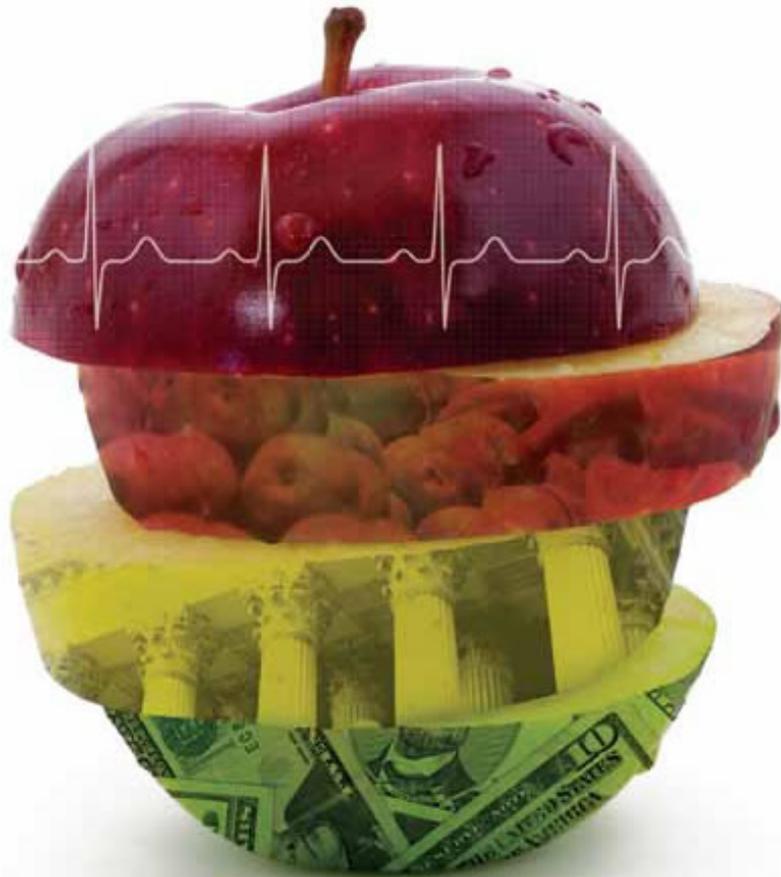


# Polk County Health Department **Annual Report** **2010**



*Protecting and promoting the health of all  
residents and visitors in Polk County*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The Polk County Health Department would like to thank the following  
for their assistance with the 2010 Annual Report:

Administrative Services  
Communicable Diseases  
Community Health Services  
Dental  
Environmental Engineering  
Environmental Health  
Health Promotion & Preparedness  
WIC & Nutrition

**Report Contributors/Editors**

Daniel Haight, MD, FACP  
Sonny Register, MPH  
Sheryl Cooper, RN, BSN, MPH  
Lauren Hinton  
Linda Hawbaker, MS  
Pamela Crain  
Bobbie Duffey

# Table of Contents

	Message from the Director.....	page 5
<b>1</b>	<b>Monitor health status to identify community health problems</b>	
	Vital Statistics (Birth & Death Records), Teen Pregnancy Prevention.....	page 6
	Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP).....	page 7
<b>2</b>	<b>Diagnose &amp; investigate health problems &amp; health hazards in the community</b>	
	Disease Outbreak Investigation & Control (Epidemiology).....	page 8
	Environmental Investigations.....	page 9
	Radiological Incident Investigations, Indoor Air Quality, Radon Testing.....	page 10
	Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Control, HIV/AIDS Outreach Program.....	page 11
	Hepatitis Prevention Program, Tuberculosis (TB) Control Program.....	page 12
<b>3</b>	<b>Inform, educate, &amp; empower people about health issues</b>	
	Public Information, Chronic Disease Programs.....	page 13
	Tobacco Prevention Program.....	page 14
<b>4</b>	<b>Mobilize community partnerships to identify &amp; solve health problems</b>	
	Community Partnerships, Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).....	page 15
	Haitian Medical Relief Effort.....	page 16
	Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP), Home Care Training Series.....	page 17
<b>5</b>	<b>Develop policies &amp; plans that support individual &amp; community health efforts</b>	
	Administrative Services, An Academic Health Department.....	page 18
<b>6</b>	<b>Enforce laws &amp; regulations that protect health &amp; ensure safety</b>	
	Clean & Safe Drinking Water.....	page 19
	Facilities Inspections.....	page 20
	Onsite Sewage Treatment, Swimming Pools & Bathing Places, X-ray Machine Inspections.....	page 21
<b>7</b>	<b>Link people to needed personal health services</b>	
	Dental Services, Family Planning.....	page 22
	Healthcare for Pregnant Women.....	page 23
	Healthy Start, Mary Sand Chronic Lung Disease Clinic, Specialty Care Clinic (HIV/AIDS).....	page 24
	Immunizations.....	page 25
	School Health Services, WIC & Nutrition.....	page 26
<b>8</b>	<b>Assure a competent public health &amp; personal health care workforce</b>	
	Staff Training & Development.....	page 27
<b>9</b>	<b>Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility &amp; quality of health services</b>	
	Leadership Council, Strategic Planning.....	page 28
<b>10</b>	<b>Research for new insights &amp; innovative solutions to health problems</b>	
	Research.....	page 29
	Budget & Fiscal Responsibility.....	page 30
	Polk County Health Department Clinics.....	page 31
	Monthly Accomplishments During 2010.....	page 32

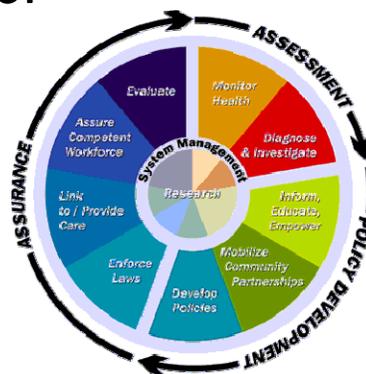
This page is intentionally left blank

# A Message from the Director

To the residents of Polk County and our Partners in Public Health,

There are ten essential ingredients in the recipe for a community that wants to become healthier and stay healthy. Some recipes call for a heaping of wholesome foods, a dash of advice, or a few sprinkles of exercise. But the ten items I'm talking about are called "Essential Health Services", and each one was carefully chosen by national experts at the Centers for Disease Control and other national public health organizations.

Who adds these ten ingredients to our community? Everyone! No one person, agency, business, or civic organization is equipped to add all ten, but each can contribute to some of the ten. A healthy community does all ten very well.



Certain public agencies play a major role in the first three ingredients: **(1) Enforce laws that protect health, (2) Assure a competent healthcare workforce, and (3) Discover and investigate health problems.** But others, such as the Polk County Medical Association, hospitals, and local clinics contribute by training their staff to follow health laws, maintain quality, and report serious diseases to the health department.

All of us can get involved by adding the next two ingredients: **(4) Monitor the community's health and (5) Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.** We can all monitor our community's health by visiting websites like [www.floridacharts.com](http://www.floridacharts.com) that reveal the numbers of heart attacks, strokes, teen pregnancies, and cancers in each of the counties of Central Florida. We can all be teachers by sharing this information with others, and helping our family, friends, and neighbors use this information to become healthier.

To take the next steps in this recipe for a healthier community, people must **(6) Mobilize partnerships to identify and solve health problems.** In our community, the Polk Health Care Alliance measures how potent this mixture of ten essential ingredients is in our efforts to become a healthier community.

When groups come together, they can **(7) Develop policies and plans that support good health efforts.** The Polk County Medical Association and the Florida Medical Association, along with elected local leaders, can educate and encourage lawmakers to enact laws that help create healthier communities.

Once all this hard work has been put into our recipe, the next ingredient is added: **(8) Linking people to needed personal health services and assuring healthcare when not otherwise available.** For example, the Medical Association's We Care Network links patients in need with volunteer doctors who provide specialty healthcare. Donations from the community can help keep this essential ingredient fresh.

Now that all these ingredients are mixed together, we must **(9) Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and community health services.** Just as in anyone's kitchen, this is an ongoing step that should be repeated often. The Polk Health Care Alliance, along with other health organizations in the county, strives for quality by constantly ensuring that we have the best doctors, clinics, and hospitals possible.

Lastly, as any good chef looks into the future to plan even better creations, the tenth ingredient for a community that is to stay healthy is: **(10) Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.** With the new USF Poly Technical Campus emphasizing wellness and community assessment, new health advances will originate from right here in Central Florida.

After taking the steps needed to keep you and your family healthy, think of ways you can help create a healthier community in your area. Share this recipe with others, enlisting their help in supplying the ten essential ingredients. *Bon Appétit!*

To Your Health,

Daniel O. Haight, MD, FACP  
Director, Polk County Health Department  
Associate Professor, University of South Florida, College of Medicine  
Chair, Tampa Bay Regional Domestic Security Task Force, Health & Medical Committee



# Essential Service #1

## Monitor health status to identify community health problems

### Vital Statistics (Birth & Death Records)

The Polk County Health Department is required by Florida law to record births and deaths in Polk County. The Vital Statistics office maintains records of all births that occurred within Florida since 1917, and deaths that have occurred within Polk County in the past 10 years. In 2010, there were 6,295 births and 5,594 deaths recorded in Polk County. The health department issued 29,748 birth certificates and 36,825 death certificates for the year.

A new Vital Statistics office was opened at the Lakeland Clinic in 2010 to make it easier for people to obtain copies of these records, which are now required for many transactions, such as obtaining a driver's license. Certified copies can be obtained at either the Bartow or Lakeland offices.

Birth and death records provide the health department with valuable information about the health issues that affect Polk County. Information, such as that listed below, helps the health department better understand what programs and services need to be provided to help people in Polk County live healthier lifestyles.

#### Birth records

- premature births
- low birth weight
- births to teen mothers

#### Death records

- causes of death
- average life expectancy

For information on how to obtain a birth or death certificate, visit the Polk County Health Department web site: [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

#### Top Causes of Death in Polk County 2010

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Chronic Lower  
Respiratory Disease
- Stroke
- Unintentional Injuries

### Teen Pregnancy

Statistics show that children born to teen parents are at greater risk for living in poverty, experiencing health problems or difficulty in school, serving time in jail, and/or becoming teen parents themselves. During 2010, there were 505 babies born in Polk County to mothers age 18 and under. Of those, 12 births were to teens age 14 and younger.

