

Oregon Public Health Connection

An e-bulletin co-produced by the Oregon Public Health Division, DHS, and the Conference of Local Health Officials

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Top Priority:

SPECIAL EDITION: Public Health Education in Oregon

This edition of the Public Health County Bulletin focuses on public health education and activities, including examples of educational approaches, innovations, research collaborations and partnerships centered on health education happening throughout the state, at the county level, and in local communities.

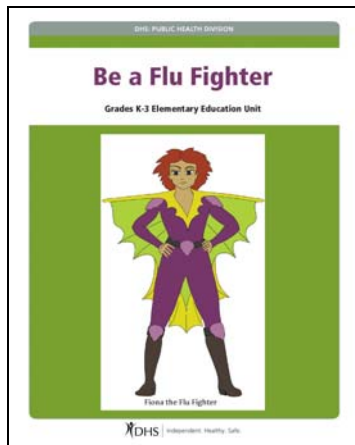


Gorge Teen Theater Troupe in action. (Photo courtesy GTTT).

Hood River County: Gorge Teen Theater Troupe Inspires Communities

Youth play lead roles in health education in local schools across Hood River County. The Gorge Teen Theater Troupe (GTTT) stimulates dialogue about provocative issues such as sexual violence, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse by engaging classmates in interactive skits. In a typical skit, the nine-member team enacts a true-to-life scenario and invites the audience to stop the scene at a critical point and act out potential solutions. Role-playing challenges audiences to analyze power dynamics and explore creative options for dealing with complex situations. Troupe members develop leadership skills while educating peers and helping to change community norms. Director Loraine Madian founded GTTT two years ago with support of the high school health teacher and a community coalition, the Sexual Health Intercommunity Focus Team (SHIFT).

Members of SHIFT include the Hood River County Health Department school nurse, the high school dean of students, law enforcement, family centered agencies and counselors. SHIFT member Lisa Sponhauer from the Hood River County Health Department says, "These teens do a really great job of performing and making [the issues] real." GTTT has made such a positive impact in the community that the local Soroptimist's Club now provides financial support. Check out the Gorge Teen Theater Troupe's recent appearance on a local cable news program, [Making a Difference](#). The GTTT is a program of Helping Hands Against Violence, a nonprofit organization serving sexual and domestic violence victims in Hood River County. For more information about sexual violence prevention programs in your community, visit the link: [End Sexual Violence Oregon](#) or contact Ashley Maier at the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (503-990-6541) or Emilee Coulter-Thompson at the Oregon Public Health Division Women's Health Program (971-673-0361).



Oregon's Emergency Preparedness program has developed a school curriculum to help fight the flu.

To view the curriculum, visit: <http://www.flu.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/schoolchildcare.shtml>

New Curriculum Statewide Pandemic H1N1 Influenza Update

Pandemic H1N1 influenza activity has persisted through the summer in Oregon and throughout much of the U.S. Some states with an early start to the school year have experienced an upswing in cases, and the Oregon Public Health Division (OPHD) expects increases in pandemic H1N1 activity in the coming months. Pandemic H1N1, coupled with the likely return of more familiar influenza strains, makes preparation for the upcoming flu season especially important.

In Oregon, as of the end of August, there had been 116 hospitalizations of people with confirmed pandemic H1N1 among residents of 11 counties, and 12 deaths among residents in seven counties. Following the lead of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the OPHD has reset its count of hospitalizations and deaths and effective Sept. 1 will be reporting both pandemic H1N1 and seasonal influenza totals. For current confirmed case counts, visit: www.flu.oregon.gov.

The severity of illness continues to be similar to that seen with seasonal influenza, with the rate of hospitalization among *confirmed* cases in Oregon measuring in the 10–15 percent range. The median age of hospitalized cases is 33. Six pregnant women have been hospitalized. Compared with seasonal strains, the pandemic virus has been more likely to cause illness among school-age children and less likely to affect persons 65 years of age and older.

