



Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



HEALTH DEPARTMENT MOVES FROM THE TEMPLE TO THE CHURCH

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department has moved its operations from the Masonic Temple to a newly remodeled building in McCook. SWNPHD purchased a church located at 404 West 10th in 2008. After extensive remodeling, SWNPHD moved into its new location in March 2010.

“This new building is twice the size of our former location. Parking will be easier to access. We have moved the entrance to the west side of the building for handicap ac-

cessibility” states Myra Stoney, Director. “We held an open house in April during Public Health Week. We are excited to show the community our new building and invite the public to stop in to see the building.”

The move to the church is the second move for the health department. SWNPHD was formed in 2002 with tobacco settlement monies and an interlocal agreement. The eight county health district was originally located in Trenton at the Hitchcock County courthouse. In 2005, with a staff of three, SWNPHD moved to McCook. The staff today consists of seven employees.



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MINI HEALTH FAIR AND OPEN HOUSE HELD DURING PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

Seventy people took part in a mini health fair during an open house to celebrate National Public Health Week.

Blood pressures, flu shots and the skin scope were popular stops. Other program materials were offered for FROG, Nebraska Respite, Emergency Preparedness planning, radon test kits, and

Access Nebraska information.

Tours of our new facility were given showing the remodeling process from church to health department.

The public had positive feedback and was impressed with the services offered and the attractiveness of the new office.

Mission Statement

**The Mission of
Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department
in partnership with
other entities, is to promote
a healthy and secure quality
of life for our communities.**

2010 Timeline

January

McCook declares Radon Proclamation Month, Finalize H1N1 Mass Immunizations clinics, NIMS training with Perkins County Health Systems, Kickin' the Habit-Tobacco with McCook Community College

STRATEGIC NATIONAL STOCKPILE (SNS) EXERCISE

Emergency Response Coordinator, Heidi Wheeler, spent several months planning a full-scale exercise with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and local agencies from across SWNPHD's eight-county district. This exercise was designed to practice the deployment of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). The SNS is a national repository of antibiotics, chemical antidotes, vaccines, antitoxins, life-support medications, intravenous administration and airway maintenance supplies, and medical/surgical items. The SNS stands ready for immediate deployment to any U.S. location in the event of a terrorist attack



using a biological or chemical agent, or in response to any natural or technological disaster.

This exercise was an excellent opportunity for all first responders to learn about and practice how to deal with a public health emergency. SWNPHD and local Community Preparedness Committees will use this exercise to make improvements to their emergency response plans, thus making an actual deployment more efficient and effective.



A big thanks to the many people who helped make this exercise a success!



Be a Hero
Volunteer

POOL COOL/ SUN SAFETY AWARENESS

Palisade, Beaver City and McCook Public Swimming Pool lifeguards and swim lesson children received training for sun safe behaviors, sun safety pool policy, and Pool Cool curriculum. All pool staff and pool users were given sunscreen to protect themselves from the sun's UV rays.



NEBRASKA RESPITE NETWORK

Respite provides caregivers of those with long-term or life long disabilities or illness an opportunity to have some time away from their caregiver duties. The Nebraska Respite Network-Southwest Area serves as a resource and referral service for families and providers needing respite or in-home services across the lifespan. Respite assists families in locating providers, accessing information for respite funding, maintaining listings of independent care providers, and provide trainings and support for family caregivers, providers, agencies, and community members.

The Southwest Service Area serves Arnold, Arthur, Chase, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Hooker, Red Willow and Thomas counties.

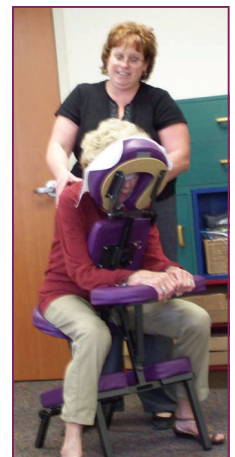
Alynn Ahlemeyer, Respite Coordinator, maintains the statewide database for the Southwest Service Area. She recruits respite providers, markets respite services and collaborates with local state and county agencies to match families with providers.



