

our services by the numbers

4,101

Dental patients served at the Family
Dental Clinic (in 10,663 visits)

18,110

Number of one-month prescriptions
supplied to clients through Prescription
Assistance

\$2.6 million

Combined value of prescriptions
(donated, discounted and
Health District-purchased)

1,738

People receiving blood-pressure checks

1,442

People receiving cholesterol checks

76

Percentage of Healthy Weighs participants
who reported eating more fruits and
vegetables after taking the class

1,124

Stop-smoking counseling sessions held

3,525

People receiving mental-health or
substance-use help from Connections

\$146,175

Value of donated/discounted services by
local therapists and psychiatrists through
Connections

193,357

"Hits" to provider pages on
HealthInfoSource.com

\$40,250

Amount of money raised for the Tooth
Fairy Fund for Grown-ups

\$260,276

Amount saved in treatment and jail costs
through the Community Dual Disorders
Team program

306

Volunteer "flu fighters" recruited to work
at H1N1 mass-vaccination clinics

2009 Annual Report

Health District

OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY



Protecting Our Community's Health

Nature often has a nasty way of reminding humans that we are not always in control. Floods and volcanoes are extreme and occasional examples, but we sometimes forget that disease is always with us.

Although we can't always completely control disease, we can do our best to reduce its impact.

One of the Health District's prime objectives is helping people fight disease, as individuals and as a community. When the new flu virus H1N1 was discovered in 2009, public health workers were concerned because it was an unknown and potentially lethal virus for which there was no vaccine yet.

Upon hearing of the H1N1 threat, Health District employees immediately jumped in to help with a strong community response. They, in addition to many other community health providers, already had a solid understanding of the potential threat and response, thanks to wise advance planning by Dr. Adrienne LeBailly, director of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

For several months, Health District staff worked tirelessly alongside Health Department employees to help minimize the impact of H1N1 on our commu-

nity. Together we planned a unified community response, briefed key officials on the situation, and informed health providers and the public on how to manage the outbreak until vaccine arrived. Once vaccine was available, our staffs joined hundreds of community volunteers to provide more than 18,000 flu immunizations at seven mass-vaccination clinics.

The H1N1 flu outbreak was a rare and large-scale threat to the health of our community. But every day, disease threatens the health of local residents in ways that don't make headlines. Many of the health-care providers who were on the front lines fighting H1N1 spend their days helping individuals overcome these challenges.

Inside are the stories of four Health District employees dedicated to helping others improve their health. Just like the hundreds of "flu fighters" who spent long hours protecting fellow citizens from illness, they are a reminder of our community's capacity for caring and cooperation. They show how, working together, our community can make a real impact on the things that threaten our health.



Carol Block

Executive Director

Help When You Really Need It



Andrea

In a more perfect world, everyone needing to take prescription medication could walk into any pharmacy and buy the medicine they require. Unfortunately not everyone can afford to pay what some prescriptions cost.

This is when the staff at the Health District's Prescription Assistance program step in to help.

Andrea Loftus is a prescription

assistance advocate who has worked at the Health District for almost five years. She helps people obtain the medications they need at a more affordable price.

"We help people have access to a better quality of life," Loftus says.

The Prescription Assistance program is open to residents of Fort Collins and northern Larimer County who meet household financial guidelines and who don't have insurance for prescriptions. People who live in the rest of Larimer County may use the program if they have a physician with Poudre Valley Health System.

The program served 1,200 patients in 2009, providing them with vouchers for prescriptions at local participating pharmacies, helping them obtain local drug discount cards or referring them to other economically priced sources for their medication.

Some drug manufacturers provide free or low-cost medications to people in need, and Prescription Assistance helps people apply for these programs.

"We help them get through the process, and we fill out the paperwork for them," Loftus says. "Just filling out those forms gets complicated. We don't want anyone getting denied simply because they forgot to check the correct box."

The Prescription Assistance Program provided an estimated \$2.5 million in donated and discounted prescriptions to local residents in 2009. Among other innovations, the program participated in a pilot project that extended voucher coverage for seasonal influenza vaccine at area pharmacies. Prescription Assistance also continued its Diabetes Supply Assistance Program, which helped a record number of clients to purchase over-the-counter medical supplies for monitoring and controlling blood glucose levels.

Before joining the Prescription Assistance team, Loftus had already seen the value of such programs firsthand.

"I knew about prescription assistance programs when I was working in Oklahoma at a domestic violence shelter," Loftus says. "We would refer some clients to a local prescription assistance program, and we'd always hear good things about it."

Loftus says it's gratifying to be able to help people function better by gaining access to the medications they need.

"I'm a people person and enjoy helping people," she says. "That's very rewarding for me." ■

Finding Joy in Healthy Habits

Those working with Bear Gebhardt to stop smoking might find their first homework assignment surprising: Enjoy your smokes.

