

# **DEPARTMENT REPORT FEBRUARY, 2016**

## **DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

The Health Director provided a Department orientation to new Board of Health members, Bill Avery and Tom Randa.

The Health Director attended the Community Health Endowment Board of Trustees Meeting and Funding Committee Meeting. The Funding Committee is reviewing grant applications and making recommendations for funding programs for the coming year.

The Health Director continues to coordinate state legislative activities for the Department and Mayor's Office.

Employee of the Month – Willa DiCostanzo – Environmental Public Health Division

## **ANIMAL CONTROL**

	<b>Sep 13- Jan 14</b>	<b>Sep 14- Jan 15</b>	<b>Sep 15- Jan 16</b>
<b>Pet Licenses Sold</b>	25937	25578	26413
<b>Cases Dispatched</b>	9655	9651	9745
<b>Investigation</b>	10301	10359	10595
<b>Animals Impounded</b>			
<b>Dogs</b>	612	561	575
<b>Cats</b>	522	557	556
<b>Court Citations Issued</b>	158	133	157
<b>Warnings/Defects Issued</b>	7173	6860	7143
<b>Bite Cases Reported</b>	170	188	179
<b>Attack Cases Reported</b>	13	25	19
<b>Dogs Declared Pot. Dangerous</b>	26	23	29
<b>Dangerous Dogs</b>	5	11	11
<b>Animal Neglect Investigations</b>	249	243	241
<b>Injured Animal Rescue</b>	258	296	306
<b>Wildlife Removal</b>	147	176	194
<b>Dead Animal Pickup</b>	647	777	723

<b>Lost and Found Reports</b>	818	930	873
<b>Phone Calls</b>	17656	17548	19816
<b>Average Response Time (in mins)</b>	20	21	18

Animal Control will participate in a news conference hosted by Capital Humane Society. Animal Control will be promoting the benefits of pet licensing. They will also announce that all pet owners can now license their pets on line. Previously on line licensing was limited to pet owners that were renewing a license or already had other pets registered with Animal Control. Since this new option started, pet owners have been taking advantage of this new service and it is hoped that it will help increase pet license sales and rabies vaccinations.

The Animal Control Advisory Committee will be meeting on March 1, 2016. They will be reviewing the Bat Infestation Policy and making recommendations. When that has been completed the policy will come before the Board of Health. Bat calls will start to increase in April and May. The Committee will also review several legislative bills. LB 916 would provide immunity to citizens that break a vehicle window to remove an animal that is in eminent danger for heat stroke or death.

Animal Control staff met with staff from the Nebraska Humane Society to learn more about their dispatch and field operations and the dispatch system they use with their Animal Control officers. The meeting was productive and we will further exploring the system they are using and whether it would benefit and enhance our dispatch and field operations.

Staff participated in the annual Dog Expo on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the Lancaster County Event Center. This event is a good opportunity to provide education and talk face to face with pet owners about licensing, spay and neuter, and overall pet owner responsibility.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**

### **Health Care Marketplace Outreach**

*Project indicator: Increase the number of low-income, uninsured, and under-insured individuals connected to a medical home in Lancaster County to 20%.*

Open enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplace was November 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016 this year. Twenty three staff in CHS are Certified Application Counselor (CACs). Their role is to help the uninsured understand their health coverage options – either NE Medicaid or the Health Insurance Marketplace – and to help them apply for coverage.

A total of 853 contacts were made by LLCHD’s CACs during this year’s open enrollment period. This includes 453 contacts via 22 community outreach events at Clinic With a Heart, the Center for People in Need, and the Thankful for Coverage Event sponsored by Enroll NE. CACs

served English, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Spanish and Russian-speaking individuals at these events.

LLCHD continues to coordinate monthly meetings of community partners who provide in-person assistance including; Community Action Partnership of Lancaster & Saunders Counties, People’s Health Center, the Center for People in Need, the Health Center Association of NE, Nebraska Medicaid & Long Term Care, Nebraska Economic Assistance, and Enroll NE. This group meets monthly to share information on the rapidly changing health insurance market & its benefits for our target population and to organize community education and enrollment events.

