

PUBLIC HEALTH

PREPAREDNESS UPDATE


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Health officials aim to increase back-to-school vaccination rates

The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 97.62 describes conditions residents can seek to be considered exempt from Texas immunization requirements.

Exclusions are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications, active duty and reasons of conscience, including a religious belief (DSHS).

Although exemptions and exclusions are offered, health officials aim to educate residents on the importance of immunizations; recommending families to follow CDC guidelines when considering back-to-school immunizations.

Dallas County Health and Human Services' (DCHHS) Vaccine for Children's Clinic (VFC) reported there has not been a significant decrease in childhood vaccinations rates; however, health officials are still monitoring rates to ensure children are protected in the classroom.

This month, DCHHS aims to increase childhood vaccines by traveling throughout Dallas County educating communities and providing free immunizations at mul-

tiple back-to-school events.

"Dallas County plans to ensure residents are well informed on how unvaccinated children are at increased risk for contracting vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, mumps and rubella," said Dr. Christopher Perkins, Dallas County health authority/medical director.

"In some cases, vaccine-preventable diseases may be severe or mild, however at any time; they can emerge causing an outbreak."

DCHHS' immunization team continues the campaign by providing immunizations at New Light Church's Back-To-School Bash. Following the event, DCHHS extended off-site initiatives by participating in the Mayor's Back-to-School Fair.

Remaining mobile immunization clinic events will be held at Cummings Recreation Center Aug. 9, George W Truett Elementary Aug. 14 and Perry Middle School Aug. 16.

For more information on traveling clinics, visit the DCHHS website at www.dallascounty.org/departments/hhs/immunizationhours.html



DCHHS Immunizations and Public Health Preparedness team with Dallas County Sheriff Marian Brown and administration at New Light Church's Back-to-School Bash. Below: Back-to-schooler shows proof he's obtained his immunizations.



DCHHS supports NHANES health study

During the third Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) meeting of the year, DCHHS discussed seasonal health concerns and announced DCHHS' recent support of the National Center for Health Statistics' upcoming Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) in Dallas County.

The organization is a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) division that has selected Dallas County to take part in the significant health study.

"NHANES randomly selects households/individuals in various locations of the county to collect information through in-person interviews and physical exams," said Gessi Ricon, NHANES deputy director.

"The results of the survey combined with other counties this year will provide the health and nutritional status of people living in the US. The survey helps in shaping new policies by identifying key trends, shedding light on emerging health issues; and tracking prevalence estimates."

The estimated dates of the survey are from Oct.15 through Dec.18, 2018. Within the coming months, survey interviewers will be canvassing approximately 550 residential homes to collect essential data on health conditions and concerns.

For more information on this ongoing initiative, sign up for DCHHS alerts at www.dallascounty.org/hhs



Left to right: Dallas County Asst. County Administrator Gordon Hikel, DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaier, PHAC Chair Commissioner John Wiley Price and Centers for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics Deputy Director Gessi Ricon.

Dallas County's fight against the resurgence of hepatitis A



Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzales draws in indigent individuals outside of the Mobile Medical Clinic.



Selected Reportable Disease Conditions, Dallas County: 2001-2016 Dallas County Health and Human Services

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Hepatitis																
Hepatitis A	114	136	55	44	62	53	42	46	40	33	32	39	14	6	14	12

Hepatitis A infections in Dallas County have dramatically declined following the licensure of the hepatitis A vaccine in 1996.

In 2001 DCHHS received 114 reports of infection following 136 reported infections in 2002, which are the highest numbers reported within the last decade.

"CDC incrementally expanded

recommendations for administration of the hepatitis A vaccine from designated risk groups (1996) and geographic areas (1999), to include routine vaccination of all US children in 2006," said Ganesh Shivaramaier, DCHHS interim director.

"Texas State legislature supporting the implementation of

hepatitis A as a required vaccination for childcare has contributed to improving our population's vaccination coverage."

In an effort to ensure these numbers remain low, DCHHS' Immunization and Public Health Preparedness teams continue efforts to reach the Dallas homeless population to vaccinate

against hepatitis A amongst Dallas Homeless.

This past month, DCHHS extend travel in July to The Bridge, City Square, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and more recently the Dallas Life Foundation.

