



**DENVER**  
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Denver Environmental Health Department

Nancy J. Severson, Manager

201 W. Colfax, Dept. 1009

Denver, CO 80202

PHONE: 720-865-5365

FAX: 720-865-5531

[www.denvergov.org/health-environment](http://www.denvergov.org/health-environment)

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (DEH) Report for November/December, 2008

### ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL (ACC)

#### New Activities

- Safety Equipment: With the assistance of DEH's safety officer, new animal handling equipment, including stretchers, capture pole and snake tongs, was obtained from the DEH health and safety funds. In addition, ACC purchased ballistic vests for all animal control officers (ACOs), who will be required to wear the vests while on duty.

#### Update on Key Issues

- Chameleon/311 Integration: Chameleon was successfully integrated with the City's 311 CRM software system and went live in November. Training of ACC staff is ongoing. ACOs now enter animal impound information directly into Chameleon, eliminating the need for paper-based, hand-written impound documentation.

### COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DECISION SUPPORT (CHDS)

#### Update on Key Issues

- Decision Support Group (DSG):
  - Activity Database Update: DSG is currently implementing the web-based version of the Activity Database in PHI with a "Go Live" date of January 2, 2009. The Activity Database in EQ Division is delayed in part due to the need to review EQ data for consistency between programs.
  - Mobile Solutions: DSG is supporting EQ as they conclude the testing phase of piloting a mobile solution that will be used in the Facility Compliance program. The EQ mobile solution will be rolled out into production in January 2009. DSG received the hardware and software for PHI's Food Program's move toward a paperless inspection system using a PDA-based mobile solution. The software development is well underway. Pre-pilot User Acceptance Testing is expected by the end of January or the beginning of February 2009.
  - Mayor's Office of HIV Resources (MOHR): MOHR contracted with an external audit firm to conduct site visits at funded provider sites.
- Denver Healthy People (DHP 2010):
  - DHP 2010 Program Manager: DEH has hired a former employee, Stacey McConlogue, as the new HP 2020 Program Manager. Stacey joins DEH on January 12, 2009.



- Live Well Grant Application: DEH completed the progress report and presented it to Live Well for Year 4 funding consideration. The total budget requested for Year 4 is \$250,000. Responded to initial feedback from the Live Well Foundation and made appropriate changes to the project budget and re-submitted the application.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (EQ)

### Update on Key Issues

- Environmental Management System (EMS):
  - Certification: The EMS in place for six city agencies (Environmental Health, Public Works, General Services, Mayor's Office, Denver Zoo, Theatres & Arenas) underwent an external audit for ISO 14001 certification. On December 26, 2008, the City and County of Denver officially received certification as an ISO 14001 EMS organization.
  - 2009 Commitments: We have commitments from nine additional city agencies to develop and implement an EMS in 2009 (Economic Development, Botanic Gardens, Library, Safety, City Attorneys, City Council, Community Planning and Development, Parks & Recreation, and Museum of Nature and Science).
- Air Quality/GHG Reductions:
  - Convention Center Idling Vehicle Project: The Community Based Social Marketing pilot project conducted in collaboration with the Colorado Convention Center was completed and was highly successful. Follow-up observations show a steep decline in idling rates post-outreach efforts. Convention Center security staff have volunteered to continue outreach and participate in enforcement efforts if needed. Presented results of Colorado Convention Center anti-idling project to SMG (the management company), Emily Griffith staff and Councilwoman Madison.
  - Engines Off!: Lakewood partnered with DEH on the Engines Off! idling vehicle reduction program and Englewood has also expressed interest, consistent with DEH's goal of making this a regional initiative.
  - Best Commuter Workplace Designation: EQ completed the remaining component needed for Best Commuter Workplace Designation for the city. The contract with Yellow Cab for the guaranteed ride home program was finalized and signed. Public Works has committed to paying for the program through 2010.
- Radium Streets: The five-year review report for Denver Radium Streets indicates that the radium operable units (OUs) on private property are protective of public health and the environment.

## OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER (OME)

### New Activities

- Denver Botanic Gardens Reburial: OME was the lead agency in coordinating the recovery of human remains from gravesites located in historic cemeteries in the area uncovered in the recent garage construction project at the Denver Botanic Gardens. All human remains, once documentation is complete, will be reburied at another location. Mt Olivet Cemetery has volunteered to handle the reburial. This recovery process provided an opportunity for the first activation of the Denver Medical Examiner Reserve Corps, a team of volunteers who have expressed an interest in forensic investigation and have been trained to assist in recovery of remains when the resources of OME are overwhelmed. Photographs taken during the recovery process will be used in educational presentations. In addition to human remains, there was a significant amount of casket hardware with historical significance, which will be placed on display by the Botanic Gardens and OME, The Colorado Historical Society was contacted to see if they have an interest in this hardware.
- Colorado Child Fatality Prevention Review Team: Dr. Martin was recently reappointed to a second three year term by Governor Ritter to represent the Colorado Coroner's Association on the State Child Fatality Prevention Review Team.
- Education:
  - Dr. Martin presented at the Annual Pediatric Trauma Conference given at The Children's Hospital. She gave a case presentation on a victim of fatal child abuse with unusual findings.
  - Dr. Martin spoke at Presbyterian/St. Luke's Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children Emergency Medical Services Continuing Education Conference on the topic of "Forensic Pathology of Child Abuse."
  - Dr. Martin presented a refresher to Denver Health emergency room physicians and staff at their monthly Morbidity and Mortality Conference regarding coroner jurisdiction and reportable deaths.
  - OME participated in an in-service to the Denver Police Department District 2 Victim Assistance Program.
  - Dr. Martin presented to Ft. Logan drug and alcohol abuse workers regarding death due to drug and substance abuse.
- Research:
  - OME is in discussions with Dr. Richard Miech, Department of Health and Behavioral Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Colorado Denver, and associates regarding involvement in a prospective research project funded by a National Institute of Health grant to study trends in drug related deaths.
  - OME will also participate in a study with Dr. Stephen Ousley and associates from Mercyhurst College, PA in the establishment of a radiographic database for forensic anthropology. This will involve providing de-identified data to them and allowing them to take measurements from x-ray films of children and adolescents in the OME database. Several other metro area coroner offices are also participating. This study is funded by the National Institute of Justice.

