



TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH



2011 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

VISION

HEALTHY PEOPLE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Tarrant County Public Health will be recognized as the public health expert within the communities it serves. Working in collaboration with partners in governmental and non-governmental organizations, we will be prepared for health threats such as chronic disease, health disparities and public health emergencies. We will achieve operational excellence through best business practices, data-driven decisions, customer orientation, a skilled, motivated workforce and sustainable funding.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It was another busy year at Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH), our Nurse-Family Partnership program graduated more than 30 moms and two year olds. Most of the moms are in school or working, being great parents and raising cute, curious and energetic toddlers. Judge B. Glen Whitley and Precinct 1 Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks convened the second Obesity Prevention Policy luncheon bringing Monte Roulier back as the keynote speaker. He spoke to an audience of more than 60 key decision-makers from across Tarrant County. The group committed to forming a Council with Commissioner Brooks as the chair. There was encouraging news regarding the county's infant mortality rate. The latest report saw a drop in overall infant mortality and a drop in the African-American infant mortality rate. There is still a great deal of progress to be made, but along with many community partners, Tarrant County Public Health will continue to seek solutions and to build health equity.

The year was filled with challenges and opportunities. With a lot of thoughtful deliberations on the part of staff, we managed our staff vacancies during the year and were successful in not having to eliminate any occupied positions. One person opted to retire. We implemented an updated fee schedule for environmental health inspections. This change allows us to charge the maximum fee permitted by the state legislature. The fee is determined by square footage. We also trimmed back on some operating expenses, and we closed two long-time clinic locations in Bedford and the Northside. We also reassigned some of the staff to the Northwest clinic in order to begin a five-day-a-week schedule there.

As we continued to prepare for accreditation, our staff participated in core competency trainings during the year. Almost every staff member completed at least two trainings. The Epidemiology and Health Information Division, with support from our Southwest Center for Advanced Public Health Practice received our seventh Model Practices award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). This type of experience will assist us with evidence-based practice partnerships with academia in the future. TCPH was invited to join the North Texas Accountable Healthcare Partnership (NTAHP), and the regional health information exchange (HIE), given our role in linking 60 hospitals into our syndromic surveillance system. We look forward to even more involvement in meaningful use efforts for the region as we believe public health has a critical role to play in the success of the health system for the future.

TCPH again participated in the 2011 Vision North Texas Summit and was asked to join the Advisory Committee. As part of our work with Vision North Texas, we are working with the City of Mesquite Planning Department to draft model health indicators and a toolkit for planners and health professionals in the region. And it finally happened after several years of wishful thinking: TCU is bringing nursing students to us by the busload to learn about public health nursing opportunities. The entire class spends the morning paired with our managers who are nurses learning about the varied and exciting careers outside the intensive care or emergency unit of the hospital. Thanks to a motivated and insightful TCU faculty.

The new year promises to be filled with updates on projects started in 2011, and in strengthening partnerships around local issues and national reforms. We will continue to do our very best to safeguard our community's health.

Yours in health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lou Brewer".

Lou Brewer RN, MPH

Touchpoints founder visits TCPH

Infant research pioneer Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, along with his colleague Dr. Joshua Sparrow, visited TCPH on Feb. 24 to meet with representatives of local health-care providers who use the “touchpoints” approach in dealing with family health concerns. The touchpoint method to family development guides parents through their child’s predictable crises (touchpoints) to help support their child’s self-esteem and readiness to take on the world. WIC Nutritionist Andrea Urquidez is the staff member trained in touchpoint methods. She coordinates TCPH efforts to develop this program with other local partners, such as Cook Children’s Healthcare System, Harris Hospitals and the City of Fort Worth.



TCPH Director Lou Brewer; Dr. Joshua Sparrow of the Harvard Medical School; Associate Director Ann Salyer-Caldwell; Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, founder of the Brazelton Touchpoints Center; WIC Nutritionist Andrea Urquidez and Carlos Francisco de Anda, Early Childhood Specialist with the City of Fort Worth’s Community Relations Department.

