

November 2018

From the Office of the District Health Officer

National Public Health Accreditation

On September 27, members of the Washoe County Board of Health and the Washoe County Health District's Accreditation Team reached another milestone in the accreditation process by submitting all 213 measures required by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

The Accreditation Team has been working diligently over the last year to gather the extensive array of documentation required. Across the 213 measures, many required two or more examples which meant that over 400 documents had to be assembled, formatted and submitted. Once all the submitted documents have been reviewed by PHAB, an on-site review will be scheduled in the next six months.



Health Officer Kevin Dick hits "Submit," and sends the Public Health Accreditation documentation to the national review board.

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Suicide Prevention Funding

The Children's Cabinet and the Washoe County School District will continue important programming on suicide and depression for seventh grade students in the district with funding of \$100,000 from the Washoe County Health District. **Signs of Suicide (SOS)**, the nationally recognized suicide prevention program, teaches students how to identify the symptoms of depression and suicidal thoughts in themselves or friends, and encourages help-seeking through the use of the ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) technique.

Children's Cabinet case managers and licensed therapists visit classrooms to provide age-appropriate suicide education to students and offer screenings for students whose parents provide a signed consent form. While seventh graders are a priority in Washoe County School District's mandate, the SOS program will conduct screenings when requested by other schools including elementary schools, private schools, and high schools. In 2017-2018, the SOS program completed screenings at 19 schools.

Washoe County Health District's 2018-2020 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) identified adolescent suicide prevention as a top priority for positive public health outcomes

in the community. "The Washoe County Health District is proud to provide funding to support



KTVN CH2-CBS Reno Reporter Andi Guevara and Director of Programs and Projects Catrina Peters met with School District and Children's Cabinet staff at a recent interview

the Signs of Suicide program," said Washoe County District Board of Health Chair Kitty Jung. "It plays a key role in educating our youth and provides a free screening for

kids who may be at risk. This program has been identified as a successful tool and we hope to help families educate themselves and become aware of available resources to reduce youth suicide," Jung said

Burn Code Season begins

The annual **Keep it Clean, Know the Code** Green, Yellow, Red burn code season began November 1, and will continue through the end of February. The program notifies area residents whether or not lighting stoves or fireplaces is allowed, or is advisable



The Know the Code program applies to residents in southern Washoe County from Washoe Valley to Silver Knolls. To find the current burn code status, residents in these areas can go online to www.OurCleanAir.com, follow AQM on Twitter or Facebook, subscribe to www.EnviroFlash.info, monitor local television and radio weather forecasts, or call (775) 785-4110.

Air Quality data show that wood burning in fireplaces and woodstoves during the winter months accounts for nearly 50 percent of wintertime fine particulate matter in the Truckee Meadows. Anyone who's experienced a week-long inversion in the Truckee Meadows can attest to the fact that residents need to take measures to avoid adding to our winter air pollution problems and follow the burn code recommendations.

So what's Prescribed Fire?

Concurrent with the **Keep it Clean, Know the Code** season, autumn also begins the local prescribed fire season. Prescribed fire is an important forest management tool to restore forest health. Treated areas also serve as fuel breaks that slow the spread and reduce the intensity of wildfires. Burning light fuels like grass, twigs, and leaves, in addition to cut piles of dead trees, snags, branches, and shrubs, when they can be controlled in the fall, winter and spring, reduces the threat of serious wildfires later in the year.

Eyewitness accounts, firefighter interviews, and post fire on-site inspections indicate a significant reduction in fire intensity when fires entered treated areas. Not only is serious damage to the forest and structures in or near the forest avoided, but health hazards associated with wildfire smoke are also reduced.

AQM assists local fire agencies with planning and air quality monitoring during prescribed fire season. One message from the prescribed fire community to residents and visitors is, "Putting fire on the ground and cleaning out the dead volatile fuels now will prevent week or even month-long fires later in the summer when conditions are much worse and people want to get out and enjoy the environment."

Special Event Inspection numbers tallied

Between June and October, of the 3,129 Environmental Health (EHS) inspections dealing with food services, over 1,230 of them were for special events. From sunrise to well past dusk in many cases, inspectors are checking hot and cold food temperatures, sanitation, storage, and other conditions to protect consumers from food-borne illnesses due to improper preparation and service. As of October, 9,519 inspections of all types have been completed this year by EHS.



Foodie enjoying ribs at the Best of the West Rib Cook-off.

Vaping's toxic effects discussed

Vaping and e-cigarettes are in the news again following a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report of a 700% increase in sales of JUUL, an e-cigarette shaped like a USB drive. But the often-touted vapor devices that are supposed to help ween people from smoking regular cigarettes are not without their drawbacks (pun intended).

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and research shows that JUUL contains among the highest nicotine content of any e-cigarette on the U.S. market. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development of children, teens and young adults. Local research conducted recently at the Desert Research Institute (DRI) showed that, when heated, flavorings used in e-cigarettes produce toxic compounds. Another DRI study using volunteer e-cigarette users measured exhaled breath from vaping participants and noted that toxic compounds in the breath of those who were vaping were higher than the breath of those who were not actively vaping.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has taken a series of actions as part of its Youth Tobacco Prevention Plan to more immediately target the illegal sales of e-cigarettes to youth and the tobacco industry's youth-oriented marketing. In Nevada and Washoe County public health leaders are assessing measures to educate and prevent youth from using e-cigarettes, including potential legislation to raise the age for purchasing tobacco and e-cigarettes from 18 to 21.



Health Educator Kelli Goatley-Seals interviews with KOLO CH8 – ABC Reno Reporter Chloe Ortega



Participants provide information for flu shots at the October 2018 Family Health Festival at Obrien Middle School.

Health District Staff team up at October Family Health Festival

Staff from Community and Clinical Health Services, Emergency Health Preparedness, Office of the District Health Officer, and Air Quality Management teamed up to coordinate and deliver services at the 2018 Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities Family Health Festival held at Obrien Middle School in Stead on October 8. In addition to the wide variety of health services offered at all health festivals, this event was able to administer free flu shots to over 200 individuals.

32 weeks of surveillance starts

Although the CDC compiles and analyzes information on influenza activity year-round in the United States and produces a weekly influenza surveillance report, Washoe County conducts a 32-week surveillance report from the first week in October through May the following year. The Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness Division uses data from Vital Statistics, CDC, and our syndromic surveillance system for a weekly review of local flu activity.

Sentinel sites in the Health District's Surveillance System include: the UNR Student Health Center, Northern Nevada Medical Center, Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center, Renown Regional Medical Center, Renown South Meadows Medical Center, and 7 Renown Urgent Cares. The reports can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/WashoeFlu>.