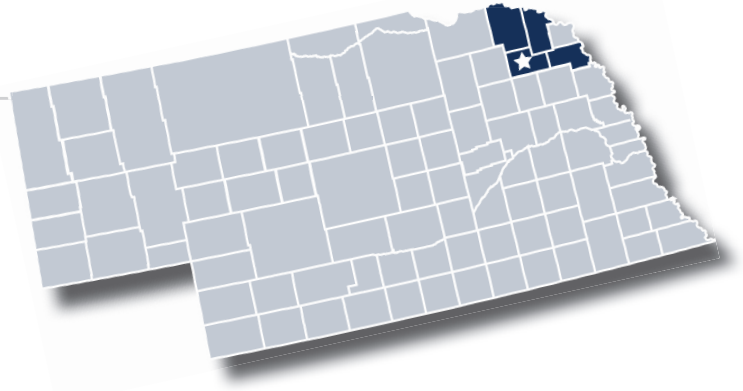


Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department

Serving Cedar, Dixon, Thurston, and Wayne Counties



Spotlight: Collaborating to Improve Health for All

Overweight and obesity is a growing problem in the United States and is of epidemic proportion in Northeast Nebraska (71.7%) as evidenced by data from the most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA). In January 2018, Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department (NNPHD) met with the two critical access hospitals in the health district to discuss the obesity issue and together embarked on a Network Development Project to address the issue. A grant was secured from HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration) and additional partners including the Winnebago Tribal Health Department, two medical clinics, the area's community action agency and six public schools signed onto the project. Over the next several months, the team completed several assessments which provided a better understanding of the communities' health issues, gaps and resources through community input and data. This information was used to develop the Community Health Improvement

Plan (CHIP). A total of seven community meetings were conducted, each with 15 to 45 participants. A community survey to assess community perceptions and behaviors around health was developed and distributed to community residents. A total of 554 surveys were completed. Five focus groups were held with a total of 74 participants. From this data collection, the community (including residents and partners) identified obesity and behavioral health as the two top priorities to work on collectively over the next three years. Partnerships are crucial to addressing obesity; NNPHD emphasizes partnership building and realizes that without partner involvement, there can be no public health.

Obesity is a factor in the development of several chronic conditions including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and some cancers. NNPHD has been working on the issue but efforts have increased over the past year. Early in 2018, NNPHD entered into a partnership with the University of Nebraska College of Nursing, Norfolk Campus to assist with their National Institute of Health research project targeting rural men. NNPHD assisted the project by helping

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with technology and taking biometrics of the 80 participants. The research concludes in 2020.

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To increase self-management of chronic diseases, NNPHD has two trained Living Well instructors who offer a six-week group workshop for individuals living with chronic diseases. NNPHD offers other class options (weight management, heart health and diabetes education) through the Minority Health Initiative project and Health Hub. Of those who participated in these classes, 43% have experienced reduction in their weight. NNPHD is collaborating with the Area Agency on Aging to offer more classes in the health district over the next year.

To address healthy weights for youth, NNPHD entered into a partnership this year with four schools in the health district to enhance and implement their wellness policies.



This report includes examples of efforts of Northeast Nebraska 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**:



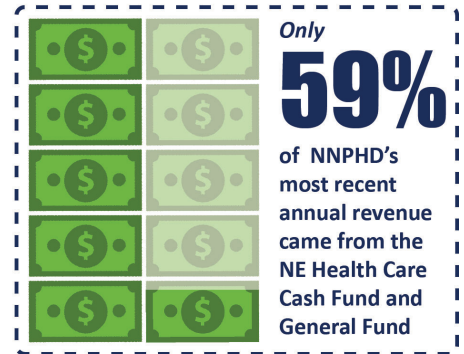
Assessment: Collect and analyze information about health problems in Nebraska communities.



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:



Obesity



Behavioral Health

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.



Linking people to services is an important public health role. Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department (NNPHD) maintains a Resource Directory at www.nnphd.org/resources/NNPHD. Staff also help with finding needed services. NNPHD received 105 requests for information and resources. Of those, 84% were addressed. NNPHD partnered with schools, daycares and dental hygienists to provide oral screenings and fluoride to 785 people; 59 were referred to a dentist. Two communities were identified as having high unmet dental needs. NNPHD has begun conversation with the Federally Qualified Health Center to bring a mobile dental unit to those communities.