A special “thank you” to staff members Anita King and Jeff Krotz for providing outreach at Clinic With a Heart on a biweekly basis.

### **New CHS Webpage: “Provider Information”**

See: <http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/health/nurse/providers.htm>.

This month, CHS added a new “Provider Information” webpage to provide local clinicians and case workers with training, research, and patient teaching resources in the topic areas of connecting patients to medical homes/health insurance and effective communicable disease control through immunizations & sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment. Three subjects were initially selected to be highlighted on this page: HPV vaccine, STI treatment guidelines, and the local “Connecting the Uninsured” training.

Tools available on this page include; CDC’s one-page “Tips and Time Savers for Talking with Parents about HPV”, downloadable applications of CDC’s STD Treatment Guidelines for Android and iPhones, and videos of the local training “Connecting the Uninsured”.

A big “thank you” to GIS Analyst Deb Bryne in the Health Data & Evaluation Division for all of her help in making this change.

## **DENTAL HEALTH & NUTRITION**

### **WIC**

#### **Caseload (Participation)**

<b>Total</b>	3822
<b>Main</b>	2933
<b>Cornhusker Clinic</b>	889
<b>%Enrolled with Benefits</b>	84.8%

	<b>LLCHD</b>	<b>State of Nebraska</b>
<b>Total Women</b>	927 (24.2%)	8720 (22.5%)
<b>Total Children</b>	1963 (51.3%)	20200 (52.3%)

<b>Total Infants</b>	862 (22.5%)	9139 (24%)
<b>Infants Receiving Breastmilk</b>	279 (32.3%)	2717 (29.7%)
<b>Infants Exclusive Breastmilk</b>	115 (13.3%)	1080 (11.8%)

**Mentoring:**

(Number and school)

<b>Students</b>	UNMC Nursing-2 Doane Undergraduate-1
<b>Interns</b>	UNL Dietetic Interns-2
<b>Volunteers</b>	
<b>LMEP Residents</b>	

Our January caseload was 3822 participants. This was our highest participation in the month of January, since 2009. Our current fiscal year average is 3739 participants per month, which is also the highest that our average caseload has been since 2011. Both our Infants Receiving Breastmilk and Infants Exclusively Breastfeeding increased by 1% this month.

**Dental Health**

- Total number of clients served (unduplicated count): 429
- Total number of patient encounters (duplicated client count): 556
- Total number of patient visits (duplicated provider appointments/visits): 792
- Total number of Racial/Ethnic and White Non-English speaking patients: 281 (66%)
- Total number of children served: 279 (65%)
- Total number of clients enrolled in Medicaid: 289 (67%)
- Number of clients served during Thursday evening hours (unduplicated count): 59
- Number of patient encounters during Thursday evening hours (duplicated client count): 63
- Number of patient visits during Thursday evening hours (duplicated provider appointments/visits): 97
- Total number of Racial/Ethnic and White Non-English speaking patients: 51 (86%)
- Number of children served during Thursday evening hours: 57 (97%)
- Number of patients enrolled in Medicaid: 47 (80%)

**Outreach Activities:**

**Fluoride Varnish and Screening Program:**

- North WIC Office (27<sup>th</sup> & Cornhusker Highway): 16 children and parents
- LLCHD WIC Office: 11 children and parents
- Presentations: 3 Presentations for 30 children and 20 adults;  
(16 Prescott Elementary children; 14 Elliott Elementary children; 20 UNMC College of Dentistry dental hygiene students)
- Transported and treated 16 Elliott Elementary School children in need of urgent dental care for 22 patient encounters.

# ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

## Outdoor Air Quality Monitoring

### Air Quality Goal

Protect human health by maintaining air quality at levels which do not impact human health and preventing illness and disease caused by poor air quality.

