

# Region 8 Update

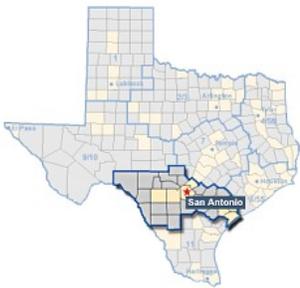


TEXAS

Department of State Health Services

## From Dr. Guerra...

### Volume 1, Issue II Fall/Winter 2009



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This newsletter finds Region 8, once again, up to its eyeballs in H1N1. At the time of our May newsletter, we were busy investigating H1N1, learning how it spread and working with communities and schools to try to minimize its impact. Over the summer the virus continued to spread but not as quickly. Since September 20, Region 8 has continued to collect data about H1N1 cases, but only those that have been hospitalized or if there has been a death. We have had a total of 130 individuals hospitalized (87 in Bexar County) and 13 deaths (10 in Bexar County).

The public health messages emphasizing that we should cover our coughs, wash our hands and stay home if we are sick are still important. We now also have a vaccine that will protect people from H1N1.

Unfortunately, manufacturers have not been able to produce it as quickly as they expected. Until now most of the vaccine has been distributed to private providers and hospitals who serve the highest risk populations: pregnant women, young children and health care workers. Starting the week of November 16, 20% of the vaccine distributed in Texas will come to local and regional health departments. In Region 8 that means we will begin to offer vaccine to the same highest risk populations (pregnant women and children from 6 months through 4 years) starting the week of November 16. We will offer H1N1 vaccines to these groups beginning with those counties with few private providers and where providers have received limited vaccine and where there is a high

percentage of uninsured and underinsured. We also want to provide vaccine in different parts of the Region. As the vaccine supply increases we will expand to other risks groups and eventually should be able to offer vaccine to anyone who wants it.

I know many of you have received phone calls from people looking for vaccine for themselves or their families. As we schedule public vaccine clinics, I will make sure you know where and when these will be held. Thank you for your help in getting the word out in your communities.

Please don't forget that we will hold our **Fall Luncheon on Tuesday, November 17** in the TCID cafeteria. I look forward to seeing you there.

## From the Border -

**José A. Gomes Moreira, Calixto Seca, JJ Nichols**

On September 29 the Office of Border Health, the Region 8 Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance program (EWIDS) and Tuberculosis Program met with the corresponding public health authorities of the State of Coahuila and their two border jurisdictions of Piedras Negras and Ciudad Acuña to lay the foundation for the establishment of two binational projects. The first is the Public Health Information Exchange between Texas

and Coahuila, to share data needed to respond to urgent public health concerns. The second project is the Binational Tuberculosis Project between DSHS Region 8 and the two Coahuila border health jurisdictions.

These are two areas of activities considered priorities by the Binational and Trinational Health Councils, AMISTAD and HOPE-K, and have also been recommended by the United States Mexico Border Health Commis-

sion (USMBHC) and Border Governor's Health Work Table.

Pre-existing binational EWIDS and TB projects between Texas and other Mexican border states have helped promote and strengthen the newly proposed initiatives between DSHS Region 8 and Coahuila.

Another meeting on these projects has been scheduled for October 29 in Eagle Pass, Texas.

# Survivor: New Braunfels 2009

Alexa George

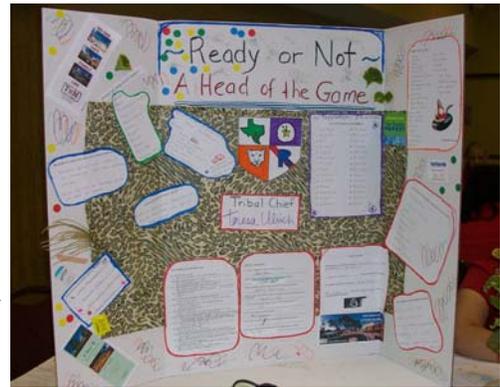
On August 27th, 120 Region 8 employees gathered in at the T Bar M Resort in New Braunfels to participate in the annual regional all-staff meeting. The theme was Survivor: New Braunfels 2009, and staff broke up into 12 tribes to complete a series of challenges intended to foster teamwork and creativity. Tribes had to come up with a team name, elect a Tribal Chieftain, answer questions about the Region, and create

tions from Dr. James Morgan, assistant commissioner for Regional and Local Health Services, Dr. Adolfo Valadez, assistant commissioner for Prevention and Preparedness Services, Captain Casey Goetz, Department of Public Safety, and Kevin Din-

nin, president of Baptist Child and Family Services. Presentations were also made by Region 8 employees Bill Lydon and Steve Hannemann, and Travel Office rep-



Employees show off how they wore their buffs for the tribal challenge.



Ready or Not's winning display board..

chance to interact with staff who work in other areas of the region.

