



# TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH



**Safeguarding** *The Business of  
the Community's Health*

Annual Report  
**2013**

# The Daily Business of Safeguarding the Community's Health

**T**he primary mission of public health is to safeguard the community's health. That includes remaining constantly vigilant of, and responding to health threats. It's a 24/7/365 job. Some of the disease threats we face in Tarrant County are relatively new. Other diseases have been around even before there was a Tarrant County. Other diseases are just a plane ride away.

During outbreaks, Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) Epidemiology staff conduct phone inquiries and on-site investigations. They attempt to identify the health status of affected individuals, where they traveled, the food they ate, who they've made contact with and when they began to show symptoms.

Investigations often cannot start until TCPH has been notified by a hospital, a physician or a laboratory of a case; meaning a span of time has already passed before they can begin their investigations. This adds to the time for recognition of any outbreak.

Although the cost of a disease is often measured in the numbers of deaths and hospitalizations, the staff-hours involved in tracking and treating an illness, as well as educating and promoting awareness, is a significant part of every disease incident. Where TCPH can, it offers treatment and/or prophylaxis (preventative treatment) for individuals close to the source of infection.

## MISSION

Safeguarding the  
community's health.

## VISION

Tarrant County  
Public Health  
will be recognized as  
"the" public health  
expert within the  
communities it serves.

# From the Director



**G**ood public health practices save lives and safeguards community health —it's as simple and as complicated as that. Elizabeth I, Queen of the British Empire in the 16th century, heavily powdered her face, pock-marked from smallpox — a disease she survived even though thousands of her subjects, mostly children, the elderly and the infirm, did not. In our time, no one dies from smallpox because public health eradicated that disease in 1979.

A 19th century scientist in Soho, England discovered the one thing that all of the villagers who exhibited symptoms of cholera had in common: they got their drinking water from the town's public water pump. By employing this keen sense of observation from then on, public health has almost eliminated cholera throughout the world.

Not long after the founding of our country, malaria arising from the mosquito swamps near our nation's capital drove people away to far-flung country estates. But once the swamps were drained, monuments rivaling those of the ancient democracies arose, and the people returned. Vector control, clean water, storm water runoff and sewage disposal are all spin-off programs from the large urban health departments of earlier years.

In the 19th century, nurses would visit urban tenements with nurse bags over their shoulders. They provided young mothers the necessary guidance and support to ensure newborns were not lost to whooping cough, malnutrition or other diseases. Public health nurses of the 21st century also make home visits to provide care because the short-term expense for the long-term investment in healthy mothers, babies, children and youth can be justified.

Today, Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) continues in this historic tradition. It also remains vigilant against bioterrorism and emerging infectious diseases. Its biosafety lab conducts tests for a 33-county region, looking for such things as anthrax, ricin, H1N1 influenza, West Nile virus, and to assure clean, safe drinking water and dairy products. We investigate exposures to infectious or communicable diseases. We educate and recommend treatment to those in close contact to illnesses such as cryptosporidiosis from a swimming pool, measles from travel abroad or pertussis (whooping cough) in a family with an unimmunized infant. We prevent disease and promote health.

At TCPH, there are more than 400 dedicated staff of core public health professionals (such as epidemiologists, biostatisticians, dieticians, health educators, public health nurses, physicians, biochemists, health administrators, community outreach workers and sanitarians). This health department has received eight model practice awards from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

TCPH serves as an advanced practice center for the nation regarding health informatics, including surveillance for disease and environmental exposures. More than 70 hospitals in North Central Texas are part of the system.

We have the only Fetal Infant Mortality Review Team in the state. This team identifies underlying causes of premature deaths and recommends strategies to address these.

The Obesity Prevention Policy Council has implemented policies to increase use of stairs, improve access to healthy foods and provide mother-friendly workplaces.

We respond to hurricane evacuations, tornadoes and floods. Our 1,776 Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can assist us in dispensing medication to 1.8 million residents within 48 hours, should a pandemic occur.

TCPH strives to achieve health equity. We have collaborated with more than 100 community partners to develop the first Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), and partnered with the North Central Texas Council of Governments and local planning departments to build healthy outcomes into the design and function of neighborhoods and cities.

It has truly been a privilege and an honor to serve the people of Tarrant County over the past 14 years. My best wishes to you for a healthful future.

Yours in health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lou K. Brewer".

Lou K. Brewer, Director - Retired  
Tarrant County Public Health

# Infectious Diseases 2013

## INFLUENZA

### *A perennial problem*

Influenza, or the “flu,” is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.

It can lead to mild or severe illness, including hospitalization and death. Though anyone can get the flu at any time, seasonal flu typically runs from October to March.

In 2013, Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) joined with the City of Fort Worth and Walgreens Pharmacy to encourage the public to protect themselves by getting a flu shot and practicing good hygiene.

The local season began with widespread flu. Peak activity occurred during the second week of January. TCPH continued to promote the “Give Flu the Boot!” message through Spring Break and into the beginning of the 2013-2014 season.