### Methods/Strategies (What we do)

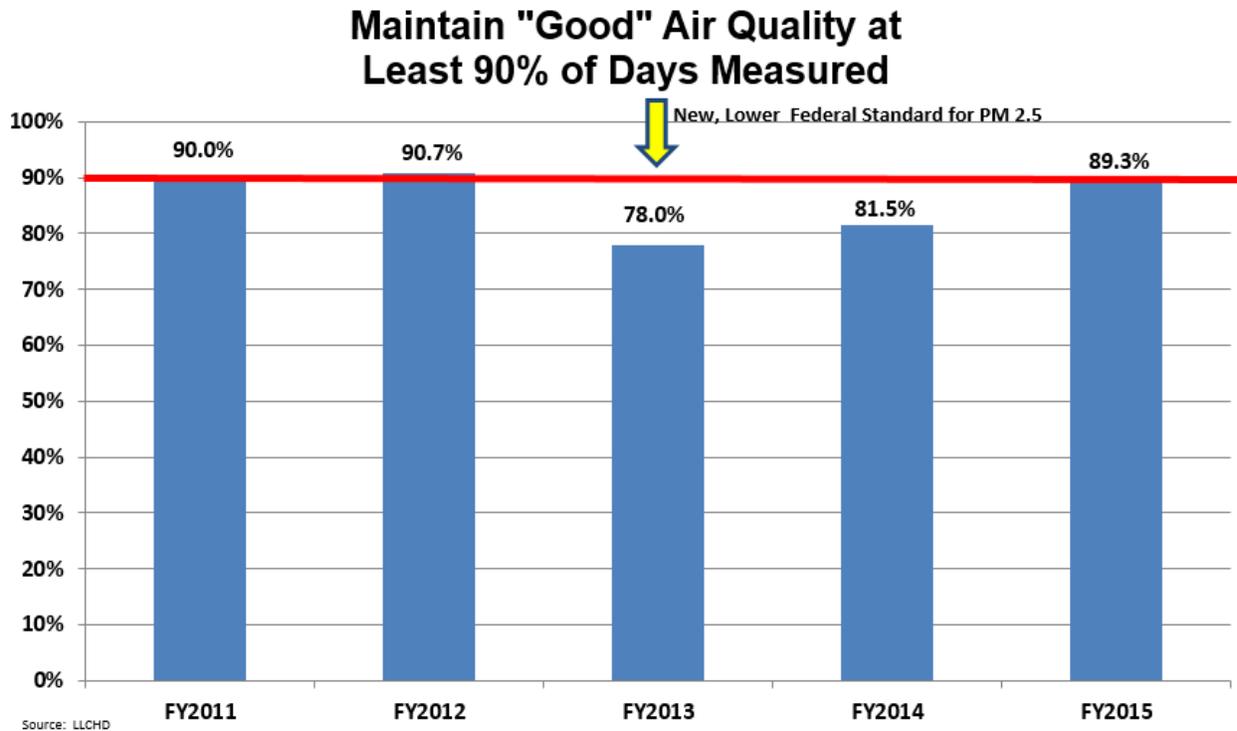
Monitor air for Particulate Matter (PM 2.5), and Ozone (O3).

### Indicator

Maintain at least 90% of the year as "Good" air quality days. Maintain compliance with all health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

### Funding/Source

Air pollution emission fees, user fees and grants fund 100% of the program.

