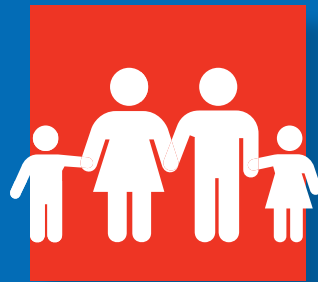


# Making a Difference



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in the Health of Los Angeles County



# Our Mission

*To protect health,  
prevent disease, and  
promote the health  
and well-being of  
all persons in  
Los Angeles County*



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Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
**2010-2011 Annual Report**

This report covers the 2010-2011 fiscal year, or  
the period July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Fellow Angelenos,

**On a daily basis and in a variety of ways, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is making a difference in the health and well-being of county residents. The department's nearly 4,000 staff members work tirelessly to address health issues affecting the millions of people who live here.**

Some of the ways we make a difference are quite visible: grading of restaurants and food markets, inspecting hospitals and nursing homes, monitoring ocean water, and providing services through our public health centers. Other ways—such as helping residents prepare for emergencies, providing laboratory services to identify diseases, and collecting and analyzing data on the health of the community—are less visible but equally important.

Over the past year, we continued to provide these crucial core services while faced with new challenges as well as new opportunities. In March 2011, after Japan's 9.0-magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami damaged a nearby nuclear reactor, the possibility of radioactive fallout reaching distant shores became a worldwide concern. We responded to this emergency, monitoring the environment and keeping the public up to date on the changing situation. Toward our goal of protecting the public's health, we expanded our successful restaurant letter-grading program to include mobile food facilities, such as catering trucks and food carts. We vaccinated thousands of students in grades 7 through 12 as part of a new state law to protect the community from a resurgence of pertussis (whooping cough). And we opened the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Public Health in South Los Angeles to care for the underserved residents in this community.

These are but a few of the ways our department is making a difference in the health of LA County. Many other examples are detailed throughout this report, which I hope will provide you with an informative summary of our progress and assurance that Public Health is continually working to improve the health of our community.

Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH  
Director and Health Officer

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AT A GLANCE

## Fiscal Year Budget

**\$851 million**

(Fiscal Year covers July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011)

**39**

Programs

**14**

Health Centers

nearly

**4,000**

Staff

total LA County residents

**9.8**

Million

LA County populations served

**48%**

Latino

**28%**

Caucasian

**14%**

Asian/Pacific Islander

**8%**

African American

**0.2%**

American Indian

more than

**200**

Languages Spoken

area served

**4,000+**

Square Miles

comprising

**88**

Incorporated Cities

about

**140**

Unincorporated Areas

**2**

Islands

(Santa Catalina and San Clemente)

founded in

**1903**

when the Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance for the provision of a county health department. In 2006, the Department of Public Health separated from the Department of Health Services and became its own freestanding department.



# 10 KEY PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIONS

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health protects and improves the health of our community by performing these key actions:

- 1. MONITOR**  
Find health problems in the community.
- 2. DIAGNOSE**  
Find what causes health problems.
- 3. INFORM, EDUCATE, AND EMPOWER**  
Teach people about health problems.
- 4. MOBILIZE**  
Work with the community to find and solve health problems.
- 5. DEVELOP**  
Make rules and plans that help individual and community health.
- 6. ENFORCE**  
Make sure rules are followed so that people are safe and their health is protected.
- 7. LINK**  
Make sure there are enough medical services for people who need them.
- 8. ASSURE**  
Make sure our employees are prepared to do their job well.
- 9. EVALUATE**  
Make sure our programs are working and doing a good job.
- 10. RESEARCH**  
Study new ways to solve health problems.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Department of Public Health makes a difference in the lives of Los Angeles County residents through its 39 programs, 14 public health centers, and four Area Health Offices. Each program focuses on a unique area of service vital to fulfilling the department's mission to protect health, prevent disease, and promote the health and well-being of all persons in Los Angeles County. The department's activities include direct medical services for immunizations and specific communicable diseases, disease surveillance and outbreak control, health assessment and data analysis, health inspections, policy development, and advocacy. Its wide-ranging services include the following:

## Children's Medical Services

Children's Medical Services provides preventive screening and diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation, and follow-up services for children in LA County through the state Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) and California Children's Services (CCS) programs. CHDP makes regular well-child checkups available to eligible children, and CCS coordinates and pays for medical care and therapy services for children under 21 years of age with certain health care needs.

## Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

The goal of this division is to reduce the occurrence, severity, and consequences of chronic diseases and injuries. To accomplish this, it works with government and community partners to address the underlying causes of chronic diseases, including those related to the physical and social environment.

## Communicable Disease Control and Prevention

Communicable Disease Control and Prevention seeks to reduce the risk factors and disease burdens of preventable communicable diseases by promoting healthy behavior, conducting surveillance of diseases and risk factors, providing screening and enabling early detection, performing laboratory analysis and conducting communicable disease investigation and control measures.

## Community Health Services

Community Health Services provides clinical services, surveillance, and case management through fieldwork. Public health nurses, investigators, community workers, and other field staff

follow up on communicable diseases and other health-related concerns, educate the community, and conduct outreach activities. In addition, it operates 14 public health clinics, which provide immunizations and medical treatment for tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, with a focus on preventing the transmission of communicable diseases that can endanger the health of the community.

## Emergency Preparedness and Response

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Program's purpose is to prepare for emergencies and minimize adverse health effects caused by bioterrorism, infectious disease, and other public health threats through the development and exercise of a comprehensive public health emergency preparedness response plan. This includes collaboration with internal and external partners to coordinate and plan for disasters and emergencies.

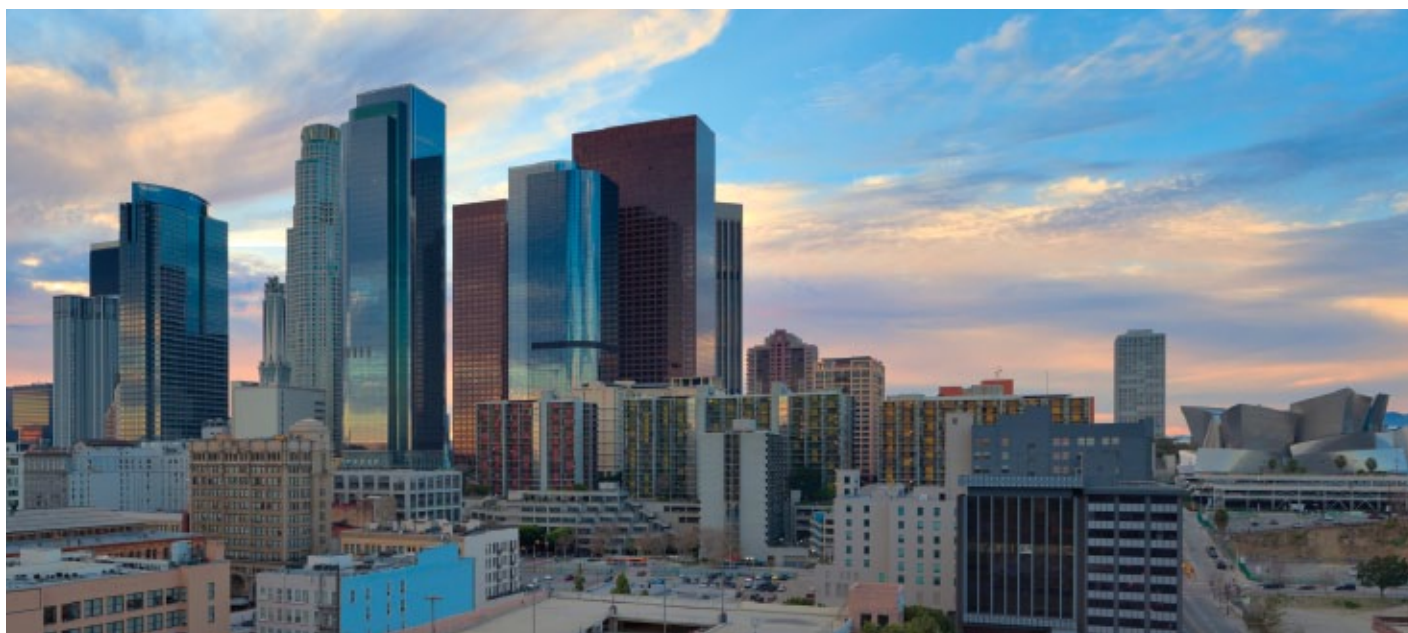
## Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Division promotes health and quality of life by identifying, preventing, and controlling harmful environmental factors. Among its responsibilities, it conducts hygiene inspections of retail food facilities and residential housing units and monitors ocean water quality.

## Health Assessment and Epidemiology

The Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology ensures the availability of comprehensive health data on the Los Angeles County population for public health assessment, policy development, and program planning and evaluation. It oversees the development and implementation of the LA County Health





Survey, a periodic, population-based telephone survey collecting data from a representative sample of LA County residents on health conditions, health behavior, and health care access and utilization of services. It is also responsible for the collection and processing of birth and death data. The office performs analyses, and provides reports and information on the health of LA County residents.

### **Health Facilities Inspection**

Health Facilities Inspection is responsible for the licensing and certification of the nearly 2,000 hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other health care facilities and ancillary health care services in LA County. Inspections evaluate compliance and document findings, and respond to citizen complaints regarding health facilities or providers.

