



# Lewis & Clark Public Health

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## Program Summaries

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### **COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION**

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*The Community Health Promotion Division is responsible for promoting and providing a variety of programs and services for the benefit of residents of Lewis and Clark County and surrounding counties. Division staff focus on pregnancy and parenting support, WIC supplemental nutrition, and chronic-disease prevention.*

### **HEALTHY FAMILIES HOME VISITING**

The Healthy Families home-visiting team provides voluntary, preventive, in-home services to pregnant women and families with young children. The program provides Parents as Teachers evidence-based home visiting, which teaches parents about developmental milestones and increases family well-being; Nurse-Family Partnership, which targets first-time, high-risk pregnant women; asthma home visiting, which assists families in managing asthma symptoms and avoiding urgent care; Circles of Security parenting education classes and parent support groups; and tobacco cessation services for pregnant and postpartum moms.

The Healthy Families team is made up of nurses, social workers, and parent educators who provide support, screening, education, community referrals, and advocacy to improve physical, cognitive, and emotional health outcomes for women, children, and families. Through a collaboration between home visiting and WIC, the health department offers peer breastfeeding services to all pregnant and breastfeeding moms in the WIC program. The Home Visiting Program also participates on the Fetal, Infant, Child, Maternal Mortality review team (FICMMR). Home visiting staff actively participate in the Early Childhood

Coalition of the Greater Helena Area to improve coordinated prevention efforts and services for young children.

## **WIC**

The Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides health and nutrition assessment and education. The program serves pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children to age five. Supplemental food specific to individual nutritional issues is provided through vouchers redeemable at grocery stores. Eligibility is determined by nutritional assessment and income. WIC is one of the primary referral sources to many other social service and health programs in the department and in the community. The program sees an average of 1000 participants a month, and works closely with the Home Visiting Program to provide comprehensive nutrition education and breastfeeding support to families in Lewis and Clark County. WIC brings almost \$1 million dollars to Lewis and Clark County annually through redeemed WIC checks. WIC includes two special projects: Farmers' Market Program which encourages families to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables at the Farmers' Market and Peer Counseling for breastfeeding support.

## **COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CONTROL**

Comprehensive Cancer Control staff provides public education, community outreach and cancer screening services to residents of Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, and Meagher counties. The program implements evidence-based interventions to prevent cancer and increase cancer screening rates in the region. The screening services target under/uninsured men and women ages 40-64 who meet financial eligibility guidelines. Payment for breast and cervical cancer screenings is available through the program. Case management and patient navigation services are available for women in the program who are diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer. Community funding from United Way supplement and make available services for people in need who do not meet program eligibility requirements. Additionally, staff provides technical assistance to worksites as they assess, plan, implement, and evaluation comprehensive worksite wellness initiatives. The health department leads the Healthy Communities Coalition which brings together community partners to address chronic disease impacts and plan evidence-based strategies to address the identified need, including cancer prevention.

## **TOBACCO USE PREVENTION PROGRAM**

The Lewis & Clark County Tobacco Use Prevention Program serves both Lewis & Clark and Broadwater counties to raise community awareness about the harmful health effects of tobacco. Staff works to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke among youth and adults, develop and implement tobacco prevention policies, decrease the promotion of tobacco products, and link people who want to quit using tobacco to cessation services. The program partners with the community, working with

area schools to enhance tobacco control policies, tobacco prevention education, and youth advocacy activities, and collaborating with health groups, prevention organizations, and citizens to reduce the burden of tobacco-related disease and preventable death in our community. The health department leads the Healthy Communities Coalition which brings together community partners to address chronic disease impacts and plan evidence-based strategies to address the identified need, including tobacco prevention.

## **HELENA CONSENTED REFERRAL SYSTEM**

The consented referral system ensures families are connected to the support services they need. It is a secure, web-based system that allows agencies across the community to send and receive referrals. Agencies are brought together through a written agreement to utilize the tool to connect families to services and improve coordination of care. Additionally the system provides referral outcome data that helps our community improve service delivery. Staff is responsible for recruiting and training new agencies and providing technical assistance to system users.