Do you have ideas for the next regional staff meeting? Do you have additional feedback about the New Braunfels meeting that you didn't



representatives Bryce Bayles and Karen Bitto. Participants also had the opportunity to attend a breakout session on topics as varied as patient triage and digital photography, and tour the emergency trailers set up by the Public Health Preparedness team.

a display board.

When not participating in tribal challenges, employees heard from a variety of speakers. The "Survivor" theme was especially appropriate for Region 8 in the past year, as Dr. Sandra Guerra, Regional Medical Director, discussed.

She also spoke about the H1N1 flu, and how the region was preparing for a dual flu season. Employees heard presenta-

representatives Bryce Bayles and Karen Bitto. Participants also had the opportunity to attend a breakout session on topics as varied as patient triage and digital photography, and tour the emergency trailers set up by the Public Health Preparedness team.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Guerra and other members of the Tribal Council identified the winner of the tribal challenge: It was a tie between the Red E and Ready or Not

have the opportunity to share? Please contact Gale Morrow.



Red E's winning display board.



Teammates Sal Hernandez and Rosemary Armendariz work on their tribal boards.

## Welcome, New Employees!

We would like to wish a warm welcome to our newest employees who have joined Region 8 since the last *Update*.

**-Diana Acosta** began working as the receptionist in our San Antonio office in March of 2009. She came to DSHS from the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District where she had worked for 34 years. At SAMHD she worked for many years as a dental assistant and then became the division secretary. She has experience with billing, patient files, referrals and purchasing. She also speaks Spanish beautifully. We are very glad to have Diana with us at DSHS.

Family and Community Health Services welcomes two additional staff members:

**-Elly Castaneda** started with the Department of State Health Services 04/14/2009 as a Clerk II for the Seguin office. Ms. Castaneda comes to us from Arlington, Texas. She has previously worked at the North Texas Kidney consultants as a receptionist. She brings to DSHS over four years of clerical experience.

**-Jacinto Medellin** returns to public health 10/05/2009 as the clinic nurse at the Department of State Health Services nurse at the Pearsall office. Mr. Medellin previously worked in Pearsall as the public health nurse from 1977-1992. During that period he attended nurse practitioner school and became a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner. After leaving he worked at TDCJ-UTMB until 2000 functioning as a practicing nurse practitioner and unit Director of Nurses. Mr. Medellin continued his career in the position as contract clinical administrator consultant for the Emerald Health Care Jail system where he established the prison clinic health services.

Immunizations would like to welcome:

**-Charlotte Hunter**, Adult/Adolescent Vaccine Coordinator, worked at Central Office in Austin for the Immunization Branch. Charlotte is responsible for recruiting and educating providers regarding adolescent and adult vaccines. She works with coalitions, schools, and civic groups to spread the message of the importance of vaccines throughout

the lifetime. She is located at the Regional Headquarters and San Antonio and can be reached at 210-949-2022.

**-Jessica Bush**, ImmTrac Coordinator, worked previously with the Comal County Health Department with ImmTrac. Jessica works to educate providers on the proper use of ImmTrac and provides education and technical assistance to local health departments and private providers on ImmTrac. She also conducts outreach to update children's immunization records in ImmTrac. She is also located at the Regional Headquarters in San Antonio and can be reached at 210-949-2021.

Region 8 welcomes their new employees in the Department of Case Management and Social Work Services:

**-Marisa Hernandez** is our newest social worker covering Maverick, Dimmit, and Zavala counties. She provides case management services to children and families who are on Medicaid and on the Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) programs. Marisa also conducts assessments for the Personal Care Services (PCS) Medicaid benefit. We are excited to have Marisa in the Eagle Pass Office!

**-Linda Salazar-Ybarbo** is our new social worker located in the Victoria Office. Linda covers Victoria, DeWitt, Calhoun, Goliad, Jackson and Lavaca counties. She provides case management services to children and families who are on Medicaid and on the Children with Special Health Care Needs programs. Linda also conducts assessments for the PCS Medicaid benefit. It is great to have a social worker who is familiar with the local Golden Crescent resources to assist our families!

**-Diane Rodriguez** joined our Department last December and is housed in the San Antonio Office. She covers part of Bexar County and Atascosa County. She provides case management services to children and families who are on Medicaid and on the Children with Special Health Care Needs programs. Diane also conducts assessments for the PCS Medicaid benefit.

**-Jacqueline "Jackie" Mercado** is one of our newer social workers in the San Antonio Office. Jackie covers part of

Bexar County and Kerr County. She provides case management services to children and families who are on Medicaid and on the Children with Special Health Care Needs programs. Jackie also conducts assessments for the PCS Medicaid benefit. Congratulations of completing your 6 month probationary period!