Caregiver Days Out was held in Ogallala and McCook. Caregivers were invited to a "spa" inspired atmosphere where they were pampered with a massage, supper, gift packages, support information and fellowship of sharing stories. These events were well attended and have been requested to do again in the near future.

Every year the Nebraska Respite Network Southwest Area has available Mini-Grant funding for agencies or individuals who are interested in expanding Respite services or Caregiver support across the lifespan in our area. The Purpose of the Respite Mini-Grants is for the development of new or enhancing existing Respite Programs, increasing the availability of Respite Services and Caregiver Supports to families across the Lifespan in our 18 counties. The intent of the funds is that they be used to start programs, to add or increase slots designated for Respite care or Caregiver Support. In 2010, we awarded the Family Resource Center - \$6,145.84, Ogallala Autism Support Group - \$1,492.00, Kingdom Kids Christian Daycare-\$5,170.00, Community Outreach-North Platte & Ogallala-\$4,421.08 each, and Ladybug Crossing Daycare - #3,350.00.

For more information on respite or to become a provider visit us on the web at www.swhealthdept.com and click on the respite tab or call 308-345-4990.



NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH/EMERGENCY GO-KITS FOR SCHOOLS

September was National Preparedness Month. This is a promotion sponsored by the Ready Campaign in partnership with Citizen Corps and the Ad Council. National Preparedness Month (NPM) is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and communities. Each year SWNPHD takes this opportunity to provide emergency planning information or resources to people of their eight-county health district.

This year an effort was made to help our schools by providing emergency go-kits to each school in our district. Heidi Wheeler, ERC, with the help

of Maxine Logan put together over 20 kits and distributed them to each school. These go-kits were equipped with items necessary for a wide range of threats—natural disasters, school shootings, chemical spills, or explosions, just to name a few. They can be used by teachers if they need to shelter-in-place with their students or the school is instructed to lockdown.

The preparedness and stability of our schools are important in the recovery efforts of a community after an emergency or disaster. Additionally, many parents are part of the emergency workforce responding to the event—EMTs, firemen, nurses, doctors, law enforcement—who

cannot, or will not, respond unless they have a safe and secure environment in which to leave their children. These reasons made schools a priority for us this year, and we will continue partnering with them in the future to keep our kids safe.



27 Shelter in Place Go-Kits were prepared for area schools by Maxine Logan, Clerical Assistant

HANDWASHING EDUCATION FOR AREA STUDENTS

Elementary and preschool students had the opportunity to learn about the importance of hand washing and how to stop the spread of germs.



The kids had fun looking at all the germs on their hands as they placed their hands in the mouth of the GlitterBug. The kids covered their hands in a special potion, washed it off and placed their hands back in GlitterBug. The fluorescent particles would sparkle under the UVA illumination.



STUDENTS FROM PERKINS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL TAKE HONORS IN THE 2010 RADON POSTER CONTEST



Natasha Thomas, Josie & Amanda Osler

SWNPHD 2010 Radon Poster Contest was opened to all 9-14 year olds in the health district. The students were instructed to create a poster of original artwork deflecting one of the following topics:

1. What is Radon? 2. Where does Radon come from? 3. How does Radon get into your homes? 4. Radon can cause lung cancer. 5. Test your home for Radon.

There were over 50 posters submitted to the health department for the competition. The judging for our local contest was done at McCook Community College with the help of art instructor Rick Johnson and chemistry instructor Jim Garretson.

They awarded 3 Perkins County Middle School students with top

- ratings: 1st Place – Josie Osler, 2nd Place - Amanda Osler, and 3rd Place - Natasha Thomas.

- 1st place winner received an Apple i-pod and a \$25 i-tune card, 2nd place received a \$75 i-tune card and 3rd place was given a \$50 gift card to the Sports Shoppe.

