

Board updated on home health finances



Written by Mandy Hochstedler

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Home Health Supervisor Jennifer Wren explained to county board of health members Wednesday afternoon how the Logan County Health District is working to address financial issues with the home health program.

The program lost money last year in large part because it sustained \$200,000 in outstanding collections, as reported at the March board meeting. By contracting with Tuhin Sen, CPA, of Sen & Associates, the agency has recouped about \$20,000 of those delayed funds from Medicare and others. In the upcoming months, Mr. Sen will continue efforts to collect last year's funds, Ms. Wren said.

To keep this year's collections on track, members approved the creation of a new position — a full-time medical billing specialist. The agency had previously employed a part-time billing specialist to work on home health bills two days a week.

"I think we will actually come out way ahead if we hire a person to handle these bills," said President Don Spath.

In addition, Ms. Wren said the computer billing issues have been resolved and billing for medical supplies is now built into the computer system, both recommendations made by Mr. Sen to improve program finances.

In other matters, Health Commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott reported that newborn baby visits to area homes ended in June as a result of the health district's loss of levy funds this year. A total of 183 visits were made by LCHD nurses in 2008.

"Here's a program that really works," he said of the baby visits. "Our staff can tell of four to five really dramatic instances where the program helped a new mother and her baby."

The health commissioner said he is working with Mary Rutan Hospital on the possibility of revamping the baby visit program specifically for high risk cases, although he said it may be difficult to determine who would qualify as "high risk."

Interim Nursing Director Kay Schroer reported that two special immunization clinics have been scheduled for this summer — a teen and college clinic from 1:30 to 4 p.m. July 23, and a kindergarten clinic from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Aug. 13.

Students heading off to college can also receive their recommended immunizations at regular adult clinics conducted from 2 to 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. The regular shots for tots clinic is offered from 9 to 11 a.m. Thursdays and from 1:30 to 6 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month. All clinics serve walk-in clients, with no appointments needed, Ms. Schroer said.

In other action, the board:

- ordered Michael Durnell, operator of Northwoods Campground, 16049 State Route 235, Belle Center, to correct Ohio Administrative Code violations — no visible lot numbers from the street for lots 11 and 13 and no record of water system backflow prevention device — within 14 days;
- ordered Benji Evans to remove bags of garbage piled at his property at 302 N. Center St., Apt. 2, Belle Center, within three days;
- granted a variance request to George Dowling, president of Anchor Lodge Association, 9539 State Route 368, Huntsville, that the existing fence and barriers surrounding the pool area are considered to meet state rules and that the 45-inch latch requirement for doors opening to the pool be waived; and
- granted variance requests to Tamara Wascovich of Cedar Hill, Texas, to place a well at a property at 11068 Shawnee Path, Lakeview; Doug Reed, 9839 Buckeye Drive, Huntsville, to place a well on his property; and Leonard Ream, 11035 Cherokee Path, Lakeview, to build a garage over an existing well.

The next meeting is 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 5, at the health district, 310 S. Main St.

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