

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Public Health *SOUTH SPA*

Chronicle

6

A publication for friends and neighbors of the South Service Planning Area

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SPA 6 Addresses High STD Rates in Community

The SPA 6 Area Health Office and the Public Health STD Program have joined forces in an effort to address the high rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea infections in South Los Angeles.

Last year, SPA 6 had the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea than any other SPA in LA County. Fifteen to nineteen year olds are the population at most risk of infection. In 2005, teens had a gonorrhea infection rate of 1068 per 100,000 - 10 times as high as the SPA with the lowest rate (SPA 5). Chlamydia rates for the same age group are three times higher (3,415 per 100,000) than SPA 5.

The Department of Public Health is addressing the problem in a number of

ways. First, Public Health staff will work to make sure that people that tested positive for either disease but did not return for treatment are contacted. The STD Program's Mobile



Testing Unit will be more visible at community events in SPA 6 as well as of-

fering testing at local high schools. Public Health Nurses from SPA 6 will help staff the unit as needed. This summer, the Mobile Unit was at the African Marketplace testing. They also were at local events in commemoration of World AIDS Day on December 1.

Another key strategy that the two agencies are work-

ing on is a health education intervention designed to promote awareness.

The Board of Supervisors has provided additional funding to implement the Women of Color initiative which will focus on educating women about STDs and encouraging them to get tested regularly and to practice safe sex.

On November 13, SPA 6 and STD Program staff held a Community Advisory Board meeting. Numerous community agencies were invited to hear about the STD problem and help think about ways to solve them. In the coming months, the Advisory Board will continue to work with the STD Program and SPA 6 staff to further develop the health education campaign.

Inside this issue:

Cervical Health Awareness Month	2
Prevent Drunk and Drugged Driving	2
World AIDS Day	3
Handwashing Awareness	3

On August 2, over 130 participants representing more than 70 national, state, and local organizations convened a countywide summit marking the commencement of the "It's Quitting Time L.A.!" initiative.

The goal of the initiative is for Los Angeles County to be the first large metropolitan jurisdiction to reach the CDC Healthy People 2010 goal of 12 percent adult smoking prevalence. Currently adult smoking prevalence is 14.6 percent.

The Public Health Tobacco Control and Prevention Program is the sponsoring

agency for the initiative and will be promoting activities on their website and other



media outlets. In addition, they have provided funding to the 8 Public Health SPAs to develop a county wide tobacco cessation strategy. The committee for this endeavor has developed a plan to implement the "Ask. Advise. Refer." intervention into all 14 Public Health clin-

ics. SPAs 5, 6, and 8 will begin a pilot run of the intervention before it is introduced to the other SPAs in the County.

All Public Health staff will wear shirts advertising the campaign and offer patients referrals to the California Smokers Helpline - 1-800-NO BUTTS. Also, those that have direct patient contact will ask their smoking status and advise them on quitting.

Studies have shown that interventions such as "Ask. Advise. Refer." are associated with quit rates of 13 percent.

Cervical Health Awareness Month—January 2007

Approximately 10,000 American women will learn they have cervical cancer or HPV this year, and nearly 4,000 will die from an advanced form of the disease. This January, during Cervical Health Awareness Month, the National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) is focused on educating women about the importance of the Pap test as a screening tool for cervical cancer/HPB and about vaccines that can further reduce the burden of this devastating disease.

It's the start of the new year—a time when many reflect on their health. To start the year right, we encourage women to contact their health care provider to schedule a Pap test to check for cervical cancer. This screening is a crucial part of a woman's health care regimen, yet one that many overlook. "It's important to remember that cervical cancer is a preventable disease— as long as it's caught early enough," says Sarina Araujo, Executive Director of the NCCC.

While routine administration of Pap tests is the best means of detecting cervical cancer at an early stage, vaccines have the potential to protect women from the disease, by targeting cancer-causing types of the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV, a virus transmitted through sexual contact, is

the single known cause of cervical cancer. Two forms of the virus, HPV 16 and 18, account for more than 70 percent of all cervical cancer cases. Some medical experts believe that through a successful education, screening and vaccination program for women, we will have the potential to nearly eliminate cervical cancer in the U.S.

"These vaccines represent a major advancement in women's health and in cancer prevention. With these new tools, we may be able to help ensure no woman in the United States has to endure cervical cancer," says Juan C. Felix, MD, chairman of the NCCC medical advisory panel and chief of OB/GYN pathology at the Women's and Children's Hospital, University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. "We hope these vaccines will make cervical cancer a concern of the past."

The LA County Public Health Office of Women's Health offers a multi-lingual hotline for women to call to find locations for free or low cost Pap tests in their area.

In January 2000, the Cervical Cancer Prevention & Education Initiative (CCPEI) was launched by the Office of

Women's Health because cervical cancer can be prevented, yet Los Angeles County women are diagnosed at nearly three times the national rate.



Cervical cancer disproportionately affects Latinas, African American and Korean women in Los Angeles County. Too often, poverty or lack of awareness keeps them from getting regular screenings that can prevent cervical cancer or result in early treatment. Late stage diagnosis is expensive and too often fatal.

