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Message from the Board of Health President

Public Health Solutions (PHS) district health department was established by the state of Nebraska in 2002 to address local public health issues and to fill service gaps. A five county district was formed through inter-local agreements with participating counties. With collaborative partnerships in the PHS district, we are able to work towards our mission:

To prevent disease and injury, promote wellness, and protect the personal, community and environmental health of all people in Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, and Thayer counties.

Each year the Board of Health gives direction to the Department regarding what work should be done to address community priorities. The board is made up of a county commissioner and a community-spirited citizen appointed by the commissioners from each of the five counties. The Board of Health also has a physician and dentist, to bring the total number of members to twelve. Being the administrative authority for the Department the Board of Health governs the affairs of Public Health Solutions by policy development, community engagement, continuous improvement, and oversight.

We hope that you enjoy reading through this annual report that highlights the accomplishments of the staff and the work they do. As the Board of Health President this past year, and a long-standing board member, I would like to thank the members for their service, community partners for their engagement, and staff for their dedication to our communities.

Larry Cerny
Board of Health President

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<td>Dr. Jenna Cook, MD</td>
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PHS STAFF

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M Jane Ford Witthoff, Health Director

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Carmen Chinchilla-Gutiérrez, Dental Program Coordinator
Allison Clark, Healthy Families America - Family Support Specialist
Jenik Davis, Administrative Assistant
Megan Garcia, Office Specialist
Alejandro Gomez, Receptionist & Community Health Worker
Jennifer Hansen, Community Health & Development Coordinator
Jill Kuzelka, VetSET Coordinator & Advocate
Kate Lange, Saving Rural Hearts Coordinator, Public Health Nurse
Sharon Leners, Healthy Pathways Coordinator, Public Health Nurse
Caitlin Moore, Community Health Educator, RIR Coordinator
Valeria Ortiz, Medical Billing Specialist
Avery Paulson, Surveillance Specialist
Jessica Peterson, Health Navigator, Nurse
Debbie Pohlmann, Immunization Coordinator, Public Health Nurse
Deb Schardt, Public Health Dental Hygienist
Maria Schinstock, Community Health Worker, Diabetes Program
Nancy Schlamann, Development Assistant, Receptionist
Rhonda Theasmeyer, Healthy Families America Family Support Specialist
Lori Wagers, Healthy Families America Family Support Specialist
David Weiting, Emergency Response Coordinator
Debra Wendelin, Community Health Worker
Sonya Williamson, Fiscal Administrator
Laura Wooters, Healthy Families America Program Manager, Public Health Nurse
Adam Zobel, Community Health Educator, Health Hub Coordinator
1 INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE: PRIMARY, DENTAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH
   • Match people to needed services through Healthy Pathways
   • Increase behavioral health screening
   • Increase dental health screening, preventative services and referrals
   • Decrease undiagnosed chronic illness through Health Hub:
     — Community education regarding importance and availability of services
     — Application assistance to help overcome financial barriers to health care services
     — Increase health assessments and referrals through Health Hub

2 INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICES
   • Increase community assets that support healthy choices
   • Increase awareness about the availability of preventive services
   • Increase community promotion of preventive services and activities
   • Application assistance to increase access to preventive health care services
   • Increase screening and education through Health Hubs and worksite wellness
   • Assist with practice transformation
   • Decrease gaps in immunizations of HPV, pertussis, pneumonia and flu
   • Injury prevention: Safe Kids and Elder Fall Prevention

3 IMPROVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
   • Strengthen behavioral health of children through Rooted in Relationships
   • Support Community Prevention Coalitions in each county
   • Increase early intervention for children
   • Match people to needed behavioral health services through Healthy Pathways
   • Increase physical activity through walkable and bike-able communities
   • Connect veterans and families to needed services and support through VetSet
   • Community promotion of behavioral health

4 STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES
   • Healthy Families America home visitation
   • Support for Prevention Coalitions in each county
   • Increase parenting skills through Circle of Security parenting program
   • Healthy Pathways to address children and family needs
   • Application assistance to reduce financial barriers
   • VetSet program for veterans and their families
   • Increase community assets that support healthy families
The activities and programs of the local public health departments are organized under the three core functions of public health: assessment, policy development, and assurance. The assessment function involves the collection and analysis of information to identify important health problems. Policy development focuses on building coalitions that can develop and advocate for local and state health policies to address the high priority health issues. The assurance function makes state and local health agencies as well as health professionals responsible for ensuring that programs and services are available to meet the identified priority needs of the population.

Additionally, the activities and programs of the local public health departments are summarized under the associated ten essential services of public health. The ten essential services of public health provide a working definition of the public health system and a guiding framework for the responsibilities of local public health partners. These functions and services are specifically referenced in the Neb.Rev.Stat. §§71-1628.04.

1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure competent public and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based-health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.
FAMILY & INDIVIDUAL HEALTH SERVICES
The Rooted in Relationships initiative partners with communities to implement evidence based practices that enhance social-emotional development of children, birth through age 8 across Nebraska. Communities implement the Pyramid Model, a framework of evidence-based practices that promote the social, emotional, and behavioral competence of young children, in selected family childcare homes and childcare centers. In addition, communities develop and implement a long-range plan that influences the early childhood systems of care in the community and supports the healthy social-emotional development of children.

Saline County was selected as a target community in this initiative in 2014, and this year was the second year of implementation. Eleven childcare providers across the county, serving five different childcare locations, implemented the second year of the Pyramid Model in their early childhood classrooms. Childcare providers speak of a decrease in problem behaviors in children, as well as an increased ability to move smoothly between activities during their day.

