

2009 Annual Report of the Gillespie County Health Board

I. INTRODUCTION

The Gillespie County Health Board provides oversight on health matters, reports its findings to the City of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, and gives advisory opinions and policy recommendations to the City and County.

The Gillespie County Health Board respectfully submits this report for its 2009 activities, findings, and recommendations.

Members of the Health Board are:

Tom Hutton – Chairman
 Gina Enderlin
 Richard Traugott
 Stanley Iwanicki
 Ross Burtwell
 Joyce Fox
 Dawn Sultemeier
 Joanne Martin

Ex-Officio Members:

Becky Walch
 Kelli Olfers

II. PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE REPORT

Below are the reportable conditions to date that have been reported in Gillespie County for 2009.

Food Borne/Enteric	Total	Out of County	Year to date
<i>Campylobacter</i>			7
<i>E. coli O157:h7</i>			0
<i>Salmonellosis</i>			3
<i>Shigella</i>			0
<i>Trichinosis</i>			0
<i>Cryptosporidia</i>			1

Sexually Transmitted

<i>AIDS</i>		0
<i>Chancroid</i>		0
<i>Chlamydia</i>		32
<i>Gonorrhea</i>		0
<i>Hepatitis C</i>		0
<i>Syphilis</i>		0

Vaccine-Preventable

<i>Chicken Pox</i>		7
<i>Hepatitis A</i>		0
<i>Hepatitis B</i>		1
<i>H. influenza</i>		0
<i>Measles</i>		0
<i>Mumps</i>		0
<i>Pertussis</i>		0
<i>Rubella</i>		0
<i>Tetanus</i>		0

Other

<i>Meningitis, Bacterial</i>		0
<i>Meningitis, Viral</i>		0
<i>Strep, invasive</i>		1
<i>Tuberculosis,</i>		1
<i>MRSA</i>		0
<i>Lyme disease</i>		1
<i>Flu-like Illness (ILI)</i>		394
<i>Flu Type A</i>		54
<i>Flu Type B</i>		14
<i>Flu N/D</i>		28
		0
		0
		0

**Year to date totals do not include non-Gillespie County residents that were treated locally.*

III. SANITARIAN'S REPORT

The Gillespie County Health Division now has a full time Sanitarian and a full time Certified Food Safety Professional. This change was evidenced by the increase in the number of inspections with retail food establishments that are needed to be performed on a day to day basis and at the same time be able to

handle day to day calls, reports, accounting, and other environmental related inspections and investigations.

The following new retail establishments were permitted in 2009: Frontier Outpost, Mario's Tex Mex, Hill Country Kitchen To Go, St. Barnabus Church, Full Moon Bar BQ, Roncho Ponte Vineyard, Café Real, The Peach Pit, Fredericksburg Pie Company, Argentine, West End Pizza Company, Shannon Carr Nagel Wedding Cakes, Fredericksburg Inn & Suites, Holiday Inn Express, Twin County Lamb, Max & Zelda's Oasis Café, Fredericksburg Bar BQ Company, LDR Meat Market, and Best Western Fredericksburg.

As of November 4, 2009, 417 retail inspections were performed this year. This number does not include courtesy inspections, i.e. inspection approvals upon opening or during construction, or follow up visits. There were 12 mobile permits issued this year.

With the anticipation of passing a food handlers City ordinance and County order in the coming months, the Gillespie County Health Division and the Agri-Life Extension office has teamed up to offer 2 hour food safety classes. To date we have educated 114 food handlers. We are currently working on setting up classes in Spanish.

Temporary permits and inspections of the following functions in Gillespie County were issued: Fredericksburg Trade Days, Texas VW Classic, Peach Jamboree, Lavender Festival, Peddler Shows, Night In Old Fredericksburg, Gillespie County Fair, Renewable Energy Round Up, Gourmet Chili & Pepper Festival, Fredericksburg Farmers Market, Crawfish Festival, Pickin for the Record- Luckenbach, Lonestar Street Rod, and the Fredericksburg Vintage Car Swap. There were 225 temporary health permits issued this year to date.

