

Public Health Nursing in California

Examples by County

Public health nurses provide nursing services through a variety of public health programs and activities, improving the health of residents in their communities. They provide health care services for communicable disease, health care coordination for chronic or acute illness, and respond to local emergencies when needed. Public health nurses provide services to the public in the home, within clinics, community facilities, institutions, and mobile units. Listed below are examples of the diversity of nursing services provided that improve the health of all Californians.

Fresno County – Meningitis outbreak: Three cases in a middle school in 48 hours

Public health nurses administered antibiotics to 799 students/faculty; 548 students were vaccinated with meningococcal vaccine in 36 hours.

Fresno County – Enteric disease outbreak of 30 cases

Public health nurses conducted limited interviews with 200 potentially exposed individuals and worked with environmental health specialists to identify the source and minimize illness, referring symptomatic clients to medical care.

Lake County - Local assistance to State in Gonorrhea outbreak

Public health nurses mobilized to supplement State investigation efforts on sharp increase of 33 cases.

Long Beach, City of – Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Public health nurses conduct SIDS workshops on a regular basis with Black Infant Health program clients. Information is presented in a culturally sensitive manner, and includes the history and recommendations of the Back-to-Sleep campaign. Deaths due to SIDS have dramatically decreased since initiation of the Back-to-Sleep campaign; however, the African-American population continues to be disproportionately affected.

Long Beach, City of – High incidence of dental disease in Long Beach schoolchildren

As a result of local data showing a high incidence of dental disease including untreated dental disease in kindergartners and 3rd-graders, PHN's mobilized a task force with local stakeholders and launched an educational plan involving LBUSD, Head Start, Children's Dental Disease Prevention Program, the local non-profit Children's Dental Clinic, and RN students from CSULB to inform parents, providers, and the community on the importance of prevention and treatment of dental disease.

Los Angeles County - Improving vision screening for children

Child Health & Disability Prevention program (CHDP) public health nurses regularly observed improper techniques in vision screening of children by CHDP medical providers. In February 2006, CHDP initiated quarterly regional vision workshops to participants from various medical provider groups. Statistically significant improvements were observed post training in screening techniques among participants.

Los Angeles County - Lead poisoning screening during pregnancy

In 2006-07, a community needs assessment and a survey was conducted to assess the incidence of Lead screening of pregnant women receiving care in LA County. Lack of guidelines for medical providers and lack of patient awareness regarding the importance of screening were identified. Public health nurses collaborated with a local hospital and community based clinics to identify interventions aimed at increasing lead exposure awareness, modifying behavior and eliminating risks associated with lead poisoning during pregnancy. Comprehensive lead presentations and health teaching was done to increase knowledge of potential adverse pregnancy outcomes, and encourage timely screening for Lead exposure.

Los Angeles County – Influenza Vaccination Demonstration Project – Targeting underserved populations

Pregnant women and children generally have significantly lower influenza immunization rates. Influenza Vaccination Demonstration Project is an innovative project partnering LAC public health nurses from Service Planning Area 3 (San Gabriel Valley) and the Women, Infant, and Children's (WIC) program. In 2007, influenza vaccine was administered to 127 children under five years of age, 89 pregnant females, and 323 females of children bearing age at 30 clinics conducted at six WIC sites. An additional 322 children and adult males and females were also vaccinated. Project was expanded to included 55 clinics at 11 WIC sites within San Gabriel Valley and downtown LA and Hollywood-Wilshire areas.

Los Angeles County – Collaboration of public health nursing and the Community to increase Hepatitis vaccination among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Los Angeles County

30% of the reported confirmed Hepatitis B cases were MSM. To address this high-risk population, public health nurses at Hollywood-Wilshire Health Center created vaccination outreach activities in collaboration with the County's Sexually Transmitted Disease and Immunization Programs. During 2006, 798 individuals and in 2007, 1,088 individuals received hepatitis A, B or A/B vaccine. The 2007 HepTeam LA campaign has received national recognition.

Los Angeles County – Community Baby Shower program

Community Baby Shower program was designed to give teen mothers information, education, and demonstration on life skills and included classes on STD prevention, pregnancy, domestic violence prevention, Sudden Infant Death prevention, breastfeeding, baby care, and resource programs for mentoring teens to higher education and career pathways. Collaboration between public health nurses, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and community based organizations such as Black Infant Health, La Leche League, and "Break the Cycle". In 2007-08, the program has been expanded to include three high schools and 150-160 pregnant students.

