The goal of the Epidemiology in Texas Annual Report is to provide a yearly summary of incidence data, outbreak reports, and case narrative that enable health professionals and the public to understand, monitor, and prevent disease, injuries, and other health conditions in Texas.
Foreword

This is the first edition of the Epidemiology in Texas Annual Report since the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) began operations on September 1, 2004. The DSHS now performs the duties of several former state organizations: the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation’s (TDMHMR) mental health services, the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), the Texas Health Care Information Council, and the Texas Department of Health (TDH). Over 11,500 employees now work at DSHS (over 60% work in the state hospitals) providing a wide variety of behavioral health and public health services at the state hospitals, and regional, local, and Austin offices with an annual budget of about $2.5 billion.

Epidemiologists and other health services staff work together with their local and state partners to improve the health of all Texans. One area of work is providing information and resources for healthcare and public health professionals in Texas. This year, the DSHS EpiLink Online Bulletin (www.epilink.org) began publication and already has covered topics on infectious disease, substance use, environmental health and toxicology, maternal and child health, and the public health laboratory. The annual epidemiological report is another piece of this important function.

This 2006 edition provides an annual summary of certain topics, multi-year summaries of others, as well as regional outbreak investigations. The last report was published in 1999, and much has changed since then. Public health preparedness has taken an all-hazards approach and DSHS has, too. Our holistic, integrated approach to improving the health of Texans is beginning to be implemented across the agency and you should be able to track our progress across future annual reports.

To your health,

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Drowning Events in Texas, 2000-2004

A Patnaik, MPH, University of Texas School of Public Health – Houston, Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Services

M. mucogenicum outbreak in a hospital in South Texas, 2006

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Wildfire-related Mortality- Panhandle, March 12-20, 2006

J Alexander DVM, B Hernandez, T Haywood, P Raimondo, J Walker, MD, T Sidwa, DVM, S Elkins, D Johnson, A Whitley, P Tabor, C Tuttle, D McLellan, R Apodaca, M Widtfeldt, S Prosperie, B Ray, RN, D Powell, Texas Dept of State Health Services; B Woods, P Hannemann, P Schaub, C Roggenbuck, Texas Forest Service; C Rollins, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Svc; J Smith National Interagency Fire Center; Douglas Weatherwax, CDC; and, local emergency management staff members, justices of the peace, and public safety officers in the Texas Panhandle region