In December, TCPH saw increased local reports of flu activity.<sup>1</sup>



*Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, along with Lou Brewer, director of Tarrant County Public Health – retired, each get their annual flu shot.*



<sup>1</sup> [http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/lib/ehealth/2014.01.03\\_Tarrant\\_Co\\_Weekly\\_Influenza\\_Activity\\_Week\\_52\\_December\\_28.pdf](http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/lib/ehealth/2014.01.03_Tarrant_Co_Weekly_Influenza_Activity_Week_52_December_28.pdf)

## TUBERCULOSIS

*A world-wide menace*

**T**uberculosis (TB) disease is one of the oldest illnesses known to man. It spreads from person to person, affecting the lungs, brain and spine.

TB is curable with proper treatment; however, drug-resistant forms have emerged that resist many of the mainline drugs. The result is treatment that can last for months or even years.

In 2013, TCPH's TB clinic sharpened its focus to include a greater emphasis on Latent TB Infection (LTBI) treatment completion. Increasing resources to treat those with LTBI has shown to significantly reduce the number of future active TB cases countywide.

TCPH's TB Elimination division also added additional operating hours - enabling more people to access their medications after work and school, instead of taking work time off during the day.

In addition, TCPH secured funding and staffing for a new LTBI treatment program. The regimen consisted of two drugs given via Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) - meaning a clinic staff member watched their patient take each dose of the medication.



*A TB skin test.*

# Infectious Diseases

# 2013 *(continued)*

## **PERTUSSIS:**

*An all-time high incidence*

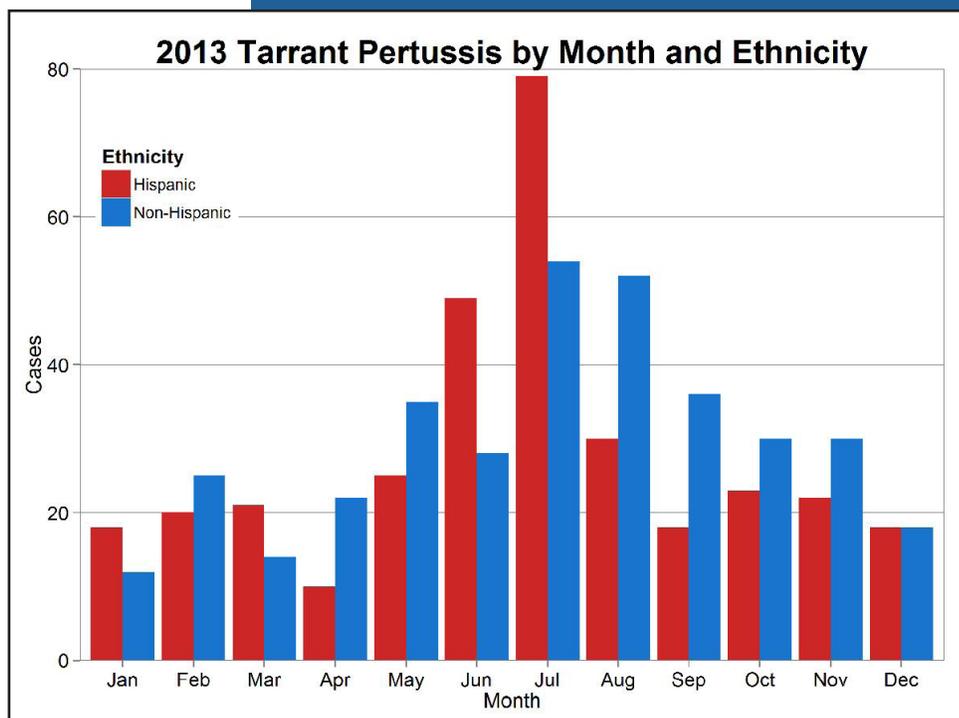
**P**ertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease easily spread when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks. It is known as “whooping cough” because small children will gasp for air, sometimes making the “whoop” sound.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, there is an effective vaccine to prevent pertussis.

Pertussis continued to be a disease of concern for Tarrant County in 2013. From January through April of 2013, the county averaged 36 cases per month. In May, that number increased to 62, followed by 79 cases in June, and a peak of 134 cases in July. The total number of cases with onset in 2013 was 700, for an overall case rate of 36.9 cases per 100,000 people. There were 148 cases involving infants less than one year old and 47 of those had to be hospitalized. TCPH created an educational campaign in both English and Spanish; specifically targeting families with small children.<sup>3</sup>

TCPH advised local physicians and health-care providers to consider pertussis when evaluating patients with compatible symptoms. TCPH community health workers spread the word about pertussis to local businesses, including child care facilities and retail shops servicing new and young families.

The Immunization Collaboration of Tarrant County partnered with TCPH to continue informing obstetricians and family physicians about the pertussis situation and promote vaccination.