**-Diana "Dee" Medina** joined our social work team in May of this year. Dee covers part of Bexar, Frio and LaSalle counties. She provides case management services to children and families who are on Medicaid and on the Children with Special Health Care Needs programs. Dee also conducts assessments for the PCS Medicaid benefit. Congratulations of completing your 6 month probationary period!

**-Veronica "Roni" Vasquez** joined our team in January as the program's main Administrative Assistant III. She has extensive experience working in the health/medical field. Roni comes to DSHS from the Methodist Hospital system. She provides administrative support to the Program Manager and Team Leads as well as provides oversight of the administrative support team. We are thrilled to have Roni on our team!

**-Pamela Gomez** is our Human Service Technician III located in the San Antonio Office. Pamela is responsible for answering the program's main phone line. She assists with CSHCN eligibility program. Pamela handles all of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) letters offering our families case management services. She also maintains program databases. Pamela also serves as the back-up administrative assistant for the PCS program. We are excited to have Pamela on our team!

**-Lillian Vazquez** is our Human Service Technician II who primarily works with the CSHCN eligibility program. Lillian is bi-lingual in English and Spanish and handles many of our Spanish speaking clients. She assists families in completing the CSHCN applications and enters data into our CMIS system to determine client eligibility. She is housed in the San Antonio Eligibility Department on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We are pleased to have Lillian on our team!

## Wellness Corner - Holiday Edition

### Start the Day Right

If there was a magic pill that could give you more energy, help you get to and maintain a healthy weight, and help you focus at work, would you take it? Well, there's something better! Breakfast tastes better than a pill, and helps with all these things, but it can be tough to find the time.

Try out these tips and make breakfast part of your routine. Turns out



Mom was right—Breakfast really *is* the most important meal of the day!

- Oatmeal with a tablespoon of sliced almonds
- Yogurt with fruit and low-sugar cereal
- Toast or tortilla with peanut butter and banana
- Scrambled egg, fruit and an English muffin

- Breakfast taco with eggs and lean meat
- String cheese and a cereal bar
- A small muffin and hardboiled egg
- Cereal and low fat or fat free milk or yogurt. Look for cereal with at least 3 grams of fiber and less than 10 grams of sugar.
- Something non-traditional—a turkey sandwich or dinner leftovers...The goal is to get some lean protein, carbohydrates, and a little bit of healthy fat. Aim for 300-450 calories. Happy eating!

### Giving Yourself the Gift of Health

Its that time of year again...with the (thankfully!) cooler weather comes a string of holidays. Between holiday traveling, parties, and day-to-day activities, it can be difficult to find room on your family's schedule to sit down, let alone worry about being healthy! But keeping your health a priority will give you more energy to tackle your social calendar *and* make sure you're able to enjoy many more holidays.

- Get enough rest – It's easy to cut back on sleep when it seems like there aren't enough hours in the day. This will backfire, though, when you don't have the energy for everything you need to do. Make sure 7-8 hours of sleep every night is at the top of your To Do list.
- Don't starve all day in anticipation of a party – Eat healthy meals and snacks throughout the day so you won't be ravenous when its party time or the Thanksgiving



meal is finally served.

- Have a game plan – Whether its Christmas shopping or Christmas dinner, having a strategy will make things easier, and help you make good choices.
- Plan in activity – Don't wait for your New Years' Resolution to start your workout routine. Fitting in just 10 or 15 minute spurts of activity throughout the day is better than nothing. A good sweat session is a great stress reliever, too!
- Start a new holiday tradition of activity – Whether it's a neighborhood walk after opening presents, or a game of soccer after Thanksgiving dinner, a group activity can be a great way to bond.
- Stay hydrated – It's easy to focus on the festive holiday drinks when you're at a party or visiting with family before a holiday dinner, but try to alternate alcoholic and drinks with calories (such as cider and eggnog) with water. Try sparkling water or a splash of fruit juice to make it more festive.

- Set a good example – Especially during family gatherings when little ones will be watching, be sure to follow the rules you'd set for them. Fill half your plate with vegetables, don't take more food than you need, wait a few minutes before having seconds, and set your fork down in between bites and while you talk with others.
- Designate 'worth it' foods – Don't gorge on foods that you can (and do) eat all year. Have a reasonable amount of the treats that you truly only have during the holidays, and enjoy every bite. Focus on the food itself and you may find you're satisfied with a smaller amount.
- Give back – Volunteer to serve meals at a soup kitchen, collect donations for a family in need, or play with the animals at an animal shelter. Helping others helps you, too, and can help keep the stress of the season in perspective.