An additional aspect of this initiative is the creation and regular meeting of a group of early childhood stakeholders. This group, comprised of local individuals with an interest in early childhood mental health, helps to guide the work being done in the community to ensure there is quality work going on throughout the county. One identified support that was implemented this year was Circle of Security-Parenting classes. This eight-week class provides parents with the tools to create a safe and healthy space for their child at home, and it complements the Pyramid Model work that is being done in childcare centers and homes.

In the past year, 141 families were directly served through implementation of the Pyramid Model and Circle of Security-Parenting classes throughout the county; additionally, 246 children were directly served. This work will continue in Saline County, with plans to expand into Jefferson County in the coming third year of the initiative.

Funding for Rooted in Relationships is provided through the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Funds are spent directly supporting Pyramid Model implementation in childcare centers, including contracts with early childhood coaches and trainers. Additionally, Circle of Security-Parenting classes are made available through this funding, as is early childhood training opportunities for professionals in the area.
Healthy Families America (HFA) is a national, evidence-based early intervention home visitation program for families facing challenges. HFA Gage and Jefferson is a partnership between Public Health Solutions and subcontractor Nebraska Children’s Home Society. Services are provided at no cost and on a voluntary basis to pregnant women and women with young infants.

HFA takes an infant mental health approach, with the belief that early, nurturing relationships are the foundation for lifelong, healthy development. Research has shown that HFA can significantly impact families in six areas: Improved mother and newborn health, reduction in child injuries, abuse, and neglect, improved school readiness and achievement, reduction in crime or domestic violence, improved family self-sufficiency, and improved coordination and referral for other community resources as needs.

HFA home visitors are family support workers who see families until the child’s third birthday to improve the health, social, behavioral, economic, and educational outcomes of overburdened families. Funding for evidence-based home visitation was appropriated through LB 195, Sec. 111 in 2014 and is disbursed and coordinated via an annual contract with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

**Success Story**

**Jamie and Kylee***

I was living with my boyfriend in his truck when we got arrested for possession of narcotics. I spent 64 days in jail and then I found out I was pregnant. I was so scared. My boyfriend didn’t want to be a dad, so we broke up. My foster mom took me in after I got out of jail on the promise that I’d stay clean. My probation officer told me about a program called Healthy Families America. My family support specialist started meeting with me every week to help me get ready for my baby. My baby girl was born in February and my family support specialist comes to visit us every week. She helps me learn how to be the best mom to Kylee. I haven’t always made the greatest decisions in my life, but now that I have Kylee, I want to do my best and be my best. It makes me feel awesome when we have the screening visits and I learn that her development is right where it should be. Healthy Families America has lots of fun activities that help Kylee’s brain grow and I have so much more confidence in myself as a mother. I love my daughter so much and look forward to my HFA visit every week. Being a single mom isn’t easy, but I’ll do whatever it takes to make a better life for my daughter. I’m on the right path and I’m even signed up for GED classes to start next month!

*Name has been changed to respect confidentiality.

**HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE?**

- **1097** Home Visits Completed
- **39** New Families Referred
- **33** New Families Screened
- **23** New Families Enrolled
- **35** Families with Ongoing Participation
- **77** Outreach Activities Performed
- **4** Quarterly Family Socialization Events

**Total Number of Families Served Since Program Launch in September 2014**

71
The purpose of the Healthy Pathways Program is to:

- Decrease undiagnosed and untreated chronic illness through outreach
- Increase the use of preventive health services and activities
- Increase patient self-care and compliance through Community Health Workers
- Reduce barriers to health through assessment, referral and navigation

The patients are referred when practitioners or community agencies see that they do not have access to health services they need, are not compliant with care, and experience barriers to health and health care.

This past year we responded to 141 patient referrals. 92% of the referrals were from Gage County health care providers. 84% of them were Gage county residents and 83% were uninsured. 66% had chronic illnesses and 34% had some form of disability.

Staff interventions include teaching and coaching, application assistance, and referrals. As a result of these interventions, 54% achieved compliance with medical home goals of improved health, improved self-care, and improved compliance with care plans.

The following are the specific services offered in response to referrals:

- Medication Assistance to free and reduced cost medication
- Assistance with finding and filling out applications for free vision exams
- Preventative screenings for prediabetes, prehypertension, immunizations, tobacco screening and referral to the Nebraska Quit line, and the Every Woman Matters Program including mammograms, cervical cancer screening, and colorectal cancer screening
- Access barriers to health and follow through with interventions and education
- Assist with financial assistance paperwork and establishing a primary care provider
- Increase patient self-care and personal responsibility through education and being an advocate.
- Expert services in referring to other community partners
- Assist with completion of Medicaid and Economic assistance applications
- Assist with setting up transportation, reminder calls for appointments and providing calendars with dates of appointments and names and phone numbers of providers
- Budgeting, housing, and self-care concerns.
- Some diabetic supplies available at free or low cost.

In all, there was $143,284.00 in cost savings to individuals.
The primary goal of the Minority Health Initiative (MHI) is to minimize the detrimental impact diabetes has on the local Hispanic population in Saline County. Community Health Workers (CHW) provide health screenings for hypertension, diabetes and prediabetes for at least 150 racial ethnic minorities per year at PHS, WIC clinics, churches, worksites and other identified venues. 100% of those found to be at risk for hypertension and diabetes are referred for services. Prediabetics are referred to the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)

Since July 2015, 272 clients have been screened for chronic diseases, were provided health education, and other options to address health concerns. Through the screening, we identified diabetics, prediabetics, and clients with high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Community Health Workers teach clients about the importance of self-testing, taking medications daily, physical activity, and maintaining a relationship with their health care provider.