The office of Sanitarian inspected four foster homes for the year of 2009 and 8 daycare centers. FISD, HISD, & Doss Consolidated have been inspected for health and safety.

Inspection scores of establishments and helpful information are listed on the City of Fredericksburg website. In addition to inspections of food establishments, the Gillespie County Health Division carries out other inspections, such as the municipal swimming pools of the City of Fredericksburg and the LBJ Park pool.

The sanitarian participates on several boards that meet on a regular basis. The following is a list of different boards:

- Emergency Management Committee
- AgriLife Extension Leadership Advisory Board
- TAB Board (Translational Advisory Board)

IV. HEALTH BOARD HEARINGS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that 17 million U.S. households reported some degree of food insecurity in 2008, up from 13 million households in 2007 (as reported by the WSJ, November 17, 2009). It was also reported that families struggling to buy enough food in 2008 jumped 31% over the previous year. Last year when the economy began to nose dive, the Gillespie County Health Board determined

that food insecurity and hunger should be investigated. The following study and report was directed by Stanley Iwaniki.

Feeding the Hungry in Gillespie County

The recent downturn in the economy and concurrent rise in the cost of food has led the Gillespie County Health Board to consider what resources are available to the less fortunate citizens of the County, especially children and the elderly on fixed incomes, to help mitigate potential hunger and resultant inadequate nutrition. We reviewed the major Federal programs available to low income families and individuals and identified several support options provided by local non-profit and faith-based groups. The in depth study was led by Stan Iwanicki who has spent a professional life time working within the food industry.

Federal Programs:

A number of federal government nutrition programs have been established to help low-income families and individuals. Chief among them are the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly the Food Stamp Program), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. While the Board considers these programs not within the scope of their purview, we did hear testimony about the WIC and the school-based feeding programs to gauge their impact on affected members of the community.

WIC

Karen Brooks, the local WIC representative, reviewed the program requirements and benefits with the Board. The WIC program is a nutrition program designed to give children the best possible start by providing optimal nutrition during critical development stages. WIC services include nutrition education, breast-feeding support and education, WIC foods, and referrals to a variety of health and social services. The program is for pregnant women, breast-feeding women, postpartum women, infants and children younger than five. To be eligible, participants must meet income guidelines, have a nutrition need or related health problem, and be a resident of Texas. Income eligibility guidelines are around 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. For example, a family of 4 can earn up to \$40,793 per year. If a person is not working at all, no benefits will be granted. Some of the healthy foods that are available through the WIC program are: infant formula and cereal, tuna & carrots for moms who choose to breastfeed, eggs, cereal, juice, beans, peanut butter, milk, and cheese. Starting in October of 2009 more foods will be added to the benefit list of the WIC program including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, baby foods, low fat milk, soy milk and tofu options. Karen did share that there was a language barrier within the Hispanic community. She felt a bi-lingual staff member would help communicate the nutrition education message. The WIC staff tries to inform the community with outreach programs, flyers in doctors' offices, the hospital and low income housing areas. They also try to organize an open house each year.

School Nutrition Programs:

Joyce Fox, director of the School Nutrition for FISD presented facts and figures about the National School Lunch Program to the Board. She saw an overall growth of 2% in the National School Lunch Program at FISD in the 2008-09 school year. Approximately 76% of the children at the primary school, 58% in the elementary school, 50% at the middle school and about 29% at the high school qualify for the program. Overall FISD has 48% of its students participating in the free or reduced lunch program.

An application must be filled out to participate in the program. If for some reason a family cannot complete the application, an administrator may complete the application on the child's behalf. Families with incomes at 130% or below the Federal Poverty Guidelines qualify for the free lunch program. Families that fall between 130% and 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines qualify for reduced meals. Currently, the schools charge \$2.10 for lunch at the Primary and Elementary and \$2.25 at the middle and High School and \$1.35 for breakfast district wide. Reduced rate is \$0.40 for lunch and \$0.30 for breakfast district wide.

The Texas Nutrition Policy has been in place at FISD for 4 years. Schools must adhere to this policy if they participate in the Federal Lunch Program. It dictates the number of fat grams, calories, and portion size that can be served to certain age groups.

