites can occur. Vigilant reporting, investigation and remediation are very important in controlling the extent and frequency of infestations by bed bugs.



The Common Bed Bug, *Cimex lectularius*

Open Houses Held to Open Door the for Parent Involvement

In October 2009, the Nursing Division held evening Open Houses to provide an opportunity for parents to tour the Dunkirk and Jamestown facilities with their teens to learn more about clinic

services offered at the Chautauqua County Health Department. Stations were set up throughout the office to discuss topics such as: reproductive health, immunizations, sexually transmitted diseases, and

birth control. The goal within the department is to reduce misinformation and involve parents to guide teens toward making responsible decisions regarding sex.

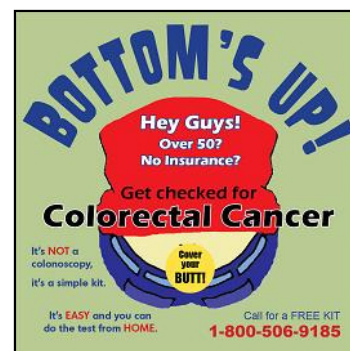
Cancer Services Program in the Media

The Cancer Services Program (CSP) experienced many transitions in 2009. Budget cuts narrowed the focus of this program for the uninsured to women ages 40 – 64 and men ages 50 – 64. The decreased population base of eligible individuals required an expanded, more concerted outreach effort. Some notable

events that reached this limited population were the four Amish clinics that were held in Westfield, NY as well as participation in community events such as the Chautauqua County Fair, and the Convoy of Hope.

In addition, new and innovative targeted media campaigns such as “Don’t wait until it’s too late” and

“Bottoms Up” were conducted focusing specifically on the target populations. The CSP continues to perform above goal in the program areas of case management, data management and promotion of comprehensive cancer screening.

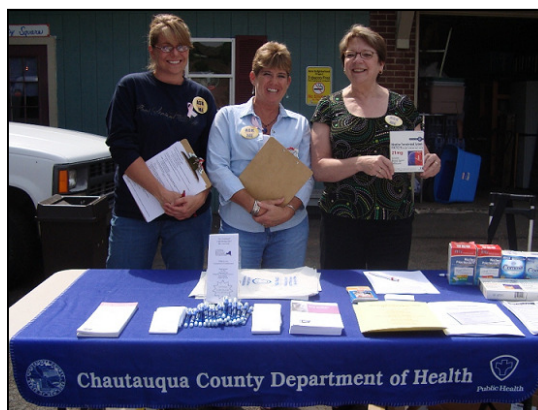


Promotional coaster for CSP's colorectal screening services

Early Intervention Updates

Early Intervention provides services to children from birth to age three who have been diagnosed with a developmental delay. These services include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, vision services, special education, audiology, nursing, and social work. Evidence demonstrates that intervening early in the stages of child development may reduce long-term consequences of delays, and improve quality of life for

children and parents. Early Intervention is mandated and funded by 50% aid from New York State. Numbers of children enrolled in the program have increased over the last 5 years, with 425 enrolled during 2009. While preventing all developmental delays may not be possible, public health seeks to reduce the long-term consequences of those delays to ensure meaningful life for residents of all ages.



Public Health at work in the community

Chautauqua County Health Department

Hall R. Clothier Building

7 North Erie Street

Mayville, NY 14757

Phone: 866-604-6789

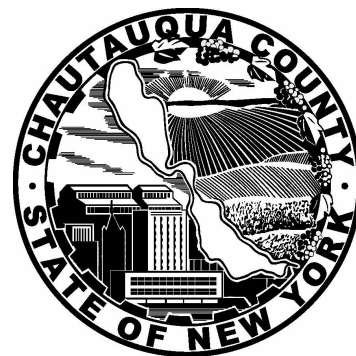
Fax: 716-753-4794

E-mail: cchealth@co.chautauqua.ny.us

Please visit our website at:

[http://](http://www.co.chautauqua.ny.us/departments/health/)

www.co.chautauqua.ny.us/departments/health/



Dunkirk Beach Study Findings

Beginning in 2008, the Division of Environmental Health partnered with the SUNY Fredonia Biology Department in an effort to identify sources of *E. coli* contamination that has resulted in public bathing beach closures in the Dunkirk area over the past several years.

Two years of routine sampling, observation, and special investigations led to the conclusion that weather variables play a significant role in the presence of high levels of *E. coli* at the beaches. Surface runoff that follows periods of heavy rainfall carries bacteria and potentially more hazardous pathogens from non-point sources to the beaches, thereby threatening the health of the lake system, bathers, and animals.

Urban and agricultural runoffs seem to be the greatest contributors to *E. coli* loads.



Wright Park Beach in Dunkirk

Agricultural runoff from the Chautauqua County Fairgrounds during fair week has been determined as a specific source of elevated *E. coli* levels in Crooked Brook Creek.

Areas where specific pollution sources have not been identified but have demonstrated bacterial levels indicative of pollution have been isolated. These areas include:

-Hyde Creek East and West Branches south

of Route 20 in Sheridan

-Crooked Brook Creek south of Site 2 (Paper Factory)

-Goose Creek on Franklin Street between Tenney and Talcott Streets

-Canadaway Creek north of Spoden Road in Pomfret

Regulatory authorities have been notified of the study's results. Microbial source tracking has not provided any solid evidence that any particular animal source is to blame for high levels of *E. coli*. Testing for human-specific *Bacteroides* provided evidence that human waste is present in the waterways that contribute to the Dunkirk Beaches. The CCHD is currently working to locate funding sources to conduct additional investigations and mitigate pollution from known sources.