## Wellness Corner

### Baby Steps to a Healthier Holiday

Jeanette Ely, TSU Dietetic Intern

For many of us, the holiday season is a time of both joy and dread. How many holiday seasons have started with you relaxing your regular diet to indulge in those treats “you only eat during the holidays,” and ended with promises to start your new diet with the new year? A big part of the holiday season is spent sharing food with the people that we love. The good news is that you don’t have to compromise your health for the sake of making the traditional foods you look forward to all year. This holiday season, commit to making a few tweaks to your traditional recipes for your health. In fact, your family may also appreciate the small steps that you take to make the holiday a little easier on their waistlines. Here are some easy ideas that could make a big difference for your family:

1. Replace ½ the butter or lard in a recipe with extra-virgin olive oil or applesauce (for baked goods). When making your holiday tamales, con-

sider cutting back on the amount of fat you use in the dough. You might also try using canola oil instead of lard or shortening to see if your family can taste a difference.



2. Use more vegetables like onions, garlic, celery, green peppers, or mushrooms in recipes to increase the moisture and bulk. For example, adding a few of these veggies to your stuffing recipe should reduce the amount of butter and dried bread needed

3. Use a lower fat milk or dairy product than what a recipe calls for. If you usually use cream or half-and-half in

your mashed potatoes, try using whole milk, 2% milk or low-fat buttermilk. This will help make your favorite dishes healthier by reducing the calories and saturated fat, but won’t compromise the flavor and quality.

4. Reduce (or eliminate, if high blood pressure is a concern for you or your loved ones) the amount of salt that you add while preparing dishes because many people prefer to salt their own food at the dinner table.

5. Support your local community by cooking one item that was grown or raised near you. Make a trip to the farmer’s market for a locally-grown squash (try roasting it with a touch of olive oil, instead of topping with marshmallows), locally-grown onions for stuffing and under the turkey, locally produced eggs to use in your cookies, or even a locally raised turkey or other meat dish. Not only do these items have great nutritional quality, flavor, and freshness, but it helps local farmers provide a happy holiday season for their own family.

### Dip Into This!

When everyone’s waiting for the holiday dinner to be served, this dip is easy to whip up and set out. Have an assortment of cut up vegetables (carrots, celery, jicama, bell peppers) and whole grain crackers on hand for dippers.

#### Creamy Black Bean Fiesta Dip

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained

1/3 c reduced fat sour cream

1/2 c chunky salsa

2 Tb lime juice

1 tsp garlic powder

1/4 tsp salt, if desired

Chopped cilantro, if desired

Hot sauce, to taste

In a small bowl, mash 1/2 c of the black beans roughly, then mix with the sour cream. Add the rest of the

ingredients (including the whole beans). Serve with cut vegetables and crackers.

4 tablespoons of dip provide less than 50 calories, 1 gram of fat, 3 grams of fiber, and 2 grams of protein.

Recipe adapted from PCC Natural Markets.



# Operation Lone Star: 1 Mission, 2 Perspectives

## Matthew Williams, DMD & Connie Alaniz

Dr. Williams: Operation Lone Star (OLS) is a joint civilian and military emergency preparedness mission, staged annually in several South Texas border counties, since 1999. DSHS Region 11 is the sponsoring entity for OLS and receives support from the Texas Military Forces, as well as other Texas emergency preparedness related groups.

Since 2007 the DSHS Oral Health Program has supported this mission by staffing the DSHS Preventive Dental Services Module at one of the OLS sites.



The DSHS Oral Health Program fields five Regional Dental Teams, each consisting of one dentist and one dental hygienist, that provide dental evaluations and preventive dental services to eligible pre-school and school aged Texas children. Once each year all of the Regional Dental Teams come together in one place and provide preventive dental care for children during OLS.

The members of the DSHS Oral Health Program who supported OLS 2009 were:

- HSR 8 & 11: Matt

Williams, DMD and Cynthia King, RDH

- HSR 3, 4, & 5 North: Maureen Weber, DDS
- HSR 6, 7 & 5 South: William Gray, DDS and Diana Beeman, RDH
- HSR 1 & 2: Rick Howard, DDS and Rene Hardin, RDH
- HSR 9 & 10: G.M. "Nana" Lopez, DDS and Betty Willberg, RDH



Connie: I had heard about Operation Lone Star from other staff and wanted to volunteer. I was assigned to the pharmacy at Raymondville High School, where I worked under the direction of Major Stewart of the Texas

Army National Guard, managing the pharmacy inventory using



TIMS (Texas Inventory Management System) to order prescription drugs to replenish our supply.

One of the most valuable parts of the experience for me was getting out of the comfort zone behind my computer, and functioning in a different role in an ICS structured environment. Blending with other agencies can be a challenge at times, especially when you get several branches of military forces all in the same place. Not having a military background, all those camouflage uniforms look the same to me! The ICS structure paints a clear picture of which individual person is responsible for what area, without focusing entirely on rank.

It was also very rewarding to see the many different roles of public health. Families with little or no healthcare came to one location where they received medical and dental services, prescription medications, education on diabetes and healthy eating habits, all at no cost. For me, it was a great exercise both personally and professionally. I look forward to next year.

