

Clark County Public Health

Communicable Disease Control and Emergency Response and Planning Division Overview

- The Communicable Disease program works closely with healthcare and community partners to conduct surveillance and investigate reported cases of notifiable conditions, investigate communicable disease outbreaks, and recommend control measures to prevent further spread of disease. The Communicable Disease team also serves as a consultant and technical resource for healthcare providers, and partners with the state and other local health jurisdictions to effectively control the geographic spread of diseases. The team also investigates every Clark County case of tuberculosis (TB) and monitors active TB cases throughout their months long treatment. Using internet chat programs, Communicable Disease staff observe patients taking their medication to ensure the full course of treatment is completed.
- The Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)/HIV Prevention program conducts disease investigations and partner services to ensure all STI and HIV cases and potentially exposed partners receive appropriate treatment and prevention education.
- The Harm Reduction program offers a range of services to expand the knowledge, skills, and resources that support individuals, families and communities to be safer and healthier. Harm reduction services aim to reduce the transmission of bloodborne pathogens and communicable diseases, reduce overdose deaths, reduce injection substance use in public places, and reduce the number of used needles in public. The program operates the Harm Reduction Syringe Services Center, which provides anonymous one-to-one syringe exchange and safe syringe disposal, overdose prevention education and naloxone kit distribution, Hepatitis C and HIV testing, safer sex supplies and referrals to community agencies and services. In addition to distributing naloxone kits at the Harm Reduction Center, the program also offers overdose prevention and response training for community members and organizations.
- The Immunization Program works with community partners and health care providers to promote immunization and ensure access to vaccines for all community members. Components of this work include assisting health care providers in identifying and implementing best practices related to immunization administration; partnering with the Washington State Department of Health to conduct the Childhood Vaccine Program; and serving as a resource for providers and community members who have questions about vaccines. The Immunization Program also serves as the lead agency for the Clark County Immunization Coalition.
- The Infection Prevention (IP) program provides expertise in assessing infection prevention practices, outbreak management, preparation efforts for highly pathogenic infections, and surveillance of healthcare associated infections. The IP team counsels health care facilities on planning, implementing, and evaluating infection prevention programs. During facility outbreaks, the team provides expertise in assessing infection prevention practices and implementation of recommendations to limit ongoing disease transmission. The IP team works with healthcare and non-healthcare providers to promote improved surveillance of healthcare associated infections. And the program provides input into the development of comprehensive reports for surveillance and outbreak response that may be used to inform changes in policies, procedures or processes aimed at reducing the spread of infection.

- The Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) ensures that Clark County Public Health is ready to respond to emergencies. PHEPR ensures the department's operational readiness by developing emergency procedures, training staff and equipping the department. PHEPR maintains the department's All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan and ensures that it works with other county, regional and state emergency response plans, and provides leadership and coordination of the department-wide Continuity of Operations Plan. The team also develops department policies and procedures supporting emergency response operations. PHEPR leads exercise planning, implementation and evaluation activities. The PHEPR team maintains the department's incident command post and ensures response activities meet National Incident Management System and Incident Command System standards. PHEPR also leads the public health preparedness efforts for the Southwest Washington region – including Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties and their tribal partners. Through the Region 4 program, PHEPR coordinates Medical Reserve Corps volunteers who support Public Health response activities and the Southwest Washington Health Care Alliance which supports and coordinates with hospital, health care and long-term care facilities in Southwest Washington. To accomplish this work, PHEPR routinely plans, exercises and coordinates with many community partners, such as emergency management services, local emergency operation centers, the Red Cross, environmental health agencies, health care partners, and community- and faith-based organizations.