TCPH WIC clinics provided flyers and information to increase awareness about the importance of pertussis vaccination.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?a=763&Q=490136&PM=1>

## WEST NILE VIRUS

*The threat remains*

**W**est Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that presents in two forms; as West Nile fever and a more serious West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease. The disease can vary in intensity from mild to extremely debilitating and fatal.

In 2013, TCPH shifted its specific West Nile Virus surveillance activities from seasonal to year-round, in light of the record breaking season the year before. The department also added additional staff and resources.

By April, TCPH had coordinated surveillance procedures with surrounding counties.

It also created a website with useful WNV prevention information stressing the “Take Control, Stop West Nile Virus”<sup>4</sup> message to the public, along with a new, interactive map allowing the public to track surveillance and prevention activities.

TCPH reported its first human case of WNV on June 17. This case, along with an increased number of mosquito pools testing positive for the virus, led to targeted ground spraying in various sections of

Tarrant County. Spraying efforts continued through October. The season ended with nine human cases of West Nile Virus, and two deaths.



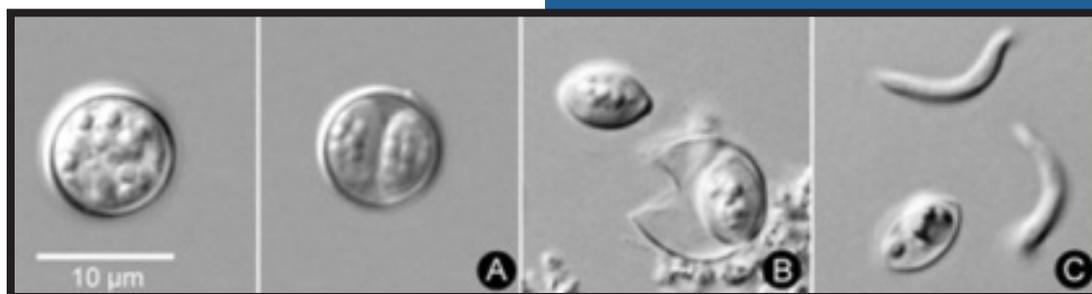
<sup>4</sup> [http://tweb.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp\\_admin/edit\\_page.asp?a=763&MODE=EDIT&CATEGORIES\\_ID=43676&QUESTION\\_ID=490766](http://tweb.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp_admin/edit_page.asp?a=763&MODE=EDIT&CATEGORIES_ID=43676&QUESTION_ID=490766)

## **CYCLOSPORIASIS** *A multi-state outbreak*

**C**yclosporiasis<sup>5</sup>, a diarrheal illness/intestinal infection caused by a one-celled parasite, showed up in North Texas in mid-June. The disease spreads by people ingesting food or water contaminated with feces containing the parasite. Contamination comes from produce.

It typically lasts for weeks without appropriate treatment. Eleven cases of Cyclospora infection had been reported to TCPH by July 10. The CDC originally thought the cases to be part of an ongoing multistate Cyclospora outbreak in Iowa and Nebraska.

Investigators later confirmed the food item associated with the illness in Texas (fresh cilantro from Puebla, Mexico) was different from the restaurant-associated cases in the other two states.<sup>6</sup> As of August 8, TCPH had investigated 41 cases. By the end of August, a total of 631 cases had been investigated nationwide - 270 of them in Texas.<sup>7</sup> No deaths were associated with this outbreak.



<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6243a5.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/outbreaks/investigation-2013-maps.html>

## MEASLES

### *The imported outbreak*

**M**easles is an uncommon, yet highly contagious illness. It's easily spread from an infectious person via coughing and sneezing to those not adequately immunized.

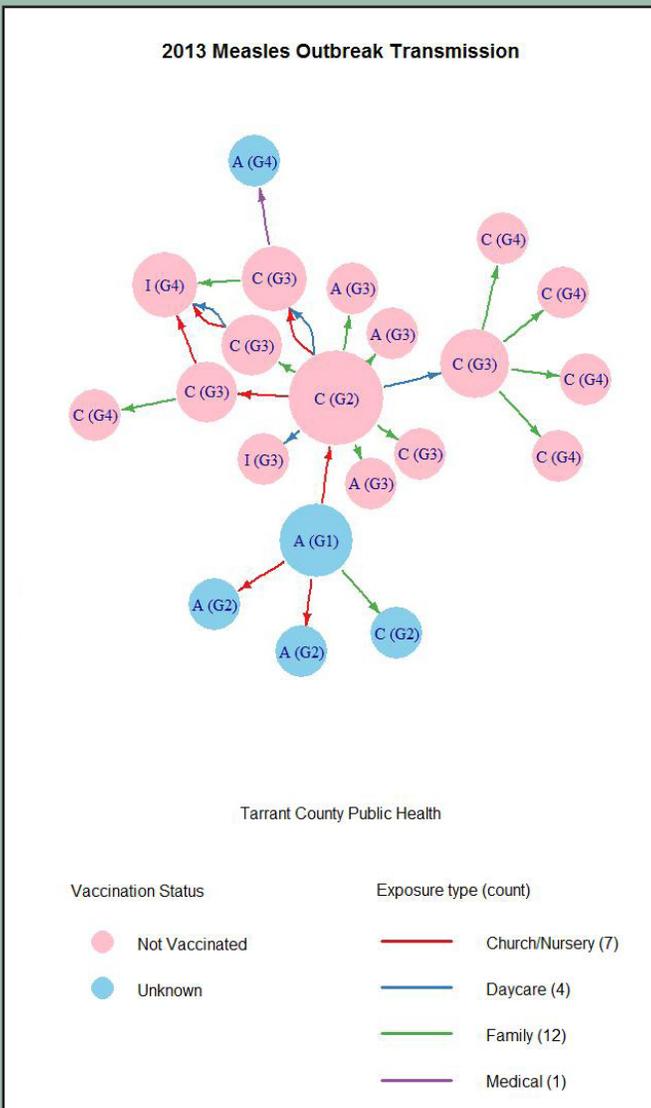
In Texas, the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine is required for children before entering school.