Success Stories

DPP participant: “At this class I was motivated and I lost 17 pounds by week 16.”

DPP participant: Physician Referrals – A National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) participant went to her doctor, Dr. Jons at Saline Medical Specialties in Crete, Nebraska, for a check-up. Her A1C level decreased 2 points. Dr. Jons was pleased with her as she reported she had been involved in our diabetes prevention program. Dr. Jons is now referring minority prediabetic clients to our program for our NDPP and lifestyle intervention program to help control their blood sugar levels and decrease their risk of developing diabetes.

DPP participant: Her numbers have been improving and she is very satisfied. She is excited to report the improvements in her bloodwork to her doctor at Saline Medical Specialties clinic.

Decrease Emergency Room Misuse - At a screening event we hosted at a local manufacturer, we identified a client with a fasting blood sugar of over 300. We told the individual to contact his physician immediately and/or go to the emergency room. The individual proceeded to visit the PHS office after he finished work. Upon his arrival at the PHS office we decided to conduct another fasting glucose and A1C screening. His results were very high (A1C =11.4 & Fasting Glucose = 400).

A PHS Nurse and Community Health Worker started doing case management by scheduling him for a doctor’s appointment. The client has been meeting with PHS and brings his blood sugar records in once a week. In one month, his A1C decreased to 10.3. In 3 months, his A1C dropped to 6.5. The ability of PHS to provide education, emotional support, and medication assistance keeps clients like him out of Saline County Emergency Rooms.
In an effort to be responsive to the needs identified by the district public, and as part of its mission to promote health and wellness and prevent disease, Public Health Solutions has worked to provide preventive dental care options for the communities it serves. Through the department’s community health assessments, increased access to dental care was a high priority area identified. As a result, PHS created the “Life of Smiles” dental program and began its activities on October 2014. The program initially started providing services at Head Start sites, WIC clinics, and schools. Since then, PHS has seen many positive results of its work.

The initial goal of the program was to increase the number of children who have had dental health education and preventive services, and decrease the incidence of caries. PHS has successfully worked towards that goal.

To help increase the access to preventive care, the “Life of Smiles” program has also opened an on-site clinic at its Crete office. There, people can receive preventive services, such as cleanings, fluoride varnish, and sealants. The on-site clinic is available to both children and adults of all ages, and provides a low-cost alternative, particularly for those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Positive Quotes
“AWESOME! Thank you again....What an awesome program!”
-Staci Hergott, Meridian and Thayer Central School nurse

“First of all thank you so much for coming and working the screenings with us. It was greatly appreciated. Secondly, I have to pass on what a teacher just told me. She said the toothbrushes were a hit! She had 3 girls ask if they could brush their teeth after they had breakfast this morning. Something that had never happened before. She was very excited to see that and thanked me for them. So, I will pass that thank you on to you!”
-Becki Schmidt, Fairbury Public Schools nurse

“You ladies [did] an incredible job yesterday! You are wonderful with children. I look forward to working with you in the future!”
-Jane Niemeier, Tri-County Public Schools, Nurse

Funding
Funding for the “Life of Smiles” program was originally provided by a Title V/Maternal & Child Health subaward through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. It was obtained through a competitive grant application process. Other funding also includes a Blue Cross Blue Shield Fearless Grant to help support the on-site clinic at our offices, as well as a large private donation to help purchase equipment. PHS is also able to obtain limited funding through third-party payers. The funding pays for the staff and materials required to provide the dental services to the PHS district.
Throughout history, populations of people have been devastated by communicable diseases. Whether the impact was disfiguration and/or death from small pox, paralysis from polio, or wide scale death from influenza, the development of immunizations enabled the obliteration of these threats. The Immunization Program, in line with the mission of PHS, seeks to promote wellness, prevent disease and injury, and protect the health of our communities by providing immunizations to all members of our population. We serve individuals who have private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and those who are uninsured or underinsured. We assess the immunization status of each individual, explain the importance of immunizations, and provide vaccine to all. We record every immunization we administer in the Nebraska State Immunization Information System (NESIIS).

With all immunization clients, the individual’s NESIIS records are maintained to assure accuracy. The percentage of clients with complete immunization records is monitored. For PHS, the percentage of clients with completed immunizations has increased by 55% over the past year.

The number of immunizations given during 2016 totaled 3,262, exclusive of those given through the SKIP Flu program. This is an increase of 1,162 immunizations compared to those given in 2015.

### Immunization Coordinators

**Program Manager**
Kim Buser, RN, BSN

**Immunization Coordinator**
Debbie Pohlmann, RN, BSN

**Immunization Support Staff**
Kate Lange, RN, BSN
Megan Garcia, AAS
Nancy Schlamann
Valeria Ortiz
Alejandro Gomez

Positive Quotes

I have had many individuals tell me that he/she “didn’t feel a thing. Did you give the shot already?”

“You have good nurse hands.” This means a great deal to me as I hope to always be gentle when I give an immunization.

### HPV featured story

We have focused on HPV during this past year because it can cause six cancers in both men and women. The CDC estimates one in four people in the United States are infected with HPV. The best way to lessen the percentage of HPV infections in the population is by increasing the proportion of the population immunized against HPV. PHS staff have provided HPV education in college classrooms and to individuals through our immunization clinics.