The Polk County Health Department continuously monitors the number of births to teens and works in collaboration with the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance (TPPA) to plan and implement strategies that reduce teen pregnancies. TPPA is coordinated by the Healthy Start Coalition and consists of community partners working together to break the cycle of teen pregnancy.

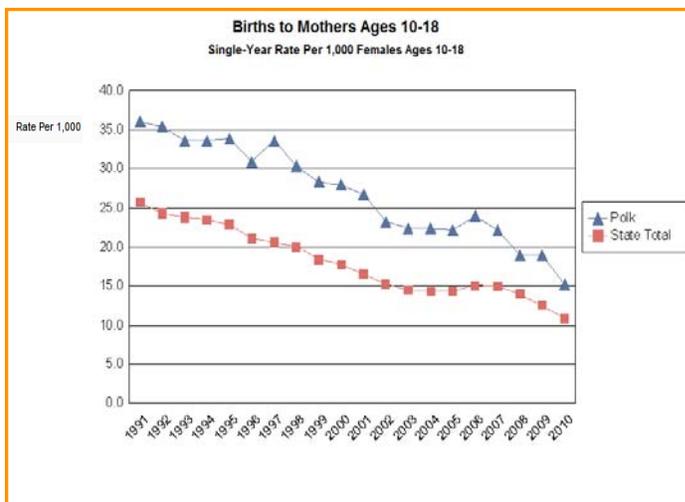
Over the past decade, Polk County has seen a steady decline in the number of teens giving birth. The graph to the right provides a look at this trend and it's relation to overall statistics for the state.

Experts believe that several factors have contributed to this downward trend:

- More teens are waiting until they are older or married to have sex
- Increased use of birth-control and condoms
- Better sex education

Even with these encouraging statistics, teen pregnancy remains a public health concern in Polk County. Compared to older women who get pregnant, teen mothers are less likely to finish their education (only 40% finish high school), more likely to live in poverty, and usually have multiple pregnancies. About a quarter of teen mothers have a second baby within two years. Keeping in mind that a teenager who is having unprotected sex has a 90% chance of becoming pregnant within a year, we simply cannot afford to be less than vigilant.

For more information on Teen Pregnancy Prevention, visit: [www.healthystarthhp.org/tppa.php](http://www.healthystarthhp.org/tppa.php)



**Figure 1: Births to Mothers Ages 10-18**

## Essential Service #1 (continued) Monitor health status to identify community health problems

### Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP)

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) is a community-wide strategic planning tool or process for improving community health. MAPP helps communities improve health and quality of life by mobilizing partnerships to create a community-wide strategic plan and take specific, targeted action.

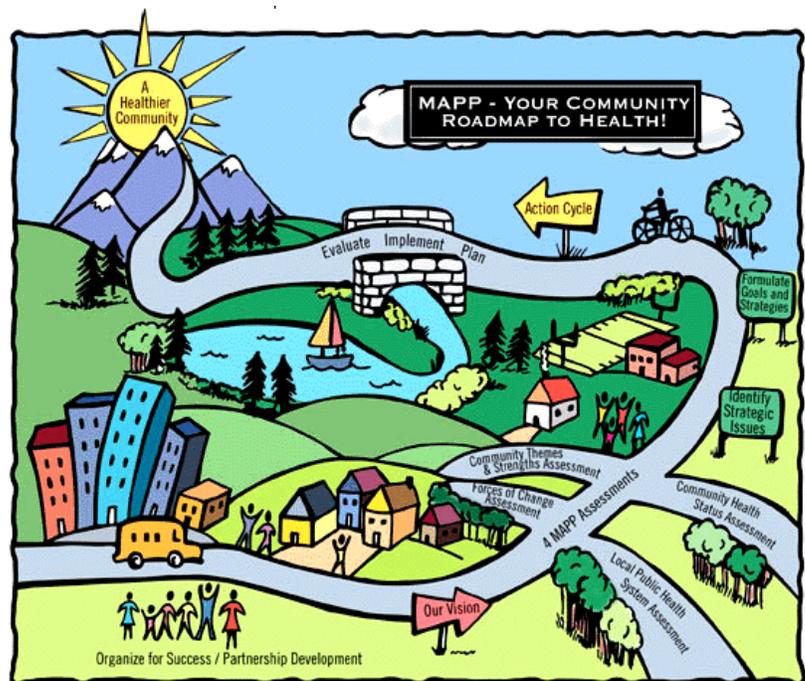
MAPP is a very data and information driven process that consists of 4 assessments:

1. **Forces of Change** - asks the questions:
  - What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local health system?
  - What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?
2. **Community Themes and Strengths** - asks the questions:
  - What is important to our community?
  - How is quality of life perceived in our community?
  - What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?
3. **Local Public Health System Assessment** - asks the questions:
  - What is our health system's capacity to provide the 10 essential public health services?
  - How well are we performing each of the essential services?
4. **Community Health Status** - asks the questions:
  - How healthy are our residents?
  - What does the health status of our community look like?

During 2010, the Polk County Health Department (PCHD), in collaboration with the Polk Health Care Alliance, completed the Forces of Change, Community Themes and Strengths, and Local Public Health System assessments.

Once all the reports are completed, the Polk Health Care Alliance will engage the community in prioritizing the findings and developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to address the identified priorities.

To view the completed reports go to:  
[www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org). These are located under Data and Reports.



## Essential Service #2

### Diagnose & investigate health problems & health hazards in the community

#### Disease Outbreak Investigation & Control (Epidemiology)

Health department staff who are specially trained in the science of epidemiology continuously monitor and investigate the sources of reportable infectious diseases. They also provide services to prevent or stop the spread of disease.

##### Mosquito-borne illness

The Polk County Health Department tracks mosquito-borne diseases by working closely with our public health partners to obtain updated mosquito counts, and test birds and horses. The health department also provides information to physicians on symptoms and diagnosis of mosquito-borne disease, such as Dengue virus, Eastern Encephalitis, and West Nile virus.



In 2010, Key West and the Caribbean experienced an outbreak of Dengue Fever. Polk reported one confirmed and one probable case of Dengue Fever in people who had traveled in the Caribbean. It is important to note that Dengue virus is not naturally found in Polk County. The people infected had traveled to where the outbreak was occurring. This virus is spread by the bite of a mosquito, and is not spread person-to-person.

Each year, the Polk County Health Department releases information to citizens with easy steps to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes. Such items as using repellants, avoiding hours mosquitoes are most active, and making sure home windows are screened are some of the recommendations. The Polk County Health Department also works with Polk County Mosquito Control to ensure adequate spraying of areas with suspected illness or large mosquito populations.

##### Influenza-like illness and H1N1 Influenza

The Polk County Health Department monitors influenza activity continuously throughout the year, activating additional surveillance systems during heightened seasonal activity. One of the most useful of these surveillance systems are sentinel providers. Sentinel providers are physicians throughout the county who serve in a variety of settings, including urgent care, pediatrics, family practice, gerontology. These physicians report the number of patients seen each week that have influenza-like illness (ILI) to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH). ILI is defined as a fever of 100.0 °F or greater, plus a respiratory symptom such as cough, sore throat, or runny nose. These weekly counts give the health department a better idea of flu activity in our community.

In addition to recording the number of persons experiencing ILI, the sentinel providers collect lab samples from patients with ILI and send them to the Florida Department of Health's state lab for further testing. Testing helps determine what strains of influenza or other respiratory illnesses are circulating in our community during that time period, and also helps identify influenza strains that should be included in the following season's influenza vaccine.

In Figure 2, the 2010-2011 data from Polk County's sentinel providers is graphed with the percentage of patient visits attributed to ILI for the influenza season. Throughout February, we saw sustained, increased rates of influenza-like activity. Increased flu activity January to March is typical for Florida's influenza season. The influenza season slowed down in April and May, as less illness was reported by sentinel providers.

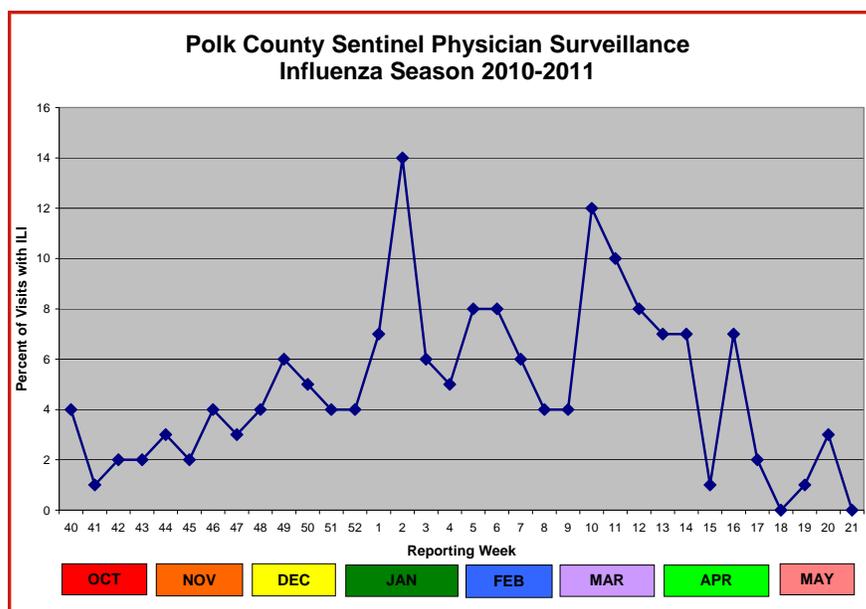


Figure 2: Influenza-like Illness by Sentinel Providers, Polk County, 2010

## Essential Service #2 (continued)

### Diagnose & investigate health problems & health hazards in the community

#### Environmental Investigations

The Environmental Health Division works to keep our residents healthy and our communities free of disease. Most of their work takes place behind the scene, as they protect residents from environmental hazards in their community.

This division investigates several different potential public health risks including:

- **Food-borne illnesses** - Environmental Health employees investigate illness complaints from the public that may be related to food products or water sources. All such reports are tracked, and an investigation is initiated when two or more individuals have become ill after eating or drinking the same things or from the same sources. When a food-borne or water-borne outbreak is suspected within a facility, a specialist from Environmental Health will conduct an onsite investigation. Samples may be gathered, the operation reviewed, and people questioned in order to determine the source of the illness and corrective action necessary to prevent further outbreaks from occurring.
- **Sanitary nuisance complaints** - Sanitary nuisance complaints are situations which may threaten or impair the health of the public. Any of the following conditions may create a sanitary nuisance that is harmful to health:
  - Untreated or improperly treated human waste, garbage, dead animals, or dangerous waste materials from manufacturing processes, air pollutants, gases, and odors which are harmful to human or animal life.
  - Improperly built or maintained septic tanks, water closets, or privies.
  - Keeping diseased animals dangerous to human health.
  - Unclean or filthy places where animals are slaughtered.
  - Any condition capable of breeding flies, mosquitoes, or other arthropods capable of transmitting diseases to humans.
  - Any act or condition which may cause disease.