"We've been hearing it since we were kids — smoking is bad for us," says Gebhardt, a smoking cessation counselor with the Health District's "Step Free" program. "Smokers beat themselves up all the time about smoking — I want them to take a moment to remember why they started smoking in the first place."

Since more than 90 percent of smokers take up the habit before age 18, for most it's an old habit — and we all know how old habits die.

"When we took smoking up, it was a peer adventure," Gebhardt says. "We did it because we wanted to grow up, we wanted enlightenment. It is how we learned to access our joy."

Bear



Author of the books *How to Help Your Smoker Quit* and *The Enlightened Smoker's Guide to Quitting*, Gebhardt himself smoked for "decades." He speaks nationally on quitting smoking, including a presentation to the National Conference on Tobacco titled "Why Rocket Scientists Still Smoke."

Gebhardt does a "freedom exercise" with his clients that encourages them to think

of other ways to tap into the joy that is inherent in all of us.

"Look at a child who is totally happy playing with a pile of rocks," he says. "We are all naturally joyful; we just have to make a conscious decision to access that joy."

The "Step Free" program is part of Health Promotion Services, which uses proven techniques to help Health District residents improve their health through heart-health screenings, stop-smoking

In 2009 Health Promotion Services personally assisted 3,000 local residents in finding better health through low-cost screenings and educational programs, including more than 1,200 seasonal influenza vaccinations. In addition, the dietary staff provided food demos to 3,500 people at the Food Bank for Larimer County. Health Promotion staff also played key roles at the mass-vaccination clinics led by the County Health Department, which immunized 18,000 people in response to the H1N1 pandemic.

counseling, nutrition and weight management counseling, and flu immunization services. The stop-smoking program serves individuals, couples and groups, and hosts at least 1,000 sessions per year.

Gebhardt, who has been in and out of the health field since the '70s, is committed to what he calls an "ongoing quest" to help solve the problem of nicotine dependence.

"We make sure we review the best practices out there and put them to work for our clients," he says. "Desirelessness is our natural state. The challenge is finding our way back to that freedom from desire to smoke."

In Gebhardt's estimation, the core of the issue is simple.

"People smoke because they enjoy it," he says. "Our challenge is to help them find other things they enjoy as much so that they can still tap into their joy. After all, joy is life's energy." ■

Caring for the Whole Person

It is a simple idea that can make a profound impact on a person's life: locate a patient's mental-health provider under the same roof as his medical provider, making it easier to access both types of care when needed.

That's the concept behind the Health District's Integrated Care program, where Ryan Scarborough has worked for the past five years.

Scarborough, a licensed clinical social worker and certified addictions counselor, is part of an Integrated Care team that serves both Salud Family Health Center in north Fort Collins and the Family Medicine Center near Poudre Valley Hospital.

The Integrated Care team includes six behavioral health specialists and a psychiatrist who provide behavioral health consultation services, mental-health and psychosocial screenings, brief therapy, case management, psychiatric consultation, substance-use assessment and addictions counseling.

"We're really helping to improve the overall health of the community by providing an easily accessible service that some patients might otherwise not seek," Scarborough says. "We work side by side with the medical providers to provide complete-person care."

Known for his gentle, supportive approach and a can-do spirit in the face of challenge, Scarborough says his interest in mental-health work was triggered by a class he took in college. "I took

a psychology class and was fascinated by it — and still am," he says.

"We have a lot of flexibility in how we offer care," Scarborough says. That flexibility comes in handy when he senses it might be helpful to meet a patient outside the clinic.

"You can tell a lot about a person's situation by seeing them in their home," he explains.

As needed, Scarborough also meets clients where he can personally assist them to access helpful services. Frequently he finds himself at the Larimer County Department of Human Services, a clearinghouse for services ranging from food assistance, to disability benefits, to Medicare and Medicaid.

Scarborough applauds the concept of whole-person care, which, among other benefits, gives the medical doctors an opportunity to personally introduce patients to the staff in Integrated Care.

"For us to be introduced by the doctor is extremely effective," Scarborough says.

"It's a really powerful place to engage patients." ■



Ryan

The Integrated Care team saw 1,400 patients in 2009, providing critical mental-health services complementing the patients' primary healthcare. New initiatives launched last year included involvement in the local "Patient-Centered Medical Home" program, an innovative approach to providing continuous, comprehensive, coordinated patient care at the PVH Family Medicine Center. In addition, through a new partnership with the PVH Mountain Crest Behavioral Healthcare Center, patients at Salud now have access to child psychiatrists on site.

A Dentist for All Occasions

When Stephanie Nelms arrives at work each day, she's not quite sure what to expect. And that's just fine with her.

"I really enjoy the diversity of procedures that I get to do," says Nelms, who is in her second year as a dentist at the Health District's Family Dental Clinic. "No day is like any other."