Extreme heat linked to two Dallas County deaths: Residents urged to cool down

Dallas County health officials are reporting the season's first two heat-related deaths. The news comes shortly after season temperatures rose to more 100 degrees during the summer months.

The 70-year-old and 63-year-old patients were both residents of Dallas whose health conditions were associated with heat-related outdoor activity and rising indoor temperatures.

DCHHS is closely monitoring heat-related illness in Dallas County with plans to report heat strokes resulting in mortal-

ity; however, health officials are reminding residents to take preventative measures.

"Dallas County residents need to be aware of the severity resulting from heat-related illness during high temperatures," said Ganesh Shivaramaier, DCHHS interim director.

"Adults and children need to take measures against heat stress when outdoors. Whether you are working or have a recreational activity, being outdoors for even a short amount of time can cause serious illness."

While many families may

struggle with paying the air-conditioning (AC) bills during the summer, DCHHS urges residents to seek a cooling shelter, seek assistance for AC services and help with their utility bill.

Lack of AC services directly impacts the health and well-being of Dallas County families. DCHHS' public health educators are traveling throughout Dallas County providing information to residents on prevention methods, the epidemiology team is monitoring and tracking cases of heat-related illness and the Comprehensive Energy As-

sistance Program (CEAP) team is assisting clients with AC units as well as high utility bills. Residents are urged to do their part in beating the heat. Remember to check on the elderly, young and sick as they are more likely to become victims of excessive heat and may need help.

For more information on AC services, utility bill assistance and tips on how to stay cool, visit the DCHHS website at www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/ceap.php



DCHHS receives Dallas Foundation Heat Relief Award

DCHHS honorably accepts the Dallas Foundation's \$60,000 Emergency Heat Relief Fund award to go towards purchasing and installing air conditioning units for low-income, home-bound individuals in Dallas County.

County wide, the Emergency Heat Relief fund continues to grow with a \$25,000 donation from the Meadows Foundation and an upcoming contribution of \$20,000 from the Simmons Sisters Fund of the Harold Simmons Foundation.

Temperatures in Dallas County are still producing heat indexes in the high 90's and 100's for August.

"With the assistance of the these awards, DCHHS has been positioned to help protect members of the community who may suffer from heat-related illness due to the lack of access to air condition and lower economic status," said Masooma Hyder, DCHHS interim asst. director of finance, budget and contracts.

"DCHHS would like to send a sincere thank you to not only the Dallas Foundation, but also the Meadows and Harold Simmons Foundation."

For more information on DCHHS' program, visit www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/ceap.php.

"The rise in temperatures should trigger a heightened awareness for our elderly and lower income families."



Left to Right: DCHHS Program Monitor Saad Mustafa, DCHHS Interim Assistant Director of Finance, Budget and Contracts Masooma Hyder, Dallas Foundation Chief Philanthropy Officer Helen Holman, DCHHS Financial Administrative Coordinator Joshua Smetak.

DCHHS names new CEAP Program Manager



DCHHS is pleased to announce that Doris Bass, Contracts Manager, has recently accepted the position as Program Manager for the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP).

Ms. Bass has a Master's degree in Management and more than 30 years of service with Dallas

County.

During her tenure, Ms. Bass has assisted in many areas of public health and human services, including the 1998 Heat Wave, Hurricanes (Katrina, Gustav, Ike, Rita), Crypto, West Nile virus outbreaks, Elephants with TB, H1N1, Ebola and Zika.

Ms. Bass will be transi-

tioning into her new role assisting the citizens of Dallas County as she has done in the past; however, in a different capacity.

Please join us in congratulating Ms. Bass as she demonstrates exemplary leadership in her new role.

Health Authority discusses community health at UT Southwestern

Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins joins UT Southwestern in a discussion regarding community health in Dallas County.

Dr. Perkins served as a panelist providing insight on public health initiatives and the challenges regarding health disparities amongst Dallas County residents.



Left to Right: Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins, Campus Dean, UT Health School of Public Health in Dallas Dr. Bijal Balasubramanian and Parkland Community Health Institute Dr. Muthusamy Anandkumar.



DCHHS
Safe families, healthy lives.

Dallas County Health and Human Services



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