Public Health in Dakota County

New Trustees on Board

Lawshe Fund Drive A Success

Public Health in Dakota County

Curator’s Corner “Quarantined!”

Dakota County Cabinette Exhibit Now Open at the Hastings Government Center

Dakota County Genealogical Society Annual Meeting March 21 7 p.m.

New Phone (651) 552-7548

www.dakotahistory.org
News from the Director

The Museum has been a very active place the last couple of months. Unfortunately, it started with a mini-catastrophe. A heavy rainstorm that occurred overnight in early December while the museum roof was being replaced ended up flooding and damaging all three floors of the building. The result has been a flurry of workers installing new ceiling tiles, cleaning carpets, and replacing light fixtures while the roofing contractor eventually made us water proof again.

On the bright side, the Society produced two publications that have been well received. The most recent “Over The Years”, written by Wayne Gannaway, highlighted the LeDuc Mansion at a point in time when the State Legislature is considering a $1 million asset preservation bond that will enable the site to be opened to the public. “The 1851 Treaty of Mendota”, transcribed and edited by Rebecca Snyder, contains a wealth of primary source documents on the treaty with the Dakota Indians that culminated in the southern half of Minnesota being opened to settlement.

Over 100 members attended our sixty-third annual meeting to voice their approval for the election of Dan Greil, Hugh Guscetti, Gary Kuhn and Lu Stoffel as new trustees. County Commissioner Don Maher was on hand to present certificates of appreciation to departing trustees Dick Darsow, Dick Guyer and Arlyn Lamb. The annual meeting program included a presentation by crime historian Paul Maccabee on the local gangster era and a musical performance by Charlie Maguire, the Singing Ranger, that featured songs from his recent CD, “Great Mississippi”.

The Dakota County Star Quilters seventh annual exhibit opened on February 5. The exhibit continues to be the most well-attended event at the Museum which is a direct reflection on the quality of the quilts produced by the women in this organization. This year’s featured quilters were Betty Wygant, Jolene Graham and Jackie Grinde.

Researchers now can use a computer workstation in the Museum’s research center to access and print out almost all of the records contained in the Historical Society’s growing number of databases on Dakota County censuses and obituaries.

The Society has also created two new computerized PowerPoint presentations. One is “A Brief History of Dakota County”, and other is “Digging Up Your Past,” a presentation on the resources and services available from the Dakota County Historical Society. Both presentations are available for community showings.

Finally, the Museum acquired a new telephone service which has changed our telephone number to: (651) 552-7548.

Thanks to Howard Epstein, Dakota County Public Health Department for gathering data and photos and to Linda Olson Keller, Minnesota Department of Health, for preserving what has become history; records and photos.
2001 Lawshe Fund Drive

Last fall’s Lawshe Fund Drive was another great success. The Society raised over $5,500* to underwrite educational programming, a vital part of the mission which Mr. Lawshe founded in 1939. We extend our thanks to the following members for their contributions.