Agencies band together to battle record hot summer

On July 15, representatives of several agencies and organizations gathered at TCPH to take part in a joint news conference. The conference provided information about the heat situation and services that were available to the public. TCPH’s Medical Director Dr. Sandra Parker advised people on how to prevent heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Other participants described utility assistance programs and other heat-relief services available to low-income households.



Dr. Sandra Parker (foreground) led the news conference. Behind her, representing various community and business organizations (left to right): Kelsey Lyons, Catholic Charities; Kelli Rod, TXU Energy; Vicki Mize, United Way of Tarrant County 2-1-1; Sonia Singleton, Fort Worth Parks and Community Services and Gerald Smith, Tarrant County Human Services Director.

TCPH receives another 'Model Practice' award

Tarrant County Public Health received a 2011 NACCHO (National Association of County and City Health Officials) Model Practices Award for its School and Child Health Surveillance System. The system enables public health epidemiologists, school nurses and childcare facility staff to better monitor, identify and respond to potential community health threats. NACCHO's annual conference was held in Hartford, Connecticut, in mid-July. The online web portal system, built in 2007 with an open-source contact management system, features a form that lets users quickly share health data, such as absenteeism, absences related to influenza-like illness and cases of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA).

System use among schools has more than doubled since the 2007-2008 school year. In 2009-2010, the year of the H1N1 pandemic, nurses submitted more than 11,000 reports. The Southwest Center for Advanced Public Health Practice at Tarrant County Public Health, which created the program, produced a comprehensive guidance kit to help other health departments apply the concepts of the school and child health surveillance program. The kit, available for free on NACCHO's Web site (<http://apc.naccho.org/Products/APC20102215/Pages/Overview.aspx>), includes case studies of four different solutions (implemented in Ohio, Kansas and Texas), each inspired by Tarrant County. Since 2003, NACCHO's Model Practices program has honored local initiatives such as the School and Child Health Surveillance System.



Dr. Anita Kurian (center) accepts the Model Practices Award on behalf of TCPH, presented by Lillian Shirley (left), current NACCHO President, and Bobby Pestronk, NACCHO Executive Director.

TCPH sponsors third World AIDS Day commemoration

On Dec. 1, representatives from various community organizations met at TCPH to commemorate World AIDS Day. Guest speakers included Krystal James with Tarrant County Precinct 1 Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks' office and the Rev. Carol West with the Celebration Community Church of Fort Worth. In addition to TCPH's Adult Health Services, Preventive Medicine Clinic and HIV Administration, external partners involved included the AIDS Outreach Center, Samaritan House, Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MHMR) of Tarrant County, Cook Children's Healthcare System and the JPS Health Network. "We're grateful for all the volunteers and providers who participated," said Rene Castoreno, program coordinator with HIV Administration and chair of the project.



Pictured (left to right): Rene Castoreno, with HIV Administration, accepts proclamation of "World AIDS Day" from Krystal James, Precinct Administrator, Tarrant County Precinct 1.

The ongoing fight against obesity

Tarrant County Public Health, along with the Tarrant County Commissioners Court, hosted the second annual Obesity/Overweight Prevention and Policy Council Luncheon at TCPH on Oct. 20, 2011. The meeting highlighted the 82nd legislative session related to obesity prevention as well as activities that have taken place in Tarrant County since the council's first meeting in 2010. Tarrant County Judge B. Glen Whitley and Precinct 1 Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks both made presentations, and Monte Roulier, co-founder and president of Community Initiatives, a network of professionals and partner organizations dedicated to building healthy and whole communities, was the keynote speaker for the meeting. At this meeting, participants agreed to choose and implement at least one identified evidence-based policy regarding access to healthy foods or increased physical activity countywide by December 2012, implement at least one evidence-based policy regarding access to healthy foods or increased physical activity within their jurisdiction or organization by December 2012, and evaluate the process and outcomes and share the results by June 2013.