### **HIV and Sexually Transmitted Disease Services**

The Division of HIV and STD Programs is responsible for coordinating the department's response to STD and HIV infections in Los Angeles County. As part of its charge, the division manages federal, state and local funds designed to support epidemiologic and disease surveillance systems, prevention and disease control efforts, coordinated care and treatment services, field investigation, program monitoring, and evaluation. The division's coordinated response relies heavily on partnerships with public partners, including a network of public health clinics and school districts, as well as with a diverse array of private-sector, community-based organizations.

### **Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health**

Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating services that address the health priorities and primary needs of infants, children and adolescents, mothers, and their families in LA County through ongoing assessment, policy development, and quality assurance. Its staff is composed of a multidisciplinary team of physicians, public health nurses, policy analysts, administrators, nutritionists, health educators, social workers, epidemiologists, and support staff.

### **Substance Abuse Prevention and Control**

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Program strives to reduce the community and individual effects of alcohol and drug abuse through evidence-based programs and policy advocacy. It administers contracts with more than 300 community-based agencies for a wide array of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services for LA County residents.

### **Women's Health**

The Office of Women's Health works to improve the health status of women in LA County through strategic planning, comprehensive and effective approaches to improving women's health, and promoting the expansion of funding for research activities. The office operates the Women's Health Hotline, which increases access to care for low-income women by providing free heart disease risk assessments and by scheduling mammograms and Pap tests with community health care providers.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Following its Strategic Plan for 2008-2011, the Department of Public Health is guided by the following priorities:

## **Health Improvement**

Improve the quality of life in the cities and communities of Los Angeles County and increase years of healthy life among residents while reducing health disparities.

## **Health Protection**

Protect the public's health by minimizing the impact of communicable diseases and foodborne and environment-related illnesses.

## **Preparedness**

Improve preparedness and readiness for the identification of and response to emergencies.

## **Organizational Effectiveness**

Improve organizational effectiveness.

## **Workforce Excellence**

Enhance the quality and productivity of the workforce.

## **Fiscal Accountability**

Develop fiscal strategies to support program commitments within financial targets.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH PUBLIC HEALTH CENTERS

The Department of Public Health operates 14 health centers in LA County that provide free and low-cost services to those with no insurance or regular health care provider. Services provided focus on population-health interventions, such as immunizations and communicable disease testing and treatment.



**Antelope Valley**  
335-B East Avenue K-6  
Lancaster, CA 93535  
(661) 723-4526



**North Hollywood**  
5300 Tujunga Avenue  
North Hollywood, CA 91601  
(818) 766-3982



**Central**  
241 N. Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 240-8204



**Pacoima**  
13300 Van Nuys Boulevard  
Pacoima, CA 91331  
(818) 896-1903



**Curtis R. Tucker**  
123 W. Manchester Boulevard  
Inglewood, CA 90301  
(310) 419-5325



**Pomona**  
750 S. Park Avenue  
Pomona, CA 91766  
(909) 868-0235



**Glendale**  
501 N. Glendale Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91206  
(818) 500-5750



**Ruth Temple**  
3834 S. Western Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90062  
(323) 730-3507



**Hollywood/Wilshire**  
5205 Melrose Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90038  
(323) 769-7800



**Simms/Mann**  
2509 Pico Boulevard, Room 325  
Santa Monica, CA 90405  
(310) 998-3203



**Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Center for Public Health**  
11833 S. Wilmington Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90059  
(323) 568-8100



**Torrance**  
711 Del Amo Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90502  
(310) 354-2300



**Monrovia**  
330 W. Maple Avenue  
Monrovia, CA 91016  
(626) 256-1600



**Whittier**  
7643 S. Painter Avenue  
Whittier, CA 90602  
(562) 464-5350

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AREA HEALTH OFFICES

Los Angeles County spans more than 4,000 square miles. Due to its large size, it has been divided into four geographic regions known as Area Health Offices. These offices align with the county's eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs). Creating these distinct areas allows the Department of Public Health to develop and provide more targeted public health and clinical services according to the specific health needs of the residents in these local communities.

## Area Health Offices

- Antelope Valley (SPA 1)
- San Fernando Valley (SPA 2)

Serving the communities of Antelope, Santa Clarita, San Fernando and Crescenta valleys

- San Gabriel Valley (SPA 3)
- Metro (SPA 4)

Serving the communities of Hollywood, Downtown Los Angeles, and San Gabriel Valley

- West (SPA 5)
- South (SPA 6)

Serving the communities of South Central Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, and the Santa Monica Bay region

- East (SPA 7)
- South Bay (SPA 8)

Serving the communities of the Gateway Cities, East Los Angeles, and the South Bay





## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH OPENS

**Columns of festive blue, yellow, and white balloons, gospel singers, mariachis, and a banner proclaiming “Building on the Promise: Quality services for a healthy community” set the stage for the grand opening of the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Public Health, in 2011.**

The new center, which replaces the decades-old South Health Center located a mile away, is a modern, two-story, 31,000-square-foot facility in Willowbrook, located on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center campus.

The completion of the center, which broke ground in 2010, marks a major milestone in the first phase of a \$400-million investment to transform the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center into a wellness village renowned for excellent health care delivery and urban health promotion.

The MLK, Jr. Center for Public Health is the first public health center in LA County to open in 35 years. Like most of the department’s other public health centers, this facility provides immunizations as well as screening and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis for those with either no

health insurance or regular health care provider. Among those addressing the community during the grand opening celebration were Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District Supervisor; Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health

Officer; and Jan King, MD, MPH, Area Health Officer for Service Planning Areas 5 and 6. “The rates and frequency of chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, are higher in South LA than anywhere else in Los Angeles,” said

Dr. Fielding. He continued, “These are burdens that must be lifted, and we want to be part of helping to lift these burdens in partnership with this wonderful community.”

Said Dr. King, “With this new home, we have hope and inspiration that the health in South LA will improve.”





## PERTUSSIS EPIDEMIC NEW LAW, CLINICS, AND OUTREACH

In 2011, the Department of Public Health staged dozens of vaccination clinics to ensure that all 7th- through 12th-graders who lined up for a pertussis, or whooping cough, vaccination received one. Additionally, staff referred low-income children, including those not enrolled in Medi-Cal, to public and private health care providers.

Under a new school immunization law in California, effective July 1, 2011, all students entering the 7th through 12th grades in the 2011-2012 school year are required to be immunized with a tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis, or Tdap, vaccine booster. And while the passage of another law, SB 614, allowed students to attend school conditionally due to an optional 30-day grace period, Public Health maintained its momentum and continued its Tdap vaccination efforts.

### How Public Health Is Making a Difference

The department's results are impressive, as evidenced by these statistics: As of September 26, 2011, more than 20,000 Tdap vaccinations were given through the public health centers, and another 8,200 were provided at community outreaches. Public Health's Area Health Offices, which launched their first Tdap clinic in May 2011, coordinated, planned, and carried out these outreaches throughout the county.

Pivotal to these efforts was partnering with a number of organizations and agencies, such as cities and school districts. In addition to providing the vaccination, staff worked with school administration to ensure compliance with the new law and to provide technical assistance, as needed. Public Health's vaccination efforts reached thousands of adolescents, including many who did not have a routine medical provider or insurance coverage for immunizations. The department also strongly encouraged families to seek vaccination from their health care provider and, as needed, linked families with low- and no-cost immunization providers.

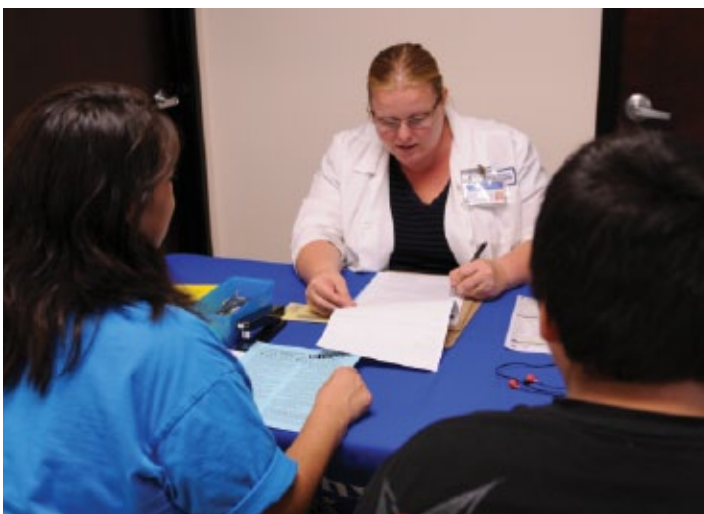
The department played a central role in promoting awareness about the new requirement and supporting provider, school, and community-based efforts. Together, these efforts helped to protect hundreds of thousands of students from pertussis, keeping them healthy and in the classroom.



## Quick Fact



More than **20,000** Tdap vaccinations were given through the public health centers, and another **8,200** were provided at community outreaches.



On the day of a community outreach, public health staff arrive early in the morning to unload supplies, set up the various work stations (e.g., information and consent forms, screening, and vaccination), and train the volunteers. It's a long, busy day, but everyone is content—the staff and volunteers for helping to keep the community healthy, and the now-vaccinated middle- and high-school students who look forward to the start of a promising new school year.

