News Release

Date: 2/10/15
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, Division of Health Planning and Promotion, (518) 565-4993

MEASLES UPDATE

No confirmed cases of measles in Clinton County but health officials encourage vaccination.

Plattsburgh, NY February 10, 2015 While Clinton County has not yet seen any cases of measles in 2015, a large number of cases around the country and three confirmed cases in New York State, have health officials spreading the word about who should get vaccinated and when. Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral illness that can lead to serious complications including in some cases, death.

The Centers for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics advise that children should receive an MMR vaccination against Measles, Mumps and Rubella at 12-15 months and a second dose between 4-6 years of age. This second dose can, if necessary be administered as soon as 28 days after the first dose. Parents should speak to their pediatrician to decide if accelerated dosing is advised.

According to Darwyna Facteau, Supervising Public Health Nurse at the Clinton County Health Department, measles immunization rates for children in Clinton County schools are at 99%. This high level of immunity called “herd immunity” protects vaccinated children as well as those who are too young to be vaccinated or have medical conditions that do not allow them to be vaccinated.

Adults should determine whether they have immunity to Measles. Adults may have received a Measles vaccination as a child or young adult, or may have had measles or been exposed to the disease sometime in their life. Anyone who has received two valid doses of MMR, or other live measles containing vaccine is considered immune. A documented laboratory test of immunity or having been born before 1957, are also accepted as proof of immunity to measles. CDC advises that anyone who lacks proof of measles immunity as described above should receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine.

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http://www.facebook.com/ClintonHealth
News Release

Date: 2-23-15
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, 518-565-4993

Emergency Preparedness Drill

Clinton County Health Department will be testing its ability to quickly and effectively respond to a natural or terrorist emergency. On Thursday, February 26, 2015, Health Department staff and other local emergency preparedness partners will be informed via the IHANS (Integrated Health Alert Network System) that a biologic terrorist attack has taken place. Staff will be advised to report to the Crete Memorial Civic Center to provide antibiotic treatment to approximately 450 residents potentially exposed to anthrax within a two hour timeframe.

Volunteers have pre-registered to play the role of county residents seeking the antibiotic treatment for themselves and their families. Doses of pretend medication will be given out beginning at 1:00PM and ending at 3:00PM. NYS Department of Health requires that over 1000 doses are distributed within the allotted timeframe in order to consider the drill successful. Prior to 1:00 PM, Health Department staff and staff of partner agencies will be at the Crete Center setting up the POD or Point of Dispensing just as they would in an actual event. “This drill will be very realistic, imitating a situation which could potentially occur” according to CCHD Public Information Officer Karen Derusha.

Local Health Departments are required by NYS Department of Health to test Emergency Preparedness Systems on a routine basis. “This drill will test our ability to deal with a large scale emergency,” states Margaret LaBombard, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Public Health Nurse II at the Health Department. “Other smaller drills such as testing communication systems happen more frequently. We constantly test to assure that the public health system in our area is prepared to protect our community”

According to Ms. Derusha, “Area residents may see increased traffic in and around the Crete Center prior to and during the drill or may see messages on Social Media. They should not be alarmed. This is only a drill.”

Anyone interested in signing up as a volunteer to act as a potential victim, may go to www.health.ny.gov/go2clinic/10 or contact Peggy LaBombard at 518-565-4864 or labombardm@co.clinton.ny.us

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http://www.facebook.com/ClintonHealth
News Release

Date: March 6, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, Principal Public Health Educator, 518-565-4993

Clinton County Health Department Awarded National Accreditation
By Public Health Accreditation Board

PHAB-Accredited Health Departments Demonstrate the Capacity to Serve their Communities Well

Plattsburgh, NY – March 5, 2015 – The Clinton County Health Department announced today that it has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The national accreditation program works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of the nation’s Tribal, state, local, and territorial public health departments. The Clinton County Health Department is one of seven departments recognized most recently by the Public Health Accreditation Board, joining a field of 67 state and local health departments nationwide accredited since the program’s launch in 2011.

“We are pleased and excited to be recognized for achieving national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement,” said Jerie Reid, Director of Public Health of the Clinton County Health Department. “The accreditation process helps to ensure that the programs and services we provide are as responsive as possible to the needs of our community. With accreditation, the Clinton County Health Department is demonstrating increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and partner organizations with which we work.”

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nations more than 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

“Our seal of accreditation signifies that the Clinton County Health Department has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health,” Ms. Reid said. “By continuing to improve our services and performance, we can be sure we are meeting the public health needs of those we serve as effectively as possible.”

Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. In cities, towns, and states across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.
"Clinton County Health Department strives to provide the best possible service to county residents and works to improve health outcomes in our rural community. Through a continuing process of quality improvement, this dedicated workforce assures that Clinton County is a place where people can be healthy” stated Lynn Howard, President of the Clinton County Board of Health.

On behalf of Clinton County, Administrator Mike Zurlo commented that “Clinton County is honored to support a local Health Department that is among the best in the nation, and is one of only 2 local departments in NYS to achieve this recognition. The rigorous requirements of this process speak to the commitment and professionalism of the Health department employees.”