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.



NNPHD was present at several community events to provide information about chronic disease prevention, offer programs such as free colon cancer screening kits to people aged 50 to 74 who are uninsured, and screen for high blood pressure and risks for Type 2 diabetes. Information on these topics was also distributed through area food pantries, pharmacies and churches to help people receive health care services. This year's Community Health Survey showed 56% of respondents aged 50 to 84 reported having received colon cancer screening. Nebraska Tobacco Quitline information was also distributed. Additionally, the 38 people who attended NNPHD health classes offered to businesses and community groups learned new ways to improve health.

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).



NNPHD works closely with schools, clinics, long-term care centers, critical access hospitals, and Tribal Health Systems in the district for surveillance of reportable diseases. Last year, 723 surveillance reports were received with 136 requiring NNPHD follow-up. Report follow-ups involved diseases such as E. coli, Giardia, cryptosporidiosis, campylobacter, histoplasmosis, salmonella, West Nile Virus, hepatitis A, B and C, and animal testing for possible rabies due to exposure to people. Two schools contacted NNPHD this past flu season to better understand benefits of school closure due to illness rates, one chose to close, and one did not.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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



Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Of the 194 homes that the NNPHD Radon program helped with testing last year, 72% (139) tested high! NNPHD works with UNL Extension Offices to distribute test kits. NNPHD assists Nebraska DHHS to monitor for West Nile Virus (WNV) by trapping mosquitos.



NNPHD notifies local authorities when WNV is identified so public prevention efforts can be implemented. NNPHD responded to the flood in Spring 2019 by distributing recovery information, water test kits and clean-up kits provided by the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health. NNPHD also assisted people displaced by flood waters to find needed alternative housing.

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.



NNPHD worked with the Wayne State College (WSC) Public Relations class to develop substance abuse prevention campaign ideas to be implemented in the district. NNPHD employs a WSC intern who developed outreach materials for the district based on the SHARP Student Survey, a state-administered survey to assess youth health behaviors. NNPHD is a member of the Region 4 Thurston County Collaborative, which focuses on substance abuse prevention. The health department received funding to organize coalition development in that county next year. The Thurston County Collaborative supported 10 youth and sponsors to attend the Human Performance Project (HPP) training, a promising practice that helps youth develop healthy living habits—in Lincoln in May 2019.

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).



Through Community Response (CR)—a community system of services to assist families/individuals when in crisis—99 households (327 people) were connected to 167 services and programs, provided \$9,232.96 in crisis support services and received another 150 supportive services. CR clients enter into a client-centered contract that strengthens their skills to meet their future needs. NNPHD implemented CR in Wayne County on behalf of the Wayne County Family Coalition and in partnership with the Norfolk Family Coalition, the area Ministerial Association and Wayne United Way. NNPHD staff also serve on area advisory committees including Healthy Families America home visitation, Head Start Health Advisory and the Wayne Salvation Army.

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

This past year has been a building year for NNPHD. A plan has been developed to initiate immunization services beginning with flu shots and then expanding as need is identified. This expansion of services is needed to build internal capacity for emergency response and mass dispensing activities for future infectious disease outbreaks. This expansion is also needed to address the issue of less than favorable flu vaccination rates (46%) for the district.

Care Coordination is another priority project for NNPHD. This past year efforts have begun to plan and prepare for expansion of services to include collaboration with one of the clinics in the health district for care coordination services. A full-time nurse was hired to work on the business plan and assist the health director with implementation of both projects.

NNPHD was present in all counties across the district last year by attending all four county fairs, the Wayne Chicken Show and Haskell UNL Lab Ag Day among others. To help prevent skin cancer—the most common form of cancer, NNPHD provided a free-of-charge sunscreen dispenser at numerous community events to protect participants from sun exposure. Another success for NNPHD in Fiscal Year 2018-19 was the completion of an onsite tornado shelter, which was funded through a grant from FEMA and NEMA.

Collaboration with educational institutions was an important focus of work for NNPHD last year. NNPHD began a five-year project with four (4) K-12 school districts in the health district focusing on improvements to and implementation of their school wellness policies. The health department also collaborated with Wayne State College by providing three class presentations, presenting on a two-person panel at the WSC Behavioral Health Mini-Conference, and assisting with the coordination of a World Heart Day event for the Wayne community.