Keynote speaker Monte Roulier (standing left), President, Pioneering Healthier Communities National YMCA Program Leader.

Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps receives funding



Early in the year, Tarrant County Public Health received a \$5,000 grant to support the Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC is a network of local medical and non-medical volunteers who are willing and able to assist the community in response and recovery efforts before, during and after a public health emergency or a natural disaster. The grant, presented by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), was used to recruit and retain Medical Reserve Corps volunteers within the county. "We depend on MRC volunteers to help strengthen our response during a public health emergency or a natural disaster," said Lou Brewer, director of Tarrant County Public Health. "And we appreciate the dedicated men and women who volunteer." Tarrant County Public Health recruits, trains, organizes and credentials these volunteers so that they can be rapidly integrated into existing emergency response systems. Volunteers are always needed. They must be 18 years of age or older, in good physical and emotional health and have a willingness to help when needed. For more information or to volunteer for the Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps, call 817-321-5319 or visit the Be a Local Hero Web site. (<http://bealocalhero.org>)

New building name



Public Health's main building's name changed in April. The building's namesake, Dr. Marion J. Brooks, was one of the founders of the Tarrant County Precinct Workers Council, the Sickle Cell Anemia Association of Texas and the Brooks Clinic – a full-service medical facility in the heart of the African-American community.

Dr. Brooks became a medical crusader committed to the under-represented and underprivileged. His dedication to the community made a difference in many lives.

2011 poster contest winners

Crosswalk safety, safe biking and texting while driving were some of the creative visuals young students used to illustrate the theme "Safety is No Accident: Live Injury-Free" for the annual Public Health Week Poster Contest.

On April 19, Tarrant County Commissioners Court recognized the winners of the 2011 poster contest. The contest has been held annually since 2003 and each year's winning artwork is now part of a permanent display at the main public health building. To view the winning artwork, visit this Web page:

<http://tcweb.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.aspx?A=763&Q=477655>.



Tarrant County Commissioners and the Judge pose with poster contest winners (left to right): Yasmine Al-Assi - 8th Grade, Irma Marsh Middle School; Kaylee Phillips - 6th Grade, Ed Willkie Middle School; Lauren Jackson - 5th Grade, Remington Point Elementary; Muiez Qureshi - 4th Grade, Watauga Elementary; Aaliyah Wells - 3rd Grade, Bill J. Elliott Elementary; Caitlin Buendia - 2nd Grade, Castleberry Elementary and Alexis Arrellano - 1st Grade, D. McRae Elementary. Second row: Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks, Commissioner Andy H. Nguyen, Judge B. Glen Whitley, Commissioner Gary Fickes and Commissioner J. D. Johnson.

FitFuture KidsFest promotes fun, healthy family activities

To further promote healthy eating and physical activity, Public Health helped sponsor three FitFuture KidsFests during the year. The KidsFests, each conducted jointly with different community-based health organizations, included activities for school-age children, such as information booths, bounce houses, pony rides, rock climbing, cooking demonstrations and performances by several youth groups. The activities helped expose parents to information that could help them develop healthy lifestyles for themselves and their children.



Carnaval de Salud a popular event

TCPH held its 6th annual Carnaval de Salud on Saturday, Oct. 1. The event featured free health screens, flu shots and entertainment. Approximately 38 area community service providers offered education, services and resources at health-related booths throughout the day. Highlights of Carnaval 2011 were activities taking place outside in the “EduTainMent” area: Zumba dancing, ZZ Skippers synchronized jump roping, human gyroscopes, jump houses, Ballet Folklorico de Fort Worth, and plenty of healthy food education information.

Carnaval would not be possible without the contribution of approximately 50 volunteers (many from the Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps) who donated their expertise and time to make the 6th annual Carnaval a great success. Public Health sponsors Carnaval de Salud as part of its support for Binational Health Week, a collaborative effort on behalf of the Mexican Ministry of Health, the Mexican Consulate of Dallas and other local agencies that focus on health care and wellness among Hispanics. The goal of the week is to promote sustainable partnerships that address health problems in the United States, Mexico and Canada. The 7th annual Carnaval de Salud is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 6, 2012.



