

# Annual Report

*live, learn, work, and play*



*For a Healthier Panhandle*

**Panhandle**  
Public Health District



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# Message from the Board President

## 2017 Panhandle Public Health District Board of Health

### Banner County

Bob Gifford  
County Commissioner  
Marie Parker  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Box Butte County

Susan Lore  
County Commissioner  
Carolyn Jones  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Cheyenne County

Randy Miller  
County Commissioner  
Mandi Raffelson  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Dawes County

Vic Rivera  
County Commissioner  
Karen Harbach  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Deuel County

Steve Fischer  
County Commissioner  
Judy Soper  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Garden County

Dixann Krajewski  
County Commissioner  
Terri Gortemaker  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### At Large

Dr. Brandon Wilcox, DDS

### Grant County

Brian Brennemann  
County Commissioner  
Dr. John Werth, DVM  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Kimball County

Daria Anderson-Faden  
County Commissioner  
Kenneth Mars  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Morrill County

Susanna Batterman  
County Commissioner  
Kay Anderson  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Scotts Bluff County

Ken Meyer  
County Commissioner  
Anne Bowman  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Sheridan County

Loren Paul  
County Commissioner  
Pat Wellnitz  
Community-Spirited Citizen

### Sioux County

Hal Downer  
County Commissioner  
Adam Edmund  
Community-Spirited Citizen

Dr. Timothy Narjes, MD

Dr. Richard Jagers, DVM

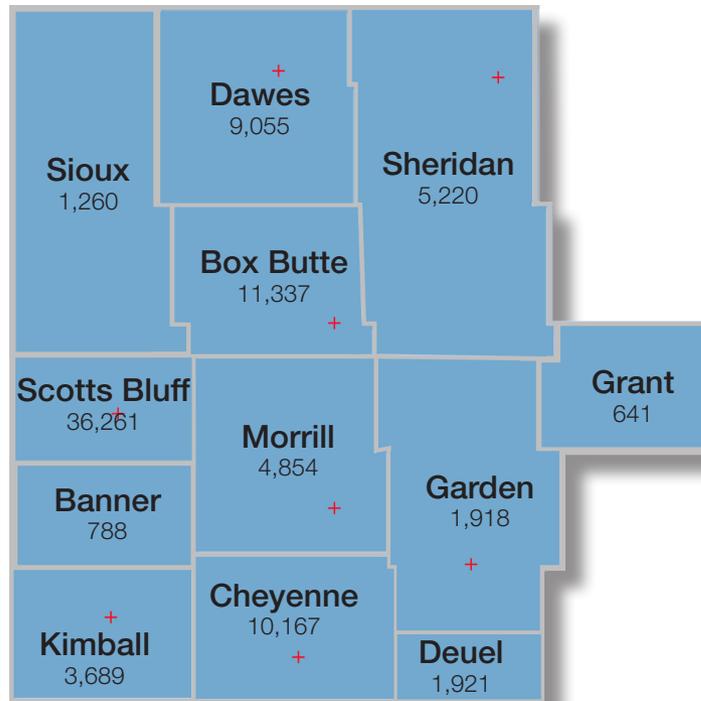
2017 was a full and productive year with completion of the Community Health Assessment and the development of the new Community Health Improvement Plan. This process is done in conjunction with our area hospitals every three years.

Panhandle Public Health District exists through inter-local agreements with participating counties. The twelve counties have a total of nearly 90,000 residents covering 14,963 square miles. The Board of Health is made up of a county commissioner and a community-spirited citizen appointed by



**Susan Lore**  
Board of Health  
President

### Panhandle Public Health District's Counties and Population Estimates



+ Hospitals

Source: 2015 U.S. Census Bureau Estimates

Produced by: Panhandle Public Health District, 2016

the commissioners from each of the 12 counties. We also have a physician, a dentist, and a veterinarian bringing the total board of health to 27 members. The six-governance functions of the board are: policy development, resource stewardship, legal authority, partner engagement, continuous improvement, and oversight.

We hope you enjoy reading this annual report that highlights the staff and the work they do. I would like to thank all of the staff and the other members of the board for their service. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Susan Lore  
Board President



# Community Planning for a Healthier and Safer Panhandle



Director Kim Engel welcoming partners and community members to the Health Summit in January.

**Every three years we come together in the Panhandle to complete a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).** During 2017, people across the region worked collaboratively to review data, share concerns and strengths of our communities, and identify priority areas that we can work on together to improve the health status for all people living in the Panhandle.

The planning process used was Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP). The ultimate goal of MAPP is optimal community health – a community where residents are healthy, safe, and have a high quality of life.

**There are six key phases, including four assessments, in the MAPP process:**

*Steps for the Community Health Assessment:*

1. Organize for Success/Partnership Development
2. Visioning
3. Four MAPP assessments
  - a. Community Themes and Strengths Assessment (CTSA)  
(Made up of focus groups and surveys)
  - b. Local Public Health System Assessment
  - c. Forces of Change Assessment
  - d. Community Health Status Assessment
4. Identify Strategic Issues

*Steps for the Community Health Improvement Plan:*

5. Formulate Goals and Strategies
6. Take Action (plan, implement, and evaluate)

PPHD partnered with the hospitals and health systems, as well as the rest of the local public health system, to complete the steps of the MAPP process. The public was encouraged to participate throughout the process through surveys, focus groups, and participatory planning processes.

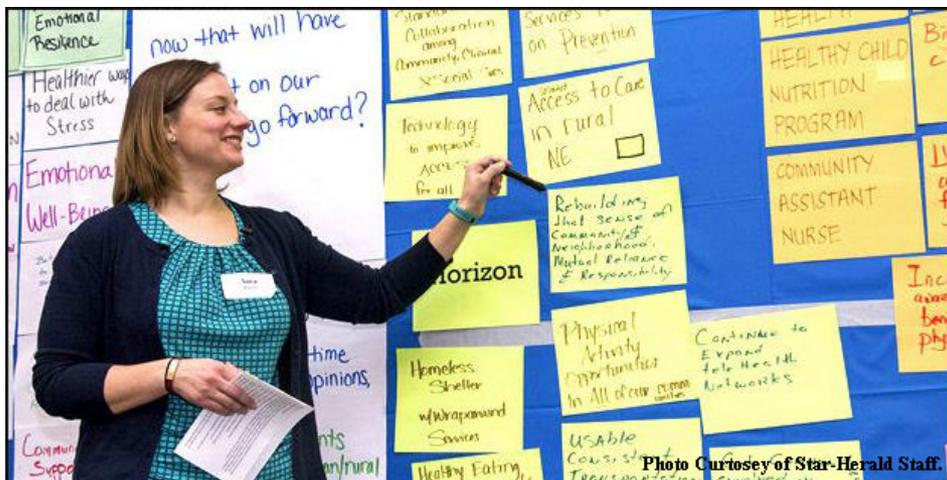
The “2017 Health Summit: For a Healthy, Safe, and Prosperous Panhandle” took place at the Gering Civic Center on January 19, 2017. This day served as the kick-off for the Panhandle’s 2017 Community Health Assessment. PPHD coordinated the Health Summit in partnership with the Panhandle Partnership and the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network.

Attendees also participated in a three-year **Visioning** process and a **Forces of Change Assessment** to look at the current landscape in relation to the vision.

The **Local Public Health System Assessment** (LPHSA) was completed in May 2017. The LPHSA allows members of the public health system and the general public to assess how effectively the system is meeting the 10 Essential Services of Public Health. Participants were grouped based on area of interest or where their professional work aligned with the intent of the Essential Service. Groups were provided with the Essential Service description and Model Standard narrative, and discussion questions for each Model



Partners working to finalize the priorities at the Prioritization Meeting in June.



*Photo Courtesy of Star-Herald Staff.*  
 Sara Hoover, CFO, facilitating at the 2017 Health Summit in January. Partners across the Panhandle gathered together for 10 regional and 8 community meetings working toward objectives and strategies for a healthy, safe and prosperous Panhandle.

Standard to use in scoring. The group also noted any strengths, weaknesses, and short- and long-term opportunities for with each Essential Service. This assessment will be used identify opportunities for the public health system as a whole.

A total of 24 **Focus Group** sessions involving approximately 159 Nebraska Panhandle residents were completed by the eight hospitals in collaboration with PPHD. Each hospital hosted at least one general community focus group with residents in their service area, and hospitals with greater than a 5% minority population in their service area held an additional focus group for each minority population.

The **Community Health Survey** was distributed to Panhandle residents via both paper and electronic means. Paper copies of the survey were distributed by hospitals and community-based organizations, in addition to being shared during the focus groups. The electronic copy was shared online via social media and email by PPHD and other community entities. More than 1600 people responded to the survey.

Regional priorities were determined when stakeholders from across the [www.pphd.org/Pages/CHIP.html](http://www.pphd.org/Pages/CHIP.html)

area attended a prioritization meeting in June. The regional priorities are:

- **Behavioral Health**, including substance abuse and mental and emotional well-being.
- **Chronic Disease**, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.
- **Aging Population**
- **Access to Care**

A focus on **Social Determinants of Health** will be reflected in all efforts, specifically focusing on housing, transportation, employment, and poverty.