In August 2013, TCPH issued an immediate health alert when a high number of cases appeared at a local church. By September, TCPH had confirmed 16 cases - including nine children and seven adults. Five additional cases were found in Denton County.

Investigators determined the outbreak resulted from an adult who previously travelled outside the United States to a country where measles was common.<sup>8</sup> Upon returning, this person visited the church while infectious, but not yet symptomatic. Of the 16 reported cases, 11 had not received the measles vaccine. TCPH collaborated with the church to provide MMR vaccine to the congregation, ministry staff and the associated day care center.

Because this outbreak occurred during TCPH's annual Back-To-School immunization campaign, many local television stations used video footage from the campaign locations to add to their measles-related reports.

The news coverage also promoted the Immunization Collaboration of Tarrant County<sup>9</sup> (an important partnership for TCPH) and helped promote the value of keeping children's immunizations up to date.



\* Five additional cases were found in other counties.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ictchome.org/>

# Supporting Efforts

## LAB BEEFS UP PROCESSES FOR IMPROVED, FASTER DISEASE DETECTION

**N**ew automated testing platforms not only provided a faster turnaround time for the detection of HIV, they also enhanced the TCPH mosquito surveillance program.

In 2013, the North Texas Regional Laboratory (NTRL) used the platform to detect the presence of HIV antigen/antibodies as early as 16 days after exposure - allowing for early diagnosis of acute HIV infection.

The new platforms can also perform tests for other diseases, such as syphilis and tuberculosis. Besides providing a faster turnaround time it also allows for more specific testing and opened the door to additional testing opportunities.

Also in 2013, for the first time, the NTRL participated in an enhanced mosquito surveillance program. The number of mosquito pools tested increased by 919 percent - from 647 mosquito pools in 2012 to 4,290 mosquito pools in 2013.

Thanks to improved laboratory equipment, the NTRL tested a record number of mosquito samples without adding additional staff.

By employing automation, high throughput laboratory equipment and rapid detection technologies, the NTRL responded more quickly and efficiently to a growing number of public health threats in 2013.



*MP Biomedical Fast Prep 24 Homogenizer machines used for liquefying multiple samples of mosquitoes for further viral testing.*

# TACKLING CHRONIC DISEASES

**C**hronic diseases, such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension, continually plague many residents. These diseases may be incurable, but most – if not all – are avoidable. Tarrant County Public Health’s Chronic Disease Prevention division aims to help individuals either understand and avoid such diseases, or learn to better manage them.

In 2013, Chronic Disease Prevention programs provided approximately 625 individual classes for more than 10,000 Tarrant County residents. Educators taught nutrition, physical activity, and stress management in various independent school districts, churches, community centers and local businesses.

Also in 2013, the National Association of City and County Officials (NACCHO) recognized TCPH’s Kids Growing Healthy<sup>10</sup> program as a Model Practice.<sup>11</sup>

Chronic Disease Prevention also conducted a pilot program with Catholic Charities, providing prevention education to refugees through interpreters.



The “Live A More Colorful Life!” nutrition curriculum continued to promote healthy

eating to 450 school-aged children and approximately 2,000 college-aged students in 2013. The University of Texas at Arlington joined the list of partner colleges who promote the nutrition-based program to their incoming students. The corresponding website<sup>12</sup> is continually updated with health information and recipes each month. Thanks to the 1115 Waiver effort, Chronic Disease Promotion received a grant of \$10.4 million for two additional programs:

The “Health For Me”<sup>13</sup> program provided workshops across the county to teach self-management techniques for persons living with chronic diseases and their caregivers. This effort is in partnership with Senior Citizens Services and the Area Agency on Aging.



The American Lung Association’s “Freedom From Smoking”,<sup>14</sup> program provided participants eight, 90-minute workshop sessions focused on stress management, nicotine withdrawal, weight control and long-term strategies for maintaining cessation.