FISD also sponsors a summer food service program during the months of June and July. There is no application necessary and children ages 1 to 17 can participate. Sack lunches are provided at the Elementary School and the Boys and Girls Club. This program is not currently mandated but will be required if over 60% of the children enrolled in FISD participate in the National School Lunch Program.

Local Programs:

Fredericksburg Food Pantry:

Kep Johnson, board president of the Fredericksburg Food Pantry presented testimony to the Board. The local Food Pantry has been in existence since the early 1980s. It operates under the auspices of the Ministerial Alliance which has a liaison member on the Food Pantry's Board of Directors.

The Food Pantry is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday for three hours each afternoon. There are two part time employees who administer the program. They order supplies and supervise the volunteers who do the bulk of the work. A part time maintenance person is also employed. An application that requests information about family size, earnings, expenses and health situations is required as well as proof of residence in Gillespie County. No one is turned away at their first visit but if they return they must furnish pay stubs, utility bills etc. There are limitations on how often people can receive food. Information on other food assistance programs such as meals on wheels, food stamps, WIC etc. is made available to Food Pantry clients. About 75 families are assisted

monthly; however, the current economic climate has resulted in a marked increase in requests for help between 2008 and 2009.

The Pantry works very closely with the Austin Food Bank and is able to buy food from them at .17 per pound. The Food Bank operates under federal guidelines and is actually the successor to the Federal Surplus Food Program. The Food Bank always has food but some items, such as fresh produce, are often in short supply. They also receive donations from commercial entities which must reduce inventories of certain food items for example, day old bread.

The Food Pantry does not operate like a grocery store. The volunteers sort the food stuffs that are available and assemble “food baskets” for distribution to recipients. What a person or a family receives is based on what the pantry has available when they request assistance.

The Food Pantry does not solicit either food or monetary donations. They currently receive sufficient monetary donations to operate. Local community organizations such as church groups and youth groups; often have food drives to benefit the Food Pantry. Mr. Johnson feels the community has supported their cause.

Gillespie County Committee on Aging (Golden Hub Community Center):

Denise Usner, director of the Golden Hub Community Center, gave testimony to Gillespie County Health Board about services and activities provided by the organization. The Golden Hub dates back to 1975 when a group of people came together to explore providing services to the elderly of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County. Since then they have developed the current Center which is located at 1009 North Lincoln.

The organization offers meals five days a week to seniors who wish to dine at the facility and deliver meals to homebound senior citizens and the disabled. Last year their volunteers delivered over 19,000 meals to people in our community. The cost of the meals is \$4 by donation but service will not be refused to seniors who cannot afford the cost. There are no special dietary considerations, except to provide a sugar free desert for diabetics. Most food is purchased from a foodservice provider but some donations are received from various places such as the farmers market. Currently, the meals-on-wheels program includes the Harper and Doss areas. The Stonewall area will be added soon. Additionally, they are planning to provide breakfast twice a week. There are approximately 75 volunteers helping with the meals-on-wheels program.

When questioned as to the need of the “dine in” meals, Ms. Usner expressed her feeling that the congregate setting was more social than need based, however, the meals-on-wheels program was definitely based on need. Other services provided at the Golden Hub are exercise classes, line dancing, dominos, bridge, computer classes, bingo, quilting, and Spanish & German classes. They rent their facility out to earn extra money for their budget. The city provides no funding to the Golden Hub but the County provides an annual \$5,000 grant to the center. The County grant enables them to apply for additional grants through the Texas Department of Agriculture. They have received

some grant money in the past several years that has allowed them to renovate parts of their building. They have 4 full-time and 5 part-time employees. Their annual budget is \$267,000 of which 40% comes from government sources. The remainder of their funding comes from participant donations, local donations and fundraising. The Golden Hub advertises through the newspaper, doctors offices, radio, and through other organizations.