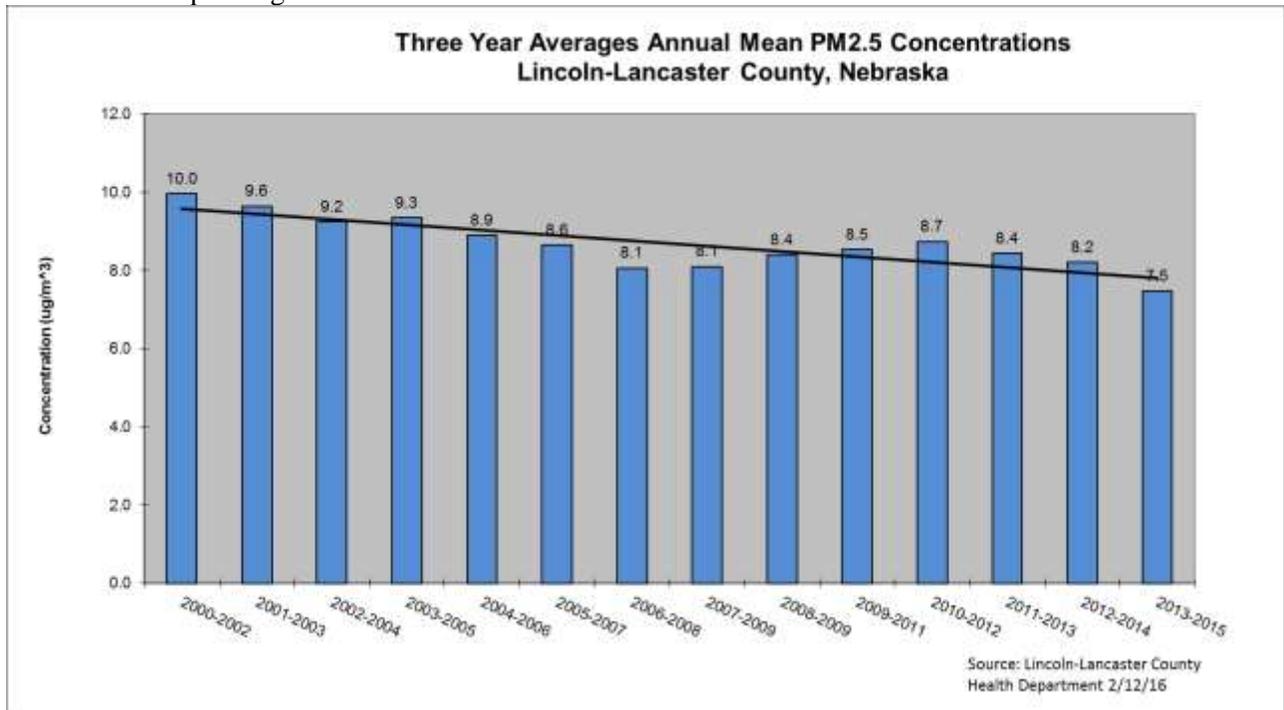


### Description

The Health Department has been delegated authority by EPA and NDEQ to manage the Title V Operating Permits program and to regulate other sources of air pollution in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Local regulations reflect Federal and State air quality laws. The Air Pollution Control Advisory Board advises Health on all air quality matters. Air quality is monitored year round for particulate matter (PM2.5) and in warm months for ozone to assess compliance with health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

**Particulate Matter**

Lincoln’s air quality is monitored 24/7 for very small particulate matter, called PM2.5. NDEQ provided grant funding for a new monitor (Beta Attenuation Method) which was installed in the spring of 2015. Higher levels of PM2.5 can trigger heart attacks, asthma attacks and breathing problems for people with COPD. PM2.5 is the primary reason for poorer air quality days. In December 2012, the Federal standard for the annual average for PM2.5 was lowered from 15 ug/m3 to 12 ug/m3. The Air Quality Index has also been modified to reflect this change. As expected, this resulted in Lincoln not being able to meet our goal of 90% of days being “Good” for air quality. In 2015, we almost met the goal, but had 89.3% of days with “Good” air quality. However, Lincoln is not in jeopardy of being out of compliance with the Federal Standard and the data trend shows ongoing progress in reducing PM2.5 in our community (see chart below). And all of the days that were not “Good” air quality were in the “moderate” category, which does not pose significant health risks.