Nelms moved to Fort Collins straight out of dental school after earning her DMD degree from Tufts University in Boston. An outdoor enthusiast, she moved west partly for the recreational opportunities of the Rocky Mountains and partly to roll up her sleeves and experience the full spectrum of dental procedures that a public clinic has to offer.

"You see more here than you would in private practice," Nelms says. "It's so interesting to get to see such a diverse group of patients and do such a variety of things."

Nelms is part of a small army of dental professionals caring for patients at the modern, expansive (12-chair) Family Dental Clinic. The staff includes five dentists, two hygienists and seven dental assistants, not to mention an eight-person support staff.

In 2009, the Family Dental Clinic provided routine and preventive care to more than 4,000 adults and children with low incomes and no private insurance. The Family Dental Clinic is a key player in both Project Smile, which provides dental care to local schoolchildren, and the Dental Health Partnership of Larimer County, a coalition of public agencies, nonprofits and private dental practices focused on addressing the unmet dental needs of our community. Last year, the Tooth Fairy Fund for Grown-ups raised \$40,000 in private donations for patient assistance beyond the Family Dental Clinic's already low sliding-scale fees.

As in any dental office, a focus is put on preventive care and good oral hygiene for patients, though the staff handles its fair share of the "big stuff" too: fillings, extractions, root canals, crowns, bridges and denture fittings.

In 2009, the clinic received more than 10,000 patient visits, a number that has steadily grown throughout the clinic's 11-year history. Patients of all ages come to the clinic, from 1-year-olds to 80-year-olds.

With a dental hygienist for a mother, Nelms learned early on the importance of healthy teeth. Now that she's the one holding the dental probe, it's a regular reminder of the dramatic difference a healthy mouth can make in a person's life.

"One patient told me he couldn't compete for a job with his front teeth missing," Nelms says. "It was so wonderful to see him happy and enjoying life again after his smile was restored."

Nelms' passion for her new profession is clear when she contrasts the Family Dental Clinic with other public clinics she's experienced, including the large clinics in Boston.

"The Family Dental Clinic is so above and beyond other public dental clinics. We have such a wonderful modern facility. There's no comparison." ■



Stephanie

Health District

OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY

120 Bristlecone Drive • Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 224-5209 • fax (970) 221-7165 • www.healthdistrict.org

Our services are open to those who live within the Health District, including Fort Collins, LaPorte, Wellington, Livermore, Red Feather Lakes and Timnath. The Health District serves residents of all incomes, though some services are specifically for families who have low incomes and no health insurance. Most services have a fee, but sliding fees are available to make good health affordable for all.

with thanks

A hearty "thank you" to the people and organizations that generously supported the special efforts of the Health District during 2009. Our newest success was meeting the challenge to raise over \$40,000 for the Tooth Fairy Fund for Grown-ups. Continuing valuable community programs include HealthInfoSource.com, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership, and Project Smile for kids.

2009 Donors to the Tooth Fairy Fund for Grown-ups

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Foothills Gateway
Fort Collins Housing Authority
Fort Collins Police Department
Larimer Center for Mental Health
Larimer County Criminal Justice Plan

Larimer County Dept. of Health and Environment
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Larimer County Health and Human Services
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Project Smile
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Centers for Gastroenterology
Columbine Health Systems

Eye Center of Northern Colorado
Overton Center for Dental Arts
The Women's Clinic of Northern Colorado

We continue to seek community donors for the emerging Dental Health Partnership of Larimer County, as well as our other ongoing partnerships. Call (970) 224-5209, log on to www.healthdistrict.org, or email jbecker@healthdistrict.org to find out more.

board of directors

The Health District is governed by a publicly elected board of directors. Directors for 2010 are:

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President

Bernard Birnbaum, M.D.
Vice President

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Liaison to PVHS

programs

Connections

mental health and substance abuse services
525 W. Oak Street
221-5551

Family Dental Clinic
202 Bristlecone Drive
416-5331

Childhood Immunization Outreach
224-5209

Health Promotion
nutrition counseling, smoking cessation,
cardiovascular screening, flu shots
224-5209

Community Impact Team

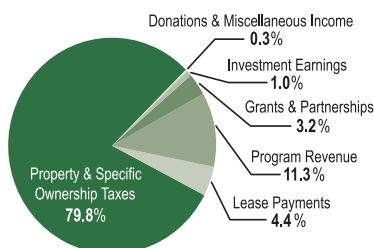
Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership, Dental Health Partnership of Larimer County, policy tracking and advocacy, resource development
224-5209

Integrated Primary Care/Mental Health Program
224-5209

Prescription Assistance
416-6519

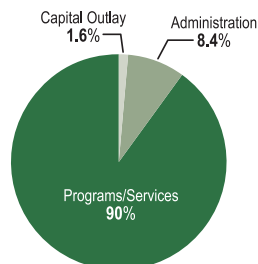
2009 revenues, total

\$6,747,697



2009 expenditures, total

\$6,339,737



2009 expenditures, by program

\$5,706,384