Angel Food Ministries:

The Board also heard testimony from Laverne Loving a representative of Angel Food Ministries. Angel Food Ministries is a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing food relief and financial support to communities throughout the United States. The program began in 1994 with 34 families in Monroe, Georgia (between Atlanta and Athens), and has grown to serve hundreds of thousands of families every month across 35 states. Angel Food Ministries crosses denominational lines. In Fredericksburg three churches currently participate in the program; Fredericksburg United Methodist Church, First Baptist Church and Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Angel Food is available in a quantity that can fit into a medium-sized box at \$30 per unit. Participants place their orders several weeks in advance and food boxes are available for pickup near the end of each month. Each month's menu is different than the previous month and consists of both fresh and frozen items with an average retail value of approximately \$60. Comparison shopping has been done across the country in various communities using a wide range of retail grocery stores and has resulted in the same food items costing from between \$42 and \$78.

Generally, one unit of food assists in feeding a family of four for about one week or a single senior citizen for almost a month. The food is all the same high quality one could purchase at a grocery store. There are no second-hand items, no damaged or out-dated goods, no dented cans without labels, no day-old breads and no produce that is almost too ripe. Also offered are specialty boxes such as steaks, chicken and pork. Additionally, there is no limit to the number of units or bonus foods an individual can receive, and there are no applications to complete or qualifications to which participants must adhere. Angel Food Ministries also participates in the U.S. Food Stamp program. Donations are accepted so that food boxes can be supplied to those in need but without resources to make a purchase.

Findings:

Residents of Gillespie County in need of food assistance have government and non-government sources of support available to them. The government programs (SNAP, WIC and School Nutrition programs) appear to be utilized by the community, but it is the sense of the Board and the administrators of these programs that participation may not be as high as it should be. Lack of participation is most likely caused by language barriers and the social stigma that may be attached to participating in need-based programs. The

Gillespie County Health Board supports efforts to make sure those eligible for these programs are aware of the benefits available to them.

As usual, there is a rich base of community support for those needing food assistance. We identified three primary community resources; the Fredericksburg Food Pantry, Meals-on-Wheels through the Golden Hub Community Center, and Angel Food Ministries. They operate primarily on donated funds and with some revenue from participants. Each of these groups provides services to a different portion of the community.

The names “Meals-on-Wheels” and “Food Pantry” are well known because of their national scope, however, the details of their local operations and availability may not be as familiar to County residents. Angel Food Ministries is relatively new to the area and not as well known as the others. Being faith-based, its outreach is primarily through churches but there are no restrictions on participation.

As with participation in government programs, the Board supports efforts to publicize and support these community efforts to ensure those in need of the services provided are aware of their availability. Examples of efforts that could be put forth from the City of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County are listed below:

- Provide a comprehensive directory that list all agencies and services available in Gillespie county. The Needs Council has a list of these services. A directory such as this would be most effective if produced in English and Spanish.
- Provide a listing of services on the City of Fredericksburg’s website as well as Gillespie County’s website.
- Have a proclamation for Good Nutrition Month with information about programs available.

V. H1N1 REPORT

This spring the United States began to see first cases of H1N1 influenza, or as the media refers to it, the “swine flu”. As the cases began to rise here in Texas, we knew it would only be a matter of time before it became a reality for Gillespie County to have confirmed cases. The Health Board was kept informed of matters from Becky Walch, our public health nurse for Gillespie County. As information came in, the board voted unanimously to support education on this major health issue. It quickly became apparent the community was doing a great job in trying to get as much accurate information out whether it be by the local emergency management meetings, public health nurse, the Fredericksburg Standard or Hill Country Memorial Hospital System with their H1N1 community forum.

Additionally, there was a huge push by many in our medical community for residents to get their seasonal flu vaccine to help protect from the annual seasonal influenza. This was accomplished by many seasonal flu clinics that were held in

Harper, Stonewall, and Fredericksburg as well as many retail outlets offering vaccinations like HEB and Walgreens.