<sup>10</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?A=763&Q=462836>

<sup>11</sup> [https://eweb.naccho.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?webcode=mpview&customerkey=47E64927-623F-47FD-898A-3EDE0EAA65B7&am1\\_key=6FBF2B33-8231-40EC-BD89-3B2D48BFCF79&am2\\_key=3FDC65E3-707A-4984-A18D-DCAF07606100&pt=5](https://eweb.naccho.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?webcode=mpview&customerkey=47E64927-623F-47FD-898A-3EDE0EAA65B7&am1_key=6FBF2B33-8231-40EC-BD89-3B2D48BFCF79&am2_key=3FDC65E3-707A-4984-A18D-DCAF07606100&pt=5)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?A=763&Q=47260813>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?A=763&Q=491165>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?A=763&Q=490605>

## MORBIDITY TABLE

These are other diseases TCPH deals with on a recurring basis. Numbers represent people with confirmed cases in 2013. These are new cases TCPH knows about.

<b>Morbidity in Tarrant County</b>			
<b>DISEASES</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)	41	38	43
HIV Seropositive	212	189	176
E. Coli 0157:H7 Infection	36	33	49
Hepatitis A	10	6	< 5
Hepatitis B	13*	15*	8
Hepatitis C	<5*	<5*	< 5
Meningitis Meningococcal**	< 5	< 5	< 5
Pertussis	95	162	700
Salmonellosis	367	340	342
Shigellosis	152	105	142
STD: Chlamydia	8,873	7,792	8,429
STD: Gonorrhea	2,103	2,103	2,152
STD: Syphilis: Congenital (< 1 yr.)	< 5	8	7
STD: Syphilis: Primary	35	50	52
STD: Syphilis: Secondary	85	108	104
STD: Syphilis: Other	87	68	120
Tuberculosis	114	75	70
West Nile Virus	< 5	280	9

NOTE: Less than five cases (< 5) are not reported to protect patient confidentiality.

\* 2011 and 2012 case counts reflect only acute Hepatitis B & C infections; chronic Hepatitis B & C infections are not reportable and are no longer tracked.

\*\* Meningococcal disease cases include blood infections as well as meningitis cases.

## PREPARING FOR HEALTH EMERGENCIES

**T**he role of Tarrant County Public Health Preparedness is to help the community prepare for any disaster. TCPH is tasked with providing medicine to the community in the event of a public health emergency.

In late October, TCPH held its annual exercise - "Operation Friday Night Lights." During this two-part event, 89 people received medication from three indoor stations during the morning test, and 70 people received medication while in their cars through two drive-thru stations in the afternoon test.

TCPH's ability to coordinate with various county departments, including the Constable's Special Response Team (SRT), proved successful.

In an actual emergency, TCPH staff would work with trained Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers. The goal in 2013 was to ensure internal staff had the same knowledge base and training provided to MRC volunteers.

The exercise provided a great opportunity for community partners and neighboring counties to learn from TCPH's efforts.



## PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF CITIZENS WHEN THEY TRAVEL

**P**eople are often surprised to learn that TCPH offers services for residents travelling overseas.<sup>15</sup> In 2013, Travel Health Services saw 3,378 clients; providing them with health consultations, immunizations and booster shots, destination dossiers, International Certificates of Vaccination (yellow cards) and more.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?A=763&Q=430426>



## GOOD DATA MAKES FOR GOOD DECISIONS

**T**he Health Informatics team at TCPH is central to the support and the evolution of the department. It gathers and structures health data in ways useful to decision makers.

The team maintains multiple surveillance systems and manages a network that collects data from nearly 60 hospitals in 49 North Texas counties.

In 2013, the Health Informatics team began collaborating with John Peter Smith Hospital and the North Texas Accountable Healthcare Partnership on a regional Health Information Exchange project. The goal - to increase the availability and completeness of notifiable conditions data, specifically pertussis.



## GROWTH OF THE CORPS

**T**he Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a network of local medical and non-medical volunteers who assist the community in response and recovery efforts - before, during and after public health emergencies and natural disasters.

In 2013, Tarrant County MRC volunteers provided more than 1,290 service hours supporting public health and other community activities –at an estimated value of more than \$29,100 worth of free manpower.<sup>16</sup> Volunteers also responded to the measles outbreak by supporting immunization clinics and assisting with contact investigations.

TCPH received two National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) grants in 2013 to support the MRC. The funds helped build MRC capacity and supported MRC-related community activities.

Are you interested in becoming a MRC volunteer?<sup>17</sup> You must be at least 18 years of age, in good physical and emotional health, and have a willingness to help when needed.



<sup>16</sup> According to the Independent Sector, the estimated value of volunteer time for Texas is \$22.57 per hour.

<sup>17</sup> [www.bealocalhero.org/tarrantcounty](http://www.bealocalhero.org/tarrantcounty)



## SAFEGUARDING THE COMMUNITY'S PRIVACY

**A**t TCPH, an important part of safeguarding the health of the community includes the safeguarding of confidential information. TCPH believes one of the best ways to maintain trust with the public is to protect their right to privacy.

An update to the Federal Privacy Rule in 2013 strengthened the requirements for health care providers to protect information and expanded the rights of patients.

