

Oregon Public Health Connection

An e-bulletin co-produced by the Oregon Public Health Division and the Conference of Local Health Officials

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Monthly Bulletin to go on hiatus

The Oregon Public Health Connection will go on hiatus beginning in June, as it is transitioned to DHS-OHA Communications. Thanks to all those state and county staff who have contributed over the past five years. Direct questions to Christine Stone, Communications Officer, Oregon Public Health Division, 971-673-1282.

In This Issue

- **Focus: Food Safety**
Food Safety Rules, Farmer's Market, Farm to School
- **Hot Topics:** State Public Health All-Staff Meeting, Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- **Best Practices:** Multnomah County

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Focus: Food Safety

Updates to food safety rules for Oregon restaurants

Food safety rules for restaurants in Oregon are being updated to match national standards as the state Foodborne Illness Prevention Program (FIPP) begins the process of adopting the 2009 FDA Model Food Code. The process is being conducted with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to bring the rules for different types of food service facilities across the state into closer alignment.

Continued on page 2

Back to the Future Theme

Hundreds attend Oregon Public Health all-staff meeting in April

"Back to the Future" was the theme for the Oregon Public Health Division's all-staff meeting, held April 27, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, where the hundreds who attended learned of future challenges and opportunities for Public Health in the coming year. It had been eight years since the division held such a meeting to update staff and organizers said the session was long overdue.



Public Health Director Dr. Mel Kohn kicked off the meeting, pictured here with Dr. Paul Jarris, Executive Director of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, who shared national Public Health challenges.

Dr. Kohn's presentation provided some perspective on how far Oregon Public Health has come since it was established by the State Board of Health in 1903. While the top cause of preventable death in Oregon in 2008 is still attributable to tobacco use, per capita cigarette consumption has dropped dramatically as environmental and policy changes have occurred. Investments in prevention at the national level as

part of health reform and the recent creation of the Oregon Health Authority are historic, significant shifts which should help continue to bolster public health efforts. However, Dr. Kohn warned that "unless we do something to address rising chronic disease prevalence, healthcare reform is likely to sink on the iceberg of rising costs." **Dr. Jarris' presentation** detailed public health's role nationally, including challenges in budgets, workforce, programs/services, and leadership and opportunities in prevention and wellness, health reform, and accreditation. Deputy Oregon Health Authority Director **Tina Edlund's presentation** previewed Oregon's Health Reform efforts including the creation of the Oregon Health Policy Board and the Oregon Health Authority, which houses many former DHS divisions relating to health including Public Health. She explained that the three goals of the OHA include improving lifelong health for Oregonians; increasing quality, reliability and availability of care for all; and lowering or containing the cost of care. Administrator of the Office of Multicultural Health and Service **Tricia Tillman's presentation** focused on increasing the understanding of the determinants of health equity, highlighting where we have come from and sharing a vision of where we want to go, including how we can achieve that vision together. Oregon Public Health Division Governmental Liaison **Katy King's presentation** included draft legislative concepts to consider for the 2011 legislative session. The gathering also included the presentation of longevity and "heart and soul" awards to state public health staff members, recognized by their peers for dedication, determination, and excellence. Staff recognized for "heart and soul" awards included: Office of Family Health- Cyndi Durham; Office of Community Health & Health Planning - Judy Lubeck; Oregon State Public Health Lab - Jennifer Sanders; Office of Disease Prevention & Epidemiology - Stephen Ladd-Wilson; Office of Environmental Public Health - Kari Salis; Office of the Public Health Director - Jayne Bailey. Longevity recognition went to Paul Peterson from OSPHL, for serving 38 years.

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Food Safety Rule Update, continued from page 1

The state food program is in the process of setting up a workgroup to explore the various issues associated with adoption of the new code. The workgroup will consist of state and county regulatory staff, food industry representatives and members of the public. The group is scheduled to finish its work by the end of this year. Training for county Environmental Health staff and the rule adoption process will take place in 2011, with the changes scheduled to be implemented effective January 1, 2012.

The purpose of the code is to safeguard public health and provide to consumers food that is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented. It establishes definitions and sets standards for management and personnel, food operations, equipment and facilities. Most of the provisions of the 2009 FDA Code are the same as the 1999 version. Both contain requirements for how retail food facilities must cook, cool and hot hold foods that can support bacterial growth, outline approved procedures to wash and sanitize food contact surfaces, and describe how food service managers must deal with potentially infectious employees. Specific sections of the code cover management and personnel, equipment, water and waste, physical facilities and poisonous or toxic materials.

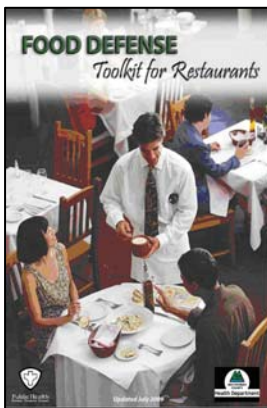
Among the rule changes that will be considered for adoption are:

- A requirement that consumers be advised of the risk of illness from consuming a menu item that is not sufficiently cooked to kill pathogens.
- A prohibition on bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods when preparing food.
- Include cut tomatoes and leafy greens among foods that must be kept below 41 degrees during storage.
- Lowering the minimum hot holding temperature for stored foods from 140 degrees to 135 degrees.

The 2009 code also makes a significant change in how certain types of violations are categorized. For decades, rule violations have been categorized as either "critical" or "non-critical." The new code identifies three classes of violations; essentially adding a middle category of violations that is considered closely associated with the most serious violations, but are not by themselves serious enough to create an imminent risk of foodborne illness. The addition of a new class of violation provides additional impetus to revamp the restaurant scoring system, which has not been modified since 1994.