“The Clinton County Health Department joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. “The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community.”

The national accreditation program was created collaboratively over a 10-year period by hundreds of public health practitioners working at the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Since the program’s launch in September 2011, hundreds of public health departments have applied to PHAB for accreditation, and hundreds of public health practitioners from across the nation have been trained to serve as volunteer peer site visitors for the program.

“Achieving accreditation indicates that the Clinton County Health Department is dedicated to improving and protecting the health of the community by striving to continuously improve the quality of the services it delivers,” said Leslie M. Beitsch, MD, JD, chair of PHAB’s Board of Directors and chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine at Florida State University College of Medicine. “Accreditation also promotes consistency in meeting standards. With an ever-increasing number of health departments now applying for and becoming accredited, you will be able to expect to receive the same quality of public health services wherever you go in the United States.”

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ABOUT THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION BOARD
The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting www.phaboard.org.

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News Release

Date: March 6, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact:  Karen Derusha, Principal Public Health Educator (518) 565-4993

Raccoon Tests Positive for Rabies

First Positive Rabies Test of 2015 in Clinton County

Town of Saranac, March 6, 2015  A raccoon that was apparently hit by a vehicle on February 27, 2015 on the Hardscrabble Road in the Town of Saranac has tested positive for rabies.  A live raccoon showing abnormal behavior was seen in the immediate vicinity earlier in the day and was reported to Clinton County Health Department by a local resident.  It is believed that this is the same animal which was hit by a vehicle.  The road killed animal was submitted to the rabies lab by USDA as a surveillance specimen.

According to Rita Mitchell of the Environmental Health and Safety Division, “There is no reported human contact.” The closest confirmed rabid Clinton County animal, a skunk found near Route 374 just east of the Village of Dannemora, was in the Town Saranac about 4 miles away in December 2014.

Local residents are reminded to vaccinate their pets and livestock against rabies and report any sick or strange acting animals to the Clinton County Health Department at 518-565-4870.

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News Release

Date: April 10, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Maryann Barto, Public Health Educator 518-565-4870

Clinton County Health Department
Press Release
"Healthy Neighborhoods May Be Coming To Your Neighborhood"
(April 10, 2015)

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program of the Clinton County Health Department will be doing door to door outreach to conduct in-home surveys in the Town of Peru during the months of April, May, and June. These brief in-home surveys are designed to identify health and safety concerns. Home safety products such as fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, first aid kits, water bottles, flashlights, asthma safety materials and child safety products are some of the items that are provided by the Healthy Neighborhoods Program depending upon the needs of the home.

During the home visit, education is provided regarding fire and burn safety, carbon monoxide poisoning prevention, lead poisoning prevention, asthma, injury prevention and many other health and safety topics. Information and referrals are also provided regarding available community resources for which a family may be eligible for. Participation in the Healthy Neighborhoods Program is free and open to all Clinton County Residents! Don’t miss this opportunity to participate!

If you would like more information about Healthy Neighborhoods or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact Healthy Neighborhoods at (518) 565-4870 or visit us on the web at www.clintonhealth.org.

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http://www.facebook.com/ClintonHealth
### News Release

Date: June 11, 2015  
For Immediate Release  
Contact: Karen Derusha 565-4993 or Karen Plotas-McGrath 565-4848

#### It’s Time to Think about Ticks

While ticks are a concern year-round, they are most active in warmer months. When you are gardening, camping, hiking, and playing outdoors, take steps to prevent tick bites. Ticks can infect humans with bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause serious illness.

According to Karen Plotas-McGrath, Public Health Nurse for the Clinton County Health Department, “There are several ways to protect yourself from tick borne infections. Avoid wooded areas or when you spend any amount of time in a wooded area or an area with high grass or leaf litter, use repellents designed to protect against ticks. Examine yourself, your pets and your gear, and shower after you have been outdoors.”

When you are in an area where ticks may be present:

- Walk in the center of trails.

- Use repellents that contain 20 to 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on exposed skin and clothing for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth.

- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5% permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may be protective longer.

- Other repellents registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may be found at [http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppfr/insect/](http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppfr/insect/).

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.

- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.

- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and day packs.
• Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill remaining ticks. (Some research suggests that shorter drying times may also be effective, particularly if the clothing is not wet.)

If you find a tick on your body, remove it as soon as you notice it by grasping with tweezers, as close to the skin as possible, and pulling it straight out. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.

After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

Watch for signs of illness such as rash or fever in the days and weeks following the bite, and see a health care provider if these develop. Your risk of acquiring a tick-borne illness depends on many factors, including where you live, what type of tick bit you, and how long the tick was attached.

The three most common ticks in New York State are the deer (black-legged) tick, the American dog tick and the lone star tick. Only deer ticks can carry the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. They can also carry germs that cause other illness. Young deer ticks, called nymphs, are brown and the size of poppy seeds. Adult female deer ticks are red and black, while males are black. Adult deer ticks are about the size of a sesame seed.