## **DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION DIVISION**

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*The purpose of the Disease Control and Prevention Division is to protect the public from communicable disease, provide immunizations to people of all ages, provide rural school nursing, inspect restaurants and other licensed facilities, and prepare the health department for emergency response.*

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL & SURVEILLANCE**

Communicable disease has the potential to affect every county resident. The most susceptible people are those who are unimmunized or under-immunized, those with weakened immune systems, and those whose work or leisure activities put them at risk for disease.

Public health nurses investigate reports of communicable disease received from medical care providers, hospitals, and laboratories. Environmental Health Specialists investigate illnesses that may have been caused by contaminated food, water or by infected insects. Disease investigation helps prevent the spread of communicable disease. Communicable disease staff conduct walk in immunization clinics. They also do tuberculosis case control; HIV/AIDS testing, counseling, and prevention education; rural public health nursing; childcare immunization record assessment, and communicable disease surveillance.

## **DENTAL SCREENING**

A public health nurse coordinates a countywide screening program that uses school nurses, dental hygienists and dentists to screen elementary school children (grades 3 and 4) for dental decay. The local dental society arranges to assess children who are unable to pay for needed treatment. Children are seen in local dentists' offices and at the Cooperative Health Center (CHC) Dental Clinic. The dental hygienists and school nurses provide dental education for children in grades one and five.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The purpose of the health department's emergency preparedness program is to improve the department's ability to respond to threats to public health. Staff's work includes improving surveillance of communicable diseases; updating emergency response plans; improving emergency communications capability; and conducting preparedness exercises.

## **HIV/AIDS COUNSELING AND TESTING SERVICES**

HIV/AIDS prevention services include anonymous testing and counseling, and primary prevention activities such as peer education and outreach to high-risk, hard-to-reach target populations. Public health nurses do partner notification work for all HIV positive individuals.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Nurses provide immunizations for people of all ages; assess records for families, schools and day cares; and educate the public about immunizations. Immunization clinics are held at the health department every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11am to 4:30 p.m. Off-site clinics are provided for seasonal influenza immunizations.

## **LICENSED ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION**

The purpose of the licensed establishment program is to prevent communicable diseases from food, insects, and unsanitary conditions, to ensure compliance with state rules for licensed establishments, and to provide education to the community.

Environmental Health Specialists inspect hotels, motels, bed and breakfast facilities, public swimming pools and spas, campgrounds and trailer courts, daycares, and group homes. Food establishment inspection includes Farmers Market, mobile food units, and short term events. They concentrate on food facilities because of the large number of people potentially at risk. Food establishment inspections include observing preparation and storage procedures, monitoring food temperatures, seeking potential sources of cross-contamination, observing hygienic practices of employees, and reviewing the general sanitation and maintenance of the establishment.

## **RURAL PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING & RURAL SCHOOL NURSING**

A part-time public health nurse from Augusta covers the Augusta area. She manages communicable disease, maternal childcare, provides immunizations, adult care information, first aid, and community education. She is also a liaison between Augusta residents and the Cooperative Health Center (CHC).

Once a month during the school year, a public health nurse travels to Wolf Creek Lincoln, and Canyon Creek schools to provide school nurse services. School nursing includes:

- health lessons,
- screening and referral for vision, hearing, dental, and scoliosis
- assessing student health concerns
- assessing immunization records

## **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

Public health nurses investigate and act to control the spread of all reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases in the county

## **HIV PREVENTION SERVICES**

HIV/AIDS prevention services include: anonymous testing and counseling; primary prevention activities such as peer education and outreach to high risk hard to reach target populations.

## **TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL**

Public Health nurses administer TB screening tests, refer clients with positive skin tests for medical workup, and manage preventive/curative medications for clients with infection or disease. They also manage follow-up of TB cases in the county and provide education about TB for clients, their families, and community groups.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION**

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*The Environmental Services Division protects public health by making sure the air, soil, and water are not contaminated with pollutants that endanger human health. The division concerns itself with on-site wastewater, subdivision review, air and water quality, animal control, community decay enforcement, junk vehicles, and East Helena lead education.*

### **AIR QUALITY**

The health department contracts with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to monitor and control air quality. An air quality monitor is located at Rossiter School in the Helena Valley, and is run every third day throughout the year. In addition, under this contract, sanitarians enforce the Outdoor Air Quality Regulations. These regulations control the types of fuels that can be burned, the opacity or density of the smoke emanating from chimneys and they restrict burn on poor air quality days.