Other Department Divisions

Community Health Division

- Nurse Family Partnership – nurse home visiting services for low income pregnant parents. Each pregnant parent is partnered with a public health nurse who provides one-on-one education and support throughout the pregnancy and until the child turns 2 years old.
- Children and Youth with Special Healthcare needs – care coordination services to families who have children ages birth to 18 years at increased risk for, or diagnosed with chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions and require health and related services beyond what is generally needed. Public health staff collaborate with the child's health care team to provide assistance with care coordination, such as information about the child's medical condition, education about appropriate infant and child growth and development, and referrals to local resources
- Medical Examiner Office: The primary role of the Clark County Medical Examiner's Office is to investigate the cause and manner of death of people in Clark County over which the office has jurisdiction. State statute outlines under which circumstances the medical examiner has jurisdiction to investigate a death. That includes deaths resulting from suspicious circumstances, accident, sudden deaths of a person in good health, unknown or obscure causes, unnatural or unlawful means or while the person is in jail or prison. Death investigations are often performed in conjunction with a law enforcement agency. As part of the investigation, the medical examiner collects information about the circumstances surrounding the death and reviews the medical and social histories of the person who died. An autopsy may also be required in some circumstances. The Medical Examiner's Office provides 24/7 service to the community and contracts with Klickitat and Skamania counties to provide forensic autopsy services.
- Health Assessment and Evaluation - The Health Assessment & Evaluation (HAE) team works to develop a comprehensive understanding of health in our community and translate

data into action. The team also provides technical assistance to community partners and is available to contract with partners for more comprehensive assistance with data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination. The HAE team utilizes data from a variety of sources, including public health, social services, health care and the community. The team of epidemiologists and evaluators monitor data on leading causes of diseases and deaths, health behaviors and social factors influencing health, and they identify trends, disparities and emerging health issues. The team also uses data to guide program and policy development, implementation and evaluation.

- Chronic disease prevention –The team works with a variety of partners, including community-based organizations, schools, faith-based organizations, and local businesses. Current areas of focus for the program include positive and adverse childhood experiences (PACEs), breastfeeding, and activity-friendly environments. In addition, the team supports the place-based initiative along the Fourth Plain corridor that is focused on workforce development, safe streets, and affordable housing. The CDP team facilitates and participates in a variety of coalitions and community groups including PACEs Action Alliance, Trauma-Informed Schools, Southwest Washington Healthy Families, and Fourth Plain Coalition.
- The Oral Health program coordinates the Access to Baby & Child Dentistry (ABCD) program in Clark County and promotes the importance of good oral health in the community. ABCD is a statewide program that offers preventive dental care for children 5 years and younger who have Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) insurance. Beginning in January 2022, the program expanded the eligibility for children with special health care needs to age 12. The Oral Health program helps parents find a child-friendly dentist, and encourages the first dental visit by age 1. ABCD clients receive two dental exams and three fluoride varnish applications each year, and restorative care, as needed. Parents also receive education about the importance of oral health.

Environmental Public Health Division

- Drinking water protection: The Drinking Water Protection program works to protect surface and groundwater by reviewing plans for individual wells and community drinking water systems that are provided by wells. This work includes conducting sanitary surveys of existing large, or Group A, community drinking water systems through a contract with Washington State Department of Health. When a new well is constructed or an existing well is decommissioned, the Drinking Water program ensures correct practices are followed. Investigations are also conducted when a complaint is submitted about a public water system. Individual well or water system owners are provided guidance and resources on proper operation and maintenance.
- Environmental Public Health Support: The EPHS team works directly with the community by answering a wide range of questions and by guiding customers through plan review, permitting, illness reports and public health complaints. The team also manages the Envision Connect Online permitting system, processing incoming applications and invoices, uploading retention documents into OnBase and distributing information to the appropriate programs.
- Food safety – includes food service inspections Before a restaurant, mobile food truck or temporary food booth is permitted to serve food, the Food Safety team reviews and evaluates their food preparation and kitchen design plans to ensure the food establishment has what it needs to open and operate safely. After a food establishment opens, the Food Safety team routinely inspects the food service and reviews menu

changes, kitchen equipment changes and provides educational resources. Inspections also occur outside of normal business hours and on weekends during temporary events, such as farmers markets, bazaars or fairs. When an illness or public health concern is reported, the Food Safety team investigates the cause and advises on how to prevent additional illness or concern in the future.