Madera County – Tuberculosis (TB) program

This program closes gaps for the uninsured through outreach, and providing TB screening to high risk populations at the Rescue Mission, soup kitchen, and a variety of migrant camps throughout the county. Chest x-ray, medications for treatment, lab work, direct observed therapy, and case management services are provided by nursing staff.

Madera County - Influenza surveillance and emergency preparedness early alert notification system

Public health nursing director partnered with the local school nursing director and created an early warning FAX notification system to identify drops in Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at schools within Madera Unified School District. Public health nursing director provided recommendations to local schools on prevention measures to share with parents via letters or telephone, such as use of hand washing and covering a cough & sneeze to prevent spread of disease. Also included were messages recommending keeping children home if they exhibit signs and symptoms of flu, and when to take child to the doctor.

Madera County – American Red Cross (ARC) shelter care training

Public health nursing director collaborated with ARC and other nursing directors in the region to implement a “Train-the-Trainer” program. Health department staff from eight counties attended regional ARC Shelter Care training to learn ARC Shelter Care and become ARC certified to train others so entire region could be mobilized to respond to disaster and have the same standards and guidelines of practice.

Merced County – Promote earlier and more consistent prenatal care

Health Department implemented a new procedure to receive referrals from local jails on pregnant women. Public health nurse provides outreach at the jail to promote earlier and more consistent prenatal care thru PHN case management & ensuring opportunity for continued OB care and post partum services once client is released from custody.

Merced County - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

The public health nurse makes a home visit and finds a grief stricken family of six people who want to know if it is “their fault”. He/she provides education about SIDS, provides grief counseling, helps family make mortuary and funeral arrangements, and connects family to the SIDS parent support group and other support services.

Merced County - Co-facilitating Child Death Review Team

Nursing director is responsible for facilitating a multidisciplinary team to review all deaths of children 0-15 years of age in Merced County. The goal of the team meeting is to assure cross reporting between agencies, to identify areas where services for families could be improved, and to create and implement strategies to prevent child abuse. The team submits a yearly report to the State.

Pasadena, City of, Public Health Department – Shigellosis food borne outbreak

Multi jurisdiction investigation included screening 34 restaurant employees, and 80 patrons.

Pasadena, City of, Public Health Department – Tuberculosis cases at City College

Extensive contact investigation resulting in 200 students and professors screened and two active TB cases treated.

Riverside County – Fires – Evacuation to shelters

Public health nurses volunteered and were deployed to work nights, weekends, regular shifts and extra shifts to staff five shelters over a one-week period providing health assessments, basic first aid, referrals to community resources, and education on health-related topics.

Riverside County – Loss of electricity and water for a 24 hour period over a week-end with 115+ temperatures

Public health nurses spent two days going door-to-door to the 45 mobile homes in Whispering Sands Mobile Home Park, checking residents for power status and heat-related illness. Made contact with 27 families and provided information on resources available.

Sacramento County- Improving birth outcomes of first time low income pregnant women.

Through the Nurse Family Partnership program, Public Health Nurses conduct comprehensive home visits with women and their infant to improve birth and child health outcomes. The program has resulted in significant decreases in premature births, low birth weights, subsequent pregnancies, and preventable hospitalizations. As well as an increase in breast feeding and the number of children immunized by 24 months.

Sacramento County – Prevent child abuse and neglect. Public Health Nurses has partnered with Child Protective Services in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. PHNs make home visits to high risk and at risk families who have medical conditions which may make them vulnerable to abuse or neglect. Case conferences with CPS, CCS, and IHSS occur on a regular basis to assure families are linked to appropriate resources and, are receiving adequate care.

Sacramento County – Emergency Response - Public Health Nurses were placed on 24/7 standby over a weekend in January 2008 to work at heating shelters during an extended cold weather period when electric power was out over a prolonged period of time. Nurses were called in over the weekend to contact over 300 residential care facilities to assess the needs of the facilities. Facilities without power were asked if residents needed to be sent to warming shelters or placed in other residential homes that had heat.

San Bernardino County - Fires – Evacuation to shelters

Public health nurses deployed to shelter to perform health screenings and triage to individuals and families.