**Up to $25.00**
- Hugh Guscetti
- Richard C. Guyer
- Frank A. Dehrer
- Robert E. & Susan Hansen
- Charlotte G. Anderson
- Merlin Hansen
- Donald F. & Jane M. Bohrer
- E. W. Horst
- Mary J. Cavanagh
- Gerald W. Kalina
- Frank X. Edgell
- Karen E. Kappahn
- Elmer N. Johnson
- Lois M. King
- Ruth M. Matson
- Jackie T. Koza
- Ludmilla Milnar
- Dona Lannon
- Martin H. Mollenkamp
- Robert G. Lockwood
- Thomas F. Stanek
- Rose Marie Mickelson
- David E. & Roseanne Byrne
- Richard N. Nightengale
- Frank Lavacot
- Thomas G. Novitzki
- Calvin J. Lerman
- Robert L. Pool
- Fay E. Walther
- Lois I. & Geoffrey G. Puckett
- Elsie M. Bahnemann
- Mrs. Albert J. Schroeder
- George A. & Phyllis Betzold
- Gladys Schumacher
- Mr. and Mrs. William Beyer
- Roger B. & Mary R. Shepard
- John P. & Cindy M. Bodger
- Kathleen Smith
- Arthur A. Broderson
- Richard M. Sperle
- Sharon Bruestle
- Chester D. Taylor, Jr.
- Charlie Bzoskie
- Clifford W. Timm
- Jane M. Brenna
- Helen E. Vujovich
- Arthur A. Broderson
- John Vujovich
- Sharon Bruestle
- Russell F. Withrow
- Charlie Bzoskie
- Elizabeth Witt
- Jane M. Brenna
- Albert W. Lindeke, Jr.
- Arthur A. Broderson
- Roger S. Tonderum
- Dorothy M. Englund
- M/M Richard Guelcher
- Laurie Hess Erdman
- Ralph & Marian L. Geddes
- M/M Richard Guelcher
- Hugh Guscetti
- Josephine B. Teare
- Richard C. Guyer
- Joy A. Curtin
- Robert E. & Susan Hansen
- Ann Esta Doty
- Merlin Hansen
- Marti Grow
- E. W. Horst
- Howard M. Guthmann
- Gerald W. Kalina
- Mary & Tom Kaliszewski
- Karen E. Kappahn
- Gary G. Kuhn
- Lois M. King
- Iantha LeVander
- Jackie T. Koza
- Mr. Thomas G. Mairs
- Dona Lannon
- Barbara McMorrow
- Robert G. Lockwood
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Pugh
- Rose Marie Mickelson
- M/M Michael Smeby
- Richard N. Nightengale
- Ethel J. Warweg
- Thomas G. Novitzki
- Robert L. Pool
- Josephine B. Teare
- Lois I. & Geoffrey G. Puckett
- Richard B. Darsow
- Mrs. Albert J. Schroeder
- Martha Jo Bruyer
- Gladys Schumacher
- Olivia I. Dodge
- Roger B. & Mary R. Shepard
- Susan May
- Kathleen Smith
- Richard M. Sperle
- Richard Voorhees
- Chester D. Taylor, Jr.
- Thomas A. Wilde
- Clifford W. Timm
- William G. & Tish B. Wolston
- Helen E. Vujovich
- John Vujovich
- Russell F. Withrow
- Elizabeth Witt
- Albert W. Lindeke, Jr.
- M/M Richard Guelcher
- Roger S. Tonderum
- Ralph & Marian L. Geddes
- Steven J. & Margaret Larson

*An additional $2,000 donation has been pledged to the drive.*
If you are old enough you might recall when you became immune from measles, you stepped out the front door and removed the “quarantine” sign. Or, when the old and poor, lacking a loving family might go to the poor farm. Or, when movie theater house lights came on between the cartoon and feature for a “March of Dimes” polio collection. All were part of our evolving Public Health heritage.

Minnesota Public Health took a major step forward in 1976 with passage of the Community Health Services Act. The act lead to the creation of the Dakota County Public Health Department and its mission to “help build healthy families and a healthy community.”

Following are moments in Dakota County’s “Public Health” heritage.

Dr. Charles Nathaniel Hewitt arrived in Red Wing, Minnesota to practice medicine. The year was 1867. In six years Hewitt, a New Yorker, Civil War battle field doctor, and disease prevention advocate, became Minnesota’s first public health leader.

**On the spot to meet the challenge**

A year after arriving in Red Wing, Hewitt made his public health mark in a surprising way. A Mississippi River steamboat captain approaching Red Wing discovered he had cholera victims on board. His solution was to dump them off on Red Wing’s levee. Fearful city citizens refused to aid the victims. Learning the situation Hewitt went to the victims, quartered them in a house on a nearby island, and secured city funds for their care.

The incident gave Hewitt the respect his action deserved and an opportunity to bring public health measures to the attention of city and state. He believed each community should have a medically qualified public health officer.

By 1873 Dr. Hewitt persuaded the Minnesota Legislature to pass an act providing for Boards of Health in all communities. The Legislature also created a State Board of Health naming Hewitt the director to support and coordinate local boards.

When Hewitt retired he was pleased Minnesota had 1,780 local health boards. However, he noted the lack of sufficient nurses and health officers to carry out public health measures.

**Public health nursing is different**

The public health nursing concept started at a New York City settlement house in 1877. In 1904 the Red Cross Christmas seals financed the first public health services. The influenza epidemic of 1918 led to the 1919 local government authorization to provide public health nursing services.
In 1915 Henry Bracken, Minnesota Health Board director, proposed a staff of state nurses to train local nurses in public health practices. The legislature did not fund the proposal. However, the board appointed Frances V. Brink to the position of superintendent of nurses when funded in 1918. She had public health experience and helped several communities until her resignation in 1921.

