

# Spotsylvania County Health Department

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*“Caring for a Healthy Community”*

## Annual Report

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*Activities and Achievements of the  
Rappahannock Area Health District*



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Virginia Department of Health  
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# Annual Report

## Spotsylvania County Health Department

### Letter from our Director Dr. Donald R. Stern

This past year has been an exciting year for public health in Spotsylvania County. Our vision is that our citizens would be *“Healthy people living and working in a healthy community”* and we strive to accomplish this vision by preventing disease, promoting health and protecting the environment. The threat of anthrax was a challenge to assure proper follow-up of reported possible exposures and control for community panic. West Nile Virus presented as a similar challenge; a new public health threat that was responded to in an aggressive manner by our staff who *Care for a Healthy Community*.

A new Health Department Management Team began working for you this past year with my coming on board in October of 2001, Mike Gillenwater, Environmental Health Manager starting in January 2002, Kay Jones, RN, Nurse Manager accepting this new assignment in July and Dr. Dave Kukanich picking up the coordination of the Child Development Center this past year.

This report provides a summary of activities that help sustain the health of the community and identify future targets for interventions.

- Many program improvements were made in the area of foodborne outbreak management and training. We resurrected the Epidemiology Team to conduct foodborne outbreak investigations and initiated the “Over Easy” Food Services Training course for food handlers in the food service industry.
- We improved our disaster and bioterrorism management by obtaining new grant resources from the State to hire a full-time bioterrorism coordinator and epidemiologist, identifying and training primary and secondary Emergency Operation Center (EOC) contacts and participated in all EOC exercises and activities. We

developed a rapid physician contact system with desktop fax capability to all physicians in the area.

- We began work on a plan to improve access to basic dental services for school children in the County.
- We improved communication with our non-English speaking customers by providing Spanish language training for staff.
- We increased community based public health services including information on bioterrorism threats and planning for bioterrorism event, information and activities to prevent the spread of West Nile Virus, addressing adolescent health issues, reducing tobacco dependency, and reducing fire and home-related injuries.
- We initiated the Public Health Recognition Award and gave the first award to Dr. Norman Bernstein who serves in the Regional Tuberculosis Clinic and is invaluable in addressing many communicable disease related issues.
- Last but not least we enhance public health services through improved funding through several new program specific grants to address the public's health.

Our major challenges this next fiscal year will include the ever increasing demand for bioterrorism preparedness, providing smallpox vaccine to health care workers and emergency first responders, and prevention of human disease from West Nile Virus as well as maintaining current services in the face of state and local funding shortfalls.

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## Health Status

Disease and vital event (birth, death, marriage, divorce) data can be used to measure the health status of our citizens. This data helps us determine where to focus limited public health resources to make improvements in community health. The most current health data available is for calendar year 2001.

In comparison to state vital event rates for FY 2001, Spotsylvania County presents as a relatively healthy community in most categories. Below is a table of selected disease and vital events comparing state, district and Spotsylvania rates. For more detailed information please see [www.vdh.state.va.us/healthstats/index.asp](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthstats/index.asp). The significant trends include a decrease in the less than 15 yo pregnancy rate.

HEALTH STATUS	STATE RATE	DISTRICT RATE	SPOTSY
<b>Reproductive Health</b>			
Low Weight Birth Percent of Total Births	8.0	7.2	8.0
Prenatal Began Care: Percent in First Trim.	84.6	90.6	91.8
Teen Pregnancy Rate (Preg./1000 teens)	31.5	27.0	22.7
Out of Wedlock Births Percent	30	28.9	27.7
Abortions rate	20.3	17.6	4.7
<b>Deaths</b>			
Unintentional Injuries: Death/100,000 pop.	33.3	39.0	37.6
Malignant Neoplasms: Deaths/100,000 pop.	190.4	168.8	174.8
Diseases of the Heart: Death/100,000 pop.	214.7	159.7	148.2
<b>Infectious Diseases</b>			
Chylamidia Cases reported	17.820	481	82
HIV Cases reported	804	12	5
AIDS Cases reported	908	12	3
West Nile Virus cases reported	0	0	0

## Health Services

In fiscal year 2002 the Spotsylvania County Health Department clinical staff provided over 6,800 clinic encounters for Spotsylvania County citizens. These services include prenatal care, family planning, communicable disease, immunizations and child health care. Below is a table of selected service types and numbers of citizens served

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in Spotsylvania County.