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Pandemic H1N1 Influenza Update for Oregon, continued from page 1

In mid-August, Gov. Ted Kulongoski, the Oregon Department of Human Services and OPHD hosted a statewide summit on pandemic H1N1 flu. About 900 people attended and 500 more watched the morning session on live Web stream. Representatives from state agencies, local governments, business leaders, school districts, local public health, health care services, tribes and many others attended. The sessions are available on the Web at www.flu.oregon.gov, including the morning plenary presentations about the status of the flu and vaccine. Newly revised frequently asked questions, H1N1 fact sheets on topics ranging from public health law to pregnancy and child care, and other up-to-date flu information is posted on the site.

Preventing the flu

Here are some ways to minimize the spread of H1N1:

- **Vaccinate!** Immunization is the most effective means of minimizing illness and death from influenza. This year there will be two vaccines—one for the usual “seasonal” strains, and one for pandemic H1N1. Vaccine to protect against pandemic H1N1 is expected to begin arriving soon. Although Oregon should eventually receive enough vaccine for everyone who needs it, initial shipments will be reserved for those at highest risk of complications, including children aged 6 months to 24 years, pregnant women, people caring for infants under 6 months of age, people of all ages with underlying medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes and immune deficiencies), and health care workers and emergency responders.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **If you are sick, stay home.** Seek medical treatment when necessary.
- **Provide tissues and hand sanitizer in common areas** such as lobbies, break rooms, conference rooms, restrooms, etc.

Are you prepared?

One thing that was clear from the summit turnout is that people are looking for information on how to protect themselves and their families. Taking a few actions at home and at work can lower the odds of catching and spreading the flu, which will help your agency remain open when citizens need your services the most. The virus continues to spread worldwide, and the federal government predicts that absentee rates could be as high as 40 percent. Most of the people who get this new strain of flu will recover within a week to 10 days, but that will still mean that a lot of people will not be able to work for a week or more. Given the real possibility of widespread cases of H1N1, local health departments, hospitals and tribes are urged to take a proactive approach to minimize the flu's effects on your ability to fulfill your mission.

Oregon's New Reporting Law

As of Sept. 1, 2009, an emergency Oregon Administrative Rule mandates reporting by physicians, labs, and medical facilities of all hospitalizations and deaths associated with laboratory-confirmed influenza. These should be reported to the local health department for the county in which the patient resides.

Information provided by J. Christie Holmgren, APR, Public Information Officer, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Oregon Public Health Division
christie.j.holmgren@state.or.us



To learn more about the Oregon Public Health Association's Health Educators, please visit:

<http://www.oregonpublichealth.org>



For more information, contact
Sandra Uesugi, Oregon State
University Environmental Health
Sciences Center,
sandra.uesugi@oregonstate.edu

Highlighting Selected Works

Oregon Public Health Association's Health Educators

¡Salud! is a unique collaboration in Tuality Healthcare between Oregon winemakers and healthcare professionals to provide access to healthcare services for Oregon's seasonal vineyard workers and their families. During the summer months, they bring a mobile screening unit out to worksites; testing cholesterol, blood glucose, BP, BMI and fat percentages. As a health educator, Arden Grijalva works with her clients to explain their results and to help them improve health outcomes. As a result, many chronic and acute conditions have been identified in this high risk population and care is provided. For more information, visit: www.saludauction.org

IX Annual Binational Health Week: October 3-15, 2009

The Binational Health Week is a large multinational health education effort targeting the Latino community. The campaign promotes physical activity and healthy eating habits. It also provides basic access to healthcare to the underserved Latino immigrant populations with an emphasis on family wellness. The goal is to raise awareness of critical health issues and health disparities.