The goals of this initiative are to make more women aware that cervical cancer is preventable with a routine Pap test; to increase the number of women screened; increase access to screening, follow-up, and treatment; and lower the stage at which cervical cancer is diagnosed.

For more information and to schedule a Pap test, call 1-800-793-8090 to schedule an appointment.

For more information about NCCC visit their website at www.nccc-online.org

You Drink and Drive...You Lose!

The busy holiday season is upon us. A time when spirits are high, celebrations thrive and travel increases across America's roadways. Tragically, drunk and drugged driving is on the rise during this special time when many people attend parties where alcohol and drugs are readily available. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 16,000 people are killed every year due to drunk and drugged driving. In addition, drugs are used by approximately 10 to 20 percent of drivers involved in crashes, often in combination with alcohol. Drunk driving is defined as driving with a blood alcohol content (BAC) at or above 0.08. Drugged driving is defined as driving under the influence of any drug that causes the driver to be impaired or incapable of driving safely.

December has been designated National Drunk and Drugged Driving Pre-

vention Month (3D Month) in the hopes of raising awareness of the risks associated with driving after drinking or using drugs. During this month, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) are promoting their "Tie One on For Safety" campaign. This campaign is designed to encourage the public to become actively involved in the fight against drunk driving by tying MADD ribbons to a visible place on their cars to heighten public attention to drunk and drugged driving. To join the fight against drunk and drugged driving, contact your local chapter of MADD to receive your free ribbon. In addition, remember to drive safely yourself during this holiday season and encourage others to do the same.

Don't be a statistic this holiday season! The only way to guarantee that you are driving safely is to avoid alcohol and



illicit drugs completely. Even one drink can slow reflexes and make you sluggish. When you attend parties, designate a driver, who will abstain from alcoholic drinks so that he or she can safely drive impaired persons home. Better yet, avoid drinking yourself. Sober ride programs are another option available in many communities during the holidays. These programs offer safe rides home to people who have consumed too much alcohol. Together we can protect our friends and family from drunk drivers.

Handwashing Awareness Week December 3-9, 2006

Handwashing is the single most important act you can do to prevent getting sick and spreading disease. The CDC estimates that 36,000 people die from the flu or flu-like illness each year, 5,000 people die from food borne illness each year, and between 78,000 and 90,000 patients die each year from Hospital Acquired Infections (HAI). A direct link to many of these deaths is poor handwashing.

Handwashing and Hand Awareness is important for infection prevention, food safety, school health, and personal health. There are many critical times to wash your hands. A few examples are before eating,

after the bathroom, during food preparation, after handling animals, after changing diapers, and any time you think your hands are dirty. Use soap, running water, and scrub all surfaces of your hands for 20 seconds and dry with a paper towel.

Service Planning Area 6 is asking that you make a concerted effort to promote the importance of handwashing and Hand Awareness. Help spread the word, not the germs by making handwashing and hand awareness a habit.

On January 25, the Department of Public Health held a press conference to introduce a handwashing campaign to prevent

the spread of colds and flu. The campaign will include radio and television public service announcements in various languages encouraging Angelenos to wash their hands.