American dog ticks can carry the bacterium that causes Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Dog ticks are reddish-brown and larger than deer ticks. Deer and dog ticks are most active during the spring, early summer and fall.

Lone star ticks are becoming more common in New York State. They can carry the germ that causes human monocytic ehrlichiosis and another rash illness that has been seen in over 20 other states. Adult female lone star ticks have a white dot on their back and are similar in size to deer ticks. They are most active from April through July.

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###

"Working Together for a Healthier Community"
News Release

Longest Day of Play

June 26th Event Will Provide Many Opportunities to be Active

The Longest Day of Play will be held on Friday, June 26th this year with activities at the US Oval from 10AM – 2PM as well as at other sites in Clinton County throughout the day. The Longest Day of Play is held each year to celebrate and promote play as a way to add healthy physical activity to each day. Children and adults will have opportunities to run, move, jump, skip, build, dance, paddle, and just keep moving from morning ‘til evening, rain or shine.

Activities at the U.S. Oval will be geared toward children from infants to age12. Activities at other locations will serve varying ages, including adults. Off-site offerings will include a chance to try stand-up paddle boarding, play pickle ball, swim, walk the Saranac River Trail, build with Imagination Blocks and jump in a bounce house. A full schedule of events is available on the Clinton County Health Department’s website and on the Longest Day of Play Event page on Facebook.

According to Clinton County Health Department’s Supervising Public Health Educator, Karen Derusha, “The Longest Day of Play is more than just fun. Physical activity can reduce risk of heart disease, build stronger bones and muscles, improve mental and emotional health, and improve brain function. Most of us need to be more active but don’t find time to go to a gym, or exercise at home, or, it may be difficult to fit organized sports into the family schedule. Play can be done anywhere and anytime. It doesn’t take lot of thought or planning. Grab a ball or a hula hoop, play a game of tag – do anything that keeps you moving. You’ll feel better and be healthier.”

Although the Clinton County Health Department organizes the Longest Day of Play each year, it would not be possible without the collaborative efforts of a variety of partners, including community organizations, municipalities, businesses and volunteers. This is the third year that a Longest Day of Play has been held in Clinton County. “Each year, we have an assortment of activities available” stated Sarah Belser-Ehrlich, one of the event’s coordinators. “The Longest Day of Play is a great way to start an active summer.”

Activities on the U.S.Oval will include:

- Parachute Games
- Obstacle Courses
- Relay Races
- “Ball-a-Palooza”
- 4-H Fitness Trail
- Hula Hoops and Jump Ropes
- “Play with Your Food”
- Home Safety Games

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• Small Group Games
• Backyard Games
• “Cows in the Barn”
• “Minute to Win It” Games
• Sack Races
• Infant - Age 5 Play Group

Off-site activities will include:

• Pickleball Playday at Treadwells Mills Recreation Park, 10am – 2pm
• Walk the Saranac River Trail, 8:30am – 9:30am
• Stand Up Paddleboards and Kyaks at Baggs Landing, 1pm – 4pm
• Imagination Blocks Play Day at Champlain Valley Transportation Museum, 9am – 11am
• Bounce House Obstacle Course at George Deno Recreational Park, West Chazy, 5-7pm
• Open Swim, at the Wellness and Fitness Center (PARC), 2pm – 4pm
• Zumba Gold, at the Senior Council, Plattsburgh, 9:30 am

Parents or a responsible adult must accompany all children at the U.S. Oval and for most off-site activities. All participants at the US Oval will be asked to sign a registration form which includes a photo release. With a few exceptions, activities will take place rain or shine. Activities at the U.S. Oval will move into the City Recreation Center in the case of heavy rain, thunder or lightning. Weather-related changes will be posted to the Longest Day of Play Events page on Facebook.

As Benjamin Franklin once said, “We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.” Ms. Belser-Ehrlich reminded.

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"Working Together for a Healthier Community"
Plattsburgh Primary Care Health Partners (PPCHP) was officially designated a ‘New York State Breastfeeding Friendly Practice’ on June 11, 2015. The New York State Department of Health recognized the office as the first in the region to receive this achievement. PPHCP has made it their mission to promote, support and maintain breastfeeding in their office and the community. PPHCP was supported in this effort by the Obesity Prevention in Pediatric Health Care Setting program at the Clinton County Health Department. Research shows that obesity prevention begins with breastfeeding.

According to pediatrician and champion provider, Dr. David Beguin, "It took a quarter century to get here! With the devotion and commitment of moms and families in the area, we are here and doing an excellent job. We are committed to continuing the support, guidance and education needed to sustain this valuable resource.”

As part of the process, the practice has implemented policies and procedures such as: ongoing staff training, maintaining a breastfeeding friendly office environment and facilitating internal and external referral opportunities for mothers and infants. The practice also promotes a culture within the office that supports breastfeeding as the optimal way to feed one’s baby.