State authorizes, counties organize, and all hope Red Cross seals sell

A Minnesota legislative bill in 1919 authorized cities, villages, and counties to employ public health nurses. The bill prompted Dakota County representatives to organize an association at Hastings, citing, “The County is in a much better position to say what public health work is most needed. Since 1915, public health nurses have demonstrated the detection and correction of defects.” The quote actually referred to Red Cross Nurses.

In 1918 the University of Minnesota offered its first course in Public Health Nursing.

The first Dakota County public health nursing service was established in 1919 by the Red Cross who administered the service until 1923. Nurses were Helen Stevens (1919-20), Agnes Renneke (1920), Marian Pilling (1922-23). The county financed services for several months in 1922.

1926, a landmark year

Minnesota 1926 legislation established the “certification” of public health nurses, advisory committees to local public health nursing services, uniform records and reports, and state sources for advice.

The county administered public health services from 1926 until nurse Margaret Casey’s resignation in 1929. Casey was not replaced. A board majority was not convinced of the value of the service.

During this period, Dakota was one of 56 counties offering nursing services. The office was in South St. Paul until 1927 when nurse Casey worked out of her Farmington home until she shared space with the county agricultural agent in Farmington.

Public health in 1920s schools

Eighty-five percent of students have defects, reported County Nurse Helen Stevens. “Systems” and “defects” were terms used for 1920s school inspections to detect contagious diseases such as measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, chicken pox, mumps, etc. Also checked were parasitic diseases such as scabies and impetigo.

When County Nurse Stevens examined 399 school children during three weeks, she found only 62 (15 percent) were free of “defects.” “Defects” noted included 224 teeth, 102 throat, 62 eyes, 40 nose, 27 ears, and 17 skin conditions.

Nurse Agnes Renneke’s activity report included 150 children examined, three baby clinics, 83 children’s teeth checked, and 18 house calls.

The public school was a natural place to hold clinics for both children and adults. Public health nurses in the 1920s concentrated on schools for signs of defects and communicable diseases. A booth at the County Fair also provided an opportunity to make health checks.
Dakota County public health in the 1930s

During the 1930s Depression, communities made severe cuts in services including public health. However, Dakota County and 17 other counties continued to provide basic health care services.

Dakota County had a public health nurse most of the decade. Financing public health services came from several sources including the County Public Health Association, Civil Works Administration (CWA), State Emergency Relief Association (SERA), Red Cross, and Social Security.

- Mary Schmalzbauer 1930 - (3 mos)
- Fern Larsen 9/30 - 12/30
- Dorothy Hutchins 1/34 - unknown
- Jesse Lende ?/34 - unknown
- Laura Becker 11/34 - 3/35
- Margaret Lindquist 12/35 - 12/36
- Eulalia Earlewine 9/39 - 9/44

The County Public Health Association administered the services. CWA and SERA nurses were under a Relief Administrator and advisory group.

County appoints nursing board, Establishes full-time nursing service

In 1936, County commissioners appointed a Public Health Nursing Board and established a full-time Nursing Service. The Nursing Service was also used for field training of public health nursing students. The office was located in Farmington.

State board defines a “Public Health Nurse”

In 1938 the Minnesota Board of Health created a Division of Public Health Nursing. A Public Health Nurse was defined as a “graduate nurse, registered to practice nursing, who teaches public health practices to individuals, and demonstrates home nursing care. Besides an interest and ability to work with people she has completed special courses in public health.”

In the summer of 1930, nurses follow-up visits to families considered “at risk” for tuberculosis by the Mineral Springs TB sanitorium in Cannon Falls which provided services to Dakota County.

Tuberculin testing was extended in 1936 to make testing an annual event in high schools. The County Public Health Board paid toward the cost of chest x-rays for positive reactors. When the sanatorium was unavailable to conduct the tests, a physician was assigned from the Minnesota Tuberculosis and Health Association.

In 1937 the University of Minnesota began assigning public health students to field experience working with nurses in Dakota County. The late 1930s also introduced blood donor programs.

Public Health a wise expenditure

In an attempt to sell the investment return of Public Health Nursing to the public and legislators, Olivia T. Peterson, Minnesota Director of Public Health Nursing, issued a paper in February 1941. She pointed out it cost a township $266.40 to care for a family of three with small pox, including burial costs of one victim. For only $100 the entire township could have been protected by vaccination.