SERVICE TYPE	DISTRICT	SPOTSY
Total Clinics Visits	29,708	6,892
Immunization Clinic – number of clients serviced	7,734	2,524
o Number of immunizations given	14,274	4,202
WIC Clinic Admissions	3411	952
o Number of Visits	11,740	1,904
Family Planning Clinic Admissions	2372	598
o Number of Visits	4,709	1,134
Maternity Clinic Admissions	649	166
o Number of Visits	4,224	1,160
Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic Visits	1,754	44
School Encounters	5,284	2,218
Home Visits	1,092	158
Dental Clinic Visits	508	0
Child Development Clinic Evaluations	158	83

The staff of RAHD engaged in a wide variety of community activities that promote the health of individuals and the community as a whole. Some of these activities include health fairs; providing immunizations in the schools, flu vaccine to high risk citizens, infant car seats to parents, safety equipment and education to seniors, home visits to pregnant moms, home visits to citizens with communicable disease, disease screening, and providing smoke alarms and safety information.

The nursing and nutrition staff provided many presentations to community groups. Some of these include smoking cessation programs to office staff, communicable disease prevention and control, STDs and abstinence to teens, HIV/STD overview, universal hygiene precautions, Lyme disease and West Nile Virus awareness and education, breastfeeding, nutritional and wellness information, parenting and baby care, and prenatal health.

The CDC provided over 243 hours of collaborative services and 28 hours of in-service education for the professionals and organizations of the community.

Dr. Stern provided training for area physicians through physician conferences held at Mary Washington Hospital on Management of Food Borne Illness and Treatment of Tobacco Dependency.

We believe that it is necessary to partner with other community groups in order to enhance the effectiveness of our services and to be the best stewards of community

resources. This notion is captured in the partnership and committee activities of the RAHD staff including participation on the Family Assessment and Planning Team, Community Policy and Management Team, Rappahannock Area Program on Teenage Pregnancy Prevention, District Nursing Council, Central Commonwealth Perinatal Council, Tobacco Control Coalition, Disaster Preparedness, Headstart Advisory Committee, Breastfeeding Taskforce, Project Link and the Spotsylvania School Health Advisory Committee. Three series of classes were held this past year by RAHD nutritionists on. We partnered with Healthy Families to provide training on basic nutrition for children for Health Families moms and our nutritionist evaluated the menus of all Head Start programs.

## **Environmental Health Services**

The Environmental Health (EH) Staff at the Spotsylvania Health Department are committed to provide professional and friendly environmental health support and guidance to the residents of Spotsylvania as we enforce various state statues and regulations. Environmental Health service requests continue to grow while the staffing level has remained the same for the past 10 years.

### **RABIES PROGRAM**

Rabies is a top priority for our staff as this disease in humans is invariably fatal and prevention programs such as vaccinations for our domestic animals is the best way to keep the virus from spreading. Rabies is endemic in Spotsylvania County and the entire Rappahannock Area Health District. The EH staff are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to investigate cases of human exposure. We investigated approximately 240 rabies transmission risk exposures (bites and scratches from wild or domestic animals) during the year and provide training at the schools when requested. There were 4 raccoons, 1 fox and 2 skunks that tested positive for rabies in FY 2001. The Health Department makes sure that any exposed humans see their doctor for vaccination against rabies if necessary.

### **WEST NILE VIRUS**

West Nile Virus (WNV) first appeared in the United States (New York) in 1999 where 7 humans died from the virus. The virus spread to 6 more states (to include a crow in Spotsylvania) in 2000 and as of November 2002 it is now in over 45 states. As of November 2002 there had been 3,735 human cases and 215 deaths in the US. Although there were no birds found positive in Spotsylvania in 2001, testing in 2002 found positive birds. We stopped testing birds after we found 10 that were positive. Thus, the virus is in the mosquito population in Spotsylvania County. Prevention is the key to preventing human disease as there is no vaccine available. The Health Department has been asked to organize a WNV Task Force for the County that will look at prevention strategies including an extensive education program for our citizens.

