



Lafayette County Health Department

Primary Accreditation · Since September 2006

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lafayette County Health Department Honored for Excellence in Public Health

*Local Health Department Program is One of 24 Nationwide to Receive
"Model Practice Award" in 2010*

Lexington, Missouri – The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) will honor the Lafayette County Health Department at its 2010 annual conference in July for implementing a program that demonstrates exemplary and replicable qualities in response to a local public health need. *Operation Door Hanger* is one of 24 public health programs developed by a local health department selected from across the nation to receive NACCHO's Model Practice Award.

In an effort to be prepared for emergencies, the Lafayette County Health Department conducted a first-of-its-kind County-wide exercise on April 7, 2009 (during Public Health Week). The goal of the exercise was to make contact with as many of the 12,000 plus residences in the County as possible within the 5 hour window of time allotted for the exercise. This effort simulated distribution of emergency medications under the alternate dispensing methodology required by CDC City Readiness Initiative planning guidance. This guidance establishes a target for reaching 100% of a jurisdiction's population in 24 hours. As a result of the remarkable investment from the participating communities, roughly 83% of the targeted households were reached in less than 5 hours.

According to Lafayette County Health Department Administrator, Nola Martz, "there are only 8 full time and 4 part time Health Department employees to cover a population of nearly 34,000 for a public health emergency in Lafayette County requiring this kind of action to contain the spread of disease. Distribution of the medicine is only one of a number of response activities that your health department staff would be involved in. You can see why it was critical that we look at other methods for reaching the most people in the least amount of time with the fewest public health employees possible so that we can not only dispense these life saving medications, but also maintain core operations of the department. The enormous success of this exercise is directly a result of the engagement in our community partners and their willingness to do their part to support our efforts." Some of those partners included: local law enforcement and fire protection services, school districts, Chambers of Commerce, school bus service providers, area radio stations, National Weather Service, Scouting organizations, Lafayette County Health Department volunteers, city councils, elected officials, HAM radio operators, Citizen Emergency Response Teams, church groups, other community volunteers, and area newspapers.



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Most dispensing methods that have been tested rely on the public reporting to dispensing centers staffed by volunteers. The most innovative aspect of this exercise was that rather than rely on the entire LCHD staff to drive the exercise, the LCHD Emergency Response Planner, Rodney Kirrchoff, engaged the local emergency management directors (EMD's) and community leaders in the entire exercise planning process, and gave each EMD the control over how best to formulate a dispensing response within his community.

The exercise was selected as a session presentation at last year's NACCHO conference. "We are proud to receive NACCHO's Model Practice Award for 2010. The award is evidence of your local public health department's commitment to develop responsive and innovative public health programs that protect the health of local residents," said Nola Martz, Administrator of the Health Department. "We would also like to again thank all of those who participated in the exercise making it so successful—otherwise we would not be receiving this award."

Each innovative project receiving the award was reviewed by a committee of peers (other local health department professionals) and selected from a group of 93 applications. Since 2003, NACCHO's Model Practice Awards program has honored initiatives – including programs, resources, and tools – that demonstrate how local health departments and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health concerns. Operation Door Hanger is now part of an online, searchable database of successful public health practices in areas ranging from immunization and maternal and child health to infectious diseases and emergency preparedness. The NACCHO Model Practice database allows users to benefit from colleagues' experiences, to learn what works, and to ensure that resources are used wisely on effective programs that have been implemented with good results. It also enables NACCHO to share information with key stakeholders and media about the good work being done by local health departments across the country.

This award puts **Lafayette County Health Department** into special company—a select group of health departments that exemplify a forward thinking, proactive attitude toward protecting and promoting the health of communities across the nation.

For more information about the exercise, contact the Health Department at 660-259-4371, or visit our Web site at www.lafayettecountyhealth.org

For more information about the NACCHO Model Practice Awards, go to www.naccho.org.

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