

April 2008

Chautauqua County

Data of Interest

- **5606 dogs, cats and ferrets received rabies vaccinations during 14 free clinics held throughout the county.**
- **In New York State, 132 youth start smoking everyday.**
- **The greatest proportion of sexually transmitted infections remain to be in the 15 to 29 year age group.**
- **In 2007, 2,898 Chautauqua county children were patients of the dental van.**

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Annual Report 2007

Executive Summary

Public Health for the Future

The new millennium ushers in many challenges to the traditional way we approach public health practice. In addition to the ever present threats of naturally occurring diseases that can be found in water, food and air there are man made disasters such as pollution and bioterrorism. As we struggle to refocus, we are fortunate to have new tools at our disposal. Geographic informational technologies and a rich array of internet based resources help us understand this complex world that we now live in. The County Health Department adjusts its activities to marry these technologies with the daily task of providing a safe environment for Chautauqua residents and visitors to enjoy. One of the current priorities is a fundamental re-assessment and proposed upgrade of the water

infrastructure for all county communities burdened by aging and decaying distribution systems and treatment facilities. Health Department projects and programs such as this play a major role to insure the future health of all our residents and the communities.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Water Supply Emergencies

Significant drinking water emergencies occurred during 2006 and 2007, prompting boil water orders to be issued by the Health Department. These emergencies differed from those in past because they continued for many days, leaving residents without adequate drinking water. As a result, the Department began

to question the long-term viability of the municipal water systems in Chautauqua County. A comprehensive water system evaluation began to identify strengths, weaknesses, and improvements needed by the 100-year old systems currently providing drinking water to many residents. This evaluation will

be completed in 2008 and may include recommendations for municipal partnerships, interconnections, and shared services to address the issues in an economically viable way. Safe drinking water is essential to sustaining meaningful life, a commitment the Health Department takes very seriously.



Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted disease and leading cause of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing HPV infections thus markedly reducing the incidence of cervical cancer and genital warts.

The Health Department is committed to promoting and administering HPV vaccinations to females aged 9-26.



“Beach safety is important for the health of residents, visitors and the future economy of Chautauqua County.”

Reproductive Health in Chautauqua County

Providing accessible, affordable reproductive health care to residents of Chautauqua County has been a priority of the Health Department for over 30 years. In 1982, the teen pregnancy rate in our county was the third highest in the state.

It is well documented that unwanted pregnancies at any age lead to a host of other social issues. Pregnant teens often fail to complete high school, have

poorer job prospects, and a lower lifelong standard of living. Any woman experiencing an unwanted pregnancy is less likely to seek prenatal care or choose to breastfeed. Children from unplanned pregnancies are more often born to unmarried women and face greater developmental risks brought on by poverty and family lifestyle choices.

The Health Department served 2,753 clients in the Family

Planning Program in 2007. Nearly 78% of clients had income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. Slightly under one half were uninsured. According to 2005 NYS data, the overall pregnancy rate for the county is 67.1 with the teen rate of 23.1 for 15 to 17 year olds. While the teen rate has decreased dramatically from the 1993 rate of 44.6, recent trends suggest an increase in pregnancy rates for 15-19 yr. olds in some areas of the County.

Mapping of Water and Sewer Systems Continues

In rural communities, ensuring safe drinking water for all residents is a large part of the work of public health. The Health Department is fortunate to have acquired a \$248,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to adapt electronic management of all data related to private wells and sewage

systems, both public and private. This information will then be accessible directly from the field for staff members conducting inspections and greatly improve efficiency. The Health Department will use Geographic Information System (GIS) to map these components and make them

available to other departments throughout county government. In addition to the large-scale drinking water system assessment that is being conducted county-wide by the Health Department, this project further seeks to improve the department's ability to protect the public from disease.