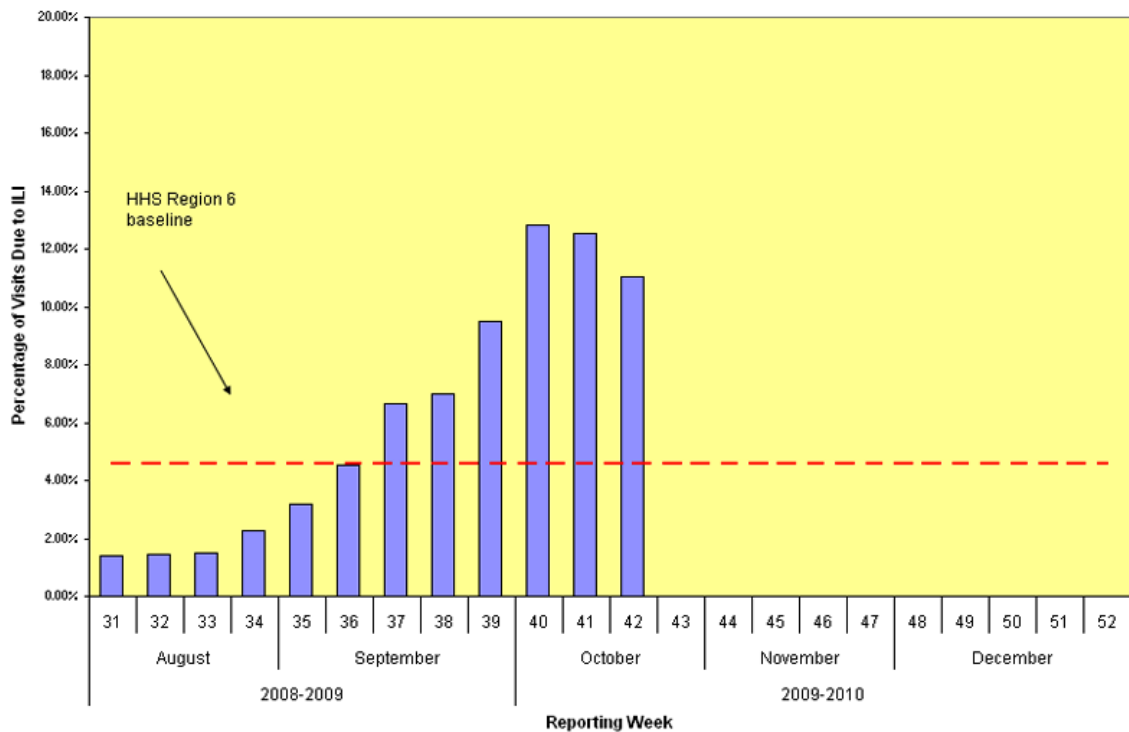
As for current statistics, the following graph illustrates the number of deaths and hospitalizations in our region, (Region 8), due to H1N1.

Cumulative Surveillance Case Summary for Novel Influenza A (H1N1) by Health Service Region as of 10/24/2009

Health Service Region	Hospitalizations *	Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Admissions*	Deaths**
Region 1 Total	23	10	1
Region 2/3 Total	270	32	19
Region 4/5N Total	39	10	7
Region 6/5S Total	170	74	21
Region 7 Total	67	16	11
Region 8 Total	112	19	14
Region 9/10 Total	117	16	9
Region 11 Total	192	60	31
Texas Total	990	237	113

The H1N1 influenza virus is still on going in our community today. Data does suggest that we peaked in the number of cases during week 40, and have experienced a slight decline in the past two weeks.

**Percentage of Visits Due to Influenza-Like Illness (ILI),
Texas Providers in the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network,
2008-2009 and 2009-2010 seasons**



The H1N1 will continue to be a major health topic leading us into 2010. The Gillespie County Health Board will continue to take action in keeping our community healthy by:

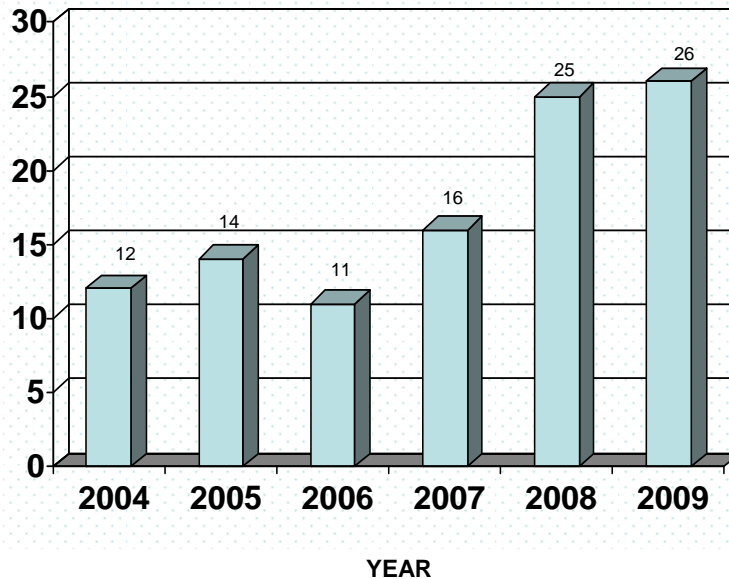
- Communicating health information effectively;
- Supporting vaccination efforts; and
- Linking vulnerable and hard to reach populations to vital information and resources.

VI. ONGOING STUDY OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

Teen pregnancy across the country was on a decline until about three years ago when the nation experienced a rise in the incidence for the subsequent three years. Unfortunately, our own community has also followed this same pattern. Teen pregnancy incidence, as reported by school year at the Fredericksburg High School, was 2004 – 12, 2005 – 14, 2006 – 11, 2007 – 16, 2008 – 25, 2009 – 25, plus one reported at the middle school. This trend has once again prompted debate at the national and local level about how to curb teen pregnancy. Public services for a teen mother are reported to average \$4,080 per year.

The topic of teenage pregnancy came to surface during the boards September meeting. It was presented by Dr. Dick Traugott as an update from the TAB, (Translational Advisory Board). The following graph depicts the upward trend in teenage pregnancies at FISD.

FISD STUDENT PREGNANCIES 2004-2009



Why care about teen pregnancy? There are high risks for the Mom (dropout of school, welfare, single parenthood), high risks for the baby (low birth weight, infant mortality, abuse, foster care, incarceration, teen parenthood) and for the Dad, (less education and lower income). Another consideration is the cost in taxes. In 2004 Texas spent one billion dollars of tax money on teenage pregnancies. Texas has the 3rd highest teen birth rate and the highest percent of repeat teen births in the nation.

Success in addressing this issue involves a family and community effort to develop a strong sense of individual worth and responsibility based on personal values as well as comprehensive educational program.

To pursue what this community might do to reverse this pattern of rising teen pregnancy the Health Board in conjunction with the Translational Advisory Board (TAB) is in the process of engaging in the following plan.

1. Define the problem of teen pregnancy in our community more completely by gathering additional data from agencies which are impacted or provide services to pregnant teens and look for unique issues which our community might address.
2. Provide forums for disseminating and receiving information related to this problem in our community for those who have interest or deal with teen

pregnancy. (In June 2009 Dr. Janet Realini, Director of Healthy Futures, a non-profit agency which deals with reducing teen pregnancy, spoke at an open meeting on developing a community effort to deal with teen pregnancy.)

3. Search for newer, tested educational programs which are proven to be more effective in changing behavioral patterns in teens.

With these statistics in mind, the Gillespie County Health Board voted unanimously to join in efforts with the TAB board to educate the community on the topic of teenage pregnancy. The board plans on looking into different educational programs, health organization services, and community character building programs within our community to address this societal problem.

VII. SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH ONGOING STUDY

Suicides in Gillespie County was another topic of interest to the Gillespie County Health Board. According to a 2008 Community Health Status Report sponsored by ASTHO (Association of State and Territorial Health Officials), Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and NACCHO (National Association of County and City Health Officials), Gillespie County is above its peer counties and above the national average in suicides. It was mentioned in our September meeting that there is one psychiatrist, very few psychologist coupled with the fact of a population with high alcohol usage. Another factor is our community lacks a local suicide hotline. With this information at hand, the board decided to look into mental health issues and access to mental health in Gillespie County as a beginning project in 2010. This information was passed to the TAB (Translational Advisory Board). The University of Texas School of Public Health in San Antonio is working in conjunction with the TAB, and volunteered to take this project as part of a class assignment. Their findings will be submitted to the local TAB and to the Gillespie County Health Board.