



CRAWFORD COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WI 53821

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

DEAR CITIZENS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

Nurses Change Lives...that is the motto of Crawford County Public Health nurses.

Change is what we hope to accomplish each day we come to work, to assist in the change that can make someone's life safer, healthier, more joyful, independent, and productive. The programs we enter into all take our mission and the needs of the population into consideration.

This year has also had many changes for us. Deanna Wallin-Sander, who gave us 22 years of productive service, has taken a position in the Gundersen Clinic in Boscobel. Deanna was a skilled professional who led the programs for Maternal Child Health, worked with the Lions Club to procure a camera device that tests vision (Plusoptix) and developed the Wauzeka School Nurse position. We treasure the skills and knowledge she has worked hard to develop, and are proud of her new adventure.

Deanna's leaving had the domino effect of forcing other changes in the staff. Judy Powell, who has always had a high interest in children's health, was given the option to move from a mental health position into the school nursing, community education and preparedness assistant. This work will allow her years of mental health work to continue to be effective.

Lisa Cumber is our newly hired staff member. Her main function will be as a mental health nurse. The function of the mental health nurse in Human Services is changing greatly with the integration of electronic medical records and the adventures of tele-medicine. I am proud of the sustaining energy Lisa has shown. The supportive mentoring of Judy Powell who had this position in the past has been a great asset.

Michelle Breuer works closely with our communicable disease follow-up which is one of the most important tasks of Public Health. Michelle has put together wonderful data on the school mass immunization exercise. She also heads the prenatal care program.

Sharon Steele is not only the administrative assistant, but is in charge of the immunization program. She watches over our costly vaccinations, ensuring safety and adequate inventory. Sharon is also our billing agent. Everyone with a good clerical assistant knows there is no end to the tasks a good secretary provides.

As the director I oversee jail health, environmental health and preparedness activities. Without the professionalism of my staff these tasks would be difficult.

Despite huge changes in our activities and the demands made of public health, we appreciate our jobs and enjoy being able to maintain a safe, healthy environment in Crawford County. I recognize this could not be done without the assistance of the hospital, other county and municipal departments, and concerned citizens.

In the following pages you will read a sprinkling of what our dedicated staff of four nurses, one administrative assistant, and one part-time support staff can accomplish for the residents of Crawford County in one year.

Enjoy;

Gloria Wall RN

Gloria Wall RN, Director

Nurses
Change
Lives

The Woman Infant & Child (WIC) Program is a nutrition, informational and supplemental food program available to eligible families that have children under age five, women who are pregnant and nursing women. The WIC mission is “Working Together to Create Healthy Families”.

The WIC office and staff serving our area is the Southwest Community Action Program (SWCAP), located out of Dodgeville. Three clinics a month are held in Crawford County. The first two Wednesdays of the month are held in Prairie du Chien at our Public Health office and the last Wednesday of the month in Gays Mills at the Community Building.

Crawford County Public Health Nurses screen all families for Public Health services that may be of benefit to promote health and wellness. Nurses are present at each clinic which allows us to expand on programs and services areas such as immunizations for children and adults (Tdap), lead testing, Prenatal Care Coordination (PNCC), fluoride varnishes - oral health, infant well water testing and First Breath and My Baby & Me (programs for pregnant women related to smoking cessation and alcohol exposed pregnancy). Educational resources and referrals to other programs are also often made and include; areas related to early childhood education programs, Family Resource Center, Birth to Three, food pantries, Human Services, adult and child oral health, child vision, Catholic Charities – Domestic Violence/Hands of Hope (transportation), reproductive services and more. In 2015 327 unduplicated individuals received WIC benefits and services with CCPH nurses serving 179 of those families. Additionally in 2015 WIC clients redeemed a total of \$165,609.96 worth of WIC checks/vouchers specifically to grocery stores and pharmacies in Crawford County. CCPH will continue to provide services and resources to our WIC families in 2016.