For more information, please visit www.binationalhealthweekpdx.org or contact Catherine Potter, Program Director of Parish Health Promoter Program, a collaborative program of Providence Portland Medical Center and Catholic Charities' El Programa Hispano at catherine.potter@providence.org.

eLearning: PestiBytes, A Pesticide Podcast Series

The increasing popularity of portable audio and video devices like iPods and social media like Wikipedia and Facebook allows us to increase our impact and compliment face-to-face community outreach such as community workshops and health fairs. Through podcasts and web-based environmental health outreach, the Environmental Health Sciences Center (EHSC) at Oregon State University hopes to interact with a broader audience, nationally and globally, bringing the latest research from the OSU EHSC to communities we would never reach otherwise. Need a quick answer to your pesticide question? Check out PestiBytes, a podcast series from the National Pesticide Information Center and the EHSC at OSU. These 90-second audio clips provide pesticide information related to fruit and vegetable washing, babies, insect repellents and children, pets, community mosquito spraying, and more! Listen to these files on your computer or MP3 player or download the transcript to read the information as a PDF. Go to <http://npic.orst.edu/pestibytes/index.html> Spanish audio and transcripts coming soon! See EHSC podcasts at <http://ehsc.science.oregonstate.edu/podcasts> to learn more.

PH: In the News

Whooping cough resurgence (Jackson County, OR.) – Scattered cases of whooping cough have shown up across Southern Oregon this summer, prompting renewed concern for health officials. (Courtesy Medford Mail Tribune.)

Toxic algae suspect in Oregon dog deaths (Douglas County, OR.) – Toxic algae may be to blame for the mysterious deaths of four dogs in southwest Oregon. Toxic algae blooms have become increasingly common in lakes in both Western and Central Oregon. (Courtesy OregonLive.com, Portland, OR.)

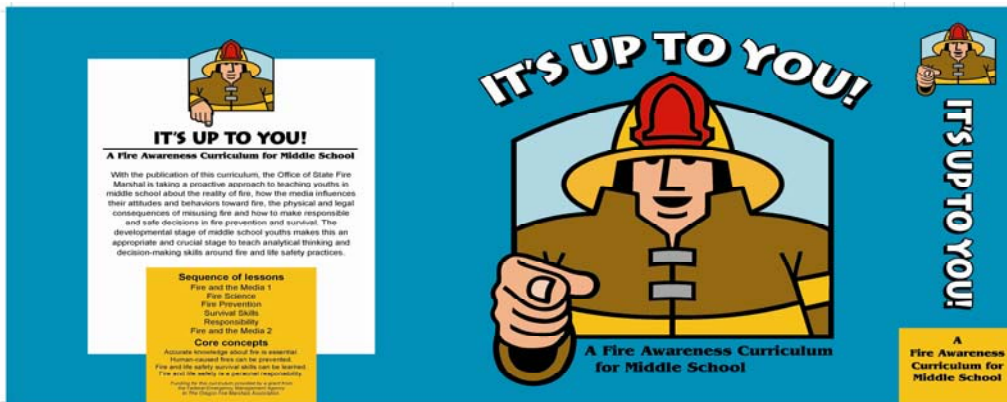
Creswell schools prepare to cope with expected H1N1 flu outbreak (Lane County, OR.) – Creswell school district officials have made preparations to cope with an anticipated outbreak of H1N1 virus cases among school students and staff members. (Courtesy The Creswell Chronicle, Lane County, OR.)

Whooping cough outbreak noted in Grants Pass (Josephine County, OR.) – Josephine County Public Health received confirmation of two positive and three presumptive cases of pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough in Grants Pass. These cases raise Josephine county's pertussis total to nine for 2009. In 2008, the county had only one case. (Courtesy Illinois Valley News, Douglas County, OR.)



Health Literacy Focus

The September 2009 edition of the National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC) newsletter is focused exclusively on health literacy. The Oregon Public Health Division has a representative on the national NPHIC Health Literacy Committee and participated in creating this edition.