**Strategies, goals, and objectives** were brainstormed at a series of priority area meetings held in fall and winter of 2017. Each meeting included a presentation on the priority area. After the presentation, participants identified barriers for specific populations, gaps in services, and emerging issues in the area. They then reviewed a list of Healthy People 2020 objectives and interventions and strategies. A list of each was compiled that was either related to current work of the partners or that aligned with current resources and capacity, or where significant work could be made to address the priority area. The results for these meetings were used to develop an **Action Plan** included in the final CHIP document.

To learn more about the CHA and CHIP process, view the full 2017 Nebraska Panhandle CHA report, or view the full version of the new Nebraska Panhandle CHIP, please visit [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org).



*Partners working in small groups at the Chronic Disease Work Group Meeting.*

# Community Health Improvement Plan Performance Measures

As we launch our new CHIP we want to take a minute to share all the good work that has been done in our current CHIP. The data below and on the next page show how, together, we have been able to effect the trends. Please note that the data has not caught up with all of our hard work, as available data is traditionally a year or two behind. We anticipate seeing the trends continue to improve.

*“These performance measures are slow moving and do not immediately show the positive changes that are happening across the Panhandle. If we were measuring the policies adopted, partnerships built, and collaborations developed these would be skyrocketing.”*

*Kelsey Irvine, Community Health Planner.*

The 2014 CHIP has provided guidance to the health department, partners, and stakeholders on improving the health of the population. The plan has been critical for developing policies and defining actions to target efforts that promote health. Together we are making an impact and improving the Panhandle community’s health through coordinated efforts and targeted resources.

The full CHIP is available at [www.pphd.org/Pages/CHIP.html](http://www.pphd.org/Pages/CHIP.html).

*live, learn, work, and play*



*For a Healthier Panhandle*

Priority Health Area	Goal	Objective	Data	Current Data	Trend
I. Healthy Living	Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight	↓ Adult obesity	% of obese adults	35.5% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↑
		↓ Youth obesity			
I.a. Healthy Eating	Increase consumption of healthy food	↑ Daily consumption of fruits and vegetables	% of adults who consumed fruits less than 1 time/day	39.8% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↓
			% of adults who consumed vegetables less than 1 time/day	23.8% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↓
		↓ Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverage	% of adults who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages 1 or more times/day in past 30 days	30.5% (2013) <sup>1</sup>	—
I.b. Active Living	Improve health, fitness, and quality of life through daily physical activity	↑ Physical activity among adults	% of adults who met both aerobic physical activity and muscle strengthening recommendations	18.7% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↓
		↑ Physical activity among youth			

Priority Health Area	Goal	Objective	Data	Current Data	Trend
I.c. Breastfeeding	Improve the health and well-being of infants	↑ Breastfeeding of infants	% of infants (0 – 1 year) who are breastfed	60.6% (2014) <sup>2</sup>	↑
II. Mental and Emotional Well-Being	Improve mental and emotional health	↓ Depression among adults	% of adults who were ever told they have depression	18.6% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↓
		↓ Depression among youth			
III. Injury and Violence Prevention	Prevent unintentional injuries and violence	↓ Injuries from violence	Suicide death rate per 100,000	20.0 (2013-2015) <sup>4</sup>	↑
		↓ Injuries from motor vehicle accident	# of injuries from motor vehicle accidents	338 (2015) <sup>3</sup>	↓
		↓ Injuries from falls among adults	% of injuries from falls in adults 45 years and older	13.3 (2014) <sup>1</sup>	↑
IV. Cancer Prevention	Reduce the number of new cases, illness, disability and death caused by cancer	↓ Youth tobacco use	% of youth who report ever having tried cigarettes	26.3% (2016) <sup>4</sup>	↓
		↓ Adult smoking	% of adults who currently smoke cigarette	19.0% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↑
		↑ Recommended cancer screening	% of 50-75 year olds who are up-to-date on colon cancer screening	58.3% (2015) <sup>1</sup>	↑
			% of female 50-74 years old who are up-to-date on breast cancer screening	59.8% (2014) <sup>1</sup>	↓
			% of female 21-65 years old who are up-to-date on cervical cancer screening	76.5% (2014) <sup>1</sup>	↓

Data Sources:

- <sup>1</sup>Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Entire Panhandle Region
- <sup>2</sup>Healthy Families America, covers only Box Butte, Morrill and Scotts Bluff Counties
- <sup>3</sup>Nebraska Traffic Crash Facts Annual Report, 2014
- <sup>4</sup>Nebraska Vital Records; National Center for Health Statistics
- <sup>5</sup>Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey, Entire Panhandle Region

*“The CHIP serves as a roadmap for a continuous health improvement process for the local public health system by providing a framework. Progress is evaluated on an ongoing basis to identify areas for possible improvement or revision”*  
**Kelsey Irvine, Community Health Planner**



**Kelsey Irvine**  
 Community Health Planner

# Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council



The Council recognizes that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offers innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness coordinators, and we work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible. One of the key benefits of membership includes the opportunity to network with and learn from fellow members.

Annie Loutzenhiser, Shareholder; Gardner, Loutzenhiser, & Ryan PC  
“We partner with the Council because they are a local organization to help support the needs of a small business’ wellness strategy. Our employees are essential to the operations of small business, and a worksite wellness program is a simple, cost effective way for a business to show those employees that they are important.”

Diana Lecher, Director of Home Health, Hospice, & Cardio/Pulmonary Rehabilitation; Chadron Community Hospital  
“Since we are a hospital and our staff see the effects of poor health, we find that many of our employees want to improve their health and they enjoy the opportunities our wellness program offers them. Belonging to the Council provides our hospital with many resources that saves our Wellness program a lot of time. Turnkey programs, evidenced best practices, newsletters and the yearly Wellness Conference are tools we utilize over and over again.”



*Jessica Davies*  
Assistant Health Director

Jennifer Sorenson, Human Resources Director; Northwest Community Action Partnership  
“The Council has been particularly helpful with policy guidance, wellness challenges, and their regular newsletters. Healthy employees are productive employees which also contributes to our morale. It is essential to keep our employees well for the very important work they do.”



### Advisory Committee

The following Advisory Committee Members and businesses graciously give their time to provide guidance and oversight for the Council:

- Chair - Dan Newhoff, Box Butte General Hospital
- Secretary/Treasurer - Annie Loutzenhiser, Gardner, Loutzenhiser, & Ryan
- Brad Snedden, BNSF
- Diana Lecher, Chadron Community Hospital
- Kendra Dean, Cirrus House
- Susan Wiedeman, Panhandle Coop
- Jennifer Sorenson, Northwest Community Action Partnership
- Terri Allen, Western Nebraska Community College

Dan Newhoff, Wellness Coordinator; Box Butte General Hospital  
“The best benefit that the Council gives, especially for small businesses, is task assistance and experience in developing an evidence-based, outcome-focused wellness program. Most organizations don’t have a person assigned to just wellness, the Council alleviates that burden and this allows small businesses to still have a quality wellness program.”

“Worksite wellness is the smartest investment you can make. Employees, make your business. It makes perfect sense to invest in your employees’ health and wellness because by doing so, you get so much in return. Without all of our employees, we could not function with the level of success that we have.”

# Panhandle Safety & Wellness Conference Award Recipients

Two Panhandle businesses were honored with the Governor's Wellness Award at the recent Panhandle Safety & Wellness Conference & Awards Luncheon in Gering. Bayard Public Schools and City of Chadron received the Grower Award for growing the seeds for wellness at their organizations.

Since the award was created ten years ago, 383 total awards have been distributed across the state - 54 in 2017 alone.

*"These awards symbolize what we hold dear to Nebraska – commitment to our people! Organizations that put their people first reap tremendous rewards including a positive culture, happy, healthy, and safe people, and increased productivity."*  
Governor Ricketts

Governor Ricketts noted, "Wellness and safety are strategic business decisions with nearly a 6:1 return on investment, but most importantly, it is the right thing to do for the citizens of this great state!"

This past year, Governor's Wellness Award recipients increased physical activity by 16%, decreased tobacco use by nearly 9%, and decreased obesity by nearly 3%.

At Bayard Public Schools, staff have improved consumption of fruit and vegetables by 11% and decreased risk for saturated fat consumption by 10%. In addition, there has been an 11% increase in those meeting physical activity requirements. They offer National Diabetes Prevention Program - not just for employees - but the community as well. They've also started a small garden.

The City of Chadron has increased the percentage of employees meeting wellness goals. They are documenting measurable changes in absenteeism cost with \$236 less cost for individuals with no health risks, compared to employees with health risks. As the impact of healthy eating, exercise, sleep patterns, and stress management becomes more and more clear, the City continues to advocate for employee wellness.

Davies touted, "We are so proud of each of these organizations for their commitment to employee health. They are certainly leaders in the region and we commend them for helping build a culture of wellness in this area."

[www.pphd.org/pwwc.html](http://www.pphd.org/pwwc.html)



**Bayard Public Schools**

Matt McLaughlin, Jessica Davies, Mike Simons



**City of Chadron**

Rossella Tesch, Bev Bartlett, Jessica Davies, Carl Spicher

**Parker Wellness & Safety Committee**

**Chadron Community Hospital Wellness & Safety Committee**

**Join the fun at the 2018 Conference!**

# Businesses Support Active Living



**Sitting is now considered the new smoking due to the number of negative effects it has on our health.** A 30 minute walk, five days a week can reduce the rate of people becoming diabetic by more than half. For men it can also decrease the risk of colon cancer by 50% and prostate cancer by two-thirds.