Similarly, a neglected swimming pool that is breeding mosquitoes is causing an insect infestation that may lead to disease if the local residents are bitten. These types of unsanitary or unsafe conditions on the outside of a dwelling can cause disease or injury to the public and need to be eliminated or cleaned up.

When a nuisance is found to exist, a sanitary nuisance notice is issued giving a reasonable time for correction, based on the severity of the condition, and if correction is not completed, legal action is taken. Failure to comply is a second degree misdemeanor.

- **Lead contamination** - Environmental Health staff educate at-risk individuals and families about lead poisoning hazards and prevention. Staff also provide assessment of the living environments of children who have been diagnosed with elevated levels of lead in their blood. Health care providers and laboratories are required to report elevated blood lead levels to the Health Department. In 2010, there were 27 lead contamination investigations in Polk County.

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that has been used to make many products. Lead poisoning occurs when too much lead gets into the body. The biggest exposure to lead for children is lead based paint hazards in older homes. Other sources include: soil, parent's occupations/hobbies, imported pottery and dishes, home remedies, and water.

Anyone can be poisoned by lead, but young children are the most at risk. Children get lead into their bodies by eating or breathing lead-contaminated dust or handling things that have become contaminated from household dust or exterior soil.

Some potential results of lead poisoning are:

- Decreased intelligence/ability to learn.
- Increased behavior problems.
- Increased childhood health problems, such as anemia, speech and language delays, hearing problems, kidney damage, seizure, and in rare cases of extremely high levels, even death.
- Decreased school performance.

For more information on Environmental Investigations, visit: [www.myfloridaeh.com](http://www.myfloridaeh.com)

## Essential Service #2 (continued) Diagnose & investigate health problems & health hazards in the community

### Radiological Incident Investigations

Although radiological emergencies are rare, the health department does average 3 to 4 incident investigations per year. There were 2 radiological incidents in Polk County during 2010.

Team members investigate transportation accidents involving radioactive materials, incidents of lost or stolen radioactive sources, and contamination of facilities or the environment after any spill involving radioactive materials. This team is specially trained to protect the public against accidental exposure.

The Radiological Health team also provides training on the proper handling and disposal of radioactive materials. This training is offered for a variety of groups, including local fire and police departments, emergency response personnel, and the 3-day Applied Radiation Physics class for Bureau of Radiation Control personnel. Upon request, staff from this division are also available to speak to local businesses and civic organizations about such topics as radon. One example of this would be a presentation given to Polk County Landfill personnel about the proper identification and handling of radioactive materials.



The Polk County Health Department, under contract with the Florida Department of Health Bureau of Radiation Control, plays a vital role as an active member of the Florida Radiological Incident Emergency Management Response Team. Working in cooperation with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the team participates in annual emergency response exercises in preparation for any unexpected radiological emergency, such as a radiation leak from a nuclear power plant.

### Indoor Air Quality

Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are the primary cause of indoor air quality problems in homes. Inadequate ventilation can increase indoor pollutant levels by not bringing in enough outdoor air to dilute emissions from indoor sources and by not carrying indoor air pollutants out of the home. High temperature and humidity levels can also increase concentrations of some pollutants.

Health effects from indoor air pollutants may be experienced soon after exposure or, possibly, years later. These effects, which include some respiratory diseases, heart disease, and cancer, can be severely debilitating or fatal. It is prudent to try to improve the indoor air quality in your home, even if symptoms are not noticeable. Certain immediate effects are similar to those from colds or other viral diseases, so it is often difficult to determine if the symptoms are a result of exposure to indoor air pollution.

**In 2010, a total of 422 indoor air quality telephone inquiries were handled by the Environmental Health Division. In addition, 70 voluntary indoor air quality investigations were conducted.**

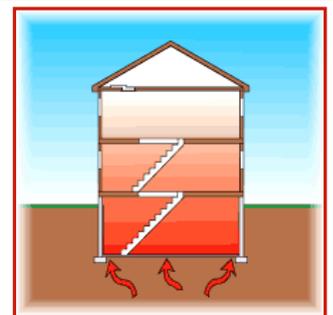
### Radon Testing

In 2010, the Polk County Radiological Health unit tested 503 local radon samples.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless gas that is found at low levels in outdoor air, but can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Lung cancer is the only known effect on human health from exposure to radon in air. For smokers, the risk of lung cancer is significant due to the combined effects of radon and smoking. In fact, the risk to smokers is six times greater than to those who have never smoked.

The Polk County Health Department works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to educate the community about the dangers of radon exposure and encourage residents to take action to protect their homes and families. Radon test kits are available to local homeowners for a fee of \$15.

The Polk County Radiological Health Unit also measures radon levels in schools, correctional facilities, and other public and private buildings. It is certified by the State of Florida as a Radon Measurement Business, and by the Natural Environmental Health Association as a Radon Laboratory.



## Essential Service #2 (continued)

### Diagnose & investigate health problems & health hazards in the community

#### Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Control

The Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention & Control Program identifies tests and/or treats people who may have been exposed to an STD or HIV in a timely manner in order to prevent further spread of the disease. These diseases include syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, genital warts, HIV, and many others. Individuals who go undiagnosed and untreated may spread the infection to others and experience long term negative health effects.



In 2010, the Polk County Health Department provided 19,887 sexually transmitted disease services to over 3,861 clients. Among these clients, 499 were diagnosed with gonorrhea, 2,447 chlamydia, 1 case of congenital syphilis, and 100 syphilis cases. From 2009 to 2010, STD cases in Polk County increased by 0.99% from 3,011 to 3,047 cases. From 2009 to 2010, the total reported cases of STDs increased by 1% among teens and young adults, ages 15 - 24.



Since prevention and early detection are important in controlling sexually transmitted diseases, STD program staff educate, counsel, locate, and screen people at risk for sexually transmitted diseases. Free testing and education are provided within the community during health fairs and events and through partnerships with local homeless shelters, CBOs (Community Based Organizations), county jails, and other groups. Confidential STD screening, treatment, and counseling are available at the Auburndale, Bartow, Haines City, Lake Wales, and Lakeland clinics.

For more information on sexually transmitted diseases, visit: [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org)

#### HIV / AIDS Outreach Program

The HIV/AIDS Outreach Program works to prevent and control the spread of HIV through education, and counseling and testing services, as required by Florida law. The number of newly diagnosed cases of HIV increased in Polk County in 2010. Polk County had 104 new cases reported of HIV, which is a slight increase from 100 HIV cases in 2009. There were 88 newly diagnosed cases of AIDS, which was down from the 100 AIDS cases reported in 2009.

In an effort to address HIV/AIDS in Polk County, the HIV/AIDS Outreach Program made 8,154 educational contacts and provided counseling and testing to 1,074 people in 2010. People tested for HIV were also offered testing for hepatitis, syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea.

From 2009-2011, the PCHD's HIV/AIDS Outreach Program has partnered with the West Bartow Front Porch community, who received a \$100,000 Closing the Gap grant for HIV/AIDS prevention among minority populations. As part of this grant, the health department provided HIV prevention interventions and HIV Counseling and Testing services at community events that targeted specific at-risk populations such as African-Americans between the ages of 15-24.

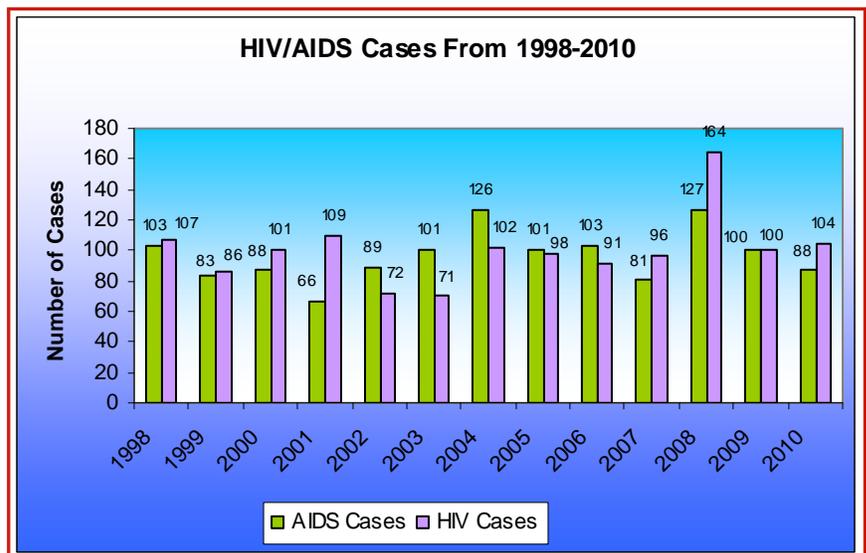


Figure 3: HIV/AIDS Cases from 1998-2010

## Essential Service #2 (continued) Diagnose & investigate health problems & health hazards in the community

### Hepatitis Prevention Program

The Hepatitis Prevention Program serves adults 18 years and older at risk for hepatitis. Funding focuses on hepatitis testing, hepatitis A and B vaccine delivery to adults at risk, information and educational activities, and infrastructure development.

In 2010, the Hepatitis Prevention Program screened 1,952 Polk County residents. Education was provided to those screened, and at various health fairs and outreach events held throughout the community. Despite a budget reduction of 4% for this program, hepatitis screening increased 27% in 2010.

Vaccinations are provided free of charge to those who are at increased risk from viral hepatitis due to lifestyle choices or health conditions. In 2010, 539 doses of vaccine for hepatitis A and B were given.

The Polk County Health Department's Hepatitis Prevention Program partners with local community support services such as homeless shelters, drug and alcohol treatment centers, and the local county jail. Through these partnerships, we strive to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, provide educational information and materials, and administer hepatitis vaccine to those most at risk within our community.