PRENATAL CARE COORDINATION

The Prenatal Care Coordination Program (PNCC), a BadgerCare benefit, is offered and provided to Crawford County pregnant women. The program assists pregnant women in receiving support and services necessary for a positive birth outcome for both mom and baby. Women are identified as early as possible in their pregnancy and receive support services, health and nutrition education, and referrals to appropriate community resources. Program referrals can be and are received from WIC, school nurses, medical providers, Badger Care HMO's, Human Services or other community partners. CCPH nurses are all trained providers of the First Breathe program that facilitates smoking cessation and the My Baby & Me program that addresses pregnant women at risk for an alcohol exposed pregnancy. In 2015 our department received 46 PNCC referrals with 12 eligible PNCC clients agreeable for enrollment. The 12 PNCC enrolled clients accumulated a total of 36 face to face visits and over 40 other phone and/or collateral contacts. Breast feeding is always encouraged and it was pleasing that 6 of the 12 moms choose to breastfeed. One client was enrolled with the First Breath Program and was successful in quitting and/or decreasing her tobacco intake. All moms were screened for My Baby & Me program. Our goal for 2016 is to continue building the program to reach more eligible PNCC clients.

HEALTH CHECK

The Health Check program is designed to provide preventative health counseling to children under the age of 18 enrolled in Medical Assistance (MA). A general head to toe physical assessment, hearing, vision, blood tests, dental inspection, analysis of growth and development, anticipatory guidance, immunizations if needed and nutritional counseling are all included in a Health Check. The Health Check program is federally funded under MA. Private clinic settings are the primary providers for these services. We continue to advertise and promote Health Check services especially with Human Services and provide routine physical screenings for childcare services.

POSTPARTUM VISITS (PPV)

Crawford County Public Health (CCPH) offers home visits or support through phone contacts to all postpartum mothers and babies upon referral from Boscobel, Vernon, and LaCrosse hospitals. Issues addressed during these visits and/or contacts include: normal growth and development, immunizations, feeding and nutrition, safe sleep, shaken baby syndrome, postpartum depression, well water testing, car seat safety, health insurance, day care, second hand smoke, early brain development and more. In 2015 32 postpartum contacts were provided.



**CARING TODAY FOR A
HEALTHIER TOMORROW**

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Reviewing the 2015 Communicable Disease Report the top three areas of concern identified include: hospitalized Influenza cases, Tic Borne Illnesses and again STI's. Due to the continued Influenza A/H3N2 "drift strain" circulating into the New Year we continued to see hospitalized influenza cases. To help combat 2015 seasonal influenza CCPH conducted over 60 office and county wide influenza vaccination clinics for adults including Crawford County School's teachers and staff. Through the Emergency Preparedness Exercise over 1,000 Crawford County school aged children were vaccinated against influenza. There was an increase of Tic Borne illnesses such as Lymes Disease and Ehrilichiosis/Anaplamosis from the previous year; especially Ehrilichiosis. These increased rates do mirror the rest of Southwest WI. Preventative education that also includes strategies to reduce hospitable habitats in our environment will be continued throughout our communities and with each individualized diagnosed case.



LEAD TESTING

Testing for the presence of lead in children ages 1 and 2 continues to be done routinely at our WIC clinic sites and on a walk-in basis at the Public Health Office. This screening is done free of charge and information regarding the hazards of lead is addressed with each client. Any Crawford County child with venous blood level of ≥ 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ receives a risk assessment of the environment and/or home assessment, along with follow-up blood lead screenings. In 2015 we had four reported elevated blood lead tests. Home assessments were completed to help determine the exposure source. Two of the homeowners are currently working on removing the lead contamination that was found. Funding for this undertaking is an issue for them. One exposure seems to have occurred in another county. And one appears to be from an antique bell the child was playing with. This year 68 children were screened through our office.



WATER QUALITY

Water quality is an issue every year. Water test kits are provided in cooperation with the State Lab of Hygiene for pregnant women and infants at risk who have a private, untested water supply.

High nitrates in water have been linked to birth defects, "blue baby syndrome", learning disorders, and can lead to coma and death if left untreated.

Boiling concentrates the nitrates in water therefore, finding the source of contamination and taking steps to reduce further contamination is very important. Water samples were supplied to homes of referred newborn babies not on public water.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE

It is an ongoing responsibility of our Public Health nurse to follow up on persons diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections (STI's). Individuals are interviewed, provided with education and preventative measures to help maintain health and wellness. Resources are made known and referrals are made as needed. Sexual contacts are attempted to be contacted and interviewed in the same manner with the goal being to stop spread of disease. Confidentiality is important and always maintained.

