

February 2023

As the Mendocino Public Health Officer, I have concerns from environmental health to infectious diseases. Most of my time for the last 3 years has been devoted to infectious diseases. Addressing each of these is a job of communication and coordination with our clinic and hospital partners as well as schools, businesses and other community groups, and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

Recently, the winter surge of RSV, Influenza and Covid stressed hospitals and Emergency Departments, but all seem to be coming under better control. The Covid pandemic is easing up, and with it our covid response (including contact investigation and tracing, and public dashboard reporting) is winding down in an orderly and thoughtful way, so that we continue to be prepared for any other infectious disease emergencies.

Recent highlights

Disease surveillance: We assisted Ukiah and Ft. Bragg to participate in a state-wide wastewater infectious disease surveillance system.

COVID: As the state has withdrawn support for Covid testing and vaccination, we have re-opened our 3 Public Health Clinics for vaccines and distribution of rapid test kits, while continuing to educate the public about the importance of vaccines.

MPox: The statewide MPox emergency has ended, we have vaccinated those who requested it, and have more vaccine in our county for others, if needed.

Tuberculosis: We completed a big project to get Tuberculosis under control in the county with the addition of an infectious disease nurse. She has also helped us with a new case of HIV, and an outbreak of Avian Flu in a backyard flock on the coast was contained without requiring the euthanasia of flocks in the County.

Wells: We assisted with the response to the storms and Creekside sink hole which exposed many people to E. coli contamination of well water.

Substance Use: We continue to participate in Behavioral Health's Safe RX program to respond to the Opioid epidemic by working with MCOE to get Narcan in every school in Mendocino County.

Education:

- We continue monthly Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) meetings, which were started early in the COVID pandemic, and they have asked us to help with health education which remains spotty in the county. We hope this education

will help control the STD and unwanted pregnancies, as well as bullying and violence, all of which is prevalent in Mendocino County.

- Because education is a principle Public Health intervention for all situations, I continue to make regular presentations including monthly "Media Day" as well as Spanish language radio.

Partnerships: I continue to work with the clinics and hospitals and have been invited to participate with Adventist Hospital in recruiting more primary care physicians, which our county so desperately needs.

Challenges: The Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Team and Data Team have identified a problem of getting people from the Coast and the North-county in for early prenatal care and post-partum follow up. This is another area I am trying to coordinate with the medical community.

A. Coren, PHO