The winning posters were sent to the Department of Health & Human Services in Lincoln for the State competition judging.

Radon Test Kits Available

Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading overall cause of lung cancer.

Radon is an odorless, colorless gas that can only be detected by testing your home.

Pick up your FREE Test Kit TODAY!

SUPPLY LIMITED



HEALTHY HOMES WORKSHOP

On October 21st, SWNPHD hosted a “Healthy Homes Workshop” for all real estate agents to obtain 3 hours of continuing education.

The workshop was offered to agents within the health district at **no cost**. This will be the first of several workshops the health department will offer. It was a joint effort between SWNPHD and University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension. The course is approved by the Nebraska Real Estate Commission for 3 hours of continuing education.

With an increase in the number of requests for radon testing during real estate transactions, we hope by offering this free workshop it will help the agents answer questions potential buyers and sellers may have.

Instructors for the workshop were Dr. Shirley Niemeyer, Extension Specialist who was part of the team that developed Healthy Indoor Air for America’s Homes, a national program sponsored by the EPA and USDA and Rebecca L. Versch an Extension Educator from Lincoln and co-author of Radon in Nebraska Homes.

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department works with Nebraska Department of Public Health and the CDC in an attempt to decrease the spread of disease and intervene when necessary by monitoring the activity of seasonal outbreaks, such as influenza by working with hospitals, clinics, providers, and other individuals.

The Disease Surveillance Coordinator follows up on lab reports for individuals who test positive for reportable diseases. The coordinator collects information from medical clinics, hospitals, and other professional providers as well as the patient to find the origination of the person's illness.

SCHOOL SURVEILLANCE

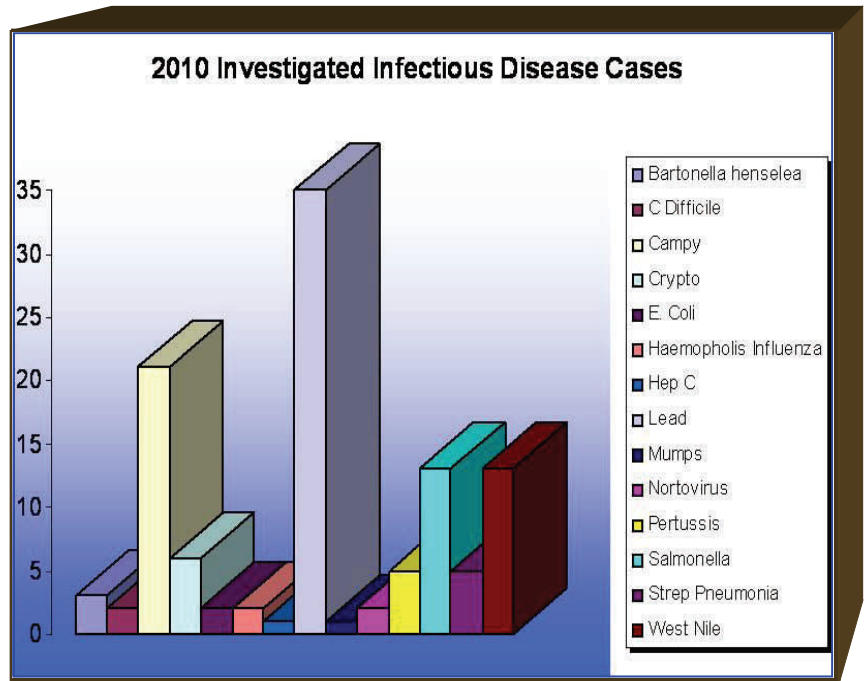
Following the guidance of the state, the school surveillance program tracks and documents numbers of absences due to illness in schools. Any school with an enrollment of 25 or more students is asked to participate by reporting weekly throughout the school year. Any absence over 10% with any illness is considered significant and is investigated and reported to the Nebraska DHHS. Of primary interest is an absence of a child with a "flu-like" illness.