"With support from the Health Department, we were able to successfully furnish and equip a breastfeeding/newborn room and decorate our waiting area with tasteful artwork, demonstrating the grace and natural act of breastfeeding. We also successfully certified two clinical staff members as Lactation Consultants offering a personal touch and support in an attempt to assist families through some of the struggles and transitions breastfeeding moms can face daily," says Carolyn Brunelle, Licensed Practical Nurse and Breastfeeding Champion for Plattsburgh Primary Care Health Partners.

The Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice include:
1. Develop and maintain a breastfeeding-friendly office policy.
2. Train all staff to be breastfeeding-friendly by promoting, supporting and protecting breastfeeding.
3. Eliminate infant formula and formula company materials from your office.
5. Discuss breastfeeding benefits, especially exclusive breastfeeding, and the basics of breastfeeding management with women and their families during the prenatal period.
6. Discuss breastfeeding benefits, especially exclusive breastfeeding, and the basics of breastfeeding management with women and their families during the postpartum period.
7. Encourage breastfeeding mothers to feed newborns only breast milk.
8. Teach mothers about maintaining lactation when separated from their infants.
9. Identify your local breastfeeding support network and foster collaborative working relationships and referral systems.
10. Provide comprehensive breastfeeding support to new mothers.

Because of the well-documented health benefits of breastfeeding for infants, children and mothers, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Department of Health and Human Services recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, with continued breastfeeding as long as mutually desired by mother and infant.

For more information about receiving Breastfeeding Friendly Designation: https://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/breastfeeding/

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###
News Release

Community Partnership Award

On July 29, the Clinton County Health Department presented Dr. David Beguin; Carolyn Brunelle, LPN; Ashley Miner, Administrative Assistant and Kymberlie Sweenor, Exercise Physiologist, of Plattsburgh Primary Care Health Partners with a Community Partnership Award for their role in advocacy, support and participation in local Public Health initiatives to improve the health of our community’s most valuable resource, our children.

Since 2011, with the inception of the Obesity Prevention in Pediatric Health Care Settings (OPPHCS) grant at the Clinton County Health Department, Plattsburgh Primary Care Health Partners has been an advocate, a supporter and a front runner in the mission to decrease childhood obesity within their office and the community. They have taken a true hands-on approach and are constantly striving to increase the quality of care to their patients and our youngest citizens. In an effort to step outside the box and show the community that their mission extends outside the office they have enthusiastically participated in the Longest Day of Play sponsored by the health department for the last 3 years and engaged a crowd of participants.

Plattsburgh Primary Care Health Partners has also committed a dedicated nurse to the Clinton County Breastfeeding Coalition to assist in increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. As a true testament to their belief that breastfeeding is the best way to feed ones’ infant, they were the first practice in the region to achieve ‘Breastfeeding Friendly Designation’ through the New York State Department of Health while working with OPPHCS. In addition, they have always held an open door policy with the Clinton County Health Department, embracing all pilot programs and data collection efforts. A prime example of the continued collaboration exists with an HPV project through the Clinton County Health Department and their goal to increase the percent of children receiving a complete series of the vaccination to prevent the spread of this cancer causing virus. The office embraces quality improvement and is always willing to try something new in an effort to increase the health and well-being of this community.

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###
News Release

Date: August 6, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Tim Simonette, Sr. Public Health Sanitarian 518-565-4870

Rabies Bait Drop Program to Begin

Ongoing effort to stop the spread of raccoon rabies.

Starting on August 11, 2015, the Wildlife Services (WS) program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will begin dropping bait packets in Clinton, Essex, Franklin and other upstate and central New York counties, as well as in Vermont and New Hampshire. Wildlife Services will be distributing an oral rabies vaccine (ORV) bait to vaccinate raccoons, skunks, foxes and coyotes to help stop the spread of rabies. Bait drop programs have been taking place in New York State for several years. The bait packets are about the size of a matchbox. They are coated with flavoring or sweet smelling wax, to attract wild animals to them. They may be distributed by airplane or by hand on the ground.

Rabies is a virus that affects animals and humans. Without treatment, rabies is almost always fatal. The goal of the Rabies Management Program is to stop the spread of rabies in wildlife and by doing so, to protect humans and pets.

Bait packets will be distributed between August 11 – 20, 2015. People and pets cannot get rabies from a bait packet. Rabies bait packets are generally not harmful to people or pets however, if found, they should be left alone unless they are in an area where children or pets might easily find them. According to Tim Simonette, Sr. Public Health Sanitarian at the Clinton County Health Department, “If you find a bait packet in a place where children or pets play, wear gloves to safely move the bait. If you don’t have gloves with you, a baggie or paper towel will do. Toss the bait into a wooded area.”

“Pets should not be allowed to eat bait packets but don’t panic if they do. To avoid being bitten, do not try to take a bait packet from your dog. Eating a large quantity of bait packets could give a pet an upset stomach so if there are several bait packets where your dog can get into them, move them. Wash your hands, especially if a bait packet is broken open and you get the vaccine on your skin. Avoid contact with your dog’s saliva, if a packet is eaten.”