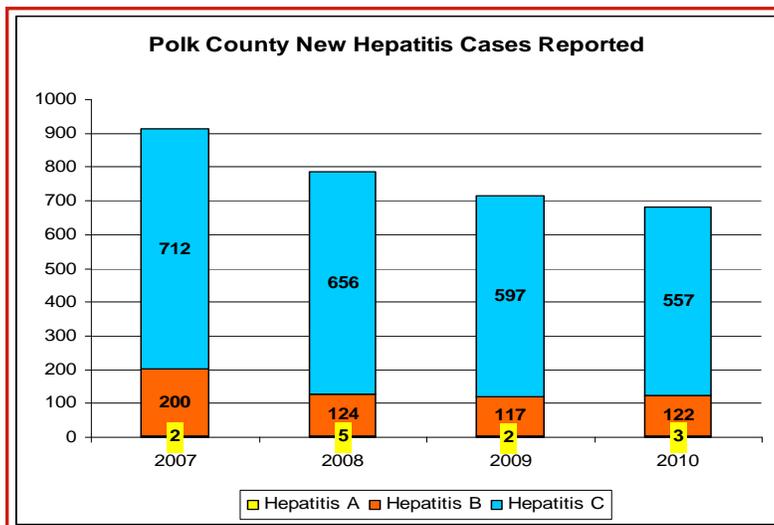


Figure 4: New Hepatitis Cases Reported in 2010

As a result of the Hepatitis Prevention Program, rates of newly reportable hepatitis cases in Polk County have been declining over the last three years.

For more information on hepatitis and liver failure, visit [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

### Tuberculosis (TB) Control Program

The Polk County Health Department TB Control staff play a very important part in preventing and controlling Tuberculosis (TB) in our community. Each case of TB is fully investigated and treated to prevent further spread of the disease to others.

TB is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air and can remain hidden for many years in someone that is infected. TB usually affects the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, and bone.

The health department's TB Control program has four strategies.

- Identifying and ensuring complete treatment for all persons with TB disease.
- Finding and evaluating persons who have been in contact with individuals with contagious TB to determine whether they have TB infection and provide them with appropriate therapy.
- Testing high-risk groups for exposure to TB to identify persons who may need therapy.
- Identifying settings at high risk for increased transmission of TB and recommend effective infection control measures to reduce risk.



The TB Control staff work closely with other doctors and clinics who provide TB services in settings such as private clinics, managed care organizations, HIV clinics, correctional facilities and hospitals.

In 2010, Florida reported 835 TB Cases. Florida continues to rank fourth in the nation for TB Cases reported. Polk County ranked #11 out of Florida's 67 counties with 16 TB Cases reported.

For more information on the TB Control Program, visit: [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

## Essential Service #3

### Inform, educate, & empower people about health issues

#### Public Information

The Polk County Health Department's Public Information Office informs citizens about local health issues and observances. Working via the Web, TV, in print, and by phone, the communications staff responded to 90 media calls and distributed 34 press releases in 2010. The office manages and updates content for the health department's internal and external websites, and publishes a bi-monthly staff newsletter.

Major health information campaigns handled during 2010 included:

- **Aldicarb testing in local wells: Auburndale, Haines City, and Lake Wales**

The Polk County Health Department, in conjunction with the State of Florida, issued an advisory regarding the possible contamination by aldicarb of some private wells in certain areas of the county. Aldicarb is a regulated pesticide used on crops, such as citrus. Because of the potential for harm, wells were tested and residents instructed on precautions to take until results were known.

- **Polk County Health Department Awarded Mini Grant to Promote Child Passenger Safety**

The Polk County Health Department received a mini-grant from Heartland for Children to promote child passenger safety. *Buckle Bear*, a nationally recognized program, was provided at select local child care facilities, targeting children ages 4-8.

- **Mosquito-Borne Diseases**

The Polk County Health Department received notification that a horse died which tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a mosquito-borne disease. The horse was found in the rural outskirts of Lake Wales and had not been vaccinated for EEE.

#### Chronic Disease Programs

The Polk County Health Department provides health education programs in the community to promote health and prevent the complications associated with chronic diseases.

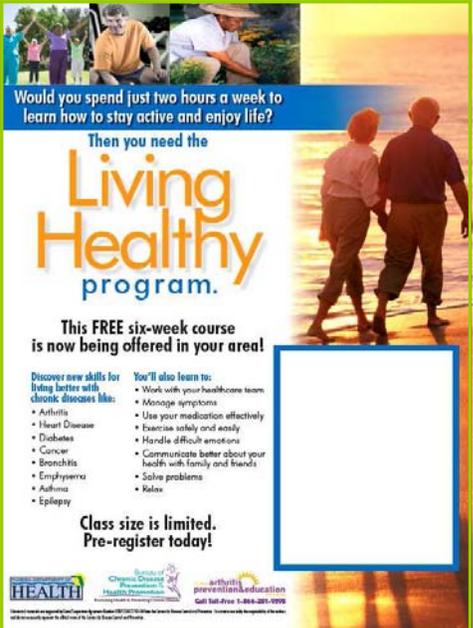
In 2010, the **Diabetes Education Program** offered diabetes screenings during special events held in the community. Free education classes in both Spanish and English were also provided for persons who wanted to learn more about managing diabetes.

##### Chronic Disease Management

The "**Living Healthy**" **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** was part of an initiative to reduce preventable emergency room use and hospitalizations, based on the successful Chronic Disease Self-Management program developed by the Stanford University School of Medicine.

During 2010, this six-week course was provided free to persons interested in discovering new skills for living better with chronic diseases such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and epilepsy. Leadership courses were also taught to those interested in continuing to present these classes within their community.

Participants learned how to work with their health care team, manage their symptoms, use their medications effectively, exercise safely and easily, handle difficult emotions, communicate better about their health with family and friends, solve problems, and relax.



Would you spend just two hours a week to learn how to stay active and enjoy life?

Then you need the **Living Healthy program.**

This **FREE** six-week course is now being offered in your area!

Discover new skills for living better with chronic diseases like:

- Arthritis
- Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Bronchitis
- Emphysema
- Asthma
- Epilepsy

You'll also learn to:

- Work with your healthcare team
- Manage symptoms
- Use your medications effectively
- Exercise safely and easily
- Handle difficult emotions
- Communicate better about your health with family and friends
- Solve problems
- Relax

**Class size is limited. Pre-register today!**

**HEALTH** | **Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion** | **Arthritis prevention/education**  
Call toll-free 1-866-281-2559

## Essential Service #3 (continued) Inform, educate, & empower people about health issues

### Tobacco Prevention Program

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in our society. It is recognized as a cause of multiple cancers, heart disease, stroke, complications of pregnancy and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Tobacco use is responsible for 438,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.

The Polk County Health Department's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program received a three year \$210,000 "Community-Based Tobacco Interventions" grant to mobilize the community to establish policies supporting long-term, social norm change.

The Tobacco Prevention and Control Program focused on the following initiatives in 2010.

**Maintain a tobacco-control partnership (Infrastructure)** - The Tobacco Free Partnership (TFP) is a group of local individuals and community agencies who are committed to a Tobacco Free Polk County. The mission of the TFP of Polk County is to form community partnerships with individuals and organizations to educate and serve the citizens of Polk regarding prevention of tobacco use, intervention, and cessation programs.



**Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)** - According to the 2010 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, 27.8% of high school students and of 10.5% of middle school students in Polk County have used some form of tobacco in the past 30 days. SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization, working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco. Polk County SWAT is committed to developing leadership skills in youth through training in tobacco issues, media literacy, policy development processes, presentation skills, and evaluation. In 2010, middle and high school students across Polk County participated in school or community based SWAT Clubs. They learned how to become advocates for change, and worked at the local level to reveal the truth of how tobacco industries target our youth.

**Prevent Initiation of Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults** - Too often, tobacco products are able to get into the hands of our youth. Almost 90% of adult smokers started before the age of 18. In 2010, the Partnership worked with law enforcement agencies to increase the quantity of compliance checks conducted by enforcement agencies.

Local surveillance has indicated that there is an abundance of flavored tobacco products being sold and distributed in Polk County every day. In 2009, the FDA banned the sale of flavored cigarettes, however; smokeless tobacco, cigars, cigarillos and other products are not regulated. Since the new FDA law allows for local authorities to restrict additional tobacco product sales, counties across the State of Florida, including Polk, are working towards a ban of all flavored tobacco products not currently covered under FDA restrictions. Removing these products that are designed to attract youth would significantly reduce the initiation and use of tobacco among youth and young adults.



On December 1, 2010, the Polk County Board of County Commissioners unanimously passed a County Resolution that urges retailers in the county to restrict the sale and marketing of flavored tobacco products where youth have access. The Partnership worked with SWAT students as well as multiple members of the prestigious board to make this critical step in reducing youth use of tobacco products in the county. This is one milestone obtained as part of a longer process.

**Eliminate Secondhand Smoke Exposure, Tobacco Free Policies** - Approximately 50,000 people die each year in the U.S. as a result of secondhand smoke. This program educates, empowers and provides resources to agencies within our county to establish tobacco free policies. In 2010, the program consulted with local organizations to plan and implement tobacco-free policies at their worksites.

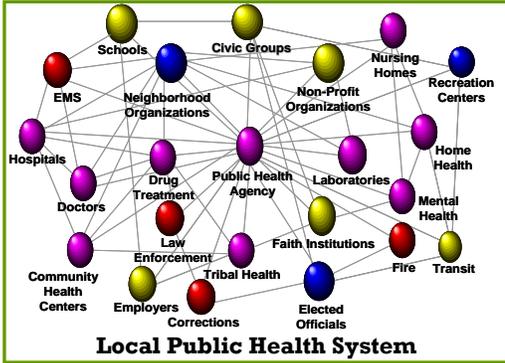
**Promote Cessation from Tobacco Use** - The program promotes **The Florida Quitline Line, 1-877-U-CAN-NOW (1.877.822.6669)**, a free cessation service offering individualized counseling and support to any Florida resident who is ready to quit. In addition, the program provides referrals to local cessation services and promotes the Florida AHEC Network which operates a Quit Smoking Now Referral Line at 1-87-QuitNow 6 (1-877-848-6696).

For more information on tobacco prevention, visit: [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org) or [www.doh.state.fl.us/Tobacco](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Tobacco).

# Essential Service #4

## Mobilize community partnerships to identify & solve health problems

### Community Partnerships



The Polk County Health Department works with other community partners within the local public health system to identify, prioritize, and solve health problems in the community.

This includes networking, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration to share resources and responsibilities to achieve a common purpose.