This year, we partnered with Dr. Russell Ebke of Crete Area Medical Center to promote HPV prevention through a written and televised media campaign. This campaign targeted parents of high school athletes urging them to get their children immunized against HPV. Our HPV immunization rates have increased as we continue to educate on this important topic.

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<td>Vaccine for Adults</td>
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**HPV CANCER PREVENTION**

“HPV vaccines for boys and girls in their pre-teens/teenage years can prevent six types of cancer. Ask your doctor about getting your child vaccinated.”

*Dr. Paul J. Lavely, M.D.*

If there were a vaccine against CANCER, wouldn’t you get it for your kids?

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens)
In 2016, PHS rolled out the Teddy Bear Clinic. With a generous donation from Aetna, our staff took the clinic to community events in the district. The goal of the Teddy Bear Clinic is to help children become familiar with the instruments used during a well child check-up, so that they are less frightened when visiting their healthcare provider.

Every child is given the opportunity to ‘adopt’ an adorable 6-inch teddy bear. A PHS staff member helps the child give their bear a ‘Well Teddy Check-up’ before they take it home. Children don gloves and mask while they take their teddy’s temperature, listen to a heartbeat, show their teddy how to properly brush teeth, and give their bear a flu shot. After the check-up is complete, child and teddy are given a ‘prescription’ for healthy habits they can practice at home.

PHS distributed over 200 teddy bears last year. This fun family activity is available for health fairs and we hope to reach more communities in the coming year. Contact PHS if your community would like a Teddy Bear Clinic at your next health-related event.

Clinic Coordinator
Kim Buser, RN, BSN
Public Health Solutions offers flu immunizations to all school students and faculty each year. These are scheduled in late April/early May in order to get the clinics included on the calendar for the next school year.

The goal of this program is to increase the rate of people receiving the flu immunization. PHS feels it is especially important to try to immunize as many school-age children as possible as they are the ones who, although might not get as sick from the flu, spread the virus. We try to promote the need to get the flu shot as a way to protect the elderly like your grandmother or grandfather and babies too young to be immunized.

This year a big challenge came midway into the clinics when we received word from the manufacturer of the Flu Mist that the FDA had stopped the release of the next shipments. PHS was fairly lucky as we had received earlier shipments. We had to notify the schools that the supply of Flu Mist we had on hand was going to be reserved for those children in preschool and kindergarten. PHS educated the public on the fact that this was a nationwide problem and there was nothing we could do to get more flu mist vaccine until FDA approved release. We feel this did lower our rate of participation.

Having support from the county commissioners, and working with the health care providers has been a great source for educating the public about the importance of vaccinating and reaching those who are in need. A great support has come from the school districts in our five-county area. It is their decision to allow us to come into their school to offer the flu immunization to students. PHS greatly appreciates their willingness to allow us this opportunity. As stated earlier, we have built strong relationships with school staff with this program. A post survey sent to schools showed that they were pleased with the program.

The number of schools participating has increased since it began and currently all schools except two small parochial schools participate in the program. The Department has endeavored to coordinate this initiative with other health care providers out of the belief that health care is best delivered and/or coordinated through community health care providers. Furthermore, this program is seen as an adjunct to existing immunization programs. So every effort is made to not disrupt local immunization programs and to avoid taking revenue away from planned events of health care providers.

The Department’s program objective is to promote community wellness and minimize the cases of flu by increasing the number of immunized students. It is also the goal to increase

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<th>Percentage of students immunized via SKIP Flu Program</th>
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Public Health Solutions
SKIP Flu Program Percentages
Total - All Counties

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<td>2015-16</td>
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Goal:
The goal is to increase public awareness and education regarding flu immunizations. PHS hopes that more people understand that receiving a flu shot helps to protect the whole community especially the elderly and very young.

Special Note:
PHS immunized approximately 3,200 students and staff in October 2015. There was almost a 30% total participation rate with one county in our district having close to a 50% participation rate. These rates are above the national average.
1422 Component 1

Program Manager
Jennifer Hansen, MPH, CHES

Contracted Staff
Kerry Hagemeier, Worksite Wellness Development Specialist
Gretchen Swanson, Center for Nutrition, Healthy Vending/Cafeteria Data Collection & Analysis, Policy Development
Andria Cogley, Marketing/Promotions Graphic Designer

The Centers for Disease Control’s “1422” grant has set aside half of the grant’s funds to support community transformations to encourage healthier behaviors. This part of the grant allows PHS to spend funds on creating healthier physical environments where people can walk and bike safely, using signage to promote walking and biking paths, working with partnering organizations to develop signs and policies to support healthy foods and drinks in vending machines and cafeterias, and creating a network of partners to offer lifestyle change programs.

Walkability

Part of the 1422 funds have allowed PHS to assist two communities in the district, Hebron and Fairbury to create community-driven action plans for increasing walkability and bikability. From their action plan, community members of Hebron and surrounding areas formed the Thayer County Walking Coalition, a group of locals who are passionate about making their community a healthy, safe, and connected one. The coalition also wrote a city-wide resolution supporting health, exercise, and transportation through increased walking and walkability, which was passed by Hebron’s city council in 2016. The coalition continues to meet monthly in order to drive their plan forward, has held 3 community-wide fundraisers to increase awareness of their efforts, and has secured over $115,000 in funding to complete the trail system and connect key buildings and locations in Hebron. Beyond the 1422 dollars, funds for completing Hebron’s trails have been provided by local community members, the Hebron Community Foundation, the city of Hebron, and the National Resources District (NRD). The Thayer County Walking Coalition has partnered with local organizations, such as Thayer County Health Services/Korff Fitness and Wellness Center and Blue Valley Lutheran Homes to create a walking trail plan for connecting these key locations to downtown and making them more accessible to community members who wish to walk there. The coalition plans to focus efforts outside of Hebron in the future, potentially connecting to other communities through local access and recreation points like the Little Blue River.