## NEW WHOOPING COUGH VIDEO PROMOTES AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

In 2010, there were more cases of whooping cough reported in California than in any year since 1947 and more than 3.5 times as many cases (lab-confirmed and probable) reported in Los Angeles County, compared to 2009.

In response to the statewide whooping cough epidemic, the Department of Public Health created an educational video for the public, titled “Whooping Cough: Protect Your Family.” The video, which was produced in English and Spanish, features public health nurses who explain in easy-to-understand terms what whooping cough is, how it is spread, its symptoms, and actions that can be taken to prevent the disease.

Employing fact-based messages and a powerful story about a family who lost a child to whooping cough, the video also conveys the importance of vaccination. The video was uploaded to the Department of Public Health’s YouTube site, at [www.youtube.com/lapublichealth](http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth), to make it easily

accessible to viewers. Staff and community-based partners were also encouraged to use the video to educate clients and community members about preventive strategies as well as learn how to protect their own families and loved ones from whooping cough.





## EGG RECALL: SALMONELLA

Throughout the year, the Department of Public Health issues food recall alerts as part of its duty to safeguard the health of Los Angeles County residents. In August 2010, the department sent out two news releases to warn the public about an egg recall due to a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis infections. The infections were associated with an egg farm in Iowa, which had shipped eggs to 14 states, including California. In Los Angeles County, as many as 60 people were confirmed to have the *Salmonella* serotype associated with the recalled eggs.

With the public's safety foremost in mind, the news releases listed the symptoms of *Salmonella* Enteritidis; identifying information about the recalled eggs, such as brand names and the dates and codes printed on the carton; and information about the proper handling and preparation of eggs.

In addition to the news releases, the department coordinated with state and federal agencies on this issue and reached out to food distributors and retailers throughout the county to ensure that the potentially tainted products were removed from their shelves.

Numerous media outlets called for more information, and Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer, provided updates on the situation, including an interview on "World News with Diane Sawyer." The Department of Public Health also posted information on its website to keep the public informed about the egg recall and its potential impact on Los Angeles County residents. While this was occurring, the Public Health Laboratory was busy testing numerous fecal samples for *Salmonella* to determine the extent of the outbreak in LA County.

In a short timeframe, many different programs within the department worked collaboratively—from testing samples to gathering data to contacting food distributors to pushing out the latest information to educate the public and make a difference in the health of the community.





## Quick Fact

**In most instances, bed bugs are moved from infested areas to non-infested areas on clothing, luggage, furniture, or bedding that is brought into homes.**

# BED BUG TOOLKIT

The expression, “Don’t let the bed bugs bite,” has been part of our lexicon in putting children to bed for decades. No one thought much about what they were saying, as they really didn’t know what a bed bug was nor had they ever seen one. That is no longer the case today, as bed bug infestations have been well-publicized around the country and have resurfaced in LA County.

What exactly are bed bugs? They are small, nocturnal insects that suck blood (preferably from humans), easily move from place to place, and can live for long periods of time (up to 18 months) without food. Most harbor themselves in mattresses and bedding, which allows for easy access to food supplies, hence, their name. They were prevalent throughout the United States until the 1950s, when it was believed the nation’s bed bug problem was eradicated, mainly due to the pesticide DDT. In the 1970s, DDT was banned in the U.S., except for a few limited uses.

Over the past couple of years, bed bugs have been reintroduced as an important public health pest in housing institutions and hotels and motels, as well as multiple- and single-family dwellings in LA County. This resurgence of bed bugs has created not only significant concerns within the pest management industry, but also for public health. Even though bed bugs do not spread disease, they can cause allergic reactions, asthma, anemia, stress, financial burden, and housing code violations. More troubling

is that complaints appear to be on the rise as well as the severity of many infestations. Those who are the most affected by this increase are the elderly, disabled, and individuals and families on limited incomes.

### **How Public Health Is Making a Difference**

To help curtail and eliminate the bed bug problem, the Department of Public Health created a Bed Bug Toolkit in 2011, which can be found at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/bedbugs.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/bedbugs.htm). This new resource includes a variety of materials, such as fact sheets and presentations, to educate the public as well as building owners and tenants about these persistent pests. The information in this toolkit not only describes what bed bugs are and where they live, it provides guidance on how to prevent bed bugs in the home as well as how to get rid of them. Using this toolkit, the residents of LA County now have the resources at their fingertips to help prevent these pesky insects from invading their homes and their lives.



## RESPONSE: JAPAN RADIATION RELEASE

**On March 11, 2011, when the first reports were received of a massive 9.0-magnitude earthquake near the coast of northeastern Japan, followed by a destructive tsunami and subsequent damage to a nearby nuclear facility, the Department of Public Health went on alert.**

The department's leaders and Emergency Preparedness and Response Program closely monitored the situation and, as news of an explosion, radiation leaks, and an unstable situation at the nuclear power complex was received, the department made the decision to activate its Department Operations Center (DOC), on March 17. The DOC, a crucial component of the department's emergency plan, is a command center that is set up whenever there is a high-level public health emergency that requires an ongoing, coordinated response across divisions and programs.

The DOC, which was structured according to the federal Incident Command System, included the Incident Manager, Public Information Officer, and Section Chiefs for Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance. Since this situation involved monitoring the environment, the department's Radiation Management Program, Environmental Health, took the lead during this DOC activation.

### Addressing the Public

With news of a radiation plume released by the damaged Japanese nuclear power plant heading toward California, LA County residents looked to Public Health for more information. Through press conferences, media interviews, press releases, and health advisories, the department offered reassurance that there was no increased risk of radiation above normal levels in the environment. It also educated the public on the dangers of taking unnecessary precautions, such as potassium iodide. These messages were updated regularly to keep residents informed of the changing situation. In addition, web pages were created, in English and Spanish, to keep those on the Internet apprised of the latest news from the department and to provide information on earthquake preparedness.






## Quick Fact

**To keep the public informed about the Japan nuclear power complex situation, Public Health set up special web pages in English and Spanish. These pages included resources, the latest press coverage and updates, and bilingual fact sheets for a variety of audiences, such as parents, schools, and first responders.**

### Monitoring the Environment

Behind the scenes, more than 100 staff members were called upon to assist in the response. Some were asked to conduct air sampling throughout Los Angeles County at geographically strategic locations. Each day, these staff members gathered samples that were analyzed to provide the Incident Manager and the command staff with important data to inform decision-making.

In addition, a battery of radiation detectors that had previously been purchased was also deployed. These detectors performed the crucial task of relaying real-time information on radiation levels throughout the county back to the command post.

### Working in Partnership

Throughout the response, the department was in constant contact with federal, state, and other local governmental agencies to share information and coordinate the response. These interactions

developed into a working group known as the MAC-G, or multiagency coordination group. Through the pooled resources of the MAC-G, which included the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, California Department of Public Health, and Municipal Water purveyors, the department gained a more global view of the situation. In addition, it ensured that the agencies involved did not duplicate work, thereby making the response a more streamlined and efficient operation.

As the days and weeks passed, Public Health continued to monitor the environment in LA County. Fortunately, the Japan nuclear power complex situation was stabilized and the department was able to transition out of emergency response mode.

This situation provided yet another example of the department's ability to quickly mobilize, respond, and manage an emergency affecting LA County residents.

# GRANTS DRIVE HEALTH CHANGE IN COMMUNITIES

**The Department of Public Health was awarded two grants, in March 2010, totaling \$32.1 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative.**

The funds, which were granted for a two-year period, were earmarked to address obesity prevention and tobacco prevention activities in LA County. To enact change in the county, the department was charged to work with cities, schools, and communities to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, and reduce smoking. These three health behaviors are the major factors contributing to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer—the leading causes of death in LA County.

Since the funding of the grants, both Project RENEW—which was awarded \$15.9 million for obesity prevention—and Project TRUST—which was awarded \$16.2 million for tobacco prevention—have made significant strides in conducting outreach and implementing healthy changes in LA County.



**Project RENEW** (Renew Environments for Nutrition, Exercise, and Wellness) and funded partners have made great progress to improve the health of residents in communities,

schools, and workplaces. Its public awareness campaign, Choose Health LA, represents all of the public health efforts of RENEW and empowers communities to make healthy choices in environments that support these choices.

At the beginning of 2011, revisions were drafted to the county vending machine policy to limit sodium content for pre-packed snacks and set maximum calorie levels for beverages sold in vending machines in county facilities. Additionally, in response to a Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors motion, the department collaborated with the Department of Health Services (DHS) to expand the healthy food and beverage options provided through county hospital cafeterias and vending machines. These changes include reducing the serving sizes of sugar-sweetened beverages, adding menu labeling, and requiring the development of a sodium-reduction plan by the vendor in conjunction with DHS.

In communities, RENEW is working to increase the accessibility of healthy foods and beverages in high-burden, high-need communities with childhood obesity rates above the county

average. It is also working with cities throughout the county to increase access to healthier food and beverages through the adoption and implementation of new vending policies. Additionally, the program is helping to transform the food environment through corner stores in South Los Angeles by helping owners provide more healthy options and implement product placement and marketing strategies to encourage the purchase of these food and beverages.

In schools, RENEW is working to improve the health of students through more nutritious school meals and increased physical activity. Using recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, the department is working with local school districts to improve the nutritional quality of school meals, including the addition of more whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables and the reduction of fat, sugar, salt, and calories. Physical education trainings with teachers are being conducted to build capacity for schools to meet the California requirements for physical education minutes.