Since schools are often the first to learn about illness outbreaks in their community, we work with school staff and school nurses to track school illnesses on a weekly basis throughout the school year. The school staff needs information from parents so the reporting is accurate and reflects the child's actual illness. It is important that parents calling in absences give *specific* symptoms which helps to categorize the illness.

HOSPITAL SURVEILLANCE

Each of the five hospitals in the SWNPHD district reports the number of hospital admissions with "flu-like" symptoms by age group. These symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat that are not attributed to another illness. Infection Control staff plays a crucial role and have helped in the effort to track influenza.

By looking at local trends we can design health promotion and disease prevention programs that address priority issues affecting our communities and individual residents. Emerging health threats, such as outbreaks from a tainted food source enables us to respond quickly to locally relevant issues which affect quality of life as well as short-term and long-term health.



STEER CLEAR OF TOBACCO

Steer Clear of Tobacco is a program developed by Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department to promote tobacco cessation and prevention at rodeos and other events in the health district. It is our hope that this campaign will help those cowboys, cowgirls and crowd to cease tobacco use and prevent those who aren't already using tobacco from starting.



Steer Clear of Tobacco offers Quit Spit Kits, Quit Smoking Kits, Freedom From Smoking Clinics, tobacco cessation and tobacco prevention materials to assist citizens in their quit process.



The Nebraska State Immunization Information System (NESIIS) stores vaccine information and people can log on to search for dates and names of vaccines they or their child has received. In

past years most people relied on their private physician for vaccines. Now clinics in other sites offer vaccines, such as Public Health and County Health Departments and other entities. With the widespread availability of vaccines, people can lose track of when, where, and what vaccine they have gotten.

When individuals receive a vaccine certain information is obtained from them. This information along with the info about the specific vaccine they receive such as the manufacturer, lot number, dose, and expiration date is entered into the secure database. This ensures the information will be available if the person moves or loses track of the vaccines received.

Go online to view your immunizations at home. dhhs.ne.gov/nesiis



FROG - FITNESS REACHING OLDER GEN S

Fitness Reaching Older Gen's (FROG) is an exercise and nutrition program which helps older adults to improve their mobility and strength. The goal of FROG is to reach out to the older adult population and provide skills or exercises which help prevent injuries caused by falls.

Reducing falls may reduce healthcare costs and provide the older adult population with a more active and enjoyable

life. About 13 percent of America's population is age 65 or over. Many changes take place as we age, such as: diminishing sense of taste and smell, tooth loss and change in energy levels. These are all normal processes of aging. Exercise and Nutrition play a huge part in keeping aging bones and muscles more flexible to help protect your body from serious injuries should you fall.

FROG headed to Omaha for the

18th Annual National Association of Local Boards of Health Conference Aug. 5th, 6th, and 7th of 2010. A poster session about the program was presented to board of health members, senior agency officials and national public health leaders.

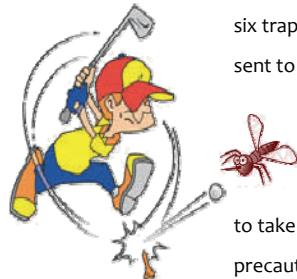
A frog manual was developed which is available on line. FROG continues to be taught throughout the health district by several public health partners.



Download a FREE copy
<http://www.swhealthdept.com/fitness.htm>

WEST NILE VIRUS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Tee it up against West Nile Virus." was this year's West Nile Virus education campaign. Educational materials were distributed to area golf courses within health district. Golf courses are a natural breeding ground for mosquitoes, because of the water hazards found on most courses. Water hazards pose a concern not just because of hitting an "errant" shot into them, but also standing water is a prime breeding ground for mosqui-



toes. Mosquito trapping in the Chase County area began June 7th. Mosquitoes were collected from six traps biweekly and sent to the State lab for West Nile Virus testing. "It is important to take the necessary precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes." States Beverly Powers, Surveillance Coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

"The West Nile Virus is not limited to the locations which have positive tested pools of mosquitoes."