Similar to last year, ONRAB baits (containing human adenovirus 5) will be used in Clinton County where there are ongoing field trials. In addition, USDA will also be using Raboral VRG (with the vaccinia virus) in other areas. Human exposure to the new oral rabies vaccine may cause symptoms similar to the common cold such as fever, sore throat or headache. If you come in contact with the vaccine, wash the exposed area thoroughly and contact the Health Department at 518-565-4870. Letters describing the program, the vaccine and symptoms of exposure will go out to physicians and veterinarians before the bait drop begins.

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USDA Wildlife staff will trap and sample raccoons and skunks during the summer and fall to monitor the Oral Vaccine Program. Local landowners may be asked to allow cage traps to be set up on their property to catch raccoons and skunks for testing. Once tested, animals will be released. Additional information about the ORV program is available on the APHIS website at www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies

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###
News Release

Date: August 7, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: John Kanoza, Director/Engineer of Environmental Health, 518-565-4870

Legionella Bacteria Levels High at Some Sites

New York State Officials Responding to High Levels of the Bacteria that Causes Legionnaire’s Disease.

Strong concern over a higher than normal number of cases of Legionnaires’ disease in Bronx, NY, has prompted NYS Officials to take proactive steps to protect State residents. Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the New York State Department of Health is providing free Legionella testing for building owners, operators, managers and landlords of buildings with cooling towers or evaporative condenser units that can be sources of the bacteria. To date, there have been no cases of Legionella in Clinton County.

Legionnaires’ Disease is not spread person-to-person. Legionella exists naturally in water and moist soil and is found in creeks and ponds, hot water tanks, water in air conditioning cooling towers and evaporative condensers, as well as soil at excavation sites – but high concentrations of the bacteria can be dangerous. Proper maintenance and routine disinfection of cooling towers can help minimize the presence of Legionella and reduce the risk for exposure to the public. Although some smaller buildings may have units of this type, water-based cooling towers are typically found in larger, industrial, commercial and high-rise residential sites.

Building owners and facilities managers are reminded of the importance of proper maintenance, cleaning and disinfection of cooling systems. The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Cooling Engineers (ASHRAE) recently released new guidelines that landlords are encouraged to follow.

Kits for testing of cooling towers and evaporative condenser units are available free of charge. The NYS DOH Wadsworth Center Laboratories will test the samples. Wadsworth Laboratories have been part of the recent public health response in New York City to stem the Legionnaires’ Disease outbreak by conducting laboratory testing on environmental and human samples. The Wadsworth Center’s Bacteriology Laboratory has tested more than 100 samples from cooling towers in the Bronx, of which six cooling towers have tested positive for contamination. Additionally, the lab is performing genotyping to determine whether the same strain of Legionella is common to all the towers and associated with samples from patients.
Legionella Bacteria
August 7, 2015

Free testing will be available until October, when the hot summer temperatures that may contribute to the growth of Legionella bacteria have moderated. Building owners, operators, managers, and landlords who wish to have DOH test for Legionella should send the name and address to which the kit should be mailed, and a working phone number to: Legionella@health.ny.gov. DOH will send an appropriate sampling kit with simple instructions for sample collection.

DOH will provide results of the tests, and when the test shows dangerous levels of Legionella or other bacteria, DOH will provide clear guidelines for disinfecting these systems.

Additional information on Legionnaires’ disease from DOH can be found at http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/legionellosis/docs/fact_sheet.pdf

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News Release

Date: August 17, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator 518-565-4993

Clinton County’s First Health Impact Assessment
Local Health Department seeks to add health considerations into development planning process.

On May 13, 2015, Clinton County Health Department invited a group of community leaders and stakeholders to participate in a planning workshop as part of Clinton County’s first foray into the fairly new area of Health Impact Assessment.

Evidence shows that where we live impacts how long we live and how healthy we are. In fact, research has shown that zip code is more predictive of life expectancy than genetics. People who live where there are opportunities for healthy physical activity, access to healthy and affordable foods, decent jobs and where negative environmental factors are limited, can be expected to live longer and suffer from less chronic disease than those who don’t. Health Impact Assessments are a public health and planning tool that can address this disparity.

According to Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator at the Clinton County Health Department, “A Health Impact Assessment lets us look ahead to what might happen when we develop an area of our community and determine if it will have a positive or negative effect on the health of our citizens. Importantly, it allows the community to thoughtfully consider areas of improvement to positively impact health.”

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a relatively new concept taking hold across the US and globally. The Centers for Disease Control describes HIA as a process that looks at the potential health effects of a plan, project or policy before it is built or implemented. An HIA can provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health outcomes. HIA brings potential public health impacts and considerations to the decision-making process for plans, projects, and policies that fall outside the traditional public health arenas, such as transportation and land use.

