



*NorthWest Bergen*  
**Regional Health Commission**

*Good Public Health Grows a Stronger Community*

**2009**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**TO THE PUBLIC**

**'COMMUNITY HEALTH STATUS'**

**FOR MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN THE HEALTH OFFICER  
JURISDICTION OF**

**NORTHWEST BERGEN REGIONAL HEALTH  
COMMISSION:**

**HILLSDALE, MAHWAH, MIDLAND PARK, MONTVALE,  
NORTHVALE, OLD TAPPAN, UPPER SADDLE RIVER,  
WALDWICK, WESTWOOD AND WYCKOFF**

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## **Childhood Immunizations**

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) required influenza vaccination for the first time for children six to fifty-nine months who attend daycare, or public or private preschool. Originally, this was to have been required for the 2008 season, but was delayed due to a lack of pediatric vaccine. Parents were given from September 1 to December 31, 2009 to comply with this change. However, due to the advent of H1N1 influenza and the subsequent lack of sufficient pediatric seasonal flu vaccine once again, the mandate was dropped for the 2009 school year.

School immunization status reports, usually due to NJDHSS by January of the following year, were delayed until March 2010 (also due to the effect of the H1N1 pandemic).

## **Communicable Disease**

The Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS) is a web-based system for healthcare providers and laboratories to submit reportable communicable diseases and conditions to the state and local health department. The local health department has the responsibility to perform disease investigations and enforce appropriate recommendations for controls to prevent further disease spread. Investigations may be conducted as a result of food borne illness or infections occurring in long term care facilities and schools. The total number of communicable diseases reported for NWBRHCs jurisdiction was 329, including cases marked as confirmed, probable, and under investigation.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission has been very proactive in the area of emergency preparedness and response. Staff participates in meetings and activities of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) in Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission municipalities.

To increase emergency preparedness efforts in the 10 municipalities under its jurisdiction, NWBRHC staff coordinated a program with the theme of "Planning for Pandemic Flu: Managing the Challenges – Two Town's Perspective". All of our municipality's administration, police and fire departments, Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and Boards of Health were invited. Representatives from the Board of Health and OEM in Hillsdale and Midland Park gave presentations on how each of their communities would establish a Point of Distribution Site (PODS) for the rapid dispensing of medication during a public health emergency. The presentations created much discussion and information exchange among the 60 municipal representatives. As a result of this program, some municipalities came together to develop ideas for regional emergency preparedness planning strategies.

Also, NWBRHC was awarded a mini-grant from the New Jersey Health Officer's Association to purchase communications equipment to enhance public health response efforts. With the mini-grant NWBRHC was able to purchase a much needed computer lap top for staff and other items to facilitate effective communication.

## **Seasonal Influenza**

NWBRHC held 11 flu clinics, in nine municipalities from September 23rd through October 22nd. As a result 1,494 flu shots were given. The clinics were held earlier than usual to incorporate planning for H1N1 flu clinics which followed.

Since there are many vendors providing influenza vaccinations earlier in October, NWBRHC plans to begin flu clinics early again next year. Clinic schedules will be evaluated with an objective of improved cost-effectiveness.

## **H1N1 Influenza**

NWBRHC applied for and received a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services to conduct H1N1 influenza preparedness and response activities. Nine school-located H1N1 clinics were held in our 9 municipalities. 2,317 H1N1 flu vaccines were given. Initially, the clinic target group was focused on children 6 months to 18 years of age and pregnant women. School clinics began on Nov. 21, 2009 and were completed December 16th. More clinics will be held in 2010 as second dose clinics for those students under the age of 10.

The public clinics were open to anyone regardless of residence (as long as they lived in NJ); however, until late December we only vaccinated the CDC-designated target groups.

NWBRHC employees have also worked collaboratively with other local health departments in their H1N1 public and school-located clinics in Washington Township as Westwood High School serves residents of Washington Township as well as Westwood residents.

The following lists school-located clinic dates held thus far:

11/21/09	Waldwick
11/23/09	Upper Saddle River
12/1/09	Northvale
12/2/09	Midland Park
12/4/09	Wyckoff
12/6/09	Westwood
12/8/09	Hillsdale
12/15/09	Montvale
12/16/09	Old Tappan

## **Food Safety**

NWBRHC REHS performed 594 Chapter 24 Retail Food Establishment inspections in 2009. To assist retail food establishments in complying with new NJDHSS regulations beginning in 2010, NWBRHC began offering Servsafe Food Safety Certification for Manager's classes. These classes were held in addition to the six other three hour food handler classes that were offered to establishments in our municipalities

## **Complaints**

NWBRHC investigates complaints received on a variety of concerns. These concerns

include, food establishments, rodents/vermin, animals, air pollution/odor, heating, septic systems, smoking, poison ivy, water, unsanitary living conditions, and garbage. Staff also respond to emergency situations such as fires and power outages in food establishments, hazardous waste spills, and water advisories. In 2009, staff responded to 313 inquiries and/or complaints.