TCPH responded with updated training materials for its staff and new information for patients. The department also added a staff position to manage the compliance program.

TCPH's commitment to safeguarding health - including its privacy and confidentiality - remained strong.

## TEEN DAD MENTORING PROGRAM CONTINUES TO BEAR FRUIT

**T**he "Fathers-To-Dads" initiative, launched in 2012, helps teenage fathers improve life skills, family relationships and to reduce family stress – in an effort to positively impact future birth outcomes.

The eight weekly mentoring sessions include financial literacy, vocational planning, relationship building with children, and how to identify a trusted individual with whom to discuss problems.

In 2013, 62 teen dads attended at least one session at the Hurst-Eules-Bedford or Fort Worth Independent School Districts. One participant noted: *"I confronted some demons during the program. I lost my dad a few years ago.*

*That made me worry about the future with my kid. But because of the program, I'm not as worried."*



## KEEPING AN EYE ON COMMUNITY HEALTH

**T**he Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is a nutrition education program. It provides supplemental foods to promote good health for pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children (up to age five) deemed to be at nutritional risk and with inadequate income.

All services are free to those who qualify. TCPH is the county agency tasked with administering this federal program.

TCPH operates 18 WIC clinics throughout the county. The program averaged 55,047 monthly participants in 2013. More than \$34.5 million went into the Tarrant County economy from WIC redemptions at area grocery stores.

### CHILD DEATHS A CONCERN IN TARRANT COUNTY

**I**nfant mortality rates are a common measure of a healthy society worldwide. The rate in Tarrant County began increasing in 2000.

The “Tarrant County Fetal Infant Mortality Review” (TCFIMR)<sup>18</sup> program works with the community to examine social, economic, cultural, safety and health system factors associated with fetal and infant mortality.

Premature births have been identified as a primary contributor to infant mortality in Tarrant County. In response to this finding, TCPH implemented the 17P Initiative<sup>19</sup> in 2013 to prevent recurrent preterm delivery.

17P is a medication given to pregnant women with a history of a spontaneous preterm birth. The goal of the initiative is to educate health care providers in the community on the use of 17P to prevent preterm births.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?a=763&q=471012>

<sup>19</sup> <http://tcweb.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?a=763&Q=491158&PM=1>



*Some of the 2013 graduates of the Nurse-Family Partnership program and their families.*

## PARTNERSHIP HELPS FIRST-TIME MOMS BUILD THEIR FUTURES

**T**he Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program helps foster long-term success for first-time moms, their babies and society. This maternal health program introduces vulnerable first-time parents to caring maternal and child health nurses, who support them as they start their new life.

In 2013, 24 young women graduated from the program after 2.5 years of mentoring by their nurses. The mothers demonstrated notable improvement in pregnancy outcomes, children’s health and development, economic self-sufficiency, and increased breast feeding success six months post-partum.

## WORKSITE LACTATION PROGRAM LEADING THE WAY

**T**he TCPH “Worksite Lactation Support Program” is a pioneer that serves as a “best practice” model for businesses considering their own lactation programs.

It’s even been recognized as a Silver-Level “Mother Friendly Worksite” – the second highest designation awarded.

In 2013, TCPH assisted Lockheed Martin in their quest for “Texas Mother Friendly Worksite” designation, and began working with Catholic Charities of Fort Worth toward the same goal.

By the end of the year, 36 infants and 31 employees had participated in the program across the department.



# Community Empowering Programs

## OBESITY PREVENTION POLICY COUNCIL CARRIES WEIGHT

**F**ighting obesity is one of the most important public health initiatives of the decade. In 2013, an estimated 19 percent of Tarrant County children 2-14 years old and an estimated 28 percent of adults 18 and older were obese. The Obesity Prevention Policy Council (OPPC) addresses and implements policies regarding access to healthy foods, and increased physical activity within their respective organizations or jurisdictions.

In 2013, the OPPC actively championed healthy policies targeting the workplace, since many people spend the majority of their time at work. Sample policies<sup>20</sup> are provided on the OPPC website to assist local businesses with policy implementation.



*To be successful in safeguarding the community's health, it's important to have community involvement. TCPH has several programs and activities that have been very well-received for their achievements.*

## VOICES FOR HEALTH HAVE BEEN HEARD

**T**hroughout 2013, "Tarrant County Voices for Health" conducted community assessments, methodically surveyed and researched health issues within the community and investigated underlying causes of specific health problems.

The group also developed specific activities to address health factors that influence how and where people live, work, learn and play.

Their work culminated in a strategic Community Health Improvement Plan for Tarrant County.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <http://tcweb.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?a=763&Q=477480&PM=1>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eHealth/cwp/view.asp?a=763&q=487455>



*Participants in the Tarrant County Voices for Health meet to discuss specific health issues and goals.*



*Earth Day's "Mr. Tree" stands with students of Hazel Harvey Elementary School.*



*Tarrant County celebrates Carnaval de Salud 2013.*



*Tarrant County Judge and Commissioners pose with winners of the 2013 Public Health Week Poster Contest.*

## EARTH DAY AT TCPH

Every April, TCPH joins the community in celebrating Earth Day. TCPH uses this opportunity to provide important education.