Aligns with State Health Standards

Unique Partnership Delivers New Middle School Fire Awareness Curriculum

An educational partnership, unique to Oregon, of professional staff from the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, and the Center for Media Literacy, developed a fire awareness curriculum for students in middle school – *It's Up to You!* No other fire awareness curriculum exists for this age group – anywhere! The curriculum is closely aligned with Oregon Health Education Content Standards which were adopted by the State Board of Education and falls within the injury prevention area. Parents can access fire safety and awareness via the online resources provided.

For more information, visit the juvenile firesetter intervention program at: http://egov.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/JFSI_FA_Curricula.shtml or contact Judy Okulich, OSFM, at judy.okulich@state.or.us



A 2007 study by the National School Boards Association found more than 75 percent of U.S. students had online access to social networking software, but few used equally engaging applications for educational purposes.

Educational Research: Connecting Health Curricula to Learning Preferences of the "Net Generation"

Unlike any age group before them, the current generation of students, from kindergarten to college age, has been raised to some extent on a steady diet of technology, many beginning as early as preschool. Technology and technological tools – from computers, the Internet, cell phones, text messaging, video games, iPods, and other handheld devices to using social networking like Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr – have become an ingrained part of many of these students' lives, providing social interaction, creative outlets, recreation, informal learning, and information gathering. Being "wired" might also be changing the way this generation prefers to learn. Previous research has concluded that due to their ease in using technology, these students may prefer finding information on their own, perceiving a technology gap among teachers and other educators, and having little patience for activities that do not provide a direct connection to their lives.

A research study is underway reviewing the learning preferences of the "net generation," comparing those findings to curricula offerings in Oregon that meet state and national health standards, and determining which curriculum or curricular activities may be best suited to this new generation of learners. The study may be useful and applicable not only in this state but also in other locations where educators and others are struggling to determine how well their curricula may be meeting the educational needs of this unique generation of learners. The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Public Health Division are among those participating. The study will take place between October 2009 and March 2010.

For more information contact Latrissa "Trish" Neiworth, Community Outreach & Education Coordinator, Oregon Public Health Division, 971-673-0206, latrissa.l.neiworth@state.or.us



For detailed contest information including contest rules, resources, ideas and forms visit: www.orosha.org/psacontest/ or contact Yutonah Bowes, OR-OSHA, 503-947-7015.

Youth Safety at Work

Save a Friend, Work Safe Video Contest

Cue the director, it's time for high school students across Oregon to create a 45-second public service announcement promoting young worker safety and health. The top three entries will take home cash prizes ranging from \$300 to \$500 and will earn a matching amount for their school. The contest is designed to increase educational awareness about safety on the job for young people, with the theme of "Save a friend. Work safe." Students are encouraged to develop a slogan, use humor, and get creative while emphasizing ways to protect themselves at work.

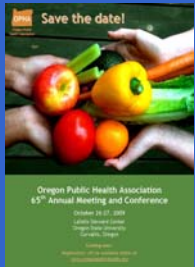
Packets with detailed information, including rules, entry forms, and promotional materials will be mailed to high school principals early in September. The Youth Safety at Work PSA contest is organized by the Oregon Young Worker Health and Safety Coalition, a statewide collaboration sponsored by Oregon OSHA; SAIF Corporation; Oregon Public Health Division Occupational Health Program, DHS; and American Society of Safety Engineers, Columbia-Willamette Chapter and Santiam Section.

PH Calendar

OCTOBER 2009



Bill Odegaard Public Health Genius Awards Luncheon
Community Health Partnership is committed to recognizing and honoring the outstanding Oregonians who are working to improve the health of the public. The GENIUS AWARDS are intended to acknowledge those whose work embodies the spirit of compassion, dedication, achievement and commitment to improving the public's health, stimulating others to strive toward these high standards of excellence. Awards luncheon, Friday, Oct. 16, 2009, Multnomah Athletic Club, Portland, OR



OPHA Annual Conference
Oregon Public Health Association 65th Annual Meeting and Conference, Oct. 26-27, LaSells Steward Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

Words Matter: What Public Health Can Learn from the Health Care Reform Debate
Web Conference Presenters: Bob Crittenden, MD, MPH, Family Physician; Francesca Holme, MPH, Herndon Alliance; 12 – 1 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 27, as a part of the Hot Topics in Preparedness series offered by the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice. Please pre-register prior to attending.