Additionally, RENEW is helping to provide safe, open spaces for recreation through joint-use policies and expanded bicycle networks. The Joint-Use Task Force continues to meet monthly to identify opportunities for the passage of joint-use agreements between schools and communities. The program has also partnered with the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning to support the development of a healthy design ordinance that guides built environment design to promote physical activity in the form of walking, biking, and exercising. The Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission voted to initiate amendments to incorporate the healthy design ordinance in the county code, which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

**Obesity rates are rising in Los Angeles County:**

Approximately 22% of adults and more than 20% of youth are obese. Disparities in obesity prevalence are significant; for example, within a 10-mile radius the childhood obesity rate can be 4% in one neighborhood and 34% in another, with the highest obesity rates in low-income neighborhoods.



## Quick Fact

An estimated **585,000** nonsmoking adults and **336,000** children are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes each year in Los Angeles County.

### PROJECT TRUST

Building on the department's past tobacco control and prevention successes, **Project TRUST** (Tobacco Reduction Using effective Strategies and Teamwork) has made significant

progress in further reducing indoor and outdoor secondhand smoke exposure, strengthening youth smoking prevention efforts, and increasing access to effective tobacco-cessation services.

In the past year, seven cities adopted policies that created smoke-free public places, including parks, plazas, worksites, farmers' markets, and other outdoor areas, and four cities passed policies to protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke exposure in their apartments. With the addition of these policies, more than 75% of the county's 9.8 million residents are covered by tobacco control and prevention policies.

The funding has also enabled the department to expand effective tobacco-cessation services for all smokers in Los Angeles County, including those most impacted by tobacco use. Project TRUST has been working closely with more than 60 social service agencies and homeless shelters to reduce smoking prevalence among vulnerable adult populations by creating smoke-free environments and integrating smoking-cessation services into existing agency programs and services.

**Tobacco remains the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death** in the United States. In Los Angeles County, an estimated 8,600 people die each year from diseases caused by smoking. Despite these risks, approximately one million Los Angeles County adults continue to smoke cigarettes.

The harmful effects of smoking extend beyond the smoker. An estimated 585,000 nonsmoking adults and 336,000 children are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes each year in Los Angeles County. Secondhand smoke exposure causes serious disease and death, including heart disease and lung cancer in nonsmoking adults and sudden infant death syndrome, acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks in children.



## WOMEN'S HEALTH HOTLINE SAVES LIVES

**To combat the high rate of cervical cancer in LA County, the Department of Public Health began a pilot project in county facilities, in 2001, to assist low-income women in obtaining Pap tests.**

The centerpiece of the project was a bilingual (English and Spanish) toll-free hotline, staffed by resource workers who would set up Pap test appointments, thereby assisting the callers in navigating the county system. The pilot project was titled, "Free Pap Test Fridays." Due to the overwhelming number of calls received, two additional operators were hired to handle the high volume of women seeking Pap tests.

Based on the success of this pilot project, in 2002, the department received a \$2.3 million grant from The California Endowment, for its Cervical Cancer Prevention and Education Initiative. Using these funds, the hotline expanded in scope, community partnerships, and multilingual capabilities. In addition to making Pap test appointments at county facilities, the office also established relationships with community provider clinics, plus conducted a multicultural media campaign and hired more personnel, who were multilingual in seven languages, to staff the hotline.



Although the hotline has evolved through the years, its objectives remain unchanged: to increase access to care for low-income women in LA County and to encourage preventive screenings.

Today, a woman who calls the hotline (1-800-793-8090) during normal office hours can speak with an operator in English,

Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, or Armenian. If she is requesting an appointment for a Pap test and is within the appropriate age range, she will also be asked about a mammogram screening and whether she has a few minutes to take a Heart Disease

Risk Assessment over the telephone. If she is calling about the Heart Disease Risk Assessment, she will also be asked if she needs an appointment for a Pap test or mammogram. Through this type of "cross-selling," the department ensures that the caller's health is addressed comprehensively. If a woman is calling about something beyond the scope of the hotline, the caller is provided with referral information to the proper community resources.



 Quick Fact

Since the launch of the **Women’s Health Hotline** in January 2002 and through June 2011, more than **34,500** appointments have been made on behalf of callers. Since March 2007, more than **6,800** women have received a **Heart Disease Risk Assessment**.

Initially, the hotline operators set appointments for callers only at county facilities; however, through collaborations that were sought out and cultivated by Public Health staff, the program can now set up appointments through a network of 146 community provider clinics. These partnerships have greatly benefitted the women of LA County by expanding the volume and range of resources available.

**How Public Health Is Making a Difference**

Since the launch of the Women’s Health Hotline in January 2002 and through June 2011, more than 34,500 appointments have been made on behalf of callers.

Coronary heart disease is the number one cause of death for all women in LA County, regardless of race/ethnicity or service planning area (geographic location). Since March 2007, more than 6,800 women have received a Heart Disease Risk Assessment. Based on an analysis of 1,365 Heart Disease Risk Assessments completed between March 2007 and January 2008, 50% of

participants were Latina, 30% Asian/Pacific Islander, 12% African American, and 5% white. More than 95% were uninsured and living at less than 200% of the federal poverty level. Three-fourths were born outside of the United States, and 73% preferred a language other than English.



The three most prevalent modifiable risk factors were physical inactivity (65%), overweight/obesity (58%), and low intake of fruits and vegetables (54%). In the assessment, 50% had between two and four risk factors, and 25% had five or more risk factors. Regardless of the number of risk factors, there were statistically significant increases in the awareness of heart disease risk factors overall.

Based on the results of a satisfaction survey, 92% of callers said they learned something new about heart disease risk factors and, importantly, 98% said they intended to apply the new information and make healthier lifestyle changes.

*continued on page 22 >*



## Quick Fact

**Based on the results of a satisfaction survey, 92% of callers said they learned something new about heart disease risk factors and, importantly, 98% said they intended to apply the new information and make healthier lifestyle changes.**

### Hotline Operators Share Their Stories

The operators who staff the Women's Health Hotline talk to thousands of women each year, listening to their stories with compassionate hearts and ears. In the end, they are singularly focused on creating a healthier LA County by increasing access to care for low-income women and encouraging preventive screenings. Here, they share some of their stories:

- “One day I got a call from a Chinese woman who had heard about the Women's Health Hotline,” says Elaine, one of the multilingual hotline operators. “Like most of the Chinese women who call the hotline, she was low-income with a low level of education and didn't know about cervical cancer. She had never had a Pap test. I talked to her about the Pap test, but she didn't want to have one because she didn't want to take time off of work and lose income. She said she was too busy working and taking care of her family. But I pushed her to go and set up her appointment. Later, I called to follow up. ‘Did you go?’ I asked. She said, ‘No, I didn't.’ I said, ‘You have to go. What day can you go?’ She kept making excuses, but after talking to her awhile, she gave me a date, and I rescheduled the appointment. Many months later, she called back and said, ‘Because you pushed me so much, I went to the appointment and found out I had cancer, but now I am OK.’” Elaine says the woman thanked her profusely and even her husband got on the phone to thank her. He told her, “If you didn't push my wife to go and she died, we would have lost her, and who would be taking care of my children right now?”
- Lydia, another hotline operator, recounts this story of a woman who called the hotline to obtain a free Pap test. She says, “Although the caller lived in an affluent neighborhood, she said

that she was going through a divorce because her husband had left her for another woman and that she was losing the house. Plus, her husband had taken her off of his insurance. She said she hadn't had a Pap test in two years and that she had a history of abnormal results.

“I told her how important it was for her to have a Pap test regularly, then I set up her appointment. Afterward she called back to tell me that she was able to establish a support system through the clinic I sent her to, which also addressed her depression and high blood pressure. She called back to thank me for my help. Although she is not our typical demographic, this caller exemplifies that bad times can happen to anyone, at any socioeconomic level.”



- Hotline operator Monica recalls a time when she was out in the field, working in the department's mobile clinic at the Placita Olvera.

“A woman had brought her 60-year-old mother to the clinic for a mammogram at her mother's request. But what the mother didn't know was that the daughter also made arrangements for her to have a Pap test. The mother did not want the Pap test but she went through with it anyway since it was already set up. On the way home, she scolded her daughter and said, ‘Why did you do that to me? I wasn't prepared, and I was embarrassed.’

“A year later, I see this lady running toward us. She says, ‘Are you the people who were here last year?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ She said, ‘You saved my life.’ It turns out she had an early stage of cervical cancer. She kept thanking us and thanking us. She told us that if it hadn't been for our outreach efforts and for her daughter bringing her in, she wouldn't be here today.”





# PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM FOODBORNE ILLNESS

Parents who are concerned about the safety of the food their children are served in the school cafeteria will be glad to know that the Department of Public Health conducts routine inspections of hundreds of school cafeterias in Los Angeles County.

These inspections are a result of amendments to the federal Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This legislation included a mandate that beginning on July 1, 2005, public schools receiving federal funds as part of the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program are required to obtain at least two food safety inspections per school year to qualify for federal funding. The inspections must be conducted by a state or local government agency responsible for food safety inspections.

To assist the schools in meeting this requirement, Public Health created a voluntary, fee-for-service Public School Food Safety Inspection Program. Through a service agreement, schools contract with the department to conduct the required inspections.