PPHD was excited to partner in 2017 with Panhandle Coop – Main Street Market in Scottsbluff and Kimball to encourage walking at their grocery stores.

The store provides ideal lighting and safe conditions for a perfect little stroll, a protected location away from the Nebraska weather elements like snow, rain, ice, and wind.

*“We mapped out distances inside and around the outdoor perimeter of our store to encourage patrons to safely walk. We are excited to promote this wonderful access point for the community to walk. Our doors open at 6 am and stay open until 9 pm!”*

*Susan Wiedeman, Marketing Director, Panhandle Coop*

The journey to a happier and healthier “good life” begins with one step. Walking is the single most powerful thing you can do for yourself. It’s also a great way to spend time with the people you care about...to connect, share your life, and create memories. Getting started is simple. **Just Step and Repeat.**

## Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council works to expand worksite campus walkability, signage, and promotion.

The following businesses have recently developed walkability projects in partnership with the Council

- Chadron Community Hospital
- Chadron State College
- Cirrus House
- Panhandle Coop – Main Street Market
- Regional West Health Services
- The DOVES Program
- Western Nebraska Community College

More projects will be announced in 2018. Join the Movement Today!



# Increasing Healthy Food Choices

**Choose Healthy at Regional West Health Services.** Grabbing a candy bar and soda each afternoon at the company vending machine can add over 500 calories to your diet each day. If this habit is maintained daily in the Monday-Friday workweek, this nets a whopping 130,000 extra calories and 45 lbs. of sugar consumed each year!

Food affects a person's physical and mental well-being. Just like the gasoline you put in your car to keep it running properly, the food you eat will affect how your body runs. Healthy eating can help prevent many chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and some cancers.

In an effort to provide healthy options for employees and patrons, Regional West Health Services (RWHS) transitioned their snack vending machines in September to make the majority of the items meet a higher quality nutrition standard through lower calorie, sugar, sodium, and fat content.

*“The Healthy Vending initiative has provided a stepping stone towards creation of future innovative projects that will have a positive, healthy impact on our valued employees and their families.*

*Through a wellness survey, our employees shared their desire to improve their health and wellness, including the desire for more opportunities to choose healthy food options, particularly at night when the Park Bench is closed. We were pleased to partner with Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council to initiate healthier snack options for employees, patients, and visitors all hours of the day and night.”*

*Summer Parker, Vice President, Human Resources, Regional West Health Services*

Focus groups helped to poll level of interest in a healthy vending initiative. One participant said, “At 2 am, you are very thankful there is anything in the vending machine, healthy or unhealthy.”

Another stated, “It is rare to see healthy choices. I am kind of excited about the healthy vending because of that. You are not going to ruin your whole day just because you went to the vending machine hungry at 2 pm.”

“Healthier vending initiatives increase consumer choice by making healthy snack and beverage choices, the easy choice,” said Jessica Davies, Assistant Health Director.

Hospitals, local public health departments, and worksites play a critical role in increasing healthy snack and beverage choices for employees and the community. Employers around the area are committing to providing healthier, more nutritious options at their vending machines. Contact Jessica TODAY at [jdavies@pphd.org](mailto:jdavies@pphd.org) to find out how your business can do the same.

## THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

We want to make the healthy choice the easy choice for you. We're making a few changes and we hope you will too.

At your next visit to the vending machine, look for green items with:

- ✓ LESS FAT
- ✓ LESS SUGAR
- ✓ LESS SODIUM
- ✓ FEWER CALORIES
- ✓ MORE NUTRITIONAL VALUE

 Regional West

*Choose*  
**HEALTHY  
HERE**  
PANHANDLE

# Population Health



Population health looks at health outcomes and how to use health outcomes data, such as hospital or clinic data, to improve the health of a specific population.

Research shows that only 20% of a person’s health is impacted by their clinical care. The other 80% is made up of what we call “social determinants of health” – health behaviors, social and economic factors, and the physical environment. These social determinants of health are where public health is focused.

PPHD is working toward population health management of chronic disease by partnering with area clinics, pharmacists, community health workers, community organizations, businesses, and entire communities.

Panhandle clinics can refer patients to the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) and Health and Wellness Coaching. Once patients are involved with one of these programs, health coaches can help refer patients to other services that they need, including Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring Supports (SMBP), and health screening programs such as cervical, breast, and colorectal cancer screenings.

Panhandle pharmacies have partnered with PPHD to assist with blood pressure management by offering blood pressure monitors for public use and referring patients to their primary care providers to help control their blood pressure when needed. You can find these services at the following pharmacies:

- Dave’s Pharmacy (Hemingford)
- Nein Pharmacy (Bridgeport)
- Community Pharmacy (Scottsbluff)
- Sonny’s Pharmacy (Bridgeport)

Examples of community-based health promotion efforts such as healthy food and beverage offerings at grocery stores, convenience stores, and in vending machines, and facilitating both business and community-wide walkability efforts can be found throughout this report.

All of the aspects of population health management can collectively impact the course of chronic disease in a person more than one alone.

**Health and Wellness Coaching** is three to six sessions lasting 20-40 minutes for three months over the phone at no cost to you.

Your coach will:

- Work with you to set your goals
- Help you gain confidence, knowledge, skills and tools
- Guide you to a healthier lifestyle
- Support you in achieving your health goals

**NATIONAL Diabetes PREVENTION PROGRAM**  
 Proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District

*Health and Wellness Coaching*  
 Making Healthy Choices Possible

**Make a referral today!**  
[cfarris@pphd.org](mailto:cfarris@pphd.org)  
 308-262-1317

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACHING

### Improving Population Health One Person at a Time



**Cheri Farris**  
 Community Health Educator

To request Health and Wellness Coaching or to make a referral contact Cheri at 308-262-1317 or email [cfarris@pphd.org](mailto:cfarris@pphd.org).  
[www.pphd.org/Pages/health\\_coaching.htm](http://www.pphd.org/Pages/health_coaching.htm)

# Lifestyle Change Program Continues to Find Success

## LIFESTYLE CHANGE PROGRAM



Group support

16

16 weekly meetings with monthly follow-up



CDC-approved curriculum



A trained lifestyle coach

You will learn to make achievable and realistic lifestyle changes



Eat healthy



Incorporate physical activity into daily routine



Manage stress



Solve problems that get in the way of healthy changes

**Are you ready to improve your health, increase your energy, lose weight, and reduce your risk for chronic disease?** If you answered yes, this program is for you. Trained lifestyle coaches lead these classes throughout the Panhandle. To find a class in your community call 308-262-2217 or 855-227-2217 or email Cheri Farris at [cfarris@pphd.org](mailto:cfarris@pphd.org).

*“Doing this program has done a lot for how I feel about myself and my health. When I started I was on 3 pills for my blood pressure, and I’ve already cut one out and my doctor says I can cut out more if I keep going in the right direction. Plus, I started exercising 5 days a week, and man does that feel good!”*

*Pam, Panhandle NDPP Participant*



9 OUT OF 10

people with prediabetes don't know they have it



Prediabetes is when your blood sugar level is higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes

Prediabetes increases your risk of:



TYPE 2 DIABETES



HEART DISEASE



STROKE

## Success Since 2012

972 Participants | 8,591 Pounds Lost  
85 Completed Classes

Recommended by Health Care Providers  
Covered benefit through Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council

National Assoc. of City and County Health Officials  
Model Practice Award

Published in  
NACCHO Exchange and Nebraska Medicine

PPHD 1st site in Nebraska to receive Full Recognition from CDC-DPRP

Blood Pressure

Weight

Risk

BMI



Health

Energy

Activity

Weight Loss



Nebraska Panhandle  
Proudly part of  
Panhandle Public Health District

# Join the Movement to Activate the Panhandle

Living an active life is a personal choice, but it's a choice that is highly influenced by things such as community infrastructure. In recent surveys, both the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations showed a preference for living in communities that are comfortable for walking and biking.

The Scottsbluff, Gering, and Terrytown city councils have each committed, through resolution, to the formation of the Tri-City Active Living Advisory Committee. The committee was designed to create and improve communication links and resource sharing – between and within citizens and government.

*“We are excited to have a diverse committee meeting on a regular basis to provide continuous feedback on projects that will ultimately impact the public’s ability to safely walk or bike around the community.”*

*Annie Folck, City Planner City of Gering*

The committee will not dictate policy; rather, it will serve as a resource and a liaison to assist active living projects or programs. If interested in committee meetings or staying up on the communications, contact Janelle Hansen at [hansenj@pphd.org](mailto:hansenj@pphd.org) or join the Tri-City Active Living Advisory Committee Facebook group.



**Choose Healthy at Big Bat's** when you are on the go and in a hurry. Big Bat's and PPHD have teamed up to make sure you can keep healthy snacking in check.

*“We are excited to offer fresher, healthier items in our convenience stores in Chadron and Scottsbluff. We appreciate that consumers are wanting access to things like fresh, whole fruit and fruit cups, and are happy to accommodate.”*

*Corey Pourier, Big Bat's Owner*

Studies continue to show that people who can't shop for fresh food close to home are more likely to have early signs of heart disease, making the need for nutritious foods in convenience stores all the more important.