Some of the partnerships in which the health department participates include (but are not limited to):

- Children’s Cabinet of the 10th Circuit
- Coalition on Injury Prevention
- Healthy Start Coalition
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Polk County Board of County Commissioners
- Polk County Growth Management
- Polk County School Board
- Polk Health Care Alliance
- Polk Vision
- Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF)
- Safe Kids Suncoast Chapter
- School Health Advisory Council
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance
- Tobacco Free Partnership of Polk County
- United Way of Central Florida

### Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The Polk County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was started in February 2008. These individuals are trained community-based **volunteers** who donate their time, knowledge, and expertise to prepare and respond to local emergencies.

During a disaster, MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources in areas in which they are properly trained and equipped.

MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as:



- Dentists
- Emergency Medical Technicians
- Epidemiologists
- Fire Fighters
- Lab Workers
- Law Enforcement Officers

- Massage Therapists
- Mental Health Counselors
- Nurses
- Nurse Practitioners
- Pharmacists
- Physical Therapists

- Physicians
- Radiology Workers
- Records Technicians
- Social Workers
- Veterinarians



Other community members, such as interpreters, chaplains, office workers, and legal advisors, can fill other vital support positions.

In 2010, the Polk County Medical Reserve Corps had over 500 volunteers.

The MRC volunteers contribute valuable services to the community. Whether rolling up their sleeves to assist residents in times of disaster, or providing community wellness services such as health screenings and education, these dedicated volunteers are an asset to the health department.

For more information on volunteer opportunities, contact our human resources office at (863) 519-7900, Ext 11078.

If interested in becoming a MRC volunteer, contact the MRC Coordinator at (863) 519-7900, Ext 11100.

To learn more about the Medical Reserve Corps, visit [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

## Essential Service #4 (continued)

### Mobilize community partnerships to identify & solve health problems

#### Haitian Medical Relief Effort

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 a devastating earthquake struck the island nation of Haiti. This earthquake destroyed or severely damaged a large portion of Haiti, and eliminated its capacity to provide healthcare services.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, Polk County Health Department staff, in their capacity as regional health & medical coordinators, began efforts to arrange for medical evacuation flights of Haitian nationals into Tampa International Airport. Injuries ranged from burns to severe fractures and spinal injuries. These patients would be triaged and sent to hospitals over the entire Central Florida region.

The first two flights carried 35 severely injured Haitians into the Tampa International Airport. Volunteers from the Polk and Hillsborough County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) were enlisted to provide initial triage and evaluation of these patients. The efforts of the MRC allowed Tampa Fire Rescue paramedics to focus on preparing the patients and transporting them to the designated hospital.

Over the next two weeks, more than 70 patients were transported into the Tampa Airport from Haiti. Their injuries were all very serious, with many requiring surgery and long-term rehabilitation.

Initial operations were led by Polk County Health Department staff until the Veterans' Administration activated their National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and established a Federal Coordination Center (FCC) at the Tampa Airport. Dr. Daniel Haight, Polk County Health Department Director and Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) chair, subsequently presented a summary of the relief effort activities to the general assembly of law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency management, and medical partners at the Tampa Bay Regional Domestic Security Task Force meeting.

The Polk County Health Department worked in conjunction with the following groups to make this rescue effort happen:

- Tampa Airport Operations
- Tampa Airport Police
- Tampa Fire Rescue
- Polk County Health Department
- Hillsborough County Health Department
- US Customs & Border Patrol
- US Transportation Security Administration
- US Immigrations & Customs Enforcement
- Florida Dept of Children & Families
- American Red Cross



## Essential Service #4 (continued) Mobilize community partnerships to identify & solve health problems

### Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP)



*"MOBILIZING RESIDENTS TO BE PREPARED ONE NEIGHBORHOOD AT A TIME"*

The purpose of NEPP is to organize and educate community groups to increase their level of preparedness to handle all types of health-related emergencies. The project is designed to engage and mobilize small neighborhood teams to help foster self-sufficiency at the residential level. NEPP teams are trained to lessen the demand on medical resources in a disaster situation.

During 2010, the Polk County Health Department assisted with the implementation of NEPP programs in several of our local communities. Eight NEPP teams have been created in our neighborhoods, four of which were new groups and four were in their second year of operation. These groups are responsible

for helping their communities shelter in place during and immediately after any major emergency situation, such as a hurricane. The members of these teams come from all walks of life and backgrounds, and come together to create a plan of action for their neighborhoods.

Meetings were held during the year with each neighborhood team to provide training that enables them to work with the members of their communities to plan and practice emergency procedures. Strategies for each group were discussed and assistance in creating an emergency plan was provided. Members of the NEPP team then reported back to their communities to inform and educate residents.

To learn more about forming a NEPP team in your community, go to [www.doh.state.fl.us/PHNursing/NEPP/nepp.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/PHNursing/NEPP/nepp.html).



### Home Care Training Series

Operation Safe Communities was revised during 2010, and renamed the "Home Care Training Series". The purpose of the training is to provide communities with tools and resources to prepare people to shelter at home, and assist in keeping the "worried well" out of acute care facilities. It is designed to provide home care for a general population, as well as additional information for children, seniors, and their caregivers.

Topics covered in the Home Care Series include:

- prevention
- disaster preparedness and planning for the individual/family
- general care
- how to manage symptoms
- staying informed to what is happening within your community and beyond

The course was developed to be used as an entire program, or it can be broken down into segments, such as 15 minute presentations at community coffees, civic groups, schools, and faith based organizations. Based on community feedback, the Home Care Series was used very successfully in 2010, and will be further developed in 2011.

## Essential Service #5

### Develop policies & plans that support individual & community health efforts

#### Administrative Services

The Polk County Health Department Administrative Services division supports over 500 employees of the health department in delivering high quality public health services at 17 sites in Polk County. It is located in Bartow, at 1290 Golfview Ave.

Most of the 17 health department sites are owned and operated by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and maintenance of these facilities is shared between the health department and the BoCC.

Administrative support services include:

- Human Resources
- General Services
- Information Technology
- Vital Statistics
- Billing
- Legal Services
- Information Security
- Facilities Management
- Budget
- Finance & Accounting



#### An Academic Health Department

During 2010, the Polk County Health Department developed a more comprehensive student intern program. Through partnerships with local colleges and trade schools, we were able to provide preceptorships for 36 students.

Areas of study accepted for this program included doctor, nursing, environmental health and engineering, epidemiology, and the Masters of Public Health program. Each student spends time with an assigned mentor, participating in and observing the everyday aspects of public health. One benefit to our staff is that these interns really keep them on their toes, updating their skills to be able to answer questions and stay one step ahead of the student.

By providing this academic environment, the Polk County Health Department seeks to encourage and support those students who may later choose the field of public health as their career. We also hope to develop our reputation within the academic community of being a valued partner in the education of future health leaders. Some of the schools for which we provided internships were:

- University of South Florida
- Florida Southern College
- Polk State College
- Nova Southeastern University
- Keiser University
- Everest University
- Walden University



## Essential Service #6 Enforce laws & regulations that protect health & ensure safety

### Clean & Safe Drinking Water



Ensuring the safety of our drinking water is one of the most fundamental and critical responsibilities of modern public health. The Polk County Health Department is strongly committed to safeguarding the quality of our drinking water. There are many ways of protecting drinking water: protecting water sources, treating the water, and testing samples of the water to assure it is safe. Another important means of protecting water is by promoting awareness. Safe drinking water does not happen by accident...we all play a role in protecting it. The Environmental Engineering Division provides the following programs and services to ensure drinking water in the county is free from disease-producing germs and chemical pollutants.

**Public Drinking Water Program** - This program ensures compliance with federal and state safe drinking water standards for approximately 464 public water systems in Polk County. Staff review and permit water treatment plans, inspect water systems, and monitor all public drinking water systems' compliance with bacterial and chemical contaminant standards.

In 2010, compliance issues at 67 water systems were resolved through enforcement actions, and approximately 60 systems were restored to compliance through informal follow-up inspections.

**Water Toxics Program** - This program conducts well surveillance in impacted areas, collecting water samples to be tested for chemicals like pesticides. In 2010, this program collected 677 samples for water toxics from water systems and private wells. Upon citizen request, program staff can collect well water for testing, provide information to owners on potential health effects, and provide assistance in obtaining treatment or another source of water when necessary.

**Environmental Laboratory** - Located in Winter Haven, this laboratory is designed to test drinking water samples to ensure compliance with bacterial contamination standards. Over 3,500 bacteriological samples were tested here in 2010.

Visit the Polk County Health Department web site [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org) for more information on water programs.

**State Underground Pollutants Environmental Response (SUPER) Act Program** - The SUPER Act Program is responsible for identifying areas in the county that have contaminated drinking water as a result of leaking underground storage tanks, surface spills, and other discharges to the environment. During 2010, this program collected 298 samples from water systems and private wells in impacted areas, notified the residents of potential health effects, and provided assistance in obtaining treatment or other sources of drinking water when needed.

**Stationary Pollutant Storage Tank Program** - This Lakeland-based program provides service in both Polk and Hardee counties. In the 2010, Storage Tank Regulation Program staff performed a total of 1199 inspections of all types:

- annual compliance
- non-compliance re-inspection
- discharge
- installation
- closure

Environmental engineers inspect facilities to ensure compliance with state requirements designed to prevent leaks of potential pollutants into the environment. This compliance verification program is contracted in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and is funded by the Inland Petroleum Trust Fund. Facilities regulated under this program include:

- Retail gas stations
- Facilities using vehicular fuels
- Industrial storage tanks & fuel storage facilities
- Agricultural facilities that store diesel & pesticides classified as pollutants

**Petroleum Cleanup Program** - This program monitors the clean-up of petroleum that has leaked into our soil and groundwater which could potentially contaminate drinking water. In 2010, there were 57 contaminated sites that were cleaned up and closed. Since the Polk County program's inception, a total of 648 contaminated sites have been closed.



## Essential Service #6 (continued)

### Enforce laws & regulations that protect health & ensure safety

#### Facilities Inspections

The Polk County Health Department is responsible for the regulation of several types of facilities through inspecting, permitting, and licensing. This assures the public that these facilities and their services are safe to use and are in compliance with public health laws.