Community partners came together in 2013 to present useful information in areas such as water conservation, landscaping, gardening, pollution prevention and better energy alternatives.

The department also encourages a local elementary school to take part by contributing creative environmental messages through various art projects.

## TCPH HOSTS ANNUAL FAIR

The public came together in October for TCPH's 8<sup>th</sup> annual Carnaval de Salud - featuring free health screenings, flu shots, entertainment and useful health information geared to the Hispanic community.

More than 1,000 people enjoyed the festivities and health services provided.

During the event, TCPH and its participants provided 615 flu shots, tested 82 individuals for sexually transmitted disease, gave 225 free dental checks, checked 147 people's cholesterol and glucose levels, monitored 210 people's blood pressure and body mass index, examined 250 people's vision and provided coupons for free mammograms to 50 women.

## ANNUAL CONTEST ATTRACTS CREATIVE, HEALTH-MINDED YOUTH

Kids across the county took part in TCPH's 11th annual Public Health Week Poster Contest early in the year.

The 2013 contest, "Public Health Saves Lives. Saves Money," brought in more than 600 entries. The winning themes reinforced exercise, healthy eating, hand washing and smoking avoidance.

The Tarrant County Commissioners Court warmly welcomed the winning artists and presented them with prizes.

Their artwork remains a permanent part of the Public Health Week Poster Gallery in the Dr. Marion J. Brooks Building. It's also available for viewing online.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> <http://tweb.tarrantcounty.com/ehealth/cwp/view.asp?A=763&Q=487630>

# Other Activities

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

In 2013, Tarrant County Public Health leadership implemented a three-year strategic plan. The performance management improvement portion required that a standardized quality improvement system become part of all daily operations.

TCPH leadership and representative staff began training in July. Initial improvements included better internal communications and a mechanism for gauging employee satisfaction.

The expectation was that staff trained in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) service and delivery would improve the department's overall effectiveness at safeguarding the community's health. Early results showed great success and a CQI culture was expected to be fully in place by the end of 2014.

## GAINING PROFESSIONAL CLOUT

TCPH began seeking national public health accreditation in 2013 through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

The goal of PHAB and national accreditation is to improve the quality of health services and accountability to stakeholders.

At the time, only 22 health departments nationwide had obtained national accreditation status. 42 states had at least one health department participating in the PHAB accreditation process – including many of Texas' large urban health departments.

TCPH sought to complete the formal process in 2014 and to obtain accreditation in 2015.

Along with improving the quality of health care services, the achievement would better position TCPH to compete for future funding opportunities.



## In 2013, TCPH hosted the following community groups at the Dr. Marion J. Brooks Building (Main Campus)

Aging and Disability Resource Center  
ALIVE Project Advisory Committee  
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.  
BWI Ministries  
Dr. Louis Levy Symposium  
Fort Worth Energy Services Collaboration  
Fort Worth Safe Communities Collaboration  
Hazard Mitigation Action Planning  
Healthcare for the Homeless  
Healthy Tarrant County Coalition  
Heart Healthy Line Dance Group  
HIV Consortium  
Infant Health Network  
JPS Health System  
Mass Casualty Training for Civilians

National Association of City and County Officials  
North Texas Council of Governments  
Obesity Prevention Policy Council  
Tarrant County Diabetes Collaboration  
Tarrant County Voices for Health  
Texas Association of Infant Mental Health  
Texas Christian University  
Texas Department of Health and Human Services  
Contract Management  
Texas Health Steps Coalition  
Toastmasters International  
University of North Texas Health Science Center  
Vocas Positiva  
WinLink Training



*Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, former commissioner for the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, address representatives from local neighborhoods, businesses and community organizations during a meeting hosted by TCPH.*

# The Bottom Line

In addition to a modest operating budget, TCPH is fortunate to be a recipient of several local, state and federal grants.

## 1115 Healthcare Transformation Waiver

TCPH continued to take part in the 1115 Healthcare Transformation Waiver program through 2013. This five-year federal incentive program - also referred to as a Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) pool - provided funding for health care providers to improve the quality, health status, patient experience, coordination and cost-effectiveness of their operations.