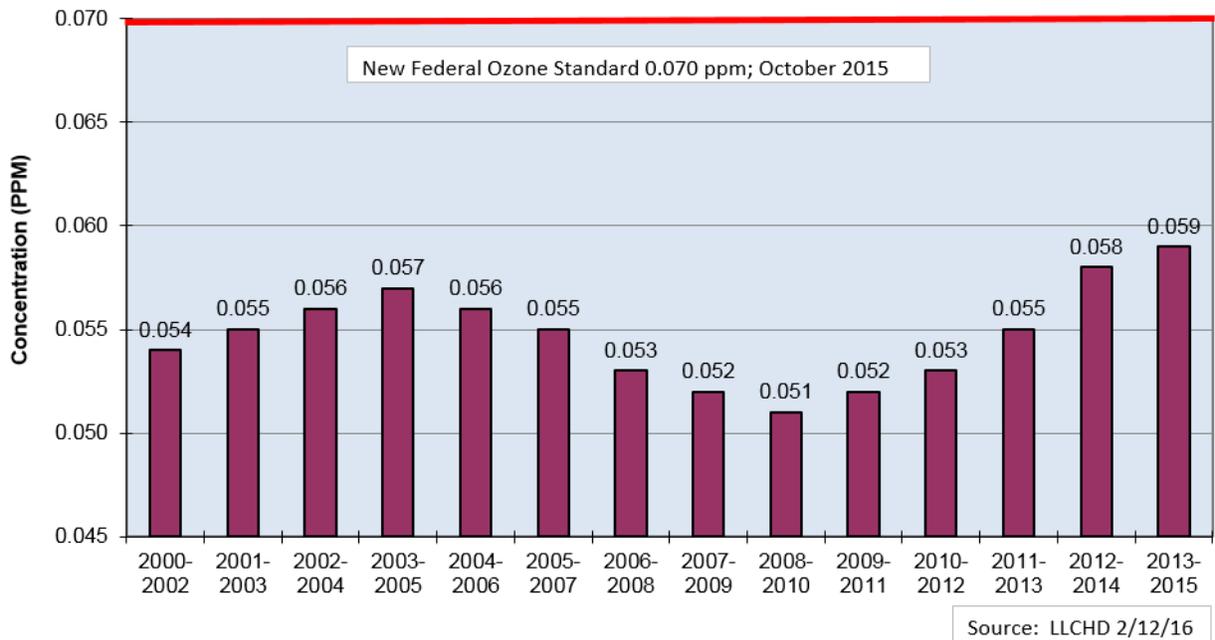
**Ozone**

Ground level ozone is associated with aggravation of COPD, asthma, and irritation of the lungs. Ozone is monitored in warm weather months. Ozone forms when the sun interacts with hydrocarbons (VOCs) and Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), the two largest sources of which are vehicles and industry. Ozone is transported by prevailing winds, which tend to be from the south and southeast during summer months, thus our monitor is located in Davey, NE. Of note, over the last four years, NPPD Sheldon Station, the largest industrial source of NOx in Lancaster County, reduced emissions by over 70%, from 6,293 tons in 2011

to 1,740 tons in 2015. Vehicles are now the largest source of NOx. NOx is also emitted from agricultural field burning.

On October 1, 2015, EPA strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone, lowering the standard from 75 to 70 parts per billion (ppb), based on extensive scientific evidence about ozone’s effects on public health and welfare. The updated standards will improve public health protection, particularly for at-risk groups including children, older adults, people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma, and people who are active outdoors, especially outdoor workers. Lincoln and Lancaster County have maintained Federal “attainment” status for air quality for over a decade, and our levels of ozone are still significantly lower than even the new standard (see graph below). The vast majority of days were in the “Good” air quality category for ozone, but monitoring has detected a slowly rising average level of ozone. Many growing communities see increasing levels of ozone primarily due more vehicles and sprawl, which increases vehicle miles driven and air pollution. Newer, more efficient vehicles with more stringent pollution control and better MPG, and promoting commuting by bicycle, bus and walking help keep our air quality good. Maintaining attainment with National Ambient Air Quality Standards ensures health risks are kept low and prevents onerous Federal requirements which could dampen economic development.

## Three Year Averages 4th Highest Ozone Concentrations - Lincoln, NE



New ozone monitoring equipment was purchased through NDEQ grant funds and was installed in April of 2014. At the request of EPA and NDEQ, LLCHD used a second monitor to measure ozone levels in Waverly (to the northeast of Lincoln in the direction of Omaha). NDEQ and EPA were particularly interested in assessing if ozone from Lincoln was potentially affecting Omaha (Douglas County), which has higher levels of ozone than Lancaster County. We are pleased to report that the Davey and Waverly ozone monitors recorded very similar acceptable levels of ozone throughout the summer and were consistently lower than Omaha’s levels. LLCHD believes this data indicates that Lincoln does not contribute to Omaha’s higher ozone levels.

## Lincoln Recognized for Clean Air



STATE OF THE AIR 2015

If you live in Lancaster County, the air you breathe needs your support.