Jamie Goffena, Nebraska Extension Educator, provided food demonstrations for consumers to get a chance to try the healthy items.



## Making the healthy choice, the easy choice!

# Dental Health Program – Keeping Teeth Strong



**Kendra Lauruhn**  
Public Health  
Registered Dental  
Hygienist

PPHD's Dental Health Program - Keeping Teeth Strong strives to reduce dental disease in children and elders. Untreated tooth decay can lead to pain and infection and, ultimately, to problems speaking, eating, working, and playing.

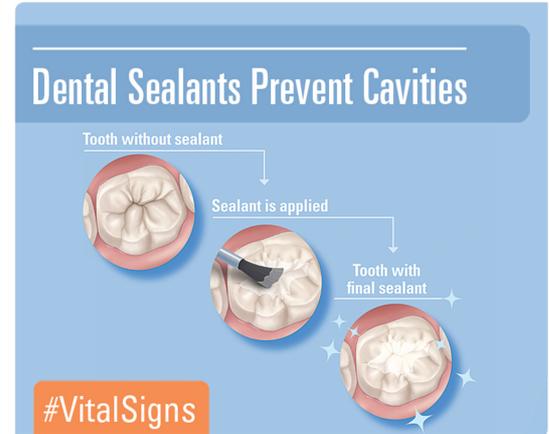


PREVENTION is the key!



PPHD currently serves 10 school districts in Box Butte, Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Garden, Kimball, Cheyenne, and Deuel Counties.

We also serve Education Service Unit #13 Head Starts in Gering, Scottsbluff, Bayard, Morrill, Bridgeport, Kimball, Sidney, Minatare, and Mitchell.



## Student Services completed in Schools in 2017

Oral Health Group Education: 46 presentations reaching 1,084 students

Dental Screenings: 2,789 | Fluoride Varnish: 1,480

Dental Sealants: 661

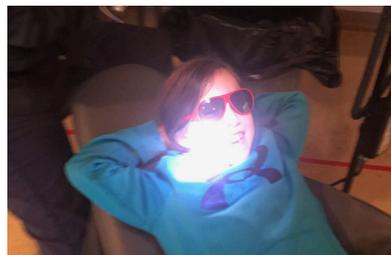
### SERVICES OFFERED

1. Screenings to detect signs of dental disease
2. Fluoride varnish treatment to strengthen teeth and help prevent cavities
3. Dental Sealants to prevent cavities on molars
4. Dental health education to encourage good oral hygiene
5. Referrals to inform parents/guardians of the need and urgency of dental care

Dental   
Health Program  
Keeping Teeth Strong

Proudly part of  
Panhandle Public Health District

For more information about the dental health program or to find a dental home in your area, contact Kendra at 308-633-2866 ext 106 or [klauruhn@pphd.org](mailto:klauruhn@pphd.org).



# Healthy Families Nebraska Panhandle

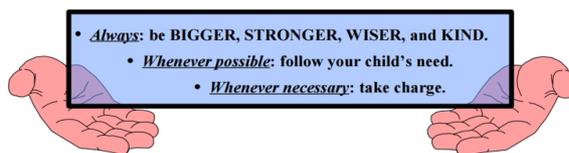


L-R Parenting Coach/  
Intake Specialists: Linda  
Ainslie, Sandra Babin,  
Jennifer Eversull, Myrna  
Hernandez; Program  
Manager, Supervisor  
Sarah Bernhardt

For more information contact  
**Sarah Bernhardt, MA, LIMHP, LPC**  
[sbernhardt@pphd.org](mailto:sbernhardt@pphd.org)  
**308-633-2866 | 877-218-2490**

Imagine that first moment a soon-to-be-mother or father learns they are expecting a child. One might expect elation or joy. But other feelings are an unspoken part of the experience, such as fear, worry, or shock. Challenges such as finances, relationships, employment, and early life trauma might color the expecting parents' anticipation of how they will manage the new little person about to enter their world.

Parent coaches in Healthy Families aim to nurture the relationship with expectant parents. *We help families with the building blocks of attachment to promote child well-being.* Through consistent home visitation, parent coaches implement curriculums that focus on building healthy brains, reading the cues of children, understanding child development, and learning about secure attachment. Additionally, parent coaches are all facilitators of Circle of Security.



The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study was a groundbreaking look at how early childhood experiences impact adult health decades later. The ACE survey provides a score of 0 to 10, based on how a person answers each question. The higher the score, the stronger the potential for adult health problems. Healthy Families

researchers estimate that 75% of the families served in the programs have an ACE score of 4 or greater.

In order to mitigate risk factors, Healthy Families enhances the protective factors that buffer against potential child abuse or neglect. Protective factors include: knowledge of parenting and child development, parental resilience, social connections and support, concrete supports for parents, and social and emotional competence of children through nurturing and attachment. We aim to support our families in each category to help them buffer against the storms of life.

**Health Families Nebraska Panhandle is a free service in Scottsbluff, Morrill, and Box Butte counties.**

Collectively, parent coaches serve a range of 60-70 families. Healthy Families accepts clients from prenatal to three months post-natal, with the service offered until the child reaches 3 years of age. Parent coaches meet with families most intensely in the first year in the program, and then transition home visits to bimonthly, monthly, then quarterly prior to graduation. Families may remain in the program for up to 36 months. Mothers and fathers are encouraged to be a part of our program.

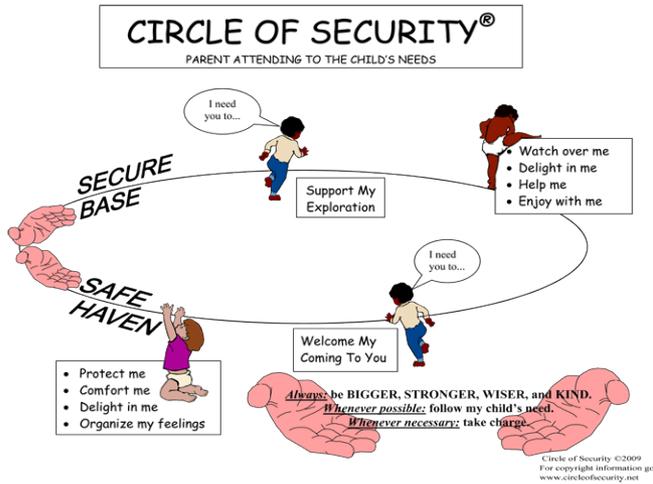


# Striving to Do Better, Be Better

All parents wish children came with instructions. It often feels like we're just making it up as we go along, never sure if we're getting it right. You're not alone. We've all felt that way.

**Circle of Security™-Parenting** is an 8-week parenting program based on years of research about how to build a strong relationship with your children. It is designed to help you learn how to respond to your child's needs in a way that enhances your connection with him or her. It helps parents give their children a feeling of security and confidence so they can explore, learn, grow and build positive relationships; all essential skills for life-long success.

Through **Circle of Security™-Parenting** you'll start to see that your child's need for attention is actually a need for connection with you. You'll learn how to be bigger, stronger, wiser and kind so you can both set limits and still take the time to understand your child's emotional world. The Panhandle Partnership coordinates a system of Circle of Security™-Parenting classes. To enroll in a class near you go to <https://panhandlepartnership.com/circle-of-security/>.



## Performance Management

What is it?

using data to improve performance

it involves

- Measuring performance over time and making improvements
- Setting performance objectives based on organization's mission and goals

All employees

Why do it?

to help your agency know which path is the right path

- Keep getting better through quality improvement
- Stay focused on reporting progress
- Follow that path by tracking performance measures
- Establish performance standards

## PPHD Accomplishments

PPHD uses the Clear Impact Scorecard, a cloud-based software system, to track performance management. Learn more here: [http://pphd.org/performance\\_management.htm](http://pphd.org/performance_management.htm)

100%

- of partners are confident in PRMRS ability to plan, prepare, respond, and mitigate emergency situations
- of partners believe the PRMRS coalition mission and goals are aligned with hospital preparedness capabilities
- of hospitals completed Sentinel indicator
- of hospitals completed HVA



Number of schools that have developed, enhanced, or enforced tobacco-free campus policies

Number of multi-unit complex managers that adopt tobacco and smoke-free policies

Number of tobacco and smoke-free fair board policies



73% of PWWC worksites allow smoking outside only in certain places



51% of PWWC worksites offer healthful beverage options in vending machines



972 NDPP participants



8,591 pounds lost through NDPP

# Panhandle Prevention Coalition

The Panhandle Prevention Coalition is made up of a group of coalitions united together by our passion and dedication to make residents of western Nebraska healthy and safe across the lifespan.

Our purpose is to reduce the impact of substance use and abuse including underage drinking, binge drinking, drinking and driving, tobacco use, drug use, and prescription drug abuse, while promoting and supporting mental and emotional health for all in the Panhandle.