To help fight the bite:

- Apply mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus;
- Wear long-sleeved shirt, pants and socks;
- Avoid going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active; and
- Eliminate standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites.

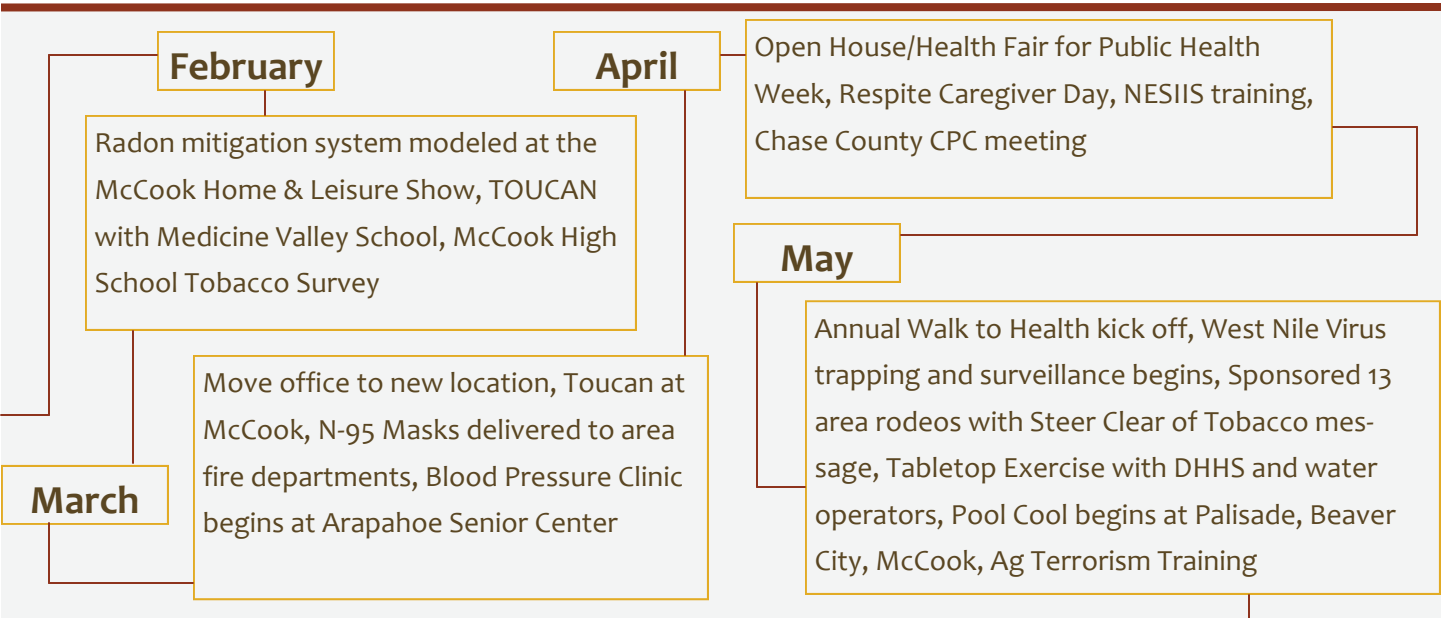
WALK TO HEALTH

There were 133 participants in the 6th annual Walk to Health Program. The



free program started June 1st and ran 90 consecutive days. Participants tracked their steps by using a pedometer, keeping track of their time or by distance walked. A baseline evaluation was completed at signup and an ending data evaluation was turned in at the completion of the program. Participants received monthly newsletters with fitness and nutrition information and healthy recipes.

All participants completing the program received a Walk to Health T-shirt.



