



PUBLIC HEALTH

Connections

Bureau of Community Health Systems

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To submit an item for *Public Health Connections* or to join the email list, please email **Lisa Horn** at lisa.horn@ks.gov



Health departments report 2019 achievements

Local health departments continued to forge ahead with innovation, passion and hard work in 2019.

In addition to the core public health services they provide day in and day out, many health departments focused their work on preparing for accreditation, tobacco prevention, access to healthy foods, health equity and mental health, to name a few.

Here are some highlights submitted by health departments from around the state:

Butler County



In collaboration with its local mental health center, Butler County started a Mom-to-Mom support group for women experiencing post-partum depression and anxiety.

Crawford County

Received the Health Equity Maternal Child Health grant to focus on increasing tobacco cessation rates for prenatal



The Lawrence-Douglas County WIC program was one of 16 departments in the United States to earn the Gold Premiere Award for Excellence in Breastfeeding Support in 2019.

and postpartum women. The agency is tackling the issue by providing cessation appointments in conjunction with clients' WIC appointments and by collaborating with the county's federal-qualified health care center to offer cessation services with its prenatal classes.

Harvey County

Staff worked with federal, state and local

See 'Highlights' on page 2



Public health tracks Coronavirus

Kansas currently has no confirmed cases of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus and one person under investigation (PUI). KDHE continues to work with CDC and other health agencies to learn more about the virus. Visit kdheks.gov for the latest information.

Dr. Norman delivers State of Public Health address

Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Secretary Lee Norman, MD, delivered "2020: The State of the Health of Kansans" to the Kansas Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Jan. 21.

Dr. Norman delivered the same presentation to the Kansas House Health and Human Services Committee Jan. 22. This is the first time KDHE has delivered such address to the Kansas Legislature.

See 'Norman' on page 3

Highlights shared by departments around the state

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Harvey

partners to pass a model T-21 (no tobacco sales to those under age 21) policy for the city of Newton. The policy is being used as a national model through the Public Health Law Center.

The department also established a communication/referral flow model for use by law enforcement, emergency responders, health care and behavioral health for suspected individuals with drug misuse concerns.

Kingman County

Following 26 years of service, longtime administrator Cindy Chrisman-Smith retired Aug. 31. Kingman County Health Department Staff Nurse Mary Schwartz assumed the administrator role Sept. 1.



Kingman

Lawrence-Douglas County



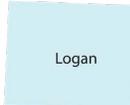
Douglas

Implemented a new electronic medical records system and QLess, an online platform where clients can “check in” virtually to the clinic. Using text messages, it provides clients an estimate of how long their wait time will be. The data obtained from the software is being used to identify process improvements.

The agency’s WIC program won the Gold Premiere Award of Excellence for Breastfeeding Support and was one of 16 programs in the U.S. to earn the recognition.

Logan County

The Logan County Health Department was featured in episode 11 of “WooHoo Kansas Schools,” sponsored by the Kansas Health Foundation. Their presentation was on high speed handwashing. See the episode [here](#).



Logan

Due to recent changes in the community, the health department needed to identify a different primary Point of Dispensing (POD) location. The 4H building was chosen and the POD was set up Oct. 24. The POD’s doors opened at 3 p.m. and closed at 6 p.m., with 113 people vaccinated against influenza during that time.

Osage County



Osage

With support from the Emporia Community Foundation, the agency launched an animal therapy program in the health department’s clinic to help calm children during vaccinations and provide “furry” support to other clients. “Nurse Gracie” received her certification through Therapy Dogs International in November. A pilot research project is being launched as well. *(Check next month’s Connections for a full article on Gracie and her impact).*

Riley County

Riley County had an accreditation site visit in November and will learn in the spring of 2020 if they’re accredited.

The department successfully completed another round of its Community Needs Survey, to include one-on-one interviews and focus groups with a more diverse population. This will help to enhance the department’s Community Health Improvement Plan.



Riley

Shawnee County



Shawnee

Shawnee County hired its first Community Health Planner. The position works with Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods, a grassroots health coalition, and will track and report out on the Community Health Improvement Plan that was also completed in 2019. The department also submitted all of its accreditation documentation and is preparing for a February site visit.

Thomas County

The agency began providing Worksite Wellness Initiatives to local businesses in Thomas County by conducting biometrics and labs for their employees and consulting on existing policies and policy changes to improve health. In addition, the health department and K-State Research and Extension are collaborating to educate Extension agents from 26 counties on tobacco prevention.



Thomas

Wallace County



Wallace

The Wallace County Health Department facilitates bi-monthly meetings to work on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experience) and trauma informed systems of care. Also in 2019, the agency joined a regional food policy council and have begun local healthy food access work.



2020 census: Counting everyone once and in the right place

by Lisa Horn, Public Health Nurse Specialist, KDHE, Local Public Health

The 2020 census has already begun in the most remote parts of Alaska — while the area is frozen and still traversable.

Census notices and forms will start arriving in the mail beginning in March, with Census Day set for **April 1, 2020**.