Human “gyro” ride at the Carnaval de Salud.

Approximately 1,200 people attended. Services provided included:

- **600 free flu vaccines**
- **316 cholesterol screenings**
- **65 dental exams**
- **112 Safe Kid IDs**
- **991 Goodwill prescription cards**
- **275 blood pressure checks**
- **80 mammogram vouchers**
- **58 spinal adjustments**

Article on infant mortality receives media award

Tarrant County Public Health's efforts to communicate to the public through local media resulted in an award for a local journalist. Susan Shrock, reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, received a media award from the Texas Public Health Association for her report on the status of infant mortality in Tarrant County. The article featured information gathered by public health, along with quotes from TCPH's Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Anita Kurian.

Front page article from the Star-Telegram, Nov. 10, 2011



Farmers Market at TCPH

Each Wednesday during the spring and summer months, TCPH hosted a Farmer's Market in a collaborative effort to provide WIC clients and the local community with fresh produce while supporting local efforts to promote Farmers Markets. The markets also aided in TCPH's ongoing commitment to promote healthier eating.

Julie Jennings, with Scott Farms, holds a sugar queen cantaloupe.

Health equity a key issue in 2011

Tarrant County Public Health has implemented a Health Equity Program to complement its ongoing work to address health equity issues in Tarrant County and decrease health disparities. This has been accomplished so far by researching and applying best practices to the department and the community. Among the strides made have been the training of TCPH staff members through a series of "Health Equity 101" workshops. These workshops are designed to help staff understand the social determinants of health disparities and the role they can play in prevention, while restating the department's commitment to eliminating disparities. The PBS series "Unnatural Causes ... is inequality making us sick?" and poverty simulations have been used to illustrate the conditions and to illicit possible solutions to local health disparities. A speaker's series also has been developed to help frame the issue. The speakers, each with expertise in health literacy, health care disparities, environmental health and social justice, have provided staff with thoughtful insights into local disparity issues. This series continues in 2012. Health disparities among different populations in Tarrant County mirror the decline in health status and outcomes. TCPH is committed to addressing the issue as part of its overall mission and commitment to safeguarding the health of Tarrant County residents.



Dr. Elizabeth Treviño-Dawson (standing in front), Assistant Dean at the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