Vending

PHS has provided policy-making assistance, marketing materials, and additional support to help local hospitals and community locations, such as Beatrice Community Hospital and the Beatrice YMCA, improve their vending machine options and to encourage the purchase of healthier foods and drinks. PHS was able to use 1422 funds to provide signage promoting the healthier foods and drinks to increase awareness of people who use the vending machines. Individuals who use the vending machines at both the hospital and the YMCA can download the NEMS-V Healthy Choices Calculator and input nutrition information of their potential choices to see if it is a healthy choice or not. Furthermore, not only did the YMCA improve their vending machines and increase the amount of healthier foods in their machines, they also put a policy into place supporting the improvements in order to make sure the changes made will continue in the future.
Worksite Wellness
While working with Beatrice Community Hospital on improving vending machine options, we identified the need for BCH to have a more comprehensive approach to worksite wellness. PHS worked with Beatrice Community Hospital and the Beatrice YMCA to create a partnership model for delivering a lifestyle change program called Smart Moves, a CDC-recognized diabetes prevention program focused on helping individuals eat healthier, include physical activity in their daily lives, and better manage stress. PHS provided funds to train two BCH staff members and one YMCA staff member as lifestyle coaches for the Smart Moves program. Additionally, 1422 grant funds were used to purchase a membership to Workwell, Nebraska’s worksite wellness council, to provide education on worksite wellness and include membership benefits for up to 10 local businesses. PHS extended the membership opportunity to Beatrice Community Hospital in order to provide education on worksite wellness and to work with BCH to incorporate the Smart Moves program as a covered employee health benefit. Next year, BCH plans to use signage to promote physical activity among employees. PHS will use 1422 funds to assist BCH in designing and implementing this signage.

Farmers Markets
PHS has continued to lead the Farmers Market Coalition of Southeast Nebraska through quarterly calls with farmers market managers and vendors, and hosting the 2016 season kick-off meeting where managers and vendors received marketing technical assistance, were updated on new rules/regulations by the department of agriculture and local food inspectors and were able to get their scales certified prior to the start of the season. We revised, printed, and distributed the 2016 Guide to Local Foods across the district to increase awareness of times and locations of our farmers markets and to provide information to the public about the benefits of buying fresh and local produce and goods. PHS will provide local farmers markets and vendors with resources on becoming SNAP certified and obtaining an EBT machine to accept SNAP EBT cards. This will improve healthy food access as well as access to fresh and local foods for those who live in our communities.

1422 Component Numbers
18 Smart Moves NDPP coaches trained
14 Smart Moves classes started in 2016 – Over 100 participants making healthy lifestyle changes
$115,000 in funds obtained by local community(ies) to improve walkability
1 healthy vending policy implemented
2 hospitals received signage to show healthier vending options
10 Farmers Markets supported
1 new Workwell membership provided to assist local hospital in developing worksite wellness program
1 vending machine purchased by PHS/DHHS
3 grocery stores increased access to healthy foods
6 healthy food demonstrations occurred in 2 local grocery stores
200+ healthy samples provided in healthy food demonstrations
12 volunteers helped poured concrete for Thayer County Walking Coalition trail development
1 city resolution passed to support walking as a form of physical activity and transportation
Public Health Solutions (PHS) is one of six local health departments in Nebraska that has been given the opportunity to receive funding through a federal grant called the 1422 grant. This federal grant is channeled down to the local health department through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The 1422 grant is a four-year grant funded by $215,000 per year; PHS is now in the second year of the 1422 grant work.

The 1422 grant purpose is to focus on health system interventions to improve the quality of health care delivery to populations with the highest hypertension and prediabetes disparities. The main areas for this work include health systems, primary care offices, and local pharmacies. Gage County was chosen for the target area of impact for this grant due to having the largest population of our five-county district and one of the highest Medicaid populations per capita.

During this last year, PHS has been working with Deines Pharmacy, Arbor State Pharmacy, and Weaver Pharmacy. All three of these pharmacies have staff trained in accurate blood pressure measurement through MCD Public Health. They are all offering free walk in blood pressure measurement and all have scheduled blood pressure measurement events on a monthly basis. Two of the three pharmacies have created blood pressure policies to follow, including education and lifestyle interventions to improve health outcomes. One of the pharmacies has also created a self-monitored blood pressure policy to guide staff through the steps of patient education and what to report to the physician. The physician’s offices have been informed of the benefits that the pharmacy can provide as health care extenders and patients are starting to frequent the pharmacies for blood pressure checks more often. This reduces the burden on the physician’s clinic and also the cost to the patient.

The pharmacies are also working on improving medication adherence. Taking medication daily as prescribed has a large impact on management of chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. Some of the pharmacies are implementing medication syncing so all of the individual’s medications are ready on the same day of the month, some are using automated call back systems to remind individuals it is time to pick up their medication, and one pharmacy is going above and beyond by having a staff member call the individual and try to find out why they have not been taking their medication as prescribed. By doing this they are addressing the person’s barriers and improving their medication adherence.

