

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Civil Grand Jury reviewed the Health Department as part of the routine review of county departments. The last time the Health Department was looked at was 2004/2005. This review was not complaint driven.

METHODOLOGY

The County Health Officer gave a presentation to the Civil Grand Jury on September 15, 2009. February 17, 2010, members of the Civil Grand Jury went on a tour of the facility at 20111 Cedar Road North in Sonora. The County Health Officer was very open to questions and gave all information panel members requested.

NARRATIVE/FACTS

The Department has 40 staff members working in various service areas. One of the sections visited was the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) area where women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have young children are instructed, guided, and given assistance toward healthy lifestyle choices such as breastfeeding and appropriate food selection.

Panel members viewed the room where vaccines are stored under locked refrigeration. Members also learned about the mobile health van, popularly known as BOB (Be on Board), which delivered flu immunizations to 3,300 individuals during the current flu season. The vaccines were provided, as well, to 7,600 other individuals through local providers and other agencies. The BOB van, which serves patients with or without insurance at local schools, is funded by the Sonora Area Foundation, The Irving J. Symons Foundation for Tuolumne County and the Tuolumne County Schools HELP Fund to have the van available at the schools. The BOB Van also provides Sports physicals for students.

Members met with the Public Health Nurse who, based on referrals, makes home visits and works with other community agencies to assist families in need of health and life skills education and access to services.

Panel members learned about the Emergency Preparedness Program which has storage units throughout the county stocked with emergency equipment. Staff members are continually involved in planning and training for any emergency that might occur. The Health Department provides oversight of the county's Emergency Medical Services.

FINDINGS

1. An impressive amount of effort is made in retaining clients' confidentiality.
2. Rent for Department of Social Services is \$16,834 per month, Division of Public Health and Child Welfare Services building is \$13,376 a month, and Environmental Health building is \$3,998 per month.
3. There are 1175 women and children in the WIC Program; an increase of 200 over the last year.

4. The BOB van is an important and visible component of the Health Department. It serves a very necessary function.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There are no recommendations for Findings 1 and 3.
2. For Finding 2, it is the Jury's understanding that a large sum of money is spent for rent on the building which houses the various clinics and programs. It would be more cost effective if all Health Department services were to locate to the currently nearly empty old Tuolumne General Hospital Campus. The money saved by the relocation could then be applied to other programs and services such as the BOB van and to other community health needs.
3. For Finding 4, keep the BOB van funded by continuing fundraisers and by applying for grants.

COMMENDATIONS

Jury members were favorably impressed with the knowledge, demeanor, and openness of the County Health Officer and look forward to hearing about the Health Department's continuing high quality service to the community.