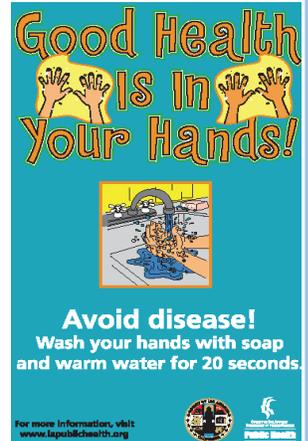


Figure 1a. Chlamydia cases reported in Los Angeles County, 2005

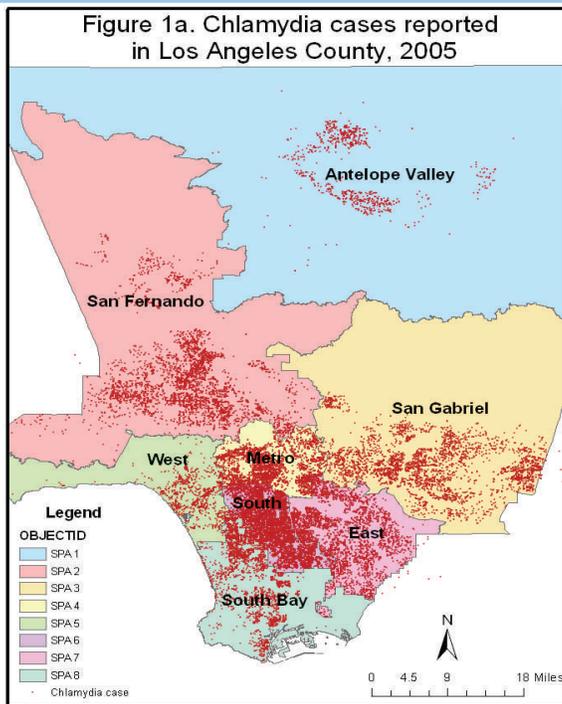
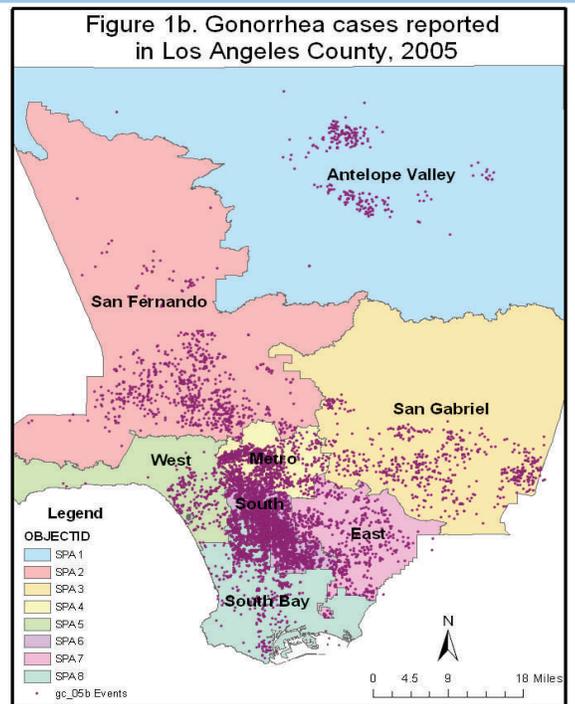


Figure 1b. Gonorrhea cases reported in Los Angeles County, 2005



Selected Reportable Diseases South Service Planning Area (Provisional)

DISEASE	1/1/06-6/30/06	1/1/05-6/30/05
Amebiasis	4	6
Campylobacteriosis	22	25
Encephalitis	0	3
Hepatitis Type A	38	9
Hepatitis Type B	3	2
Hepatitis Type C	0	0
Measles	0	0
Meningitis, Viral	9	27
Meningococcal Infections	11	0
Pertussis	19	18
Salmonellosis	47	62
Shigellosis	37	41
Tuberculosis	36	47

December 1st was World AIDS Day, an opportunity for people worldwide to unite against the fight against HIV and AIDS. World AIDS Day was founded by the World Health Organization in 1988. Since then, it has been taken up by governments, international organizations and charities around the world. This year's World AIDS theme is, "I Care...Do You? Youth and AIDS in the 21st Century", the goal being to ensure greater education and involvement of young people in preventing HIV/AIDS.



This year marked the 20th year that the world has been fighting the AIDS virus. Worldwide, a total of more than 60 million people have been infected with HIV since the pandemic began, and 20 million have died.

The AIDS epidemic has had a devastating impact on communities. Impoverished conditions and depressed economic circumstances tend to accompany an increased presence of HIV in these communities. The epidemic is growing most rapidly among minority populations. According to the CDC, the prevalence of AIDS is six times higher in African-Americans and three times higher among Hispanics than among whites. Although African-American and Hispanic persons represent about 25 percent of the country's population, more than half of new AIDS cases reported to CDC are among these populations. Nearly 50,000 AIDS cases have been reported in Los Angeles County. Today approximately 52,000 people are living with AIDS or HIV in Los Angeles. One out of five people do not know that they are infected.

In light of World AIDS day and its attempt to promote AIDS awareness worldwide, Los Angeles County holds an official observation, done at a commemorative breakfast at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in downtown Los Angeles. The Department of Public Health STD Program provided HIV testing at several sites in LA County, two of which were part of Magic Johnson's efforts to increase awareness in South Los Angeles.

SPA 6 EXECUTIVE TEAM

Area Health Officer (Acting):	Martina Travis, MPH, BSN
Area Medical Director:	Maxine Liggins, MD, MPH
Director of Operations:	Willie Mae Howard, MPA
Nurse Manager (Acting):	Dee Warren, MSN, MPH, BSN
Nurse Supervisors:	Yesenia Eras, PHNS (Acting) Irlene Terrell, PHNS Patricia Bautiste, PHNS Ann Nelson, PHNS Emily Moore, PHN
Community Liaison:	Jameelah Harris-Mims, MSN, MPH, PHN
Epidemiology Analyst:	Farimah Fiali
Health Educator:	Nicole D. Vick, MPH, CHES
Health Program Coordinator:	Teresa Level

MANAGING EDITOR

Nicole D. Vick

The **SPA 6 CHRONICLE** is published quarterly by the South Service Planning Area. You are welcome to make copies of this newsletter.

CONTRIBUTORS

Anita Vaidyanathan— Intern (UCLA), Department of Public Health, SPA 6

Jameelah Harris-Mims, PHN, MSN, MPH—SPA 5/6

National Cervical Cancer Coalition



Chronicle 6

South Area Health Office
Hubert H. Humphrey CHC
5850 S. Main Street, Rm. 2266
Los Angeles, CA 90003

FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS CONTACT:

Teresa Level
Phone: 323 235 6707
FAX: 323 846 5442
tlevel@ladhs.org