A Health Impact Assessment recognizes that health impacts can result from a wide variety of factors. “Determinants of health include traditional health constructs such as access to health care, opportunities to be physically active and access to healthy foods. However, factors such as support for social cohesiveness or creation and maintenance of good paying jobs also have a considerable impact on health” states Ms. Derusha.

In order to introduce the concept of Health Impact Assessment to the community, the Health Department contracted with consultant, Victoria Zinser-Duly AICP to facilitate an assessment of potential development around Cumberland Head Corners including the City Beach. “This area was selected because there has been significant discussion and visioning around its development and because it is an area with potential to serve many county
residents, as well as visitors to our area” according to Ms. Duley. “HIA is commonly applied to an existing development plan, however, with this first effort, we took a broader perspective.”

HIA consists of six steps, screening, scoping, assessment, recommendations, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. Preliminary discussions with representatives of the County, City and Town were part of the screening and scoping process of this HIA. The May workshop contributed to the assessment phase. Key community leaders and stakeholders discussed baseline health effects of what currently exists and then outlined several proposed ideas for development. Potential health effects of the proposed development were evaluated. The workshop discussion, along with research of data relevant to the assessment culminated with a report titled: Health Impact Assessment for Cumberland Head Corners which is available at www.clintonhealth.org. The report outlines seven recommendations to guide re-development of Cumberland Head Corners and other County redevelopment.

Clinton County Health Department is sharing these results as an example of the type of health considerations that should be incorporated into decision making in Clinton County and to support future HIA work. The recommendations in this document set a precedent for including Health Impact Assessments in planning efforts in Clinton County.

1. Work with private property owners to identify redevelopment opportunities that encourage healthy behaviors and identify public assistance for such activities,

2. Continue collaboration among the municipal partners (County, City, Town), State partners such as the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, non-profit partners such as Vision2Action and the Adirondack Coast Visitor’s Bureau and related public agencies,

3. Conduct master planning and associated zoning review to encourage healthy development within this area,

4. Pursue grant opportunities to fund redevelopment of major recreational or trail facilities,

5. Work with DOT to study the intersection itself and plan for improvements that consider multiple forms of transportation (including vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian),

6. Continue to consider affordable housing needs within this area or planning for its provision outside of the area, and

7. Tie the redevelopment plans/visioning from the ongoing City and Town Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans into these activities and overall connections to ongoing activities to the south and to the north.

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For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator 518-565-4993

BETTER CHOICE RETAILERS MAY BE SPROUTING UP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

July 21st, 2015 (Plattsburgh) – Clinton County is striving to become a healthier, more active place to live. With the help of community partners, the Clinton County Health Department’s Healthy Neighborhoods Fund initiative is working to increase access to healthy, affordable food; improve access to safe places for exercise and activity; and link people to healthy lifestyle programs.

In an effort to increase the access, availability, affordability and marketing of healthy food choices, the Clinton County Health Department is partnering with local small business owners to initiate Better Choice Retailer (BCR), a healthy small food retailer certification program. The Better Choice Retailer program was created with input from local convenience store owners as well as best practice methods used in similar programs country-wide.

Better Choice Retailers will be offering consumers healthier alternatives to more traditional convenience store products including: low-fat dairy, lean protein, 100% whole grains, zero-calorie beverages, BCR approved snack options and fresh fruits and vegetables or low-sodium canned vegetables, or low-fat, no added sugar frozen fruits and vegetables. Jamie Latinville, owner of Latinville Deli and Grocery, says that “offering healthy foods is in our retail plan so having the support of a program such as Better Choice Retailer will not only help us reach our goals but it also encourages community members to eat healthfully.”

Community members should start seeing Better Choice Retailers sprouting up in Plattsburgh and the 14 surrounding towns within the county by the end of summer and are urged to support the healthy small food retailer movement. Better Choice Retailers will have decals and other materials displayed so consumers can identify them. A complete listing of BCR will be available at www.clintonhealth.org. In-store events to showcase the dedication these small business owners have made to improve the health of their communities will follow.

For more information or to become a Better Choice Retailer please contact Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator at 518-565-4993.

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News Release

Date: September 15, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator 565-4993

Clinton County Health Department
Press Release
"Healthy Neighborhoods May Be Coming To Your Neighborhood"
(September 15, 2015)

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program of the Clinton County Health Department will be focusing outreach efforts in the Town of Schuyler Falls during October, November, and December to conduct door to door outreach and perform in-home surveys. These brief in-home surveys are designed to identify and educate residents on health and safety concerns within the home. Appropriate home safety products such as fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, first aid kits, flashlights, asthma safety materials and child safety products are provided depending up the home’s need after completing a survey.

During the home visit, education is provided regarding fire and burn safety, carbon monoxide poisoning prevention, lead poisoning prevention, asthma, injury prevention and many other health and safety topics. Information and referrals may also be provided regarding available community resources for which the family may qualify. Participation in the Healthy Neighborhoods Program is free and open to all Clinton County Residents! Don’t miss this opportunity to participate!

If you would like more information about Healthy Neighborhoods or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact Healthy Neighborhoods at (518) 565-4870 or visit us on the web at www.clintonhealth.org.