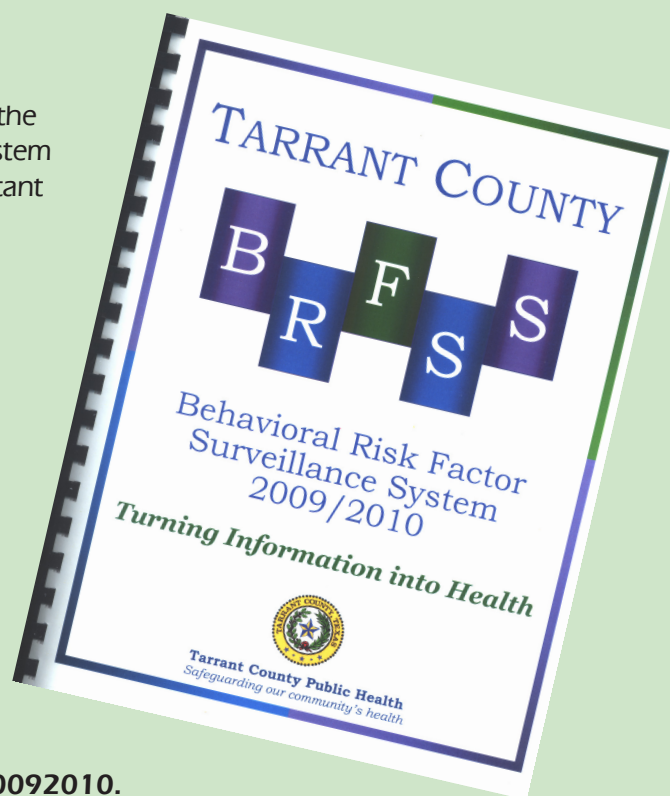
First county-wide antibiogram

In 2011, the Epidemiology and Health Information division at Tarrant County Public Health released the first county-wide antibiogram. An antibiogram is a chart which provides the percentage of microorganisms encountered in a healthcare setting, typically within a year, which are susceptible to commonly utilized antibiotics. Antibiograms serve to aid medical professionals in administering empirical treatment prior to identification of a patient's isolate specific susceptibility patterns as well as allow for the identification and comparison of antibiotic susceptibility patterns and trends by region and time period.

The 2010 Tarrant County antibiogram is a compilation of antibiograms from 14 hospitals located within Tarrant County. Some notable findings in 2010 include three cases of carbapenem-resistant *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (CRKP) which were identified and confirmed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); no cases of carbapenem-resistant *Escherichia coli* were reported; no cases of vancomycin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (VRSA) or vancomycin-intermediate *Staphylococcus aureus* (VISA) were reported. The full report is available at www.tarrantcounty.com/healthdata.

Latest BRFSS report released

TCPH held a press conference on March 18 to announce the release of the latest Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) report. The BRFSS report contains data on important community health issues, such as the prevalence of heart disease in our community, numbers of residents without health insurance, differences among racial/ethnic groups regarding tobacco use, binge drinking, physical activity levels, and more. According to the report, there is a consistency each year surveyed that the three leading causes of death in Tarrant County are heart disease, cancer, and cerebrovascular disease - all chronic diseases related to risk behaviors. The BRFSS is a random-digit-dialed telephone interview survey administered by state and local health departments with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The first BRFSS project was completed in 1998, the second in 2004. Data for this report was gathered from October 2009 through February 2010. This report can be found online: http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/lib/ehealth/Tarrant_County_BRFSS_20092010.pdf.



Multistate Outbreak of Listeriosis

In the fall of 2011, the Epidemiology division at Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) collaborated with public health officials across the nation, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate a multistate outbreak of listeriosis. Listeriosis is a serious infection usually caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. Investigators used DNA analysis of *Listeria* bacteria isolated from patients to identify cases of illness that may have been part of this outbreak. A total of 146 people infected with any of the four outbreak-associated strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* were reported to CDC from 28 states. Texas reported 18 cases; two of the cases in Texas were from Tarrant County.

There were 30 deaths reported nationwide; two from Texas; one from Tarrant County.

Collaborative investigations by local, state and federal public health and regulatory agencies indicated that the source of the outbreak was whole cantaloupe grown at Jensen Farms' production fields in Granada, Colorado. As a result, Jensen Farms issued a voluntary recall of their Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupes. Following this, the FDA announced a recall from Carol's Cuts LLC, a Kansas food processor, and Fruit Fresh Up, Inc., a New York food processor as the fresh cut cantaloupe used in their fruit medley originated from Jensen Farms. By December 2011, available epidemiological information indicated that the outbreak was over. No further cases of listeriosis have been reported to Epidemiology since September 2011.

Morbidity in Tarrant County		2009	2010	2011
DISEASES				
Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)		52	40	43
HIV Seropositive		242	220	219
E. coli 0157:H7 Infection		9	24	36
Hepatitis*: Type A		34	21	10
Type B		684	792	13 *
Type C		2,545	2,143	<5 *
Meningitis: Aseptic		213	177	126
Meningococcal **		7	4	<5
Other Bacterial		7	3	6
Pertussis		185	255	95
Salmonellosis		202	214	367
Shigellosis		39	170	152
STD: Chlamydia		7,828	8,023	7,873
Gonorrhea		2,900	2,575	2,103
Syphilis: Congenital (<1 yr.)		16	11	<5
Primary		48	39	35
Secondary		134	112	85
Other		124	98	87
Tuberculosis		109	114	75
West Nile virus		29	0	<5

Numbers reflect most current data available at time of publication.