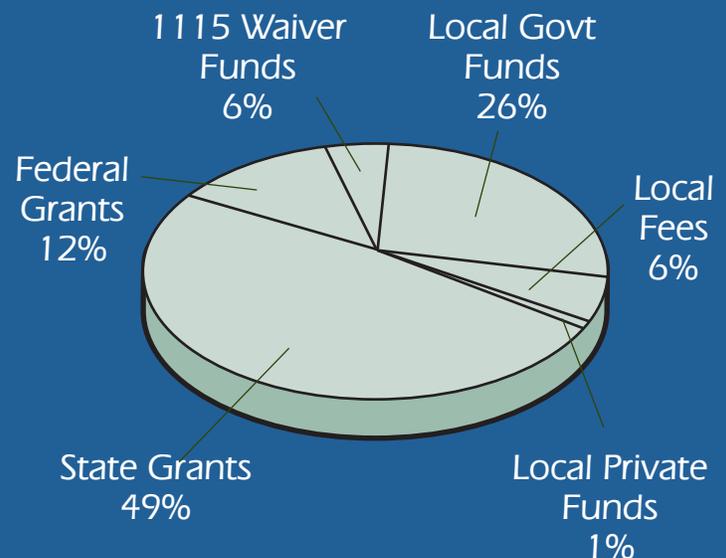
During 2013, TCPH identified and secured funding for eight initiatives, including:

1. a health information exchange to enable more effective use of electronic health information systems currently in place and to help prevent the spread of certain diseases;
2. an expansion of current TB clinic capacities and the piloting, testing and replication of innovative care models that, when combined, will reduce active TB in the population;
3. introduction of a newer drug, along with modified delivery regimens specifically targeting latent TB infection;
4. implementation of a proven chronic disease self-management program aimed at improving health-related quality of life;
5. a prevention program to reduce preterm birth, through the use of steroid medication, in the local population of women that have a history of spontaneous preterm birth;
6. implementation of the American Lung Association's evidence-based Freedom From Smoking curriculum to decrease tobacco use in Tarrant County;
7. a targeted program to reduce the level of sexually transmitted disease among youth in Arlington; and
8. a clinic expansion in Arlington that increases the availability of clinical and epidemiological services specifically targeting sexually transmitted disease.

TCPH assembled the necessary infrastructure and support staffs to support these initiatives and the respective programs launched in 2013. As the department moved into 2014, many of these initiatives began to show results.

## Annual Report Total Funds Information FY2013

Local government funds	<b>\$10,803,312</b>
Local fees	<b>\$2,517,900</b>
Local private funds	<b>\$386,502</b>
State grants	<b>\$20,296,883</b>
Federal grants	<b>\$5,189,778</b>
1115 Waiver Funds	<b>\$2,411,463</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$41,605,838</b>



## A SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITY

The following table provides a three-year glimpse of TCPH activities and/or the numbers of people involved. Fluctuations in some numbers may be due to changes in reporting requirements.

DEPARTMENT WORKLOAD MEASURES	2011	2012	2013
BCCCP <sup>1</sup> - Pap smear screens	164	560	711
BCCCP <sup>1</sup> - Breast exams	287	1,010	1,039
BCCCP <sup>1</sup> - case-managed clients	294	399	398
Pregnancy tests & referrals	817	699	598
Flu shots provided	8,545	8,202	14,152
Immunizations provided	116,518	51,690	119,130
WIC <sup>2</sup> - visits	698,071	686,603	652,496
Health education - health events, presentations	622	587	644
Health education - referrals	240	12,117	11,371
Communicable disease reports investigated	5,511	5,543	4,959
New HIV cases reported	391	189	253
STD clinic visits	5,864	5,543	5,860
STD disease intervention, field investigations	4,041	3,639	3,200
Clinical lab tests performed	50,187	60,003	53,558
HIV/STD cases investigated, partners notified	1,263	513	670
Preventive Medicine Clinic (PMC) HIV care caseload	945	997	985
PMC clinic visits	5,846	5,432	5,489
Travel Health Services clinic visits	3,742	3,643	3,378
TB clinic visits	16,125	15,811	16,416
TB contacts screened as part of disease intervention investigation	653	329	808
TB cases in Tarrant County	75	72	70
Percent of foreign-born TB cases	61	41	64.3
Suspected TB cases treated preventively	273	124	77
HIV co-infections (cases only)	6	1	2
Drug-resistant cases (TB)	3	4	4
Directly Observed Therapy doses administered in the field (TB)	10,557	11,280	9,313
DOPT <sup>3</sup> doses administered (TB)	5,974	9,215	8,835
Contacts investigated (TB)	653	565	808
Total on therapy (TB)	932	141	147
Total with latent TB infection	901	626	943
Food establishment inspections	5,465	6,151	5,683
Swimming pool inspections	1,001	1,015	1,005
Onsite sewage facilities permitted	193	212	204
Food handlers trained/certified	10,234	13,311	15,983
Mosquito pools tested for WNV	83	647	4,290
Milk and dairy lab tests performed	20,915	18,691	17,785
Water lab tests performed	20,753	19,811	19,761

<sup>1</sup> Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program

<sup>2</sup> Women, Infants & Children Program

<sup>3</sup> Directly Observed Preventive Therapy



# TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

1101 S. Main Street  
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<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

# TARRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

**B. Glen Whitley**

*County Judge*

**Roy Charles Brooks**

*Commissioner, Precinct 1*

**Andy H. Nguyen**

*Commissioner, Precinct 2*

**Gary Fickes**

*Commissioner, Precinct 3*

**J. D. Johnson**

*Commissioner, Precinct 4*

**G. K. Maenius**

*County Administrator*