## FOOD PROGRAM

As the population has grown in the County so has the number of food establishments and temporary food related events. Foodborne illness continues to be a major cause of personal distress, preventable death and avoidable economic burden. Yet, it is estimated that 6 to 33 million people become ill from microorganisms in food each year and as many as 11,000 deaths occur nationally due to foodborne illness. As with rabies and West Nile Virus prevention and education are key to protecting the public. The EH staff of Spotsylvania began offering a food course titled "Food Safety Over Easy" in FY 2002. The course is designed to educate all individuals involved in the foodservice industry. This is a four-hour course offered monthly at a modest fee. The course continues to be fully booked and receives positive comments from course attendees and food service managers in the County.

Environmental Health Activity	2002	1996
o Establishments Permitted	228	180
o Temporary Food Permits Issued	29	12
o Restaurant Inspections	238	206
o Complaints Investigated (food)	52	43
o Restaurant Plan reviews	13	12

## SEWAGE AND WATER PROGRAMS

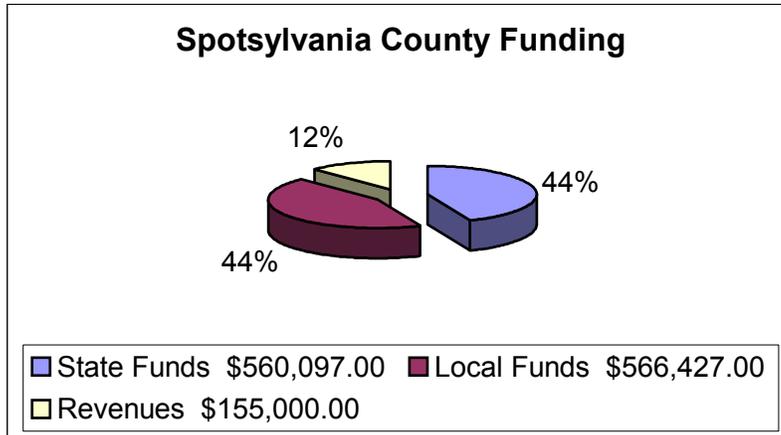
As with the other EH programs, applications for sewer and water permits continue to grow while the staffing level remains the same. Although the actual numbers may drop from year to year, the onsite alternatives continue to grow and the technology in the field is growing also. The staff have a huge challenge to stay current in the technological growth and changes, yet keeping up with the growth.

Environmental Health Activity	2002	1996
o Sewage Disposal and Well Applications	931	945
o Permits Issued	890	531
o Certification Letters Issued	88	54
o Permit Denials	35	31
o County Request for Services	121	180
o Complaints (sewage/water)	92	70

## Administration

Primary funding for Health Department activities comes from State general funds, local funds provided by Spotsylvania County and revenues generated from Health Department activities. Revenues are collected for clinic-based services, well/septic permits, food services fees and the issuance of death certificates and are used to pay

Health Department expenses.



Another significant source of funding are the many grant-funded programs administered through the Health Department. While the following graph represents the grant total for the entire Health District, Spotsylvania County receives a significant amount of services as a result of these programs. The following grant supported activities are provided to Spotsylvania County residents:

WIC – Women, Infant, Children nutritional supplement program. This program provides vouchers for nutritious food purchases to expectant mothers and their children who meet income guidelines.

Perinatal – This grant provides services staffing to provide prenatal and postnatal services to expectant mothers.

Family Planning – Provides staffing and supplies for federal Title X family planning clinics.

Immunization – Provides for a district wide coordinator of our various immunization programs.

CDC (Child Development Center) – Provides comprehensive evaluation services for children with extreme difficulties.

PHHS – Provides funding for our Breast and Cervical Cancer early detection program.

Bridging The Gap – A food supplement program for children over the age of 5 (thus, not eligible for WIC) but not yet enrolled in school (where they would qualify for the free/reduced lunch program). This funding pays for the food vouchers of the program.

ATS (Anonymous Testing Site) – Provides funds for anonymous HIV testing and counseling.