Crawford County has seen a 25% increase in rates from 2014 and a 61% increase from 2013. Over the past five years there has been an overall 61.4% increase in STI's. This is a continued trend and is a concern for our county. Additional analysis was conducted to further investigate specific populations and trends related to STI's. The two most prevalent STI's are Chlamydia and Gonorrhea with Chlamydia accounting for 97.8% of the total cases. The ages of reported cases ranged from 16-43 with the average age being 23.8 and the most predominant age being 19. Ages 19-29 accounted for 58.7% of all cases. The female population is affected the most as they account for 68.9% of all the cases. Timing of incidence also examined and results of the top three months of prevalence was January, August and October. In 2014 January and October was also two of the highest months of incidence. Additional resources were evaluated to further investigate other possible trends. Similar to Crawford County the CDC (November 2015) also reports of increased rates of STI's, especially among our younger (ages 15-24), female population. The CDC comments that "Preventing STI's among youth is a key priority" and that sexually active individuals, "Must take steps to protect themselves". Testing, treatment, using condoms consistently and correctly, and limiting the number of sex partners are all effective strategies for reducing the risk of infection and consequence to health. Crawford County will follow CDC guidelines in regards to providing education and guidance to help combat this growing health risk.



PHARMACEUTICAL ROUND UP

Public Health has teamed up with the coroner and sheriff's office to have a pharmaceutical round up. The Public Health Office continues to accept and collect medications throughout the year for proper disposal. The 2015 pharmaceutical round up held at the Crawford County Highway Department remains successful.

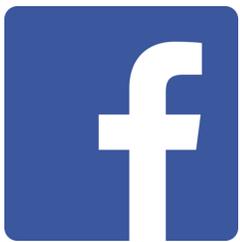
COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Crawford County Public Health Nurses are available to present educational programs to community groups related to health and wellness topics. Topics presented to groups have been Healthy Heart Living, CPR demonstrations, first aid, home safety, chemical safety, head lice, breast cancer, winter safety, carbon monoxide, explanation of the duties and responsibilities of the Public Health Department, child abuse/neglect, perinatal substance abuse, early childhood brain development and other current health trends. Health issues relating to the season and interest are also provided to the radio, newspapers, senior sites and newsletters.

The community also informs us of current issues of interest in their respective communities.

FLU CLINICS

Flu clinics continue to be held throughout our county. We continue to work very hard to educate and immunize the public. 1130 of Crawford County's population has been immunized. We also provide flu vaccinations to several business that want to offer flu vaccine to their employees.



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PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

The changes in the Public Health Preparedness are drastic. We have moved to a regional preparedness coalition with new partners. This new group is centered around the Lacrosse hospitals. The funding from CDC as we know it will be gone after next year. I have some fears of whether our efforts will be adequately supported compared to the hospitals, and other partners (EMS, RTAC and Emergency Government).

Ebola dollars were utilized to plan for an emerging communicable disease. CDC made many changes throughout the year with the changing knowledge of this disease. I am proud to say, Crawford County has a heroic nurse practitioner who committed her knowledge and skills to the population of Sierra Leone. This population was ravaged with the ebola disease. The ebola information from CDC, the professional consideration of Lisa Varnes- Epstein for the safety of the community, the education provided by the newspaper Crawford Independent and the North Crawford School, and the communicable disease follow-up of Crawford County Public Health nurse, Judy Powell allowed the fear that could go along with this incident to be dispelled.

Crawford County is working closely with partners including the Emergency Management and the Sheriff to work on 3 issues this year: 1) Mass Care 2) Medical Surge and 3) volunteer management. Crawford County has also maintained our partnership with the Southwest Regional Consortia consisting of Richland, Vernon, Grant, and Iowa, Lafayette, as they are surrounding counties who have the same issues as Crawford County.

IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

Immunization clinics are held twice a month at the Crawford County Administration Building in the Public Health office and bimonthly in Gays Mills and Seneca at the Community Buildings to provide an opportunity for children and adults to receive immunizations. The health department also offers vaccinations requiring payment to adults such as flu, Hepatitis B and Zoster (Shingles). Crawford County Public Health is able to offer the Shingles vaccine free of charge to eligible individuals through a patient assistance program offered by Merck. 1899 immunizations were given in 2015.

Vaccines supplied to our department from the Wisconsin Immunization Program are funded through a combination of funds from the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program and PHSAS 317. VFC vaccine can be administered to individuals that are 18 years of age and younger that, 1) have no insurance or 2) are on Medical Assistance or 3) are Native American or 4) are Alaska Natives.