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Date: September 28, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha 518-565-4993

"Clinton County Trailblazers"
Take the 50/50 Challenge!

Working with the Rapid Results Institute and supported by a grant from the NYS Health Foundation to the Clinton County Health Department, community partners have organized to launch a 100 Day Challenge to increase physical activity by Clinton County residents. Rapid Results 100 Day Challenge projects are designed to generate BIG changes in a short amount of time. Our Challenge is divided into two teams, focused on Youth and Adults. We’re challenging ourselves and challenging you - can we work together to get more people more active before the end of the year? We’ve looked at the available data, and we think so… But we need your help!

The Clinton County Trailblazers are launching a NEW challenge. The 50/50 challenge encourages Clinton County residents over 18 years of age to walk 50 miles in 50 days. Walking is a free exercise that only requires a good pair of walking shoes and a commitment to good health. Participants are encouraged to explore the many trails in the area along with routes near where they live, work and play. 50 miles in 50 days only requires walking 10 minutes twice a day!

Kick Off Event: Wednesday October 7th, 2015 at Noon
Terry J. Gordon Recreational Path
Meet in the parking lot at the Oval near the City Gym
Rain or Shine!

Those interested can either register at the kick-off event, at the Senior Citizens Council or online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCTB50. The first 200 people registered will receive a pedometer. All completed forms will need to be submitted by December 15th, 2015. If you complete all 50 miles in 50 days, you will receive a free Trailblazers water bottle and be entered to win additional prizes.

According to the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities, one out of two US adults are living with a chronic disease such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Increasing people’s physical activity levels will significantly reduce their risk of chronic diseases and related risk factors.

So grab a friend and get walking. Several local trails will be hosting walks as part of the challenge.

"Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations"
For more information logon to the Clinton County Trailblazer website: http://www.townofplattsburghrecreation.com/clintoncountytrailblazers
or go to the Clinton County Trailblazer facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/clintoncountytrailblazers?fref=ts
or contact us at 518-563-6180 or aging@clintoncountygov.com

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News Release

Date: October 1, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha, Division of Health Planning and Promotion, (518) 565-4993

Rabies Update

Bat Inside City of Plattsburgh Home Found to Have Rabies.

A bat captured inside a city of Plattsburgh residence on September 29, 2015 has been tested for rabies and is positive for the disease. One person who was sleeping in the bedroom where the bat was found is receiving rabies post-exposure treatment. A domestic cat that was also in the bedroom has received a rabies booster.

Rabies is a fatal viral infection, usually transmitted by an infected animal’s bite. Humans can be exposed to rabies through a bite or scratch from a bat. Treatment to prevent rabies is given if there is a reasonable chance that these types of contact occurred (for example, if a bat is near an unattended child or person with mental impairment, or in a room with a sleeping person). If anyone comes in contact with a bat or you find a bat in your home or camp, and are unsure about whether anyone has come in contact with the bat, contact your health department. In Clinton County call 565-4870

To keep bats out of your home, look for holes that might allow bats to enter and seal any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch. Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics, and ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Avoid doing bat-proofing from May through August. If there are young bats in your attic, many of them can’t fly and keeping the adults out will trap the young who will die or try to make their way into your rooms.

Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so these are the best times to "bat-proof" your home.

In addition to bat proofing, it is important to remember that pets, including indoor cats, must be vaccinated against rabies. NY State Public Health Law requires all dogs, cats and ferrets over four months old to be vaccinated. There are still two free rabies clinics for pets this fall. October 6th at the Chazy Fire Station and October 8th at the Plattsburgh Public Works Building. Vaccination of pets is one of the best ways to protect your family from rabies.

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Date: October 13, 2015  
For Immediate Release  
Contact: Karen Merrill, Health Care Services Division, 518-565-4848  

Health and Wellness Event  

Friday, October 23rd event provides pickle-ball competition and health information for men  

GoodHealth. GoodLife. is a free health event for men of all ages which will be held Friday, October 23rd from 7:00 until 9:00 pm at 5139 North Catherine Street in Plattsburgh (Senior Citizen’s Council building - use back parking lot entrance). Speakers will present health-related topics with specific focus on what men want to know. The game of pickle ball will be taught to everyone with competitive play to follow throughout the evening.  

Learn to play pickle ball while you learn about your health! As America’s fastest growing sport for all ages, pickle-ball is a paddle sport created for all ages and skill levels. The rules are simple and the game is easy for beginners to learn. It can also be a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players! Pickle ball combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong. Play will be indoors using a paddle and a plastic ball on a badminton-sized court with a modified tennis net. Participants should wear gym shoes to play.  

During the evening, health agency representatives, including Dr. David Smith, a local physician, will present health information on issues that concern men such as heart disease, exercise, nutrition, sexual health and healthy relationships. Play will be stopped for short “Time-Out Talks” on specific health-related topics. There will be many opportunities during the event to ask questions. Additional resources of interest will be on display.  

