

# Public Health in Southeastern Idaho

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During the month of April, Southeastern District Health Department (SDHD) will be promoting the many aspects of public health to create a greater awareness of what SDHD has to offer the eight counties and tribe they serve.

When I first started my job with SDHD, I never realized the magnitude of the programs that the health department has to offer. This week we will briefly explain some of the many programs SDHD encompasses and in the following weeks, describe in more detail the four main departments that provide specific programs for public health.

## **Family and Community Health Services**

Family and Community Health Services (FACHS) is responsible for providing a variety of services to individuals, families, and community groups to promote health and well-being to decrease and/or prevent disease. The health services that are provided by FACHS include: Women's Health Check, Family Planning/Reproductive Health, PAC (Prenatal Ancillary Care), WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), Infant & Toddler Screenings, STD and HIV/AIDS testing, immunizations, school health, and head lice education.

## **Environmental Health**

Environmental Health is responsible for enforcing public health laws and regulations which are designed to protect the public and environment from factors that could have a negative impact on individuals, the community, or the environment.

Also, the Environmental Health Division acts as a consultant to the public on environmental health issues which fall outside of regulations or laws, but that have an influence on people's health and well-being.

Areas that the Environmental Health Division addresses are food safety (restaurant inspections), sewage (collection and safe disposal of human waste), solid waste (landfills, etc.), recreation (construction and operation of public swimming pools), water (regulation of the design, construction, operation, maintenance, and quality of public/private drinking water), land development, disaster preparedness, and general environmental health programs (accident prevention, indoor air pollution, child care, public health nuisances).

## **Health Promotion**

The primary purpose of the Health Promotion Department is to provide individuals and communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to reduce personal risk for experiencing health-related problems (both short and long term). A number of health issues are addressed specifically by Health Promotion professionals. These include diabetes, public health preparedness, arthritis, oral health, injury control, abstinence education, tobacco use, and tobacco cessation. These issues are addressed through a number of pathways, including the establishment of community coalitions designed to address a specific

problem, information dissemination, media campaigns, worksite health promotion, and school health education, just to name a few.

### **Home Health & Hospice**

In southeastern Idaho, SDHD's Home Health program encompasses many services for many different types of patients. Persons of any age who are disabled, chronically ill, or recovering from an acute illness may benefit from the services of a home health care provider. Patients requiring short or long-term continuing care can receive it at home in a relaxed, familiar setting.

Hospice provides palliative and supportive care to the terminally ill and their family members. A multi-disciplinary team composed of physicians, nurses, aides, social workers, therapists, spiritual counselors, and volunteers work with patients and families to meet their many special needs.

For more information about the services offered by SDHD, please contact 208-233-9080 or visit our web site at [www.sdhdidaho.org](http://www.sdhdidaho.org).