Case numbers may change due to ongoing investigations. Less than five cases are not reported to protect confidentiality.

* 2011 case counts now reflect only acute Hepatitis B & C infections; chronic Hepatitis B & C infections are not reportable, hence are no longer tracked.

** Meningococcal disease cases include blood infections as well as meningitis cases.

Reducing sexually transmitted disease in Tarrant County

Adult Health Services (AHS) continues to provide medical and epidemiological services to county residents to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STD). One of the groups benefiting from STD information and testing is the youth in the community, ages 15 to 24. This age group is responsible for high transmission rates of both chlamydia and gonorrhea. Providing accurate information to youth has been difficult because of the limited access in schools and other venues where youth congregate.

In 2011, AHS began working on an STD curriculum specifically for youth to inform and educate them about sexually transmitted infections. The PRIDE Program was developed as a result of collaborations with community agencies, a community motivational instructor and AHS. What makes this program unique is that it is offered in community after-school programs and venues where youth meet and socialize. The information is presented by youth leaders who work with the same individuals for most of the school year. The leaders have the trust and ability to dialogue with youth in small group settings. AHS staff participated in the training of these youth leaders, and occasionally have observed the agency sessions. Fifty youth leaders were trained in 2011 from three community programs. The youth leaders conducted sessions with the youth and provided more than 160 individuals with important information and guidance. This informational exchange will help reduce STD incidence in Tarrant County in the future.

Program Measures

This table provides a snapshot of three year's of program activity. Fluctuations in the numbers may be attributed to a range of reporting changes.

DEPARTMENT WORKLOAD MEASURES	2009	2010	2011
BCCCP ¹ - clients screened	996	934	904
BCCCP ² - Pap smear screens			164
BCCCP ² - Breast exams			287
BCCCP - case-managed clients	293	284	294
Pregnancy tests & referrals	1,222	974	817
Flu shots provided	12,872	13,821	8,545
Immunizations provided	136,799	131,543	116,518
WIC ³ - visits	710,597	732,882	698,071
Health education - health events, presentations	682	720	622
Health education - referrals	537	351	240
Communicable disease reports investigated	5,091	4,762	5,511
New HIV cases reported	242	289	391
STD clinic visits	7,002	6,638	5,864
STD disease intervention, field investigations	3,534	3,740	4,041
STD/HIV field screening of high-risk individuals	7,191	8,251	9,645
Individuals from target populations receiving HIV education and/or testing and counseling	2,354	2,228	1,654
HIV pre- and post-test counseling sessions	3,272	6,711	5,662
Clients provided HIV/STD prevention education	7,100	6,555	6,721
Clinical lab tests performed	54,410	60,081	50,187
HIV-1 lab tests performed	9,338	11,150	14,241
Clients tested for HIV	5,635	6,711	9,645
HIV/STD cases investigated, partners notified	950	746	1,263
Preventive Medicine Clinic (PMC) HIV care caseload	866	928	945
PMC clinic visits	5,819	6,674	5,846
Travel Health Services clinic visits	4,457	3,330	3,742
TB clinic visits	15,700	18,182	16,125
TB contacts screened as part of disease intervention investigation	500	637	653
TB cases in Tarrant County	110	103	75
Percent of foreign-born TB cases	45	66	61
Suspected TB cases treated preventively	310	312	273
HIV co-infections (cases only)	10	7	6
Drug-resistant cases (TB)	5	7	3
Directly Observed Therapy doses administered in the field (TB)	14,849	18,252	10,557
DOPT ⁴ doses administered (TB)	3,685	3,247	5,974
Contacts investigated (TB)	735	637	653
Total on therapy (TB)	408	288	932
Total with latent TB infection	1,164	922	901
Food establishment inspections	5,713	5,566	5,465
Swimming pool inspections	971	823	1,001
Onsite sewage facilities permitted	225	219	193
Food handlers trained/certified	14,664	11,911	10,234
Mosquito pools tested for WNV	202	115	83
Milk and dairy lab tests performed	21,068	20,649	20,915
Water lab tests performed	21,732	23,990	20,753