“Men, as a group, are less likely to seek health care – and no one is talking about it,” says Karen Merrill, Clinton County Public Health Nurse. “The topic of men’s health and fitness doesn’t need to be a hidden discussion anymore. We want to talk about it! Come to the men’s health event and ask questions! Learn how to take charge of your health - and your life.”  

This event is sponsored by the Clinton County Partners for STI Awareness & Prevention and consists of members representing Clinton County Health Department; University of Vermont Health Network at Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital; Plattsburgh State University of New York; Clinton Community College; Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York; Alliance for Positive Health; and community advocates and also, presented in association with Senior Citizens Council of Clinton County.  

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News Release

Date: October 29, 2015
For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Derusha 565-4993 or Karen Cabana 565-3295

Clinton County Health Department Launches New Website

On October 28, 2015 the Clinton County Health Department launched their new website at www.clintonhealth.org. The new website design will be easier to use and will better meet the needs of the community.

According to Karen Cabana, Computer Programmer for the Clinton County Health Department, "It was time! Our previous website was not even viewable on mobile devices. It lacked visual appeal and easy navigation for smaller electronic screens."

The website development was an effort that involved a dedicated group of employees comprising the Web Committee. They represented each division of the Health Department and worked over the course of 6-7 months. These members brought a diverse set of backgrounds and skills to offer a new look for website navigation and content, and under the leadership of Ms. Cabana, were able to achieve a final product that offers enhanced features:

The Web Committee lists the site’s new enhancements as

- Modern and visually appealing
- Dynamic formatting based on desktop, tablet or cellphone screen size
- Organized content by categories
- Easy navigation via mouse, stylus, or finger
- Engaging the community with expanded Social Media tools
- Ease of future content management

Along with the new website, Clinton County Health Department will continue to grow its following on Facebook. They have begun using several other social media platforms including Instagram, Twitter, Blogger and YouTube. “Our communication and outreach will be enhanced by the new website and by our engagement through other social media applications,” states Supervising Public Health Educator and Public Information Officer Karen Derusha. “We want to ensure that the community has the information it
needs from us on a day to day basis, and that we have developed a strong communication infrastructure for use in emergencies.”

The Web Committee Team sees the new website as a reintroduction of Clinton County Health Department to the community and hopes that the community will take time to explore the new features it offers and to learn more about local Public Health.

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News Release

Date: 12-14-15
For Embargo for release 12-17-15
Contact: Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator 518-565-4993

Clinton County on the Move

Two 100-Day Challenges Inspiring Adults and Children to Move and Be Active

For the last 100 days, children and adults have been moving more for their health. Since September a group of local partners has been participating in a Rapid Results 100-Day Challenge aimed at increasing physical activity among Clinton County residents of all ages.

The Rapid Results Challenge was launched on September 9th. One hundred days later, partners in this journey have assembled to celebrate the success of the initiative and to plan for the future. “The overarching goal has been to promote physical activity, to get residents of Clinton County moving more” states youth team leader Sara Allen. “Our goal now is to keep the momentum going.”

Two teams, one focused on youth and one focused on adults, developed interventions to motivate their target age groups. The youth team is comprised of representatives from Clinton County Health Department, Clinton County Youth Bureau, the Town of Plattsburgh, the Ted K Center, and North Country Thrive. Additional partners included the sites that held activities throughout the fall and schools that distributed information. The adult team consists of representatives of the Health Department, the Clinton County Office for the Aging, Eastern Adirondack Health Care Network, the Town of Plattsburgh, Town of Peru and the Senior Citizen’s Council of Clinton County. Each team devised a strategy to get county residents moving more.

The adult team facilitated the Clinton County Trailblazers 50/50 Challenge which challenged participants over the age of eighteen to walk at least 50 miles in 50 days. Two hundred eighty-seven people registered to take part. They have been receiving motivational messages via e-mail to keep them engaged. Similar programs have been offered for seniors in the past but this time the opportunity was open to all adults over 18 and promoted by a diverse group of partners.

Children have been challenged to participate in events that allow them to be active and to collect stickers in “passport” booklets to track their progress. The youth initiative focused on getting information out to families about the many activities available to them. “The idea that there’s nothing to do around here, just isn’t true” according to team member KayLeigh Raville, “Many organizations hold events but lack the capacity to really promote them. We used our collective voice to get the word out about many free and low-cost events taking place in local communities.” The youth team used the power of social media to share information about an array of opportunities at different times and locations. These included “Fun Runs”, ice skating, trail walks, play groups and more. The “hashtag” #ClintonCountyMove has been used throughout the challenge to let families know what is happening and when.
The data collected so far shows that county residents have been active this fall. The challenge now is to keep it going and to help residents establish a pattern of increased physical activity. #ClintonCountyMove will continue to be used but will now include activities for all ages. Additional hashtags may be developed to specify youth focused and adult focused opportunities. All organizations that provide free or low cost physical activity opportunities are invited to use #ClintonCountyMove on social media to promote activities from this point forward.

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