SERVICES TO CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL

Through a contract with the Human Services Department, primary case management services, medication setup and injections, education, symptom monitoring and supportive psychotherapy are provided to chronically mentally ill clients in the certified Community Support Program (CSP) and in the Human Services outpatient mental health clinic. The CSP nurse makes routine home visits. Sample medications and drug assistance programs are offered to our clientele. The CSP nurse arranges and provides this service as prescribed by the Human Services Mental Health Team. Medication and injections are provided weekly to our clientele.

When a family seeks services, many agencies don't know who could best provide the services or resources needed to meet this need. Deanna Wallin Sander, with the support of the members of "Healthy Roots" spearheaded a system and product called the "Resource Directory" that would ideally be consistently updated with the most current information that is given to us. The directory will be examined at least yearly to assure correctness of information. MCH also was working closely with the "Healthy Roots" members to work toward healthier, happier Crawford County children and families through better nutrition and fitness. Multiple activities took place in our schools and parks to support active lifestyles and improved nutrition. 2016 will bring a change in the MCH program. Obesity and sedentary life remain a high priority need in Crawford County; however the dollars of the MCH program could not be utilized for that use for more than 3 years. We are now going to utilize those dollars and energy to decrease smoking in our pregnant women and families. Crawford County has data to show a much higher than Wisconsin percentage of pregnant women who smoke and children who live in a family of smokers.

CPR-FIRST AID EDUCATION

Heart disease and Cancer are the leading causes of death in Crawford County. To prevent and protect the population a decision was made to become a training site for CPR, as we know, bystander CPR is critical in the effort to save a life endangered by cardiac arrest. We have enlisted help from Prairie du Chien EMS, Prairie du Chien Schools and Prairie du Chien Prison to increase community CPR in Crawford County. Staff has been trained. At this time we have 14 instructors with 2 additional instructors in training. So far we have provided this education to 207 persons.



FLUORIDE THERAPY PROGRAM

Crawford County Public Health offers an Early Childhood Cavity Prevention Program to children through age six. This program includes oral health screening, education, fluoride varnish application, and referral for any necessary dental problems. Fluoride has been found to prevent or reduce cavities in primary and permanent teeth of young children.

Crawford County Public Health's Early Childhood Cavity Prevention Program targets WIC participants and Head Start. There were a total of 127 fluoride varnish treatments done by the public health nurses.



JAIL HEALTH

State law mandates that jail inmates receive adequate health care, this includes medication administration which must be done under a Medical Professionals license. The County nurse fills that role in Crawford County. Nursing visits or consultation are provided at all times for health assessment and supervision of dispensing medication and health care for inmates. In 2015, 53 jail health visits were made. Logging of all telephone requests and cases of requested assessments that were later refused were not tallied.



BLOOD PRESSURE CLINICS

The blood pressure clinics are held at the nutrition meal sittings to accommodate senior citizens. We service three sites-- Eastman, Soldiers Grove and Prairie du Chien. The blood pressure screening often involves health education and counseling by a Public Health nurse. The number of blood pressure screenings completed in 2015 was 145. Community Education is also provided during these clinics.

TB TESTING

Tuberculosis skin tests are available upon request for children attending Head Start, camp physicals, and college entrance exams, teachers and school personnel. Skin tests are also given to personnel at the Opportunity Center, group home workers, new clients at foster homes, EMS volunteers, and the general public. One hundred fifty two tests were given in 2014 and 110 were given in 2015.

Public Health Nurses are certified by Wisconsin Prevent Blindness to perform vision screenings for children. We are a resource for both public and private schools to assist in annual vision screening of children. The resources include initial screening, retesting, and referral of children. Our vision screening program continues to partner with the Lions Clubs of Prairie du Chien, Seneca and Wauzeka to serve the community by providing Early Childhood Vision Screening. The goal is to help identify pre-school children (ages 1-5) who may have or be at risk for amblyopia "Lazy Eye". The Early Childhood Vision Screening Program provided screening to **743** pre-school/school aged children free of charge.

The collaboration between Lions Clubs Zone 5 and Crawford County Public has resulted in a stronger, more effective vision screening program in our county. The vision screening device employs state of the art technology in vision screening of young children, it has exceptional accuracy, provides a detailed printed report to aid the eye care professional in follow up examinations and the ability to quickly and simply screen children. The most important benefit is that when eye problems in children are identified early, when treatment can be most effective, it ensures that children's vision is optimal for learning and in some cases can even prevent permanent loss of vision.