1 Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program

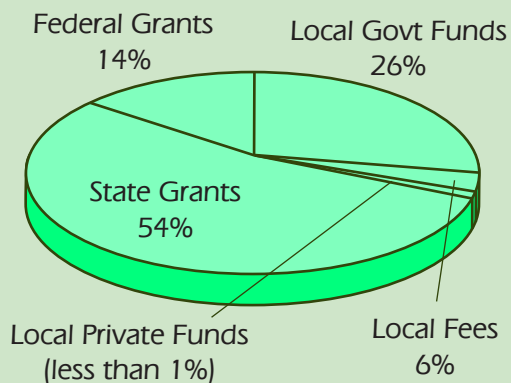
2 BCCCP reporting changed in October to differentiate services provided

3 Women, Infants and Children Program

4 Directly Observed Preventive Therapy

Financial Status

Local government funds	\$10,521,384
Local fees	\$2,352,700
Local private funds	\$165,818
State grants	\$22,314,161
Federal grants	\$5,846,912
TOTAL:	\$41,200,975



Total WIC grocery dollars that entered Tarrant County's economy in 2011:

\$33,201,225

Joint Forces Mass Casualty Exercise

The Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps (TCMRC) participated in a Joint Forces Mass Casualty Exercise on Sept. 10, 2011. The TCMRC was tasked with overseeing pre-event registration and credentialing of all civilian participants, as well as coordinating onsite registration (check-in/out) and the badging of all military and civilian participants the day of the exercise. Participation in this exercise provided an opportunity to test the functionality and capability of the TCMRC's badging system and, more specifically, to test the system's ability to process a large number of spontaneous volunteers.

A total of 670 people were checked in within a two-hour period with minimal delays, demonstrating that the system is fully capable of rapidly checking-in/out a large number of spontaneous volunteers within a relatively short period of time. The "Just-in-Time" training and step-by-step guide used by the TCMRC proved to be more than sufficient to allow non-MRC staff to easily set up and operate the badging equipment and software. Participation in this exercise also gave MRC volunteers and other civilians an opportunity to train alongside military medics, nurses and other first responders, and to obtain a basic understanding of the military's first response/triage, helicopter evacuation and patient care procedures.

Point of Dispensing Tabletop/Functional exercises

Tarrant County Public Health Preparedness, in partnership with Tarrant County College, conducted Point of Dispensing Tabletop/Functional exercises in April and May of 2011. The Tarrant County POD Tabletop/Functional Exercise was developed to exercise and self-assess points of dispensing (POD) functions and the capability to sustain redundant communications with stakeholders during a disaster.

Agencies participating in the exercises included City of Fort Worth Fire Department/Emergency Management, Dallas County Health and Human Services, Grayson County Health Department, Tarrant County (Administrator's Office and Public Health), and Tarrant County College's (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, South and Trinity River campuses). The Tarrant County POD Tabletop/Functional exercises allowed Tarrant County Public Health and its partners to test mass prophylaxis and communications capabilities during POD tabletop and functional exercises. The exercise participants successfully achieved these pre-identified objectives:

- **Coordinate with law enforcement to provide security to protect medicines, supplies and public health personnel.**
- **Activate mass prophylaxis.**
- **Implement local plan for distributing and dispensing prophylaxis.**
- **Initiate call-down lists for mass prophylaxis site staffing.**
- **Ensure mass prophylaxis site operations are established in accordance with memorandums of understanding (MOUs).**
- **Provide internal and external security for mass prophylaxis sites.**
- **Develop and maintain plans, procedures, programs and systems.**
- **Strengthen interoperable and operable communications and capabilities.**

The exercises increased the participant's experience in response to mass prophylaxis by identifying strengths and areas needing improvement.