**Mobile Home & RV Parks** - Polk County has approximately 500 licensed mobile home and RV parks, which is the greatest number in the state of Florida. In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists performed 992 inspections. The health department inspects each park at least twice per year to ensure compliance with laws regarding:

- garbage collection & disposal
- insect & rodent control
- plumbing & backflow prevention
- sanitation
- space requirements
- sewage collection & disposal



**Migrant Labor Camps** - At the beginning of every migrant season, annual permits are issued to camp owners whose migrant housing meets standards to ensure safe and sanitary conditions. The migrant season varies, but typically runs from mid-October until end of June or early July. Environmental Health specialists conduct monthly inspections of migrant housing camps during the farm season, in order to ensure healthy living conditions for those who work in our farm industry. In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists performed 219 inspections and site investigations and issued permits to 36 facilities.

**Food Service Establishments** - In 1992, the role of inspecting restaurants was transferred to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR). Whenever there is an outbreak of food-borne illnesses associated with a restaurant, the health department does a joint inspection with DBPR to help determine the cause and eliminate it.

The health department routinely inspects and permits the following food service establishments: assisted living facilities, bars, child and adult day care centers, detention facilities, fraternal and civic organizations, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and theaters. In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists performed over 1198 inspections at approximately 414 food service establishments in Polk County.

**Group Care Facilities** - The health department inspects facilities such as public and private schools, foster homes and group homes to ensure compliance with sanitation standards. In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists performed approximately 1198 inspections at over 903 facilities.

**Body Piercing & Tanning Facilities** - The health department regulates body-piercing facilities to help protect the public from the spread of infectious diseases. In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists inspected and licensed 9 facilities for proper piercing and sanitizing procedures. In addition, the health department inspected and permitted 44 tanning facilities meeting proper operating standards.

**Facilities Generating Biomedical Waste** - The Biomedical Waste program was designed to protect health care workers, environmental service staff, waste haulers, and the general public from risks associated with potentially infectious materials.

The health department's Biomedical Waste program inspects facilities that generate biomedical waste. Program staff ensure that infectious materials are handled, stored, transported and disposed of in accordance with State Laws.

In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists conducted over 333 inspections in approximately facilities including hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, laboratories, funeral homes, storage and treatment facilities, and medical offices.

For more information on Biomedical waste, visit:

[www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/programs/index.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/programs/index.html)



## Essential Service #6 (continued)

### Enforce laws & regulations that protect health & ensure safety

#### Onsite Sewage Treatment



The Polk County Health Department inspects, evaluates, and permits the installation of all new and repaired septic systems in the county. Because sewage contains bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause severe illness, septic systems must be installed and maintained in accordance with laws and regulations designed to protect public health.

Environmental specialists help Polk County residents whose drinking water comes from a private well ensure that there is no danger of contamination from their septic system. Septic tanks and drain fields must be properly installed, at the prescribed distance from the well, in order to be sure that no septic debris can enter the drinking water.

In 2010, the Environmental Health Division issued over 2100 septic system permits. This number included 294 permits for new septic systems, 520 permits for existing systems, and 1218 repair permits.

For more information on septic tank permits and inspections, call (863) 534-5942 or visit the Polk County Health Department web site at [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

#### Swimming Pools & Bathing Places

The health department inspects public swimming pools and bathing places to ensure these facilities meet health and safety standards.

In 2010, Environmental Health Specialists inspected and issued permits to 721 public swimming pools and 12 public bathing places. Environmental Engineering staff are also responsible for:

- Reviewing construction plans
- Issuing new pool construction permits
- Collecting samples and analyzing samples from public bathing places

Polk County is one of only 13 counties in the state of Florida authorized to review plans and issue permits.

For more information on how to promote healthy and safe swimming environments in Polk County visit the Polk County Health Department web site at [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).



#### X-ray Machine Inspections



In Polk County, there are 1,119 x-ray machines in over 400 facilities, including hospitals and doctors' offices, that must be inspected to ensure they are being operated safely and appropriately by qualified individuals.

The health department works to reduce unnecessary exposure to radiation for those who work with x-ray machines and the public who rely on them for diagnostic tests. Environmental Health Specialists regularly inspect each machine according to a schedule that is determined by the type of machine being used. For example, mammography and cancer therapy machines are inspected annually, but dental machines are inspected every 5 years.

During 2010, Environmental Health Specialists inspected 450 X-ray machines.

## Essential Service #7 Link people to needed personal health services

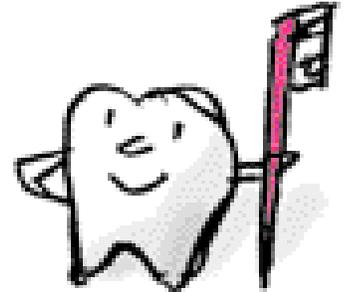
### Dental Services

The Polk County Health Department Dental Division provides preventive dental health measures including education to promote prevention of cavities, gum disease, and premature loss of teeth.

Good oral health is important to a person's overall health and well-being. Brushing, flossing, and regular dental visits are inexpensive ways to keep a healthy smile.

The Dental program provides:

- cleanings
- emergency extractions
- exams
- fillings
- fluoride treatments
- oral hygiene information
- sealants
- x-rays



Dental services are available to children and young adults up to the age of 20. While the focus is on Medicaid eligible clients, services are also available to non-Medicaid clients on a fee for service basis.

Polk County Health Department Dental Offices are located in Auburndale, Bartow, and Lakeland. In FY 2010-11 the health department's dental clinic recorded over 18,000 patient visits. The health department also visited 13 schools, screened 500 students, and placed 1,544 sealants as part of its school dental sealant program.

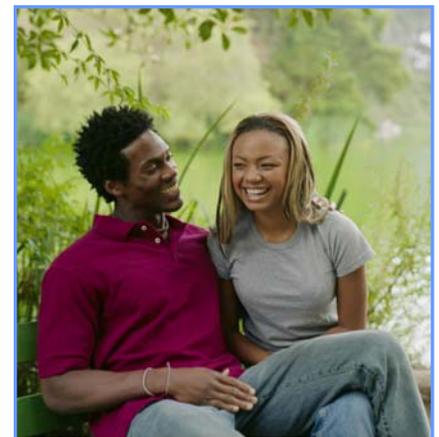
For more information on dental services, visit: [www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/index.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/index.html).

### Family Planning

During 2010, there were 8,350 residents served in the family planning clinics of the Polk County Health Department, resulting in a total of 18,158 services provided. The purpose of our family planning clinics is to help young women maintain good reproductive health through planned pregnancies.

Family planning services offered through the Polk County Health Department clinics include:

- Physicals, which include pap smears and breast exams
- Birth control methods
- Counseling, testing, and treatment for STDs, HIV and AIDS
- Education on the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- Breast and cervical cancer referrals
- Pregnancy testing



Tubal ligations (for women) and vasectomies (for men), are available for eligible low-income residents who are over 21 years of age and desire permanent sterilization.

Appointments can be made at any of the following health department clinics: Auburndale, Bartow, Lakeland or Lake Wales.

For additional information on Family Planning, visit: [www.doh.state.fl.us/family/famplan/index.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/famplan/index.html).

## Essential Service #7 (continued)

### Link people to needed personal health services

#### Healthcare for Pregnant Women

Prenatal care is the care women receive during their pregnancy. Early and consistent prenatal care is essential to decreasing the risks of premature birth, infant death, and other complications during pregnancy. It is important that all women seek health care during the first three months of their pregnancy.



#### Prenatal Services

Women receiving prenatal care services are seen by board certified obstetrician-gynecologist and advanced registered nurse practitioners specializing in women's healthcare.

Prenatal services include:

- Physical exams
- Prenatal education
- Monitoring fetal growth and development
- Pregnancy support groups

In 2010, the health department provided care to over 3900 pregnant women. This included over 24,000 prenatal related visits.

The Polk County Health Department offers prenatal care services at the following clinic locations: Auburndale, Bartow, Haines City, Lakeland, and Lake Wales. The clinic in Bartow specializes in providing high risk prenatal care to women who experience complications during pregnancy. For more information on pregnancy and the importance of prenatal care, visit the following website: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy\\_gateway/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy_gateway/default.htm)

#### Continuity of Care for Pregnant Women

Polk County Health Department holds a cooperative agreement with Regency Medical Center to provide continuity of care for low and high risk pregnant women. This agreement is aimed at pregnant women eligible for Medicaid benefits, but who are not members of a Medicaid HMO. In 2010, 760 women delivered their babies at Regency under this agreement.

#### CenteringPregnancy®

CenteringPregnancy® brings together 8-12 women, who are at about the same stage in their pregnancy, to receive prenatal care as a group throughout their pregnancy.

The program provides a setting where pregnant women can develop a personal relationship with their peers and receive emotional support. Centering improves the chances that a baby will be born healthy. These babies are more likely to be full term and not be born underweight.

Studies of Centering programs show that women participating in these groups are less likely to experience postpartum depression. During each meeting these women check their own weight and blood pressure and are engaged in group discussions on topics related to nutrition, childbirth preparation, and breastfeeding.

Meetings are facilitated by a healthcare professional. The Polk County Health Department, in conjunction with the Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties, was the second site in Florida to receive site approval from the Centering Healthcare Institute.

CenteringPregnancy® Programs are available by calling any of the following health department clinic locations: Auburndale, Lakeland and Lake Wales. For more information on pregnancy and the importance of prenatal care, visit the following website: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy\\_gateway/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy_gateway/default.htm)



## Essential Service #7 (continued) Link people to needed personal health services

### Healthy Start

The goal of the Healthy Start Program is to give every baby a healthy start in life by ensuring moms receive timely prenatal care, babies are born healthy, and infants and toddlers develop and thrive. This program is funded by the Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk. Emotional support and education is provided to moms on:

- continuing their education
- recognizing problems during pregnancy
- beginning prenatal care early

The health department coordinates care for women with high risk pregnancies and post-partum women for up to 3 years following their delivery, as well as infants and toddlers (up to age 3). Public health nurses and family support workers make home visits to provide families with the following services:

- Parenting education
- Referrals for mental health counseling
- Smoking cessation
- Breastfeeding education & support
- Health education in English & Spanish
- Family planning education & services
- Childbirth education
- Inter-conceptional education

#### Healthy Start Clients Served in Polk County 2010

Prenatal = 3930

Infants = 1966

TOTAL = 5896

Car seats distributed = 305

Healthy Start clients may receive bus passes to travel to medical appointments. Free childbirth education classes are provided by certified Childbirth Educators who are members of the Healthy Start Program staff. Smoking cessation classes were available free of charge to Healthy Start clients through the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). Those interested in completing their high school education are provided with study books to help them prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) exam.

