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Tri-County Health Department Presents Hero Awards

Tri-County Health Department has given their sixth annual “Public Health Hero Award” to eight local recipients. The award recognizes an individual, business or agency that has worked to improve public health. Nominees have to be from a field other than public health and are selected by Tri-County Health Department employees. Engraved plaques were presented at a reception hosted by Richard L. Vogt, MD, Executive Director of Tri-County Health Department.

The awards were presented to the following individuals and agencies:

Betty Pepin, Community Health Services

Betty Pepin, Executive Director of Community Health Services (CHS), is committed to the health of children in Commerce City and Westminster. CHS has served as the community clinic and school-based health center for Commerce City and Adams County School District 14 and recently added an additional clinic for Adams County School District 50. A school-based health center is a health care facility located within or on school grounds and serves students whose access to care is limited. These services are designed to identify problems early, provide continuity of care, and improve academic participation.

Debbie Kunkel, Healthy Start Project, Metro Community Provider Network

Debbie Kunkel has coordinated services for low-income women and their families in the Aurora, Englewood and Sheridan communities through the Healthy Start Project. During the past two years, she has worked closely with Tri-County Health Department in collaboration on a Local Health System Action Plan with a goal to reduce infant mortality and to decrease the incidence of preterm and low birth weight babies. Ms. Kunkel works tirelessly to reduce health disparities in uninsured and underserved populations.

Julie Romero, Immaculate Heart of Mary

Julie Romero provided the space and volunteers to implement a pilot of the Produce and Health Fairs in Adams County. The goal was to put fresh fruits, vegetables and nutrient-dense foods in the hands of the low-income population and assist the Food Bank of the Rockies in getting perishable foods to the public before the food spoiled. Ms. Romero and her volunteers worked with Tri-County Health Department's Nutrition Division, Food Bank of the Rockies, Operation Frontline and multiple community agencies to provide food as well as nutrition and health information to low-income families in Adams County, serving 2,387 people.

Lily Rhoades, Adams County Community Development

Ms. Rhoades played an important role in supporting four "Produce and Health Fair" events that were held at a food bank in Adams County. Because of her dedication, 2,387 family members in Adams County received supplies of fresh produce. In addition to her support of the four "Produce and Health Fair" events, Ms Rhoades was instrumental in facilitating three additional produce distribution events to needy individuals in Adams County during the summer of 2007. She identified distribution sites and partnering agencies and provided produce delivery for these events. Because of these efforts, 325 more Adams County residents (approximately 1300 family members) received supplies of fresh produce.

Nina McNeill, Adams City Middle School

As the nurse practitioner at the school-based health center in Adams City Middle School, Nina McNeill has actively promoted good health to the students and staff for the past 12 years. In addition to primary health care, Ms. McNeill provides an after school class on healthy cooking and nutrition, offers a travel club which includes walking the environs of Commerce City, and incorporates tobacco prevention and cessation into her work. Ms. McNeill also promotes health to the students' parents at events such as Back to School nights and Parent/Teacher conferences by offering healthy food choices.

Larry Coapland, Deputy Fire Chief/Emergency Manager, City of Thornton

Deputy Chief Coapland was Tri-County Health Department's key contact for the planning and operation of the North Valley Tech Center Point of Dispensing (POD) for the POD Squad Mass Prophylaxis Exercise on November 17, 2007. Deputy Chief Coapland coordinated

activities with City of Thornton Police, Traffic Engineering and Public Information staff to develop site-specific plans for POD operations. Additionally he worked closely with TCHD staff to provide over 2,000 doses of free influenza vaccine to the public in just over three hours.

Douglas County School District, Health Services

Douglas County School District Health Services staff contributed a great deal to the planning and operation of the Mountain Vista High School Point of Dispensing (POD) for the POD Squad Mass Prophylaxis Exercise on November 17, 2007. Paulette Joswick and her team of 21 school nurses attended a half-day nurse volunteer workshop where influenza vaccine administration procedures were reviewed and practiced. They then worked side-by-side with Tri-County Health Department staff to provide over 1,100 vaccinations in just over three hours.

Douglas County School District, School Safety and Security Department

The Douglas County School District School Safety and Security Department contributed a great deal to the planning and operation of the Mountain Vista High School Point of Dispensing (POD) for the POD Squad Mass Prophylaxis Exercise on November 17, 2007. Larry Borland and Carol Rosenoff worked with Tri-County Health Department and Mountain Vista High School staff to assure access to the site and to facilitate operational support and security. Mr. Borland coordinated activities with staff members to develop site-specific security plans for POD operations. Ms. Rosenoff worked closely with Tri-County staff to develop an Incident Action Plan, which enabled staff to provide over 1,100 vaccinations in just over three hours.

Tri-County Health Department

Tri-County Health Department is the largest local health department in Colorado, providing services for more than 1,250,000 residents of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties. Services include disease prevention and control, birth certificates, immunizations, family planning, nutrition services, West Nile virus prevention, and inspections of restaurants and child care facilities. More information about their services is available online at www.tchd.org.

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