## Update on Key Issues

- Workload: For the month of November, OME performed 51 autopsies, 28 externals and 3 chart reviews/death certifications. During December, OME performed 49 autopsies, 19 externals and 9 chart reviews/death certifications. All three physicians finished the 2008 year under the National Association of Medical Examiner's 325 autopsy/physician limit.
- Forensic Fellow: Dr Michael Burson from the University of Colorado has accepted the fellowship position for academic year 2009 and will start on July 1, 2009. OME has yet to fill the position for 2010. There is a candidate scheduled for interview in February for the 2011 academic year, Dr. Lindsey Harle, from Hawaii.
- Medical Transcription: The medical transcriptionist vacancy was filled in mid-December. The unfilled position (vacant since the first week of September) resulted in a large backlog of unfinished reports, which is currently being addressed.

## PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION (PHI)

### New Activities

- Retail Food:
  - Meeting with Colorado Restaurant Association (CRA): PHI met with the President of the CRA to discuss increased communication on issues that impact both PHI and the hospitality industry. The meeting was very productive and will lay a foundation for increased collaboration between PHI and the CRA on the common goal of food safety.
  - Staff provided information for a very positive follow up story regarding the Dog's On Patios variance, which appeared the *Rocky Mountain News*.(see below)
  - 9 News Investigation: 9 News investigative reporter Deborah Sherman conducted a piece on the Children's Hospital's kitchen compliance. The facility, which moved from the City and County of Denver to Aurora (Tri-County Health Dept jurisdiction) in 2007, has had compliance problems since the move. 9 News was investigating the facility's compliance history when under Denver's jurisdiction.
- Child Care: The interim Director of PHI and the Supervisor of the Child Care section met with the administrators of the Division of Child Care within the Colorado Department of Human Services to review expectations related to the Child Care inspection contract. A second meeting is scheduled for January.
- 2009 EMS Targets: PHI created targets for the 2009 EMS program, including a reduction in paper use, creation of policies that may facilitate reduction in mileage, initiating the use of rechargeable batteries when the current battery supply is depleted, and partnering with EQ to expand the solid waste management education program to additional retail food districts in Denver.

## Update on Key Issues

- Swimming Pool Inspections: December 19<sup>th</sup> was the compliance deadline for swimming pool operators with the federal Virginia Grame Baker Pool Safety Act. Numerous regulated pools in Denver have not yet complied with the federal regulation as a result of the complexity of the law and the substantial financial resources needed to retrofit existing pools with new drains. PHI has not conducted any enforcement at this point and will continue to work with pool operators to help assure a safe pool environment as well as progress toward compliance.

- Child Care: Small Fry Child Care Center was temporarily suspended due to non-qualified staff and being grossly out of ratio (adult to child). The Division of Child Care within the Colorado Department of Human Services received a notice of appeal from the Small Fry Child Care Center requesting that the facility be re-opened immediately. Small Fry Child Care facility was issued two summonses by PHI in November and the license was summarily suspended due to numerous violations including hindering lawful inspections. PHI will recommend that Small Fry be allowed to re-open on a probationary status with specific stipulations after compliance with previously noted violations is confirmed.

## **COMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA UPDATE**

Dogs on Patios - Staff worked with the *Rocky Mountain News* to do a follow up on the dogs on Patios Ordinance. The story, *Rule letting dogs on cafe patios has tails wagging*, was positive depiction on the variance a year after going into effect.

Children's Hospital - Staff provided information for a story on KUSA Channel 9 regarding failed kitchen inspections at Children's Hospital.

Hypoallergenic dogs at shelters – In response to an announcement by the president elect (noting that he wanted to adopt a hypoallergenic dog from a shelter), staff worked the Metro Denver Shelter Alliance to pitch a story about the large variety of hypo-allergenic dogs at shelters. KUSA Channel 9 filmed a story at DMAS. Channel 4 filmed at DDFL the following day.

Engine's Off! Ant-idling Program – Staff pitched the anti-idling program *Engines Off!* to coincide with a proposed air quality ordinance change, and worked with KCNC News 4 and to produce a positive story with the Colorado Convention Center.

New Pool Safety Regulations – New Pool Safety Regulations went into effect on Dec. 19 and numerous national news stories ran as a result. KCNC News 4 contacted staff to inquire about the new regulations. DEH Staff worked with Parks & Recreation Center staff to ensure messages and information were consistent.