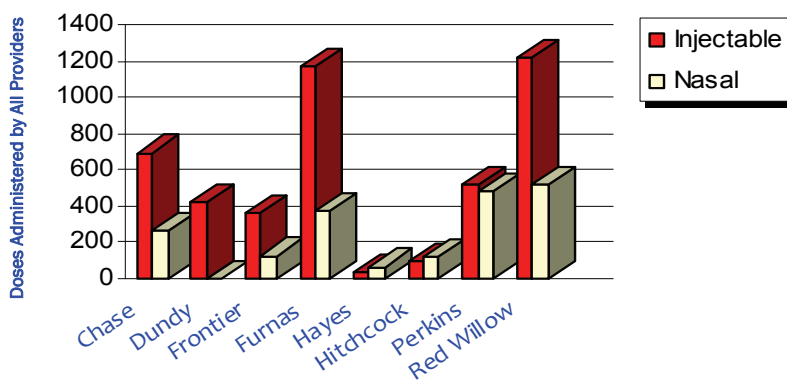
H1N1

The first shipment of H1N1 vaccine arrived October 5, 2009 in Southwest Nebraska. Two hundred doses of nasal spray were delivered. This vaccine was distributed to a select few provider offices within the eight county health district served by Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

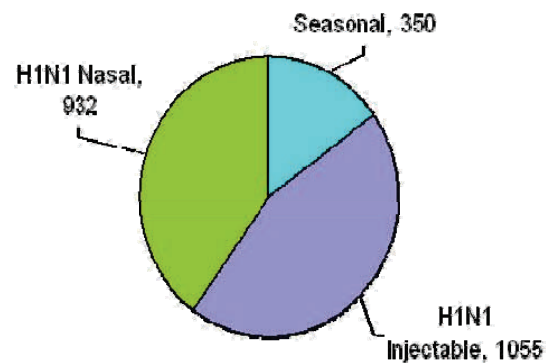
Two different types of vaccine were available: live, attenuated intranasal vaccine and the inactivated

injectable virus. These vaccines were made just like seasonal flu vaccines. They were as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines. They will not prevent “influenza-like” illnesses caused by other viruses. They will not prevent seasonal flu. **You should also get seasonal influenza vaccine, if you want to be protected against seasonal flu.**

H1N1 Immunizations



SWNPHD Flu Shot Clinic's



TOUCAN-TEACHING OUR YOUTH CHOICES: ACTIVITIES AND NUTRITION

TOUCAN educates school age children (K-3 grades), teachers, and parents about healthy nutrition and physical activity choices.



The TOUCAN program has been in McCook Public Schools for three years. On February 3, 2010, it went to Medicine Valley Elementary. The TOUCAN program is taught in K-3 physical education classes throughout the day.



The students learn proper eating habits, the food guide pyramid (mypyramid), physical activity, physical activity in relationship to calories consumed, and exposes the children to calorie counting. Learning is so much fun with story telling, puppet shows and lots of fun games and physical activity.

A second important part of TOUCAN is environment changes; such as, improved menus, employee wellness, etc.



NEBRASKA KIDS FITNESS & NUTRITION DAY

Wednesday September 1st, 4th grade students from across the eight county health district participated in a one day health and fitness day hosted by McCook Public Schools and Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. Schools participating in the event include: St. Patrick's - McCook, McCook Central Elementary 4th grade, Eustis-Farnam, Medicine Valley, Hitchcock County, Wauneta/Palisade, Chase County, Perkins County, Dundy County, Hayes Center, Arapahoe, Southwest and Southern Valley.

Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day (NKFND) was developed and funded, in part, by the Nebraska Beef Council and the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Donations were also received from sponsoring business through out the health district. Sponsors of \$100 or more are listed on the back of the t-shirts. The complete list of donors is provided to the teachers so that the classes may thank the sponsors.

This one day event includes 6 nutrition stations and 16 fitness

stations. The kids rotate through the events spending 18 minutes at each nutrition station and seven minutes at each fitness station. The nutrition stations include information on proper hand washing, label reading, my pyramid food guide, picking appropriate snacks, picking proper portion sizes and energy balance. Fitness stations included obstacle course, parachute, soccer shots, scoops relay, torch relays, fitness balls, and step aerobics, twister and more.



