

County health department now in charge of giving immunizations

By Amanda Miller
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Parents that have taken their children in for immunizations have probably noticed a change. The Cheyenne County Health Department is now giving immunizations, instead of the clinic.

That is not all the county health department is busy doing. Mila Bandel, registered nurse and, public health nurse, gave the annual yearly report to the Cheyenne County Commissioners and the Cheyenne County Hospital Board.

The county health department's mission statement is evaluate, monitor, protect, restore and/or improve the health of all persons within the county by providing health, environmental, and educational services to maintain and promote a healthy lifestyle. To do this, the health department relies on several grants every year.

The health department was awarded five grant awards for the July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013 fiscal year. The county also supports public health with funding.

The five grants that the health department and the amount that was received were: State Formula Grant, \$7,000, Maternal Child Health Grant, \$3,083, Emergency Preparedness Grant, \$7,772, and Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Grant, \$14,000.

In addition, the county commissioners contributed \$10,600 this fiscal year.

The grant funds are used to purchase all IT equipment; vaccines, bioterrorism and maternal and child health equipment; office supplies, and portions of salaries.

A large portion of what the health department is in charge of is the immunization program and disease prevention. This means tracking the population for immunization rates and notifying parents when it is time to get another immunization for your children.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, disease prevention is key to public health. Vaccines can protect both the people who receive them and those with whom they come in contact. Vaccines are responsible for the control of many infectious diseases that were once common in this country and around the world. Vaccines eradicated smallpox, one of the most devastating diseases in history.

In the yearly report, Mila reported that we stand at 84.1 percent immunization rate coverage of the major immunization series for two months through 18 years of age. From January to Nov. 22 there were 1,176 shots administered.



MILA BANDEL, COUNTY HEALTH NURSE, took Doug Ross' blood pressure during the recent Fall Health Fair. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

The county health department took over all immunizations on April 1. The clinic no longer administers childhood or adolescent vaccines.

The health department is receiving the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Grant for the fourth year. With this, they conduct school health screenings, blood pressure and sugar screenings, the diabetes support group, and health fairs. Mila is the school consultant for St. Francis and Cheylin, serving 422 students.

The health department also has several programs to help the neediest in the population receive health care that they otherwise may not receive.

The breast and cervical cancer prevention program, called early detection works, promotes and enrolls patients that financially qualify for the program to help prevent or detect cancer issues. They have helped 23 women locally in the program this year.

The Farm Workers Program focuses on outpatient acute care services for income eligible farm workers and their families

that work for a dairy or local farmer. 32 local families participate in this program. Finally, the health department helps coordinate planning for any natural, man-made disaster or emergency that occurs within the county.

On a personal note, Mila said, "I truly enjoy working in public health. I have the opportunity to work with people of all age ranges and in different stages of health. There is never a dull moment... One moment, you can be working with a patient on chronic disease illnesses and in a moment's notice working on a disease investigation that is urgent. You can be giving vaccinations and turn to emergency preparedness issues. You are always doing something different but still having the opportunity of helping people live healthier lives."

Look for "Moments with Mila" in The Herald to learn more from the Public Health Nurse about making healthy decisions. The County Health Department number is 785-332-2381 for more information.



ELVIS CAME TO LIFE at the lip sync held at the Good Samaritan Village Friday afternoon. There were a variety of numbers performed by the staff which entertained the residents as well as their guests and other staff members. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien





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