For more information on Healthy Start services, visit: [www.healthystarthhp.org](http://www.healthystarthhp.org)

### Mary Sand Chronic Lung Disease Clinic

The Mary Sand Clinic has been in operation since 1971, serving as an outpatient resource to Winter Haven Hospital and local physicians. Its primary focus is to continue the rehabilitation process begun in the hospital for patients with chronic lung disease. Services provided at the Mary Sand Clinic include exercise programs to increase activity and stamina, support groups for both patients and their families, blood pressure and oxygen reading monitoring, and help with breathing techniques and exercises. In 2010, there were 1961 patient visits made to this clinic.

For more information on the Mary Sand Chronic Lung Disease Clinic, please visit [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org) or call (863) 965-5400.



### Specialty Care Clinic (HIV / AIDS)

The health department's Specialty Care Clinic, located in Bartow, provides HIV education, counseling, testing and treatment services to residents of Polk County. This program is supported through Ryan White grant funding and state funds. Funding from the Ryan White grant has been renewed for FY 2010-2011.

In 2010, board certified infectious disease specialists and specially trained nurse practitioners provided primary medical care services to 999 clients.

In addition to medical services, the clinic provides clients with nutritional and mental health counseling, assistance with obtaining HIV medications and assistance in accessing specialized medical care, dental care, housing, and transportation.

Confidential HIV counseling and testing is offered at all Polk County Health Department clinics. Anonymous testing is offered only at the Specialty Care Clinic in Bartow.

For additional information on the HIV/AIDS Program, visit [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

## Essential Service #7 (continued) Link people to needed personal health services

### Immunizations

Immunizations are your first line of defense against diseases such as: polio, measles, mumps, rubella, influenza, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.

The Polk County Health Department provides the following immunization services:

**Child Immunizations** - Through the "Vaccines for Children" (VFC) program, uninsured or underinsured children and adolescents in Polk County can receive immunizations at no cost through the health department or other private local VFC providers.

In 2010, approximately 38,960 doses of vaccine were given to health department clients under the age of 19.

Children and adolescents can receive immunizations at the following health department locations: Auburndale, Bartow, Haines City, Lakeland and Lake Wales.

For more information on childhood immunizations, visit: [www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease\\_ctrl/immune/community/index.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctrl/immune/community/index.htm)

**Adult Immunizations** - Adults need to keep their immunizations up-to-date to protect themselves from diseases that can result in death or disability. These immunizations include tetanus, influenza, pertussis and pneumonia.

Adult Immunizations are available at the following locations: Auburndale, Bartow, Haines City, Lakeland, and Lake Wales.

For more information on Adult Immunizations, visit: [www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/immune/adult/index.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/immune/adult/index.htm).

**Traveler Immunizations** - Many of the diseases that have been eliminated in the United States are still common in other parts of the world. Therefore, when traveling outside the U.S., it is important to ensure you protect your health.



The health department provides specific immunizations for a traveler's destination. In addition, the health department offers prescriptions for anti-malaria medications and critical information on general safety issues, travel alerts, and health information from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Travelers are encouraged to make an appointment as soon as they know their point of destination outside the U.S. and their departure date. It can take several weeks or months to complete the recommended series of immunizations.

The Traveler Immunization Clinics are located in Auburndale (863) 965-5400, Lakeland (863) 413-2620, and Lake Wales (863) 678-0413. Call either location and ask to speak with the Travel Immunizations Nurse.

For more information on traveler immunizations, visit: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

**Flu Shots** - Flu season in Florida normally peaks during the months of November through February. One of the best ways to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot each year. Flu shots are safe, effective, and do not cause the flu.

The Polk County Health Department partners with various agencies across the county to offer flu shots to the community during flu season.

Flu shots are available at the following four health department sites: Auburndale, Bartow, Haines City, Lakeland, and Lake Wales.

For more information on flu, visit: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

**The Board of County Commissioners presented the Polk Health Department with a proclamation on April 21, 2010 for their tireless efforts during the H1N1 flu vaccination campaign.**

## Essential Service #7 (continued) Link people to needed personal health services

### School Health Services

The Polk County Health Department (PCHD) partners with the Polk County School Board to provide health services to students from Head Start - 12th grade. PCHD employs 22 Registered Nurses and 10 health support technicians, who work in over 150 schools to provide the following services:

- Healthcare assessments and immunization and health record review
- Nutrition assessment (Body Mass Index screening)
- Health screenings (vision, hearing and scoliosis)
- Lead and hemoglobin screening clinics for Head Start students

School Health staff provide over 100,000 services to many of the over 92,000 Polk County students. In addition, school nurses collaborate with parents, teachers, social workers, and other health care providers to develop Individual health plans, identify available health resources, and identify the need for health referrals to address specific health problems.

In FY 2010-2011, School Health provided vision screenings to 28,864 students in grades K, 1, 3 and 6 and hearing screenings to over 21,000 children in grades K, 1, and 6.

PCHD also partners with the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County to provide vision & hearing screenings and health education for 3-5 year old children in day care centers.

PCHD provides 2 Registered Nurses who are based in our county's 2 teen parent school clinics.

For more information on school health services, visit [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/school/services/sh\\_services.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/school/services/sh_services.html)



### WIC & Nutrition

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program is federally funded and serves pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum women, infants, and children (up to the age of five) who have low or moderate income and are at nutritional risk. WIC helps to prevent low birth weight infants and infant deaths by improving the diet of pregnant women.

In addition, the program helps to improve the growth of children who participate in the program by providing a combination of the following (at no cost):

- Breastfeeding promotion & support
- Healthy foods
- Nutrition education & counseling
- Referrals to health care, immunizations, & community services

In 2010, the Polk County Health Department's WIC Program served an average of 23,371 clients each month at 11 different sites in Polk and Hardee Counties. The WIC Program provides an economic boost to Polk and Hardee Counties.

In 2010, WIC checks were redeemed at local grocery stores by program participants in Polk and Hardee Counties totaling an estimated value of \$16,927,188.

WIC services are currently offered at the following locations: Auburndale, Bartow, Frostproof, Ft. Meade, Haines City, Lakeland (North & Central), Lake Wales, Winter Haven and Wauchula.

For more information on WIC services and eligibility, visit:

[www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/wic](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/wic)



## Essential Service #8

### Assure a competent public health & personal health care workforce

#### Staff Training & Development

In 2010, over 900 hours of training were provided to the staff of the Polk County Health Department (PCHD). This training included:

- New Employee Orientation
- Basic Supervisory Training
- Emergency Preparedness (FEMA)
- Information Security
- Microsoft Office Programs, beginner and intermediate courses
- CPR and Basic first aid, along with other nursing updates



It is the goal of the Training and Development department to provide staff with an opportunity to enhance and update their skills and knowledge by offering courses throughout the year that may include Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for licensed personnel. All staff are encouraged to participate in webinars, video conferences, and classroom presentations.

The Staff Training and Development Coordinator works closely with the Department of Health (DOH) Office of Workforce Development to monitor progress through our online learning management system, and tracks compliance with mandatory trainings among health department staff.

New Employee Orientation is held monthly to facilitate training for staff members who have been recently hired. Staff receive training on HIPAA and privacy awareness, information security, bloodborne pathogens, and safety in the workplace. They are also introduced to program areas and services of the health department. Diversity and code of ethics are highlighted, along with human resources topics. Our team of preparedness experts provides emergency training from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to acquaint new staff with their responsibilities in the event of a hurricane or other emergency situation.

In 2010, basic and intermediate Microsoft Office programs were provided. We encourage all staff to upgrade their computer skills by attending classes offered, which included Word, Excel, Outlook, and Access.

The addition of video conferencing equipment in 2010 provided the ability for long-distance teaching to be used in all DOH locations. Several video classes and meetings have been held during the year, which have allowed staff members in remote areas to participate in training they would otherwise not have been able to attend.



## Essential Service #9 (continued) Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, & quality of health services

### Leadership Council

The Polk County Health Department established a Leadership Council as a way for staff to come together to discuss identified strategic priorities and develop plans to accomplish them. Each member of the Leadership Council may choose to serve on one of three subcommittees: Academic, Accreditation, or Research.

In 2010, the **Academic Committee** focused on developing the Student Placement Program. Students from various colleges and universities were assigned a mentor in one of our program areas for the length of their placement. They also created a database to track student placements.

With our goal of applying for National Public Health Accreditation in 2013, the **Accreditation Committee** continued its review of the published Standards and Measures. Subject Matter Experts in each area were interviewed to determine how closely our programs meet the accreditation requirements. This group will continue to focus on preparing the PCHD for Accreditation.

Accomplishments for the **Research Committee** this year include:

- Determining our definition of research;
- Completing process maps for human research, non-human research, and program evaluation;
- Developing rough drafts for the request to conduct research form, as well as the research application, and research protocols.

**Working on making it better....  
...how are we doing?**



### Strategic Planning

The Strategic Plan for the Polk County Health Department (PCHD) was developed to help focus the department's efforts on specific strategic priorities. During 2010, the Leadership Council and the Strategic Plan workgroup continued to focus on those goals that were identified during the development phase.

The 2010-2013 Strategic Priorities and Goals are:

- **Financial Stability & Growth**

**Goal:** Maximize efficiency and funding sources to continually improve the health of the residents and visitors of Polk County.

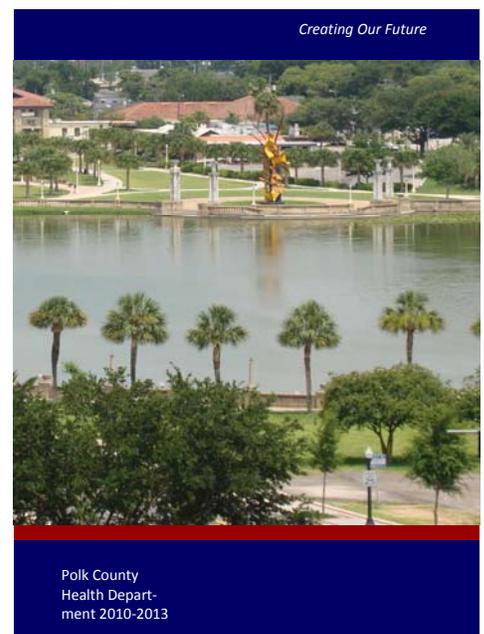
- **Knowledge Management**

**Goal:** Use experience, information, and data to set direction, make evidence-based decisions, and assess performance.

- **Organizational Development**

**Goal:** Strengthen the health department's capacity to respond to challenges and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Implementation of a Strategic Plan is a crucial piece of the National Public Health Accreditation program. We will use this plan going forward, as we prepare to apply for accreditation in 2013.