- The hazard assessment program works with government agencies to investigate hazardous waste sites that pose a threat to public health and the environment. These contaminated sites are assessed for their potential health impacts and then technical assistance for site cleanups is provided to owners of the properties. HAP staff also work to reduce exposure through drinking water and the physical environment. Threats to drinking water sources are tracked and emerging environmental toxins are identified. Human lead exposures in schools, childcare facilities and residential homes are reported to HAP by Washington State Department of Health. When an exposure occurs, HAP investigates to identify the source of exposure and then continues to monitor for lead levels until in a safe range.
- Land development and review: Before land division or property development can occur, the Land Division and Development Review (LD/DR) program evaluates how sewage treatment and water supply will be provided to the property.
- Onsite Septic –When a home requires an onsite septic system, the program evaluates land and soils on the property to determine if a septic system can be located.
- Onsite Septic Operations and Management: With nearly 35,000 homes and businesses with septic systems in Clark County, ensuring that they are operating properly is essential to preventing human exposure to sewage and the contamination of groundwater. The Operation and Maintenance (O&M) program protects public health and the environment by ensuring routine inspections of septic systems are done on schedule and to identify minor or major problems before they create a public health threat. If deficiencies are found, the O&M team works with homeowners on repairs or replacements to help them protect their investment, protect surface waters and groundwater.
- Pollution Prevention Assistance: Businesses are required to keep rainwater from picking up contaminants from their property or worksite and running into local waterways. This can be difficult for small-business owners, as local, state, and federal dangerous waste and stormwater regulations are not always easy to understand. The Pollution Prevention Assistance (PPA) program provides hands-on pollution prevention advice and regulatory assistance to businesses and other organizations that generate small quantities of dangerous waste.
- The Recreational Water Safety (RWS) program focuses on preventing deaths from drowning or serious injury and works to reduce the risk of recreational water illness in swimmers using public pools, spas and float tanks. The RWS team reviews design plans for new or remodeled recreational water facilities to confirm proper water filtration and sanitizing systems, as well as a review of the building and landscaping plans to confirm drowning prevention measures and safe operation. Routine inspections are conducted to ensure pools, spas and float tanks are properly maintaining water quality, safety equipment and the physical conditions of the facility. Notifications of injury, illness or drowning prompts the RWS team to investigate and provide a corrective action plan for the recreational water facility. The RWS team also leads the Swim Beach program which monitors designated swim beaches in Clark County between Memorial Day to Labor Day. The water is sampled at local designated swim beaches for bacterial contaminants and harmful algal blooms. The Swim Beach program also works with lake managers and parks departments to post signs during unsafe conditions to notify the public and provide recommendations for recreation. Weekly newsletters are issued during the summer with

the latest advisories and information on how to protect the community from potentially hazardous conditions. Other natural water bodies are monitored if reports are received of unsafe conditions such as sewage spill or algal bloom.

