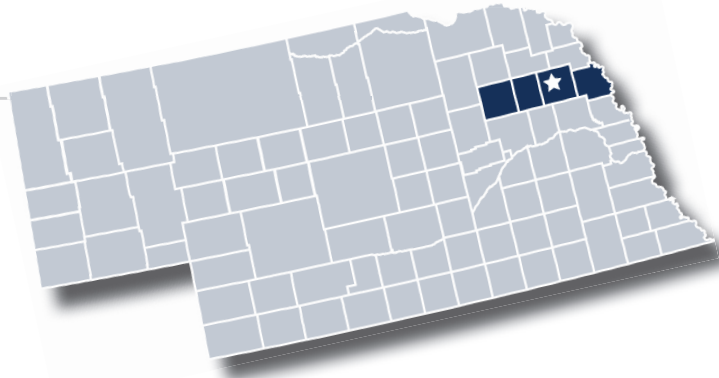


Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department

Serving Burt, Cuming, Madison, and Stanton Counties



Spotlight: Preventing Substance Use



Gina Uhing, Director
gina@elvphd.org
(402) 529-2233
www.elvphd.org

Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department (ELVPHD) has implemented a robust youth substance abuse prevention program for over 10 years through their Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI) coalition. The coalition includes an executive board, as well as county-level coalition members who work to prevent substance use and abuse throughout ELVPHD's four-county service area.

To help lower youth substance abuse rates, the coalition and ELVPHD implement many evidence-based programs

To help lower youth substance abuse rates, the coalition and ELVPHD implement many evidence-based

programs which are evaluated by external evaluators to determine their effectiveness. Following are some of the outcomes of these programs.

Responsible Beverage Server Training (RBST) is a course that is offered to alcohol retailers (on- and off-premises). The course teaches alcohol retailers how to handle intoxicated patrons, techniques for proper identification and age-verification of patrons, as well as tips to recognize underage drinkers. Evidence shows that RBST reduces alcohol sales to youth. The ELVPHD team trained 90 retailers in RBST in 2018-2019, more than doubling their goal for the year. Of the 90 people trained, 100% passed the certification exam given at the end of the course.

In an effort to reach as many youth within the service area as possible,

ELVPHD implements several curriculums within the school systems. With one of these curriculums, the "Alcohol Literacy Challenge (ALC)", ELVPHD sought to reach at least 500 youth. In just under six months, this goal was vastly exceeded—727 youth, ranging in ages from 11 to 18, participated in ALC. Among the outcomes of this work, 17% of the participants showed an increase in correctly answered questions about the dangers of alcohol from pre- to post-test.

ELVPHD contracts with the Nebraska State Patrol to conduct alcohol sales compliance checks in the district. During the last complete round of checks, ELVPHD found 89% of retailers were in compliance. ELVPHD provided information about RBST classes to all retailers who did not pass their check.



This report includes examples of efforts of Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department to make the “Good Life” a healthy one in their jurisdiction. The following examples reflect work supported through multiple sources of funding, including monies from the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (HCFA).

Local health departments act as communities’ Chief Health Strategists by assuring that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved. Local health departments do this by working in each of the **Three Core Function Areas of Public Health**:



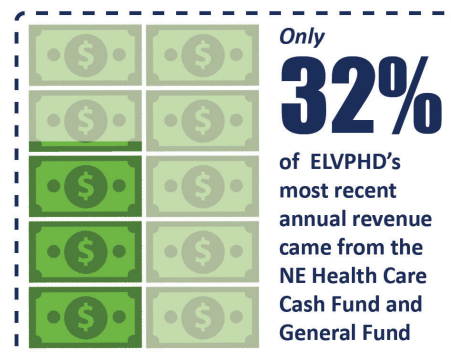
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



Policy Development: Work with partners to apply data, educate the public, and develop programs and policies—all to address and prevent illness, disease and disability.



Assurance: Promote effective coordination and use of community resources to protect the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans.



Community Health Assessment (CHA) Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Every 3-6 years, Nebraska’s local health departments (LHDs) engage local partners (including hospitals, clinics, schools, law enforcement, military and veteran organizations, economic development agencies, businesses, foundations, other community organizations, and individual community members) to identify key, local health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis. This process is known as the Community Health Assessment (CHA). LHDs take the lead in coordinating this complicated process, synthesizing the outcome data, and prioritizing identified issues. The resulting formal assessment is used to create a community-wide plan aimed at strategically improving health – the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

With CHIPs in place, LHDs take a lead driving the work toward meeting CHIP goals and monitoring progress. Much of this work is done collaboratively through partnerships and workgroups that include the diverse sectors mentioned above.

The CHA/CHIP process ensures that local communities are able to work together toward a Good, Healthy Life for all Nebraskans.

CURRENT CHIP PRIORITIES:



Access to Care



Cancer Prevention
and Screening



Obesity



Standard Motor
Vehicle Safety

ACCESS TO AND LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Access to and Linkage to Clinical Care includes (but is not limited to) coordination of services between medical providers and providers of health-related social needs, oral health/dental services, and behavioral/mental health.



Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department (ELVPHD) convened partners to explore how chronic care management can be enhanced in the district. ELVPHD coordinated key informant interviews with clinic and hospital partners, as well as an overall environmental scan of current resources and gaps. ELVPHD presented at the Nebraska Public Health Conference in April 2019 to share experience with building care coordination linkages between local health departments and primary care clinics. ELVPHD is currently working to develop a Chronic Disease Management program in the district. This priority was identified during recent community health improvement planning focus groups with key stakeholders—including clinics and hospital partners.



CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Chronic Disease Control and Prevention includes (but is not limited to) asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, tobacco control, and worksite wellness.



According to BRFSS trends (2011-2017), the smoking rate among adults in the ELVPHD district is 18%, equal to the state rate (18%). The smoking rate among male adults in the district was higher than female adults (20% and 16%, respectively). The rate was higher among White, non-Hispanic adults than Hispanic adults (19% and 9%, respectively). ELVPHD provided evidence to Nebraska senators about the effectiveness of pricing strategies (including increased tobacco taxes) to decrease teen initiation of smoking and to encourage current smokers to quit. ELVPHD initiated an agreement with the Nebraska State Patrol to conduct future tobacco retail compliance checks in the district.



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Communicable Disease Control and Prevention includes (but is not limited to) communicable disease epidemiology (disease outbreak management/response), tuberculosis (TB), immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and surveillance (tracking and following up on reports and provider/school reports).



According to ELVPHD's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data in 2017, less than half (43.5%) of all adults in the district and (only 66% of adults over 65) had a flu vaccine in the past year. ELVPHD recognized a need for expanded vaccine opportunities for adults. ELVPHD prioritized worksites and senior citizen centers to increase flu vaccination rates. This offered convenient and accessible options for the targeted populations. ELVPHD noted a 23% increase over the previous year in the number of flu vaccinations given at the department. ELVPHD currently offers state-funded vaccines for uninsured children and adults, as well as privately purchased vaccines.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental Health includes (but is not limited to) radon, lead, emergency response, hazardous substances and sites, and Complete Streets initiatives.



Breathing radon gas is the second-leading cause of lung cancer behind smoking. Levels of this naturally-occurring gas are high (greater than 4.0pCi/L) throughout Nebraska and in the ELVPHD district. ELVPHD provided information to senators regarding average radon rates in the district and effective mitigation strategies in response to the proposed bill, LB130—Radon Resistant New Construction Act. ELVPHD distributed radon test kits and tracked results. On average, the return rate for radon kits is 71%. Of the kits returned, 59% showed radon concentration greater than 4.0 pCi/L. All households with high radon results received radon mitigation information.



INJURY PREVENTION

Injury Prevention includes (but is not limited to) motor vehicle injuries, occupational injuries, senior fall prevention, substance abuse, car seat safety, binge drinking, and distracted driving.



According to BRFSS trends (2011-2017), nearly 1 in 3 adults over age 45 reported a fall within the past year. Fall rates were slightly higher among women (30%) than men (28%). ELVPHD partnered with the Area Agency on Aging to offer evidence-based, fall-prevention education in the senior centers throughout the district. ELVPHD implements the fall-prevention curriculum, Stepping On! Results show that 52% of participants reported increased confidence in preventing falls, and 88% made at least one fall-prevention change within their home. In addition, 90% of participants improved their fall-risk measure, which gauges the ability to balance, safely stand from a sitting position, and walk.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Maternal and Child Health includes (but is not limited to) Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), family planning, newborn screening, evidence-based home visitation, Early Preventative Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).



ELVPHD monitors blood lead levels among children in the district and investigates cases of elevated blood lead levels. ELVPHD promoted education to prevent lead poisoning through social media. Social media efforts reached at least 7800 people throughout the district this year. ELVPHD assists Nebraska DHHS in coordinating inspections, referrals, and linkages to services for children with elevated blood lead levels. During the reporting period, 26 of the children tested had elevated lead levels (greater than 5 ug/dL).



Additional public health activities that Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department performs to assure that the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans are protected and improved.

According to the 2018 County Health Rankings, one in three (32%) adults in the ELVPHD district were obese (Body Mass Index [BMI] over 30). ELVPHD's obesity rate is slightly higher than the state's (31%). Nebraska BRFSS (2011-2017) found that 68% of adults in the ELVPHD district reported being overweight or obese (BMI over 25). This rate was also slightly higher than the state's (66%). Based on this information, obesity prevention was identified as a health priority in the district. ELVPHD implements several evidence-based, obesity-prevention initiatives including: National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDDP) for which ELVPHD achieved national recognition, Living Well, and Eating Smart & Being Active. In addition, plans are in place to expand to include obesity prevention initiatives for children. Results from initiatives currently in place include:

- 30% of participants reduced their body weight by 7% in a year.
- 83% of participants reduced their weight at some level.
- Of those participants who lost weight during the class, 72% maintained (or lost more) weight loss at 6- and 12-month follow-ups.

Access to oral health care is a concern in the district. This is largely due to 1.) a high number of children enrolled in Medicaid with a disproportionate number of dentists that do not accept Medicaid patients or do not accept any new (unestablished) Medicaid patients and 2.) an overall shortage of providers because a significant portion of the district is a state-designated shortage area for general dentistry. To increase access to oral health services for children (0-17 years of age) and for older adults living in long-term care facilities within the district, ELVPHD uses Registered Dental Hygienists with Public Health Authorization to provide age-appropriate oral health screenings, standard dental cleanings, fluoride-varnish applications and placement of sealants. During the reporting period, ELVPHD screened 536 children (0-17 years of age) and 38 older adults, provided fluoride varnish to 493 children and 11 older adults, placed 124 sealants on children's teeth, and provided 31 dental cleanings for older adults. Through these and other activities, general oral health education was provided to approximately 1,200 people.