Food safety inspections of school cafeterias began in March 2010. As of December 2010, 44 school districts and charter schools had

entered into a service agreement with the department to conduct 852 food safety inspections. In January 2011, Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest school district in the state, also signed up for the Public School Food Safety Inspection Program. Operating the program as a fee-based service allows Public Health to conduct these inspections at no net loss of funding to the department or LA County.



## How Public Health Is Making a Difference

By focusing on the factors that can contribute to foodborne illness, the food safety inspections help protect the health and safety of the children eating at these school cafeterias from harmful pathogens and other hazards. In addition, the health inspectors use the opportunity to educate food service staff about proper food handling, thereby reducing the risk of foodborne illness in the future.

# MOBILE FOOD FACILITIES: LETTER GRADING

The growth in popularity of gourmet food trucks over the past few years has spawned a whole new industry of mobile food service in Los Angeles County. As a result of this trend, potential new sources of foodborne illness are crisscrossing the streets of Los Angeles every day, serving up breakfast, lunch, and dinner to residents and visitors alike.

To help protect the public's health, the department, in 2010, extended its well-known restaurant letter grading program to mobile food facilities, which includes food trucks and hot dog carts in unincorporated areas of the county and in cities that adopted an ordinance for the program. Like a restaurant that has been inspected, the public can now instantly identify mobile food facilities that are certified and inspected by seeing the familiar A, B, or C letters in their windows or on the side of their carts.

The mobile food facility grading program is modeled after the highly successful restaurant letter grading program. As a result of restaurant grading, residents of Los Angeles County have come to expect a certain level of food safety when eating out at a restaurant. By applying these same requirements to mobile food facilities, the public can be more confident about the safety of the food they eat, as well as empowered in making healthier decisions based on objective food safety findings and criteria.

After all, the same problems that are found during restaurant inspections—such as lack of employee hygiene, cross contamination of food preparation surfaces, and lack of overall cleanliness—are the same problems that can be found at mobile food facilities. All of these factors have been shown to cause food-

borne illness and are conditions that occur routinely at uninspected facilities.

Whether a brick and mortar facility or one on wheels, the department requires all food facilities to undergo inspection and maintain current permits. Especially when it comes to food trucks, this new program will help the public differentiate between permitted and non-permitted food vendors.



As of late 2010, Los Angeles County had more than 6,000 actively permitted mobile food facilities. The new mobile food facilities grading program consists of two phases: Phase one covers high-risk facilities, such as mobile food preparation units, limited food vehicles, and food carts; Phase two, expected to launch in 2012, covers low-risk facilities, such as vehicles and carts that serve pre-packaged and limited unpackaged foods.

## How Public Health Is Making a Difference

The restaurant inspection letter grading program has proven effective in reducing foodborne illness: A year after the restaurant letter grading program was introduced in 1998, there was a 13.1% decrease in the number of people hospitalized with foodborne diseases. Further, during the first 10 years of the letter grading program, the percentage of "A" grades rose from 57.5% to 84.1%, reducing the number of high-risk food safety violations.

Now, with the rollout of the mobile food facility grading program, the Department of Public Health is helping to ensure that food trucks and carts are held to the same food-handling and safety standards as other food purveyors in LA County, thus protecting the health of LA County residents and visitors who buy food from these moving eateries.





## PROMOTING GOOD NUTRITION AT FARMERS' MARKETS

Among the stands selling seasonal, locally grown vegetables and fruits, homemade honey, and bright bouquets of flowers sits a booth where nothing is sold, in the literal sense, except the value and importance of good nutrition.

With an “Ask the Dietitian” Public Health banner as the backdrop, staff from the Department of Public Health, registered dietitians, and student volunteers entice market-goers to the booth with samples of healthy recipes, such as cantaloupe salad; cucumber and strawberry salad; or arugula, spinach, and orange salad. At the booth, the public can pick up nutrition-related materials on subjects ranging from vegetarianism to cholesterol to sodium, as well as dozens of recipe cards for healthy salads, and produce pointers. This provides a good opportunity for those staffing the booth to discuss nutrition, show the visual displays of fat and sugar content found in popular fast foods, and answer nutrition-related questions.

The Ask the Dietitian program, which was created in the mid-1990s by Public Health, has been successful these many years due to community partnerships it has formed with local farmers' markets and volunteer dietitians and students.

For example, the program, which runs from March through November, relies on booth space donated by the farmers' markets. In 2011, 12 spaces were donated. They were geographi-

cally spread throughout the county, which allowed the department's messages to be widely disseminated. In addition, the produce to prepare the month's featured recipe is donated by the neighboring produce stands or purchased by the farmers' market management from the vendors and given to the dietitians. A roster of volunteer staff, both registered dietitians and students, stand at the ready to work the booths.

### How Public Health Is Making a Difference

The Ask the Dietitian program is a win-win-win situation:

The department has the opportunity to educate the public about good nutrition and cooking with locally grown, fresh produce; vendors may sell more fruits and vegetables because of the booth's tasty samples and nutrition messaging; and the farmers' markets appreciate having an educational component present

to promote both good health and, indirectly, their vendors' products.

While the Ask the Dietitian program has received positive evaluations and feedback from the public, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Since the genesis of the program, many other counties across the nation have consulted with the program and implemented the concept, helping to spread the department's health messages beyond the borders of LA County.





## PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATORS IN THE FIELD

**Crucial to protecting the public's health is the Department of Public Health's work to prevent communicable diseases and halt their spread. To help carry out these important functions, the department relies on its staff of public health investigators. These tenacious individuals spend much of their time in the field, locating infected clients and their partners to educate and refer them for screening, treatment, and other health care services.**

Sometimes clients come in for testing but don't come back to find out the result. That's when an investigator becomes involved. But oftentimes, tracking down clients is not easy, as many live in transitional housing and do not have a permanent address. Sometimes the addresses given are incorrect. So the investigator must be resourceful in trying to find the clients to advise them of the result and offer resources for treatment services.

When an investigator reaches a client at home, the investigator will confidentially inform the client of his or her communicable disease status, provide education about the disease, and offer referral information for examination and treatment services. The investigators also ask about the client's past partners. This allows the investigators to then locate the

partners and let them know that they have been exposed to someone with a communicable disease.

The investigators work with clients aged 12 and older who have reportable sexually transmitted diseases, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, or HIV. They also work with non-compliant tuberculosis and acute communicable disease patients. Complementing the work of the investigators, the department's public health nurses handle clients who are pregnant or under the age of 12.

In 2010, the approximate numbers of STD cases assigned to public health investigators were as follows: chlamydia, 10,444; gonorrhea, 5,966; syphilis, 2,102; and HIV, 2,895. The true figures are actually higher, as they do not include the cases generated from interviewing the partners of these clients.






## Quick Fact

In 2010, the approximate numbers of STD cases assigned to public health investigators were as follows: **chlamydia, 10,444; gonorrhea, 5,966; syphilis, 2,102; and HIV, 2,895.**

One of the investigators' greatest challenges is talking to clients who are not willing to cooperate with treatment or provide information. In cases such as these, the investigators stress how communicable diseases affect not only the client's life, but also the lives of others. Most of the time, the investigators are successful in convincing clients to cooperate, and each time it's a victory for public health and the community.

### A Broad Range of Duties

While tracking down clients and partners is, perhaps, what public health investigators are best known for, their assignments are much more diverse:

In the public health center's sexually transmitted disease clinics, they interview clients, conduct risk assessments, provide health education, provide HIV pre- and post-test counseling and HIV test results, and offer partner notification and referral services.

When a client is diagnosed with or has been exposed to an enteric disease (such as salmonellosis, shigellosis, or typhoid fever) and that person works in a "sensitive occupation," such as food handling or in a nursing home, the investigator will notify the client's employer that the client must be removed

from work until treatment is completed. In many instances, however, the investigator works with the employer to reassign the client to duties that will not affect the health of others.

Some investigators, who are assigned to the Court-Ordered Compliance Program for drunk drivers, are housed in several Los Angeles County court buildings. There, they refer services to clients who have been ordered by the court to undergo programs for drunk driving, domestic violence, or anger management. They also monitor these clients to ensure that they complete the programs.

When a child is born outside of a hospital, it's the investigator's job to determine whether the baby was born in Los Angeles County. This is necessary for the issuance of a birth certificate.

With such a wide variety of assignments, the work of a public health investigator is always interesting. Whether in the field or in the office, these individuals work tenaciously to prevent the spread of communicable diseases one client at a time.



# RAVE TASK FORCE EDUCATES ON DRUG USE

Electronic music is now considered mainstream music, and it is popular with youth and young adults. This music genre is showcased at electronic music events, or raves, much like a traditional concert would showcase rock, rap, and country artists. While drug use can occur at any music event, ecstasy and other drugs at raves have led to injury and death. In LA County, at the 2010 Electric Daisy Carnival, hundreds of attendees were arrested and many others were sent to the emergency room. A 15-year-old attendee died from ecstasy-related intoxication.

This prompted the LA County Board of Supervisors to instruct the LA County Department of Public Health and the LA County Department of Health Services to create a Rave Task Force to address this public health concern and educate youth and young adults about ecstasy and other drug use at clubs, raves, and electronic music events.