We do this by:

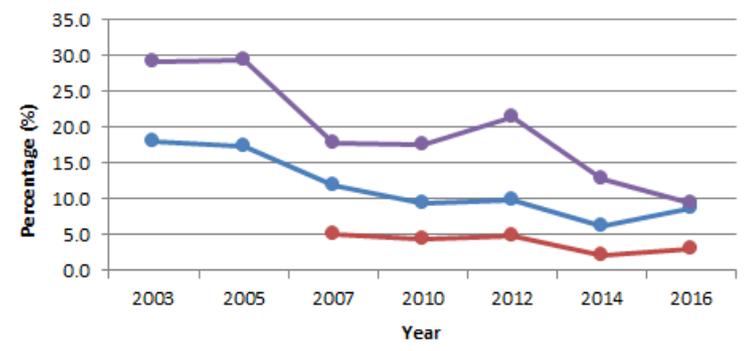
1. Seeking policy change at the local and state levels to reduce youth access to alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.
2. Collaborating with law enforcement to facilitate, fund, and standardize compliance checks, beverage server training, and sobriety checks.
3. Educating and generating awareness about the dangers of substance use and abuse.
4. Ongoing collaboration between practitioners, experts, and leaders across the continuum of care.

**Together, we are united for change. Join the movement today.**

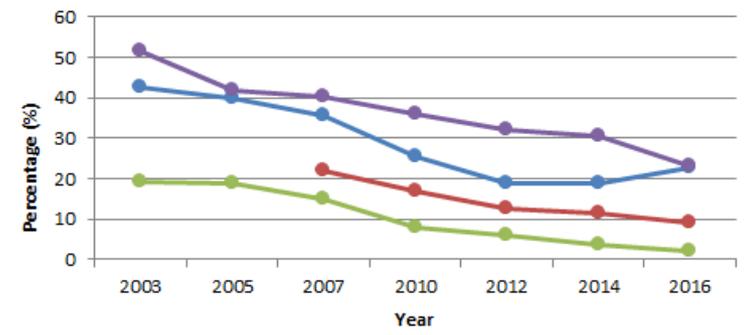
Here's what you can do:

- Join the prevention coalition. Call 308-262-2217 to learn more.
- Talk early and often to your kids about not using tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Limit screen time. Create clear expectations.
- Always enforce the minimum drinking age of 21.
- Call law enforcement if you suspect underage parties or drinking and driving at any age 1-888-MUST-BE-21.
- Thank law enforcement for providing compliance checks and responsible alcohol and tobacco training.
- Involve youth in planning and implementing healthy activities.
- Keep track of what medications you have at home. Limit access to these drugs and keep your home safe by properly disposing of old and unused medicines at the Prescriptions Drug Take Back.

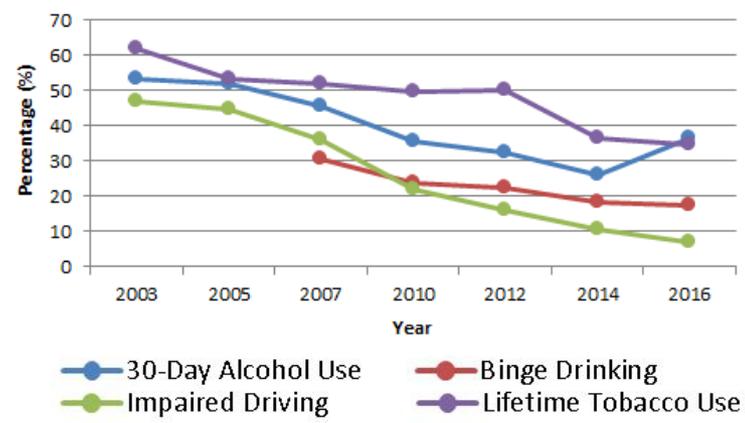
**8th Grade Panhandle Data**  
Nebraska Risk & Protective Factor Student Survey



**10th Grade Panhandle Data**  
Nebraska Risk & Protective Factor Student Survey



**12th Grade Panhandle Data**  
Nebraska Risk & Protective Factor Student Survey



# Tobacco-Free in the Panhandle

**Quitting smoking or chewing tobacco is hard.** In fact, it's common to try to quit several times before you finally do. Each time you try to quit, you learn more about what works for you, and eventually you can succeed.



Only you can choose to quit tobacco. Once you've made the decision, the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline can help you be successful.

The Nebraska Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), gives residents 24/7, free access to counseling and support services. Over 150 Panhandle tobacco users used the quitline services in 2017. All information is confidential.

**Smoking is a public health concern and you can do something about it.** We are committed to helping you to pass a tobacco-free or smoke-free policy to make the Panhandle a healthier community.

For technical assistance contact Tabi Prochazka, [tprochazka@pphd.org](mailto:tprochazka@pphd.org), 308-487-3600 ext. 107.

[www.pphd.org/Pages/tf.htm](http://www.pphd.org/Pages/tf.htm)

**Tobacco-free policies popular across the Panhandle.** Policymakers are looking at the scientific evidence and passing policies to protect those that live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle.

The evidence is clear: secondhand smoke causes serious diseases and premature death among non-smokers. Secondhand smoke is harmful in outdoor settings, as there is no safe level for exposure. *Tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the US.*

Tobacco-Free in the Panhandle supports policies to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure and prevent youth initiation.

**Dawes County joins Kimball County as a community leader with tobacco-free efforts.** Dawes County passed a tobacco-free campus policy that includes all forms of tobacco, e-cigarettes, and vaping effective on November 1, 2017.

*"Tobacco-free employees are healthier, miss less work, and have lower health care costs. We commend Dawes County for creating ideal conditions and support for employees and the community to be tobacco-free."*

*Tabi Prochazka, Health Promotions Coordinator*



**Tabi Prochazka**  
Health Promotions  
Coordinator

## Tobacco-Free Recreational Facilities

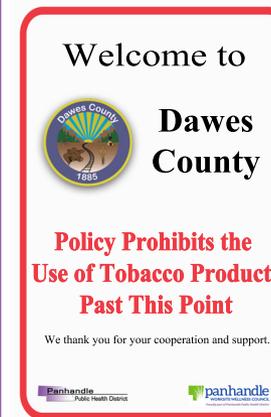
City of Scottsbluff | Village of Hemingford  
Village of Big Springs | City of Chappell  
Village of Lewellen | City of Oshkosh

## Tobacco-Free Counties

Kimball County | Dawes County

## Additional Communities with Tobacco-Free Zones

Alliance, Bayard, Bridgeport, Chadron, Crawford, Dix, Gering, Gordon, Harrison, Hay Springs, Hyannis, Kimball, Minatare, Mitchell, Morrill, and Sidney



We are a healthier and safer Panhandle community. 19

# Opioid Epidemic Prevention Efforts

**Prescription drugs cause more deaths than all other drugs.** In Nebraska, every three days someone dies of a drug overdose. Four out of five heroin users start with prescription painkillers. The Panhandle was identified as one of five high burden areas for drug overdoses in Nebraska.

Saving lives is the reason we have joined forces for a targeted response to the opioid crisis. We are partnering with providers, first responders, pharmacists, and you to increase utilization and understanding of evidence-based procedures to decrease opioid abuse and misuse. By raising awareness, providing education, and increasing policies we are striving to avoid opioid addiction, overdose, and misuse. *It only takes a little to lose a lot.*

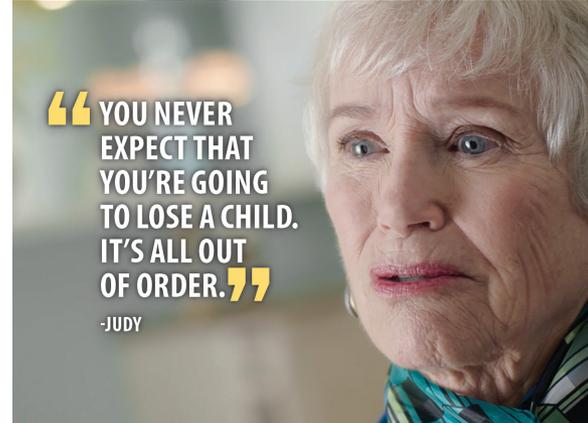
**So what are opioids?** Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine and many others.

**What can you do now?** Talk to your doctor to consider non-opioid options for pain management. Get your prescription opioids (or narcotics) and other medications out of your medicine cabinet, locked up, and out of sight to reduce abuse and or accidental use.

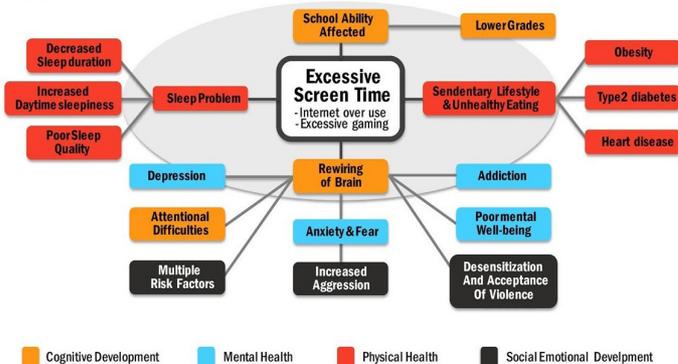
- Store them out of sight! Keeping them secure and out of sight can prevent them from falling into the hands of someone who wants to abuse them and someone in your house from accidentally taking the wrong medication.
- Lock them up! A lockbox, safe, or locked medicine cabinet is one of the most effective ways to prevent abuse or accidental use.
- Safely dispose of them! Unused medications are a disaster waiting to be found. It's vital to safely dispose of unneeded and expired prescriptions. There are safe Drug Take Back disposal sites available throughout the Panhandle. <http://www.nebraskameds.org/>

Accidental overdose can occur when a patient takes an opioid as directed, but the prescriber miscalculated the opioid dose or an error was made by the dispensing pharmacist, or the patient misunderstood the directions for use. To avoid misuse confirm directions and follow them. Do not change dosing without consulting your provider, do not take another person's prescription, do not use with alcohol, and beware of other potential interactions.