Everyone's participation is critical in helping determine the allocation of more than \$600 billion federal dollars to go toward infrastructure, preparedness, disaster relief, education and disease control, to name a few.

Undercounting by even 1 percent could cost Kansas more than \$58 million each year over the next decade.

The U.S. Census Bureau's goal is to count everyone "once, only once, and in the right place."

But even with robust public outreach, advertising, and

data collection processes, the 2020 Census, like previous censuses, will count some people more than once and miss others entirely.

Ten percent of the Kansas population has been identified as "hard-to-count" and health departments are integral in ensuring these people are counted.

These groups include:

- Young children
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Low income persons
- Persons experiencing homelessness
- Undocumented immigrants
- Person with mental or physical disabilities.

By law, the census is confidential. Answers cannot be used for law enforcement purposes or to determine personal eligibility for government benefits.

See kansascounts.org to get involved and for more info.

Norman: Health isn't just medical care

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"As the State Health Officer, it is my duty to look at the health of our state and provide education on what we as a state can do at an individual level, a community level and a government level," Dr. Norman said. "Health isn't just medical care. It's our behaviors, our environment, our policies and our outcomes."

Since 1990, Kansas has seen the greatest decline in its health rankings according to America's Health Rankings published Dec. 6:

- **Behaviors**- Kansas ranks no. 38 in the survey for obesity rates and no. 30 for smoking.
- **Environment**- Kansas ranks no. 21 in the U.S. for the number of children living in poverty. Kansas's chlamydia numbers are twice the healthiest state, at 465 per 100,000.
- **Policy**- Kansas ranks no. 49 in U.S. for females receiving the HPV vaccine and no. 34 for males. Kansas ranks no. 32 for children ages 19-35 months completing vaccines at 69 percent. Kansas ranks 40th for the amount of dollars in public health funding at \$60/person. This is 4.5 times less than the top state at \$281/per person.
- **Medical care**- There is low access to dentists, particularly in rural Kansas. Kansas ranks no. 38 with 50 dentists per 100,000. Kansas also ranks no. 35 for mental health providers.
- **Outcomes**- Kansas ranks in the bottom half on cancer, cardiovascular and diabetes deaths; frequent mental distress; infant mortality; and premature deaths in years lost before age 75.

"What this data suggests is that Kansas needs to improve access to care – addressing the shortage of medical professionals, financial impediments and geographic maldistribution among others," Dr. Norman said. "It suggests that we have unhealthy behaviors that need to be remedied and that there's a need for active illness prevention and intervention."

Dr. Norman continued, "Every Kansan can take steps to improve our state's health – increase your physical activity, be mindful of proper nutrition and make sure your family is up-to-date on immunizations. It's also critical that we as a state look beyond ourselves and our families, to our neighbors and community members. It's time for us to intervene and invest in the health of Kansans."

Regional meetings kick off

by Lisa Horn, Public Health Nurse Specialist,
KDHE, Local Public Health

Connect with other local health departments and exchange information with Kansas Department of Health & Environment staff at the upcoming regional public health meetings. The regional public health meetings offer a variety of useful information.

The first quarter agenda includes presentations on:

- Extreme Storms, Flooding and Impacts in Kansas — Past, Present and Future
- Kansas Climate and Health Impacts
- Prevention in the Age of Vape
- Exploring Data Sources for Public Health Practice.

The remaining dates and locations for the first quarter meetings are:

- **South Central, Feb. 5**, Hutchinson
- **Southwest, Feb. 12**, Garden City
- **Northwest, Feb. 13**, Oakley
- **North Central, Feb. 26**, Beloit.

Enter course **#1088850** on [KS-TRAIN](#) for the full agenda and presenter information. If you have ideas for regional meeting topics or would like to be added to the email list, please contact **Lisa Horn** at lisa.horn@ks.gov or (785) 296-4485.

January is Radon Action Month

Governor Laura Kelly and KDHE are urging Kansans to protect their families by testing their homes for an odorless, invisible gas.

“Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., and the first in people who have never smoked,” Dr. Lee Norman, Secretary of KDHE, said.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can emanate from soil and become a health hazard when concentrated inside a home, school, business or other structure.

More than 200 lung cancer deaths per year in Kansas may be linked to indoor radon. EPA estimates that indoor radon contributes to 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year.

Exposure causes no

immediate symptoms and often goes unrecognized until serious health complications arise.

More than one in four homes across Kansas has high radon.

Inexpensive radon test kits, available at local hardware and builder’s supply stores and at your Kansas county extension

office, can reveal the amount of radon in any building. Those with high levels can usually be fixed with simple and affordable venting techniques.

Homeowners should talk with a certified radon contractor if high levels are detected. Call the **Kansas Radon Hotline at (800) 693-KDHE (800-693-5343)** for a list of certified radon contractors.

See kansasradonprogram.org and at www.epa.gov/radon for more info.



Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

- [Registered Dietitian](#)
- [Public Health Nurse](#)

Riley County

- [Maternal and Child Health Social Worker](#)
- [Maternal and Child Health Nurse](#)
- [Raising Riley Literacy Facilitator](#)
- [Child Care Licensing Surveyor](#)

Shawnee County

- [RN – Nurse-Family Partnership](#)
- [RN – MCH Outreach](#)
- [Office Assistant II - WIC](#)



Bright Futures tool and resource kit course now on KS-TRAIN

To receive access to the newly updated KDHE Bright Futures log-in information, the Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit Course will need to be completed. The course takes approximately 25 minutes to complete. To complete the course, visit [KS-TRAIN](#) and search for course #1089435.

For more info on Bright Futures forms, please see pages 2 and 7 [here](#).

Once course completion is verified, the KDHE Bright Future log-in information will be sent to you.

If you have any questions related to the Bright Futures Course or the KDHE Bright Futures website, contact **Elisa Nehrbass** at Elisa.B.Nehrbass@ks.gov or at (785) 296-1305.

Kansas Health Matters updates indicators

A group of indicators were recently updated in the Kansas Health Matters (KHM) system. The updated indicators reference natality, mortality and years of potential life lost (YPLL).

The list includes:

- Infant Mortality Rate
- Number of Births per 1,000 Population
- Age-Adjusted Years of Potential Life Lost- Homicide
- Age-Adjusted Years of Potential Life Lost- Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome Nephrosis
- Age-Adjusted Years of Potential Life Lost- Suicide
- Age-Adjusted Years of Potential Life Lost- Traffic Injury
- Age-Adjusted Years of Potential Life Lost- Unintentional Injuries.

To view these and many other indicators at the state, public health preparedness region and county levels, go to the Kansas Health Matters website, kansashealthmatters.org.

Youth Tobacco and E-Cigarette Use fact sheet available

The Kansas Youth Tobacco Use fact sheet is available from KDHE [here](#). The data reflects that nearly one in four (24.8 percent) Kansas high school students have ever tried conventional cigarettes (even one or two puffs) and 5.8 percent currently smoke conventional cigarettes while nearly half (48.6 percent) of Kansas high school students have ever tried e-cigarettes and 22 percent currently use e-cigarettes.

STOP School Violence Grant Program seeks applications

The Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP (Student, Teachers and Officers Preventing School Violence) Grant Program is designed to improve school security by providing students and teachers with the tools they need to recognize, respond quickly to and help prevent acts of violence.

Project ideas can be anything from implementing new anonymous-reporting technology to intervention team training to conducting school threat assessments. Applications close **March 3**. Find out more [here](#).

Upcoming Trainings, Conferences

SBIRT toolkit now available, webinar on use Feb. 4

The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Toolkit for perinatal substance use is now available on the KDHE website. You can view the SBIRT Toolkit [here](#).

An MCH Technical Assistance Webinar will be from **noon to 1 p.m., Feb. 4**, and will include an overview of the SBIRT Toolkit, highlighting components to assist in implementing substance use screenings into practice.

A demonstration of the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) will also be included and will soon be available in DAISEY. Please register [here](#).

Open Forum to present on performance improvement and innovation in public health

Join us in Kansas City, Missouri **March 26-27** for a very special Open Forum. Attendees will learn all about the most interesting and emerging content from their peers around a wide variety of topics in performance improvement and innovation in public health.

Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Open Forum is targeted to public health practitioners who work in performance improvement, accreditation readiness or are focusing on innovation in their health departments or their community. See the agenda, register and obtain other details [here](#).

Enroll in a spring 2020 badge course

Wichita State University's online badge courses are designed for working professionals looking to increase their knowledge and gain new skills. Badges are academic short courses of one credit hour or less designed for working, non-degree seeking professionals and allow students to demonstrate to employers their knowledge, skills and competencies in a subject area.



They are online and self-paced. Students who successfully complete a badge will receive a digital recognition of their accomplishment that they can share on social media and link to a digital resume. Badges of particular interest to healthcare professionals include: "Care of Populations: Public Health," "Anatomy & Physiology of Lactation," "Medical Terminology" and "Creative Interventions."

Enroll now until April 13. All coursework must be completed by May 7. Scholarships are not available for Spring 2020. For a complete listing of available courses, click [here](#). Visit badges.wichita.edu for more details. Contact **Keshia Ezerendu** at **(316) 978-7579** or workforce@wichita.edu with questions.

National Preparedness Summit early bird registration now open

NACCHO's 2020 Preparedness Summit, "Fixing Our Fault Lines: Addressing Systemic Vulnerabilities" will be **March 31-April 3** in Dallas. Early bird registration and details are available [here](#).

Every Mom Thrives: Supporting Perinatal Behavioral Health Regional Event set for March 5

Implement mental health and substance use screening, referral and treatment support into the work of your organization. This free training is designed for anyone who works with perinatal women including medical providers, public health, administrative staff and social workers. CEUs and travel stipends available.

The event will be **9 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 5** at the Neosho Memorial Regional Medical Center in Chanute. Register [here](#). For more information, email kcc@ku.edu.