Ozone

A

Particle Pollution 24-hour

A

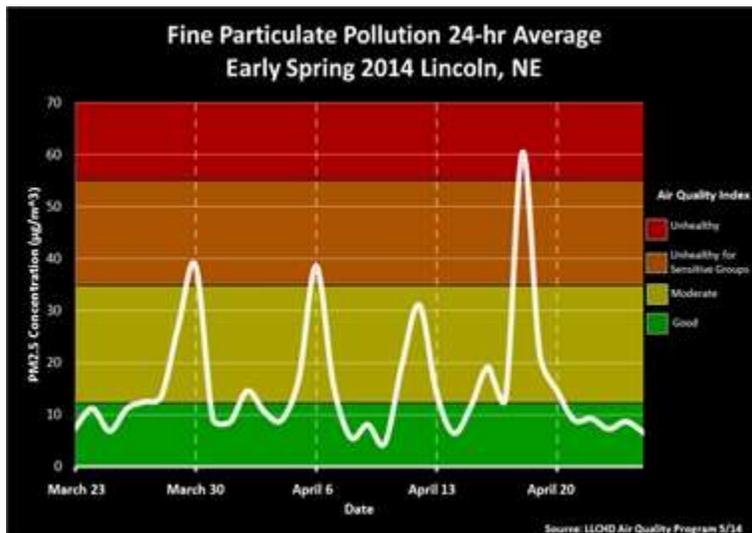
Particle Pollution Annual

Pass

You can make a difference in the air that you breathe.

We are proud to report that Lincoln was once again recognized by the American Lung Association in their *State of the Air* report for having clean air, receiving an “A” rating for both ozone and PM2.5.

## Where there's Smoke there's Particulate Matter



Smoke from open burning and fires have many toxic components, including extremely small particles (called PM2.5) that embed deep in the lungs. Higher levels of PM2.5 can trigger heart attacks, asthma attacks and breathing problems for people with COPD. While nearby burning in the County does contribute to PM2.5 levels, it pales in comparison to the agricultural burning of hundreds of thousands of acres of grass in the Flint Hills area of Kansas. This burning in Kansas creates huge amounts of air pollution and results in smoke coming into Lincoln drastically increasing our PM2.5 levels to unhealthy levels

which can impact all people. 2014 was the worst year for such impact on record. Air Quality staff use internet resources to closely monitor and predict smoke impacts from open burning in Kansas. In 2015 the Kansas Department of Health and Environment shared their air quality modeling data and information on likely heavy burn periods. This improved LLCHD's ability to predict days in which our community might experience unhealthy air quality. When poor air quality is predicted that could impact the public's health, the Health Director issues Health Alerts or Health Advisories. Fortunately in 2015, we had much less smoke from Kansas. In general, controlled burns must be conducted before mid to late April in the spring. Heavy snowfall late in the winter and early Spring of 2015 prevented ranchers from burning as much land as usual.



Our peers in Kansas have reported that due to the wet summer last year, the “fuel load” in the Flint Hills is much higher than normal and the spring of 2016 could be another bad year for air quality. There is one other unique event that results in very high particulate levels – the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Smoke from fireworks can be very heavy and similar Health Advisories are issued. In addition, staff carefully review requests for open burning in the County to protect the public’s health and to reduce smoke pollution.

### **Partnerships & Efficiencies**

The NDEQ contracts with LLCHD to conduct Air Quality Monitoring and passes Federal money to LLCHD that partially funds this work. This assures maximum efficiency and immediate access to local air quality data allowing real-time decision making on Health Advisories.

## **HEALTH DATA & EVALUATION**

The focus of HDE’s community health assessment is now on getting feedback about the Community Health Profile and the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The two reports are posted on the Health Department’s main page under Featured Links and we issued a press release in early February. We have had a couple of media interviews, but have not had many people respond to the surveys asking for feedback that are on the second page of each document. Hopefully, that is because they are generally satisfied with the assessments and Community Health Improvement Plan. Highlights of the reports will be presented at the March Board of Health meeting. If anyone has any comments they should feel free to contact Steve Frederick at 402-441-6271 or via e-mail at [sfrederick@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:sfrederick@lincoln.ne.gov).