Mothers learn by helping with health checks

A 1941 article noted the county nurses visited the country schools in September and October while the roads were still in good condition. Mothers were often invited to participate in health inspections. Beside helping with the children, the nurses knew the experience helped the mothers check other children at home. Rural school inspections were usually scheduled every other year.
The public health nurses booth at the 1948 Dakota County Fair featured “Fight Cancer by Teamwork.” Far left is nurse Lila Watson, at right is nurse Edith Lake, and seated is Mrs. Ralph Reisinger, chairman of the County Nurses Advisory Board. Board members looked forward to the annual opportunity to talk “Public Health” to fair-goers. The booth was shared with Red Cross nurses.

The 1940s challenges of war
Public health nurses during the 1940s were:

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Financing health care was a combination of County Public Health Association, Social Security funds, and State Aid. During World War II nurses Earlewine and Watson divided county coverage. If there was a shortage of nurses before the war due to finances, now a shortage was due to the war. The problem of providing public health service increased as mothers replaced men in farm fields, offices, and industry. A 1944 newspaper article, “The Citizen’s War at Home,” asked small town women to stay home and volunteer for needed community services.

Nurses Watson and Earlewine organized and taught Home Nursing Care classes. Nurse Earlewine also worked with the County Civil Defense training women as volunteer health assistants.

Construction of Rosemount’s Gopher Ordnance Works prompted hiring Mrs. Fern Larsen, a registered nurse, to assist at the new war-time facility. The Works increased Rosemount’s population tenfold. Mrs. Larsen served the county in 1932 and had post graduate studies at the University of Minnesota.

When Nurse Edith Lake replaced Nurse Earlewine in 1945, she was based in Farmington. Nurse Lila Watson officed in West St. Paul.

When canceling a clinic is an understatement
This was an era of organizing vaccinations in schools for small pox, diphtheria, and whooping cough and often required selling the benefits to a reluctant parent. Imagine Nurse Lake’s thoughts when she had to cancel a pre-school screening clinic due to a developing polio epidemic.

State aid for County nursing services.
A 1947 bill signed by Governor Youngdahl provided state aid for county public health nursing services. Counties were encouraged to increase the number of nurses to one per 5,000 population. Dakota County had two nurses and a 45,000 population.

The County Nursing Board divided the county in three sections with nurse Lila Watson in South St. Paul and Rosemount, Margaret Dowd, a new nurse, in West St. Paul, Lebanon, Burnsville and part of Lakeville, and Edith Lake covering the rest of the county. Miss Dowd resigned and was replaced by Mrs. Mary Skirball.

For about two years in the early 1940s county nurses reported to the County Welfare Board and the Nursing Committee served as an advisory to the Welfare Board. The arrangement was discontinued when a legal opinion cited state law did not provide for the administration by the Welfare Board.
The heritage of Christmas Seals

In 1947, the Minnesota Public Health Association worked with the Dakota County association to oversee the annual tuberculin testing in schools. The Red Cross seal drives of the early 1900s were now the Christmas seal drives, which funded tuberculosis research and testing throughout counties in Minnesota. On April 15, 1947, Dr. Kathleen Jordan of the Minnesota Public Health Association arrived to begin Mantoux testing in the southern half of the county. From April 15th - 22nd tests were given in 11 locations. The chest x-ray survey was carried out during 1946 - 1947. X-ray follow-ups were one of the reasons a third nurse was needed.

From Tuberculosis to Polio

A report noted the tuberculosis mortality rate dropped from 25% in 1938 to 14% in 1948. As TB decreased polio increased. Public Health Nurses Watson and Lake were nationally recognized for “Control of Tuberculosis.”

The cost for 37 polio cases in 1948 was $14,923, paid by the March of Dimes office.

1949 Public Health Nurse Services

Newspapers carried this article listing County public health nurse services and a number to call.
1. Assist expectant mothers prepare for childbirth.
2. Teach young mothers how to care for themselves and their babies.
3. Help school children by physical examination and vaccinations.
4. Give instruction in bedside care and how family can help care at home.
5. Visit people who may have communicable diseases and urge family to contact a doctor.
6. Teach proper isolation measures to parents of children with communicable diseases.
7. Assist doctors in immunizing children and adults against preventable diseases.
8. Help prevent spread of tuberculosis by assisting in testing and x-ray services, and by visiting cases and their contacts.
9. Give talks, distribute literature, show films, arrange exhibits, teach people of the community how to protect and preserve their health.

Call GARfield 5221

All-out effort to conquer Tuberculosis

Nurse Mildred Moravec said, “We’re hoping for a 100% turnout for the test since it is recognized as one of the best ways of detecting the presence of TB germs in the body. Children found to be infected will be chest x-rayed to make sure the germs are not causing trouble.”