Another success this past year has been providing a free live webinar to providers and other health care personnel on the new National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP). PHS arranged for Endocrinologist Dr. Wahl from Omaha and Wellness Coordinator Brian Cross from Bryan Health to put together a live one-hour webinar. This webinar focused on the diagnosis of prediabetes and how the new NDPP program is an evidenced based program that physicians can refer patients to for lifestyle modification and weight loss. The goal of this program is to lose 7% of one’s total body weight and to reduce the risk of prediabetes turning into Type 2 diabetes. Gage County held two NDPP classes, one at the hospital and one at the YMCA. The NDPP in the five-county health district is called Smart Moves. It is the objective of the Nebraska Diabetes Prevention Action Plan to scale and sustain the NDPP program in Nebraska. One way of doing this is to create knowledge about the program in our community.
Each year in the U.S., over 326,000 people, including 6,000 children, experience out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest (OHSCA). Sadly, only about 10% survive. In rural areas, limited resources and physical distance make it even more difficult to save a person having a heart emergency. Fortunately, survival rates can be doubled or even tripled when bystanders help before the arrival of Emergency Medical Services—and most survivors have good outcomes.

In September of 2014, PHS received funding from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) for the Saving Rural Hearts Program (SRH). SRH aims to improve OHSCA survival rates in the district by increasing the number of bystanders trained to quickly recognize a heart emergency, call 911, provide CPR, and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Grant funding was spent primarily on training the public, and for purchasing AEDs, adult mannequins, and Friends and Family CPR Anytime kits. These expenditures were critical to the success of the grant. Towns and villages without an AED were able to receive one, and bystanders were trained in chest compression only CPR and AED use.

**Success Story**

“[I] wanted to thank you for the course [CPR/AED class]. Two weeks after the course, we had a ninety-year-old [man] go down at a cross-country meet. I was able to get someone to call 911, call our trainer over,... and send someone for the AED... A third-year PA student started CPR... Thanks for your help. Real life situations are very different and you are not sure how you will really react. Because of your time and dedication to your profession, [the man] was able to see another day and his grandson’s next race.”

58 AEDs placed in various community locations (ballparks, fairground buildings, libraries, schools, etc.)

Dispatchers trained in dispatcher-assisted CPR in all 5 counties

5 CPR Flash mobs
The VetSET program is committed to supporting service members, veterans and families. A veteran advocate works with veterans in the five counties PHS serves. The advocate coordinated meetings with every county Veteran Service Officer to support program initiatives: to serve, educate, and transition. Regardless of where or how they serve, veterans return to their families with diverse and unique needs that must be addressed for them to maintain good physical and mental health.

What makes VetSET Unique?
• Increase Military Cultural Competencies in rural Nebraska through networking and training opportunities
• Outreach to veterans and their families to connect them with the appropriate resources
• Lessen the division between community and veteran service systems; upgrade the local community system to better serve the veteran and his/her family.

VetSET was also able to help military members navigate questions and concerns about the VA and the CHOICE program. The Veteran’s Choice program provides eligible veterans the option to receive non-VA health care from approved providers in their communities. VetSET coordinated CHOICE Briefs in rural hospitals so the staff and administration could understand the benefits of being a CHOICE provider. Town hall meetings were also conducted so the veterans are able to understand their eligibility for the CHOICE program.

Success Story
A veteran in the PHS district was suicidal and almost homeless. His water and electricity had been shut off in the run-down trailer that he lived in, and he had not been taking his medication. The VetSET advocate received a call from the village board asking about resources; local law enforcement had also been called, and the advocate further suggested that they take the veteran to the Vet Center. Upon arrival at the Vet Center, it was determined that he needed more immediate care and was taken to Bryan Adult Mental Health. Through contact with the nurse at Bryan, the advocate was told that he would be evaluated and observed. For sustained follow-up care, the advocate then contacted the VA to see if he could be admitted into the VA Home. He was able to stay there for 6 months, during which the veteran advocate worked with the family in the PHS district to clean up the property.

Through work done at the VA home, the veteran eventually got a job, was able to drive again, and eventually got an apartment. He gave ownership of his property to his nephew. Through conversations with his mother, the advocate found that the veteran and his family now have Sunday dinner together after previous minimal contact. Both the veteran and his mother told the advocate that no one had taken the extra steps to help him and follow him through the entire process of getting the help he needed. VetSET gave this veteran the opportunity to better his life and access the resources that he needed.
Tai Chi Moving for Better Balance is a twelve-week evidence-based program identified to increase balance and reduce falls in older adults ages 60 and above. Meeting twice a week, the class teaches older adults a series of eight low-impact moves designed to aid them in moving about safely as they age. Emphasis is placed on slow, deliberate movements and participants note a decreased fear of falling, as well as less visits to the doctor due to injuries gained in a fall.

Falls are a major threat to the health and quality of life of older adults both across the United States and in the Public Health Solutions district area. There is a high rate of unintentional injuries in adults ages 65 and over, and this program was continued to help combat this statistic. By building capacity for trained leaders in local communities, Tai Chi classes have been implemented across the district for older adults.

This fiscal year, five community members were trained to become Tai Chi leaders in their areas. This additional capacity was added to our cadre of current leaders, and new classes occurred in Wilber and Crete. Existing classes have continued in Byron and Geneva; there is additional interest in Gage county, and this will be pursued in the coming year.