Legislative change affects public health

In 2011, the Texas legislature passed a law requiring college students to have a meningitis vaccination in order to attend any Texas college or university, effective the fall 2011 semester. The law created an unexpected demand for meningitis vaccine as the school year started. Public health immediately made its limited supply available to local college students. Fortunately, we were able to secure additional limited shipments of low-cost Adult Safety Net Program meningitis vaccine from the Texas Department of State Health Services and made the \$25 vaccine available on a first-come, first-serve basis to people 19 and older at TCPH's public health centers, while supplies lasted.



Antonio and Nancy Nunez, both students at Tarrant County College, await the results following their meningitis vaccination at Tarrant County Public Health's La Gran Plaza Public Health Center.

Mother-Friendly Worksite Task force

In early 2011, TCPH launched an employee task force to move the department toward greater compliance with legislative initiatives to reduce childhood obesity and illness, specifically regarding breastfeeding. According to Healthy People 2010 goals, 25 percent of employers in the United States have a program to support women who choose to return to work after birth and continue to breastfeed their infants. Public Health had some things in place, such as three "mothers rooms" in which nursing mothers could express milk. Employees returning from maternity leave, who wished to feed their baby using breast milk, also could access breast pumps available through the department's WIC program. The primary focus of the Mother-Friendly Worksite task force was to investigate and develop a policy that would support breast-feeding moms returning to work to continue to breastfeed their babies.

Through a series of employee surveys and focus groups, the task force developed a Worksite Lactation Support Program, whereby 1) all employees receive breastfeeding education so they can be relied upon to assist and maintain a culture of support regarding breastfeeding; 2) expectant families would have access to related literature and DVDs via a lending library; and 3) lactating employees would be given reasonable accommodations to meet their needs and those of the organization. Currently, breastfeeding employees have access to private areas in 19 public health facilities throughout the county. As supply permits, Public Health may loan equipment (portable electric breast pumps) to assist employee breast-feeding families with milk expression. The ultimate goal of the program is to transition participating employees back into the workplace and to increase the duration of breastfeeding, which is beneficial for both the mother/baby and the business of public health.

Tarrant County Public Health is one of the first county government agencies in Texas to create and implement such a policy, the bottom line of which will result in a healthier baby and mom. Additionally, a Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition has also been founded to promote such policies throughout Tarrant County. The coalition continues to meet at least eight times per year with a mission to protect, support and promote breastfeeding in the community.



What's good for babies is good for business

Tarrant County Public Health



NFP Graduations

On July 19, six young women became the first graduates of TCPH's Nurse-Family Partnership program. The program matches qualified nurses with first-time expecting mothers to teach them how to take care of themselves while pregnant and how to take care of their baby. The nurse works with the mother through the child's second birthday. The program's goal is to help improve the overall health status of both mother and child. In December, the Nurse-Family Partnership program held its second graduation ceremony. Twenty-eight young mothers completed the two-year requirements to graduate from the program. Many of the graduates credited the program with helping them become better parents and some noted that it also helped them along their journey toward their life goals.



Congratulations to...

Keisha Leatherman,

with Chronic Disease Prevention who, because of her work on behalf of Tarrant County Public Health, was named "2011 Citizen of the Year" by the YMCA of Arlington in April. According to the YMCA, "Ms. Leatherman has been a staunch supporter of efforts to improve the health and well-being of youth in our community."



Pamela Perrin, RN, BSN (left)

with the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program is presented a service pin from the Nurse-Family Partnership's National Service Office for her years of service with the program. Presenting the pin is Karen Miller, also with the NFP.





TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

1101 S. Main Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76104
817.321.4700

<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

TARRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

B. Glen Whitley
County Judge

Roy Charles Brooks
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Andy H. Nguyen
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Gary Fickes
Commissioner, Precinct 3

J. D. Johnson
Commissioner, Precinct 4

G. K. Maenius
County Administrator