Safe and Healthy Beaches

Each summer, Chautauqua County sees its population surge with the influx of summer residents and visitors who come to swim, boat, or fish in the waters throughout the county. Public health is charged with protecting residents from dangerous levels of bacteria that

occasionally plague bathing beaches. Staff have long monitored these waters, and notified the public as to their safety. However, through a new partnership with SUNY-Fredonia, the Health Department began a project to use DNA analysis of E. coli bacteria to identify the source

of the contamination. This allows the department to address the source of contamination and prevent future beach closings. Beach safety is important for the health of residents and visitors and is essential to the future economy of Chautauqua County.

High Profile Rabies Exposure

While 2007 did not see higher than average numbers of rabies exposures in Chautauqua County, it was a year for high profile exposures. Two separate groups of people were exposed to rabies by bringing baby raccoons into their homes. In each circumstance, the adults who made this decision put family members and friends at risk for a disease that is nearly 100% fatal.

Individuals who are determined to have been exposed must be treated quickly to prevent the onset of rabies symptoms. While this treatment is highly effective, it is also expensive. If the individuals exposed have private insurance, those companies are billed for the post-exposure treatment. However, individuals without insurance receive the same

treatment with costs covered by the Health Department. It is important to remember that protecting residents is the work of public health, and so it is the responsibility of the department to treat individuals exposed to rabies no matter the cost. Efforts to educate residents about rabies risks continue to help reduce those expenses.



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Early Intervention Program Sees Record Numbers

Early Intervention provides services to children from birth to age three who have been diagnosed with a developmental delay. These services include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, vision services, special education, audiology, nursing, and social work.

Evidence demonstrates that intervening early in the stages of child development may reduce long-term consequences of delays, and improve quality of life for children and parents. Early Intervention is mandated and funded by 50% aid from New York State. Numbers of children enrolled

in the program have increased steadily over the last 5 years, with 446 enrolled during 2007. While preventing developmental delays may not be possible, public health seeks to reduce the long-term consequences of those delays to ensure meaningful life for residents of all ages.

Municipalities Seek to Help Residents Lead Healthier Lives

Municipalities partnered with the Health Department to help residents live longer, healthier lives by encouraging physical activity and restricting smoking in outdoor play spaces. The Steps to a HealthierNY program provided *Community on the Move* funding in 2006-07 to help Brocton, Cherry Creek,

Gerry, Kennedy, and Panama build walking paths and improve trails and sidewalks. Through the "Young Lungs at Play" initiative, municipalities passed resolutions officially making parks and playgrounds off limits for tobacco products. Steps to a HealthierNY and the Tobacco Control Programs provided no smoking signs to

Dunkirk, Jamestown, Cassadaga, Gerry, Brocton, Ellicott, Mayville, and Poland after passing such resolutions. Public health is committed to continuing the important work of promoting healthy lifestyle choices for county residents.



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New Website Design Coming
Soon!

www.healthychautauqua.org

The Chautauqua County Department of Health is a community of public health professionals committed to protecting and promoting your family's health. The Health Department accomplishes this mission by preventing disease, prolonging meaningful life, protecting the environment, and providing leadership in health crises.

The **Ten Essential Health Services** include:

Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.

Diagnose and Investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.

Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.

Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.

Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.

Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.

Assure competent public and personal health care workforce.

Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population based health services.

Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Services are offered to the community through three main service sites -
MAYVILLE, JAMESTOWN, AND DUNKIRK.

Community Health Assessment a Priority for 2008-09



The Health Department is required to conduct a comprehensive Community Health Assessment (CHA) every five years. The CHA is the ongoing process of regular and systematic collection, assembly, analysis, and distribution of information on the health needs of the community. This information includes statistics on health status, community health needs/gaps/problems, and assets. Collection requires assistance from various

community partners in order to properly engage consumers and gather their feedback. The sharing of findings with key stakeholders enables and mobilizes community members to work collaboratively towards building a healthier community. Upon completion of the CHA, the Health Department creates a strategic plan called the Municipal Public Health Services Plan. This plan guides the work of public health in Chautauqua

County and seeks to fill the identified gaps and improve health behaviors where possible in an effort to steadily improve the health of the entire community. While the process is lengthy, the product that it yields is essential to preventing, promoting, and protecting the health of the Chautauqua County residents.