SCHOOL HEALTH

Consultation with school nurses regarding communicable diseases and conditions, immunizations and state rulings continue to be utilized by all school districts in our county. Again this year we were able to offer free flu vaccinations for students by conducting the Mass Clinic Preparedness Exercise. We were also granted the ability to offer Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis), Meningococcal, and HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccines to adolescents in grades 6-12.

The Wauzeka-Steuben school nurse contract continues to be 9.5 hours per week for 39 weeks and 15 hours during summer months. Nursing duties include but are not limited to: diabetes management, asthma, medication management, immunization assessment and administration, instructor for Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention, member of the Wellness Committee and staff training. Student assessments including: hearing, vision, height, weights, BMIs, head lice, and early childhood screening. The nurse works closely with The School District of Wauzeka-Steuben to maintain the 3 automatic – external defibrillator (AED) throughout the school building and providing CPR/AED training for coaches and staff.



2015 MASS IMMUNIZATION FUNCTIONAL EXERCISE

Crawford County Public Health (CCPH) recognizes the significance of prevention and promotion of health in our communities, county and state; especially for our children whom are more vulnerable. CCPH joined many other local public health agencies across the state of Wisconsin to conduct and take part in a Public Health Preparedness Exercise to provide the 2015-2016 influenza vaccine as well as vaccines for Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap), Meningitis (McV4), Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Polio (IPV), Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR), Varicella (Chickenpox) and Hepatitis A to school aged children. The exercise scenario consisted of a novel strain of influenza circulating as well as an unexpected outbreak of various illness; each disease exhibited high morbidity and mortality among our younger population. Additionally, county and state studies continue to reveal an increase in cervical, oral/and or anal cancers specifically related to HPV. CDC has recommended that all school aged children be vaccinated against these diseases. The scope was defined as a functional exercise that included up to three, thirty day dispensing campaign phases.

The 2015 Immunization Fall Functional Exercise was successful as 732 school aged children were vaccinated against influenza. This is slight decrease of 5.5% from 2014 however still an increase of 4.2% from 2013. Through the first and second immunization dispensing phases CCPH was also able to vaccinate 64 children against Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis, 79 children against Meningitis, 101 doses of HPV vaccine was administered and 12 other children were vaccinated with other vaccines as mentioned above. That is over 900 vaccinations! With the goal to immunize additional school aged children further outreach was conducted to smaller private and pre/schools this past year. We will continue to work closely with our schools on ways to improve this exercise and vaccinate more children. This exercise also provides the opportunity to be in our communities and provide education and awareness regarding the importance of vaccination. All Crawford County schools were collaboratively involved and their cooperation was significant to the success of this exercise.

Environmental Health is a collaborative program with the state and local public health officials in collaboration with DNR and Department of Agriculture.

17 animal bite cases, all of which were negative for rabies. All were followed. The offending animals were mainly dogs. Cows, cats, bats, raccoon and possum also were implicated. The sheriff's office work closely on initiating the cases with the follow-up to be done by public health.

There were 6 welfare checks of fragile persons in poor living conditions. One gentleman, who had health problems including open sores agreed to go to the nursing home. Animals were removed from two homes by our animal control officer Crissie Reynolds.

There were 9 Meth Lab follow-ups. We investigated 3 public water complaints including unsafe pool chemicals, bad water in 1 school and possible lead in water causing illness. We investigated 2 raw sewage complaints, 2 restaurant cleanliness complaints, 1 beauty shop cleanliness complaint, 5 indoor air issues, 8 mold issues which resulted in 1 building being removed and 1 school with significant renovations to remove the mold. Bed bugs have come to Crawford County with bedbug complaints at 3 hotels, 2 apartment complexes, the hospital and 1 rental house.