- The School Health and Safety (SHS) program works in collaboration with local K-12 public, private and parochial schools to ensure environmental health standards are met. This work is accomplished through routine food inspections, environmental health assessments, site and building plan review and complaint response. The SHS team uses their technical knowledge to assess best practices and code compliance in relation to the built environment (e.g. light, sound, plumbing), integrated pest management, indoor air quality and safety concerns around chemicals, science labs and playgrounds. With an education-first focus, the SHS program works to create resources and provide technical assistance to support the school partners.
- The Solid Waste Operations program manages the regional solid waste system to protect and preserve human health, environmental quality and natural resources. The program contracts with private companies for recycling collection, sorting, processing and marketing, and garbage transfer and disposal services. The team works in partnership with Clark County, the cities and town within Clark County, and the Solid Waste Advisory Commission on solid waste planning and the development of future solid waste management plans. Education and outreach are also provided for garbage, recycling, household hazardous waste and unwanted medication take back information.
- Clark County Public Health's Solid Waste Enforcement (SWE) program works to protect the community and the environment by responding to citizen nuisance complaints regarding improperly stored garbage and permitting and inspecting solid waste handling facilities throughout Clark County. Recycling facilities, compost facilities, transfer stations and permitted landfills are inspected to make sure they are following state and local regulations. Technical assistance and professional guidance are also provided to support education and outreach efforts, obtain compliance and when a new solid waste facility is proposed within our community. To promote proper solid waste management, program staff consult with property owners, businesses, tenants and collaborate with a wide array of agency partners, including Washington State Department of Ecology, Southwest Washington Clean Air Agency, Clark Conservation District, Clark County Community Development and all of our municipality partners.
- The Solid Waste and Environmental Outreach (SWEO) programs include Green Business, Green Neighbors, Green Schools and the Composter Recyclers.
 - Green Business provides onsite assistance and tools to support recycling and environmental initiatives at businesses. Recommendations and training are provided to help start or improve recycling programs, increase efficiencies and reduce waste. The Green Business program provides a certification for participating businesses and hosts networking events to share ideas and enhance business-to-business connections in our community.
 - Green Neighbors provides information to Clark County residents about ways to live sustainably at home. Green Neighbors offers education on waste reduction and recycling, hosts community events and coordinates volunteer opportunities.
 - Green Schools works with all local public and private schools in their sustainability efforts by encouraging environmental leadership and giving students tools to implement change in their schools. Assistance is provided to boost waste reduction, education and awareness in schools.
 - The Composter Recycler (CR) program educates the community on food waste reduction and recycling. Residents interested in becoming CR volunteers participate in a 10-session course that explores backyard composting,

vermicomposting, recycling, sustainable living and green cleaning. Trained volunteers provide community education through workshops, composting demonstration sites, worm bins in the classroom, and staffing booths at outreach events.

Administrative Services Division

- The County Health Accounts Payable team, CHAP, processes all outgoing payments for the department. They also provide technical support for employee timecards and process reimbursements, such as mileage reports. They process payments for training and travel expenses, and conduct online ordering for programs. They also process medical billing transactions. With all of these activities comes a large amount of documentation and records to manage.
- The Finance team provides services for the entire department. They prepare and submit the department's budget each year, and ensure the department follows county, state, and federal financial policies/regulations and is always in compliance for audits. Additionally, Finance maintains a large chart of accounts and our financial accounting system, Workday. Finance prepares and distributes monthly financial reports to programs, performs grant billing, processes accounts receivables, responds to audit requests, and tracks department assets. In addition, the team provides financial technical assistance for program systems, such as Envision Connect and Insight, and ensures financial data transitions from the programs and allocates in Workday.
- The Vital Records team receives and processes orders for birth and death certificates and issues certificates to eligible requestors. The Vital Records team guides members of the public through the certificate ordering process, outlining qualifying relationships and documentation necessary for ordering birth and death certificates. The team processes completed orders and issues certified certificates and noncertified informational copies. The Vital Records team also works closely with funeral homes to receive and process orders for death certificates.
- The Information Management and Information Technology (IMIT) team provides tech support for department staff, including support for OnBase, Office 365 and Smartsheet. They also provide specialized tech support for program systems, such as Insight and Envision Connect. IMIT also provides technology project management. IMIT is responsible for the department's records management, including records retention, destruction and organization. The team receives and fulfills public records requests, and they provide HIPAA training and technical assistance.
- The Grants and Contracts team (GCT) performs grant management, including application preparation and tracking of administrative tasks. They also manage department contracts, including contract negotiations, and monitor sub-recipients. The team is tasked with ensuring the department complies with state and federal regulations for contracts and grants. GCT creates and oversees requests for proposals (RFPs) and facilitates informal RFPs. Additionally, the team prepares and manages staff reports for county council consideration and approval.
- The Public Health Operations program provides management and coordination of a broad spectrum of administrative processes, such as department policy and procedure management, coordination of web authors for Public Health's external website and internal Clarknet site, technology asset inventory management, centralized new employee onboarding/offboarding processes and management of department surplus. Public Health Operations is also responsible for implementing performance management and quality improvement plans along with coordinating quality improvement projects across the

department. The team also provides coordination of Random Moments and Smartsheet license requests.