# Essential Service #10

## Research for new insights & innovative solutions to health problems

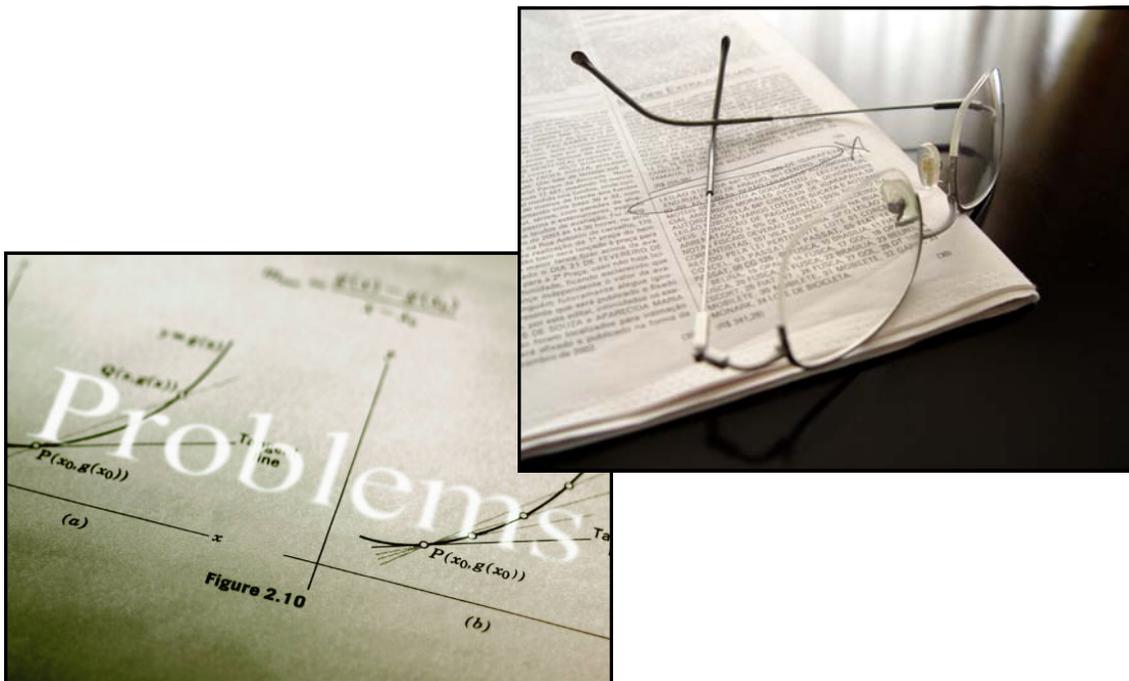
### Research

Research is an ongoing and vital part of any public health department. Without it, informed decisions cannot be made, and we might make inaccurate assumptions.

During 2010, the Research committee of the Leadership Council worked to define research and its application in the health department environment. They were able to complete several steps in this process, including:

- Reaching consensus on the definition of research
- Creating process maps for human and non-human research
- Creating process maps for research program evaluation
- Developing drafts of the Request to Conduct Research form and the research application
- Developing a draft of the research protocols

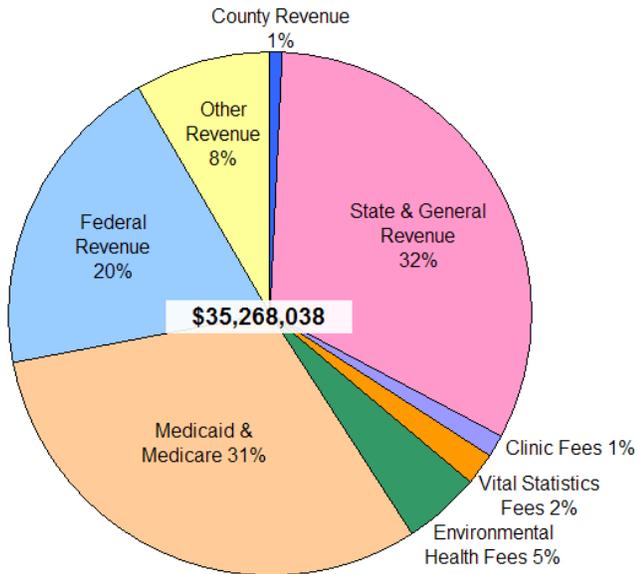
As the work of this committee continues through 2011, further processes will be defined and put in place. Programs like the student internships we offer will contribute to our research capabilities by providing staff who can analyze available data and create needed reports. Their input will also provide a fresh perspective from which to look at the processes we currently have in place, and may allow us to pinpoint areas that need to be revised.



# Budget & Fiscal Responsibility

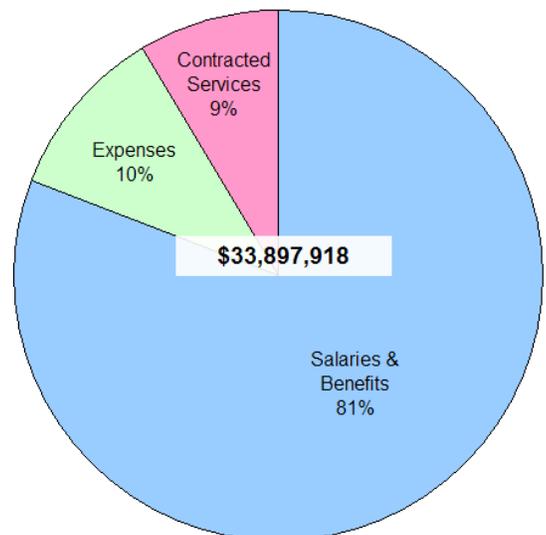
The Polk County Health Department is a state agency that relies upon federal, state, and local county government funding to help support our public health programs and services. In addition, the health department generates revenue from contracts and grants, state and county fees, Medicaid, and Medicare.

## 2010-2011 Revenue Receipts



**Revenues** – The total revenue collected in fiscal year 2010-11 was \$35,268,038. The chart on the left shows sources of revenue.

## 2010-2011 Operating Budget



**Operating Budget** – The health department's approved operating budget for fiscal year 2010-11 was \$33,897,918. The chart on the right demonstrates where expenditures occurred.

A large portion of the health department's revenue is used to employ over 500 professional and paraprofessional staff to serve over 600,000 residents in Polk County.

Some of these staff includes:

- administrative professionals
- advanced registered nurse practitioners
- board certified physicians
- clerical support staff
- dentists and dental assistants
- dietitians
- disease intervention specialists
- environmental engineers
- environmental health specialists
- epidemiologists
- health educators
- licensed practical nurses
- registered nurses
- social workers
- other public health professionals

# Polk County Health Department Clinics

Auburndale  
1805 Hobbs Road  
(863) 965-5400



Bartow  
2020 E. Georgia Street  
(863) 519-8242



Haines City  
111 North 11th Street  
(863) 421-3204



Lakeland  
3241 Lakeland Hills Blvd.  
(863) 413-2620



Lake Wales  
835 West Central Avenue  
(863) 678-4144



For more information on any of the topics covered in this report, visit [www.mypolkhealth.org](http://www.mypolkhealth.org).

# - Monthly Accomplishments During 2010 -

## **January / February**

- Dr. Daniel Haight, PCHD Director, was elected a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, which is the second largest physician group in the United States. This honorary designation is awarded to recognize ongoing individual service and contributions to the practice of medicine.
- The PCHD Specialty Care Clinic's Partnership for Health intervention/prevention program was featured in the Department of Health Quarterly Contract Manager's Newsletter. This intervention provides ongoing prevention services for HIV positive persons and their partners, with a goal of helping HIV-positive patients protect themselves and their partners during intimacy.

## **March / April**

- Dr. Daniel Haight was re-confirmed by the local Florida Department of Law Enforcement as Chairman of the Tampa Bay Regional Domestic Security Task Force's Health and Medical Committee. The eight-county region includes over 40 hospitals and other medical partners.
- The PCHD School Health Division offered 4 lead screening clinics in order to help close to 500 children meet compliance with Polk County Schools Head Start mandates. One clinic was community-based, and the others were held at 3 of our health department locations.

## **May / June**

- Dr. Daniel Haight, along with several community partners and other members of the health department, helped facilitate the first meeting of the new Polk County Immunization Coalition. This group is promoting immunization awareness in Polk County by providing information and removing barriers to immunizations for all residents.
- The Tobacco Prevention Program staff, along with DOH and community partners, were presenters at the Florida School Health Alliance conference in Altamonte Springs. This presentation highlighted Polk's work on the DOH Community Intervention Tobacco Grant, including the development of the Tobacco Free Partnership and SWAT Program of Polk County.

## **July / August**

- The July issue of The Nation's Health published a feature on National Public Health Week that included a photo and story about a presentation by Dr. Daniel Haight. The presentation was made to members of the Polk Health Care Alliance at the group's monthly meeting.
- The Polk County Health Department Immunizations Program was awarded a \$1000 mini-grant by the Florida Association of Public Health Nurses to provide and promote tetanus-diphtheria-and-polio (Tdap) vaccine.

## **September / October**

- The PCHD Tobacco Program Coordinator was a co-facilitator of the Regional Tobacco Prevention Specialist meeting at the Orange County Health Department. This meeting provided grantees with the skills and knowledge to successfully implement their contractual activities and work with stakeholders within their communities to assist with policy, environmental, and systems changes.
- The PCHD Tobacco Use Prevention program hosted a regional Students Working Against Tobacco meeting at the Lakeland clinic. During this meeting, Jordan Bontrager, a Polk County SWAT youth, was elected to the statewide Youth Advocacy Board.

## **November / December**

- On November 17th and 18th, the health department facilitated a 2-day workshop with numerous community partners to complete a Local Public Health System Assessment. This assessment was conducted for the Polk Health Care Alliance, and is one of four community health assessments that will be used by the Alliance next year to draft a Community Health Improvement Plan.
- On December 13th, the Polk County Tobacco Use Prevention program worked with the Board of County Commissioners to pass a resolution encouraging local retailers to ban the sale and marketing of flavored tobacco products to youth. Polk's SWAT members were instrumental in the unanimous passage of this resolution.

- END -

Polk County Health Department  
**Annual Report**  
**2010**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.