



Protecting Children & Families

Protecting Moms & Babies from Hepatitis B

Critical medication must be given on-time to prevent the transmission of Hepatitis B from pregnant women to their unborn babies. When a pregnant woman is diagnosed with Hepatitis B, it is designated a “reportable condition” that must be reported to Public Health – and Public Health is responsible for following up with the mom to ensure she receives the needed medication and treatment. Currently, Public Health – Seattle & King County is only reaching 60% of the women who need treatment; they should be reaching 90%– 100%. Public Health currently experiences a lack of time and resources – which are further stretched when there is an outbreak of whooping cough, *E. coli*, or measles – to follow up with all pregnant women – putting their babies at risk for a lifetime of illness, including liver disease.

Protecting Young Children from *E. coli*

When two small children were hospitalized due to complications from a dangerous strain of *E. coli*, the Snohomish Health District had to make a tough call to close the Montessori school they attended to prevent the spread of this serious disease. Working closely with school staff, the Department of Early Learning, and the state’s Public Health Lab, more than 70 children and employees were tested in a matter of days. Health District staff also worked with the school to thoroughly sanitize the facility prior to re-opening. More than \$30,000 was spent on the Health District’s response, the school lost income during the closure and families were forced to miss work until their kids were cleared to return. Expanding outreach to child care owners and providers on developing and enforcing health policies is critical to preventing closures like this, and protecting the more than 17,000 kids in child care throughout Snohomish County.

Protecting Kids from Lead

Fewer than half of local health jurisdictions across our state have the capacity to respond to elevated lead levels in kids. Without the ability to investigate elevated levels, Public Health cannot identify and stop the cause of exposure, whether it’s from drinking water, lead paint or soil contamination. This leaves our children at continued risk of many lifelong affects from lead exposure.

Preventing Illness in School-Age Kids

San Juan County has one of the lowest immunization rates in the country, putting kids at risk for illnesses like whooping cough and measles. Using limited funds, health officials have successfully worked with several local schools to improve immunization rates through direct outreach to parents and guardians. New state funding will allow San Juan County to expand this program to all of its schools, keeping kids healthy and ready to learn. Lewis, Klickitat, and Kittitas Counties would also use new state funding to expand their vaccine education work with parents and schools.

For more information, please contact the Washington State Public Health Association at info@wspha.org.