The 1950 drive commenced the last week of July and ended in early November with 47,000 people tested.

Dr. Jordan, who also participated in the 1947 campaign, joined the 1950 effort giving Tuberculin tests to 1,000 West St. Paul students.

The TB mobile x-ray trailer supplied by the Minnesota Public Health Association, covered the southern section of the county during August. The major costs for the drive were financed by Christmas seal sales.
Nurses in the 1950s.

Financed by the county and state aid.

Mildred Morovec 10/48 - 1/52
Esther Watson 7/50 - 4/51
Alene Maas 10/50 - 1/51
Faye Svare 4/51 - 7/51
Dorothy Melvin 3/51 - 4/52
Lucy Sontag 7/52 - 7/53
Ruth Wilkinson 4/52 - 8/54
Frances Trite 2/54 - 9/55
Laverne Detlefson 6/54 - ?/62
Ester Tessman 9/55 - 9/59
Katherine Kelly 9/59 - ?/62

By 1955 licensed practical nurses could be hired to assist public health nurses in home health care.

Mid-1950s focus on polio and civil defense

By the fall of 1953, County Polio cases reached a total of 62. Nurses visited the Sister Kenny institute in Minneapolis and the County was very supportive of the Kenny campaign.

The Cold War fostered emergency assignments for all public services. A Rosemount civil defense meeting made assignments for both the county public health and Red Cross nurses.

A Public Health report advocating hiring more nurses pointed out that five school nurses serve about 6,000 students, whereas the two county nurses have the remaining 40,000 people in the county.

“First Polio Shots Given Here”

It was a four column May 1955 headline in a Hastings newspaper. A shipment of the highly publicized Salk polio vaccine arrived. Innoculations for approximately 125 students were given each day.

Hastings recognized for TB testing

Hastings earned national recognition in 1958 for its effective Mantoux testing promotion campaign. Over 85%, or 5,433, Hastings citizens were tested.

Public Health Nursing Director

The first identified Dakota County Nursing Director was Emily White in 1964. At the time there were only three nurses and a clerk on the staff.

In 1965, Karen Nelson joined the department as director. Karen had been hired in 1964 by the Minnesota Department of Health and was placed in Dakota County on a demonstration project to see if Home Health care was feasible. The next year she was hired by Dakota County.

In 1968, the South St. Paul United Way transferred its Homemaker caseload to the County after it was determined 100% of the caseload was ill persons needing nursing assessment and management. The State of Minnesota and Dakota County were pioneers in setting standards for Home Health services provided under the Medicare program.

Services and staff added in 1960s

A third nurse position was filled again in January 1966 by Mrs. George Shears. The position was first opened in 1947 but within two years was vacant.

In 1966 County commissioners also authorized Public Health Nursing to set up a fee system for at-home bedside nursing. Physical therapy was added in an effort to become certified as a provider of Home Services under Medicare.

The Dakota County Public Health Nursing Service was certified by Medicare in 1967. Home nursing services began in 1967, home health aide services in 1969, and homemaker services in 1972.

In 1975, a contractual agreement was made with the St. Paul Rehabilitation Center for physical, speech, and occupational therapy.
1960s public health nurses

The number of nurses listed looks large because it includes temporary home health care nurses.

Laverne Detlefsen  Katherine Kelly
Mary Louise Krall  Sharon O’Neil
Marjorie Mack  Emily White
Karen Nilsson  Kathryn Larsen
Janice Trotter  Ann Shears
Patricia Berdan  Mary Ferguson
Shirley Giles  Janice Peterson
Myrna Sens  Marilyn Weber
Karen Nelson  Elizabeth Ojala
Pricilla Osborn  JoAnn Petersen
Helen Behrens  Connie Dickerson
LeAnn Karnes  Patricia Koehn
Sandra Matuska  Barbara Rutz
Dianne Zeider

Time for a major change

In 1873, when Dr. Charles Hewitt, Minnesota Health Board director, urged authorizing communities to form local health boards, he could never have expected the result. By the time Hewitt retired there were 1,780 local boards and by 1976, 2,100.

The boards and their appointed officers were charged with: 1) assessing their community’s health, and reporting live births and deaths with the cause, 2) local policies and action to limit the spread of communicable disease; and 3) assuring sanitary conditions for a healthy community.

By 1976 the number of boards became unmanageable for the state and no longer effective.