In our efforts to identify resources and build readiness to address use and misuse of opioids, we looked to the experts SAMHSA's Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit, partners at DHHS Prescription Drug Overdose Program, and Nebraska's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.



# How do We Save Our Kids from Depression and Suicide?

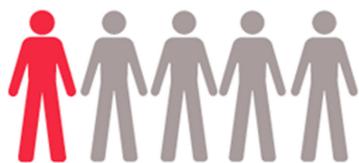


## Kids at risk

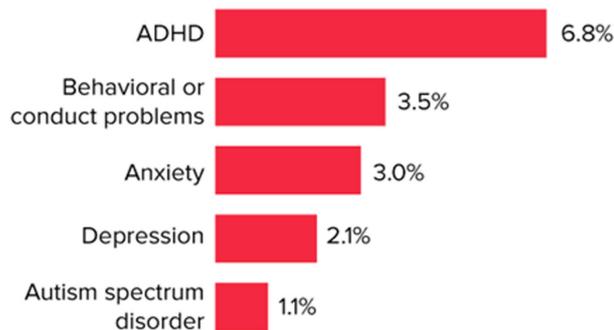
Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people, aged 10 to 24

**1 in 5**, or 15 million, American children and young adults up to age 25 struggle with a mental illness or learning disorder

And **2/3** or 10 million are undiagnosed or untreated



## Children ages 3-17 diagnosed with:



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.pphd.org

The latest research is showing a direct connection between screen time and depression in teens. In young adults, we see a significant increase in depression and feeling of social isolation tied to heavy use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram.

So, how do we save our kids from depression and suicide?

- Set safe boundaries for screen time.** The recommendation is 2 hours.
- Wait until high school to get your child a smartphone.** Freshman year is a good time to aim for getting kids smartphones and for them to begin limited social media usage.
- Set safe boundaries for social media usage.** Less than 2 hours a day for all ages - that includes you.
- Set an electronics curfew.** Charge all electronics out of the bedrooms.
- Watch for warning signs of depression and suicide.** Four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.
- Take a training such as QPR.** Question. Persuade. Refer. QPR is an emergency response to someone in crisis and can save lives.
- Connect.** Put the phones down, talk, go for a walk, play a game.
- Spend time with your kids.** Talk about their day, their life, their dreams.

Together, we are united for change. Join the movement today.

The Lifeline is **FREE**, confidential, and always available.

**HELP** a loved one, a friend, or yourself.

Community crisis centers answer Lifeline calls.



Printed 2005 • Reprinted 2011  
CMHS-SVP-0126



Learn the Warning Signs.

## Suicide Warning Signs

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- ❖ Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- ❖ Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- ❖ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- ❖ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- ❖ Talking about being a burden to others.
- ❖ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- ❖ Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- ❖ Sleeping too little or too much.
- ❖ Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- ❖ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- ❖ Displaying extreme mood swings.

Suicide Is Preventable.

Call the Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

With Help Comes Hope

**CRISIS TEXT LINE | Text HOME to 741741**

We are a healthier and safer Panhandle community. 21

# Cancer Prevention

**Healthy Choices** can reduce your risk of getting cancer.

**Keeping a Healthy Weight:** BMI (Body Mass Index) of 18.5-24.9

- Being overweight increases risk of getting some cancers, including endometrial (uterine), breast in postmenopausal women, and colorectal cancers.
- *Choose a balanced diet* of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low fat milk and milk products. Get at least *150 minutes of physical activity* a week.

**Avoiding Tobacco:** all tobacco products, smoking, and secondhand smoke

- Lung Cancer is the leading cause of cancer death, 80%-90% of all cases are caused by cigarette smoking
- Ready to quit? Call the no cost quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

**Limiting Alcohol Intake:** 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks for men

- There is strong evidence that drinking regularly increases your risk of getting mouth, voice box, and throat cancers.
- Studies link alcohol consumption to increased risk for breast and colorectal (colon) cancer.

**Protecting Your Skin:**

- Skin Cancer is the most common cancer in the U. S.
- Risk is from UV rays from the sun and tanning beds
- Apply sunscreen, wear sun-protective clothing, sunglasses, and seek shade to prevent skin cancer.

**Panhandle resident Debra Downing is a cervical cancer survivor, and urges women to call PPHD for assistance to get screened.**

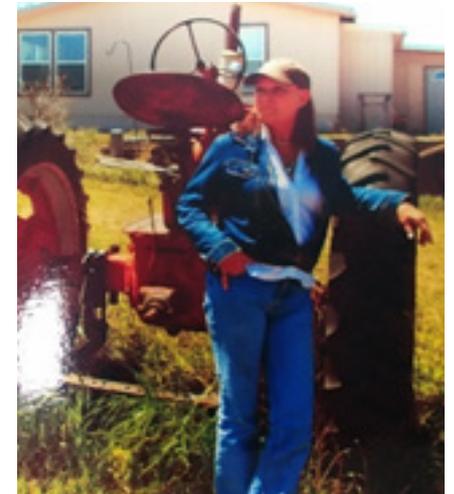
Many years ago, after having a baby and a big move, it was easy for Debra to ignore the checkup reminders that kept coming. Finally, after the receiving the third one, she thought she really needed to call to see what was going on. Life was so busy with her young family, money was tight, and next thing she knew she was having a baby, so again, it got put off. After the second baby came, her postnatal checkup showed abnormal cervical cells. After further tests, Debra's doctor said to her, "We have a problem. You have stage 3 cervical cancer and it's about to spread to your organs. There's no time to wait."

Thankfully all cancer was removed with treatment, and it hasn't returned in the last few decades due to getting regular screenings and listening to her body's signals. Debra learned how important it is to get regular screenings and how lucky she is to be here. Without getting screened regularly, that truly may not have been the case.

What Debra wants other women and their loved ones to know is how important it is to get your cancer screenings so that you, too, can be around for your loved ones. Cancer screening saved her life, and it could save yours, too. In most cases cervical cancer has no symptoms, so get checked on regular basis, even if you feel ok, she says.

Current guidelines from the U.S. Preventative Task Force Service recommend that women between 21- 65 get screened every 3 years.

If you need help paying for your screenings, call us at 308-262-2217. Help is available that can pay for screenings if you are uninsured, or if your insurance doesn't cover screenings.



*Debra Downing  
Cervical Cancer Survivor*

# [6 REASONS TO GET HPV VACCINE FOR YOUR CHILD]

**1** HPV is a common virus that infects men and women



**80%**

of people will get an HPV infection in their lifetime

Most HPV infections will go away on their own. Infections that don't go away can cause precancers and cancers.

**2** HPV vaccination works

**71%**

Infections with HPV types that cause most HPV cancers and genital warts have **dropped 71 percent among teen girls.**

**3** HPV vaccination prevents cancer

**29,000**



More than **29,000** cases of cancers each year could be prevented with HPV vaccination.

Same as the average attendance for a baseball game.

**4** Preventing cancer is better than treating cancer



HPV infections can cause many types of cancer, but there is only **cervical cancer screening.**

HPV vaccination is prevention for the other types of cancer caused by HPV infections.

**5** Your child can get the HPV vaccine when they receive the other preteen vaccines



Three vaccines are recommended for 11-12 year olds to protect against the infections that can cause **meningitis, HPV cancers, and whooping cough.**

**6** Preventing cancer is easier than ever before



Data now shows 2 doses of HPV vaccine provide similar protection to 3 doses, when given before the 15th birthday.

**6 OUT OF 10** parents are choosing to get the HPV vaccine for their children.

[Talk to your child's doctor about HPV cancer prevention at ages 11-12]



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Vaccination is an essential part of keeping preteens and teens healthy and protected from serious diseases.

# Cancer Prevention

## FREE Colon Cancer Test!

*"I don't have time for colon cancer."*

Colon cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer related deaths in the U.S. but it can be prevented.

**Take the time.**

If you're 50 or older and don't have time for colon cancer, talk to your doctor and get screened.



**This coupon is good for a FREE home testing kit so you can get screened for colon cancer.**

To get your kit you can call:

Panhandle Public Health District  
Scotts Bluff Residents

855-227-2217  
308-630-1580



Department of Health & Human Services  
**DHHS**  
NEBRASKA

5/USBDP002043-06

**Pool Cool promotes sun safety through policies** at swimming pools to establish sun protection standards. Pool staff receive training to teach and promote sun safety, and are encouraged to model sun safe practices.

Forty-seven percent of the Panhandle pools have adopted policies that inform pool users and lifeguards of the importance of sun protection, which is key to preventing skin cancer.

The policies include components such as:

- Applying sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 to all areas exposed to the sun thirty minutes before going outdoors.
- Wearing hats that create a shadow on your face, nose, ears, and neck.
- Wearing sunglasses that protect from 100% of UVA & UVB.
- Using lip balm that has an SPF rating of at least 15.



# Preparedness Protects the Public

Panhandle Alert is the official emergency notification system used to communicate with community residents during emergencies.



