

APPLETON HEALTH DEPARTMENT QUARTERLY REPORT October-December 2014

Executive Summary

The Health Department's day-to-day activities for the fourth quarter of 2014 are enumerated in the attached report. The Department continues to work toward fulfilling the goals of our Department, keeping in mind the belief statements that support and enhance our mission statement.

“Plays a vital role assessing and assuring the health needs and trade practices in the community”

This quarter, City Sealer Eric Maggio and Health Officer Kurt Eggebrecht met with the eight contracted Consortium municipalities of Ashwaubenon, Berlin, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Little Chute, New London, Ripon and Waupaca. The yearly meetings provide a chance to have face-to-face discussions about the weights and measures program and answer any questions about the work we have done throughout the year. The municipalities are pleased with the quality work completed and the partnership of sharing services.

Based on growth of new establishments our contracted service days will increase in 2015. Little Chute will increase from 12 to 13 days. Kaukauna will increase from 14 to 20 days. This additional workload will be absorbed with current staffing levels.

“Provides services to protect and promote the health and well-being of the citizen and consumer”

This quarter the department detected significant resources towards the prevention and protection of seasonal influenza in our community. Prior to any cases in our community our public health preparedness staff offered educational posters and hand sanitizer to all faith based organizations in the city.

Public health nursing staff provided 374 doses of influenza vaccine to City of Appleton employees, their spouses, partners and children nine years of age and older as well as elected officials. Nursing staff also worked with area long term care facilities to ensure that they were up to date with current guidelines and recommendations related to respiratory outbreaks. This education and collaboration will continue throughout the influenza season.

In addition, the Health Officer has had frequent check-ins with Appleton Area School District administration regarding repeated school absences related to the flu.

“Communicates with the public on health and consumer related issues”

This quarter health department staff presented to groups on a variety of topics including:

- October 14, public health nurses Becky Lindberg and Tina Pelishek participated in the 5th Annual Appvion Wellness Fair. 187 Employees received education on “Safe to Sleep” and other general public health topics such including immunizations and illness prevention.
- October 16, Becky Lindberg, RN gave a presentation on the Lifecourse Model (which helps explain lifelong impacts on your health) to the Fox Valley Early Childhood Coalition. Twelve early childhood professionals were in attendance.
- December 16, Tina Pelishek, RN provided education during two playgroups held at the Community Early Learning Center to 28 parents and young children. These playgroups are associated with the Appleton Area School District’s Birth to Five program, and the focus area was “Parents Interacting with Infants.”
- October 27 and 30, Sonja Jensen provided department staff education on Ebola contact investigations. All nursing and environmental staff attended the training. This training is preparation in the event that we have a suspected or confirmed case in the future. There are no reported cases in Appleton.

“Provides services in a cost effective and efficient manner”

Public health nurses Becky Lindberg and Kris Eiden provided TB skin testing for 21 individuals at the Salvation Army and the Homeless Connections on October 21 and 23.

Annually the Environmental Health and Weights and Measures programs survey establishment owners. We feel it is important for us to hear from those we serve and to continually improve our programs and services. We ask that the respondents not include identifying information so they can feel free to be honest. We want to hear the positives and the negatives.

The Weights and Measures survey was sent out to a random third of businesses in October. Businesses were given 30 days to complete and return. There were 80 total surveys were sent out and 25 of those were returned. There are 7 total questions asked on the survey. The results of the survey showed customer satisfaction of 99%.

Similarly the Environmental program conducted a survey of a random third of our licensed establishments to hear what they have to say about our service. This year we had a 25% return on the 150 surveys sent out. Overall, there was a 98.5% satisfaction of our service to the operators.

“Develops and evaluates departmental programs, policies and procedures based on community needs and collaborate with community agencies and providers to assess those needs and ensure high quality services”

October 28, Appleton Health Department participated in a Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) on pandemic influenza. This exercise, provided by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was delivered to local partners throughout the country via live television feed. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a key local volunteer partner in our public health preparedness planning, hosted the exercise and provided the meeting space and technology necessary to participate. In addition to Thrivent, other area partners involved in the exercise included Appleton Fire Department, both local healthcare systems and Appleton Area School District.

This quarter Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) became a topic of increased focus in our public health preparedness efforts. With the unprecedented outbreak in Africa and limited travel-associated cases appearing in the United States, every local health department renewed their focus planning for the potential implications of Ebola exposure in their jurisdiction including contact tracing, quarantine, daily monitoring, transporting individuals to appropriate healthcare settings, and protecting first responders from exposure.

Appleton Health Department chose to establish a limited Incident Command System (ICS) activation to develop Incident Action Plans, establish incident objectives, and assign response planning tasks to staff members as well as provide updates to the rest of the department and our partners.

Frequent communication with local hospitals, police, fire, emergency management and other city departments was a crucial part of our planning efforts. Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) held frequent conference calls with local health departments to give the latest reports and response guidance related to Ebola.

In order to address concerns and gaps in our preparedness efforts, Appleton Health Department staff participated in an Ebola Tabletop Exercise (TTX) on October 21st. Developed by our NEW Public Health Preparedness Partnership, the exercise allowed staff members to run through a scenario of suspected Ebola in our area and determine the best course of action to keep the patient and our community healthy. This exercise was a valuable learning experience and provided feedback to department leadership on how to best communicate information and updates to all department staff regarding Ebola.

The Ebola tabletop exercise was provided through our NEW Public Health Preparedness Partnership to the other six health departments in our preparedness group over the course of the 4th quarter.

In November, at the request of the Sheboygan County Health Department, Michelle Roberts, RS, provided restaurant inspection training to their new health inspector in order to give the inspector additional insight on the inspection process.

“Professional staff works together as a cohesive team by cooperating, communicating and supporting each other to achieve departmental and individual goals”

In December, Environmental Supervisor Tim Mirkes, RS successfully completed a Wisconsin Food Code Standardization maintenance exercise with a state evaluator from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The purpose of standardization and maintenance is to promote statewide uniformity and establish proof of inspector proficiency in the food establishment inspection process. It focuses on risk factors that contribute to foodborne illnesses. It also allows for the State standardized inspector to conduct the standardization exercise with local staff.

Health Department staff participated in a variety of educational opportunities this quarter including:

- October 6th – 8th, Weights and Measures Inspector Keith Verhagen represented Appleton and the East Central Weights & Measures Consortium by attending the annual fall conference in Wausau. The conference was administered by the Wisconsin Weights and Measures Association and the National Conference for Weights and Measures. Those attending were provided safety training and effective communication training. City Sealer Maggio served as the President of the Associate this past year and also attended the conference. During the closing of the conference, Weights and Measures Inspector Keith Verhagen was voted as Wisconsin Weights and Measures Association Vice President.
- Public Health Nurses, Tina Pelishek and Jess Moyle attended the regional Prenatal Care Coordination sharing session on October 27 held in Menasha.
- November 5th – 6th, Becky Lindberg, RN attended the annual Wisconsin Healthiest Families/Keeping Kids Alive Conference “Embracing Change” in Wisconsin Dells, sponsored by Children’s Health Alliance of Wisconsin.
- Becky Lindberg, RN and Sonja Jensen, RN attended the Kick-Off event for Project Aware, which was held at Fox Valley Technical College on November 12th.

Also in November, the department Sanitarians attended the annual Department of Agricultural Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) fall training meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Eggebrecht, M.Ed., MCHES
Health Officer