LIMITED AGENT

Crawford County Public (CCPH) Health contracts with WI Health Service Food Safety and Recreational Licensing Department to conduct inspections, reinspections and complaint follow-ups under the supervision of a WI Registered Sanitarian to Crawford County's hotels/motels, vacation home rentals, campgrounds, and prepackaged food establishments. Along with the inspections, additional education is provided to help promote the health and safety of the public and have included: smoke and carbon monoxide detection/safety, well water testing/safe water and bed bugs. In 2015 CCPH conducted inspections for 19 hotel/motels, 11 vacation home rentals, 14 campgrounds, and 5 prepackaged food facilities. In 2016, the DHS and Department of Agriculture inspection programs are merging. It is unknown whether the limited agent program will continue. Crawford County has been advised to consider becoming a full agent program. Vernon County is considering the same issue, of becoming full agents to inspect grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, pools, as well as the other inspections. It would require a registered sanitarian to oversee the program in the two counties. We continue to look into the viability of this program



TRANSIENT NON-COMMUNITY WELL WATER PROGRAM

Newly in 2015 we worked with the DNR in the Transient Non-Community (TNC) well water program. We were trained by DNR staff to perform complete well water system surveys, collect annual well water samples, and provide any necessary follow up and data entry. Through this program we gained valuable information on safe drinking water practices, became more familiar with Crawford County's well water systems, and identified TNC wells that were not currently being monitored. Specifically, we identified the deep well hand pump in the Steuben Village Park as a community water source that was unmonitored, along with some retail apple orchards and a church. We completed 49 complete sanitary surveys (due every 5 years), sampled 49 different wells (due annually), and collected follow-up water samples on 10 well systems (positive for coliform bacteria). At years end we assessed the program and determined that it was fiscally prohibitive to continue. The primary barrier is getting the water samples to the State Lab of Hygiene in a timely fashion. Donna Sefton from the Dodgeville DNR office deserves recognition for the education and hands on assistance she provided.

WISCONSIN WELL WOMEN

Due to restructuring of the WWWP, as directed by the state, a new multijurisdictional service coordinator model was formulated and was effective July 1, 2015. As of that date Crawford County Well Women clients and providers were served by the new regional coordinator out of La Crosse County. Crawford and La Crosse counties work collaboratively during this transition time to ensure an optimal outcome for our Crawford County Well Women clients and providers. Crawford County Public Health will continue to be a liaison for the program however is very disappointed in the State's decision to again regionalize another program and remove funding from our rural county and agency. CCPH has been a WWWP local coordinating agency serving our residents over the past 20 years. The contract objective for 2015 was to screen 22 women for breast and/or cervical cancer, ages 35-64 years of age from January 1 through June 30, 2015. The contract objective was not met for 2015 as only 4 women aged 35-64 were screened. A total of 11 Crawford County women were enrolled in the WWWP for this time period. For the 2015 year a total of 19 women were enrolled and per Forward Health, 8 women were screened for breast and/or cervical cancer. These screening results are much lower than previous years. Possible rationale is related to the change in cervical cancer screening recommendations from yearly to every 3-5 years and that more women were able to obtain medical coverage through Badger Care, Medicaid, or through the Marketplace. All women enrolled and/or contacted through the Crawford County Public Health were screened for tobacco use and if appropriate referred to the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line. Crawford County, even through restructuring, continues to have loyal and dependable providers. All providers were required to submit a new provider agreement and be accepted again as a provider. Support was provided to our providers during this timely and tedious requirement. We are very pleased that our providers understand the necessity to have services available locally to serve our rural communities. Much appreciation continues to be expressed from WWWP women for this valuable program and the coordination from Crawford County Public Health.



RADON

Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that is the nation's second leading cause of lung cancer and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon is naturally present in the ground and can enter buildings through their foundations. Both old and newer homes can be susceptible to radon. Crawford County has a high incidence of lung cancer, therefore Public Health is very concerned about the radon levels in persons homes. Research shows that radon causes more lung cancer among non-smokers than even second-hand tobacco smoke. Fortunately, this cause of lung cancer is largely preventable; the first step is to test your home. If elevated radon is found, it can be easily and effectively corrected. Radon concentrations in air can be measured with simple, inexpensive test kits available from hardware stores and local public health agencies. Crawford County provides kits to homeowners free of charge at this time through a radon grant for the 6 surrounding counties of Vernon, Iowa, Richland, Lafayette, Grant, and Crawford. This year we provided radon education to Crawford County residents and 18 test kits were given out. State statistics indicate that between 5 and 10 percent of homes in Wisconsin have elevated airborne concentrations of radon in significantly occupied spaces. Radon concentrations vary greatly from home to home, so any home, no matter its age, should be tested.

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