San Diego County – Firestorm – Evacuation to shelters

Public health nurses deployed to 12 shelters and covered approximately 148-12 hour shifts over six days; PHN staff deployed to five Local Assistance Centers assisted 3,000 contacts with referrals; provided basic first aid; answered health related questions; assisted with prescription refills and resources over a two week period. During this time, 2,200 flu and 100 tetanus vaccinations were administered.

San Diego County – Measles outbreak

During January and February 2008, public health nurses assisted with surveillance and contact follow-up measures. 68 people were quarantined and PHN's assisted with calling this group to answer questions and provide support. Each person quarantined received anywhere between five to 14 calls over a three week period. 12 cases of measles were identified.

San Francisco County – Improving birth outcomes

Public health nurses provide home visits to high risk obstetrical clients, and improve birth outcomes through carrying out MD orders, referring clients for immediate treatment of preterm labor, or signs and symptoms of other medical risks, and providing breastfeeding education and support.

San Francisco County- Chronic disease health care coordination

Public health nurses provide home visits to clients with multiple health conditions, assisting them with urgent health care needs, connecting clients with a medical home, and linking them with community services and agencies. Nurses also monitor medical treatment, and teach safe methods of medication administration in the home environment.

San Francisco County– Health care for special needs children

Through the California Children’s Services program, public health nurses provide health care coordination services and authorize diagnostic and medical treatment services for children with eligible medical conditions. Children may receive specialty medical care, cancer treatment, transplants, physical and/or occupational therapy, durable medical equipment, or hospice and palliative care.

San Francisco County - CCS High Risk Infant Follow-Up program

Public health nurses authorize a number of diagnostic services including: physical examination with neurologic assessment; developmental assessment; family psychosocial assessment; hearing assessment; ophthalmologic assessment, and health care coordination services.

San Francisco County- Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program

Public health nurses assure that eligible children receive periodic health assessments and preventative services. They assist families with medical appointment scheduling, counsel families regarding findings from the child’s physical exam, and assist with access to care and remove transportation barriers.

San Francisco County- Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care

The public health nurse provides health expertise in meeting the medical, dental, developmental, and mental needs of foster children through consultation and collaboration with social workers and probation officers.

San Francisco County- PHN Liaison Nurses

Public health nurses assist medical providers, community agencies and families in finding services for identified medical needs through facilitating linkage and referral to other agencies and services. Community services may include: perinatal, substance abuse, mental health, and grief support services.

Santa Barbara County – Outreach effort to homeless

Public health nurses provided health related services to 320 homeless clients in a shelter. PHN staff vaccinated clients, performed HIV testing and screened for Tuberculosis. Of those screened for TB, 30 positive skin tests were identified and four individuals were later diagnosed with active Tuberculosis and are currently under treatment.

Solano County – Two Tuberculosis cases in local high schools

Public health nursing staff was mobilized to assist TB staff with clinics; Greater than 700 contacts skin tested twice, and given appropriate case management follow-up over several months.

Tehama County – Meningitis case in public school

Public health nurses provided prophylactic medication to 13 students and four teachers and vaccinated 255 students.

Tehama County – Two drug resistant Tuberculosis cases

Public health nurses screened over 400 contacts, and provided direct observed therapy for the clients in the field, at home, and work place after hours.

Tehama County – Mobile screening clinic

Public health nurses visited a farm worker camp and offered influenza vaccine, HIV counseling and testing, and tobacco education for 100 transient laborers.

Tehama County – Give Kids a Smile Day: Free dental care and treatment to children 1-18 years of age

Provided free dental care and treatment to children 1-18 years of age. 126 volunteers including dental professionals provided over \$37,000 worth of free dental care and oral health education to 146 kids.

Tulare County – Norovirus Outbreak----Outbreak at a local education science and conservation camp.

One hundred thirty elementary school children symptomatic over a three week period. Camp staff and children tested, and given educational messages on hand washing and preventing spread of the virus. Public health nurses monitored sterilization procedures on camp facilities.

Tulare County – Whooping Cough---- Investigation of two month old infant with Pertussis.

Infant had older exposed siblings attending preschool and elementary school. Contacts treated by Health Department staff, school personnel educated on prevention measures, immunization records audited on all contacts for compliance with State mandates. Family non-compliant with HD directives. PHNs provided extensive education to minimize further exposures in children.

Yuba County – Multi-Drug Resistant-Tuberculosis outbreak

Three cases; over 2100 persons screened; over 100 clients put on medication