The Rave Task Force included members from numerous agencies and organizations, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Coliseum Commission, and event promoters. Together, they developed countywide recommendations to enhance the public's health and safety at raves and similar events in Los Angeles County. After consideration, the Board of Supervisors adopted the full list of recommendations from the Rave Task Force as general policy direction for all raves in the county, regardless of whether they are held at private or public venues.

To spread the word, a letter was sent to promoters and sponsoring entities who were planning or have staged raves within LA County within the past five years, as well as to all electronic music festival venue operators, law enforcement agencies, and emergency medical service providers within the county, encouraging them to adopt and implement the recommendations from the Task Force at all electronic music festivals within county borders.

## How Public Health Is Making a Difference

Through the department's collaboration with multiple organizations, the Task Force's recommendations were used at three raves in the last half of 2010: LA Love Festival, Monster Massive, and Together As One.

Attendees were provided with information about the signs and symptoms of ecstasy use, including an ecstasy "education" card



## Quick Fact

**Ecstasy and other drugs at raves have led to injury and death.**



to increase awareness about the drug. Security personnel were briefed on the signs and symptoms of ecstasy use and overdose. Electronic educational messaging was posted throughout the venue. A public service announcement was developed with event promoters and electronic music talents to highlight the dangers of ecstasy and overdose.

Data collected from the raves revealed the rate of medical transports to emergency rooms declined after the Rave Task Force's recommendations were implemented. At the two-day Electric Daisy Carnival, held prior to the Task Force's formation, there were 7.3 transports per 10,000 attendees on Day 1 and 8.0 transports per 10,000 attendees on Day 2. After the Task Force's recommendations were put in place, these figures declined to 6.0 transports per 10,000 attendees at the first rave (LA Love Festival) to 3.7 transports per 10,000 attendees at the last rave (Together As One).

Moving forward, the department is committed to ongoing collaboration across county departments and other agencies. Public Health will continue its substance abuse prevention education efforts along with community-based organizations to increase the knowledge and resistance skills of students who may be considering experimentation with ecstasy. Through the efforts of the Rave Task Force, numerous strategies are now in place to improve the health and safety at these events in the future.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

## “No Excuses” Campaign Helps Residents Quit Smoking

To help smokers in LA County fight their urge to light up, the Department of Public Health launched its “No Excuses” campaign in 2011. The campaign, which ties into the department’s existing “It’s Quitting Time L.A.!” cessation program, offers free nicotine patches for LA County residents who want to make a quit attempt. In addition, the department partnered with the Los Angeles Sparks women’s NBA team to promote “No Excuses.” LA Sparks basketball player DeLisha Milton-Jones served as the spokesperson and filmed a public service announcement to encourage smokers to quit.

The “No Excuses” website, [www.noexcusesla.com](http://www.noexcusesla.com), also features videos and links to social media to encourage smokers to make a quit attempt. The site offers compelling health statistics and positive reinforcement to provide encouragement: Within 20 minutes, your blood pressure and pulse drop to normal and your body temperature in your hands and feet increase to normal. After 8 hours, carbon monoxide levels in the blood drop to normal and your oxygen level increases. After 24 hours, your breath, hair, and body stop smelling like smoke. Your chance of a heart attack decreases. After 1 year, your risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half. After 5 years, your risk of a stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker.

The campaign reinforces the message: “You can be the star player in your tobacco-free life. Live Tobacco Free. No Excuses.”



## Vaccine Campaign Aims to Improve Immunization Rates

To remind LA County residents that vaccines are the best way to protect their children and the community against serious diseases, such as influenza, measles, polio, and pertussis (whooping cough), the department launched a multi-pronged public education campaign in April 2011, urging parents and caregivers to get their whole family vaccinated.

The campaign—titled “Stay Healthy. Vaccinate.”—spreads its messages through print media, television and radio spots, its own website and feeds on Facebook and Twitter. To promote vaccination, materials focus on facts about vaccination, including their safety and effectiveness. The campaign, posted online at [www.vaccinatela.com](http://www.vaccinatela.com), also provides easy-to-understand summaries of the various vaccines and information on where to obtain vaccinations for those with or without health insurance.

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## Second Phase of HIV Prevention Campaign Rolls Out

To publicize the 30th anniversary of the first U.S. reports of HIV/AIDS, the Department of Public Health launched the second phase of its “Erase Doubt” HIV prevention and awareness campaign, [www.EraseDoubt.org](http://www.EraseDoubt.org). It is targeted at Latino and African American gay and bisexual men, and women aged 18-44.

The first phase, which launched in 2009, featured the “Virus” imagery. It was branded by the Erase Doubt logo and introduced an enlarged, striking image of the human immunodeficiency virus, along with statistics to illustrate the impact of the epidemic in LA County (i.e., “You are up to 5 times more likely to get HIV if you already have an STD.”)

In June 2011, the second phase of the campaign was unveiled. It uses everyday people living in Los Angeles County as the faces of the HIV prevention message and asks viewers “Is HIV in You?” The bold, eye-catching imagery directs the public to the campaign’s website with the offer to “Get Tested. Get Treated. Free.” Ads can be seen on buses and billboards and information is posted on Facebook and other social media sites. The models appearing in the ads can also be seen in person, serving as ambassadors at various community events and in videos on the Erase Doubt website, reminding people that even after 30 years, HIV/AIDS is still with us.



## Fresh Air Dining in Los Angeles

On March 8, 2011, outdoor dining areas in the City of Los Angeles went smoke-free. As a result, patrons can now enjoy a fresh dining experience at restaurant patios, cafes, food courts and even food kiosks, carts and mobile food trucks.

To raise awareness, the Department of Public Health launched the “Fresh Air Dining LA” campaign, [www.freshairdiningla.com](http://www.freshairdiningla.com), a few days prior to the law taking effect. In addition to colorful ads and radio announcements in English, Spanish, and Korean, the website features downloadable signs that must be posted by affected businesses. The signs state that smoking is prohibited within 10 feet of restaurant patios, cafes, and food courts, and within 40 feet of food carts, food kiosks, and mobile food trucks.

The law provides several public health benefits: It protects patrons and workers from the dangerous health effects of second-hand smoke, it reduces places where young people can learn to smoke, and it expands the public space where smokers who are trying to quit are not exposed to smoke.

While the vast majority of LA County residents are nonsmokers—85.7 percent—even smokers have reported enjoying a smoke-free dining experience. With this policy, Los Angeles joins a number of cities in LA County that have already implemented smoke-free outdoor dining policies, including Beverly Hills, Calabasas, Glendale, Pasadena, and Santa Monica.



## “Salt Shocker” Video Series Exposes Foods with Excessive Sodium

Excessive sodium consumption is a growing public health concern. The average LA County resident consumes more than double the recommended daily amount of sodium. Over time, all that excess salt can cause high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.

To urge LA County residents to be more proactive in monitoring their sodium intake, the Department of Public Health launched a sodium awareness initiative during World Salt Awareness Week, March 21-27, 2011. The centerpiece of the campaign was the “Salt Shocker” video series, which was developed by the department. Each 1-minute video reveals a common food or ingredient that many people would not suspect to be loaded with sodium, such as ketchup and cottage cheese. The videos also explain the dietary guidelines for sodium consumption, shed light on misconceptions, and provide tips to help viewers reduce sodium intake.

The video series, which can be viewed at [www.choosehealthla.com](http://www.choosehealthla.com) or [www.youtube.com/lapublichealth](http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth), is an informative and engaging way for Public Health to drive greater awareness and concern about excessive sodium consumption. To further this campaign, the department continues its work with the National Salt Reduction Initiative to dramatically reduce the amount of sodium in many of the packaged foods that LA County residents eat and in the restaurants where they dine.

The Los Angeles County Sodium Reduction Initiative has worked diligently toward creating healthier food environments by implementing population-based strategies such as food procurement policies to reduce sodium content in meals served in various food service venues across the county.



## Resources for Kids: Flu Prevention Activity Books

To empower children and make them aware that there are simple actions they can take to help prevent the flu, the Department of Public Health created a fun and informative activity book titled “Be a Germbuster.” This bright, colorful, 16-page resource, which was released to coincide with the beginning of the flu season in September 2010, is filled with coloring pages, games, and puzzles that educate children on important flu-prevention strategies, such as washing your hands, covering your cough and sneeze, getting a flu vaccination, and staying home when you’re sick.

The activity books, which were printed in English and Spanish for two age groups, 5-9 years old and 10-12 years old, were distributed to LA County schools and at public health outreach events. They are also available online, at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov).



## Resources for Kids: Summer Safety Activity Sheets

Children often cite summer as their favorite season of the year. After all, school is out and the days are longer, which means more time for outdoor play and activity. But summer is not all fun and games, as the statistics show—it’s also a peak season for injuries.

To help teach kids about basic actions they can take to stay safe during the summer, the Department of Public Health created the “Healthy Fun Under the Sun” safety campaign, in June 2011. This seasonal campaign, [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/summer](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/summer), is targeted to children aged 6 to 10 and comprises five activity sheets, each focusing on a different safety topic: sun safety, water safety, preventing germs, healthy foods, and pet safety.

# ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the activities highlighted in the feature articles, the Department of Public Health achieved many other significant accomplishments, several of which are listed here...

## Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

- Trained more than 140 elementary, middle, and high-school teachers across seven school districts with high childhood obesity rates on how to integrate physical education into the school day. This increased the amount and the quality of physical education instruction provided to more than 4,000 students.
- Assisted in the development of a joint-use policy in the Mountain View School District. The new policy increased access to safe places for physical activity for the 123,118 community residents served by the district at its 12 school sites.
- Issued grant funds to cities and community-based partnerships in El Monte, Long Beach, Culver City, Glendale, and Pacoima to develop land use and transportation policies and build infrastructure that promotes physical activity. Policies adopted included bike and pedestrian master plans, safe and healthy streets plans, safe routes to schools plans, health and wellness elements, and greenway vision plans. Grantees also striped bike lanes, created walking circuits, installed way-finding signage, planted trees, and enhanced safety through traffic-calming features such as traffic circles.
- Collaborated with the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence in Los Angeles/University of Southern California Andrus Gerontology Center to increase awareness about the dangers of falls. The Department of Public Health provided training and community resources to help reduce the risk for falling in vulnerable groups and conducted research to study the effectiveness of fall prevention strategies in the community.

## Communicable Disease Control and Prevention

- Completed 16 years of varicella (chickenpox) surveillance as part of the Varicella Active Surveillance Project, which has been tracking disease cases and vaccine usage since 1995. Results confirmed a sharp decline in varicella incidence across all age groups, as well as declines in community outbreaks. The data collected has contributed to vaccine policy development on a national level.

- Responded to the pertussis (whooping cough) epidemic of 2010 through the timely and accurate management of more than 2,300 disease reports. Countless hours were spent educating patients, parents, and health care providers in a successful effort to enhance vaccination rates and protect more people from this infectious disease.
- Planned and held a regional workshop for Southern California public health departments to discuss current practices of foodborne outbreak response and identify areas for improvement. It assisted in quality improvement efforts in foodborne outbreak response.
- Developed a comprehensive influenza (flu) and viral respiratory pathogen surveillance system, which includes data from out-patient visits, emergency rooms, laboratories, hospitals, and the coroner. This allows for the tracking of classic and new respiratory pathogens. The information is published biweekly during flu season through the *Influenza Watch* newsletter. This provides up-to-date information for public health officials, the health care community, and the public.
- Worked with birthing hospitals in Los Angeles County to create policies designed to reduce mother-to-baby transmission rates of hepatitis B, and to increase hepatitis B vaccination rates. Hospitals have also been instructed to obtain original HBsAg laboratory reports instead of relying on transcribed results in order to reduce errors. This is an important step in ensuring hepatitis B-positive pregnant women are identified upon hospital admission and their infants receive appropriate preventive treatment.
- The Public Health Laboratory became the only public health lab in the state to hold ELITE status from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This certification allows the lab to test, identify and characterize the presence of *Legionella* bacteria in water samples. Only two other laboratories in the state hold this status, both of which are commercial environmental facilities.
- Piloted the Quantiferon blood test program, which is an alternative to the traditional TB skin test, for patients seen in the Refugee Health Assessment Program. This has resulted

in a dramatic reduction in false positive test results, and in significant cost savings from averted chest X-rays, fewer medical visits, and unnecessary treatment regimens.

- Educated more than 100,000 low-income residents on a variety of nutrition topics, including healthy cooking techniques, healthy eating on a budget, and the best methods for incorporating physical activity into their daily routine.

### Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Launched a pilot project to exercise the capacity of Child Care Resource and Referral Centers in LA County to administer vaccine to at-risk, low-income, and ethnically and linguistically diverse children and their families. These efforts are improving the pandemic and emergency preparedness of child care providers, and the children and families they serve.

### Environmental Health

- Conducted more than 52,600 restaurant inspections and 13,810 food market inspections, and nearly 51,174 licensed housing inspections of apartments and condominiums. These inspections, which include the restaurant letter grading program, are crucial to protecting the public's health from food-related illness caused by infectious agents, and environmental-related housing issues, such as pests and mold.
- Collected and analyzed more than 2,200 beach water samples from the LA County coastline. These samples check for accept-

able levels of bacteria to ensure the safety of swimmers, surfers, and other beachgoers. Warning signs are posted when a portion of the beach is found to have exceeded these levels.

- Established a pilot program in the City of West Hollywood to address concerns of food facility owners related to the consistent application and enforcement of the California Retail Food Code, timely inspections, and timely plan reviews. The project resulted in increased collaboration with local business operators, constituents, and city officials; more uniformity and consistency in the interpretation and application of food codes; and quicker process times for plan check reviews and other services.

### Health Assessment and Epidemiology

- Implemented an e-commerce initiative for Vital Records, which allows for the use of credit cards to purchase burial permits as well as birth and death certificates. This improves service to customers, including the public and funeral homes.
- Completed data collection for the 2011 Los Angeles County Health Survey, which gathers extensive information about LA County residents' health status, health behaviors, access to care, use of preventive services, and opinions on public health issues. Data from this survey are crucial to identifying important public health issues and are key to prioritizing departmental efforts.

*continued on page 34 >*



## Highlight

**...increased awareness about African American infant mortality, and coordinated prenatal/postpartum services for over 1,400 African American women**



**Additional Accomplishments**

**HIV and STD Programs**

- Reorganized the Sexually Transmitted Disease Program, HIV Epidemiology Program, and Office of AIDS Programs and Policy into one division, the Division of HIV and STD Programs, to further collaboration of related activities and improve efficiency.
- Contributed to a CDC-sponsored Geographic Information System project. The department provided geocoded addresses for more than 11,000 persons diagnosed with HIV from 2005 to 2009. This project contributes valuable information on the geographic distribution of the HIV epidemic in LA County.
- Completed interviews with more than 600 high-risk heterosexual LA County residents, performing HIV tests on 98% of those interviewed, as one of 21 sites participating in the CDC's National HIV Behavioral Surveillance Project. Further, successfully competed for more than \$600,000 in funding to conduct HIV behavioral surveillance in men who have sex with men, including funds to implement new HIV testing technologies and hepatitis B and C screening for more than 500 study participants.
- Implemented the non-occupational, post-exposure prophylaxis (nPEP) program at community-based clinics to evaluate the safety and feasibility of services for high-risk sexual exposures among an at-risk population. The program demonstrated that it is safe and feasible to deliver nPEP as a biomedical HIV prevention intervention and that optimal care for these services can be delivered effectively when integrated into the flow of HIV clinical care and treatment.

**Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health and Children's Medical Services**

- Submitted more than 30,900 applications for individuals through contracted agencies to increase health access and care for children and their families in Los Angeles County. Applications were submitted to Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, and other no-cost or low-cost health programs. Of the applications submitted, 29% were for women aged 15-44; 38% were for children aged 0-6.
- Implemented a small nursing team to triage new intake referrals for California Children's Services. This expedited notification to referral sources and decreased 40% of the incoming referral workload.
- Through the Black Infant Health program, established over 7,000 community education contacts to increase awareness about African American infant mortality, and coordinated prenatal/postpartum services for over 1,400 African American women.

- Provided Comprehensive Prenatal Services training to 636 participants on several topics, including assessment and care plan, nutrition assessment, breastfeeding, case coordination, prenatal depression, and intimate partner violence.

**Substance Abuse Prevention and Control**

- Partnered with CalWORKs substance abuse treatment services and community-based Prevention Services to improve the quality of services by implementing community-based, evidence-based methods and strategies to address the needs of CalWORKs families with substance use disorders and to reduce the impact of substance abuse in local communities across the county.
- Expanded the use of medication-assisted treatment for alcohol and opioid dependence: Incorporated Vivitrol, an extended-release medication approved for treatment of alcohol dependence and the only medication approved to reduce relapse to opioid dependence, in conjunction with conventional psychosocial counseling treatment. It was successfully used with more than 400 patients. Preliminary results indicate improved engagement and retention of patients in treatment programs and the reduction of relapse among patients with histories of chronic alcohol problems.

**Other notable departmental achievements included the following...**

- Provided approximately 1,200 Pap test and mammogram appointments to ensure that low-income women had access to potentially life-saving screenings. Also provided approximately 1,300 heart disease risk assessments, which included follow-up mailings of in-language health education materials to assist monolingual clients in taking action to reduce their risk.
- Created an online pet survey to assess local animal health and pet owner knowledge. The data will be used to support the 2020 Healthy Pets Healthy Families Initiative, which will help identify potential areas where human and pet health intersect and to create local animal health goals for the year 2020.
- Coordinated four community dialogues on environmental and community needs and emerging women's health issues for 900 stakeholders, increasing their knowledge and providing tools and resources for use with their constituents.
- Convened a Blogger Roundtable in June 2011. Through this dialogue, bloggers covering LA County were able to meet Public Health staff and learn how the department can be a resource for their stories.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES

The Department of Public Health has several activities planned for fiscal year 2011-2012 to make a difference in the health of Los Angeles County. Here are some of its priorities:

- Develop a Food Recall software platform for discovery, data collection, notification, evaluation, and reporting tasks. This resource will allow rapid notification to both industry and the public, which can help limit or avoid exposure to foodborne illnesses that are associated with recalled foods. It will also enable verification of food products removed from local distributors and provide a working database for analyses of food recall product trends.
- Implement an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention curriculum in 24 public middle schools in Los Angeles County. The 24-lesson curriculum, “It’s Your Game/Keep It Real,” will be used in 7th and 8th grades. It has been shown to delay onset of sexual activity in African American and Latino youth.
- Initiate a new system for screening and intervening with families in the child dependency system needing help for substance use disorders; develop a new, centralized screening, assessment, brief intervention, and placement system for persons seeking treatment services for substance use disorders; and implement an automated contract, performance, and program compliance monitoring system.
- Continue operation of the Automated Disease Surveillance Systems: Visual Confidential Morbidity Reporting, electronic laboratory reporting, and syndromic surveillance. These systems represent one of the largest local public health electronic data and surveillance systems in the U.S.
- Assist in the development of joint-use policies that increase access to school recreational facilities for community use after school hours, increasing access to safe places for physical activity for the 4.5 million community residents served by the ABC, Compton, Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Pomona Unified School Districts.
- Assist cities in developing land use policies that promote physical activity by providing direct staff assistance and technical assistance from expert consultants. The cities of Pomona, Lynwood, Huntington Park, South Gate, and Compton are receiving assistance for bike and pedestrian planning and for the development of safe routes to schools plans.
- Create an easy-to-read handbook titled “Requirements and Procedures for Residential Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems.”
- Continue to conduct annual trainings for Smallpox Response Teams. These multi-agency exercises involving a biological attack test capabilities for tactical operations during a biological incident response.
- Implement the Community Mobile STD Screening Partnership, an innovative, community-focused initiative to reduce the rate of STDs among young women of color, aged 12 through 25. The initiative will forge a series of enhanced community partnerships with public and private agencies and community members and will center around expanded distribution and utilization of the STD Program’s model STD home test kits. These free kits have shown significant success in increasing rates of early identification and treatment of chlamydia and gonorrhea among young women of color.
- Improve the ability of LA County communities to withstand and recover from emergencies, disasters, and other adversities by expanding efforts to build community resiliency. This will be accomplished by training representatives from the community, establishing workgroups, and building capacity in diverse community organizations.
- Revise the Tuberculosis School Mandate so that doctors will screen students and only test them for tuberculosis if a risk factor is present, in accord with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.
- Write the book, *Public Health in Practice: Lessons from the Nation’s Largest, Most Diverse County*, and have it published by Oxford University Press. This volume will provide practical guidance from real-world practice about how to address public health challenges. It consists of case studies of practical public health planning, programs, and policy development, and discusses common problems as well as opportunities for innovation. Its intended audience will be public health practitioners, schools of public health, public policy, public administration and law, and academic and public health professionals.
- Develop a new Strategic Plan to guide the Department of Public Health.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH KEEPING LA INFORMED

The Department of Public Health uses a multipronged approach to effectively communicate its messages to a wide variety of audiences. Through print and electronic methods, public events, and educational presentations, the department works hard to ensure its messages are heard by the public, community leaders, government officials, policymakers, public health researchers, health care providers, and others. During fiscal year 2010-2011, it developed these new resources...

## Reports



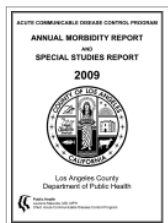
The Potential Health Impact of Reducing Excess Sodium Consumption in Los Angeles County  
*Released October 2010*



LA Health – Healthy Women: Wellness Across the Life Span  
*Released October 2010*



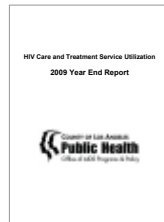
LA Health – Trends in Diabetes: A Reversible Public Health Crisis  
*Released November 2010*



Annual Morbidity Report and Special Studies Report, 2009  
*Released December 2010*



Annual HIV Surveillance Report, 2010  
*Released January 2011*



HIV Care and Treatment Service Utilization Year-End Report, 2009  
*Released January 2011*



LA Health – Trends in Depression: Shedding Light on the Darkness  
*Released January 2011*



Sexually Transmitted Disease Morbidity Report, 2009  
*Released February 2011*



Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms in Los Angeles County  
Released March 2011



National Immunization Survey Report, 2009  
Released May 2011



Preventing Animal Bites in LA County  
Released May 2011



LA Health Data Snapshot – Physical Activity Among Adults in Los Angeles County  
Released May 2011

These reports may be viewed and downloaded at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/yrhealth](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/yrhealth).

## Social Media

### Using Facebook to reach a greater audience

In April 2009, the Department of Public Health launched its YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/lapublichealth](http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth)) and its Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/lapublichealth>) to reach the increasing number of LA County residents who use these social media sites. In September 2010, to connect with an even greater audience, the department unveiled its Facebook pages, in English ([www.facebook.com/lapublichealth](http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth)) and in Spanish ([www.facebook.com/LaSaludPublica](http://www.facebook.com/LaSaludPublica)).

Since going live, the popularity of its Facebook pages has continued to climb. The immediate nature of social networking sites coupled with the department's frequent postings, allows Public Health to disseminate timely messages in a cost-effective manner as often as it wishes.

The Facebook posts offer concise information about a variety of public health topics, such as where residents can obtain flu shots, how to deal with stress, how to make healthy snacks, resources for domestic violence, tips on physical activity, how to reduce the risk of work-related injuries and illnesses, and where qualified women can obtain a free Pap test. Many posts feature a health-related awareness day, week, or month, or special event.

By tapping into Facebook, one of the most-visited social networking sites in the world, the Department of Public Health is making a difference in the lives of Los Angeles County residents and spreading its messages to improve the health of the community.



# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARDS

The staff members who make up the Department of Public Health are dedicated, talented, and hardworking individuals, sharing the common goal of improving the health of Los Angeles County residents. During 2010-2011, many staff members and programs were recognized for their outstanding achievements.

- *24th Annual Quality and Productivity Awards, County of Los Angeles 2010.* Gold Eagle Award: Countywide Response to H1N1 Influenza; Top Ten Award: General Relief to Supplemental Security Income Project; Special Award, Best Teamwork: Los Angeles County Co-occurring Disorders Court.
- *LA COUNTY STARS!* (Special Talents for Achieving Remarkable Service) awards, in the category of Service Excellence and Organizational Effectiveness, County of Los Angeles, 2010. Awarded to the Reptile-Associated Salmonellosis Working Group.
- *Los Angeles Technology Forum: Outstanding IT Manager Award, 2010,* Roy Bradley.
- *Commendation, 2010,* Employees of Public Health for Participation in the Remote Area Medical LA Free Clinic, from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.
- *Public Health Excellence Awards, 2010-2011:* Tony Kuo, MD, MSHS; Paul Simon, MD, MPH; Laurene Mascola, MD, MPH; Noel Bazini-Barakat, RN, MSN, MPH; and Kathleen Smith, RN, MSN, MPH.
- *28th Annual Department of Public Health Nursing Awards:* Outstanding Public Health Nurse for 2011, Belinda Jenkins, PHN; Outstanding Registered Nurse for 2011, Georgiana Yau, RN.
- *Freedom Network's Paul and Sheila Wellstone Award, 2011:* Susie Baldwin, MD, MPH.
- *American College of Preventive Medicine Distinguished Service Award, 2011:* Robert Gilchick, MD.
- *Jane Boggess Advancement of Pharmacy Practice Award, Pharmacy Foundation of California, 2011:* Linda Aragon, MPH.
- *27th Annual Public Health Employee Recognition Awards, 2011:* 26 honorees. Overall Outstanding Employees: Medical Field, Vanria Butler, PHN; Administrative Field, Jennifer Hang.
- *LA County Department of Public Health Physician Awards, 2011.* Physician of the Year: Elise Pomerance, MD; Clinical Excellence: Myrna Mesrobian, MD and Celerino Brucal, MD; Innovation: Elizabeth Bancroft, MD; Scientific Achievement: Margaret Shih, MD, MPH; and Health Equity: Susie Baldwin, MD, MPH.
- *2011 Model Practice Award, National Association of County and City Health Officials.* Acute Communicable Disease Control Program, Pandemic Influenza Unit, "Pediatric Surge Pocket Guide."
- *2011 Achievement Awards, National Association of Counties:* Maternal Depression Improvement Project, Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Programs; Restaurant and Hospitality Express Program, Environmental Health Division; Sewage Spill Reporting – Protecting Our Beaches, Environmental Health Division; and the Don't Think Know Home Test Kit for STDs, Division of HIV and STD Programs.





LA COUNTY STARS! Award: Reptile-Associated Salmonellosis Working Group



Public Health Excellence Award, 2010-2011: Noel Bazini-Barakat, RN, MSN, MPH



Commendation, 2010, Employees of Public Health for Participation in the Remote Area Medical LA Free Clinic, from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors



Freedom Network's Paul and Sheila Wellstone Award, 2011: Susie Baldwin, MD, MPH

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH FINANCIALS

	FY 2010-2011 Actual	FY 2009-2010 Actual
<b>Gross Total</b>	<b>\$730 million</b>	\$751 million
Less Intrafund Transfer	\$47 million	\$46 million
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$683 million</b>	\$705 million
Revenue	\$510 million	\$534 million
<b>Net County Cost</b>	<b>\$173 million</b>	\$171 million

Fiscal Year (FY) covers the period  
July 1-June 30

# Our Vision

*Healthy people  
in healthy  
communities*



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH**

*Director and Health Officer*

**Jonathan Freedman**

*Chief Deputy Director*

**Rose Anne Rodriguez, Esq.**

*Director, External Relations & Communications*

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