“1978”

Birth of today’s modern Dakota County Public Health System

In 1976 the State of Minnesota passed the Community Health Services Act (CHS). The CHS act and subsequent 1978 Local Public Health Act were designed to overcome the current local board complexity and to establish an improved public health partnership between state and local governments. In 1977 the Minnesota Department of Health had replaced the former state health board. The act allowed county and city boards of health to organize themselves as Community Health Boards, providing they met certain population and boundary requirements. Meeting these requirements, the board became eligible to receive a state subsidy. The new community health board could also preempt all township and city boards within their jurisdiction.

The 2,100 local health boards were reduced to 23 single county boards, 23 multi-county or county-city boards, and 4 metropolitan city boards, for a total of 50 boards. Dakota County is a single county board.

Circumstances point to a county board

The option to create a single county health board was natural for Dakota County. In 1976 the county was experiencing population growth and changing local governments. A 1950 population of 49,019 had soared to over 150,000 in 1976. Nine new cities were organized with some inviting new residents and others desiring to be small. The County community included 20 cities or villages and 14 townships.

Dakota County was in a unique position, if not responsibility, to provide public health leadership to its diverse and growing County community.
Forming the Dakota County Health Board

In October 1978, Dakota County established a County-wide Community Health Board. The board was charged to protect and promote health, and to prevent disease and disability within Dakota County.

The Dakota County Public Health Department

The Public Health Department was formed to carry out the Community Health Board’s mission by assessing community health needs and dangers, preparing and implementing required plans and services, and promoting and assisting citizens in the use of services.

The new department included the functions of the former Public Health Nursing Department.

The new department also assumed functions for improving county communities’ environmental health through regulation, monitoring, and service.

First Public Health Department Director

Donna Anderson was selected in 1979 to be Dakota County’s first Public Health Department director. Her actual title included “and administrator of community health services.”

Kathy Higgins became director of the Public Health Nursing section of the department.

Donna would direct the department’s development and services for 22 years, retiring in 2001.

In December 2001, Donna was recognized by the State of Minnesota with the Health Commissioner’s Distinguished Service Award. At the ceremony the commissioner said, “Anderson built both the credibility and the influence of Dakota County’s Public Health Department moving it from primarily nursing services to a full-spectrum agency, including health protection, emergency medical services, and environmental health, in addition to direct health care services.”

CHS Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee was established to represent the range of county communities in the planning and review of the Public Health Department programs. In 1979, each of the five Dakota County election polling districts was represented by three committee members including health service providers and citizens.

Community Health Services

The seven primary service areas outlined in the 1979 plan were:

- Community Nursing
- Home Health
- Disease Prevention and Control
- Emergency Medical Services
- Health Education
- Environmental Health
- Community Health Services Administration

This list included two additional areas of direct responsibility: Emergency Medical Services and Environmental Health. In the past public health had focused primarily on nursing services; Dakota County’s CHS plan signified a major expansion of the scope of local public health services.

Donna Anderson, Dakota County’s first Public Health Director, center, at the year 2000 Public Health Week celebration with Jan Malcolm, Minnesota Commissioner of Health, and County Commissioner Michael Turner.
Emergency Medical Services
This area received early attention by an Advisory Board task force committee. The goal was a coordinated county-wide emergency services system that improved response time, that saved lives, and that saved dollars.

Environmental Health
This addition included primary responsibilities for water quality, solid waste regulation, and public health nuisance control. Originally staffed by three specialists in the mid-1980s, service demands led to an expanded staff of 15 by 1992. Prompted by population and commercial growth, the County created a separate Environmental Management Department in 1992. The Environmental Management and Public Health Departments continue to work together to address common community health problems.

Family and Community
Today’s County Public Health Department has five family and community centered program areas:
- Emergency Medical Services
- Disease Prevention and Control Services
- Family Health Services
- Long Term Care Services
- Health Promotion Services

Working with people to make their lives better and longer is the reason for a public health effort. Today’s public health professionals, like the public health nurses of 50 years ago, visit mothers and babies, grandparents, coordinate with schools, police and city officials, and community groups. The difference today is our advanced knowledge, our increased skills, and our resources to do more.

Examples of projects include reducing sales of tobacco and alcohol to underage youth, drug use education, and coordinating emergency preparedness and response with police and fire departments.

Another example is the great strides in providing options for the elderly to continue living in their own homes and communities.