Flu activity has increased, but remains low, in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Unfortunately, there has been a recent pediatric death in the state and flu cases are increasing around the country. The good news is that this season’s flu vaccine appears to be up to 60 percent effective against the circulating flu strains, which may result in a mild flu season overall. While each flu season is different, flu activity typically peaks in February and the season can last into May so it is not too late to get your flu vaccination. Our Communicable Disease Supervisor, Tim Timmons, posts the flu activity report weekly on the Health Department’s website (<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/health/data/>) where you will find a narrative Weekly Flu Summary and

also the Weekly Flu Graphs based on reports from provider practices, hospital inpatient admissions for flu-like illness, and school absences for flu-like illness. Tim is also sending tweets via Twitter with the link to the weekly report.

With the ongoing concerns about the Zika virus, a link to the CDC's information has been added to the Health Department's Featured Links. There is still much more to be learned about the Zika virus and a great deal that is unknown at this time, but new information could come at any time and the CDC will update their website. What we do know is that there is no vaccine to prevent Zika virus infection as yet. There is also no effective treatment for the virus. Up to 80 percent of the people who are infected will show no or only have minor symptoms. The best way to prevent Zika virus infection is to avoid mosquito bites by using air conditioning or window and door screens when indoors, wearing long sleeves and pants, using permethrin-treated clothing and gear, and using insect repellents when outdoors. Out of an abundance of caution, pregnant women and women who are planning to become pregnant are being advised to avoid traveling to the affected countries due to the absence of a vaccine against the virus and no effective treatment.

The Communicable Disease program staff has been working with providers in screening and testing recent travelers to the affected countries for the virus. Also, given the recent findings of sexual transmission of the virus, couples where the man has recently traveled to one of the affected countries will be advised to abstain from sex or practice safe sex in order to prevent the transmission of the virus to a loved one.

## **HEALTH PROMOTION & OUTREACH**

### **Chronic Disease Prevention**

HPO staff initiated a Quality Improvement project to study the meal count form correction process of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The goal of the project is to decrease errors that occur when sites complete the meal count forms and also decrease staff time spent on the correction process. This project involves both quality improvement and quality development. The team developed a four member "technical assistant" concept where SFSP sites will be assigned to a TA who will follow a new process for receiving, checking, and tracking meal count forms. HDE is assisting with development of a database to track and measure this information. The process will be implemented at the start of the 2016 SFSP on May 23<sup>rd</sup> with an anticipated 35 sites serving an estimated 2,800 children.

Staff continue to work with Planning department staff and other City Department staff with N Street Cycle Track promotion, bike share program development, and the Share the Road campaign. A 20 minute Shape of the City segment was filmed by Channel 10 Health featuring a

bicyclist giving pointers on using the Cycle Track, and a representative from Public Works discussing the technical features of the Cycle Track.

Over 300 City and County employees attended the Employee Wellness fair held on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, at the City County Building and received information about nutrition, physical activity, tobacco cessation, and stress management from 60 vendors from community businesses and agencies such as bicycle shops, grocery stores, chiropractic offices, Health Department, Parks & Recreation Department, massage providers, stress management resources, and much more! Positive feedback was received from both vendors and attendees about the connections made and the desires to be healthier. This wellness fair is a joint effort of the City and the County Wellness Committees.

The MCH Childhood Obesity project coordinator (54321 GO) is partnering with Parks and Recreation to apply for a Playful City USA recognition for the third year in a row. Last year, Lincoln was one of 241 cities in the United States to receive this recognition. Ogalla, NE also received the recognition last year, being the only other recognized city in Nebraska. The Playful City designation supports the physical activity and screen free components of the 54321 GO message. The Carol Yoakum Community Center is a funded partner in the Childhood Obesity prevention project and is using a portion of the funds to purchase equipment and seeds for a youth garden. The children will plant and care for the garden and then learn about the vegetables including how to prepare them for eating.

### **Tobacco Prevention**

Staff continue to work with multi-unit housing owners/managers to add smoke-free units to the smoke-free housing registry. Currently, there are 4,930 units that are displayed on the registry. This is 15% of approximately 33,000 units in Lincoln. In the past year, 1,731 units have been added to this registry. The registry is used by people looking for smoke-free rental housing in the City.