The Oregon Public Health Connection has been recognized by NPHIC with the Bronze Award for Excellence in Public Health Communication.



(File photo courtesy Oregon Public Health Division.)

Special Focus:

School, Community Partnerships Support Youth

By Isabelle Barbour, Oregon Public Health Division's Team Lead for Healthy Kids Learn Better, Oregon's Coordinated School Health Program, and Zachary Goldman, Project Manager at Outside In, Portland, OR.

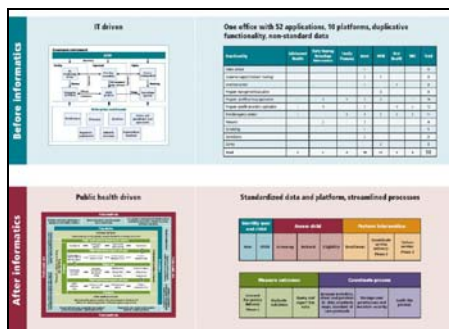
Schools by themselves cannot -- and should not be expected to solve the nation's most serious health and social problems. Families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves also must be systematically involved. Schools are well positioned to provide a critical facility in which many agencies might work together to maintain the well-being of young people. School and community partnerships exist all over Oregon. This article highlights an example of one such partnership that is taking place in the N. Clackamas School District.

By his junior year of high school, Jake had already experienced periods of homelessness and heavy alcohol abuse. He decided that he wanted something more; he wanted an experience that would change things. ... (To read the article in its entirety, please visit: [Community Partnerships Support Youth.](#))

Public Health – Oregon Department of Education: Highlighting Topics for Teachers, Parents

An educational partnership entering its fourth school year involves providing regular public health information to teachers, principals, and school districts around the state. The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Public Health Division, Office of Family Health, partner to provide monthly articles to the department's "Pipeline" publication which goes to all schools and school districts in the state. The partnership helps schools stay up to date on latest public health information as it applies to the youth they serve.

For more information, contact Isabelle Barbour or Sarah Ramowski, Office of Family Health, Oregon Public Health Division, or Latrissa "Trish" Neiworth, Community Outreach and Education Coordinator, Oregon Public Health Division, latrissa.l.neiworth@state.or.us



A Flea Pushing a Boulder: Informatics Enters Public Health placed 2nd nationally at the PHIN Conference. A portion of the winning poster is displayed above.

The poster's abstract details its purpose: "public health practice has much to gain from the discipline of informatics, but making the change from a traditional information technology (IT) environment to one guided by informatics can be challenging." For more information contact Dina Dickerson, MPH, Office of Family Health, Oregon Public Health Division, dina.dickerson@state.or.us



To view photo highlights of the PH @ OMSI Event, visit: [2009 OMSI Highlights](#)

Educational Outreach Exposes Thousands to Public Health

Public Health @ OMSI – Crack the Case of Good Health, Aug. 10 – 15, 2009.

In its final counting, OMSI reported that 14,737 visitors attended or participated during the weeklong educational outreach put on by Oregon Public Health partners this summer. More than 175 volunteers – including students from nearby colleges and universities – brought the preventative health learning activities to life for children and families reached. Visitors to the event learned ways to support healthy choices for their communities, for themselves, and for their families.

A recent survey completed on the outreach indicated that 100% of the survey respondents found the activities expanded the participants' understanding of public health. Some of the comments received included, "creative, interactive exhibits," "great staff and interesting topics," "exposed people to information they might not have received any other way," "provided a broad understanding of health issues," "hands-on exposure to new ideas and concepts" and "made public health fun." OMSI officials were so pleased with the results that they are planning for public health to return Aug. 9 – 14, 2010 for another Public Health @ OMSI event.



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