The Longest Long Term Case
A major focus of the Public Health Department has been services to assist seniors live outside the nursing home, such as transportation, adult day care, congregate dining, housekeeping, and recreation.

In 2001 Dakota’s Long Term Care Program closed its longest case, a client who has received services since 1967. He was severely physically disabled, and the public health nurse and home health aides worked with him and his family to provide home health services. He was able to live in a community and setting of his own choice with an increased quality of life for the past 34 years.

Current services in the five areas provided by the public health staff
Immunization services to children and adults
Communicable disease prevention and control
Immigrant and refugee services
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition clinics for low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children to age 5 years
Well-child health screening clinics for uninsured and underinsured children to age 21 years
Home visiting services to pregnant and parenting families to promote healthy pregnancies in low-income women; to promote child growth and development; and to prevent child maltreatment
Assessment, case management, case consultation and direct home health services to frail elderly and disabled persons to prevent or delay nursing home placement
Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention services for youth; violence prevention
Youth development; parent support
Mental health promotion services
Health services to adults incarcerated in County’s jail and youths sentenced to the County’s Juvenile Service Center
Emergency medical services coordination
Disaster and emergency response planning and preparedness
Community health needs assessment & planning
“In the 21st century, Dakota County Public Health Department’s mission remains the same as it was a century ago -- prevention of disease and promotion of health for all citizens of the County. While that core mission remains essentially unchanged, the issues facing society and the Public Health Department have changed immensely.

“The new Americans in Dakota County now reflect global cultures -- Latino, East African, Eastern European, Asian and others, all of which adds to the richness of Dakota County and its communities.

“The advancement of technology has moved Public Health from a pencil and paper era to an electronic era in which staff use laptop computers in homes and communities to support their work.

“The terrorist threats to the nation demand a local public health response to assure that we can protect the health and well-being of our citizens.

“Communicable diseases are still of concern. The availability of antibiotics had a major role in extending the longevity of life in the 1900s, but resulted in the development of new strains of bacteria which have become resistant to antibiotics creating new public health challenges.

“The focus on disease prevention broadened from communicable diseases to include diseases and conditions resulting from personal health choices - overeating, smoking, misuse of alcohol and other drugs, stress, lack of exercise, personal and family violence.

“Despite the technological changes that have been seen over the past century, the soft skills used by public health professionals in the past decades to communicate and support good health behaviors are still needed today to achieve an improvement in individual, family and community health.”

Pat Adams
Public Health Director

Pat was named Dakota County Public Health Director in 2001. Pat previously served as the County’s Director of Public Health Nursing for 15 years.

We asked Pat to share her view of Public Health in Dakota County.
PinPoints in Dakota County History

A Public Health Problem in the County before it was a County

In the Fall of 1819 Col. Henry Leavenworth with 97 soldiers and 20 boatmen arrived at the site of Fort Snelling. Their assignment was to assemble materials for construction of the fort which at that time was called Fort St. Anthony. Colonel Leavenworth’s Company built a stockade in today’s Mendota Heights across the river from the construction site. The location is now Picnic Island in Fort Snelling State Park. The stockade was called Cantonment New Hope.

As it grew colder men complained of illness. They were suffering from scurvy. Major Edward Purcell, the surgeon in the command, recognized the problem but did not have the needed medicine. Winter had set in and so many men were sick garrison duty was suspended. It was problem enough to tend the sick and bury the mounting dead.

Col. Leavenworth and a crew set out to acquire the necessary remedies. They obtained spruce in the St. Croix and Chippewa River valleys and vinegar at Prairie du Chien. Nearly half the company died that winter. The illness returned again the next winter but was handled. As a Public Health problem half was solved with the medications to fight back. The other more desirable half, eliminating the cause, was determined and handled after the second year.

It was discovered the St. Louis salt pork supplier purposely drew off preserving brine from the barrels to lighten the load, cutting shipping costs. The barrels were refilled with river water at the end of the trip before delivery at Cantonment New Hope.

Curator’s Corner
Public Health Warnings

“QUARANTINED!”

Notice of “SMALLPOX, DIPHTHERIA, MEASLES, TYPHOID FEVER, or WHOOPING COUGH” when posted on a neighbor’s house all would’ve struck a note of fear into the lives of Dakota County residents as recently as just a few generations ago. These were all serious threats to public health, and quarantine notices, in the form of eight by ten inch printed cards, issued by the Minnesota Department of Health to those infected was a standard practice. All but physicians were allowed to visit the infirm, and all personal items were not allowed to leave the premises for fear of spreading the virus.