Many participants in the Tai Chi classes speak highly of their time learning the moves; in fact, many individuals are now in their second, third, or fourth year of practicing Tai Chi. The ultimate goal of the program is for these moves to become a daily part of an individual’s life. By continuing to practice slow, deliberate movements, adults will continue to feel better balanced and better centered on their feet as they move around their homes. One participant in Geneva gave the following testimonial: “We have shower doors on our tub at home so that I could lean against them if I felt that I was losing my balance. Two years ago, when we visited our son in Arizona, I felt uneasy when taking a shower in his home because he had just a curtain in his tub. When we went back the next year after taking the Tai Chi classes, I used the tub with the curtain and had no trouble. I also used to have cortisone shots in my left shoulder quite often to help with pain in that shoulder. At night, I would have to ice my shoulder to help with the pain. I noticed after taking Tai Chi classes for a while that I didn’t need the ice packs for pain anymore, and I haven’t had shots for about a year and a half.”

Funding Moving for Better Balance comes through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Injury Prevention Program. Funds are spent on coordination of efforts across the district, as well as the training and support of leaders and classes in the five counties we serve. In the past year, we have served an estimated 60 older adults across the district with Tai Chi classes.
Stepping On

Program Manager
Caitlin Moore, BS

Contracted Staff
Fillmore County Senior Services
Saline County Aging Services

Stepping On is a seven-week evidence-based program identified to increase confidence and reduce falls in older adults ages 60 and above. Meeting once a week, the class provides older adults with a holistic approach to their safety in their homes and in their lives. Participants are taught a series of strengthening and balancing exercises to use daily to increase their confidence, and a group of guest experts are brought into the classes on various weeks to discuss aging topics with the participants.

Emphasis with Stepping On is placed on making lifestyle changes in the participants’ daily lives. Adding grab bars to a bathroom, extra lighting in the hallway, ensuring safe footwear during winter weather, and empowering seniors to learn more about the medications they are taking are just some examples of changes made in participants’ lives. Participants are able to try out home aides (grab bars, cane attachments, walkers, night-lights) during the class, and guest experts are available to answer any questions that may arise.

Participants in the classes note that they feel safer at home and better equipped in the case of a fall after completing the seven-week course. This class provides older adults with the tools necessary to discuss their independence with their families and to discuss any concerns with their medical providers. This past year, three individuals were trained as Stepping On leaders, and new classes occurred in Wilber and Friend. There is additional interest in Gage and Jefferson counties, with plans being made for classes to be held there in the coming year.

Stepping On is funded through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Injury Prevention Program. Funds are spent on coordination of efforts across the district, the training and support of leaders and classes, and the purchase of materials for classes and displays. In the past year, we have served an estimated 30 adults with Stepping On classes. Additional older adults were educated on fall prevention, with plans made to host classes in the coming year.
The purpose of the Community Health Hub is to decrease morbidity and mortality through early detection and referral to treatment. The health hub model uses evidence-based strategies to promote clinical preventive services and make appropriate linkages to medical homes for the provision of screenings, follow up and treatment services.

Public Health Solutions chose evidenced based strategies to promote cancer screenings;
- **Breast cancer:** target population are women age 40-74. Women are recommended to have Mammogram testing done to screen for breast cancer.
- **Cervical cancer:** target population are women age 40-74. Women are recommended to have a preventive cervical cancer screening (Pap test).
- **Colon cancer:** target population are men and women who are 50-75 years of age. To increase screening rates, PHS provides an at home screening test called FOBT (fecal occult blood test), which, if positive, may be an indicator of colon cancer.
- **Blood Pressure Screening:** target population are men and women who are age 18 or older. Those with high blood pressure readings are able to have health coaching and will be connected to interventions and health care providers.

Success Story

Through health coaching sessions, a grandmother, who now has custody of her grandson, was able to complete a lifestyle change by increasing her exercise and eating a healthier, balanced diet. She stated that without her health coaching calls, she would have never been able to make the change. There was not a constant stream of support at home; the health coaching calls became her support and accountability to make the changes.
The Safe Kids of Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, and Thayer Counties coalition serves as a collaborative group working to prevent childhood injury across the public health district. The group's mission is to prevent unintentional injuries to children from birth to 14 years of age by increasing public awareness, changing behavior through education and safety devices, and by supporting child-safe communities; the three primary areas of focus for the coalition are child passenger safety, pedestrian/bike safety, and safe sleep/suffocation (fire safety).

The coalition completed work focusing on child passenger safety for the majority of the previous year. Seventy-five child safety seats were distributed to families in need throughout the district, and 87 child safety seats were checked. Safe Kids Day was also held in Crete on April 23, with approximately 225 children and parents visiting the booths at our event. Families were educated on fire safety, water and home safety, and child passenger safety, and the Nebraska State Patrol assisted with a seatbelt demonstration focused on teenage drivers and parents of teenagers.

This coalition is made up of individuals from the five PHS district counties; members include parents, nurses, Child Passenger Safety Technicians, police officers, and non-profit partners. Minimum funding is made available through Safe Kids Worldwide, while the majority of the funds used are received from donations and small grants through Nebraska Safe Kids. Additionally, $3,000 was received from the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety to purchase child safety seats for community check events throughout the area.
POPULATION PROTECTION
Healthy environments provide the foundation for healthy lives. PHS is committed to helping communities find the resources they need to provide safe environments for individuals and families. Environmental factors have a big impact on health conditions such as asthma, allergies, respiratory health, and many more.