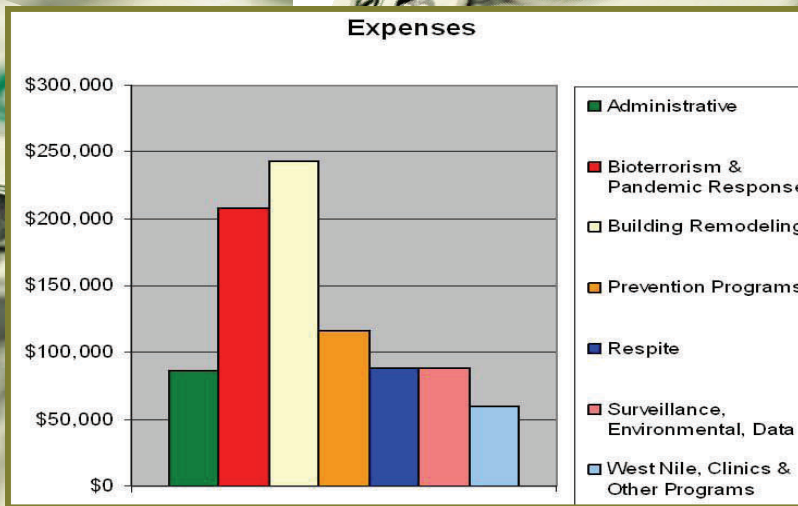
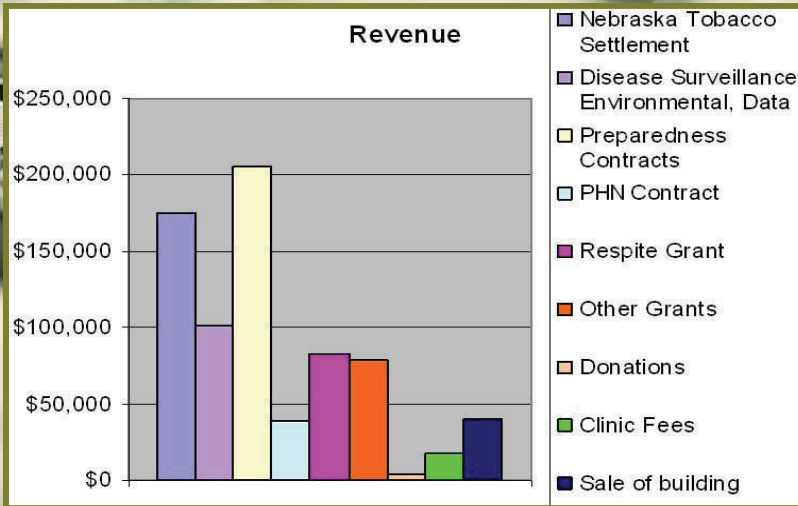
P.H.O.N.E. (Public Health Outreach Nursing and Education) Nurse

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is contracted with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to provide outreach and educational services for clients receiving Medicaid or Kids Connection health coverage. This program helps to establish and maintain a rural physician network, a health and human services network, and a "single contact" community health nursing consultation; thus increasing the opportunity to improve the health of eligible clients.

The nurse:

- ◆ Encourages children enrolled in Medicaid to receive Early Preventions, Screenings, and Diagnostic Testing as recommended
- ◆ Assists families in choosing medical, dental, and vision homes,
- ◆ Promotes self care and responsibility for health,
- ◆ Educates people on the proper use of the Emergency Room,
- ◆ Educates people on missing scheduled appointments, and
- ◆ Creates partnerships with health care providers.





September

2nd annual Radon Poster Contest, 5th annual NKFND event held, distribution of preparedness buckets for schools, school and hospital Influenza Surveillance begins, Handwashing education with area preschools and elementary schools

October

Perkins County CPC meeting, Flu shot clinics begin

November

FROG program expands to Hayes Center

December

Facebook up and running

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