Sign up now to receive free alerts via text message, email, and/or voice message.

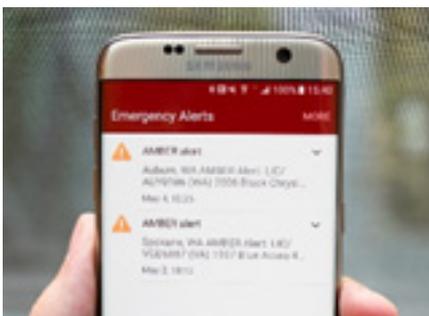


## Step 1. Enroll Online

Go to [www.panhandlealert.org](http://www.panhandlealert.org) and enter the required information and how you want to be reached. Your information is kept private.

## Step 2. Receive Alerts

Select the types of alerts you want to receive (emergency alerts and community notifications).



## Step 3. Stay Informed

This system is available to anyone who lives, works, or travels through the Nebraska Panhandle.

[www.panhandlealert.org](http://www.panhandlealert.org)

**Disease surveillance** involves early detection, prompt investigation, and monitoring the occurrence and distribution of disease to protect individuals and families from disease. Scots Bluff County numbers included for the first time.

## 2017 Disease Report

Panhandle Public Health District	2017	2016
Anaplasma phagocytophilum	1	0
Animal Exposure (bite or nonbite)	8	8
Aseptic meningitis	8	1
Campylobacteriosis	33	15
Cryptosporidiosis	7	7
Diarrheal Disease, not otherwise specified	8	14
Giardiasis	7	3
Group A Streptococcus, invasive	4	0
Group B Streptococcus, invasive	0	1
Haemophilus influenza, invasive	1	0
Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome	1	0
Hepatitis B, chronic (probable and confirmed)	7	1
Hepatitis C, chronic or resolved	44	29
Hepatitis C, acute	2	0
Lead Poisoning (child)	13	0
Legionellosis	2	0
Lyme Disease (confirmed and probable)	1	1
Mumps	1	0
Noroviruses	5	2
Pertussis (confirmed, probable, suspect)	3	1
Q Fever, acute	1	1
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (confirmed and probable)	1	0
Rabies, animal	1	0
Salmonellosis (confirmed, probable, suspect)	17	11
Shingellosis	2	0
Streptococcus pneumonia, invasive disease (IPD)	3	2
Active Tuberculosis	1	1
Varicella (chickenpox)	2	2
West Nile virus disease, neuroinvasive	5	1
West Nile virus disease, nonneuroinvasive	12	2
Yersiniosis (non Plague)	5	1
<b>Total confirmed, probable, and suspect cases</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>114</b>



PRMRS the Healthcare Coalition of the Nebraska Panhandle

## PANHANDLE REGION MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

### PRMRS MISSION

To create and maintain a system for responding to public health emergencies by enhancing existing local planning efforts for resources, expertise, communication, and personnel, in order to increase the capabilities to manage a large number of casualties and/or disruption of service.

The healthcare coalition joined forces in 2005 for the common cause of making their communities safe, healthy, and more resilient. Emergency planning describes how neighboring medical and public health agencies will manage emergencies. PRMRS develops common procedures assisting the response to run as smooth and organized as possible. Partners train and test their plans to make each response better.

### Emergency Operations Plan Quality Improvement Project:

To ensure readiness for emergencies and adequately prepare to meet the needs of patients, clients, residents, and participants during disasters, the PRMRS leadership team analyze the requirements, and work together to meet or exceed the standards.

Through local agreements, the healthcare coalition developed a quality improvement project to address these standards by taking turns visiting neighboring hospitals to review their plans and find the strengths and

[www.pphd.org/Pages/prmrs.htm](http://www.pphd.org/Pages/prmrs.htm)

areas needed for improvement. From this experience, the coalition strives to achieve optimal emergency planning efforts by identifying best practices and sharing resources through the plan development in our region.

*“The collaboration with colleagues makes the process more focused and the feeling of teamwork to accomplish the goals is always welcomed.”*

*Cheryl Cassiday, CNO  
Chadron Community Hospital*

Assuring that partners have the necessary resources allows better preparation and response throughout the region.

*“Personal protective equipment is important to stop the spread of disease and for the safety of the healthcare worker when the need arises.”*

*Melody Leisy, PRMRS Coordinator*



**Melody Leisy, RN**  
PRMRS Coordinator

# Mosquito-Borne Diseases

**Fight the Bite**

**CHIKUNGUNYA VIRUS**

**DENGUE FEVER**

**MALARIA DISEASE**

**ZIKA VIRUS**

**TRAVEL-RELATED Mosquito-Borne Diseases**

- ▶ Avoid outside at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- ▶ Wear an EPA-registered repellent to decrease bites (e.g. DEET, permethrin, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus).
- ▶ Wear long sleeved shirts and pants at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- ▶ Stay in places with air conditioning and tight fitting screens or doors; use bed nets if such accommodations are unavailable.
- ▶ Upon return, travelers should avoid mosquito bites for three weeks.

**NEBRASKA**  
Good Life. Great Mission.  
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**Chikungunya virus** outbreaks have been seen in the Caribbean, Latin America, Southern Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, and islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

**Dengue fever** is caused by any one of four related viruses transmitted by an infected mosquito. Dengue is common in Puerto Rico and many popular tourist destinations in Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.

**Malaria** is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite that is transmitted by an infected mosquitoes. Malaria was eliminated from the United States in the 1950's. The vast majority of cases in the United States are seen in travelers and immigrants returning from countries where malaria transmission occurs, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

Travelers can protect themselves with antimalarial medications and by preventing mosquito bites.

**Zika virus** is transmitted to humans primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. Furthermore, Zika can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her unborn fetus, through unprotected sexual intercourse or, less commonly, through blood transfusions. Zika virus is found in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Western Pacific Islands, Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. In addition, small sporadic outbreaks are expected to occur within certain areas of the Southeastern United States.

Travelers can protect themselves by preventing mosquito bites, practicing safe sex and avoiding areas of local transmission if pregnant or planning to conceive.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent these mosquito-borne diseases. The best way to stay safe while traveling is to practice mosquito bite prevention.

**West Nile activity for the 2017 season included:**

- West Nile virus positive trap sites in Dawes, Scotts Bluff, Garden, and Box Butte counties, with a total of 57 positive sites found.
- The Panhandle had 9 positive human clinical cases of West Nile.
- One confirmed trap site with a positive case of St. Louis encephalitis.

## Fight the Bite Tips

- ▶ At least 50 mosquito species are present in Nebraska, however, only a few transmit disease
- ▶ Nebraska has three endemic mosquito viruses: West Nile virus, St. Louis Encephalitis and Western Equine Encephalitis
- ▶ The best ways to prevent mosquito-borne viruses are to limit mosquito bites and control mosquito populations on your property

## Protect Your Family from Radon

### What is Radon?

Radon is a cancer-causing radioactive gas.

It is undetectable by smell, sight, and taste.

It is the second leading cause of lung cancer.



Radon is in the ground naturally and enters your home through cracks in the floor or walls.



1 out of every 2 homes in Nebraska has high radon levels.

**There's good news – you can protect your family by testing your home.**

**PPHD offers test kits at no cost to Panhandle residents.**  
**mhaas@pphd.org | 308-487-3600 ext 108**

### Free Lifesaving Radon Test Kit

Get your free radon test kit from PPHD by mailing this coupon to Panhandle Public Health District, PO Box 337, Hemingford NE 69348, calling (308)487-3600, ext. 108 or emailing mhaas@pphd.org. Be sure to tell us where you received this coupon!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

By accepting this fee kit, I give my permission for results to be reported to myself and PPHD.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Must reside within the Nebraska Panhandle to receive fee kit.

### Did You Know?

- Radon gas can be a risk anywhere in the state.
- Old homes and new homes are equally at risk of high levels of radon.
- Homes next to each other can have varying levels of radon.
- Testing is EASY and INEXPENSIVE. It is the only way to find out if you have a radon problem.

Get your home tested and help protect your family from radon today.



**Melissa Haas**  
Environmental Health Coordinator

# Children's Health



**Janelle Hansen**  
Health Educator

**Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day** is an annual event for area third-graders to learn about fitness and nutrition. Activities at the events include noncompetitive physical activity and nutrition stations.

This year there were three Kids Fitness & Nutrition Days: one in Alliance, one in Sidney, and one in Scottsbluff. Each of the events drew students from area schools, with a total of 833 third-graders attending from 23 participating schools.

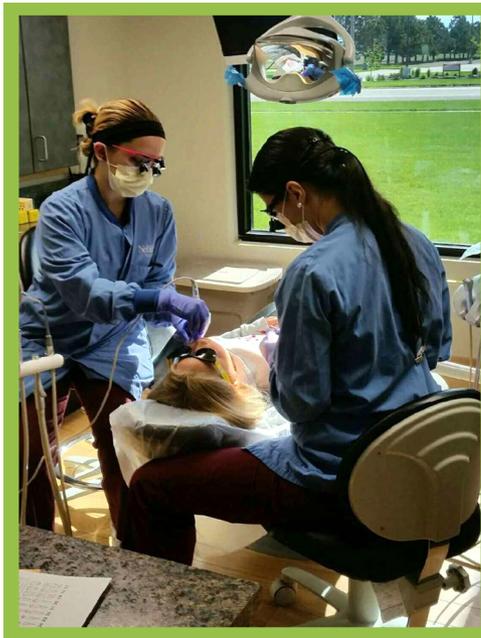
*“The overall purpose of the event is to open the eyes of young people to consider energy balance – how physical activity and nutrition work together to maintain health. It is said that if children can find a physical activity that they truly enjoy doing or an activity in which they excel, they may be more active and therefore more healthy in the future.”*

*Janelle Hansen, Health Educator*

**Dental Day** was held in June for the fourteenth consecutive year. Students from the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Dentistry and Dental Hygiene trekked out to the Panhandle to be part of the Dental Day.

