



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Denver Environmental Health Department

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (DEH) Report for December, 2007

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY DIVISION (EQ)

New Activities

- Air Contract: Although extremely short-staffed for much of the year, EQD completed 95% of the scheduled stationary source inspections, 100% of the scheduled CFC inspections, and 95% of the scheduled asbestos inspections through 12 months of the contract year.
- Air Quality: DEH, as part of the Local Government Coalition (LGC), provided testimony regarding regional haze at a hearing before the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC). Despite significant debate, the AQCC adopted two of DEH's requests. Culminating three months of work, DEH, as part of the LGC and in collaboration with environmental groups, presented a white paper to the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) Board containing analysis and recommendations for short- and long-term ozone reduction strategies. The RAQC Board also offered additional strategies for RAQC staff and CDPHE to evaluate prior to the January meeting.
- Greenhouse Gas: The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) approved funding in the amount of \$25,000 for the realtor mediated Time of Sale pilot. Planning for the pilot will start in January. DEH, in conjunction with Facilities Planning and Management, provided the consultants for the Democratic National Convention (DNC) with venue utility consumption data for the greening DNC efforts.

OFFICE OF MEDICAL EXAMINER (OME)

New Activities

- Chief Medical Examiner (CME): Dr. Amy Martin was sworn in December 14, 2007 as the new CME/Coroner for Denver.
- Staffing: With some of the vacancy savings from the forensic pathologist opening and the forensic fellow, and to help with the shortage in the autopsy room, an on-call autopsy tech position has been approved. Recruitment has not yet begun. The potential pool of applicants would include prior autopsy interns and medical/nursing students.
- Organ/Tissue Donation: The updated protocol between the various stakeholder (Coroners, District Attorneys, Donor Alliance, and Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank) was finalized and is in the signature process.

- Medical Examiner Case Reporting Criteria: Some changes have been made to reporting criteria to be followed by hospitals and other health facilities. Changes include requiring reporting all deaths within 24 hours from arrival at the hospital and all intraoperative and post operative deaths.
- Relations with Adams County Coroner: For many months, relations between OME and Adams County Coroner's Office have been challenging, and resulted in some jurisdictional issues with the relocation of Children's Hospital and University Hospital over the summer. Dr. Martin met with Mr. James Hibbard, Adams County Coroner, and they have mutually resolved these issues.

Update on Key Issues

- Forensic Pathology Vacancy: The position has been filled, although the start date for the new pathologist is still not known. Dr. John Carver is currently a forensic pathologist in Loveland, Colorado. His start date is contingent on the arrival of the new hire in Loveland, but we are projecting the end of February. Dr. Carver was also one of the pathologists who was willing to contract with OME if there was a protracted vacancy. We are working with CSA and the City Attorney to determine if Dr. Carver could contract with OME while awaiting his start date. The second pathologist with whom we are negotiating a contract is on medical leave and would likely not be able to help begin services until the end of February. Neither contract has been finalized yet.
- Forensic Fellowship: The application for a forensic pathology fellow was delayed momentarily by medical leave of the Graduate Medical Education Coordinator. We are optimistic that the January 31 deadline for submission of the application will still be met.
- Caseload: For the month of December, OME performed 55 autopsies and 31 externals.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION DIVISION (PHI)

New Activities

- Retail Food: The retail food safety program is undergoing a performance audit by the Denver Auditor's Office. To date, the auditors have reviewed the forms and various databases used in support of the program, and have conducted limited visits with field staff. More field visits are scheduled with the auditors in an effort to demonstrate inspection techniques used by PHI staff.

Update on Key Issues

- Retail Food: PHI continues to work with local, state and federal employees in preparation for the DNC with respect to food safety issues. The food unit group has completed the proposed food safety plan for the event and will submit the proposal to the DEH branch leader in January.
- Residential Health: The supervisor for the residential health program met with a reporter from the Denver Post to discuss a trailer park located at 3800 West Alameda. The residential health section has received complaints regarding the park and as a result is working to abate housing violations. Although our cases were discussed, the Post story instead focused on efforts by Neighborhood Inspection Services and Zoning to relocate the residents as a result of the entire park being classified as "non-conforming use."

ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL DIVISION (ACC)

New Activities

- DNC Consequence Management: The ACC division director met with local, state, and national representatives of animal-related emergency preparedness to discuss preparedness needs related to DNC. Preliminary commitments of resources and assistance were received from some of the key representatives in attendance.

Update on Key Issues

- Federal Pit Bull Litigation: The second set of interrogatories in the federal pit bull case was submitted to the City Attorney's Office. The plaintiffs have scheduled depositions of the ACC division director and the animal control manager in January 2008.

COMMUNITY HEALTH & DECISION SUPPORT (CHDS)

New Activities

- CAREWare Software: Mayor's Office of HIV Resources (MOHR) staff met with jProg, the software development company that created CAREWare for the federal government to track utilization in the HIV service delivery arena. jProg is developing software for MOHR that will allow the databases currently in existence at the funded hospitals (Denver Health, University and Children's Hospitals) to convert their data into the CAREWare format.
- 311: The Decision Support Group prepared a plan for DEH to "self-implement" 311 within the remaining three divisions in the department and will present the plan at the next 311 Steering Committee. The plan anticipates full implementation of 311 within DEH by the end of the first quarter or the beginning of the second quarter in 2008, depending on the availability of the Call Center and Technology Services.

Update on Key Issues

- Decision Support Group (DSG):
 - DSG is working to restore OME's database to revert to record keeping methods consistent with how data was reported prior to Dr. Whitmore's tenure. This work must be complete and operational prior to the beginning of 2008.
 - DSG staff, with assistance from Technology Service and ACC, finalized the scope of work to integrate ACC's Chameleon system with the 311's CRM (PeopleSoft) system. The draft of the contract is now with Chameleon's parent company, HLP, for review.
- Mayor's Office of HIV Resources (MOHR):
 - Grant Reviews: MOHR is awaiting final recommendations from the Grant Application Review Committee (GARC) for distribution of the Ryan White Part A. The GARC will make funding recommendations and will forward them to Mayor Hickenlooper for his final determination.
 - Provider Training: MOHR conducted an advanced training for direct service providers in December. The workshop focused on skills and theory relevant to working with participants struggling with adult or childhood trauma. The 22 attendees at the workshop were primarily clinicians working in the mental health and/or substance abuse agencies.

- Denver Healthy People (DHP):
 - Park Hill Thriving Communities: DHP 2010 submitted a renewal grant and associated supplemental grant to Live Well (Kaiser Health Foundation) for continuation of funds for the Park Hill Thriving Communities (PHTC) project. The PHTC grant (\$270,000) is for Year 3 funding to continue programs, environmental and policy work designed to increase equal access to healthy eating and active living opportunities for Park Hill residents. The supplemental application (\$240,000) is to raise the work being done in Park Hill to the level of the City of Denver so that best practices identified within the community can be applied to the City of Denver as a whole. The supplemental application was submitted in partnership with Community Planning and Development, Public Works and Denver Public Health. Award is anticipated to be announced in January 2008, with the grant cycle beginning February 2008.
 - Health Promotion Project: DEH and Denver Public Health engaged in another meeting this month to review health promotion activities occurring within each organization. These meetings offered the opportunity to review all health promotion programs and the populations being targeted through the programs, and then to identify opportunities for collaboration. The two groups will continue meeting to determine next steps to ensure efficient health promotion services are delivered by the two organizations.