### **EAST HELENA LEAD EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (LEAP)**

The goal of the program is to protect public and environmental health, and to protect the cleanup activities that that occurred. LEAP provides lead education to the community, facilitates blood lead screening for all residents and regulates the movement and use of potentially contaminated soil through the East Helena Soils Regulation. Program staff maintains soil, dust, and water sampling data collected in the East Helena area during residential environmental assessments and through the larger soils removal program run by US EPA.

Childhood blood lead levels have been dropping for the past 20 years in East Helena, according to Lewis and Clark Public Health in-house studies. The drop can be attributed to many factors, including the removal of lead from gasoline and paint, the closing of the Asarco smelter, and the remediation of approximately 1500 residential yards and community facilities. Based on current available data, blood levels of children in East Helena is lower than the national average. Regulations were recently adopted to govern the displacement and disposal of soils within the East Helena Superfund Area, in order to protect cleanup efforts and preserve public health. The program oversees implementation of the regulations.

### **JUNK VEHICLES**

The health department contracts with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to administer the junk vehicle program. Sanitarians enforce state law, which requires vehicles that are unlicensed, substantially wrecked and inoperable, to be removed, shielded from public view, or licensed. A variable number of vehicles are hauled each year

as a free service under this program. The number hauled is highly dependent on the market value of metal. When metal prices are up, people tend to haul their own junk vehicles. The program is also responsible for annual inspections of the licensed vehicle wrecking facilities as well as complaints regarding unlicensed facilities.

### **ON-SITE WASTEWATER**

The Environmental Services Division protects public health and controls environmental pollution by regulating treatment and disposal of wastewater in Lewis and Clark County. Activities include site evaluation, permitting and inspection of new wastewater treatment systems, as well as investigation of complaints and enforcement of the on-site wastewater treatment regulations. The program also includes a maintenance program that requires wastewater system owners to perform maintenance activities every 3-5 years.

### **SUBDIVISION REVIEW**

The health department contracts with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to review minor subdivisions proposed in the county. A minor subdivision is defined as a division of land creative five or fewer lots that are less than 20 acres in size. Subdivision review ensures that an adequate supply of potable water is available, along with proper wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal facilities. It is integrated into the on-site wastewater treatment and permitting program.

### **WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DISTRICT (WQPD)**

The WQPD was created in July 1992 to preserve, protect, and improve water quality within district boundaries. This goal is accomplished by protecting and reducing the risk of contamination to surface and groundwater supplies. Projects and programs of the District include: Water Watchers education program for fourth and fifth graders; water quality sampling and monitoring; outreach; public education; protection of Tenmile Creek, Silver Creek and Prickly Pear-Lake Helena Watershed; assessment of groundwater resources within district boundaries.

### **SEPTIC MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

Well-managed, decentralized wastewater treatment systems are a cost effective and long-term way to meet public health and water-quality goals. For this reason, the Health Department implements a program of routine inspection of septic systems to protect public health, preserve valuable water resources, and maintain economic vitality in the community.

## **COMMUNICATIONS & SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT**

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Communications & System Improvement Manager  
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### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The communications manager focuses on media relations and dissemination of public information through a variety of channels. This position writes and distributes news releases, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor. It also writes and designs a staff newsletter, weekly health news digests, brochures, posters, advertisements, and other promotional materials for the agency. This position maintains the agency's website and Facebook account. This position also provides guidance related to messaging and dissemination of public information.

### **SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT**

This position serves as accreditation coordinator for the agency with the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). It facilitates meetings of the agency's Accreditation Work Group and provides resources needed for accreditation. It also collects, analyzes, and compiles the Community Health Assessment, helps to facilitate quality improvement in the agency, and is a resource for workforce development and strategic planning.

*The mission of the Lewis and Clark Public Health is to improve and protect the health of all  
Lewis and Clark County residents.*