Over 200 kids ranging in age from 3 to 21 years, without dental insurance were treated in Sidney, Alliance and Gordon.

50 students studying dentistry and dental hygiene, 6 dental residents and 6 faculty members from UNMC participated. Panhandle sites included: Gordon Memorial Hospital; Box Butte General Hospital; Dr. Collis in Alliance; Summit Dental Clinic (Dr. Neal) and Life Smiles (Dr. Dornbier) in Sidney.



**Scrub Club** is aimed at preschool and kindergartners to teach the importance of proper handwashing. This simple act learned at a young age can prevent many illnesses, from the common cold to serious staph infections.

There are six simple steps to a proper hand washing that require only 20 seconds of your time.

- wet your hands with warm water
- lather with a squirt of soap
- scrub tops, bottoms, in between fingers, & nails
- rinse all the soap off
- dry your hands with a towel.

**Handwashing is a great way of staying healthy.** It is like a “do-it-yourself” vaccine. Keeping our hands clean and germ-free can help keep us from getting sick and spreading germs.



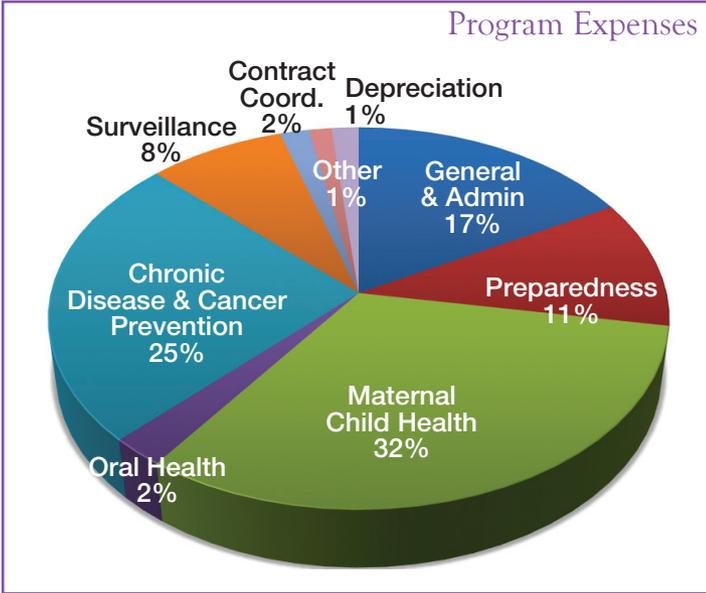
*Handwashing is a win for everyone, except germs.*

# Financial Statement

### Expenses by Source



### Where does the money go . . .



**Sara Hoover**  
CFO, Accreditation  
Coordinator

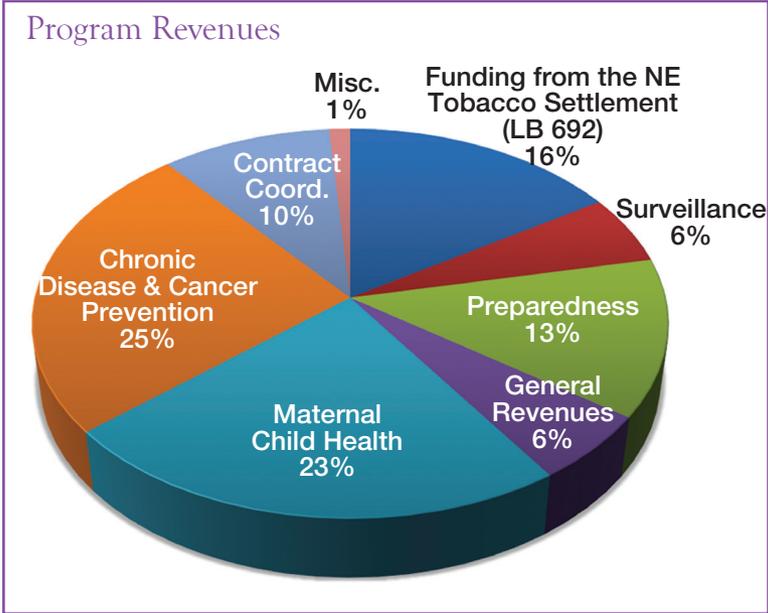


**Erin Sorensen**  
Office Manager,  
HR Coordinator

### Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2017

<b>Assets</b>	
Cash and equivalents	\$276,700
Accounts receivable	\$316,639
Inventory	\$22,172
Certificate of deposit	\$25,000
Property and equipment, net of depreciation	\$44,318
Deferred outflows of resources for pensions	\$47,916
Net pension asset	\$35,363
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$768,162</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable	\$20,620
Accrued payroll liabilities	\$52,955
Deferred inflows of resources for pensions	\$29,500
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$103,075</b>
<b>Net Position</b>	
Invested in capital assets	\$44,318
Unrestricted	\$620,769
<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b>\$665,087</b>
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,844,930</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,647,816</b>

### Where does the money come from . . .



# PPHD Staff

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Kim Engel, Director  
308-760-2415

## Main Office:

P.O. Box 337 | 808 Box Butte Avenue | Hemingford, NE 69348  
Phone 308-487-3600 | Toll Free 866-701-7173  
Fax 308-487-3682

Jessica Davies, Assistant Health Director

Melissa Haas, Environmental Health Coordinator, Worksite  
Wellness Assistant

Jennifer Eversull, Parenting Coach and Intake Specialist

Janelle Hansen, Health Educator

Sara Hoover, Chief Financial Officer, Accreditation Coordinator

Tabi Prochazka, Health Promotions Coordinator

Erin Sorensen, Office Manager, Human Resource Coordinator

## Scottsbluff Office:

1930 East 20th Place | Suite 400 | Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
Phone 308-633-2866 | Toll free 877-218-2490  
Fax 308-633-2874

Linda Ainslie, Parenting Coach and Intake Specialist

Sandra Babin, Parenting Coach and Intake Specialist

Sarah Bernhardt, MA, LIMHP, LPC, Healthy Families Nebraska  
Panhandle Manager, Supervisor

Myrna Hernandez, Parenting Coach and Intake Specialist

Kelsey Irvine, MPH, CPH, Community Health Planner,  
Performance Management Coordinator

Kendra Lauruhn, RDH, Public Health Registered Dental Hygienist



*Jessica Davies, Assistant Director, and Kim Engel, Director, receiving the Employer of the Year Award from Panhandle Business and Professional Women.*

## Bridgeport Office:

P.O. Box 1115 | 122 East 10th | Bridgeport, NE 69336  
Phone 308-262-2217 | Toll Free 855-227-2217  
Fax 308-262-1317

Cheri Farris, Community Health Educator

Melody Leisy, RN, PRMRS Coordinator, Public Health Nurse

**Panhandle**  
**Public Health District**

## Serving the Nebraska Panhandle counties of:

Banner | Box Butte | Cheyenne | Dawes | Deuel | Garden | Grant | Kimball | Morrill | Scotts Bluff | Sheridan | Sioux

# Message from the Director



**Kim Engel**  
Director

PPHD is dedicated to the purpose of building a culture of health by serving in the role of Chief Health Strategist. We did this in 2017 through coordinating the regional community health needs assessment process and the development of the community health improvement plan. This happens every three years with our area hospitals, the Panhandle Partnership, schools, economic development, and other key stakeholders. It allows for evidence-based strategies to be chosen so that we can work collectively toward common goals. We were so pleased with the remarkable involvement from community members and partner agencies. “Thank you” if you completed the survey, attended a planning meeting, or have committed to help implement strategies to create a healthy Panhandle! For additional detail on that process, assessment findings and priorities, please check out pages 4-7.

We updated our website in 2017. Along with the important content of the site, we enjoy promoting the unique beauty of the area that we all live in and serve. The stunning sunset picture below is of one of the pages. The home page resembles the cover of this report. Check it out at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org). We would love if you would take a few minutes to look around on the new site, and provide feedback on ways we could make it friendlier to use.

PPHD was honored this year with the recognition of the Employer of the Year Award by Panhandle Business and Professional Women. This award recognizes employers who have demonstrated consistent commitment to the employment, advancement, and recognition of women. The picture to the left shows us receiving the award. But truth be told, all of the employees listed on the page are the ones that should be honored as they are our most valued asset and deserve all of the credit for keeping everything running.

I hope you have enjoyed reading PPHD’s annual report. If you have any questions, please contact me at [kengel@pphd.org](mailto:kengel@pphd.org).

Kim Engel  
Director

## Thank you to our funders:

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[www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org)



We are a healthier and safer Panhandle community. 31



Scotts Bluff Mitchell Pass  
Photo courtesy of Brian Peffenberger.

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