### **Health Education**

Each year the Health Officer submits a grant to the NJDHSS to receive Public Health Priority Funding (PHPF). PHPF money is allocated to municipalities based on their population size and financial need. Through PHPF, NWBRHC is able to hire a part-time Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) to provide a certain amount of health education hours to its municipalities. In 2009, many exciting activities were conducted by the Health Educator. They include:

Health Fairs - Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission was invited by various cities, schools, and organizations to attend their health fairs and provide educational materials on issues such as nutrition, heart health, summer safety, and head lice, among others. The NWBRHC Health Educator attended the following health fairs: Hillsdale SMAC Program, Bergen County School Nurses Association, Westwood Day, Old Tappan Day, Waldwick Day, and Upper Saddle River Day.

Website - The NWBRHC Health Educator continues to maintain and update our website NWBRHC.ORG. News on upcoming events such as H1N1 or Rabies Vaccination Clinics, public health emergency preparedness information, food recalls, and health information are available to anyone visiting the site.

#### 2009 Health Education Programs

- Winter Safety for Seniors program for Hillsdale 50 Plus Club
- 6 Bloodborne Pathogen Trainings
- Novel Flu to the Old Tappan Seniors Club
- Falling Prevention to Waldwick Seniors Club
- Nutrition program to 7<sup>th</sup> graders at Midland Park Middle School
- Infection Control program Midland Park Middle School – 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- Women and Heart Health program at Waldwick library
- Nutrition program for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Kettler Elementary School, Westwood
- Stranger Danger program at Kettler Elementary School, Westwood
- Pandemic Influenza Planning report to Hillsdale City Council
- Developed program and flyer for Walk at Work Day and sent to all municipalities
- Walk at Work program for NWBRHC staff
- “Planning for Pandemic Influenza: Managing the Challenges” program for all our municipalities

#### Articles written and submitted to town newsletters:

- Disposal of Outdated Medication
- Pandemic Influenza
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Hand Smoke
- Heart Health

## **Public Health Nursing**

Our 2 town nurses as well as nurses from Health Awareness Regional Program (HARP) provide public health nursing services to Commission municipalities. These services include:

- Immunization audits in our schools and daycare centers
- Home care for the uninsured and underinsured
- Health screenings and education in many municipal senior sites
- Well Child check-ups and vaccinations

## **Rabies Clinics and Animal Bites**

NWBRHC provided 1,115 doses of Rabies vaccine to area dogs and cats in 2009 in nine municipalities. There were 93 animal bites and exposures which NWBRHC staff investigated.

In 2009 there were 255 terrestrial animal rabies cases and 32 bat cases in New Jersey, similar to the number in 2008. However, there were more raccoons and fewer bats testing positive in 2009 as compared with 2008.

## **Tobacco Age-of-Sale Program (TASE)**

Due to funding cuts at NJDHSS, the TASE program was eliminated for 2009. This program was a very important tool in our fight against underage tobacco use; hopefully it will be refunded soon. We continue to respond to any complaints of smoking in food establishments.

## **Health Officer Report**

The NJDHSS is required to periodically conduct a Performance Evaluation Report of local health agencies to determine if the agencies are meeting Standards of Performance. Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission was the first health agency in Bergen County to be evaluated. The Performance Evaluation Report broadly identifies the status of performance in the core areas of public health services. Specifically, these areas include administration, organizational capacity, workforce development, governmental and community health planning partnerships, availability of core public health programs, emergency management and response, information exchange and access to specialized expertise and capacity. NWBRHC received an overall rating of Satisfactory, the highest rating which could be achieved on the Evaluation Report. The NJDHSS Site Visit Evaluator also noted on the Report that the Health Officer and NWBRHC have demonstrated exceptional public health leadership skills, which were evidenced by achievements in "Best Management Practice".

The Health Officer continued to actively participate in the Governmental Public Health Partnership of Bergen County (GPHP). The GPHP administers the Community Health Improvement Plan for Bergen County. She is also a member of the Education, Training and Emergency Preparedness (ETEP) Committee, which is an offshoot of the GPHP. In 2009, the ETEP committee prepared mutual aid agreements which can be adopted by municipalities to assist with public health emergencies. The Health Officer is also a member of the Bergen County Health Officer's Association and the New Jersey Health Officer's Association.

## **Plans for 2010**

Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission looks forward to hiring its first part-time public health nurse. This will enable NWBRHC to establish new and enhance existing public health programs for the residents it serves.

NWBRHC plans to seek opportunities to work with our towns to offer health education to our residents, particularly in the areas of obesity, heart disease and diabetes prevention. We will continue holding H1N1 vaccination clinics focusing on reaching portions of our population not served through our previous clinics. These community based clinics will be designed with specific populations in mind such as the Korean speaking population, Spanish speaking populations well as small business owners and their employees.

NWBRHC will also continue expand and strengthen emergency preparedness and response capabilities. This includes staff attending continuing education programs and implementing technological measures while maintaining budgetary constraints.