Historically, the smallpox virus, to cite one example, had had devastating affects on the native population throughout the mid to late nineteenth century. Like many contagious illnesses though, it and many others have been successfully eradicated through the use of vaccines. Ironically, a few samples of these once deadly contagions, are kept under strict security for study by the National Disease Laboratory in the United States, and the scientific community internationally do as well.

Six of the old quarantine signs came to the museum in 1977 by way of Mr. Hilman Leine, when he was Town Clerk at Eureka Township.

Minnesota Department of Health

DIPHTHERIA

EXISTS ON THESE PREMISES

All Persons except attending physicians are forbidden to go into or away from this house or to carry anything away from the house without the permission of the health officer. The occupants of this house will be held responsible for the unauthorized removal of this card.
Preserving Publishing. Promoting History around the County

Lakeville Historical Society holds annual meeting

The Lakeville Society is going strong with an active membership and local sponsors. On Monday, Feb. 18 the Society held its annual meeting in the "Historical Society" building (the former All Saints Rectory).

David Schreier put on a PowerPoint presentation of the history of the Brandtjen Farm on 170th Street. Once 840 acres today's 800 acres will most likely be opened for development in the coming years. Until then the farm buildings are classics.

A short business meeting was held. Agreeing to take positions on the Lakeville Historical Society's board of directors were Tolly Swan, President; Vern Jensen, Vice President; Wally Potter, Treasurer; Betty Weichselbaum, trustee; Dianne Lamb, trustee.

David Kuykendall has volunteered to develop a web site for the Society. He recently developed one for the Rosemount Society. A continuing project of the Society is providing Area History kits to Lakeville schools and to the Lakeville, Farmington, and Burnsville libraries.

South St. Paul Chapter elects new officers

At the South St. Paul Chapter's annual meeting in December the year's activities were reviewed and new officers elected. Bill Lanoue was elected president with Virginia Lanegran vice-president. Ed Horst was re-elected to the Treasurer's post as was Mary Kaliszewski to Secretary. Trustees elected were James Cashman, Tom Kaliszewski, and Jeanette Birnstengel.

Mendota / West. St. Paul Chapter Remembering neighborhood stores

The chapter's quarterly newsletter the "Little Historian" is devoting a page or two each issue to remembering the neighborhood stores of yesteryear. These are the mom and pop groceries, candy stores and the like that were within walking distance and on the streetcar line. Many let you use their telephone for a nickel, sold stamps, and were authorized to receive telephone and electric payments. Some even rented books and magazines.

The chapter welcomes "they deserve to be remembered" candidates for the list as long as the store was in the West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Lilydale, Sunfish Lake, or the West Side.

I tried writing this in the third person but it didn't work

Mark Reidell said, "People ask about your 90 Seconds of Local History videos and broadcast times. Why don't you tell them in the newsletter."

For sometime I have presented moments of local history on Northern Dakota County Community TV (NDCTV). The "90 Seconds" appear on "Insight 7" which has a community news magazine format. At first they only appeared in the northern tier cities except during the county's 1999 anniversary year.

Now "Insight 7," with the "90 Seconds" appear throughout the six county metropolitan area on Community Cable Channel 6 at 6 PM on Mondays. On NDCTV the program is aired on Channel 14 every day at 9 AM, 3 PM and 7 PM. Two different "90's" appear each month. The current subjects are: "The Brandtjen Farm in Lakeville" and "Percival Barton" of old Inver Grove. Bill Wolston
Museum Hours

Tuesday .........................9 am to 5 pm
Wednesday .....................9 am to 5 pm
Thursday .......................9 am to 8 pm
Friday ............................9 am to 5 pm
Saturday ......................10 am to 3 pm
Sunday ..............................Closed
Monday ..............................Closed

Upcoming Events

Cabinette Exhibit
*Opens Tuesday March 12*
Visit the Hastings Government Center to see the newly installed Cabinette. The first exhibit features Serbian immigration to Dakota County. Displays rotating every 8 - 10 months will tell stories of people who migrated to Dakota County over the last 150 years.

DCGS Annual Meeting
*Thursday March 21 7 p.m. History Museum*
Professor Harold Hinds will speak on adding historical context to your genealogical research. Dr. Hinds is a noted publisher and lecturer on history and genealogy.

International Baccalaureate Art Show
*May 2002 History Museum*
The Annual South St. Paul High School International Baccalaureate Art Show will present exciting art by up and coming artists.