Information provided by Matt Jaqua, Office of Environmental Public Health, Oregon Public Health Division.

Multnomah County: Food Defense Toolkit, local best practices



Multnomah County Environmental Health (MCEH) has created a toolkit for restaurant managers to use to assess and control risk factors that may expose their facility to intentional contamination of food. Though rare, attacks on our food supply do happen, and the Health Department of Multnomah County Oregon is leading the nation in the mitigation of such attacks. Oregon became one of the only states to have experienced a widespread intentional contamination incident in 1984 when 750 people became ill after eating at salad bars where cult leaders, intent on impacting the outcome of local elections, had contaminated salad dressing with lab-produced salmonella bacteria.

Funded by the Food and Drug Administration, Multnomah County's food Defense Toolkit is the nation's first comprehensive program designed to assist restaurant operators in both reducing the threat of a food terrorism event and responding to an attack. They use an 8-point risk-assessment system to

prompt managers to look at frequently overlooked security areas, and give suggested remedies that can be tailored to each restaurant's unique situation.

An alert and well-trained staff makes intentional contamination of food very difficult, so included in the toolkit is an employee training guide, a training video and posters to hang in the kitchen.

MCEH also features a monthly Food Defense article in the Environmental Health Inspections News. The toolkit is available online in PDF format. If you would like to customize it for your own county, Multnomah County has created a version in MS Word available for you.

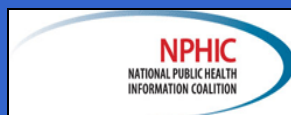
Contact Jon Kawaguchi at jon.k.kawaguchi@co.multnomah.or.us or 503-988-3400 to obtain the customizable document.

PH: In the News

Health officials investigate outbreak at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (Clackamas County, OR) – Oregon health officials are investigating a rash of illnesses that has partially closed public visiting to Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville. (Courtesy OregonLive.com)

More Salmonella Cases Tied to Oregon Restaurant (Douglas County, OR) – Oregon's Douglas County Health officials announced there are 17 confirmed cases of Salmonella linked to a Roseburg restaurant, between April 9 – 17. (Courtesy newsinferno.com)

Food fighter: Oregon's William Keene among the nation's food safety heroes (Multnomah County, OR) – William Keene, senior epidemiologist at the Oregon Public Health Division, has solved or helped to solve many outbreaks over the past 20 years, gaining the respect of his peers across the country and bolstering the state's stature as a leader in identifying tainted food. (Courtesy The Oregonian, Portland, OR)



The Oregon Public Health Connection has been recognized by the National Public Health Information Coalition for Excellence in Public Health Communication.

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Farmer's Market Update

Oregon's Farm Direct Nutrition Program continues to connect families in WIC and seniors with the freshest local produce around...and with the wonderful farmers who grow our food! Starting this year, the WIC Program's new Fruit & Veggie voucher will be an additional way to connect WIC Families with local farmers and their produce. For more information visit: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/wic/fruitandveggie.shtml> or contact Maria Menor, the Farm Direct Nutrition Program Coordinator at (971) 673-0056 or maria.i.menor@state.or.us



Farm to School Update



Schools with farm-to-school programs buy and feature local farm foods in the cafeteria. Buying local is the first step in a farm to school program. To be successful the food item needs to be affordable to the school and profitable for the farmer. Oregon pears, apples, potatoes, cherries, blueberries, winter squash, plums and tomatoes are all good examples. The second step is promotion – telling the children and the community how the school supports local farmers by purchasing and serving tasty local food. Local food tastes better and is packed with nutrients because it is fresher – it comes directly from the farm to the school. Schools with Farm to School programs see an increase participation in the school meals program. This is great news because children who eat the school meal generally eat more fruits and vegetables. It's good news for farmers too. They have access to new and stable school markets. School district wellness policies support local purchasing and school gardens. A wellness policy can support a local harvest of the month program or require every school to have a school garden. School district wellness policies are one way to make sure that Farm to School and School Gardens don't go away. Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden Program was created by the Oregon Legislature in 2008. Currently 66 Oregon school districts are serving tasty, local food to more than 329,600 children. For more information visit: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/state-home.php?id=47> or contact Joan Ottinger, the Farm to School and School Garden Coordinator at (503) 947-5901 or joan.ottinger@state.or.us

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

In April, Oregonians celebrated National Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), which President Obama and Governor Kulongoski recognized by signing proclamations. Since the 1980s, the goal of SAAM has been to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate

communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence. The 2010 SAAM theme was Prevent Sexual Violence...on our campuses. The [Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force \(SATF\)](#) and the [Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence \(OCADSV\)](#) partnered to provide materials and support to local communities, organizations, and universities that commemorated SAAM. The SATF and OCADSV joined with the Victim's Rights Law Center to decorate bandanas for the "Bandana Project," a partnership between the Southern Poverty Law Center, community groups, universities and advocacy organizations to spotlight sexual exploitation of farm worker women. The project adopted the bandana as a symbol of solidarity to end sexual violence against farm worker women because many use bandanas on the job to cover their faces and bodies in an attempt to ward off unwanted sexual attention that often leads to rape. The SATF and Mid Valley Women's Crisis Service in Salem organized a SAAM community forum which focused on engaging men in sexual violence prevention. The OCADSV also participated in Take Back the Night/Bike Back the Night, co-hosted by the Portland State University Women's Resource Center and Portland Women's Crisis Line. For more information: <http://www.nsvrc.org/saam> or <http://www.endsexualviolence.oregonsatf.org/>

Submitted by Ashley Maier, Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force and Elizabeth Nelson, Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