PHS programs that promote environmental health include:
• Battery recycling
• Clean Indoor Air Act
• Radon Testing Kits & Education
• Recycling Initiatives
• Disease Surveillance
• Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL) case management

Throughout the year, PHS receives many calls regarding environmental health and safety. Issues of special interest this year included mold identification and removal, insect infestations, radon testing and awareness, environmental lead exposure, and nuisance properties. PHS relies on scientifically based information from sources such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide accurate education and awareness of the importance of environmental health and safety.

Comment from an environmental health client

“Thank you so much for coming to my home and showing me how to check for lead based paint. I was so worried about my children. You helped me understand what I can do to keep my family safe”

The environmental health program at PHS is funded by general funds that are received by the state.
Many people are concerned about the possibility of a public health emergency such as a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or disease outbreak. Local health departments, in partnership with DHHS Office of Public Health, and the CDC, work continuously to prepare individuals and communities for potential emergency events. History has shown us that we may never be fully prepared for a disaster, but we can certainly be better prepared. Recent events in Nebraska such as the Pilger tornadoes, DeWitt flooding, and Avian Flu outbreak have taught valuable lessons in how best to respond to emergencies. PHS participates in training year-round to prepare for these types of emergencies.

Highlights from the year include:
• PHS, in partnership with the Southeast Nebraska Healthcare Coalition (SENHCC), provided training exercises to district organizations on active shooter preparedness & response, Ebola/Pandemic planning, and emergency preparedness/planning for long-term care facilities.
• A comprehensive Ebola/Pandemic Plan was developed and distributed to healthcare facilities in the district. PHS and SENHCC provided a tabletop exercise to assist healthcare facilities in determining their readiness capacity in the event of an Ebola (or similar disease) outbreak.
• The Nebraska Public Health Laboratory (NPHL), in partnership with PHS, conducted in-person training at district hospitals on transporting highly infectious laboratory samples. PHS maintains a plan to transport lab samples from area hospitals to the NPHL if requested.
• PHS supply cache was inventoried to determine how/when emergency supplies would be used if requested. PHS maintains a cache of response materials, personal protective equipment, and supplies to support incident command situations.
• Provided education on personal and family preparedness at health fairs, community events, and fairs.

Comments from training participants
“Thanks for providing this training—it was very informative and will help me update my plan”

“This type of training is very much needed & appreciated. Thank you for providing it”

Karen from NPHL showing an ER nurse at Beatrice Hospital how to package infectious samples.

The PHS Emergency Response Program and Disease Surveillance programs are funded primarily through a Bioterrorism grant award from Nebraska DHHS. These funds are appropriated by the federal government and allocated to states for management and oversight at the local level.
Disease Surveillance

Program Manager
Kim Buser, RN, BSN

Surveillance Specialist
Avery Paulson, BS, Dual MS

Our surveillance program uses applied epidemiology (the study of disease trends, transmission, and incidence over time/area) to disseminate information about emerging and re-emerging infectious disease. Over the first half of this fiscal year, we faced five human cases of West Nile Virus; however, with increased educational materials distributed, we saw no cases through the latter half of the year.

Overall, we had 191 confirmed cases of infectious disease within our district. This year brought with it many severe weather events, a contributing factor to the number of cases we tracked over the course of the year. We continue to see diversity of relatively rare reportable diseases, including Tuleremia, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Ehrlichiosis.

Surveillance also contributes to strengthen vaccination programs. Opinion of vaccination programs has seemed to wane over the last decade as seen with re-emergence of vaccine preventable disease, examples being Mumps and Pertussis. Moreover, PHS provides flu vaccination programs for school districts and then tracks syndromic illness within those schools. Additionally, with a highly transient population, we have the potential for emerging infectious disease and we continue to put emphasis on preparation for such emergence.

“Nice work epi-linking all those cases in space and time. It’s great that you could track the transmission so far back.”

-Blake, VPD Epidemiology Surveillance Coordinator, NE DHHS

Public Health Association of Nebraska Annual Meeting Award Winning Poster. Disease distribution for 2015 was determined per county and presented at the 2016 PHAN Annual meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was award one of 3 awards for best poster presentation. Primary author Avery Paulson, and contributing authors Jane Ford Witthoff and Kim Buser.
PUBplc Health Solutions
Fund Revenues
Year End June 2016

Total Revenue: $197,6939.03

Federal Through State
(34.44%) $681,119.89
State (33.81%) $668,213.83
Services (11.39%) $225,098.70
Federal (10.54%) $208,314.71
Local (9.92%) $194,191.90
## PHS EXPENDITURES FY 2016

### STATE
- $226,561.53 LB 692
- $105,383.11 LB 1060
- $306,177.52 Home Visitation Contract
- $30,091.67 Minority Health

### FEDERAL – STRAIGHT TO PHS
- $31,026.68 HRSA – Healthy Pathways
- $177,288.03 HRSA – RAED

### FEDERAL – STATE PASS THROUGH
- $122,102.78 BT Contract
- $3,991.14 Ebola
- $39,624.55 Immunization Grant
- $126,759.95 Dental Grant
- $6,000.00 Radon Grant
- $5,765.70 West Nile Virus
- $268,020.52 1422 Contract
- $76,702.71 Health Navigator
- $14,773.15 Tai Chi
- $6,302.74 DHHS – Accreditation
- $11,076.65 Rural Roads

### LOCAL
- $110,925.00 ECI – Rooted in Relationships
- $52,451.67 NALHD – VetSET
- $30,815.23 Other Grants

### SERVICES
- $1,217.19 Health Care Connections
- $64,377.30 Immunization Clinic
- $26,756.38 Dental Services
- $132,747.83 SKIP Flu Reimbursement